



## DIA'S REVELATION

Actor Dia Mirza reveals the industry doesn't recognise her strong dedication to being an artiste

LEISURE P2



## NIJJAR KILLING ROW

Justin Trudeau says Canada shared with India "many weeks ago" evidence that it may have been behind the killing of Nijjar on its soil

INTERNATIONAL P10



## SECOND ODI TODAY

All eyes on Ravichandran Ashwin and Shreyas Iyer as India lock horns with Australia in the second ODI

SPORTS P12

# One poll panel to seek views

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

**New Delhi, Sept 23:** Twenty-one days after the Centre constituted a High-Level Committee (HLC) to study the feasibility of simultaneous elections in the country, the panel in its first meeting Saturday decided to seek suggestions from political parties and law commission on the 'one nation one election' plan.

The committee has decided to invite recognised national and regional political parties for seeking suggestions on the issue of simultaneous elections in the country. "In addition, the committee will also invite Law Commission of India to make their suggestions/view points on the issue of simultaneous elections in the country," the Ministry of

Law and Justice said.

The committee held its meeting under the chairmanship of former president Ram Nath Kovind, Saturday. The meeting was attended by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Law and Justice Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, former LoP of Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, former chairman of 15th Finance Commission NK Singh, former Lok Sabha secretary general Subhash C Kashyap, former Central Vigilance Commissioner Sanjay Kothari and senior advocate Harish Salve (joined the meeting virtually).

However, Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury did not attend the meeting. Chowdhury had declined to be the part of the committee immediately after announcement September 2. He

termed the simultaneous elections as "a pragmatically non feasible and logistically unimplementable idea" and also cited the exclusion of current Rajya Sabha LoP Mallikarjun Kharge as the reasons for declining the invitation.

Significantly, the committee has been tasked to examine feasibility of holding simultaneous elections to the House of the People (Lok Sabha), State Legislative Assemblies, Municipalities and Panchayats, keeping in view the existing framework under the Constitution of India and other statutory provisions.

It will also recommend specific amendments to the Constitution, the Representation of the People Act, 1950, the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and the

rules made thereunder and any other law or rules which would require amendments for the purpose of holding simultaneous elections.

It will also suggest a time frame and phases for holding simultaneous elections. The committee will analyse and recommend possible solution in a scenario of simultaneous elections emerging out of hung House, adoption of no-confidence motion, or defection or any such other event.

The panel has also been asked to recommend "necessary safeguards for ensuring the continuity of the cycle of simultaneous elections and recommend necessary amendments to the Constitution so that the cycle of simultaneous elections is not disturbed".



**LET THE SHOW BEGIN:** Artistes perform during rehearsals for the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games at Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Stadium in China, Saturday

# Charges framed against Biswal, wife

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 23:** Nine years after the Seashore chit fund scam rocked the state, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Saturday framed charges against former Choudwar-Cuttack MLA Pravat Ranjan Biswal and his wife Laxmi Bilasini Biswal for cheating, forgery and other charges.

According to an official, the agency filed the obligatory documents with CBI Court-1 here over alleged illegal financial transactions under Sections 420, 120(B), 409, 467, 468 and 471 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The next date of hearing was fixed for November this year.

Former legislator Biswal allegedly entered into a dubious land deal with a man accused of the chit fund scam, pegged at ₹500 crore. Biswal came

## SEASHORE CHIT FUND SCAM



under the CBI scanner as a deal took place between his wife Laxmi Bilasini and key scam accused - Seashore Group chief Prashant Dash - over a piece of land at Benapur mouza in Jajpur district. Biswal was arrested September 19, 2017, from his Cuttack residence.

It is pertinent to mention, CBI had grilled Biswal and his wife at its regional office in Bhubaneswar November 21, 2014. Earlier in January, the CBI had conducted simultaneous raids at Biswal's residences in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

The Seashore MD had paid ₹25 lakh for the land in cheques in April 2012. The money was returned to Dash in cash, the arrested leader had claimed. However, CBI was not convinced by the clarification of Biswal and said the money was extracted from the chit fund firm.

Biswal had moved the High Court pleading innocence for himself and his wife and sought quashing of the FIR. However, the HC in April had directed the CBI to frame the charge against the Biswal couple and complete the hearing within a year.

# MINOR GIRL GANGRAPED; FOUR ARRESTED

AGENCIES

**Balasure, Sept 23:** A day after a police vehicle was set ablaze and angry locals fought a pitched battle with the cops in Rayagada over alleged rape of a Class III student, another horrific incident has come to the fore from Balasure wherein a minor girl was allegedly gangraped at Chandipur.

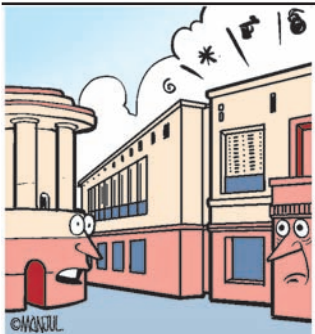
The victim allegedly tried to commit

suicide by consuming poison at her home after the incident, the police said. She was rushed to Balasure district hospital in a serious condition and is now recovering, a doctor attending her said.

Balasure Sadar SDPO Sasanka Sekhar Beura said, "One minor girl aged 15+ years was gangraped by three persons. They took her to a hotel in Chandipur area and raped her." The three accused

also allegedly captured the images and videos of the sexual assault in their mobile phones, he said. One of the accused has claimed to be the girl's boyfriend and the others are his friends, Beura said. The hotel manager, who allotted the room without keeping proper identity documents, was also booked, the police official said. The mobile phones and two motorcycles used in the crime have been seized, he added.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



They might call you the new temple of democracy, but don't expect temple-like treatment from them

# NIA confiscates SFJ terrorist's properties

AGENCIES

**New Delhi/Chandigarh, Sept 23:** Tightening its noose around Canada-based 'designated individual terrorist' Gurpatwant Singh Pannu, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) confiscated a house and land of the self-styled general counsel of the outlawed Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) outfit in Punjab's Amritsar and the Union Territory of Chandigarh Saturday, an official said.

The action, which comes as a big boost to the country's crackdown on the terror and secessionist network being operated from various countries, including Canada, followed confiscation orders passed by the Special NIA Court, SAS Nagar, Mohali (Punjab), a spokesperson of the (NIA) said.

The official said the properties confiscated include a 46-kanal (5.7 acres)

agricultural land at Khankot village in Amritsar and a one-fourth share of a house in Chandigarh's sector 15/C area.

These properties were earlier attached following orders passed by the government in two different cases, the spokesperson said, adding that they have now been confiscated on the court's orders under the relevant section of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in a case registered April 5, 2020.

This is the first time that properties of an absconding accused of the NIA have been confiscated under section 33(5) of the UAPA.

The case was originally registered October 19, 2018 under various sections of the Indian Penal Code at Sultanwind police station in Amritsar city and later, transferred to the NIA. A total of 10 accused, including Pannu, have so far been chargesheeted in the case.

## WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	34.4°C	33.2°C
TEMP MIN	25.9°C	26.0°C
Humidity	88%	84%
Rainfall	13.2mm	16.2mm
Forecast	Cloudy sky with light rain	

# 'Singham cop' sends out dangerous message, says HC judge

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Sept 23:** The cinematic image of a 'hero cop' delivering quick justice without bothering about the due process of law, as shown in blockbuster films like 'Singham', sends out a harmful message, Justice Gautam Patel of the Bombay High Court has said.

Speaking at a function organised by the Indian Police Foundation to mark its annual day and Police Reforms Day, he also questioned people's "impatience" with the process of law.

Talking about police reforms, the judge said the Supreme Court's judgement in the Prakash Singh case was an "opportunity missed", and also noted that the law enforcement machinery could not be reformed unless

we reformed ourselves.

The image of police as "bullies, corrupt and unaccountable" is a populist one and the same can be said about anyone in the public life, including judges, politicians and journalists, he said.

When the public thinks that the courts are not doing their job, it celebrates when the police step in, the judge said. "This is why when a rape accused is killed in an encounter while allegedly trying to flee, people think it is not just alright but it is celebrated. Justice has been served, they feel, but has it?" he said.

This view is deeply pervasive and reflected strongly in our popular culture, especially in Indian cinema, Justice Patel noted.

"In movies, police rail against judges



who are shown as docile, timid, thickly-spectacled and often very badly dressed. They accuse courts of letting the guilty go. The hero cop delivers justice single-handedly," he said.

"Singham' movie has especially shown in its climax scene where the entire police force descends on the politician played by Prakash Raj...and shows that justice has been served. But I ask, has it," Justice Patel said.

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# leisure



## EMMA HIRES SECURITY TEAM TO GO BACK TO UNIVERSITY

Actress Emma Watson is heading back to school to chase a degree from Oxford. The 33-year-old actress, has reportedly signed up for a part-time Master's degree at Oxford University and will reportedly be bringing a heavy security presence with her, reports *Mirror.co.uk*.

## WARNER BROS WANTED DICAPRIO TO PLAY RIDDLER

The *Dark Knight* screenwriter David S Goyer revealed in a new podcast that after Heath Ledger's *Joker*, Warner Bros wanted to cast Leonardo DiCaprio as Riddler in *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012).



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

Today you will feel like displaying your power. If you find that people are awestruck when you pass by, take it that your labours are doing the trick. Otherwise, take it that you have to get things in better order. Ganesh says either ways you have more work to do.

#### TAURUS

This day, Ganesh sees you brimming with pep and vigour. You'll be feeling playful and frisky and will want to amuse yourself, keep others amused. You are likely to hang out with old friends and cronies and will love very second of it. Long breezy drives on the wide open roads, jungle treks are distinctly in the cards.

#### GEMINI

Today, you will realise that close relationships need care and concern to grow, predicts Ganesh. You will have new responsibilities and achieve huge profits in all your dealings. Pay special attention to your personal health.

#### CANCER

You will be quite sharp at work, and equally penetrating in the matters of the heart. Though, you may temporarily lose focus, your mind will bring you back to the real world. You will work at a break-neck speed, only to be able to spend as much time as possible with your sweetheart.

#### LEO

A lucky day is in the offing. You will taste success in all your endeavours. You will be extremely creative. You will contribute a lot of new ideas in meetings. You will be able to talk about your love without any hesitation today, says Ganesh.

#### VIRGO

If being humanitarian needed a definite physical form, you are most likely to be nominated. Such is the mix of values and practicality today, says Ganesh. Devise strategies to achieve more productivity. See the bigger picture, says Ganesh. This is not difficult considering you have a broad vision - with or without the glasses.

#### LIBRA

Ganesh says that you shall be immersed in successfully completing all your remaining work today. Whatever work you undertake today you shall be able to do it to your best capability and successfully and your work ability will be praiseworthy. Ganesh showers his blessings on you

#### SCORPIO

The grey strands on your head is not just a colour, but speaks about your experiences. Your wisdom will make you take appropriate decisions at work. Ganeshji warns you to stay away from courtrooms and legal issues, or the trap may leave a deep scar.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Dressed to kill - this phrase is enough to describe you today, says Ganesh. Decked up from head to toe in chic attire and classy jewellery, you make a bold statement. Like a magnet, you will attract attention at a party. Don't get surprised if your list of admirers becomes longer.

#### CAPRICORN

You are not an impulsive person and this reflects in whatever you do. Money will be on your mind almost throughout the day. Generally, you are a penny pincher, but during the later half of the day you will go on a spending spree. Don't ignore your pocket while spending, otherwise you may end up burning a hole in it, advises Ganesh.

#### AQUARIUS

Most of the time it is your way or no other way, especially when you charging towards your goal. Today, you will push your limits to achieve what you have desired. You are talented, hard working, creative, and icing on the cake is your luck which is favouring you big time. You are determined to succeed and you will take up the tried and tested route of hard work, says Ganesh.

#### PISCES

Controversy and differences circle overhead, almost waiting for a chance to corner you. Even though you are a happy go lucky person, you may feel a little run down and disgruntled today. But don't lose heart, says Ganesh, because as the day progresses you will find bigger and better reasons to smile. Your spouse or loved one will have a major role to play in restoring your happiness.

## Kareena: Men always think about themselves

**Mumbai:** Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan, who recently made her OTT debut with the film *Jaane Jaan* and has garnered praise for her performance, has discussed her experience of working in a women-centric film and offered insights into why women tend to have a more relaxed attitude about collaborating with each other compared to men.

In a recent interview, the *Ashoka* actress said, "Men, I think, they kind of always think about themselves. Women have a quality because they're also... I don't know, they just have that where they also think about the other person. In a male-centric film, sometimes it's also mainly about them. Maybe they don't like to share and women do."

Kareena went on to share her experience of working with Kriti Sanon and Tabu in *The Crew*.

"We're always thinking about each other in the film like Tabu, Kriti, me. It's more like discussing, we're not

really trying to be one-up on each other. We're always talking about how we're going to make the scene better, let's have some more fun so the audience has more fun. We want the film to work because when the film works with three women in it, I think it says a lot. So that's what we're working as a team, which I like," recalled the Omkara actress.



### IDFFB: DAY 2

## Land of My Dreams highlights the strength of Indian women

Debalina Majumdar's *'Beyond the Blues'* takes the viewers on a compelling journey through the life of a queer individual

**Bhubaneswar:** The second day of the 4th Indian Documentary Film Festival Bhubaneswar (IDFFB) here at Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre, hosted by the Film Society of Bhubaneswar (FSB), commenced Saturday with Subasri Krishnan's *What the Fields Remember*, a poignant exploration of the aftermath of the tragic Nellie Riots in 1983. This powerful documentary set the tone for the day, setting the

stage for engaging discussions and reflections on India's historical conflicts.

Debalina Majumdar's *Beyond the Blues* was the next movie that took the viewers on a compelling journey through the life of a queer individual who courageously decides to challenge societal norms by changing their assigned gender.

The third on the list was Nausheen Khan's touching documentary *Land of My Dreams*, which masterfully chronicled the landmark women's protest at Shaheen Bagh, spotlighting the resilience and strength of Indian women in their pursuit of justice and equality. Rifle and a Bag, a riveting account of two former members of the



Subham Roy Chowdhury and Nausheen Khan during an interaction session

plex dynamics of rebellion, surrender, and redemption.

Similarly, Priyanka Chhabra's expansive and insightful documentary unravelled the heart-wrenching journey of displaced individuals during the partition of India.

The festival also saw active participation from accomplished filmmakers. Nausheen and Debalina engaged in workshops and conversations, providing valuable insights into the art of documentary filmmaking, while festival director and FSB's honorary president, Subrat Beura, highlighted the importance of both experimental and narrative storytelling in the landscape of independent non-fiction cinema.

## When Hrishida screamed at Amitabh

**Mumbai:** In 1970s, Amitabh Bachchan delivered some of his career's most iconic performances in films like *Zanjeer*, *Deewar*, *Sholay*, and *Muqaddar Ka Sikandar*.

Simultaneously, he showed his versatility by associating with the legendary director Hrishikesh Mukherjee, also known as Hrishida, working in classics like *Abhimaan*, *Chupke Chupke*, *Anand*, and *Namak Haram*. This collaboration enriched Bachchan's repertoire, taking him beyond the emblematic 'angry young man' image that remains imprinted in public memory even today.

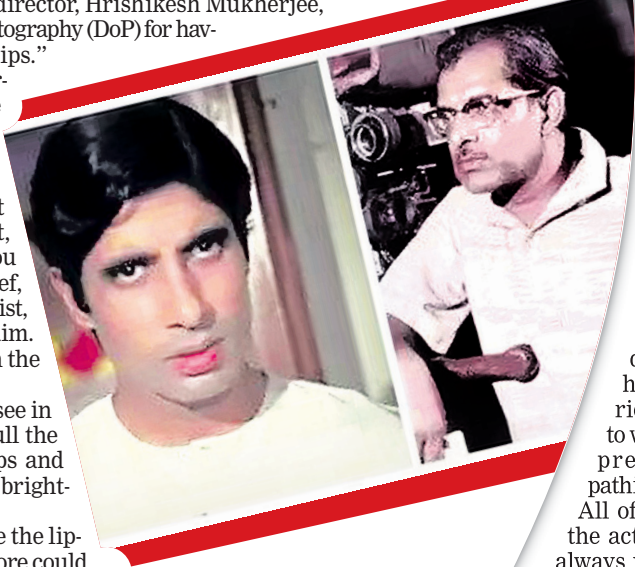
However, the road to stardom wasn't without its challenges for Amitabh Bachchan. One such intriguing tale from his early years highlights the unique hurdles he faced. The megastar recently reminisced about an episode during the shooting of the 1971 film, *Anand*, where he was berated by the director, Hrishikesh Mukherjee, and the director of photography (DoP) for having "exceptionally red lips."

Bachchan took to his personal blog to share an image from the film *Anand* and playfully wrote about a fan complimenting his lips. He used the opportunity to narrate the back story of that image. Apparently, when he appeared on set, the film's director would often exclaim, "Why have you applied lipstick? Wipe it off immediately!" To his disbelief,

Bachchan clarified that his lips were naturally that red. Even the makeup artist, after attempting to remove any trace of lipstick, confirmed Bachchan's claim. Left with no other choice, the director and DoP then decided to tone down the brightness of his lips by applying base makeup to them.

In his blog, Amitabh Bachchan humorously elaborated that what fans see in his pictures from that era is not lipstick but the base makeup used to dull the natural vibrancy of his lips. After enduring over half a century of ups and downs in the film industry, his lips, he noted, might have lost their natural brightness but continue to draw attention.

