



**FOR A CAUSE:** Members of the Bishnoi community protest against cutting of trees, near the Collector's office, in Bikaner, Friday

## US takes Canada path

At a time when ties between India and Canada have hit rock bottom over the alleged Indian role in the assassination of pro-Khalistan extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the US authorities have charged a former Research & Analysis Wing (R&AW) official, Vikas Yadav, with the foiled plot to eliminate another Sikh extremist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun on American soil. This comes against the backdrop of the ongoing narrative in India that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was playing vote-bank politics by bringing out such serious accusations against New Delhi. Canada is home to over seven lakh Sikhs, the highest population of the community outside India. It is pertinent to note here that in a robust democracy like Canada where the prime minister himself is answerable to probe panels, it is never easy to play vote-bank politics on issues concerning national security. Meanwhile, the US indictment of the former Indian government official on murder-for-hire and money laundering charges is said to be an indication of the collapse of India's foreign policy apparatus and its inept handling of issues that make or break foreign relations.



A picture of former R&AW official Vikas Yadav released by the FBI

Thursday in an indictment filed in a US court in New York. Yadav had been identified only as "CC-1" (co-conspirator) in the first indictment. Thursday in New Delhi, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, responding to a query on the person identified in the indictment of the US Department of Justice (DoJ) in connection with the case, confirmed that the person is "no longer an employee of the government of India." His co-conspirator Nikhil Gupta was arrested in the Czech Republic last year and is languishing in a US jail after extradition. "Today's charges demonstrate that the Justice Department will not tolerate attempts to target and endanger Americans and to undermine the rights to which every US citizen is entitled," US Attorney General Merrick B Garland said.

## State key player in chemicals: CM



**Bhubaneswar, Oct 18:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday said the state is emerging as a key player in chemicals and petrochemicals sector, supported by increasing demand from core industries like steel and aluminum. Addressing the 'India Chem 2024' in Mumbai, Majhi said the PCPIR, Paradeep, is driving Odisha's ambitions in this sector. The CM said the chemicals and petrochemicals sector in Odisha is ready for exponential growth. "At the same time, we are diversifying into further high-potential areas," he said. The state is also actively promoting investments in technical textiles and recycling of by-products, plastics and packaging, and specialty chemicals, which are seeing increased demand from domestic and international markets, the CM said.

## SC guidelines on child marriage prevention

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court Friday said the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) cannot be stunted by traditions under any personal law and observed marriages involving children violate the free will to choose a life partner. A bench comprising CJJ DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra issued guidelines for effective implementation of PCMA. P8

## Minor boy 'sacrificed'

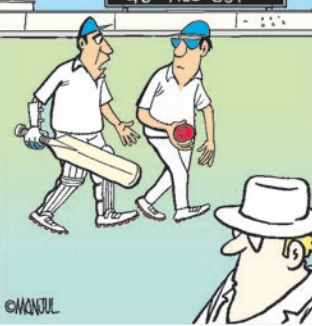
POST NEWS SERVICE

**Lathor, Oct 18:** In a suspected case of human sacrifice, the body of a minor boy who was missing since Thursday afternoon was recovered by the police from a hillock near Jhaliali village under Lathor police limits in Bolangir district, Friday. The deceased was identified as Somanath Bemal, 11, son of Tapan Bemal, a resident of Jalpankel. According to reports, Somanath went out to play Thursday afternoon but did not return home. His family launched a frantic search but could not trace him. The boy's grandfather lodged a missing complaint at Lathor police station. Meanwhile, some youths of the village who were also searching for the child found the body lying on the hillock. Lathor IIC, Rakesh Behera, along with a team initiated an investigation. The angry villagers staged a blockade on Karuanjhar-Lathor road demanding the ar-



rest of a villager, Dolamani Rana, whom they accused of sacrificing the boy. Khaprakhol Tehsildar Aditya Prasad Mishra, Patanagarh SDPO Sadananda Pujhari, a dog squad from Bhawanipatna and a forensic team started an investigation. The villagers attacked ASI Jatindra Badhei when he shouted at the agitators. After a lot of effort, the police managed to rescue the ASI from the angry villagers. Police registered a case and detained the accused for questioning. SDPO Pujhari said that after preliminary investigation it is suspected that the boy has been murdered. The exact reason behind the death will be ascertained after arrival of the post-mortem report, Pujhari added.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



The Election Commission should take over umpiring duties

## 234mn Indians living in poverty, says UN report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**United Nations, Oct 18:** India is among the five countries globally with the largest number of people living in poverty, according to a UN report that said 1.1 billion people, over half of them minors, live in acute poverty worldwide. The latest update of the global Multidimensional Poverty Index

(MPI) was released Thursday by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) based at the University of Oxford. It said that 1.1 billion people live in acute poverty worldwide, with 40 per cent living in countries experiencing war, fragility and/or low peacefulness, according to at least one of the

three widely used datasets of conflict settings. India has 234 million people living in poverty, which is medium Human Development Index, placing the country among five globally with the largest number of people living in poverty. "The other four countries are Pakistan (93 million), Ethiopia (86 million), Nigeria (74 million) and the Democratic Republic of

the Congo (66 million), all low HDI," it said. Together, these five countries account for nearly half (48.1 per cent) of the 1.1 billion poor people," it said. The report added that a "staggering" 455 million of the world's poor live in countries exposed to violent conflict, hindering and even reversing hard-won progress to reduce poverty.

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# leisure



## BROLIN TO PLAY VILLAIN IN THE RUNNING MAN

Oscar-nominated actor Josh Brolin is in talks to star opposite Glen Powell as antagonist in *The Running Man*, directed by Edgar Wright. The film is based on the 1982 novel of the same name by Stephen King, which was previously turned into a 1987 movie starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.

## TOM HOLLAND, ZENDAYA TO REUNITE FOR SPIDER-MAN 4

Tom Holland is all set to return as the fan-favorite superhero for Spider-Man 4, becoming the only actor with four solo outings as the web-slinger. Tom revealed that he and co-star Zendaya have read a draft of the script and can't hide his excitement for what's ahead.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

Today you will be focussed and unshakable in your work. The results will be noticeable by mid-day. In the evening you will meet one of your admirers and this will take a load off your shoulders. Ganesh predicts that if you are unmarried, you will meet someone remarkable.

#### TAURUS

You analysis, estimates and decisions, your planning and implementation is likely to be wayward and error prone. You could, thus, fall short of your targets today, warns Ganesh. Every thing you do is likely to be misplanned and misdirected. You are advised to maintain focus, and stick to the basics.

#### GEMINI

Ganesh warns that those around you could harbour feelings of enmity against you today. These people will try to malign your name and slander your reputation. However, in front of you these people will act like your well-wishers. You will taste the sweet fruit of success after much hard work, post noon, says Ganesh.

#### CANCER

A new friend will join your circle or you establish friendship with someone. You will be spending the day in entertainment or party with friends. But tension will prevail in the office. Yet, says Ganesh, a sense of joy will thrive on the domestic front.

#### LEO

You will take some important decisions regarding personal or professional matters today, says Ganesh. The later half of the day will be spent enjoying with your family and friends. An extremely progressive day awaits.

#### VIRGO

Heart-break kid - this is the new epithet for you today. Your pockets will empty faster than you can save. Expect marital bliss to blossom and bloom. Bond with the best, rather, your better half, advises Ganesh.

#### LIBRA

Sharing is the key to joy, and today, you shall be unlocking many doors with that key as you reveal your innermost feelings. Share them unabashedly with your family members. You are backed up with high energy levels that will soar as the day proceeds. This will enable you to show that special interest while interacting with peers at work.

#### SCORPIO

History beckons you, and unknown destinations stir up the adventurer in you, predicts Ganesh. At work, the spotlight shall be on you as you steal the show with your brilliant performance. Business will be fun and exciting for you, hopes Ganesh.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Your mood is high on expectations today. You shall plan meticulously before noon, and then in the afternoon, your plans shall fall in place, and deliver expected results. The opposite sex will find you intellectually stimulating and attractive.

#### CAPRICORN

A dazzling day awaits you today! From meeting some reliable people to taking commendable initiatives at work, you will be at the centre of everything, and will bag the appreciation of your mentors for your good work. Given that all this will boost your morale and self-confidence by afternoon, you will go a step further to bring perfection to what has already been approved and kept aside, says Ganesh.

#### AQUARIUS

You will transform abstract ideas into practical and tangible strategies today, and deserve all the credit. You will also appreciate and understand life a little more, says Ganesh.

#### PISCES

In spite of the pressure and stress you will be labouring under at the workplace today, you can expect to excel in all the activities that you choose to pursue. On the domestic front, the support that your family members extend will prove to be invaluable, says Ganesh.

## Malaika on dealing with negativity



**Mumbai:** Malaika Arora is always in the headlines either for her stunning fashion choices or her personal life. Recently, she grabbed everyone's attention when it was reported that she and Arjun Kapoor had broken up. A few days back, in an interview, she addressed the trolling related to her relationships. Malaika discussed how she has learned to handle the negativity surrounding both her personal and professional life. The chhaiya chhaiya girl, when asked how she handles criticism about her relationships and life choices, said, "In the best way I can. There are times when you feel things don't bother or affect me, but of course they do." She further said, "I have also figured out a way to deal with it, get strong about it and not let it pull me down, govern me or get the better out of me. I have figured out a way to insulate me to all of it. Yes, it's part and parcel of our lives, there is constantly something, criticism, trolling but you just need to block out the noise, the negativity and move on with whatever is positive in your life." Malaika and Arjun started dating in 2018. She was previously married to Salman Khan's brother and actor Arbaaz Khan. They share a son: Arhaan. Meanwhile, Arbaaz recently tied the knot with Sshura Khan.