In his concluding words, Bachchan humorously remarked, "So, despite the lipstick controversies, if my lips still capture attention after 53 years, what more could I ask for?" The anecdote gives a fascinating glimpse into the challenges and unexpected incidents that even legends like Amitabh Bachchan faced during their illustrious careers.



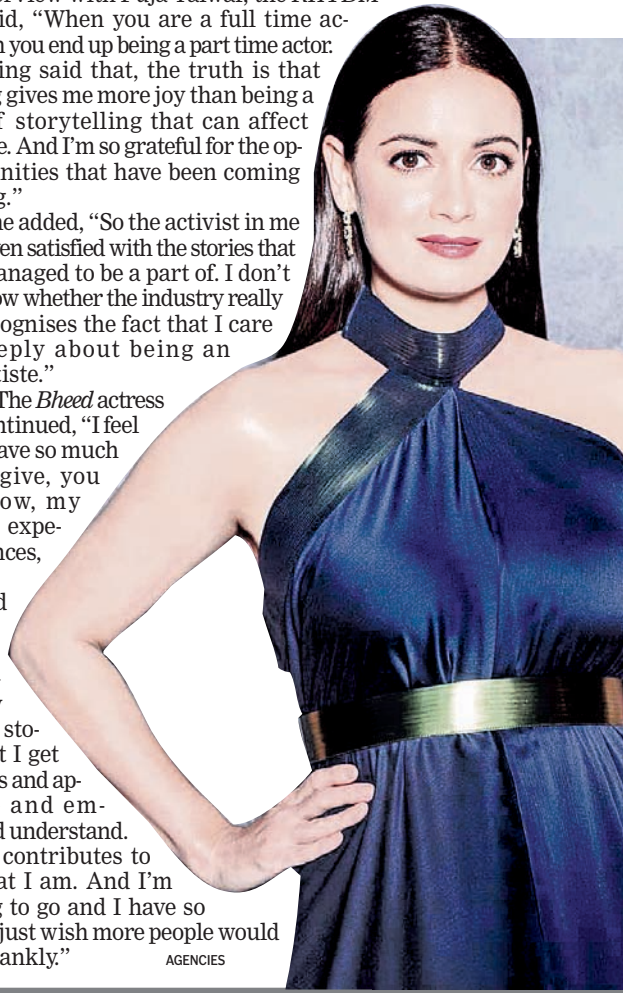
## I have so much to offer: Dia

**Mumbai:** Actress Dia Mirza, who was recently seen in *Made in Heaven* season 2, has opened up about how she has become a 'part time actor' and feels the industry doesn't recognize her strong dedication to being an artiste.

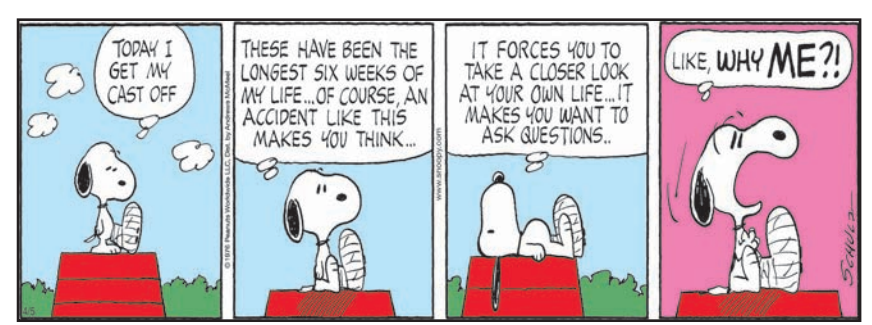
In an interview with Puja Talwar, the *RHTDM* actress said, "When you are a full time activist, then you end up being a part time actor. But having said that, the truth is that nothing gives me more joy than being a part of storytelling that can affect change. And I'm so grateful for the opportunities that have been coming along."

She added, "So the activist in me is even satisfied with the stories that I managed to be a part of. I don't know whether the industry really recognises the fact that I care deeply about being an artiste."

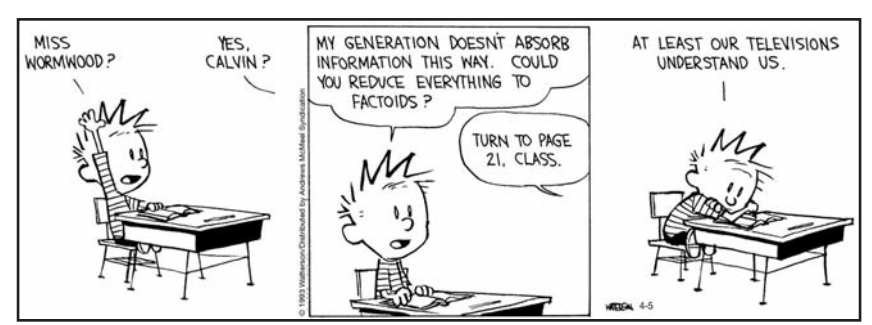
The *Bheed* actress continued, "I feel I have so much to give, you know, my life experiences, the kind of extraordinary human stories that I get to witness and appreciate and empathize and understand. All of that contributes to the actor that I am. And I'm always raring to go and I have so much to offer. I just wish more people would cast me, quite frankly."



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

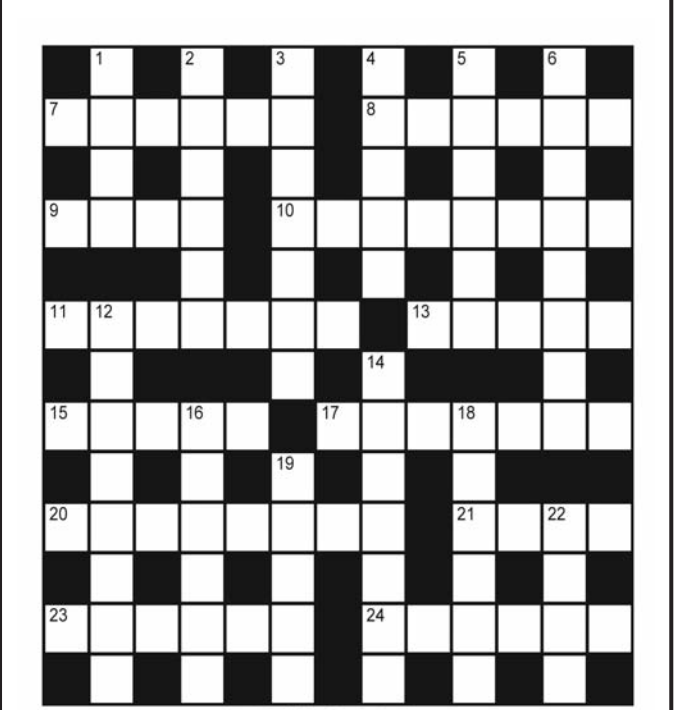


### BREVITY



### FUN post

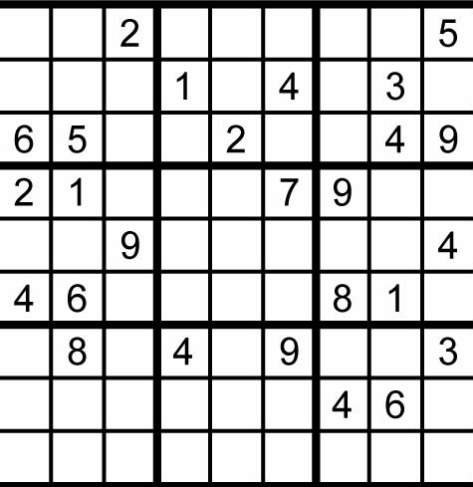
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Telescope name
  - 8 Romeo and Juliet, e.g.
  - 9 Kon-Tiki Museum site
  - 10 Outstanding!
  - 11 Incoherent
  - 13 Break off
  - 15 Hard wood
  - 17 Drashti Dhumi, for one
  - 20 Horror movie beast
  - 21 Shipshape
  - 23 Spotted wildcat
  - 24 Tree droppings
- Down**
- 1 Razorbills
  - 2 Soak up
  - 3 Liberate (3,4)
  - 4 Crystal ball
  - 5 Develop
  - 6 Riding breeches, e.g.
  - 12 Atmosphere
  - 14 Minor fight
  - 16 Tease
  - 18 Wicker material
  - 19 Adolescence
  - 22 Face-off, of sorts

### 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.

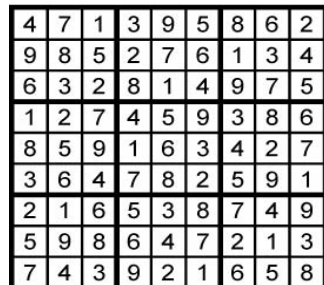


### SOLUTIONS



### CROSSWORD

### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

CEO and ACS, Energy and Excise depts, Nikunja Bihari Dhal addressing the state-level workshop on 'First Level Checking of EVM and VVPAT in Odisha' at the Gopabandhu Academy of Administration in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



## Utkal staffer held for duping job aspirants

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 23:** The Commissionerate Police Saturday arrested a staff member of Utkal University on the charges of duping many job aspirants, including university students, of several lakhs by promising to help them get various government jobs.

The 44-year-old accused, Madhab Chandra Sethi, a native of Banki in Cuttack district was produced before a local court that remanded him to judicial custody. Police arrested Madhab in the case (350/23) registered by a post graduate student, Basanta Kumar Das, who hails from Nabarangapur district.

Basant, a Post Graduate student of the Anthropology department, during his stay at the hostel of the university in 2018 came into contact with the accused Madhab who works as the Academic Coordinator at the Directorate of Distance & Continuing Education (D.D.C.E.), History Department of the university.

In May 2021, the victim faced



The 44-year-old accused, Madhab Chandra Sethi, who works as an Academic Coordinator in Utkal University, allegedly demanded ₹12 lakh from a PG student to help him get an Assistant Section Officer (ASO) job

return the money. But the accused threatened him with dire consequences," said police sources.

The cops found during investigation that Madhab had also duped several other students using a similar modus operandi.

"It is learnt that the accused has cheated many youths on the plea to provide job to them. So far, he had collected Rs 4 lakh each from students Rasmiranjan Parida and Dumsanta Kumar Panigrahi; Rs 70,000 from Smruti Ranjan Swain and Rs one lakh and twenty thousand from Gita Govinda Behera of Bhadrak district," added police sources.

severe financial crunch following the death of his father.

Madhab, taking advantage of the situation, persuaded Basant to pay Rs 12 lakh for the post of Assistant Section Officer (ASO) in the state secretariat. Accordingly, the victim paid Rs 2 lakh to Madhab while promising to pay the rest following his selection in the ASO examination.

"When result of ASO was published and the complainant could not find his name in the result sheets, he requested Madhab to



CATS AND DOGS: Motorists negotiating a inundated road as rain continues to lash the Capital city, Saturday

OP PHOTO

## Heavy rains pound parts of Odisha, more likely

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 23:** Heavy rains lashed parts of Odisha Saturday and more showers are likely in the state over the next two days as the result of a cyclonic circulation over Jharkhand coupled with an active monsoon, the weather office said.

The rains have mostly affected the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, and Mayurbhanj district, the director of Regional

Since the onset of the monsoon in June, the state has received 1,081 mm rainfall which is 3 per cent less than the normal

The state may receive more rains as a cyclonic circulation is likely to form over the Andaman Sea and its neighbourhood September 29

Meteorological Centre HR Biswas said.

In the 24 hours - till 8.30 am Saturday - the state recorded an

average rainfall of 4 mm. Kaptipada in Mayurbhanj recorded the highest rainfall of 68 mm, followed by Udala (52 mm) of the same district, and Kankadahad (47.4 mm) in Dhenkanal.

Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Satyabrata Sahu asked the collectors of the districts that have been issued a yellow alert to remain prepared.

Since the onset of the monsoon in June, the state has received 1,081 mm rainfall which

is 3 per cent less than the normal, a senior official said.

The state may receive more rains as a cyclonic circulation is likely to form over the Andaman Sea and its neighbourhood September 29, a weather official said.

Under its influence, a low-pressure area is likely to form over the Andaman Sea and its adjoining areas of the Bay of Bengal, he said, adding that the system may gradually intensify further.

## PM to flag off Rourkela-Bhubaneswar-Puri Vande Bharat

PNN/AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 23:** The Rourkela - Bhubaneswar - Puri Vande Bharat express is among the 9 such trains which will be flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sunday. The special trains will connect religious and tourist destinations

across 11 states.

The trains will provide faster connectivity across 11 states - Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, West Bengal, Kerala, Odisha, Jharkhand and Gujarat. The Prime Minister will flag off the trains through video conferencing.

The new Vande Bharat trains will run between: Udaipur - Jaipur; Tirunelveli-Madurai-Chennai; Hyderabad-Bengaluru; Vijayawada - Chennai (via Renigunta); Patna - Howrah; Kasaragod-Thiruvananthapuram; Rourkela - Bhubaneswar - Puri; Ranchi - Howrah; and Jamnagar-Ahmedabad.



SPOILS OF CELEBRATION: A shallow artificial pool for immersion of Ganesh idols on the banks of Kukhai river in Bhubaneswar remains unused, (right) as debris lay scattered, Saturday

OP PHOTOS

## BJP to campaign on women's Bill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 23:** The BJP Saturday announced that it will launch an awareness campaign on the Women's Reservation Bill in all 50,000 villages of Odisha and highlight Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts towards women empowerment.

This was announced by senior party leader and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in presence of BJP state president Manmohan Samal. "The party will rope in local organisations to hold awareness meetings in 50,000 villages in Odisha. At present, Lok Sabha has 81 women MPs which will increase to 182 after the implementation of the bill. While the Odisha Assembly has 18 women MLAs, it will increase to 49," Pradhan told reporters here at the BJP's state headquarters.

The bill to reserve one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies for women received the parliamentary nod on Thursday as the Rajya Sabha unanimously voted in its favour. The Lok Sabha passed it on Wednesday. It will now require

the approval of a majority of the state assemblies.

The reservation, however, will come into effect only after the completion of the census and delimitation exercises.

Earlier, Pradhan joined the celebration where hundreds of women cheered passage of the Bill in Parliament.

Addressing the gathering, the senior BJP leader said that Droupadi Murmu, a "tribal sister" from Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, is now the President of India. "Modi-ji will make you either an MLA or an MP. Modi hai to mumkin hai (If Modi is at the helm, it is possible)," he said.

Asserting that the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam will change the fate of India, Pradhan said the decision to increase the participation of mother power in the development of the country shows the commitment of the prime minister towards women-led development.

"Modi-ji has done a lot for the empowerment of women. Beginning from the Ujjwala Yojana to Mudra Scheme or Women Self Help Group or Swachha Bharat, Modi-ji has all along worked for the women's welfare," he said.

## 3yr RI for clerk in graft case

**Bhubaneswar:** A Vigilance court Saturday awarded three years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 5,000 to a government clerk after he was convicted in a corruption case. The Vigilance department said Prakash Kumar Sahu, the senior revenue assistant in the office of Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), Chandrapur in Rayagada was convicted by the special judge, Vigilance, Jeypore. In September 2020, when Sahu was serving as a development clerk in Kashipur block of Rayagada, the Odisha vigilance had caught him red-handed accepting bribe from the complainant for issuing a work order under the MLA Local Area Development (MLA LAD) fund, the Vigilance department said in a statement. A case was registered, and subsequently, a chargesheet framed against Sahu, it said.

## Getting-ready-to-sleep behaviour hard wired in brain for survival

WHEN TIREDNESS STARTS TO WASH OVER, THE BRAIN DECIDES TO IMPLEMENT BEHAVIOURS TO MAKE SURE THE ANIMAL IS IN A SAFE PLACE BEFORE GOING TO SLEEP

Scientists tired out mice only to find that it triggered them to "build a nest", or in other words, to "get ready for bed."

A team of researchers, led by Imperial College London, made the mice sleepy by presenting them with Lego bricks and other toys every half an hour for five hours and preventing them from napping.

The researchers then observed their behaviour and brain ac-

tivity when they were eventually allowed to fall asleep using optogenetics, whereby particular brain cells can be artificially activated by a flash of light.

As the mice became progressively more tired, the prefrontal cortex at the top of the brain sent signals to the hypothalamus at the base of the brain, the researchers observed.

The hypothalamus houses instincts related to 'nest building' and wiring that triggers sleep,



thereby setting off the "nest building" or "getting ready for bed" behaviour in mice.

"In other words, when tiredness starts to wash over the mouse, the top part of the brain (the prefrontal cortex) decides to

implement behaviour to make sure the mouse is in a safe place before going to sleep," said Kyoko Tossell, from the Department of Life Sciences at Imperial and an author on the study published in the journal Nature

Neuroscience.

For some animals this 'safe place' is especially important, as a burrow or nest provides a haven from predators.

While the prefrontal cortex is known to help in rational planning, the hypothalamus is the brain's control centre which regulates many basic survival processes integral to the body's functioning, including eating, drinking and sleeping.

Thus, sleep preparatory behaviour is wired up in the top of the brain, the researchers concluded.

"The fact that this process is hard-wired in mice shows that preparing properly for sleep is a survival feature used in nature, and so humans should take

this aspect of their sleep seriously," said Bill Wisden, Chair in Molecular Neuroscience at Imperial and the study's co-responding author.

"Although it seems to us humans that we have a conscious control of the process of going to bed, it is very likely that the same wiring exists in the human brain as the mouse brain.