Malaika and Arjun started dating in 2018. She was previously married to Salman Khan's brother and actor Arbaaz Khan. They share a son: Arhaan. Meanwhile, Arbaaz recently tied the knot with Sshura Khan.

## I don't curate my image: Sara

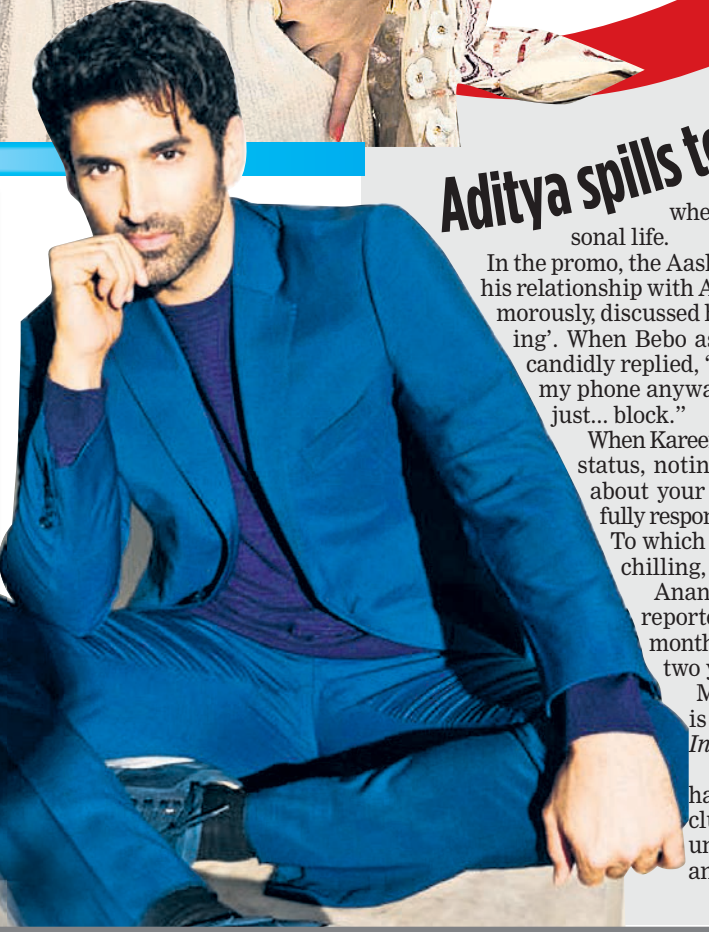
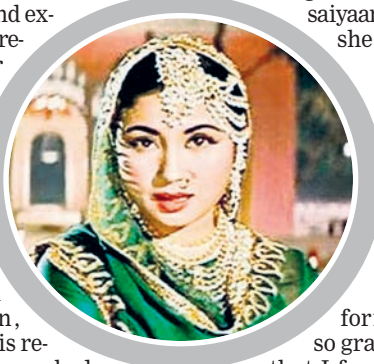


**Mumbai:** Sara Ali Khan has been a subject of discussion since her debut with *Kedarnath* in 2018. While some appreciate her humour and wearing non-designer clothes, others call it fabricated and PR work, considering her background as the daughter of actors Saif Ali Khan and Amrita Singh. In a recent interview, Sara defended herself, claiming that her image is anything but 'curated'. When asked if it was a 'conscious decision' to be seen as relatable, Sara replied, "I don't think I've spent any energy, to the dismay of some people, curating an image of myself. That's something I would do for the camera, where I curate characters. In real life I am just who I am - whether that's somebody who goes to the gym with five pairs of shorts and alternates them with crop tops, or someone who goes to the airport in athleisure but can also go in jeans and a t-shirt." She further added, "It's important to surround yourself with real people so that you're not dependent on the phone screen. It's easy to get caught up and lose focus on what the bigger things in life are. Choosing internal peace and traveling help me see what truly matters." On the work front, Sara was last seen in the historic thriller-drama *Ae Watan Mere Watan*. Her next film in the pipeline is *Metro In Dino* alongside Aditya Roy Kapur directed by Anurag Basu.

## Big B's unfulfilled desire

**Mumbai:** In the upcoming episode of *Kaun Banega Crorepati 16*, Amitabh Bachchan reflected on his illustrious career and expressed a heartfelt regret about never having the opportunity to work with the legendary actress Meena Kumari. During a conversation with Vidya Balan and Kartik Aaryan, Amitabh voiced his regret at not having worked with Meena Kumari while discussing the 1962 cult movie *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam*. Big B shared, "I never got the opportunity to work with Meena Kumari ji. In *Sahib Bivi Aur Ghulam*, there's a song - Na jao saiyaan where she per-

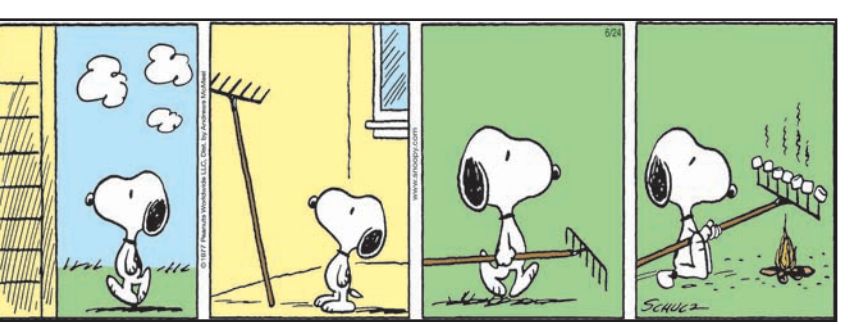
ance, the effects used to be marvellous." The *Baghban* actor went on to add, "They used to take long shots back then and I think that was the beauty of it all. Unlike today, every shot ends in just a few words."



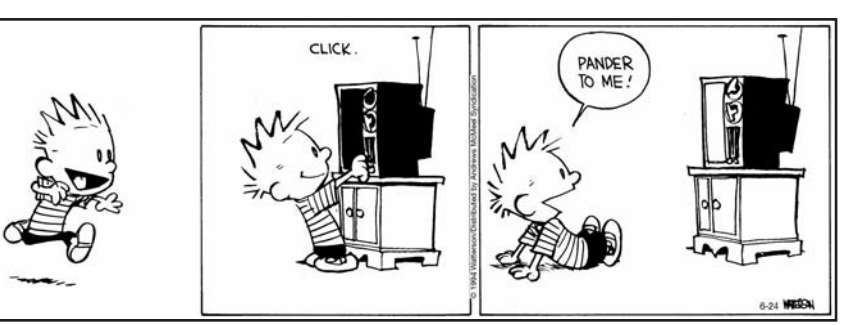
## Aditya spills tea on relationship status

**Mumbai:** Actor Aditya Roy Kapur recently appeared on Kareena Kapoor Khan's podcast show *What Women Want*, where he gave some insight into his personal life. In the promo, the *Aashiqui 2* actor, who reportedly ended his relationship with Ananya Panday earlier this year humorously, discussed how he handles relationship 'ghosting'. When Bebo asked how he deals with it, Aditya candidly replied, "A hundred messages! I'm bad with my phone anyway. My whole day will go by, and I'll just... block." When Kareena questioned about his relationship status, noting, "A lot of women want to know about your relationship status." Aditya playfully responded by asking, "Is chilling a status?" To which Kareena quipped, "You are always chilling, Adi." Aditya added, "I'm a chiller." Ananya Panday and Aditya Roy Kapur reportedly ended their relationship a few months ago after being together for nearly two years. Meanwhile, on the work front, Aditya is set to star in Anurag Basu's *Metro In Dino* alongside Sara Ali Khan. On the other hand, Ananya Panday has an exciting lineup of projects, including *Call Me Bae* Season 2 and an untitled film featuring Akshay Kumar and R Madhavan.