"So, even if we think we are making a choice, we are probably governed by unconscious urges to prepare for bed as mice are," said Tossell. The team now wants to understand further what makes the prefrontal cortex cells active during tiredness and how the brain actually senses tiredness.

**DENGUE SURGE**

# BMC forms task force to curb trend



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 23:** With dengue cases witnessing rapid surge in the Capital city, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has constituted a Task Force with a view to step up efforts to control the situation with a focused approach.

Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange, who chaired an important meeting to review the situation at the BMC headquarters, said the Task Force, comprising doctors, sanitary inspectors, ward officers, Swachh supervisors, and Swachh Sathi, will spearhead door-to-door campaigns on dengue prevention, waste segregation, and mass cleaning.

Additional Commissioner Subhendu Kumar Sahu, ADUPHO in charge, Suman Sundaray, Chief Municipal Medical Officer Satyabrata Chhotray, City Health Officer Deepak Bisoi, all medical practitioners within the BMC area, zonal deputy commissioners, ward officers, sanitary inspectors, and Swachh supervisors participated in the meeting.

The Commissioner took review of the outreach of medical teams, and emphasised the need for detailed reports, including doctors, sanitary inspectors, and ward officers' visits to specific areas, houses,

schools.

The authorities have made a shift towards daily reporting, tracking efforts at the grassroots level, especially focusing on daily awareness programs in schools.

To intensify the fight against dengue, the civic body has decided to implement 'dry days' in every ward, with a call to all zonal deputy commissioners, ward officers, and sanitary inspectors to collaborate closely with local corporators in their respective wards for waste segregation initiatives and dengue awareness campaigns.

For monitoring purpose, ward officers will conduct field visits post 5 pm daily, overseeing activities like fogging, mosquito oil spraying, and other preventive measures. Zonal deputy commissioners have been tasked with field visits and real-time monitoring, providing daily reports on bush-cutting, waste collection, and related activities.

Ward officers and sanitary inspectors will monitor mosquito oil spraying, fogging, bush-cutting, and provide photographic evidence through the 'SAFA Bhubaneswar' app, both in the morning and evening, Kulange said.

The Commissioner has urged that no bushes or waste should be left underneath the trees or poles within the city.

The BMC has also launched a toll-free helpline and app for safe septic tank cleaning services.

## IT Expo-2023 from October 5

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 23:** Information Technology Association of Odisha (ITAO) is all set to organise the four-day IT Expo-2023 at Janata Maidan in City from October 5 to October 8 to bring together stakeholders in the industry and give them a platform to exchange insights on recent market trends, products and services.

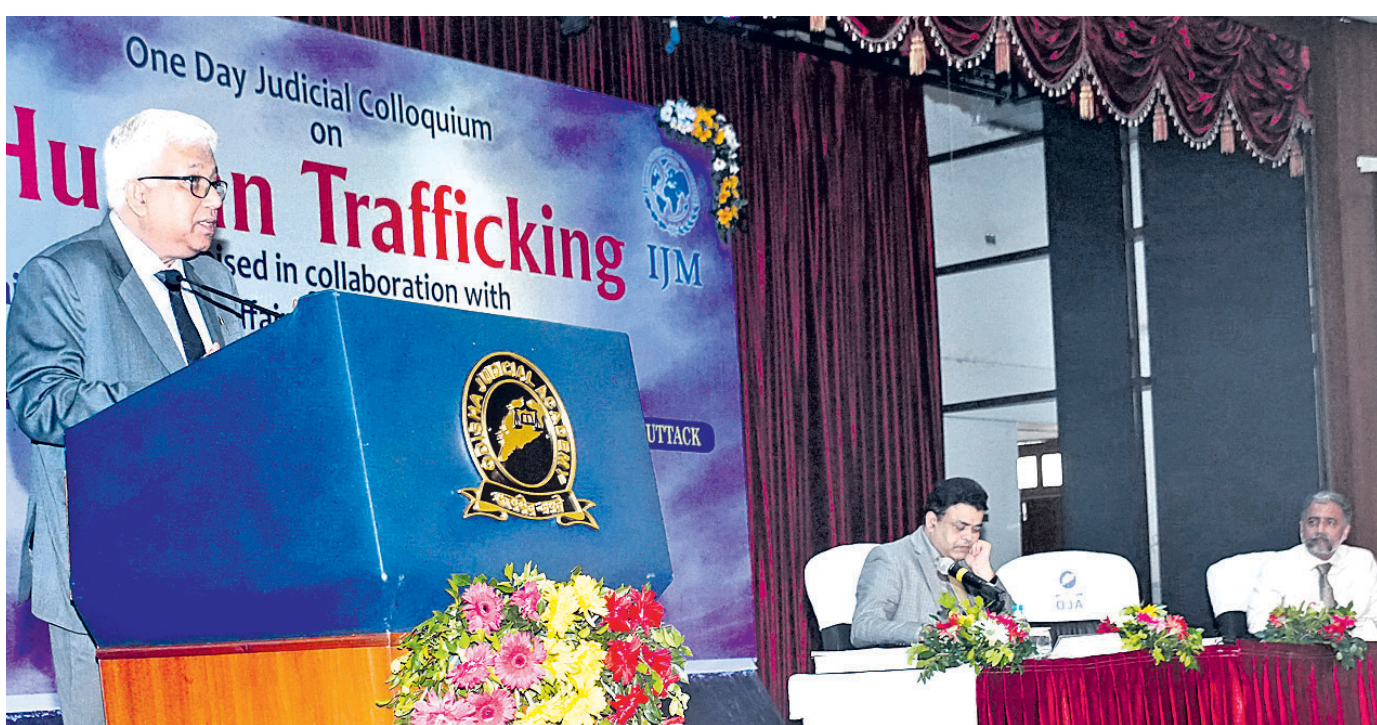
More than 50 information technology companies are going to participate in this four-day event along with more than 60 brands that will showcase their products and services.

"Theme of this year expo is 'Discover Online, Experience Offline'. Hosts of programmes have been planned to enhance and strengthen the IT ecosystem of the state. The Expo will house exhibition space, stall space, experience zone, food zone and many more," informed a member of the association.

Speaking on the occasion, Abinash Patnaik, president of ITAO said, "IT-Expo 2023 will offer industry participants to network, form partnership, exchange knowledge and learn. They can generate leads and uplift their sales. Market research and insights, product launches and demonstration, brand exposures and visibilities are other areas of attraction."

"More than 50,000 visitors are expected to visit the expo, which already has the enthusiastic participation from business owners, MSMEs, startups, entrepreneurs, government departments, PSUs and corporation bodies, colleges and school students and general public," added Patnaik.

Debashis Thirpathy, secretary of ITAO said, "Information Technology space is experiencing rapid transformation with emergence of technology like artificial intelligence, machine learning and big data. Through this expo we aim to inform general public and stakeholders about latest technology and products which will enable them to adopt for these techs to make their life and business sustainable."



**GREATER CAUSE:** Orissa High Court Chief Justice Subhasis Talapatra speaks during a one-day judicial colloquium on human trafficking organised at Odisha Judicial Academy in Cuttack, Saturday

## Startup Yatra, Xpress generate 860 ideas

*To empower more students with entrepreneurial knowledge, Startup Yatra and Xpress will expand their coverage in Balasore and Gajapati by visiting few more colleges September 25*

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 23:** Odisha Startup Yatra and Starup Xpress, two initiatives of the state government launched to nurture entrepreneurial mindset at grassroots level, have received more than 860 startup ideas from 76 colleges and 16 schools with participation from some 9,497 students, informed an official here Saturday.

Friday the vans visited one school and 10 colleges, receiving 74 ideas from 1,123 students.

In Bhadrak, the Yatra covered two colleges and one school namely the Bhadrak Engineering



School and Technology, Bhadrak Autonomous college and the Government UG High School. Similarly, in Boudh, the vans visited Model Degree College, Government ITI and Bhairabi Degree College.

Elsewhere in Gajapati, the Yatra visited three colleges: Hill top Degree College, Indira Memorial Degree College & BR Ambedkar National Degree col-

lege, whereas in Balasore, it visited SSVM Balasore and BIT Polytechnic.

"To further extend the reach and empower more students with entrepreneurial knowledge, Startup Yatra and Xpress will expand their coverage in Balasore and Gajapati by visiting few more colleges September 25, Monday. Yatra will also visit 3 colleges and one school of

Subarnapur the same day," informed the official.

During this tour, Odisha Startup Yatra and Xpress will cover six colleges of Balasore: RJ School Of Management Studies, Sagar College of Science, Fakir Mohan University, Remuna Degree College, Balasore Law College and Government ITI. In Subarnapur, the vans will visit Kendriya Vidyalaya, Model Degree College, Sonepur College and Bishwaprava College. In Gajapati district it will visit four colleges, Parsuram Gurukul Degree College, Centurion University of Technology and Management, SKGC Autonomous College and Gumma ITI.

"This year Startup Yatra aims to visit more than 200 colleges and more than 60 schools, impacting more than 25,000 students. With a core focus on guiding and empowering young minds, the initiatives seek to equip them for harnessing the ample opportunities within the startup ecosystem," said the official.

## 24 WSC students get placement in Tata Steel

**Bhubaneswar:** 24 students of the World Skill Centre here have been selected by Tata Steel in the second campus recruitment drive after completion of their advanced training courses. Alka Misra, chairperson of Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA) AND CEO of World Skill Center congratulated the students on their success. "With this placement drive, Tata Steel has hired a total of 69 WSC candidates so far in two phases. Hence, I thank the leading corporate house for showing confidence in youths Skilled-In-Odisha," she said. The selected students from School of Engineering batch 2021-22, will work at various Tata Steel locations across Odisha. "Efforts are on way at WSC with various corporates being invited for campus recruitment across 'School of Engineering' and 'School of Services' to provide best employment opportunities to the students.

## OMM looking for ties with restaurants: Secy

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 23:** Odisha Millets Mission, in collaboration with Restaurants Association of Odisha (RAO), is organising a Millet Food Festival at Kalabhoomi here today for City folks to experience chefs from premium restaurants prepare gourmet food using a variety of millets.

Agriculture principal secretary Arabinda Padhee informed the media that OMM is looking for active collaboration with restaurant associations to create new millet dishes for the younger generation.

With a farm-to-fork approach, Odisha Millets Mission (OMM) has been proactively promoting millets in various parts of the state. It has been organising training programs for chefs of different hotels and restaurants on millet dishes. Two rounds of training have been conducted at IHM with 22 hotels and restaurants.

"The Millet Food Festival is a one-day, open-for-all event that anyone can attend to experience several millet-based cuisines. Renowned restaurants from all over the state will showcase their unique, scrumptious recipes to visitors," informed an official. Michael's Kitchen, Oberai's



Café, Green Chiliyz, and Odisha Hotel are some of the restaurants taking part in the festival. Visitors can also get other millet-based items from Millet Shakti stalls by Mission Shakti WSHGs.

"Millets are a future food and are hope for many lifestyle diseases. Market for millets is growing day by day. Promotion by hotels will take these healthier options to youth," said Agriculture director Prem Chaudhury.

The festival will be attended by actors Shivani Sangita, Bhoomika Dash, Divyadisha Mohanty, and other influencers and media personalities.

## SUM HOSPITAL FIRST TO HAVE AUTOMATED KNEE SURGERY

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 23:** Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS) and SUM Hospital, faculty of medicine of Siksha Anusandhan (SOA) here, has started conducting total knee replacement (TKR) surgery employing a fully automated robot.

IMS and SUM Hospital is the first medical college in the country to adopt fully automated robotic surgery for total knee replacement.

"The aim is to develop the hospital as a Centre of Excellence (CoE) where

Orthopaedic surgeons from other hospitals could be trained. The robot has been working meticulously without any error and we have already conducted more than 40 such surgeries within the last six weeks," said Aniruddh Dash, head of Orthopaedics at the hospital.

Speaking at a programme marking the formal launch of the apparatus, said to be the world's first fully automatic Active CUVIS Robotic System, Dash said the new device was ensuring better precision and accuracy in surgery with several other advantages.

## JELLYFISH SEEN TO LEARN FROM PAST EXPERIENCES

*The finding challenges previous notions that advanced learning, including learning from prior experiences, requires a centralised brain*

The ability to learn from past experiences could be independent of possessing a "central brain" like the one that humans, mice and flies possess, according to latest findings of a study in jellyfish.

Instead, the jellies saw obstacles and employed associated learning that involves making mental connections between sensory stimulations and behaviours, to guide themselves through murky waters and around underwater tree roots to snare prey, the scientists from

Germany and Denmark demonstrated in Caribbean box jellyfish (Tripedalia cystophora).

These "seemingly simple" jellies, no bigger than a fingernail and living in mangrove swamps, have a complex visual system with 24 eyes embedded in their bell-like body, they said.

Shedding light on the evolutionary roots of learning and memory, the study findings challenge previous notions that advanced learning, including learning from prior experiences, requires a centralised brain, they said in their study published in the journal Current Biology.

"Learning is the pinnacle performance for nervous systems," said first author Jan Bielecki of Kiel University, Germany.

"Looking at these relatively simple nervous systems in jellyfish, we have a much higher



chance of understanding all the details and how it comes together to perform behaviours," said senior author Anders Garm of the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

The researchers observed the jellyfish for 7.5 minutes in a tank dressed with gray and white stripes to mimic a mangrove environment.

They saw that while initially the jelly bumped into these seemingly far stripes frequently, by the end of the experiment, it had on average distanced itself from the wall more by about a half and quadrupled the number of successful pivots to avoid collision. The findings suggest that jellyfish can learn from experiential through visual and mechanical stimuli, the researchers said.

JELLIES SAW OBSTACLES AND EMPLOYED ASSOCIATED LEARNING THAT INVOLVES MAKING MENTAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SENSORY STIMULATIONS AND BEHAVIOURS

THESE 'SEEMINGLY SIMPLE' JELLIES, NO BIGGER THAN A FINGERNAIL, LIVING IN MANGROVE SWAMPS, HAVE A COMPLEX VISUAL SYSTEM WITH 24 EYES

THE FINDINGS SUGGEST THAT JELLYFISH CAN LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE THROUGH VISUAL AND MECHANICAL STIMULI

centre. Using weak electric stimulations that mimicked the mechanical stimuli of a collision, the researchers trained the rhopalia to "recognise" the tank's light gray bars as mangrove roots and found that the learning structure generated obstacle-dodging signals in response to the light gray bars.

Each rhopalium houses six eyes and generates pacemaker signals that govern the jellyfish's pulsing motion, which spikes in frequency when the animal swerves from obstacles, the researchers said.

"Even the simplest nervous system seems to be able to do advanced learning, and this might turn out to be an extremely fundamental cellular mechanism invented at the dawn of the evolution nervous system," said Garm.

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# School peon rapes minor, locals torch police vehicle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Rayagada, Sept 23:** A Class III student of Rayagada district was allegedly raped by a peon of the school where she studies leading to angry locals setting on fire a police vehicle, police said Saturday.

The alleged rape of the eight-year-old Dalit girl took place at an ashram school at Dangasil village under Kashipur block of Rayagada district Friday, a senior police official said.

The locals were angry with the police for taking away the peon from them and set the vehicle on fire. They also vandalised a police jeep.

It prompted the police to wield their batons to disperse the mob and detain some persons for their alleged involvement in the violence, the police official said.

"Soon after the incident we arrested the accused and launched an investigation. Strong action will be taken against the people who vandalised the police vehicles," Rayagada Superintendent of Police Vivekanand Sharma said.

The victim is a day scholar in the school run by ST, SC Development department of the Odisha government.

The police official, when asked,



said the condition of the victim, who was admitted to the hospital, is stable.

He said the accused allegedly lured the girl to an empty room of the school when she was on her way to the school after lunch at her home Friday and raped her. The girl's friends informed the school headmaster and her mother after they spotted her bleeding profusely and crying in pain.

As the news of the incident spread the locals assembled in front of the police outpost at Dongasil and demanded that the school authority handover the accused to them. As the police did not comply to their repeated demand, the angry mob torched the police van and vandalised a jeep.

The official said, five police platoons (one platoon comprises 30 personnel) under the leadership of the additional superintendent of police of Rayagada are camping near the school as the situation is still tense.

Fearing arrests almost all male residents have fled from the village. The accused peon has been suspended and the school headmaster has been issued a show cause, an official said.

Chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) of Rayagada, Bidulata Huika has expressed serious concern over the incident.

She along with a team of CWC members met the victim and her mother at the Rayagada government hospital. The team assured them of justice.



**GEARING UP:** Sacred soil being brought on a decorated bullock cart after performing rituals on Brahmani river bank on the occasion of Radhastami for making of idol ahead of the famous Laxmi Puja by Ganesh Bazar Puja Committee in Dhenkanal, Saturday

# Joda flyover may miss deadline

THE FLYOVER BRIDGE HAS BEEN TARGETED FOR COMPLETION BY DECEMBER, 2023



THE CONSULTANCY AGENCY HAS CLARIFIED THAT THE DELAY WAS DUE TO MOVEMENT OF VEHICLES PLYING OF HEAVY VEHICLES HAS BEEN BANNED, STILL THE PROJECT WORKS ARE MOVING AT A SNAIL'S PACE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Joda, Sept 23:** Construction of the flyover bridge and its service road at Joda town in Keonjhar district is moving at a snail's pace with no promptitude being shown to complete the works at an early date and throw the bridge open for public use.

Doubts are being raised whether works on the project will be completed within the targeted period. On the other hand, people in Joda town having a population of 55,000 and its periphery areas are having a harrowing time as the service road and drains are yet to be completed. During rain, the service road gets filled with muck and slush making it difficult for people and vehicles to negotiate on the route.

Sources said that the state-owned Odisha Bridge and Construction Corporation Ltd (OBCC) has issued the work order for construction of the three-km long four-lane flyover bridge to a private consultancy agency Chevrox.

Construction of the flyover bridge has started from 2020 but

the service road and drains on both sides are yet to be completed as mining and industrial firms have dug up slurry pipelines affecting the construction works. Moreover, construction of five concrete columns of the flyover bridge has been delayed. Incomplete works of Suna river bridge have also delayed the completion of the flyover.

The flyover has been targeted for completion by December, 2023. However, with its works moving at a snail's pace the construction of the service road passing through this town has remained incomplete.

The consultancy agency clarified that the delay was due to movement of vehicles. Taking cognizance of the matter, the district administration has

banned the plying of heavy vehicles. However, the consultancy agency is yet to expedite the project works.

OBCC junior engineer Dhaneswar Majhi said that works on the flyover bridge has been delayed due to delays in drain construction and Suna river bridge. The project may miss the set deadline which is likely to extend by another three months. Sources said any extension in the deadline will lead to a corresponding increase in the plan outlay and estimates for the flyover.

HR official Bhagirathi Panda of the consultancy agency said works on the flyover bridge is being carried out in three shifts and every effort is being made to finish the project within the deadline.

# Young medic found hanging in his room

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar/Rourkela, Sept 23:** A young doctor was found hanging in his hostel room at Pandit Raghunath Murmu Medical College and Hospital at Baripada, police said.

Sachin Sahu, who was serving as a house surgeon in the hospital after completing MBBS, had returned to his hostel room Friday afternoon after finishing his duty and shut himself in. When he did not open the door for a long time, his friends knocked on it many times but did not get any response.



They broke open the door and found him hanging inside the room, the police said. Sachin was a native of Keonjhar district and was staying in the hostel, the police said. He was rushed to the hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead.

"A case of unnatural death case has been registered and investigation is on," said Madhumita Mohanty, Baripada Sadar IIC.

# Asst collector Minz died from drowning

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, Sept 23:** The post-mortem report of assistant collector Susmita Minz has put aside all speculations and allegations of foul play in her death as it has ruled out any murder angle and cited this as a case of drowning.

Plant Site PS IIC Jyoti Ranjan Pati informed that the post-mortem report negated all such speculations. "This is a case of simple drowning. There were no signs of physical or sexual assault," said the police official.

Susmita, an ORS officer, was working as an assistant collector here and was posted to the local ADM's office. She was a competent officer, and report-

edly had a disturbed family life. She had her divorce hearing September 16. She remained a little disturbed and was under immense work pressure, as her family members complained.

Every day she was travelling to Rourkela from Ramabahal in Rajgangpur, her ancestral home.

Minz went missing from September 16. Her family members lodged a missing complaint at the Uditnagar PS. Later she was traced to Hotel Radhika Regency, where she was staying. Despite her family calling her back home she stayed in the hotel and attended her office.

On September 19, her body was found floating in the small pond of Sensory Park.



# Poet Bhabani Shankar Nial meets Prez Murmu

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, Sept 23:** Internationally acclaimed poet Bhawani Shankar Nial met President Droupadi Murmu in Delhi, Monday. On this occasion, he presented 'Mahuri' magazine edited by him to the President. He also presented to her 'A tapestry of words', an international review of 'Lockdown', one of his English poem anthologies.

Notably, 'Mahuri' magazine had earlier carried a cover story on President Murmu. During his meeting he conveyed various important topics related to Kalahandi district to the President. Murmu congratulated Nial for his literary works and admired him. During Covid-19 outbreak, Nial grabbed attention in world literature through his literary work 'Lockdown'. His poems have been translated in more than 20 different languages all over the world.

# 163 families celebrate 'Collective Nuakhai'

FOR PAST 11 YEARS, THE RESIDENTS OF JHURIMAL HAVE BEEN CELEBRATING NUAKHAI TOGETHER



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sundargarh, Sept 23:** Nuakhai is the most important festival celebrated in every household of western Odisha. On this day, new paddy is eaten for the first time at home and this occasion is celebrated in joy of its good harvest. In today's society where conflict, resentment, jealousy and ego are increasing between families in every village, Jhurimal village of Lephripara block of Sundargarh district is a rare example of unity, partnership and brotherhood. For 11 years, the residents of Jhurimal have been celebrating 'Collective Nuakhai' together at one place, which is an innovative initiative in the entire state.

Two weeks ago, the entire village had started preparations to celebrate Nuakhai in a unique way. This morning, after first worshipping the village deity

Along with 163 families of the village, hundreds of people from neighboring villages also participated

Many well-wishers from India and abroad have congratulated Jhurimal villagers on celebration of 'Collective Nuakhai'

'Sankatmochan Bajrangbali' and offering rice prasada, every family of the village dedicated new rice to their respective deities and ancestors. After this, every member of 163 families of the village gathered in front of the Sankatmochan Bajrangbali temple located in the middle of the village. Then the 'Collective Nuakhai' festival was started with different colourful traditional cultural programmes like Sankirtanya, Samprada and Dulhuli etc.

On the auspicious occasion, Sundargarh ZP President Kunti Pradhan and Sundargarh DFO Pradeep Mirase (IFoS) partici-

pated as honoured guest. After singing a beautiful Jagannath bhajan, DFO Pradeep Mirase said, "I also consider myself a member of Jhurimal village and will cherish this relationship throughout my life. On this occasion, the Nuakhai song by rising singing star Madhusmita Naik, the film dialogues of Oriya film star Shubham Naik and the comedy show performance of famous comedians Kedarnath Patel and Manoranjan Patel, who joined as special guests on this occasion, were very captivating.

Then the innovative tradition of 'Collective Nuakhai' started. All the residents, irrespective of caste, religion, colour, sat in a row and were distributed new rice and various food items. There was no judgement of caste and religion and there was no discrimination between big and small. A total of 163 families of the village as well as

hundreds of people from neighbouring villages joined in to celebrate the 'Collective Nuakhai' of Jhurimal. In this festival of brotherhood and unity, the invited guests danced shoulder to shoulder with the villagers. After that, villagers engaged in various extinct games such as Puchi Khel, Shankh Phuka, Hulhuli, Spoon Race, Rangoli, Bottle Flip etc.

Many well-wishers from different parts of the country and abroad congratulated Jhurimal village over the 'Collective Nuakhai' celebration and urged the villagers to continue the tradition.

"Collective celebration in Jhurimal will be a guide towards creating mutual brotherhood and building a good society without discrimination. May everyone follow this tradition in the days to come, we Immigrant Indians are proud of Jhurimal village and will meet him again during 'Nuakhai Bhetghat' through video conference in the near future which will be organised by NRIs," Pradeep Patel from the USA said through video message.

In her video message, Deepti Patel from San Francisco, California said, "In today's society, when there are rifts in the relationship between brothers, father and son, Jhurimal village's Collective Nuakhai is a rare example of unity and brotherhood. This initiative will be unique for future generations.

This beautiful Nuakhai festival ends with Juhar-Bhet. All the villagers, forgetting all their fights, touched the feet of every elder person, took blessings and promised to live together throughout their life. In fact, continuation of such a tradition for 11 years is a rare example in today's society. The entire program was conducted by the staffs of Jhurimal VSS, Jai Bajrang Club and voluntary organisation 'SEWAK'.

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# POLITICS OF RESERVATION



The Women's Reservation Bill aspires to embolden women to play a more pivotal role in shaping policy while addressing the critical issue of women's underrepresentation in the realm of Indian politics

guing that the reservation will start after a delimitation exercise based on the first census done after 2026, it says that the census and delimitation processes are necessary to ensure fair and equal representation for all regions and communities in Parliament and state assemblies. The government argues that the Bill's aim is not to harm or weaken any political entity but to strengthen democracy and empower women, and they stress that the reservation system will work on a rotational basis, making sure that each constituency is reserved once every three general elections.

While asserting that reservation is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, the government has hailed the Bill as a historic step towards ensuring gender justice and equality and a means of empowering women, and that it will complement other measures such as education, skill development, social security, and legal reforms for improving the status of women.

India's adoption of the Bill has garnered recognition from the United Nations as a watershed moment in advancing gender equality and promoting women's leadership in the country. Notably, India's current standing in the Global Gender Gap Report 2022 places it at 48th out of 146 nations concerning political empowerment. The introduction of this Bill is expected to have a positive impact on India's global ranking.

While the Bill signifies a commendable stride toward gender equality, it also underscores existing challenges. It primarily focuses on reserving seats for women in legislative bodies, leaving a broader need for representation in other decision-making bodies, including government and private sectors unaddressed. Furthermore, the successful implementation of the Bill and the active participation of women in politics are pivotal factors for its effectiveness.

The writer is political strategist based in New Delhi. Views are personal

The Modi administration has built a reputation for launching unexpected initiatives, from demonetization and the implementation of GST to imposing lockdowns during the pandemic. The recent surprise move was the announcement of a special parliamentary session; however, the agenda was revealed on the opening day of the session when the government introduced the Women's Reservation Bill of 2023 in Lok Sabha on September 20. The Bill, also referred to as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, is a proposed constitutional amendment aiming to reserve one-third of seats in Lok Sabha and state assemblies for women, and on September 21, this Bill garnered overwhelming support in both Houses. For the bill to become law, it must still receive ratification from at least half of the state legislatures.



Anil Singh

INDIA'S CURRENT STANDING IN THE GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT 2022 PLACES IT AT 48TH OUT OF 146 NATIONS CONCERNING POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

The Bill aspires to embolden women to play a more pivotal role in shaping policy while addressing the critical issue of women's underrepresentation in the realm of Indian politics, and this endeavour not only carries the potential to elevate India's standing in the global arena but is also driven by the sobering statistics presented in a March 2023 report from the Inter-Parliamentary Union. As per the report, India languishes at the 148th position out of 193 nations when it comes to female representation in the Lower House of Parliament, with a mere 14.4% of seats occupied by women and this predicament assumes an even graver dimension within state assemblies, where the presence of women MLAs varies significantly, ranging from a stark absence to a maximum of 15% across distinct states.

The Bill also introduced a rotational system that would change the reserved seats after every election, ensuring a varied representation of women from different constituencies. Crucially, the Bill doesn't merely stop at seat allocation; it delves into the very framework of constituency demarcation by pro-

posing that delimitation of constituencies should be thoughtfully crafted to ensure equitable representation of women in reserved seats. These intricate provisions, woven into the fabric of the Bill, reflect a resolute commitment to fostering a political landscape where women's voices are not just heard but also elevated to positions of influence.

The Bill has a long and turbulent history of being proposed and opposed by various governments and parties since 1996. It was passed by Rajya Sabha in 2010 but failed to clear the Lok Sabha due to strong protests. The Bill remained dormant until the Modi government revived it as part of their women's empowerment agenda in 2023. The majority of political parties have thrown their weight behind the Bill; however, a few parties have voiced concerns or requested adjustments to the proposed legislation.

Most Opposition parties back the Bill for 33% women's reservation in both Houses of Parliament, but they also want OBC and Muslim women to get a share of this quota by arguing that these women are more disadvantaged and underrepresented. This view is shared by parties like Congress, RJD, JD(U), AIUDF, and AIMIM.

Additionally, certain parties contend that postponing the im-

plementation of the quota until after the census and delimitation processes, which may span several years, could unjustly deny the current generation of women their rightful representation, and they also argue that such a delay contradicts the fundamental intent of the Bill. Parties like BJD, TMC and AAP have voiced this concern and proposed that the quota should be promptly enacted using the existing electoral rolls and constituencies, with adjustments made subsequently once the census and delimitation procedures are finalised.

Some parties fear that women's reservations could harm regional and smaller parties apprehending that the rotation of constituencies could make them lose seats and influence. Parties like TRS, YSRCP, and LJP have these doubts.

The Modi government has defended the bill as a historic step towards ensuring gender justice and equality in Indian democracy. The proponents while hailing it as a necessary step towards achieving gender equality and empowering women in the political sphere, also believe that increased women's representation will address issues that are of particular concern to women.

The government argues that the Bill is in line with constitutional provisions, and while ar-

What you are not able to do today, you will achieve tomorrow. Persevere and you shall conquer.



THE MOTHER

## Normalised Killings

Extrajudicial killings are normal in India and are called encounters. They refer to the State's murder of an accused who is often, though not always, in custody. And this killing happens even if the accused has moved the Supreme Court for protection with the specific plea that they are in danger. The killings happen even if the accused is being filmed while being transported from one location to another and filmed because it is thought that they might be killed. The theory applied is that the justice system is broken and punishment cannot wait. That the world has good people and bad people and the latter do not require to be convicted before being punished and this punishment can come from outside the legal system through shooting them.

On 27 August 2013, Lok Sabha Member of Parliament Gurudas Dasgupta asked the Home Ministry some questions. They included whether the government of India was aware of the findings of the Commission headed by Justice N Santosh Hegde appointed by the Supreme Court that seven killings in six separate instances in Manipur were the consequences of fake encounters. And whether the National Human Rights Commission has demanded investigation of all encounters in Manipur.

The government replied that it was aware of the findings of the Hegde commission, but that the NHRC has "not demanded any investigation" into the findings and therefore the government had done nothing about it.

It is instructive to go into what this commission is and what it did. On 24 November 2012, the Supreme Court set up a commission of three people, including former justice Hegde, former chief election commissioner JM Lyngdoh and former DGP of Karnataka Ajay Kumar Singh. Their task was to take up the murders of 1528 people between 1979 and 2012 in Manipur through encounters. The murders were committed by Manipur police and the security forces. The matter came up after the Extra Judicial Execution Victim Families Association (EEVFFAM) filed a petition.

The commission took up the first six of the 1528 murders and by 2013 found that all of the encounters were fake. The murders were facilitated by the fact that the killers were protected by AFSPA, the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. However, the northeast and Kashmir are not the only places where encounters happen of course, and AFSPA is not necessary for the state to conduct 'encounters'. Manipur is again in the news globally but for other reasons. Here also, like with extrajudicial killings, as a people we have looked away from what has happened and even the Prime Minister was forced to speak only after an especially horrible incident came out.

So what has happened to the functioning of the state in India after the government has accepted in the Lok Sabha that this sort of murder is a reality? Not much, unfortunately, and encounters continue. The examples cited above of someone being killed in custody even after they went to the Supreme Court, and someone being killed while being transported and being covered live on TV are recent.

It appears that there is a set of circumstances that makes this possible. At the level of society, there is not much pushback against such murders. This is speculation and anecdotal, but it appears to be the case that there is approval of the use of such methods, because of the idea of "good" and "bad" people. This is reflected in the media coverage of such incidents, where holding the state to account for extrajudicial murder is not the primary concern or point raised. Because of this societal approval, or at least because of an absence of meaningful pushback except from what is called civil society, the government can continue doing what it does.

Though it has taken some interest in the matter, the judiciary also has not held the state to account for what is done in the past and what it continues to do. All of this has meant that extrajudicial killings in India remain normal. So long as this does not concern others, it has not been a problem. However this month, the issue has become international. The Indian state is accused of an extrajudicial killing on someone else's territory. No evidence of this has been put out so far, and we must as always take the position of presumed innocence. And we must hope that the allegations are untrue.

But we must also consider what the status is inside our home. The problem is amplified and endemic inside our country. An unofficial and brutal justice system exists parallel to the official one, and it executes many times more of the accused than the official one executes convicts. A report in The Hindu's Frontline magazine last year said that between 2016 and 2022, more than 800 encounter killings had been recorded. In the same period the number of people hanged after conviction was five.

It should not take external pressure for us to look at ourselves but that seems to be how things often move in India. The list of those executed in Manipur had been prepared and submitted to Christof Heyns, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, who came on a mission to India in March, 2012. Should it have needed this before we acted?



Aakar Patel

Because of societal approval, or at least because of an absence of meaningful pushback except from what is called civil society, the government can continue doing what it does

SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS

## The new world disorder

There is an old Soviet joke in which a journalist asks the General Secretary of the Communist Party to assess the country's economy. "Good" is the short answer. The journalist implores the leader to elaborate so he can complete his story. "In that case," the General Secretary responds, "not good."

Much the same could be said of the state of the world today. As many global leaders gather in New York for the 78th annual session of UN General Assembly, with notable exceptions of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and French President Emmanuel Macron, there are reasons to be concerned.

The US-China relationship, arguably the most important of this era, is in poor shape despite a recent increase in the pace of diplomatic exchanges. The US goal is for the two major powers to establish a floor for bilateral ties. At best, however, the two governments will be able to avoid a crisis. But that is made more difficult by China's refusal to

resume military-to-military communications and establish a crisis communication channel. Even optimists do not foresee a path for the two to cooperate meaningfully on pressing regional or global challenges.

Meanwhile, China faces significant economic challenges, largely due to its own policy shortcomings. But even if the problems are homegrown, it does not mean the consequences will remain confined to China. At a minimum, what happens there will impede global economic growth. At worst, there is the possibility that China's leadership will be tempted to act more aggressively abroad to distract from its domestic economic woes.