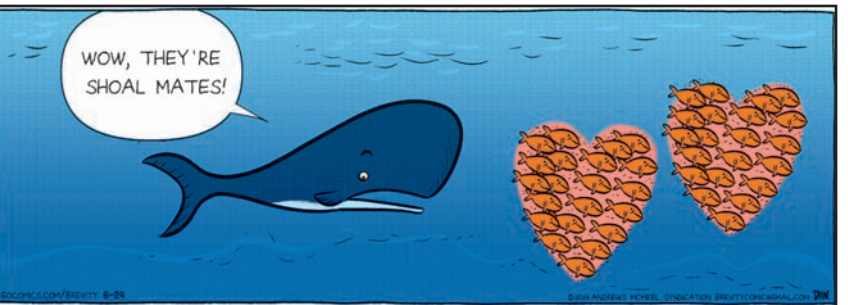
### PEANUTS



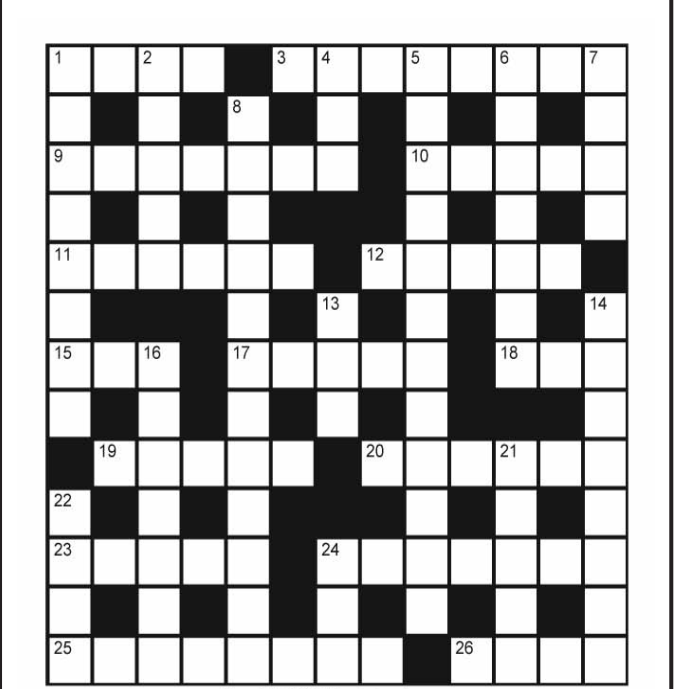
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



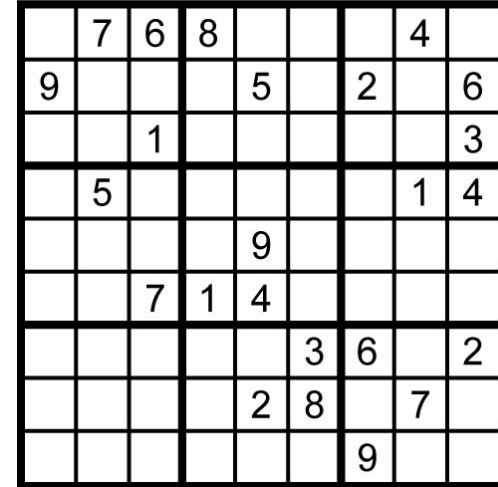
### FUN post CROSSWORD



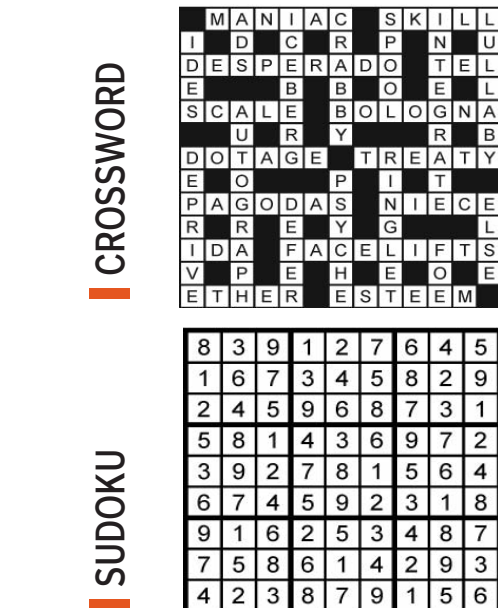
- Across**
- 1 Roman god of war
  - 3 Sleds
  - 9 Renaissance man (2,5)
  - 10 Blow one's top
  - 11 Large European flatfish
  - 12 Lukewarm
  - 15 Make lace
  - 17 Chubby
  - 18 Samuel's teacher, in the Bible
  - 19 Ziti, e.g.
  - 20 Entree with a crust
  - 23 Post-op time
  - 24 Cut of meat
  - 25 Assassin
  - 26 Foreboding
  - 6 Hard to pin down
  - 7 Fill to the gills
  - 8 Not harmonious
  - 13 North Sea diver
  - 14 Alfred Hitchcock, e.g.
  - 16 Educator
  - 21 Type of tea
  - 22 Streetcar
  - 24 Social gathering
- Down**
- 1 Do Zen
  - 2 Aare, for one
  - 4 Sapporo sash
  - 5 Type of sound system

### 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



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## PREZ VISIT PREP

Shree Jagannath Temple Administration chief administrator Arabinda Padhee presides over a meeting ahead of the visit of President Droupadi Murmu, in Puri, Friday



# Prisoner dies in Jharpada jail, family alleges murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Oct 18:** An under-trial prisoner died under mysterious circumstances at the controversy-ridden Jharpada Special Jail here Friday, even as the family of the deceased alleged that he succumbed to custodial torture by prison staff.

An officer at the Laxmisagar police station said Bidyadhara Guru, 48, who was lodged in the jail in connection with a NDPS case October 5, complained of chest pain in the morning and was rushed to the Capital Hospital by jail authorities. He was pronounced 'brought dead' by doctors at the state-run hospital at around 9 am. Bidyadhara, a native of Daspalla in Nayagarh district, worked as an auto-driver in the City. He lived with his family at Behera Sahi under Maitri Vihar police limits.

However, dismissing the police claims, Bidyadhara's wife Jhunu Guru said the former's body bore signs of torture and assault. "My husband had suffered deep injuries on the back of his head and left eye, ostensibly after he was severely beaten up. Besides, we were informed about his death almost four hours after his passing away. None of the police officers have yet clarified about the cause of his sudden death since he was not suffering from any serious ailment," Jhunu alleged.

Sources at Capital Hospital said the autopsy of the body has been postponed till Saturday



due to the controversy surrounding the case.

Meanwhile, DG of Prisons and Correctional Services, Arun Kumar Ray told OrissaPOST that Bidyadhara was an alcoholic and drug addict. "Taking the families concerns into consideration, the entire process of autopsy will be videographed to eliminate any doubt," he said.

Ray said if need arose, a special committee will be formed to probe the case under the mandated guidelines of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). "So far, a case of an unnatural death has been registered at Laxmisagar police station in this regard," he added.

Nevertheless, Friday's development came close on the heels of the murderous attack on an under-trial prisoner by dreaded mobster Munna (and his hench-

men), September 1, after the former exposed the nexus between jail officials and influential inmates. In a letter to the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Soumyakant Mohanty, the under-trial prisoner, had stated that the nexus was ensuring the unabated supply of contrabands and provision of luxurious accommodation inside the jail for those who could afford.

He also brought to light a 'rate chart' which has been prepared for peddling of contrabands and tobacco-related items to inmates in the jail. He claimed that while Bidis were sold for Rs 200 per piece, mobile phones could be accessed at a monthly payment of Rs 5,000. Moreover, luxurious accommodation is being provided at a monthly charge of Rs 50,000 inside the jail, his letter claimed.

# Bharatpur: HC seeks status report from govt

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Oct 18:** The Orissa High Court Friday asked the state government to file the status report of and case diary related to the alleged assault of an Army officer and his female friend at Bharatpur police station in Bhubaneswar September 15.

Justice Sangam Kumar Sahoo gave the directive while hearing the anticipatory bail pleas filed by now suspended Bharatpur inspector in-charge Dinakrushna Mishra, sub-inspector Baisalini Panda, two women ASIs Salilamayee Sahoo and Sagarika Hansa and constable Balam Ram Handa.

While the court is yet to hear

the plea of Mishra, it did not give any relief to four others. The court posted the next hearing for October 28.

**Inquiry Commission holds 2nd meet**

Meanwhile, the Commission of Inquiry set up by the state government to probe the alleged assault of an Army officer and his female friend at the Bharatpur police station, conducted its second meeting Friday.

Sources said during the meeting, which was attended by Home Secretary Satyabrata Sahu, Special Secretary of Home Department Radha Krishna Sharma, Crime Branch ADG

Vinaytosh Mishra and two Investigating Officers, DSP Nilima Panda and Narendra Behera, shared details about the Crime Branch investigation so far with the Commission, led by Justice Chitta Ranjan Dash.

Emerging from the meeting, Crime Branch ADG Vinaytosh Mishra said that lie detection tests of all the police officials were conducted at Gandhinagar in Gujarat.

He said brain mapping and narco-analysis of former IIC of Bharatpur Police Station Dinakrushna Mishra have been conducted and the reports are awaited.

"The Commission was in-

formed about the development of the Crime Branch investigation into the incident in the meeting," the Crime Branch ADG said.

Commission Secretary Subhendu Mohanty said that information was collected from the Crime Branch officials about the developments in the investigation. "As the Crime Branch has received no reports from Gandhinagar, the officials could not inform anything about it," he said.

Sources said the statement of the victim has been recorded before a Magistrate. The Crime Branch ADG informed that the statements of the accused police personnel are yet to be recorded before a Magistrate.

# CM congratulates tribal youth for clearing UGC-NET

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Oct 18:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday congratulated Ajay Kumar Kadra, a tribal youth from Rayagada district, for successfully clearing the UGC-NET 2024 conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA).

Ajay, who belongs to the Dongria Kondh tribe - a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) in the Bissamcuttack, Kalyansingpur and Muniguda blocks - has qualified as an assistant professor after clearing the UGC-NET 2024 due to his strong determination and hard work, which is a matter of pride for all, Majhi posted on X.

Ajay, a native of Kurli panchayat in Bissamcuttack block, did his higher studies from a private institute in Bhubaneswar.

# 'HARDSHIPS' FACED BY HABISHYALIS

## BJD slams govt, BJP hits back



AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Oct 18:** The BJD Friday slammed the state government over alleged hardships faced by elderly women (habishyalis) who came to Puri Srimandir to observe 'Kartik Brata', alleging that the BJP dispensation 'failed' to make adequate arrangements for them.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi instructed officials and the Puri District Magistrate to take measures for women pilgrims.