Elsewhere in the Indo-Pacific, North Korea continues to expand both the size and quality of its nuclear arsenal. The Pyongyang regime continues to test increasingly advanced ballistic missiles and has unveiled a nuclear-armed submarine, which would increase the survivability of its nuclear capabilities. There are no indications that North Korea is prepared to discuss, much less compromise on, its nuclear or

missile programmes.

In Afghanistan, it is increasingly clear that the new Taliban resembles nothing so much as the old Taliban. The real question is to what degree they will again allow their country to become a launchpad for terrorism. Then there is the question of how much the Taliban will contribute to the instability that has exacerbated Pakistan's vulnerabilities. Speaking of weak states suffering from poor governance, weak institutions, and limited capacity, their number is growing in Africa and Latin America.

From a global perspective, the world is not doing much better. Following a worldwide pandemic that claimed roughly 15 million lives, the past summer was the hottest on record. With just over two months remaining until officials from across the world convene for the COP28 in the UAE, there is little reason to believe that governments are prepared to prioritise climate concerns over near-term economic priorities.

Finally, as artificial- and augmented-intelligence technologies rapidly evolve, there are no signs of an emerging interna-

tional consensus on how to take advantage of their constructive dimensions and rein in their potentially destructive applications.

There is some good news. The strong Western response to Russian aggression and, more broadly, the renewed vitality of American-led partnerships and alliances in the Indo-Pacific aimed at deterring Chinese adventurism are prime examples.

There is no getting around the reality that the bad news outweighs the good. The G20 summit accomplished little, and UNGA meeting appears to be following in its footsteps. UN's most important component, the Security Council, is sidelined and will remain so, given that one of its veto-holding members is waging a war that violates UN Charter's most fundamental principle. At a time when the demand is high for effective international cooperation, it seems to be in woefully short supply.

The writer is President Emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations.

PROJECT SYNDICATE



Richard Haas

AT A TIME WHEN THE DEMAND IS HIGH FOR EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, IT SEEMS TO BE IN WOEFULLY SHORT SUPPLY

WISDOM CORNER

- In a conflict between the heart and the brain, follow your heart. SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
- Do not let the behaviour of others destroy your inner peace. DALAI LAMA XIV
- Motivation gets you going and habit gets you there. ZIG ZIGLAR

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1493:** Christopher Columbus embarks on his second expedition to the New World, setting sail with a fleet of 17 ships.
- 1789:** US Congress adopts the Judiciary Act of 1789. The act was passed by the first Congress of the United States. It created the US federal judiciary including the Supreme Court.
- 1869:** A group of speculators headed by James Fisk and Jay Gould started hoarding gold, which led to high gold prices. The US Treasury under the orders of President Ulysses S. Grant sold a large amount of gold leading to a plummet in gold prices within the span of minutes.
- 1950:** Operation Magic Carpet concludes after having transported 45,000 Yemenite Jews to Israel.
- 1994:** National League for Democracy is formed by Aung San Suu Kyi and various others to help fight against dictatorship in Myanmar.

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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Naidu in soup

Sir, This refers to "AP CID to interrogate Chandrababu Naidu," OrissaPOST, September 23. While the ACB court in Andhra Pradesh has granted the state CID to interrogate the former CM Chandrababu Naidu in the skill development corruption case which has named him as the primary accused, the AP High Court has also dismissed his petition seeking to quash the FIR against him. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has presented what appears to be an airtight case, revealing a staggering loss of over Rs 370 crore to the state exchequer in the multi-crore scam. The former CM's arrest could not have come at a more inconvenient time for the Telugu Desham Party, as it had been preparing for the upcoming Assembly polls, just a few months away. Nonetheless, the party also nurses a hope that Naidu's arrest may garner sympathy from voters. But, being in jail in a serious corruption case is hardly an accolade for a politician. It is unlikely that voters would be enthusiastic about supporting a person accused of misappropriating public funds meant to improve the employment prospects of the youth. However, for the septuagenarian leader, proving that the corruption case is politically motivated and asserting his innocence is an arduous task. Time may also not be on his side, especially considering that his son is also likely to be implicated as a co-accused.

N Sathasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Cauvery conundrum

Sir, As the Cauvery water issue continues to haunt Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the Supreme Court declined to entertain an application by the Tamil Nadu government to increase its current share of Cauvery water issue and it has put the relationship in a fix. Even though the INDIA coalition partners are involved in the sensitive issue there is no amicable solution. The blame game has already started and friction prevails in border areas while the farmers were left in the lurch. There was remote chance of settling the issue without legal implications, but water scarcity in Karnataka due to lack of seasonal rains has put the issue beyond the reach of the state. The tug of war is on.

CK Subramaniam, NAVI MUMBAI

**Lucknow: 4 heritage sites to develop as tourist destinations**



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, Sept 23:** The Uttar Pradesh government plans to develop at least four heritage sites of Lucknow into destination tourism hotspot as part of 'tourism renaissance plan' of state government.

For this, the state tourism department has invited bidders for its Heritage Property Restoration Initiative October 4.

In August this year, the department had unveiled the initiative under which heritage sites would be converted into five-star hotels.

In line with that, the department announced to hold a pre-bid event October 4.

The state tourism minister Jaiveer Singh said: "Our aim is to breathe new life into these historic properties and showcase the cultural heritage of UP to the world. By welcoming private partners, we hope to create a win-win situation, where these heritage sites are restored to their former glory and tourism flourishes."

The initiative will invite proposals for reuse of nine heritage properties on PPP basis.

Of these nine sites, at least four are in Lucknow. These include Chhatar Manzil, Kothi Gulistan-Eram, Kothi Darshan Vilas and Kothi Roshan-Ud-Daula.

Besides, Shukla Talab and Tikait Rai Baradari in Kanpur, Barua Sagar Fort in Jhansi, Chunar Fort in Mirzapur and Barsana Jal Mahal in Mathura are also on the list.

According to the department, the plan includes creation of hotels and resorts, museums, shilpgram, exhibition centres, restaurants and banquets, cultural centres, wedding destinations and more.

**STUBBLE BURNING DROPPED BY 65% IN UP**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, Sept 23:** Incidents of stubble burning in Uttar Pradesh have come down by almost 65 per cent in the past five years.

According to the government spokesman, a presentation made before chief secretary Durga Shankar Mishra highlighted data from the Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for

In-Situ Management of Crop Residue (CRM) scheme for the financial year 2022.

In 2022, a total of 3,017 incidents of crop residue burning were reported, marking a 65 per cent decrease from the 8,784 incidents recorded in 2017, as stated in the report.

In response, the chief secretary issued directives to halt the practice of crop residue burning. The agriculture department has



been tasked with conducting awareness and publicity campaigns through IEC programs.

The directives stressed the importance of using print media for publicity and implementing awareness initiatives at various levels, including district, state, and Nyaya Panchayat levels.

Stubble management awareness programs should also be organised through village-level farmer schools. Additionally, radio jingles, television audio-visual clips, and scrolling messages on TV should be broad-

cast to raise awareness. The directives also called for the dissemination of pamphlets for farmer training programs and the demonstration of agricultural equipment.

Public awareness campaigns should involve the use of vehicles, and farmers should be informed through wall writings and paintings.

Agricultural machinery designed for crop residue man-

agement should be made available through the Single Agricultural Machinery and Farm Machinery Bank.

Furthermore, the directives emphasised the need to establish teams at various levels, including the village, Nyaya Panchayat, development block, tehsil, and district, to work together in raising awareness and engaging the community.

**Legalise controlled cultivation of cannabis in Himachal: Panel**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Shimla, Sept 23:** A committee appointed by the Himachal Pradesh government has recommended regulated cultivation of cannabis for medicinal and industrial purposes.

The panel headed by state Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi has also urged amendments in the rules to allow cannabis cultivation for the plant's fibre and its low-intoxicant seeds.

Cannabis cultivation is currently illegal in Himachal Pradesh, unlike neighbouring Uttarakhand where growing the plant under government regulations is allowed. Regulated cultivation is also done in some districts of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu tabled the report in the state assembly Friday.

The committee was formed in the last budget session in April this year by the state government to examine various aspects of legalising cannabis cultivation in the state.

Giving details of the report, Negi said the geographical conditions and climate of Himachal is congenial for the cultivation of cannabis and is grown in the wild in all districts of the state. It is destroyed by enforcement agencies and this unutilised potential can be harnessed for non-addictive use and benefit the farmers.

The minister said that seeds with tetrahydrocannabinol (THC, an intoxicant) less than 0.3 per cent could be used for cannabis cultivation for industrial use while cannabis cultivation for me-



CANNABIS CULTIVATION IS CURRENTLY ILLEGAL IN HIMACHAL PRADESH, UNLIKE NEIGHBOURING UTTARAKHAND WHERE GROWING THE PLANT UNDER GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS IS ALLOWED

REGULATED CULTIVATION IS ALSO DONE IN SOME DISTRICTS OF GUJARAT, MADHYA PRADESH AND UTTAR PRADESH

dicinal use could be done in a close environment under surveillance.

The members of the committee also held meetings with Panchayati Raj representatives of Chamba, Kangra, Kullu, Mandi, Sirmour and Solan districts to gather public opinion and there was an overwhelming response in favour of allowing cannabis cultivation with appropriate checks and balances, he said.

The study conducted by the committee revealed that cultivation of industrial hemp has a huge capacity for carbon se-

questration (the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide) and its cultivation can be done with the least quantity of fertilisers and chemical insecticides, Negi said.

Cannabis is a diverse plant which can be grown on a large scale and its stem, seeds and leaves can be converted into construction material, cloth, paper, food, furniture, cosmetics, health care and bio-fuel, which would add to the resources of the state.

The committee also visited Madhya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand which are the only states where controlled cultivation of cannabis is legal and sought detailed information from the Centre for Aromatic Plants at Dehradun regarding various technical aspects, state-of-the-art plant nursery and products manufactured from hemp.

The chief minister said the committee would also visit foreign countries where cannabis cultivation is legal to get first-hand information on techniques and other aspects in this regard.

**UP govt scouting for site for new Vidhan Bhawan in Lucknow**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, Sept 23:** The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh is in the process of selecting an appropriate site for the new building of the UP Vidhan Bhawan.

"We are in the process of selecting a site for the new building for the bicameral house. The state government's consultant HCP Design Planning and Management Private Limited, which designed the new Parliament building, will provide options for possible sites for construction of the state legislature's new building and a decision on the issue will be taken once a presentation is made at the top level in the coming weeks," said a government spokesman.

UP Minister for parliamentary affairs Suresh Khanna also said the state government is in the process of selecting a site for the new building though he did not give any timeframe for completing the process.

"We have earmarked a sum of Rs 50 crore for the construction of a new legislature building in the state's budget for 2023-2024. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath wants a new building for the state legislature, and the state government is in the process of selecting a site for the new building," Khanna said.



**70 plastic dumping sites under central campaign**



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 23:** Himachal Pradesh used satellite imagery to identify 70 plastic waste sites under the Centres Swachhata Hi Seva campaign that aims to ensure visual cleanliness and tackle legacy waste, an official has said.

A senior Jal Shakti department official said the Aryabhata Geo-informatics and Space Application Centre (AGISAC) - a branch of the Himachal Pradesh Council for Science, Technology and Environment (HIMCOSTE) - carried out the GIS-based mapping of legacy waste sites through satellite imaging.

"AGISAC identified 70 sites using available satellite imagery on the basis of plastic waste signature and the geographical coordinates. The number of identified sites in the districts include seven in Bilaspur, five in Chamba, nine in Hamirpur, nine in Kangra, four in Kullu, seven in Mandi, 17 in Shimla, three in Sirmour, four in Solan and five in Una," the official said.

Out of these 70 sites, 43 are in rural areas. The list of identified sites has been shared with the deputy commissioners and block development officers con-

cerned. Necessary instructions have been issued to the block development officers to take steps to remove the legacy waste, including plastic, from the identified sites before Swachh Bharat Diwas October 2 by running special drives, the official said.

Legacy waste refers to sewage that was improperly managed or disposed of in the past and continues to pose environmental and health risks in the present.

After eradicating the plastic from these sites, block development officers/gram panchayats have been directed to ensure that no waste is dumped there in the future. The gram panchayats have been directed to impose fines on anyone found dumping waste at the sites.



Tourists participate in a river rafting event in Manali, Kullu, Himachal Pradesh. PTI PHOTO

**Surge in fever cases in Lucknow; dengue, typhoid on the rise**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, Sept 23:** Hot and humid conditions have led to a surge in the number of fever cases in Lucknow.

The outpatient department (OPD) of SPM Civil Hospital, Balrampur Hospital, Lokbandhu Hospital and King George's Medical University used to receive an average of about 150 cases daily before August. However, cases have gradually increased, and in September, the four hospitals together are now receiving 200-210 cases daily. The cases of fever due to dengue were almost negligible

until August 15, but they started rising afterwards, and now 10-15 cases are being reported daily. Similarly, cases of waterborne diseases like typhoid, which used to be around 10-12 daily earlier, have now increased by 10-15 per cent.

For dengue, humid climate creates ideal conditions for the Aedes mosquito, which transmits the virus. Stagnant water and dense population are contributing factors. For typhoid, the key concerns are contaminated food and water sources, often exacerbated by poor sanitation and overcrowding in communities.

**JAL JEEVAN MISSION**

**Women in rural Jhansi get a shot at self-reliance**

Jal Jeevan Mission is a Central scheme which aims to provide each household with potable drinking water, with over 2.5 crore families targeted in Uttar Pradesh

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jhansi (UP), Sept 23:** "Since 2021, I have been working as a water tester and training other women to test drinking water in the Bundelkhand region," says Nitu Singh, a training leader.

"Till now, we have worked with a total of 50 gram panchayats from the region. The women make around Rs 20 per water test. The income generated through this has improved our individual livelihoods," she adds.

Jal Jeevan Mission is a Central scheme which aims to provide each household with potable drinking water, with over 2.5 crore families targeted in Uttar Pradesh.

So far, 4,87,955 rural women have been trained in water test-

ing in the state.

The scheme is proving to be a saviour for the people of Bundelkhand not only in terms of providing clean drinking water, but also introducing employment generating opportunities for rural women towards achieving a self-reliant livelihood.

Contaminated water is a breeding ground for diseases, and a source of suffering for many families in the villages of Bundelkhand.

"Diseases and infections had become a frequent part of our livelihoods. We had to spend a lot of money on getting treated for these diseases which were spreading through impure water," says Rani Chadhar (18) while expressing how families were only a couple medical bills away from going



bankrupt.

However, things have taken a turn for the better, with the likes of Rani and her family benefiting on two fronts - water and income security.

"Once I started earning through the water testing program, I could save that money and hand it over to my mother. The water testing worked successfully and the

spread of diseases stopped. Families had to no longer spend on these kinds of medical expenses," states Rani.

"She gives me the money she earns from water testing assignments and we use it for household expenses for the family, and paying school fees for my children," says Rani's mother who used to travel two km everyday

to provide drinking water for their house.

Walking on foot while carrying heavy vessels filled with water was a tedious task for her and used to take up most of her day.

"Now my mother focuses on the children and the family. I have four sisters and one brother," Rani added.

Speaking about the water testing process, Nitu says these water samples undergo eleven odd tests before determining whether they are safe for consumption or not.

The group travels from one village to another, and collects water samples. The quality of water coming from different sources like taps, pipes, tube wells, and wells are tested thoroughly.

According to her, many of the women are well educated. Some even have a master's degree, yet they are out of jobs. "This program has given us a chance to earn a self-reliant, sustainable livelihood," says Nitu Singh.

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**PRESS NOTE**  
To moderate the market prices of Wheat and Rice, it has been decided by Govt. of India to offload Wheat and Rice in the open market through e-auctions in a phased manner under OMSS (D) through Food Corporation of India. Existing rate is Rs. 2150/- per quintal for wheat (FAQ), Rs. 2125/- per quintal for wheat (URS), Rs. 2900/- per quintal for normal rice and Rs. 2973/- per quintal for fortified rice (Boiled/Raw) with applicable taxes.  
Wheat Processors/Atta Chakki/Flour Millers of Wheat Products can participate through e-auction. The bidder must have valid FSSAI license, GST/Trade Tax Registration, PAN and he must declare his existing stock holding in the WSM Portal of Govt. of India in the case of wheat. An eligible bidder can bid for a minimum quantity of 10MT to max. of 100 MT. However, for bidding of Rice, FSSAI Licence and stock declaration are not required. Traders are also allowed for Rice e-auction up to 1000 MT per bidder. As per recent tender floated by FCI, 7000 MT Wheat and 28655 MT Rice has been offered for e-auction from 20centres of FCI Odisha Region. The sale of Wheat under the scheme will be carried out on FRIDAY every week by FCI. Interested bidders can register themselves at M-Junction (<http://www.valuejunction.in/fci>) for participating in e-auction.  
General Manager (Region)



RPF personnel during the 39th Raising Day celebrations at RPF training centre in Hyderabad



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being presented a jersey of the Indian team by former cricketer Sachin Tendulkar during the foundation stone laying ceremony of International Cricket Stadium in Varanasi



Pope Francis, flanked by French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte, arrives at the final session of the "Rencontres Meditteranneennes" meeting at the Palais du Pharo, in Marseille, France. Francis, during a two-day visit, will join Catholic bishops from the Mediterranean region on discussions that will largely focus on migration



Members of Rajput Sabha dance as they celebrate the birth anniversary of last Dogra monarch Maharaja Hari Singh in Jammu



BJP workers stage a protest against the release of Cauvery river water to Tamil Nadu from dams in Karnataka, in Bangalore



A volunteer carries an idol of Lord Ganesha for immersion in the Arabian Sea during the fifth day of 'Ganesh Chaturthi' in Mumbai



Commuters stand at one side of a road after it was flooded due to heavy rains in Nagpur. Heavy rains over a span of few hours flooded many parts the city, following which more than 400 people were rescued, said Maharashtra Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis



## of the day quote

The BJP government spent Rs 6.93 crore on 'Amrit Mahotsav' programmes but did not invite families of freedom fighters to official functions  
**SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU** | HIMACHAL CM

Only two states, Delhi and Punjab, ruled by the AAP have provided free electricity, whereas in other states people are paying higher bills and yet face hours-long power cut  
**ARVIND KEJRIWAL** | DELHI CM

The BJP government in the state is ignoring the problems of unemployed youth. Such a dispensation must be kicked out of power  
**KAMAL NATH** | MP CONGRESS CHIEF

## SHORT TAKES

### 18 sailors return

**New Delhi:** Eighteen Indian sailors, who were stranded in violence-hit Yemen, have been brought back to India. The regional passport office in Mumbai said on 'X' on Saturday that the seamen landed in the city. "18 distressed Indian sailors stuck in Yemen brought back through relentless efforts of #MEA and Indian Embassies," it said. "The seamen landed in Mumbai. Team MEA on ground to facilitate arrival," it added.