BJD spokesperson Lekhashree Samantsinghar claimed that the elderly pilgrims had to spend nights on the streets in the coastal town due to 'lack of lodging facilities'.

"Many women suffered as they were denied accommodation and other facilities. They spent the nights on the streets. This government has hurt the religious sentiments of people," she alleged.

Minister and BJP leader Prithiviraj Harichandan denied the charge and claimed that the administration had made elaborate arrangements for those who were coming to the coastal town to observe 'Kartik Brata'.

A large number of women, mostly above 70 years of age, used to visit Srimandir and observe 'Kartik Brata'. "Previously, our government used

to make elaborate arrangements of lodging and food for habishyalis. We had also made arrangements for their transportation from the places of stay to the temple. Last year, around 3200 habishyalis were provided with all facilities by the previous BJD government for observing the 'Kartik Brata'," she said.

"With the change of government, the elderly women suffered a lot. This was due to lack of arrangements," Samantsinghar added.

Taking to X, Majhi, who is on a tour to Mumbai, said, "After knowing about the plight of women pilgrims, I have instructed officers, the administration of the Sri Mandir and the district magistrate to take all kinds of measures. The government is committed to providing all kinds of facilities to the habishyalis who come from outside the district and observe habishyabrat at Sri Jagannath Dham in Puri. Let Lord Jagannath fulfil all your wishes. Jai Jagannath."

The BJD spokesperson also alleged that the 'failure' to provide adequate facilities to habishyalis by the BJP government has 'hurt Odia Asmita (pride)'. "The BJP government has been exposed. The saffron party pledged to uphold 'Odia Asmita' and protect the state's culture, tradition and heritage. Habishyalis faced hard-

ships in the holy month of Kartik due to the BJP government's failure. The state government has hurt the faith of habishyalis," she alleged.

Samantsinghar said that the previous BJD government had made arrangements at Brundabati Niwas, a seven-storey building, to accommodate the visiting habishyalis in Puri. Earlier, arrangements were also made at other places in Puri for these pilgrims, she said.

"This year, only 2,500 women are provided with the facilities while a large number of habishyalis were denied accommodation. In a welfare state, it is the responsibility of the government to provide basic facilities to the people observing the month-long 'Kartik Brata'," she said.

Puri Collector Siddharth S Swain said the administration has started making efforts to address the issues like providing accommodation to the pilgrims who have not registered themselves so far. "As per the ongoing procedure, the government makes arrangements for the habishyalis who register their names. However, some more people have come without making any registration. The district administration is also taking care of these people," Harichandan said.

Earlier in the day, some habishyalis fell ill at the Brundabati Niwas and were admitted to a hospital there.

Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida and Culture Minister Suryabanshi Suraj attended the inauguration of 'Habishyali Kartik Brata' at Brundabati Niwas in Puri Friday evening.

"Habishyali mothers are the messengers of our culture and tradition. Due to their dedication to the Lord, every Odia is blessed and this will make our Odisha prosperous," Parida said, assuring the women that the government will provide all possible facilities to them.

# 2 detained for misbehaving with senior ICG officer

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Oct 18:** Police Friday detained two youths in a road rage incident involving a senior Indian Coast Guard (ICG) officer and his wife near Kalinga Stadium here.

According to Police Commissioner SD Singh, the youths were detained based on a FIR and an investigation is on. The altercation occurred

Thursday night when ICG DIG Satya Ranjan Das and his wife were travelling in their car. Allegedly inebriated, the two youths blocked the officer's

## UNSAFE CITY ROADS

vehicle while waiting near a traffic post. They refused to allow the couple to take a U-turn and reportedly misbehaved when asked to clear way, po-

lice said. Sources claimed that the pillion rider attempted to open a door of the DIG's car. The traffic police later took the youths into custody.

The DIG subsequently filed a complaint with Nayapalli police. "I asked them to give passage to my car, but they misbehaved with us. As a responsible citizen, I felt it necessary to lodge a complaint," Das told reporters.





To listen to some devout people, one would imagine that God never laughs.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Punjab Power Play

With Arvind Kejriwal now out on bail and the no-show in the Haryana assembly elections, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) seems to be shaking things up in Punjab, where it holds power alongside Delhi. One of the biggest recent changes is the appointment of KAP Sinha as Punjab's new Chief Secretary, replacing Anurag Verma, who had only been in the role since June 2023. Sinha, a 1992-batch IAS officer, previously served as Special Chief Secretary for the Department of Revenue, Agriculture, and Water Conservation—a background that should serve him well in his new position.

As for Verma, he's been reassigned as Additional Chief Secretary, taking charge of multiple important portfolios, including Revenue, Rehabilitation, and Disaster Management. For the past couple of weeks, there had been speculation about a potential leadership change at the top administrative level in Punjab, and now it's confirmed.

In another interesting twist, it appears that AAP's leadership from Delhi has sent representatives to Punjab, with reports indicating that these envoys have been camped out in Chandigarh. Insiders suggest this might be a power play by the central AAP leadership to reassert their influence over Punjab's administration. It's a move that some see as a way to curtail the authority of Punjab's Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, realigning the power dynamics within the state.

These changes hint at a strategic recalibration within AAP, especially as the party tries to maintain a delicate balance between the central and state leadership. Whether clipping Mann's wings will strengthen AAP's hold in Punjab or create new tensions remains to be seen, but it's certainly something to watch closely.

### Andhra, Telangana officers in limbo

The recent directive by the Centre to enforce cadre reallocations between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana has stirred up discontent among IAS and IPS officers. Over a decade since the states' bifurcation, around ten officers are being told to return to their original cadre states. Initially allotted to Andhra or Telangana in 2014 under the Pratyush Sinha Committee recommendations, these officers had been granted interim relief by the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) to stay where they preferred. Now, following a Telangana High Court ruling, the Centre's Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has rejected these officers' appeals, ordering them to relocate.

Sources have informed DKB that the issue goes back to the 2014 bifurcation, when hundreds of officers were distributed between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. However, some officers objected to their placements, citing concerns over domicile and procedural fairness. CAT's relief allowed them to continue in their chosen states, but the recent High Court order criticizes CAT's overreach and supports a return to the initial allocations.

Officers like Vani Prasad and Ronald Rose from Telangana must now report to Andhra Pradesh, while Andhra Pradesh officers like Chevuru Hari Kiran are being sent to Telangana. Many of these officers are resisting the move, citing their established roles and deep ties to their current states. Some are even considering renewed legal action or lobbying state leaders for support.

This situation also highlights administrative challenges for both states, which face IAS shortages. The enforced transfers could disrupt continuity in local governance, further complicating the transition. The question remains: how will these officers, after years of service in one state, adapt to this sudden shift? As these officers navigate their uncertain paths, the outcome could reshape administrative dynamics in both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

### Inexplicably road-blocked

In a rather awkward twist, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to block Rakesh Asthana's bid to join the board of Religare Enterprises (REL). For those not in the know, Asthana is a former Delhi Police Commissioner and CBI Special Director, not to mention his stint as the ad-hoc Director General of the Narcotics Control Bureau. Quite the résumé, but despite his impressive credentials, he's facing some roadblocks in this new venture.

Back in November 2023, the REL board appointed him as an additional director, hoping to eventually elevate him to a full-time director position. Sounds straightforward, except for one catch: the appointment required shareholder and regulatory approvals. Now, here's where things get sticky. One shareholder raised concerns that Asthana's appointment was illegal, citing that the approval process had hit a snag after the mandatory three-month period expired without the RBI giving it a green light.

This recent decision from the RBI not only prevents Asthana from stepping into his new role but also serves as a strong reminder about the necessity of adhering to regulatory guidelines when it comes to board appointments. It's not just about having the right qualifications; it's about playing by the rules, especially in a sector as tightly regulated as finance.

You have to feel for Asthana a bit. After years of serving in high-profile positions in law enforcement, he finds himself in a rather peculiar situation, stuck in limbo while trying to transition into the corporate world. Asthana's experience reflects a broader trend where high-ranking officials often face scrutiny when they move to the private sector. While it's crucial to have experienced leaders at the helm of companies like REL, the path isn't always smooth.

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### WISDOM CORNER

- “The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.” —BERTRAND RUSSELL
- “We all want to be famous people, and the moment we want to be something we are no longer free.” —JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI
- “The cleverest of all, in my opinion, is the man who calls himself a fool at least once a month.” —FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1781: Britain's Lord Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia, handing a huge victory to American General George Washington and effectively ending the American Revolution and assuring America's independence.
- 1789: John Jay, a Founding Father of the United States, was sworn in as the first chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.
- 1812: Napoleon began his disastrous retreat from Russia.
- 1914: During World War I, the First Battle of Ypres began in western Flanders; the Allies and Germans settled into the trench warfare that would characterize the remainder of the war on the Western Front.
- 1987: The Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted nearly 23 percent, the largest one-day percentage drop in the stock market's history.

### FOCUS ECONOMY

# WHY NATIONS FAIL



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

**INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS ARE CRUCIAL FOR LONG-TERM ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**

A person's living standards are mostly determined not by talent or hard work but by when and where they were born. Historically, most models of economic growth focused on the accumulation of factors of production, labour, capital, and, more recently, technology, research, and innovative ideas. The greater the capital stock per worker and the more productive its use, the richer a country would be.

Yet that still left a vicious gap triggering questions: why some countries are rich while some are poor, why some nations are prosperous and some are plagued by extreme poverty, why some nations succeeded while others failed. Those are some questions that puzzle many economists and planners today.

However, this year's Nobel laureates in economics, Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, delved into the world's colonial past, especially European colonisation, to trace how gaps emerged between nations. They found that it is the institutions that shape a nation's prosperity. Their research emphasises the interplay between politics and economics in understanding development and inequality.

Some time ago, a little-known Scottish philosopher wrote a book on what makes nations succeed and what makes them fail. *The Wealth of Nations* of Adam Smith is still being read today. With the same perspicacity and historical perspective, Acemoglu and Robinson have written the 2012 bestseller, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*, which argues that manmade problems were responsible for keeping countries poor.

Similarly, Johnson had collaborated with Acemoglu and Robinson to produce an influential paper in November 2002 titled *Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World*



According to the Oxfam report 2023, the richest one per cent bag nearly twice as much wealth as the rest of the world put together over the past two years

### Income Distribution.

According to them, the concentration or dispersion of political power can lead to the establishment of either inclusive or extractive institutions. They argue that inclusive political and economic institutions lead to prosperity, while extractive institutions lead to poverty and failure. Inclusive institutions are characterised by property rights protection, the rule of law, a level playing field for economic competition, and broad political participation. These institutions provide incentives for innovation, entrepreneurship, and productive economic activities, leading to sustained economic growth.

By contrast, extractive institutions concentrate power and wealth in the hands of a few elites, suppress political and economic competition, and hinder economic progress. They discourage investment, innovation, and productivity, leading to a stagnant or declining economy. The authoritarian 'extractive' institutions like the ones that drive growth today in any country are bound to run out of steam.

The introduction of inclusive institutions would create long-term benefits for every-

one, but extractive institutions provide short-term gains for the people in power. As long as the political system guarantees they will remain in control, no one will trust their promises of future economic reforms. According to the laureates, this is why no improvement occurs.

Extractive institutions create severe wealth gaps and impoverish nations as a whole. Societies with a poor rule of law, in addition to institutions that exploit the population, do not generate growth or change for the better. This confirms core moral values regarding humanity. Jeffrey Sachs, another Nobel prize-winning economist, had found that geography is a determining factor of a nation. But this year's Nobel laureates have debunked this notion and argue that the fate of nations is determined by the quality of their institutions, not by geographic or cultural factors or ignorance of what the right policies are.

The Nobel laureates trio underscores that nations succeed when institutions foster fairness, accountability, and growth and fail when they only serve the interests of elites, perpetuating inequality. They believe that an effective way to help move bil-

lions of people from the rut of poverty to prosperity is not more philanthropy from the wealthy nations but appropriate economic institutions.

However, they argue countries are more likely to develop the right institutions when they have an open pluralistic political system with competition for political office, a widespread electorate, and openness to new political leaders. Without inclusive institutions, sustainable growth is impossible, because only a truly free society can foster genuine innovation and the creative destruction that is its corollary.

Broadly speaking, the work they have done favours democracy. However, according to Acemoglu, democracy is not a panacea and it can be hard to introduce, and when you introduce elections, that sometimes creates conflict, and there are pathways to growth for countries that are not democracies, including rapidly tapping a nation's resources to ramp up economic progress.

While noble laureates have helped us understand differences in prosperity between nations, especially under the colonial era, they have failed to discuss the inequality in neocolonialism, which maintains the same oppressive system but operates under the guise of economic and cultural dominance. They also failed to discuss inequality within the country that poses a serious threat to the well-being of society. They have not studied even the role of democracy properly in ensuring an equitable society. They have not studied the detrimental impact of today's exploitative system, including capitalistic society, which strives on deceit, fraud, greed, and hedonism and thereby perpetuates mass impoverishment and rampant inequality.

*The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist. Views are personal.*

### SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

# Unlocking AI-powered learning



Justina Nixon-Saintil

**ONE SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLE TO NARROWING THE AI SKILLS GAP IS THE BLISTERING PACE OF INNOVATION**

Artificial intelligence has captured the imagination of corporate leaders eager to implement new tech solutions in their industries. But AI could also be applied to broader and more complex problems, especially in education. This vision is on its way to becoming a reality, with the technology already helping to enhance student learning, create new pathways to rewarding careers, and align today's education with tomorrow's jobs.

A recent report found that around half of the teachers and school administrators surveyed in the United States who are currently using AI in their work are optimistic about its potential. But a lack of training is hindering widespread adoption.

Fortunately, surmounting this barrier is relatively straightforward. For starters, business leaders and policymakers should work together to provide teachers with free training on the fundamentals of AI and its practical applications. A train-the-trainer model can be delivered through low-cost or free online learning and customized to specific education levels or local curricula. This approach allows educators to gain confidence with the new technology

and begin experimenting with practical applications in their classrooms.

Moreover, teachers trained in AI are better equipped to help students who want to learn more about the sector. An IBM survey shows that many learners want to pursue well-paying tech jobs, but believe that they are unqualified because they lack the academic credentials. Others say they simply do not know where to begin. That is where generative AI comes in: it can recommend coursework that matches learners' levels and interests, and offer real-time feedback as they move through the material. AI-powered solutions can even pair students with mentors who can advise them on higher education and career progression. This results in a more personalized and immediate educational experience than the online learning of yesterday.

One significant obstacle to narrowing the AI skills gap is the blistering pace of innovation, which has led to substantial unmet demand for expertise. According to the World Economic Forum, half of the global workforce needs to upskill or reskill, but the training market is not cur-

rently equipped to meet this need. It is encouraging that new offerings are being rolled out across the AI ecosystem, from coursework on ethics and prompt engineering to creative experiential resources for students. As the lifespan of technical skills continues to shrink, both young students and lifelong learners must be encouraged to invest in AI training.

At the same time, AI is driving sweeping change across industries and markets, and the broad scope of this transformation requires an equally comprehensive response—individual efforts will not be enough. The first step in helping learners find their way to tomorrow's jobs is ensuring that these positions exist. Corporate executives and policymakers must work together to create jobs that offer higher-value work to qualified candidates, who, in turn, will be better able to provide for their families.

Equally important are multi-sector collaborations like the AI Alliance, which aims to encourage openness about these systems and accelerate knowledge sharing, and the AI-Enabled Information and Communication Technology

(ICT) Workforce Consortium, which directs workers to relevant training programs. Such collective action is creating opportunities to harness the excitement around AI to build common frameworks and develop a skills-first approach that can identify and nurture tomorrow's tech leaders.

But the work has only just begun. Industry leaders and policymakers must continue to develop a shared approach to education and job creation in the age of AI and encourage more widespread training in the technology's fundamentals. As IBM's Chief Impact Officer, I will be asking how my organization can ensure that students, teachers, employees, and job-seekers are benefiting from these advances. Although we have taken a step in that direction with IBM Skills Build, shaping the industries and jobs of the future requires a host of AI-powered features and programs that can provide learners with personalized educational experiences over the course of their lives.

*The writer is Vice President and Chief Impact Officer at IBM.*  
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### Once and for all

## 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)

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Sir, The Supreme Court's judgment on the validity of Section 6-A of the Citizenship Act Thursday not only put an end to concerns about an old issue reviving, but it also shed light on numerous factors that can help shape the current debate. In this regard, the ruling confirms the methodology established in the Assam Accord to address the issue of illegal immigrants in Assam. The apex court's five-member constitutional bench ruled Section 6A of the Citizenship Act statutory, clearing the door for the implementation of the 1985 accord reached by the Rajiv Gandhi government and the All-Assam Students Union (AASU). The verdict made it plain who's citizenship is safe, who can obtain citizenship, and who must be identified as illegal migrants and returned properly. In this sense, there is no room for ambiguity. The verdict also indicates that additional prudence is required when dealing with such important and sensitive matters. Politics driven by immediate interests can be more harmful in this situation. The decision may have been made in the context of Assam, but the issue of illegal immigration is significant in many other locations. Let us hope that, because of this decision, all parties involved in other sectors will take a resolution-orientated approach rather than provoking disagreements.

**Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR**

### Lasting effect

Sir, Hamas Chief Yahya Sinwar's killing will have a lasting impact on the fate of Israeli hostages, the region, and the Islamist militant group he once led. With Sinwar's killing, Israel has dealt a significant blow operationally to the organisation in the short term. Israel has had a long history of successfully killing Palestinian leaders, including several Hamas leaders who preceded Sinwar. And yet with each killing of a Hamas leader over the years, their life story of armed resistance becomes folklore that fuels another generation of leaders who are, in some cases, more extreme, hard-line, and militant. While Sinwar's death reduced the immediate threat to Israel, neither Israel would withdraw from Gaza nor would it put an end to Israel's occupation of Palestinians and the establishment of a Palestinian state. Therefore, although Israel has achieved a tactical victory today, the fundamental nature of the conflict remains unchanged.