### 2 killed, 4 injured

**Thane:** Two persons were killed and four injured after a tanker exploded on the premises of a Century Rayon factory in Maharashtra's Thane district Saturday morning, police said. Two more persons were missing. The incident took place at the company's manufacturing unit at Shahad. As per the statement issued by the company, a tanker "of a third party, which arrived from outside at the plant site on September 23 at about 11:15 am got ruptured while it was under inspection before filling."

### Teachers beat up student in Delhi

**New Delhi:** A 16-year-old student of a government school was allegedly beaten up by his teachers for peeping outside the window in northeast Delhi's Yamuna Vihar area, police said Saturday. The child's mother, in her complaint, said that on September 15, her son's teacher Shubham Rawat beat him for looking out of the window and he was also thrown out of the class, they said. The child cried and apologised to the teacher but Rawat later came again during a class and took him to a separate room where he along with other teachers again beat him up, they said. All four teachers -- Rawat, Anupam, SS Pandey and Nishant -- threatened the boy with consequences if he complained about them, police said.

### TDP chief Naidu seeks SC relief

**New Delhi:** TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu Saturday moved the Supreme Court challenging the Andhra Pradesh High Court order dismissing his petition for quashing the FIR against him in connection with an alleged scam in the Skill Development Corporation. The high court had rejected his plea Friday. Later on Friday, a court in Vijayawada had granted custody of Naidu to the CID for two days. Naidu was arrested on September 9 for allegedly misappropriating funds from the Skill Development Corporation when he was chief minister in 2015, which resulted in a purported loss of more than Rs 300 crore to the state exchequer.



The BJP government is made of five Cs, which are communalism, corruption, corporate capitalism, cheating and character assassination. Though the BJP has managed to hide it all through propaganda and advertisements, the INDIA coalition's leaders are now unmasking BJP  
**M K STALIN** | TN CM

### HEMANT SOREN MOVES HC

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren Saturday filed a petition in the Jharkhand High Court challenging issuance of summons to him by the Enforcement Directorate in a case of alleged money laundering, his counsel said



# Bidhuri remarks: Oppn steps up pressure

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 23:** Opposition parties Saturday stepped up pressure on Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla for stringent action, including suspension, against BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri over his derogatory remarks against BSP MP Danish Ali in the House.

While the BJP had issued notice to Bidhuri after facing flak over his utterances, the party also hit back at the opposition leaders, alleging they have been making uncouth and objectionable remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his parents.

BJP MP Nishikant urged the Speaker to form an inquiry committee to look into statements made by Ali and members from parties like the TMC and the DMK in Lok Sabha and alleged that the BSP MP made "highly objectionable" remarks against Modi that provoked the ruling party MP.

Former Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb shared a video clip on X of Haryana Congress chief Uday Bhan allegedly making derogatory remarks against Prime Minister Modi and Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar



and asked if any opposition leader had condemned it.

Speaker Birla had Friday warned Bidhuri of "strict action" if such behaviour is repeated and his remarks were expunged from parliamentary records but the INDIA bloc parties had demanded that the matter be referred to the privileges committee of the House.

As Bidhuri's remarks during a discussion on the success of Chandrayaan-3 in the Lok Sabha on Thursday triggered a furore, Ali had said that he could consider quitting the membership of the House if no step is taken. In a letter written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Congress

leader and former Maharashtra minister Naseem Khan demanded that Bidhuri be "permanently suspended".

Bidhuri's "shameful" statement is an insult not only to the MP but also to Parliament, the "sanctum sanctorum of our democracy", he said. "It is very unfortunate and disturbing that language which was earlier confined to street debates related to organisations like RSS and VHP has now entered Parliament through BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri," he alleged.

Speaker Birla should send a strong message by effecting immediate "permanent suspension" of Bidhuri, Khan de-

manded. BRS MLC in Telangana K Kavitha also urged the Lok Sabha Speaker to take stringent action in the matter. Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha MP Priyanka Chaturvedi demanded Bidhuri's suspension.

"Why has action not been taken till now? By just issuing a warning, you are telling the MPs that you can get away with such a conduct..." she said. DMK's Thamizhachi Thangapandian said, "When Ramesh Bidhuri made that statement, our party MP Kanimozhi stood up and registered her protest. A letter was written to the Speaker. Action needs to be taken."

Prominent Muslim organisation Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind said it was the constitutional as well as moral responsibility of Speaker Birla to take action in the matter. Members of the TMC and NCP among others have written to the Speaker seeking action against Bidhuri, who represents South Delhi Lok Sabha seat.

However, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey wrote to the Lok Sabha Speaker, accusing Ali of making unsavoury remarks during Bidhuri's speech in the House aimed at instigating him to lose his composure.

# 'Nijjar not religious figure but terrorist'

*Nijjar was a close associate of Gurdeep Singh alias Deepa Heranwala, who was involved in the killing of around 200 people in Punjab during the late 1980s and early 1990s*



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 23:** Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, whose killing led to a row between India and Canada, was not a religious and social figure but a terrorist who was involved in running terrorist training camps and funding terror acts, sources have said.

Nijjar was a close associate of Gurdeep Singh alias Deepa Heranwala, who was involved in the killing of around 200 people in Punjab during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Heranwala belonged to the banned Khalistan Commando Force.

Nijjar, who was killed by unidentified assailants June 18 at a parking lot of a Sikh gurdwara in British Columbia, had escaped to Canada in 1996 fearing arrest by police here and indulged in illegal activities like drug smuggling and extortion in Canada to arrange funding for terrorist activities, sources said.

Nijjar was also involved in training youths at a terror camp in British Columbia to carry out attacks in India, they said. Over the years, Nijjar assumed the role of 'Operation Chief' of Khalistan Tiger Force, or KTF, a banned terror group.

In 2020, he was accused by the government of being actively involved in "operationalising, networking, train-

ing and financing" KTF members. In 2012, Nijjar visited Pakistan and came in touch with Jagtar Singh Tara, chief of Babbar Khalsa International, another banned terror group.

Tara supplied him arms and trained him in assembling IED in 2012 and in 2013. He sent US-based Harjot Singh Birring to Canada to train Nijjar in operating hand-held GPS device. Nijjar also sent 1 million Pakistani rupees to Tara, sources said. In 2014, Nijjar planned a terror attack on Dera Sacha Sauda headquarters in Sirsa in Haryana on directions of Tara. However, the attack could not take place because Nijjar was denied Indian visa, they said.

Nijjar allegedly muscled his way into the post of president of the local gurdwara in Surrey in Canada in 2021, forcibly deposing his cousin, Raghbir Singh Nijjar, the incumbent, with threats of violence.

The National Investigation Agency has registered several cases against Nijjar as well as issuing an Interpol Red Corner Notice for raising a module in Canada involving Khalistani separatist Mandeep Singh Dhaliwal.

Nijjar was also the head of Canada chapter of Sikhs For Justice, another banned terrorist organisation. He had also organised violent anti-India protests in Canada and threatened Indian diplomats, sources said.

# MANIPUR RESTORES INTERNET SERVICES



Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh addresses a press conference in Imphal  
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, Sept 23:** Mobile internet services, which were suspended as ethnic violence erupted in Manipur in early May, were restored after over four months from Saturday.

The services resumed hours after Chief Minister N Biren Singh made an announcement in this regard in the morning. He also called for the cancellation of the free movement regime that allows people residing close to both sides of the India-Myanmar border to venture 16 km deep into each other's territory without any document.

Addressing a press conference here, Singh said, "The government had suspended mobile internet services on May 3 to check the spread of fake news, propaganda and hate speech. However, with the improvement of the situation, mobile internet services will be restored across the state from today."

The services were restored from around 3 pm, an official said. The chief minister said the

government will continue to deal with the influx of "illegal immigrants" and stressed the need for complete fencing of the India-Myanmar border.

"The Union Home Ministry has taken steps to fence 60 km of the international border in Manipur," he said. The CM claimed that the present situation was a result of unplanned policies of the previous governments and not an immediate aftermath of any recent decision.

"Our government has requested the Union Home Ministry to cancel the free movement regime. Also, security forces have not properly guarded the border. Instead of being deployed at zero point, they were found guarding the border 14-15 km inside Indian territory," he claimed.

The CM also came out strongly against the bandh culture and incidents of "rampant verbal abuse against MLAs, ministers and police officials, which has diverted people from real issues and created conflict among ourselves".

### Himanta's wife sues Gaurav Gogoi for defamation

**Guwahati:** Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, the wife of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, has filed a Rs 10 crore defamation suit against Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi for "false" allegations of irregularities in a food processing project. Senior advocate Devajit Saikia, her counsel, said that the case has been filed at the Court of Civil Judge (Senior Division) of Kamrup Metropolitan on Friday and it will be moved on September 26. "My client has claimed a defamation of Rs 10 crore against Gaurav Gogoi for various tweets on X. We have made it very clear that we never made any application to receive subsidy," he added. Saikia further claimed that the process to seek subsidy has not been initiated at all and for which, a show cause notice was slapped on his client's firm on May 26 this year, followed by an email from the Ministry of Food Processing. "The approval for the project was given on November 22, 2022. In the last email, we were told that our claim would lapse if we didn't submit our proposal. We are not responding to anything to seek subsidy," he added. Whatever Gogoi stated on social media about Sarma and her entity 'Pride East Entertainments', that information was not based on facts, claimed the senior advocate.

### DUSU POLLS

## ABVP wins 3 panel posts, NSUI one

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 23:** The RSS-affiliated ABVP Saturday won three central panel posts, including that of president, in the Delhi University Students Union (DUSU) and the Congress student wing NSUI bagged the remaining one, according to officials.

Tushar Dedha of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) won the post of DUSU president, defeating NSUI's Hitesh Gulia by a margin of 3,115 votes. Dedha got 23,460 votes and Gulia 20,345.

The Congress student wing's Abhi Dahiya bagged the post of vice-president. Dahiya received 22,331 votes and defeated ABVP's Sushant Dhankar by a margin of 1,829 votes. ABVP's Aparajita and Sachin Baisla won the posts of secretary and joint secretary, respectively. While Aparajita defeated NSUI's Yakshana Sharma by a margin of 12,937 votes, Baisla defeated the Congress student wing's Shubham Kumar Chaudhary by a margin of 9,995 votes.



Fishermen catch fish in the swollen Gandheswari river as it flows in spate over a bridge after heavy rainfall, at Mankanali, in Bankura district, West Bengal  
PTI PHOTO

# Govt making sincere attempts to draft laws in simple manner: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 23:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday said his government is making sincere attempts to draft laws in a simple manner and in Indian languages to the maximum extent, asserting that the language in which laws are written and court proceedings conducted play a key role in ensuring justice.

"The common man should consider the law as his own," he said. Inaugurating the International Lawyers' Conference here, Modi also said that with India working hard to achieve the goal of becoming a developed country by 2047, it requires the base of a strong and impartial justice system. Impartial justice has a big role in the growing faith of the world

in India, he added.

The prime minister also flagged concerns about cyber terrorism and money laundering besides the use of artificial intelligence for destructive purposes. He said these dangers do not recognise borders and jurisdiction and called for collaborative efforts among legal frameworks of different countries to deal with them.

He cited the example of co-operation between air traffic control systems of all countries to ensure air travel and said preparing a global framework to deal with these dangers is not about one government or country. "Every legal mind or institution is highly vigilant about its jurisdiction. However, there are many forces against which we are fighting that do not care about borders or jurisdictions. When



danger is global, then the manner to deal with it should also be global."

Whether it is cyber terrorism,

money laundering, artificial intelligence, or its misuse, there are many issues where cooperation requires a global framework. It

is not merely a matter for any one government or administration, Modi observed.

Commenting on the legal system, Modi said the language used to write laws and in the judicial process play a big role in ensuring justice. "We in the Indian government are thinking that law should be produced in two ways. One draft will be in the language you are used to," he told the audience drawn from the legal fraternity. "The second draft will be in a language which the country's common man can understand. He should consider the law as his own."

Modi said there had been a practice of drafting laws in a complex manner. One of the aspects of justice delivery on which there is very little discussion is the language and the simplicity of law, the prime

minister noted.

He said the government is trying to make laws simple and understandable to the common man but the system has been ingrained in the same framework and he was trying to pull it out of that. Modi said he has a lot to do and a lot of time for it. "So I will keep doing it." "We have made the first beginning in the Data Protection law," the prime minister said, referring to attempts to draft laws in simple language. He also welcomed the Supreme Court's decision to provide the operative part of a judgment to the litigant in his language. "Look, it took 75 years even for this small step, and I had to intervene in it too," he said. He lauded the apex court for translating its judgments into many local languages.

# international

## of the day quote

May we let ourselves be moved by the stories of so many of our unfortunate brothers and sisters who have the right both to emigrate and not to emigrate, and not become closed in indifference

POPE FRANCIS | HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

We are not pursuing anyone on a personal vendetta

ANWAR UL HAQ KAKAR | CARETAKER PM OF PAK

Delighted to meet Foreign Minister of Japan Yoko Kamikawa at #UNGA78. Discussed our regional, multilateral and global cooperation and taking them forward

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER OF INDIA

## SHORT TAKES

### 6 killed in Brazilian police operation

**Rio de Janeiro:** At least six suspects were killed as the Brazilian police carried out an operation in Salvador, according to local press. Salvador is the regional capital of the state of Bahia, with more than 2.9 million inhabitants. The police launched a mega-operation against a criminal group accused of murdering more than 30 people this month, which has resulted in 34 deaths so far, Xinhua news agency reported. Friday's operation, during which six suspects were killed, sought to serve 43 search and arrest warrants against the criminal gang accused of the multiple murders.

### US Senator Bob Menendez indicted

**New York:** Democratic Senator Bob Menendez and his wife have been charged with taking bribes from three New Jersey businessmen, the media reported. As per US Attorney's office, Menendez, 69, accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of cash and gold bars in exchange for using his power and influence as New Jersey's senior senator, Xinhua news agency reported. A lawyer for Nadine Menendez, 56, who has been married to the senator since 2020, denied wrongdoing and would defend against the allegations in court. The investigation marks the third time federal prosecutors have investigated Menendez.

### Taiwan factory fire leaves 5 dead

**Beijing:** A fire and subsequent explosions at a golf ball factory in southern Taiwan killed at least five people and injured more than 100 others, and five people are still missing. The fire began Friday night at the factory in Pingtung county and raged overnight. Three firefighters were among the dead, authorities said. Rescuers were still looking for four factory workers and one firefighter who remained unaccounted for, officials said. More than 100 people were taken to the hospital with injuries.

### Bombing kills 18 in Somalia

**Mogadishu:** An explosives-laden vehicle detonated Saturday at a security checkpoint in the central Somalia city of Beledweyne, killing at least 18 people and wounding 40 others, authorities said. Abdurahman Dahir Gure, the interior minister of Hirshabelle state, announced the toll to journalists. Images on social media showed black smoke billowing and a smashed truck cab blazing at the checkpoint.



Strength and pride are essential to our national survival, especially in the face of Communist China. China is an existential threat. It has spent half a century plotting to defeat us  
NIKKI HALEY | REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRANT

## SURGEONS PERFORM 2ND PIG HEART TRANSPLANT

US surgeons have transplanted a pig's heart into a dying man in a bid to prolong his life - only the second patient to ever undergo such an experimental feat. Two days later, the man was cracking jokes and able to sit in a chair, Maryland doctors said



## Trudeau says shared 'credible allegations' with India weeks ago

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Toronto, Sept 23:** Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said that Canada shared with India "many weeks ago" evidence that it may have been behind the killing of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil and wants New Delhi to commit constructively with Ottawa to establish the facts in the "very serious matter." Trudeau, however, did not elaborate on the evidence that he says has been shared with India. "Canada has shared the credible allegations that I talked about Monday with India. We did that many weeks ago... We hope that they engage with us so that we can get to the bottom of this very serious matter. That's important," he said Friday in a press conference with the visiting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"And what we are asking is for India, to commit constructively with Canada to establish the facts on this situation. We're there to work with them. And we have been for weeks now," Trudeau said in response to a question. When asked about Canada sharing any information in the case with India, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi said: "No specific information has been shared by Canada on this case, either then or before or after. We have, you know, as we have said, or I think we have made very clear, we are willing to look at any specific information."