**N Sadhasiva Reddy, WASHINGTON**





The TMC destroyed the future of the youths to reap political dividends. Because of the Singur agitation, not a single major industrial unit has come up in the state during the 13-rule of the TMC  
SUVENDU ADHIKARI | SENIOR BJP LEADER

RELIEF FOR SADHGURU

The Supreme Court Friday closed the proceedings in a habeas corpus petition filed by a man who had alleged that his two daughters were held captive on the premises of spiritual leader Jaggi Vasudev's Isha Foundation in Tamil Nadu's Coimbatore. A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud noted that the sisters -- aged 39 and 42 -- are adults and have stated that they are residing at the ashram voluntarily and without any coercion



of the day quote

There is such an inefficient government in the state that they are not able to introduce a full fledged budget in the Assembly, fearing that people will demand the super six promises made (by TDP) during the polls  
YS JAGAN MOHAN REDDY | YSR CONGRESS PARTY CHIEF



Bihar's scenic locations and sufficient infrastructure have always been attractions for filmmakers  
VIJAY KUMAR SINHA | DEPUTY CM, BIHAR



Our government stands for social justice, and it is our stance that justice should be available to all marginalised groups  
SIDDARAMAIAH | CM, KARNATAKA



SHORT TAKES

WB: Docs threaten to go on strike Oct 22

**Kolkata:** Agitating doctors in West Bengal, who have been seeking justice for their deceased colleague at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, Friday threatened to hold a strike by all medics in the state October 22 if their demands are not met. Stating that they are in talks with their colleagues in other states, the medics said there may also be a country-wide strike by doctors Tuesday over the issue. The junior medics said that they, along with senior doctors, were giving a deadline to the state government till October 21 to fulfil their demands.

2 killed in fire in Shahdara house

**New Delhi:** A fire broke out in a house in Delhi's Shahdara area in the early hours of Friday, resulting in the deaths of a 16-year-old boy and her mother and injuries to four other members of the family, officials said. A call regarding the blaze was received at around 5:25 am and six fire tenders were pressed into service, an official of the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) said.

UPSC postpones ESE-2025

**New Delhi:** The Union Public Service Commission Friday postponed the Engineering Services Examination-2025 to give "sufficient time" to the aspirants to prepare for the recruitment test, according to an official statement. "In order to give sufficient time to the aspirants of ESE 2025 to prepare for the examination, the Commission has also decided to postpone the ESE (Preliminary) and ESE (Main) Exam, 2025."

India sends aid to Lebanon

**New Delhi:** India Friday sent 33 tonnes of humanitarian supplies, including medicines, to Lebanon. The supply of aid came amid Israel's continuing military offensive targeting Hezbollah strongholds.

Leopard shot dead

**Jaipur:** A leopard "suspected" to have turned man-eater was shot dead Friday by a joint team of forest department and police in Rajasthan's Udaipur district, an official said. In Udaipur district, humans were hunted by leopards September 18, 19, 20, 25, 28 and 30. In the above incidents, the place of attack by leopard were Gram Panchayat Chhali, Bagdunda, Majavad and Madar under the jurisdiction of Deputy Forest Conservator Udaipur (North).

SC: Child marriage cannot be stunted under personal laws

The top court opined child marriages needed an intersectional approach towards the vulnerabilities experienced by children, especially girls from marginalised communities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Oct 18:** Terming the prevalence of "social evil" of child marriages as "sobering", the Supreme Court Friday passed a slew of directions to the Centre, states and other authorities to eradicate the malaise. In a 141-page judgment, a bench of Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Justice J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, therefore, issued several directions to the stakeholders under nine heads, including for appointment of officers solely responsible for discharging the functions of Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPO) at the district level in the country. The court further said, "Child marriage is a social evil, and its commission is a criminal offence. Despite the near-universal agreement on the ills of child marriage, its commission and prevalence have been sobering. Child marriage is the phenomenon of children being married before they attain the minimum legal age under the law." Dealing with the contentious issue whether the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 would prevail over personal laws governing marriage, it said the Centre had failed to provide con-



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

flitting judgements of various high courts on the issue as claimed. "The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amending) Bill 2021 was introduced in Parliament on December 21, 2021. The Bill was referred for examination to the Department Related Standing Committee on education, women, children, youth and sports. The Bill sought to amend the PCMA to expressly state the overriding effect of the statute over various personal laws. The issue, therefore, is pending consideration before Parliament," said the bench. Under the title of "Legal Enforcement", the top court said, "State governments and Union

**Child marriage is a social evil, and its commission is a criminal offence. Despite the near-universal agreement on the ills of child marriage, its commission and prevalence have been sobering. Child marriage is the phenomenon of children being married before they attain the minimum legal age under the law**

APEX COURT

Territories (UTs) must appoint officers solely responsible for discharging the functions of CMPO at the district level. These officers should not be burdened with additional duties that could impede their focus on preventing child marriage." Observing the term child marriage was an "oxymoron", the bench said, "A child implies a person whose capacity to make legal decisions is not fully developed. On the other hand, marriage is an institution with legal standing... Marriage dictates the framework rules of permissible and impermissible social behaviours. However, a child is incapable of understanding the broad and serious obligations expected from members of a marital union." Such marriages often deprive children of intellectual, social and psychological development and carry life-threatening risks, it underscored. The top court opined child marriages needed an intersectional approach towards the vulnerabilities experienced by children, especially girls from marginalised communities. "Intersectionality involves considering factors like gender, caste, socioeconomic status, and geography, which often increase the risks of early marriage. Preventive strategies should therefore be tailored to the unique needs of various communities and focus on addressing the root causes of child marriage, such as poverty, gender inequality, lack of education, and entrenched cultural practices," it said.

BIHAR HOCH TRAGEDY

10 more die; toll rises to 35

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Patna, Oct 18:** Ten more people died after allegedly consuming illicit liquor in Bihar's Siwan and Saran districts, taking the toll in the hooch tragedy to 35, an official said Friday. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, Saran range, Nilesh Kumar said Friday that while Siwan accounted for 28 fatalities, seven deaths have been reported from Saran. "As many as 28 people in Maghar and Auriya panchayats in Siwan district have so far died after consuming suspected illicit liquor: Seven people in Ibrahimpur area under the jurisdiction of Mashrakh police station in Saran district also died after consuming suspected spurious liquor", the DIG told PTI Friday. The suspected hooch tragedy has triggered a political blame game with Opposition parties questioning the efficacy of the ban on sale and consumption of liquor, imposed by the Nitish Kumar government more than eight years ago. Locals in both districts claimed that people lost their lives after "consuming illicit liquor". On the condition of anonymity local police officials claimed that more than 25 people from both districts are still battling for their lives at different hospitals in Siwan, Saran and Patna districts. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem examinations and the exact cause of the incident can only be known after receiving the autopsy reports, the DIG said. Officials have so far not disclosed the identity of the deceased and those under treatment.



A potter makes 'dijas' (earthen lamps) ahead of the Diwali in Hyderabad, Telangana

BABA SIDDIQUE MURDER CASE

Five arrested for providing firearms



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Oct 18:** Five more persons were held Friday for allegedly providing firearms and logistical support to the shooters in the Baba Siddique murder case, a Mumbai police official said. The total number of arrests in the sensational case now stands at nine, while three key persons are on the run. Siddique was shot at and grievously injured October 12 near his MLA son Zeeshan Siddique's office in Nirmal Nagar in Mumbai's Bandra area. The Congress-turned-NCP leader died some time later in nearby Lilavati Hospital. Prima facie, the five arrested accused were in touch with conspirator Shubham Lonkar and mastermind Mohammed Zeeshan Akhtar, both absconding at present, the official said. As per police, Akhtar's links were earlier established with the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and he is allegedly one of the masterminds of the politician's murder. "Based on human intelligence and technical analysis, an operation was conducted by Crime Branch in various parts of the state, including Panvel and Karjat in neighbouring Raigad district, leading to the arrest of these

**Salman gets fresh threat**  
**Mumbai:** The Mumbai traffic police received a threat message demanding ₹5 crore from Hindi film industry actor Salman Khan, an official said Friday. A case was registered at Worli police station under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for threat and extortion after the city's traffic control room received the message on its WhatsApp helpline Thursday afternoon, he said. The case has been registered on the complaint of a traffic police personnel, the official added. five persons for conspiracy related to the crime and its execution," he said. The official identified the five as Nitin Gautam Sapre (32), Sambhaji Kisan Pardihi (44), Pradeep Dattu Thombre (37), Chetan Dilip Pardihi and Ram Fulchand Kanoujia (43). Sapre is from Dombivali, while Pardihi, Thombre and Pardihi (27) are from Ambernath in Thane district. Kanoujia is a resident of Panvel in Raigad. They were produced before court, which sent them in police custody till October 25. As per the interrogation of the accused, we have found that Sapre and Kanoujia are key members of this module.

**SNIPPETS**

**Bahraich victim's wife demands 'death' to killers**  
**Lucknow/Bahraich (UP):** The wife of the man shot dead in Bahraich Friday said she will get justice only when her husband's killers are dead, while the PWD served a notice to one of the accused to remove the "illegal" construction. Roli Mishra also accused the authorities of taking bribes to deny "justice" to her. The wife of 22-year-old Ram Gopal Mishra, who was killed in a gun attack in Bahraich Sunday, in a message on social media said, "We want justice, but we are being denied it. Authorities have taken bribes." She said her husband's killers, though nabbed, were yet to be killed.

**Top court plans to start live-streaming of regular hearings of all benches**  
**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court is planning to start live-streaming of the regular hearings of all its benches. In a trial run, the proceedings of all benches were streamed live Friday. The apex court has been using YouTube to live-stream hearings for cases before Constitution benches and matters of public interest such as the rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata. In a unanimous decision made during a full-court meeting led by former Chief Justice of India U U Lalit, the court had resolved to live-stream all Constitution bench hearings, following a landmark ruling on the issue in 2018.