"We have conveyed this to the Canadian side and made it clear to them that we are willing to look at any specific information that is provided to us. But so far we have not received any such specific information," MEA Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said in New Delhi. Tensions flared between India and Canada early this week following Trudeau's explosive allegations of the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani extremist Nijjar on his country's soil June 18 in British Columbia

lowing Trudeau's explosive allegations of the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani extremist Nijjar on his country's soil on June 18 in British Columbia. India had designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020. India angrily rejected the allegations as "absurd" and "motivated" and expelled a senior Canadian diplomat in a tit-for-tat move to Ottawa's expulsion of an Indian official over the case.

Trudeau said Canada is working with its partners over the matter. US Ambassador to Canada David Cohen also confirmed that "shared intelligence among Five Eyes partners" had informed Trudeau of the possible involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar.

Tensions flared between India and Canada early this week following Trudeau's explosive allegations of the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani extremist Nijjar on his country's soil June 18 in British Columbia

This is the first admission by any US government official about the sharing of intelligence by Five Eyes partners with Canada even when there were multiple unofficial and non-official reports about the same, CTV News channel reported. "Five Eyes" network is an intelligence alliance consisting of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. It is both surveillance-based and signals intelligence (SIGINT). "He (Cohen) made this comment while denying a Washington Post report alleging that weeks before Trudeau's bombshell declaration, Ottawa asked its closest allies, including the US to publicly condemn the murder and that overture was rebuffed," the CTV said.

"Very bluntly, I will say that — and you know me well enough — that I'm not in the habit of commenting on private diplomatic conversations," Cohen was quoted as saying.



Environmental activists march toward the presidential office during a rally demanding actions to stop the climate crisis in Seoul, South Korea. Thousands of activists called for an end to the use of fossil and nuclear fuels

## Ukraine targets key Crimean city

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Kyiv, Sept 23:** Ukraine Saturday morning launched another missile attack on Sevastopol in occupied Crimea, a Russian-installed official said, a day after an attack on the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet left a serviceman missing and the main building smoldering. Sevastopol was put on air raid alert for about an hour after debris from intercepted missiles fell near a pier, Gov. Mikhail Razvozhayev wrote on the messaging app Telegram. Ferry traffic in the area was also halted and later resumed.

Loud blasts were also heard near Vilne in northern Crimea, followed by rising clouds of smoke, according to a pro-Ukrainian Telegram news channel that reports on developments on the peninsula. Sevastopol has been a frequent target for Ukrainian forces since Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of the neighboring country almost 19 months ago. Ukraine's intelligence chief, Kyrylo Budanov, told Voice of America Saturday that at least nine people were killed and 16 injured as a result of Kyiv's attack on the Black Sea Fleet Friday. He claimed that Alexander Romanchuk, a Russian general commanding forces along the



Crimea, illegally annexed by Russia in 2014, has been a frequent target for Ukrainian forces since Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of the neighboring country almost 19 months ago

key southeastern front line, was "in a very serious condition" following the attack. Budanov's claim could not be independently verified, and he did not comment on whether Western-made missiles were used in Friday's strike. The Russian Defense Ministry initially said that Friday's strike killed one service member at the Black Sea Fleet headquarters, but later issued a statement that he was missing.

Ukraine's military also offered more details about Friday's attack on Sevastopol. It said the air force conducted 12 strikes on the Black Sea Fleet headquarters, targeting areas where personnel, military equipment and weapons were concentrated. It said two anti-aircraft missile systems and four Russian artillery units were hit. Crimea has served as the key hub supporting Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Sevastopol, the main base of Russia's Black Sea Fleet since the 19th century, has had a particular importance for navy operations since the start of the invasion of Ukraine. Ukraine has increasingly targeted naval facilities in Crimea in recent weeks while the brunt of its summer counteroffensive makes slow gains in the east and south of Ukraine, the Institute for the Study of War said.

## Biden aides in talks with Vietnam for arms deal

REUTERS

**Washington, Sept 23:** The Biden administration is in talks with Vietnam over an agreement for the largest arms transfer in history between the ex-Cold War adversaries, according to two people familiar with a deal that could irk China and sideline Russia. A package, which could come together within the next year, could consummate the newly upgraded partnership between Washington and Hanoi with the sale of a fleet of American F-16 fighter jets as the Southeast Asian nation faces tensions with Beijing in the disputed South China Sea, one of the people



said. The deal is still in its early stages, with exact terms yet to be worked out, and may not come together. But it was a key topic of Vietnamese-US official talks in Hanoi, New York and Washington over the past month. Washington is considering structuring special financing terms for the pricey equipment that could help cash-strapped Hanoi steer away from its traditional reliance on lower-cost, Russian-made arms, according to the other source, who declined to be named. Spokespersons for the White House and Vietnamese foreign ministry did not respond to requests for comment.

Vietnam spends an estimated \$2 billion annually in arms imports, and Washington is optimistic that they can shift a share of that budget over the long term to weapons from the United States or its allies and partners, especially South Korea and India. The cost of US weaponry is a major obstacle, as is training on the equipment, and is among the reasons the country has taken in less than \$400 million of American arms over the past decade.

## UAW strike expands

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chicago, Sept 23:** The United Auto Workers (UAW) has expanded its strike against the big three US automakers to 38 General Motors Co. and Stellantis NV parts distribution centers across the US, bringing the total factories on strike up to 41. Ford Motor Co. is spared from the expansion of the strike as its negotiations with the union will continue.

Some 5,600 workers at those facilities spanning 20 states walked off their jobs Friday, joining the 12,700 workers already on UAW's strike, said UAW President Shawn Fain during a Facebook live event, Xinhua news agency reported.

## Pope Francis insists Europe doesn't have a migrant emergency

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Marseille, Sept 23:** Pope Francis challenged French President Emmanuel Macron and other European leaders to open their ports to people fleeing hardship and poverty, insisting Saturday that the continent isn't facing a migration "emergency" but rather a long-term reality that governments must deal with humanely.

For a second straight day in the French port city of Marseille, Francis took aim at European countries that have used "alarmist propaganda" to justify closing their doors to migrants, and tried to shame them into responding with charity instead. He called for migrants to have legal pathways to citizenship, and for the Mediterranean Sea that so many cross to reach Europe to be a beacon of hope, not a graveyard of desperation.

## Pak's economy on edge of precipice: World Bank

Poverty in Pakistan shot up to 39.4% as of last fiscal year, with 12.5 million more people falling into the trap due to poor economic conditions, the World Bank has said

AGENCIES

**Islamabad, Sept 23:** Pakistan is in its tipping point crisis where it should decide to remain a laggard with 40 per cent population living below the poverty line under elite capture and policy decisions driven by strong vested interests of military, political and business leaders or change course to take off for a brighter future, local media reported. This candid warning came from the World Bank ahead of the new election cycle for the upcoming government to make early choices while making it clear that international lenders and development partners could only advise with international experiences of successes and

some financing but hard choices and course correcting decisions could only be taken within the country, Dawn reported.

"This may be Pakistan's moment in making policy shifts," said Najy Benhassine, Country Director for the World Bank in Pakistan, at a news briefing while releasing a set of policy notes for debate and discussions for finalisation before the new elected government comes in, Dawn reported.

He said Pakistan was in the middle of a human resource capital and economic crisis. "Policy decisions are heavily influenced by strong vested interests, including those of military, political and business leaders," reads an overview of the 'Reforms For a Brighter Future:



Poverty in Pakistan rose within one year from 34.2 per cent to 39.4 per cent, with 12.5 million more people falling below the poverty line of the USD 3.65 per day income level, according to the World Bank

The global lender urged Pakistan to take urgent steps to tax its 'sacred cows' - agriculture and real estate - and cut wasteful expenditures in an effort to achieve economic stability through steep fiscal adjustment of over 7 per cent of the economy

Time to Decide' that Mr Benhassine released. He said Pakistan had been

facing numerous economic hardships including inflation, rising electricity prices, severe climate

shocks, and insufficient public resources to finance development and climate adaptation — when the country was among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts, Dawn reported. Pakistan's human development outcomes lag well behind the rest of South Asia and are roughly equivalent to those in many Sub-Saharan African countries with the costs disproportionately borne by girls and women while close to 40pc of children under five years of age were stunted and had the largest number (20.3m) of out-of-school children in the world, Dawn reported. Its growth model has resulted in periodic balance of payments crises driven by unsustainable fiscal and current account deficits that necessitated subsequent painful contractionary adjustments, slowing growth, reducing certainty and undermining investments.

# business

## of the day quote

The number of government-recognised startups has increased to over 1 lakh at present from 450 in 2016

**PIYUSH GOYAL** | COMMERCE & INDUSTRY MINISTER

Safety is Air India's highest priority and, in addition to investing heavily in people, processes and systems to raise our standards to best practice, we must also uplift our culture of safety and diligence to the highest levels

**CAMPBELL WILSON** | AIR INDIA CEO

Inflation is softening and volume growth is finally returning. A growth of 7.5 per cent in a quarter for the industry is great news

**GAUTAM KAMATH** | PGHHL VICE PRESIDENT FINANCE

## SHORT TAKES

### SBI raises ₹10k-cr via infra bond sale

**Mumbai:** State Bank of India (SBI) has announced that it has raised Rs 10,000 crore through an infrastructure bond issue. The country's largest lender will be paying a coupon rate of 7.49 per cent on the bonds, as per a statement. This is the fourth infra bond issue by SBI and the money raised will be deployed for on-lending to infrastructure projects and affordable housing, it said. SBI had launched the issue with an aim to raise Rs 4,000 crore, and the same was oversubscribed by over five times, it said, adding that 134 bids worth Rs 21,045 crore were received. The investors were across provident funds, pension funds, insurance companies, mutual funds and corporates, the statement said.

### Karnataka Bank to raise ₹1,500cr

**New Delhi:** Karnataka Bank has said its board has given approval to raise Rs 1,500 crore in one or more tranches through share sales to fund business growth. The board has approved fundraising by way of preferential issue or rights issue, or QIP, or any other permissible mode, subject to necessary regulatory approval, the bank said in a filing to exchanges. Further, the board has approved the issuance of up to 3,34,00,132 equity shares of face value of Rs 10 each to HDFC Life Insurance Company, Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance, Quant Mutual Fund, Bharti AXA Life Insurance, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance at a price of Rs 239.52 per equity share, amounting to an aggregate of up to Rs 800 crore on a preferential basis.

### SIDBI pact with DLAI for fintech

**Mumbai:** The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) Saturday said it has inked an agreement with the Digital Lenders Association of India (DLAI) to boost the country's fintech sector. SIDBI and DLAI have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to this effect. The MoU aims for collaborations with SIDBI to develop standard protocols to expedite the adoption of digital lending partnerships including alliances between banks and Lending Service Providers (LSPs), co-lending collaborations among others, according to a statement. SIDBI will also provide resource support to eligible DLAI member NBFCs and also explore Assignment and Securitisation transactions, it added.



An eightfold expansion in the economy is transformative in the lives of hundreds of millions of people. I think it is something to target as India defines its greatness in this next century.

**LARRY SUMMERS** | FORMER US TREASURY SECRETARY

## REAL ESTATE CRISIS

Even China's population of 1.4 billion would not be enough to fill all the empty apartments littered across the country, He Keng, a former deputy head of the statistics bureau, said Saturday, in a rare public critique of the country's crisis-hit property market.



# 'India most expensive market'

EVEN AFTER RECENT CORRECTION, NIFTY IS TRADING AROUND 20 TIMES FY24 EARNINGS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 23:** Even after the recent correction, Nifty is trading around 20 times FY24 earnings, making India the most expensive market in the world, says V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

FPI selling which started early this month continued in the week ended September 22. This month, in the 15 trading days, so far, FIIs were sellers in eleven days. As per NSDL data, in September through 22nd, FPIs sold equity for Rs 10164 crore. This figure includes bulk deals and investment through the primary market. In the cash market FII selling was Rs 18260 crores,



so far this month, he said.

Since valuations remain high even after the recent pull back and US bond yields are attractive (the US 10-year bond yield is around 4.49 per cent) FIIs are

likely to press sell so long as this trend persists. It would be irrational to expect the FIIs to buy aggressively when the US 10-year bond yield is around 4.49 per cent and the dollar index is above

105, he added.

No doubt, India has the best growth and earnings prospects among the large economies of the world. So, if the markets correct further, by say 3 to 4 per cent, FIIs can turn buyers even if US bond yields remain high, he added.

FII selling can be an opportunity for domestic investors who don't have to worry about the dollar index and US bond yields. When high quality stocks in performing sectors like banking and capital goods decline, these can be bought for handsome long-term gains.

In September, so far, even while selling in the market, FIIs were big buyers in financials and capital goods, he said.

# Micron breaks ground for \$2.7bn India chip plant

Micron has committed to investing up to \$825 million in building semiconductor assembly and test facility in India, with support from government



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Sanand (Gujarat), Sept 23:** Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Saturday said that India has embarked upon its journey to become a semiconductor hub, as US-based Micron Technology broke grounds for its about Rs 22,500 crore (\$2.75 billion) chip assembly and test facility here.

Stressing that India will soon need Rs 5 lakh crore worth chips to meet the growing demand, the minister said within three months of Prime Minister Narendra Modi meeting Sanjay Mehrotra, the President and CEO of Micron Technology in the US, the company has started construction on its plant which is unprecedented.

Micron has committed to investing up to \$825 million in building the semiconductor assembly and test facility in India, with support from the government.

The combined investment of \$2.75 billion is projected to create around 5,000 direct jobs and offer 15,000 community job opportunities over the next five years.

Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT, said that for a country

that has missed several opportunities for the last 70 years, this is a historic and epic moment.

"We have made tremendous strides in the last 9-10 years. It is certainly a very important milestone and I have absolutely no doubt that this Micron's state-of-the-art plant will be a beacon to all investors, other manufacturers and participants in the global semiconductor ecosystem," Chandrasekhar told the gathering.

The Assembly, Test, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) of the company is being set up on 93 acres in Sanand GIDC-II industrial estate and is expected to be commissioned within 18 months. The facility will focus on transforming wafers into Ball Grid Array (BGA) - integrated circuit packages, memory modules and solid-state drives.

In July, Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised 50 per cent financial assistance to players wishing to set up semiconductor manufacturing facilities in the country.

At the Semicon India 2023 in Gandhinagar, he had said that "we are continuously carrying out policy reforms to accelerate the growth of the country's semiconductor sector".

## BIZ BUZZ

### Bank of Maharashtra bags Kirti Puraskar

**Bhubaneswar:** Bank of Maharashtra, a premier public sector bank in the country bagged, Kirti Puraskar, the highest award for Rajbhasha given by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Bank received the prestigious award in two different categories viz. 'Best House Magazine' and 'Better Implementation of Official Language'. The said awards were given to the Bank in a glittering ceremony of Hindi Diwas held September, 14, in Pune, Maharashtra.

AS Rajeev, Managing Director and CEO, Bank of Maharashtra received the first prize for 'Best House Magazine' and the second prize for better implementation of Rajbhasha from Ajay Kumar Mishra, Minister of State for Home Affairs.

During this ceremony, Harivansh Narayan Singh, Deputy Chairperson of Rajya



AS Rajeev, Managing Director and CEO, Bank of Maharashtra, receiving the highest award for Rajbhasha 'Kirti Puraskar' from Ajay Kumar Mishra, Minister of State for Home Affairs.

Sabha, Anshuli Arya, secretary (official language), Ministry of Home Affairs and Bharti Pawar, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare were also present on the stage.

In this programme, AB Vijayakumar, Executive Director and Ashish Pandey, Executive Director, Amit Srivastava, CVO, K. Rajesh

Kumar, General Manager (HRM and Rajbhasha) and Rajendra Srivastava, Deputy General Manager (Rajbhasha) and other authorities of Bank of Maharashtra were also present. On this occasion, top executives and official language officers of various government offices, and banks across the country were also present.

# TRAI moots ways to spur networking

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 23:** TRAI has mooted 'concurrent PLI scheme' focussing on components and sub-assembly manufacturing to facilitate collaborated production activities, as it released an extensive set of recommendations to promote manufacturing of networking and telecom gear in India through tax benefit, dedicated master fund and other sweeteners.

With a sharp gaze on goals of scaling domestic production and local value addition in global value chains, TRAI in its recommendations favoured additional two per cent benefit under the design-led PLI scheme for product lines meeting a certain criteria, while also talking of a

dedicated 'Networking and Telecommunications Equipment Development' fund.

In order to spur innovation and encourage industry's drive towards beneficially owned resident Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), lower corporate income tax has also been recommended. This would apply if the enterprise is continuously engaged in R&D driven manufacturing and attains half of its turnover based on IPRs owned, TRAI said in its recommendations.

A dedicated Telecom Software Development Fund with initial committed corpus of Rs 1,000 crore should be established under Public-Private Partnership mode with Rs 3,000 crore minimum corpus, by seeking participation from venture capital funds,

TRAI said. "In context of PLI scheme, TRAI has recommended that there should be a concurrent PLI scheme focussing over components and sub-assembly manufacturing to facilitate collaborated manufacturing activities. Further, the schemes should imbibe local value addition norms in its future-format and higher incentives proportionate to value addition should be available," a TRAI release said.

Under the design-led PLI scheme, it said, beyond the one per cent benefit, another slab of additional two per cent benefit be introduced for such product lines that yield minimum local value-addition of 75 per cent where the components by value terms, used in the manufacturing of the specific end products

are manufactured in India.

Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) should be nudged to deploy indigenously manufactured equipment by reducing their Applicable Gross Revenues on annual net basis, by an amount equivalent to the aggregate certified value of such indigenous products deployed in respective telecom networks during a financial year. This shall widen market access for indigenous manufacturers, TRAI reasoned.

Apart from the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme and Preferential Market Access (PMA), the formula suggested by the sector regulator to the government also touched upon areas like catering to financing requirement, tax relief, promoting entrepreneurship, tele-

com products development clusters, and treating 'telecom software' as a separate product category.

"To spur innovation and to encourage industry's drive towards beneficially owned resident Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), lower corporate income tax has also been recommended. This would apply if the enterprise is continuously engaged in R&D driven manufacturing and attains half of its turnover based on IPRs owned," TRAI said.

Further, the regulator recommended that Telecom Products Development Clusters (TPDCs) should be established within the approved Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMCs) or nearby with host of common facilities.

## PITCHED BATTLE

# PhonePe's 'made in India' app store to take on Google

INDUS APPSTORE AIMS TO PROVIDE DEVELOPERS WITH ALTERNATIVE DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL TO TAP INTO INDIAN ANDROID MARKET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 23:** PhonePe Saturday announced the launch of Indus Appstore developer platform, wooing Android app developers with the promise of zero platform fee or commission for in-app payments, as the digital payments firm made a bold and decisive move to confront the might of Google in the app marketplace with the Made-in-India app store.

Akash Dongre, Co-Founder of Indus Appstore rued that app developers are forced to work with only one app store - Google Play Store - for distributing their apps, and vowed that the new offering will be a credible alternative, more localised, with better app discovery and consumer engagement.

The Indus Appstore Developer platform comes with sweeteners - app listings on it will be

free for the first year, after which a nominal annual fee will apply. Moreover, the Indus Appstore will not charge developers any platform fee or commission for In-App Payments.

Developers will be free to integrate any payment gateway of their choice inside their own apps. These apps will be listed on the soon-to-be launched 'Made-in-India' Indus Appstore, offering a localised experience in 12 languages, tailored for Indian audiences. This means users will be able to explore the app store in their preferred language.

"PhonePe, today announced the launch of the Indus Appstore Developer Platform... Indus Appstore is inviting all Android app developers to register and upload their apps using the self-serve developer platform www.Indusappstore.Com," according to a release.

The Appstore will also have a



'Launch Pad' for new developers to onboard their apps and provide them with better visibility and search optimisation.

Dongre observed that India is poised to have over 1 billion smartphone users by 2026, offering a massive opportunity to build a new-age, localised Android app store.

"Despite being such a large consumer market, app developers have always been forced to

work with only one app store - Google Play Store - for distributing their apps. Indus Appstore hopes to provide app developers a credible alternative to the Google Playstore - one that is more localised and offers better app discovery and consumer engagement," Dongre said.

The Indus Appstore aims to provide developers with an alternative distribution channel to tap into the Indian Android mar-

ket. It will assist them with high-quality user acquisition through multilingual app discovery.

For startups and new app launches, Indus Appstore will have a dedicated destination called 'Launch Pad' to provide these new apps with better visibility as well as search optimisation.

It will also offer several developer tools and features that address the challenges faced by most Android developers, including a dedicated round-the-clock customer support team based in India, the option to list their app in 12 Indian languages besides English and the ability to boost brand awareness via engaging videos.

"Indus Appstore is a native Android-based mobile app store, designed to fulfill the localised and cultural needs of Indian consumers. With an extensive array of categories it seeks to provide users a localised, contextual and a personalised experience," the release said.

For developers, Indus Appstore promises a "fair and level playing field" to list, distribute and promote their products in the Indian app ecosystem. It provides a self-publishing platform, localisation services, multiple tools to monitor and grow their apps along with dedicated 24x7 customer support.

The latest move comes at a time when Google and Apple's app stores have drawn flak in various markets over restrictive policies, opaque processes and for charging a steep commission for in-app purchases.

Amid the growing disquiet, small developers and innovators are clamouring for regulatory action to make app stores business models competitive and to break the dominance of the BigTech.

# PRESSURE ON IYER, ASHWIN



Shreyas Iyer failed to make an impact on his return before a miscommunication led to his run-out, Friday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Indore, Sept 23:** Shreyas Iyer will be desperate for some runs after missing out on a flat track while the skillful R Ashwin will be searching for wickets in the middle overs when India take on Australia in the second ODI here Sunday.

Despite missing four first-XI players, including skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, India were

able to win the first ODI rather comfortably and look on course to secure the series at the Holkar Stadium which usually produces high-scoring games.

Rain in the city has brought the temperature down which will be welcomed by the players from either side after experiencing unusual heat and humidity in Mohali.

The game Friday had enough positives for India, mainly the performance of Mohammad Shami and Suryakumar Yadav, but few questions still need to be answered ahead of the World Cup, beginning October 5.

India's designated No.4 Iyer, whose fitness came under the scanner in the Asia Cup even though he was coming back from a long injury-lay off, has not been able to get time in the middle due to different reasons.

While a back spasm ruled him out of the business end of Asia Cup, an avoidable run out Friday ended his nery 8-ball stay in the centre. The right-hander will be hoping for a bagful of runs in the coming two games which would make him and his team feel much better going into the global event.

Ashwin, on the other hand, came up with a tidy bowling effort in his comeback game but was not able to put the Australian batters in much discomfort on a flat track. He was not able to generate much turn and his flatter deliveries were easily negotiated by the opposition.

The champion spinner could still make a last minute entry into India's World Cup if Axar Patel doesn't get fit in time but the team management expects more

## MATCH SCHEDULE

INDIA vs AUSTRALIA

2nd One-Day International

Time: 1:30 pm

Telecast: Sports 18 channels

Stream: JioCinema

from the 37-year-old than what he managed on Friday.

It also remains to be seen if another off-spinner Washington Sundar gets a game. If that happens Sunday, Ashwin might have to warm the bench.

Shardul Thakur too would be looking for an improvement from the first game, having conceded 78 runs in 10 overs while all the other bowlers returned frugal figures. He does have a knack of picking wickets and coming up with a useful cameo with the bat but he has not been able to do that consistently in the ODI format.

Thakur will only be used sporadically in the World Cup and therefore, he would be keen to make the most of the chances he gets in the ongoing series.

In the batting department, world's best T20 batter Suryakumar Yadav seems to have cracked the ODI code after a prolonged lean patch.

The management has told him to consume 45-50 balls every

game, which is enough for someone like him to make a telling impact on the match. He just did that Friday with a well paced half century.

Like India, Australia too were missing some of their key players in the opener including Mitchell Starc, Glenn Maxwell and Josh Hazlewood. Skipper Pat Cummins hinted after the game in Mohali that they might only be ready by the third game in Rajkot September 27.

Australia won the series in India earlier this year and find themselves in a must-win situation Sunday. Josh Inglis showed promise with a run a ball 45 but the middle-order needs to be more consistent.

Veteran opener David Warner has carried his good form from South Africa to India and would be looking to maintain it over the next couple of months.

Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne were guilty of throwing their starts in Mohali and a big hundred will be needed from either of them if Australia are to comeback in the series.

The last ODI was played here in January when India amassed 385 against New Zealand with Rohit and Shubman Gill smashing hundreds. Rohit will not be around but trust Gill to do an encore in front of a vibrant Indore crowd.

# Pak team await visa for World Cup travel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Indore, Sept 23:** Players and team officials of Pakistan's World Cup-bound contingent are yet to get visas for their scheduled travel to India September 27, two days before their opening warm-up fixture.

The Pakistan squad was supposed to reach Hyderabad via Dubai where a two-day team bonding exercise was planned before travelling to India September 27. The Babar Azam-led side is scheduled to play their first warm-up game against New Zealand September 29.

PCB sources told PTI that the team bonding trip to Dubai has been cancelled as players await their visas from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. Sources also confirmed that the PCB has raised the matter with the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Pakistan last visited India for the T20 World Cup in 2016. The arch-rivals only play each other in Asia Cup and ICC tournaments due to the tense relations between the two countries.

"PCB had sent its officials to Islamabad for passport collection yesterday but the visas are still in process. That has forced the board to cancel the team bonding trip in Dubai. If the visas come through, the

team will reach Hyderabad September 27 via Dubai," said a source.

Another source privy to the matter added: "the visas will come through after due vetting process. When it comes to issuing an Indian visa to a Pakistan passport holder, clearances need to come from three ministries – home, external affairs and sports. That process takes time but it will happen."

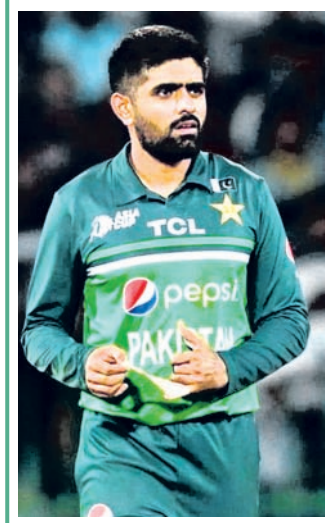
A total of 33 members of the Pakistan contingent, including players, three travelling reserves and team officials, are awaiting their visas. Tournament host BCCI could not be reached for a comment.

Pakistan's second warm-up will be against Australia October 3, also in Hyderabad. They will remain in the city for their opening two World Cup games against Netherlands and Sri Lanka October 6 and 10 respectively before flying to Ahmedabad for the big game against hosts India October 14.

Only two members from the current Pakistan squad have toured India for cricket – Mohammad Nawaz and Salman Agha.

## THE SQUAD

Babar Azam (C), Shadab Khan, Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Abdullah Shafique, Mohammad Rizwan, Saud Shakeel, Iftikhar Ahmed, Salman Ali Agha, Mohammad Nawaz, Usama Mir, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Shaheen Afridi & Mohammad Wasim.



# India men, women TT teams in pre-quarters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hangzhou, Sept 23:** Indian men's and women's table tennis teams advanced to the pre-quarterfinals of the Asian Games with comprehensive 3-0 victory over Nepal and Tajikistan respectively in Group F matches here Saturday.

Indian women topped the group with two wins in as many matches, and they will face Thailand in the round of 16. The men also eliminated their women counterparts while blanking Tajikistan to top the Group F with an all-win record.

Indian women, who had on Friday beaten Singapore, started the match against Nepal on a winning note with Diya Chitale brushing aside Sikka Shreshtha 11-1, 11-6, 11-8. Ayhika Mukherjee doubled India's lead with a 11-3, 11-7, 11-2 victory over Nabita Shreshtha.

Sutirtha Mukherjee then sealed it in India's favour when she outclassed Evana Thapa 11-1, 11-5, 11-2. Manika Batra and



Manush Shah in action against Tajikistan during the preliminary round of the Asian Games in Hangzhou, Saturday

Sreeja Akula were rested for this round.

The Indian men, who had earlier defeated Yemen and Singapore, were equally dominant against the Tajik side despite veterans G Sathiyana and A Sharath Kamal not playing. Manav Thakar gave them a good start while beating Afzalkhon Mahmudov 11-8, 11-5, 11-8.

Manush Shah maintained the tempo with a 13-11, 11-7, 11-5 victory over Ubaydullo Sulstonov as India took a 2-0 lead. Harmeet Desai applied finishing touches with an easy 11-1, 11-3, 11-5 win over Ibrokhim Ismoilzoda.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hangzhou, Sept 23:** Blending elements of artificial intelligence and environmentally friendly technology, the Hangzhou Asian Games began here Saturday with a one-of-a-kind opening ceremony, headlined by a spectacular futuristic light show.

The dazzling programme, held amid a diplomatic row over the denial of entry to three Indian athletes from Arunachal Pradesh, was a melange of technology, cultural history of China, and the spirit of the continent's unity.

In keeping with the main theme of 'Tides Surging in Asia', the ceremony was about the intermingling of China, Asia and the world in the new era, as well as the unity, love and friendship of the Asian people.

The water element through the surging tide of Qiantang river – which flows through Hangzhou – was the underlying theme of the grand evening which lasted nearly two hours.

The ceremony sought to portray a distinctly Chinese and a uniquely Asian flair, capturing



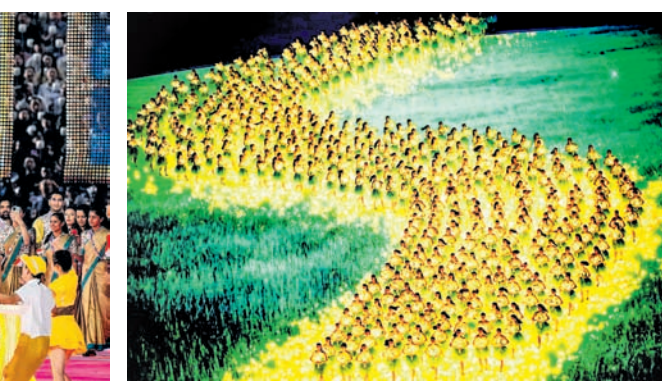
Flag-bearers Lovlina Borgohain and Harmanpreet Singh lead the Indian contingent during the Asian Games opening ceremony in Hangzhou, Saturday

the country's cultural heritage and romantic imagery through the blending of its thousands of years old civilization and modern technology, through stunning visuals. It portrayed the efforts of China's path to modernisation in a presentation that combined Eastern aesthetics and a viewpoint that connects with a global audience.

The technological might of China was written all over with the lighting of the cauldron – the Games' Flame – being done in a unique way. Digital tech-

nology was utilised as torch-bearers in the virtual and physical worlds jointly lit the cauldron. Chinese President Xi Jinping declared the Games open as more than 12,000 athletes from 45 countries gear up to fight for top honours till October 8.

The Olympic Council of Asia's (OCA) acting president Randhir Singh, International Olympic Committee (IOC) head Thomas Bach, heads of several countries, officials of National Olympic Committees and host of other dignitary were present on the occasion.



Artists perform during the opening ceremony at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Stadium

Loud cheers greeted the nearly 100 Indian athletes and officials as they marched into the stadium, led by flag-bearers Harmanpreet Singh and Lovlina Borgohain. The Indian contingent walked out for the athletes' parade in eighth position.

The male athletes were clad in bandhgala jacket and khaki kurta while their female counterparts donned high-necked blouse and khaki-textured saree made from recycled fabrics. India is fielding 655 athletes in the Games.

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# ODISHA FC OPEN ISL CAMPAIGN WITH WIN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 23:** Odisha FC kicked off their Indian Super League (ISL) 2023-24 campaign in style as they defeated Chennaiyin FC 2-0 at the Kalinga Stadium here, Saturday.

Jerry Mawihmingthanga broke the deadlock just before the break – in the 44th minute – before Diego Mauricio (62nd) sealed the deal for the home team.

Chennaiyin created several goal-scoring opportunities but missed the finishing touch. One of such chances came in the 21st minute when Rafael Crivellaro's strike was blocked by the opponent goalkeeper from the close distance. The visitors had almost opened their account in the 43rd minute but Connor Shields couldn't manage to con-



vert a brilliant cross from Aakash Sangwan. Later, Farukh Choudhary's header went over the bar six minutes before the end. Earlier, both sides continued their hunt for the opener re-

lently after a short interval due to rain. Chennaiyin goalkeeper Samik Mitra denied Odisha the lead in the 23rd minute with a brilliant save to keep out Isak Vanlalruatfela's left-footed shot from the centre of the box.

However, Mawihmingthanga put the hosts in the lead just before the halftime whistle when he guided Amey Ranawade pass to the bottom left corner with a left-footed strike.

The Kalinga Warriors doubled their lead in the 62nd minute with Mauricio getting his name on the scoresheet.

Chennaiyin will next face NorthEast United FC in their second game of the season in Guwahati September 29 while Odisha are scheduled to play a home game against Mumbai City FC September 28.

# Martin aces Grand Prix of India sprint

REUTERS

**Noida, Sept 23:** Pramac Racing's Jorge Martin won Saturday's sprint race at the inaugural Grand Prix of India – also called MotoGP Bharat – ahead of Ducati's championship leader Francesco Bagnaia after pole sitter Marco Bezzecchi crashed on the first turn at the Buddh International Circuit.

The sprint was delayed due to wet conditions following a spell of torrential rain earlier in the day but apart from a few damp patches on the track, dry conditions greeted the riders with the sun low on the horizon.

VR46 Racing's Bezzecchi had not put a foot wrong to claim his third pole of the season but following a poor start, he crashed on the first corner when he was clipped by his teammate Luca



Jorge Martin celebrates after winning the sprint, Saturday

Marini. Martin started second on the grid but he had a perfect launch to take the lead going

into the first corner ahead of Bagnaia and the two Hondas of Marc Marquez and Joan Mir.

Mir had looked good in qualifying but he made a mistake on turn three after three laps and lost his balance, allowing Brad Binder in the Red Bull KTM to move up to fourth and pressure Marquez for the final podium position. Bezzecchi managed to rejoin the race and the Italian was a man on a mission as he worked his way up the grid, setting multiple fastest laps. But with only 11 laps in the sprint, he ran out of time but still managed to finish a creditable fifth.

With Martin and Bagnaia cruising, the biggest battle on the final laps was Marquez keeping Binder at bay for third place and it was the Spaniard who eventually came out on top for just his second sprint podium of the season.