**Haryana to offer free dialysis to chronic kidney patients**  
**Chandigarh:** Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini Friday announced all government hospitals in Haryana will offer free dialysis to chronic kidney patients, fulfilling the ruling BJP's first poll promise. Addressing a press conference after presiding over the first meeting of his cabinet, the Chief Minister said his government will also implement the Supreme Court's decision empowering states to make sub-classifications within the Scheduled Castes for granting reservation "today itself". Saini, who was sworn in as chief minister for a second time Thursday, said the people of Haryana defeated the Congress' narrative of lies and efforts to provoke farmers and the poor by bringing the BJP back to power for a third time. By giving a big mandate to the BJP, people put their stamp of approval on the policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said.

J&K govt seeking restoration of statehood only: Oppn

WHILE THERE HAS BEEN NO WORD FROM EITHER THE GOVERNMENT OR THE NC, A JAMMU-BASED NEWSPAPER 'DAILY EXCELSIOR' CARRIED A REPORT THAT THE CABINET HAD PASSED A RESOLUTION URGING THE CENTRE TO RESTORE J&K'S STATEHOOD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Oct 18:** Political parties in Jammu and Kashmir Friday described the reported resolution by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah-led cabinet seeking restoration of statehood only and not Article 370 as an "utter surrender" and a departure from the stand of the ruling National Conference (NC). While there has been no word from either the government or the NC, a Jammu-based newspaper 'Daily Excelsior' carried a report that the cabinet had passed a resolution urging the Centre to restore J&K's statehood. The report also said the Chief Minister will travel to Delhi to handover the draft of the reso-

lution to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Efforts to reach out to the Chief Minister, his cabinet colleagues or the ruling party leaders for a comment on the report did not fructify. Various political parties, including the People's Democratic Party (PDP), People's Conference (PC) and Awami Ittehad Party (AIP), denounced the move, reminding the NC of its poll promise to "strive to restore (Articles) 370-35A and statehood as prior to August 5, 2019", and saying it was a departure from the pre-election stand. In its manifesto, the NC had promised that in the interim period, "we will endeavour to redraw the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, and the Transaction of



Business of the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Rules, 2019". The manifesto promised that the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, in its first list of busi-

ness after elections, will pass a resolution against the Centre's decision to strip the region of its statehood and special status. Ittija Mufti, PDP leader and daughter of party president

Mehbooba Mufti, asked whether it bodes well for J&K when the first cabinet meet is shrouded in secrecy about a resolution on restoring statehood but there is not a squeak about restoring J&K's special status. PDP youth wing president Waheed Paro said Abdullah's first resolution on statehood is nothing less than ratification of the August 5, 2019 decision. Baramulla MP Sheikh Abdul Rashid said the reports of the resolution passed by the J&K government seeking restoration of statehood only and not Article 370 were "very painful" and a "departure" from the principled stand of the ruling NC. People's Conference chief Sajad Lone wondered why the

resolution on statehood reportedly passed by the cabinet was "shrouded in mystery and secrecy that only one newspaper publishes it". Lone, who is an MLA-elect from Handwara, however, said the resolution should have been passed in the Assembly rather than the cabinet. The separatist-turned-mainstream politician said he would have loved to see which way the BJP and other parties vote on statehood and on Article 370 resolution when it is presented in the Assembly. Reminding the NC of its pre-pol commitment, Lone said, "We are not demanding or expecting anything extraordinary. Do what you promised the people of J&K in your manifesto."



# national

## of the day quote

Mr. Gautam Adani, Chairman of Adani Group of Companies met with courtesy. A donation of ₹100 crore was handed over to Young India Skills University from Adani Foundation in the form of a cheque  
A REVANTH REDDY | T'GANA CM

Will (Sena-UBT leader) Sanjay Raut and (NCP-SP's Maharashtra chief) Jayant Patil take any final decision without consulting Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar respectively?  
NANA PATOLE | MAHA CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Our country is focusing on developing religious and tourist destinations to boost tourism and create more jobs  
NITIN GADKARI | UNION ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS MINISTER

## X POST OF THE DAY

Breaking! Elon Musk said "Elections should not be done through EVM, it can be hacked. Paper ballot is the only Best option. I am a Technologist & I understand that" Now some Sanghi with expertise in Gobar will reply him how EVM hacking is impossible  
@DrJain21

## SHORT TAKES

### Pralhad Joshi's brother booked

**Bangalore:** The Bangalore police have filed an FIR against Union Minister Pralhad Joshi's brother based on a complaint of cheating lodged by a former JD(S) MLA's wife. The Minister clarified he had separated himself from his brother Gopal Joshi more than three decades, and said he had filed an affidavit in the court and also published a public notice saying that anyone claiming to be his brother, relatives or friends and indulging in any financial business will not be a binding on him.

### Bullet-riddled body of labourer found

**Srinagar:** A bullet-riddled body of a labourer hailing from Bihar was Friday recovered in Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district, officials said. The body was recovered from Wachi area of Zainapora in the south Kashmir district, they said. They labourer identified as Ashok Chauhan was living in Sangam area of Anantnag. One of Chauhan's colleagues told PTI Videos they left their rented room at 7 in the morning and he was with them for about an hour.

### Delhi HC dismisses Madhu Koda's plea

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court Friday rejected a plea by former Jharkhand Chief Minister Madhu Koda seeking a stay on his conviction in a coal scam case to enable him to contest the upcoming assembly elections in the state. Koda's application was opposed by the investigating agency, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), on grounds of maintainability. "Application dismissed," said Justice Neena Bansal Krishna.



Haggling among allies must not be allowed to reach a breaking point  
UDDHAV THACKERAY | SHIV SENA (UBT) PRESIDENT

## SC REJECTS PLEA OVER DEFENCE PRODUCTION

The Supreme Court Friday dismissed a plea concerning the defence production policy noting it was a matter in the Centre's domain. "These are matters which are purely in the policy domain of the Union government," a bench of Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra told the petitioner appearing in person



# Satyendar Jain walks out of Jail

The AAP said in a post on X, "Satyamev Jayate. Another conspiracy of BJP failed as Satyendra Jain ji, who brought about health revolution in Delhi by building magnificent Mohalla Clinics, got bail from the court. The real face of BJP has been exposed again now in front of the entire country"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Oct 18:** A court here Friday granted bail to AAP leader and former Delhi minister Satyendar Jain in a money laundering case, citing "delay" in trial and "long incarceration", while also saying the Enforcement Directorate can "no longer be permitted to wish away" precious years of the life of an accused.

Jain, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) May 30, 2022 on the charge of laundering about ₹4.5 crore money through four companies allegedly linked to him, walked out of the Tihar Jail Friday evening after spending more than 18 months in judicial custody.

Special Judge Vishal Gogne rejected the ED's request to deny the bail, saying the relief granted under Article 21 (right to life and personal liberty) of the Constitution supersedes stringent twin conditions of section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Under the twin conditions of the PMLA, the accused has to prove in court that he/she is prima facie innocent and fur-



ther convince the judge he/she would not commit any offence while on bail.

"The grounds relating to delay and long incarceration are, in effect, constitutional and pleary twin conditions sourced from Article 21 of the Constitution and therefore superior to the twin conditions under Section 45 PMLA," the judge said. The judge further observed that the decisions in AAP leader Manish Sisodia's bail order from the Supreme

HUNDREDS OF AAP WORKERS GATHERED OUTSIDE THE TIHAR JAIL TO CELEBRATE THE RELEASE OF THE FORMER HEALTH MINISTER

HE WAS ARRESTED BY THE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE MAY 30, 2022, ON THE CHARGE OF LAUNDERING MONEY THROUGH FOUR COMPANIES ALLEGEDLY LINKED TO HIM

Court in an alleged excise scam money laundering case, and other subsequent cases, have mandated the reading of delay and long periods of incarceration into the exercise of meeting the twin conditions under Section 45 PMLA. The judge said that the CBI had not arrested Jain in the predicate office-related case, and it was the ED, which lodged the case based on a CBI FIR, that "lent a twist to the tale by arresting him in the allegations pertaining to Section 4 (money laundering) PMLA".

"The ED, as an agency bound by the rule of law and the settled principles governing liberty in the context of bail, can no longer be permitted to wish away precious years of the life of an accused by simple pleading that it has the prerogative to arrest," the judge said. He added that

## SC grants bail to MLA Abbas Ansari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Oct 18:** The Supreme Court Friday granted bail to MLA Abbas Ansari in connection with a money laundering case registered with the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Ansari is the son of gangster-politician and former MLA Mukhtar Ansari, who died in jail a few months ago. A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and Pankaj Mishra gave the relief to Ansari. The apex court had August 14 issued notice to the ED and sought its reply on the appeal filed by Ansari challenging an order of the Allahabad High Court, which rejected his bail.

Another bench of the top court had granted bail to Ansari in a separate case registered against him for allegedly using his wife's cellphone during her jail visit, to threaten the witnesses and officials, who were connected to the prosecution against him.

"Having regard to the fact that the investigation is complete, chargesheet has already been filed and the petitioner has been in custody for more than 1.5 years in the instant case. Keeping in view the fact that the conclusion of trial will take some reasonable time, however, without expressing any opinion on the merits of the case, the petitioner is directed to be released on bail subject to his furnishing bail bonds to the satisfaction of the trial court," the bench said.

Ansari was lodged in Chittrakoot District Jail when his wife along with the driver and co-accused Niyaz visited him and he allegedly used a cellphone to threaten witnesses and extort money.

## ISRO gears up for space docking mission

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Oct 18:** Hyderabad-based Ananth Technologies Friday handed over two 400 kg class satellites to ISRO, which will be part of the Space Docking Experiment planned by the space agency later this year.

The satellites will be launched onboard the PSLV-C60 mission slated for a December launch and considered a stepping stone for future missions such as the Indian space station and Chandrayaan-4 mission that aims to bring lunar rock and soil samples back to earth.



The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) rocket for the mission is also being built at a facility of Ananth Technologies Private Limited (ATL) in Thiruvananthapuram. The satellites were handed

# ED's big anti-terror crackdown on PFI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Oct 18:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Friday said the Popular Front of India (PFI), a proscribed terrorist organisation, was working to create an Islamic movement in India through a "jihad" that included non-violent air raids and "guerilla theatre", apart from various methods of cruelty and subjugation.

The federal agency issued a statement, saying it has attached fresh assets worth more than ₹35 crore that are "beneficially-owned and controlled" by the PFI "in the name of various trusts, companies and individuals" as part of its ongoing probe against the outfit and entities linked to it. The PFI was banned

by the Centre in September 2022 after the ED, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and various state police forces carried out countrywide raids against its office-bearers and establishments.

The ED alleged that the real objectives of the PFI, formed in 2006 in Kerala but headquartered in Delhi, are "different" from the ones stated in its constitution. "Real objectives of PFI include formation of an organisation for carrying out an Islamic movement in India through jihad, though PFI masquerades itself as a social movement." "PFI claimed use of non-violent forms of protest but evidence reveals that the methods of protest employed by them are violent in nature," the agency alleged.

# Study finds most people unaware of 'climate justice'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Oct 18:** A majority of people, including those most affected by climate change, are unfamiliar with the term 'climate justice' means, despite recognising the inequalities that it exacerbates, a global study has found.

Researchers from the University of Nottingham, UK, surveyed over 5,600 adults across 11 countries, including India, Brazil and the Philippines, found that about two-thirds of the respondents had never heard of the term 'climate justice' -- a form of environmental justice that addresses the climate crisis through a human rights lens.

Studies have found that those contributing the least to climate

change and those least equipped to adapt to the crisis are the most vulnerable to its effects. Climate justice is aimed at distributing the effects of climate change fairly.

The study, published in the journal Nature Climate Change, however, found that the participants recognised the social, historical, and economic injustices linked to climate crisis -- something that the researchers said was "common around the world", even though not consciously connected with the concept of climate justice.

For example, about 78 per cent of the people surveyed supported beliefs aligned with climate justice, such as understanding that the poor suffer worse impacts of climate change. About the same



fraction of the participants also agreed that people from the worst-affected communities should have more of a say in decisions concerning climate change. "Citizens of frontline i.e. climate-vulnerable countries, are largely confined to being the

subjects of climate discourse, as opposed to active participants. The unbalanced discourse matches the inequalities that characterise climate change itself," lead researcher Charles Ogunbode, an assistant professor at the University of

## MUDA CASE ED CONDUCTS RAIDS IN K'TAKA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Oct 18:** The probe into the MUDA 'scam' allegedly involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah picked up pace Friday with the Enforcement Directorate conducting searches in its Mysore office in a money laundering case linked to irregularities in the allotment of sites, raising political temperature in the Congress-ruled State.

The MUDA office in Mysore and some other locations including in Bangalore were raided by the federal probe agency officials, along with an escort of a central paramilitary force, in connection with the Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case in which it has booked Siddaramaiah, his family members and others, the sources said.

"ED probe team has come, we will provide whatever information they ask," MUDA Secretary Prasanna Kumar told reporters in Mysore. "They have said that they will work here today and tomorrow. Whoever from staff they may want (to meet), we will call them and provide them the informa-

tion." Deputy Chief Minister and State Congress chief D K Shivakumar said the ED action was only an exercise to gather information, collect documents related to the case and verify them.

"ED can gather information. Why do you call it a raid? They may be seeking documents, which can be provided. Where is injustice in that?" Shivakumar told reporters here.

His brother and former MP, D K Suresh, termed it a "politically-motivated raid" in connection with a "politically-motivated case." Urban Development Minister Suresha B S (Byrathi Suresh) said the MUDA would provide all documents to the ED as sought by it.

"Whatever documents are sought, MUDA will give...ED is said to have got powers to raid after ECIR being booked (against the CM), whatever documents they ask MUDA will give, there is no question of us getting involved in this, officials will provide documents," Suresh, under whose department MUDA comes, said.

Welcoming the ED raids, Opposition BJP and JD(S) in Karnataka asserted that it was necessary to unearth the "scam" and to bring out the truth.

THE ED FILED AN ENFORCEMENT CASE INFORMATION REPORT (ECIR) SEPTEMBER 30 TO BOOK THE CM AND OTHERS TAKING COGNISANCE OF A RECENT LOKAYUKTA FIR  
THE CM IS FACING ALLEGATIONS OF ILLEGALITIES IN THE ALLOTMENT OF 14 SITES TO HIS WIFE B M PARVATHI BY THE MUDA



A 'Nihang' Sikh performs 'Gatka', during a religious procession on the eve of the birth anniversary of the fourth Sikh Guru Ram Das at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab  
PTI PHOTO

STUDIES HAVE FOUND THAT THOSE CONTRIBUTING THE LEAST TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND THOSE LEAST EQUIPPED TO ADAPT TO THE CRISIS ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE TO ITS EFFECTS  
CLIMATE JUSTICE IS AIMED AT DISTRIBUTING THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE FAIRLY

Nottingham, said. The findings suggested that beliefs of climate justice among the public may be strengthened by raising awareness, they said. "In our global survey of 5,627 adults in 11 countries spanning the global north and south, most participants (66.2 per cent) had never heard of climate justice," the authors wrote. Despite low levels of climate justice awareness, climate justice beliefs ap-

pear to be widely endorsed across countries; especially beliefs about the unequal distribution of climate change impacts, the importance of giving voice to frontline communities, the underpinning roles of colonialism and capitalism in the climate crisis and the need to redistribute resources from the rich to the poor, they wrote.

The researchers found the lowest levels of support for notions capturing the gender and racial dimensions of the climate crisis. About 40 per cent of the survey respondents agreed that climate change affected women worse than men, while about 57 per cent agreed that Indigenous peoples and minorities are worse affected, the team found.

# international

## of the day quote

**NATO** is an indispensable alliance. So in the months to come, I hope that Europeans remember America is indispensable for us. And I hope that Americans remember your allies are indispensable for you

**FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER** | PRESIDENT, GERMANY

I think realistically, holding the election can be possible by next year. There are many factors. This is a preliminary assumption to me

**ASIF NAZRUL** | LAW ADVISER, BANGLADESH

What the President is trying to do is to make our commitment to Ukraine sustainable and institutionalized for the long term. And every other ally agreed that that was the responsible thing to do

**JAKE SULLIVAN** | WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER

## SHORT TAKES

### US sanctions two Indians

**Washington:** The US has sanctioned 18 companies and individuals, including two Indians, for their alleged ties to a Houthi network transporting Iranian oil, revenue from which enables Houthi attacks on Israel and disrupting shipping in the Red Sea region. The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned the companies, including the captains of vessels transporting illicit oil, for their ties to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force-backed Houthi financial official Sa'id al-Jamal and his network, a press release said Thursday. The 18 companies sanctioned include Marshall Islands-registered Changtai Shipping and Motionnavigations Limited and UAE-based Indo Gulf Ship Management. The two Indians sanctioned are linked to the Indo Gulf Ship Management, according to the Treasury Department.

### S'pore detains teenager

**Singapore:** Singapore has detained a 17-year-old self-radicalised supporter of terror group ISIS under the Internal Security Act (ISA) mere weeks before his planned attack on non-Muslim males in a public housing estate. The teenager, purportedly influenced by the ongoing Hamas strikes and developments around Syria, wanted to use either a kitchen knife or a pair of scissors from his home as his weapon, said the Internal Security Department (ISD) in a press release Friday. It was a "very close shave as he could have easily gone on a rampage", Singapore's Minister for Law and Home Affairs K Shanmugam said. "I would say this is one of the ones where it was quite close, fairly close," Shanmugam said.

### Fuel train collides with elephants

**Colombo:** A train transporting fuel derailed in Sri Lanka's North Central Province after colliding with a herd of wild elephants on the railway track, the Department of Railways reported Friday. The accident occurred around 3:30 am local time Friday while the train was en route from the Kolonnawa Petroleum Storage Terminal in Colombo to Batticaloa in the Eastern Province, Xinhua news agency reported. According to the Department of Railways, four fuel tankers derailed as a result of the collision, causing significant damage to the railway tracks. Two elephants were killed, and several others were critically injured in the accident, local media reported.



**China strongly opposes all forms of official contact and interaction between Taiwan and countries having diplomatic relations with China, including the establishment of representative offices for each other. We have lodged solemn representations to the Indian side**

**MAO YAN** | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

**MODI TO ATTEND BRICS SUMMIT**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the BRICS summit in Russia from October 22-23, the Ministry of External Affairs says



# Netanyahu dashes peace hopes

**ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER CALLS SINWAR'S KILLING A MILESTONE BUT VOWS TO KEEP UP THE WAR**

AGENCIES

**Jerusalem, Oct 18:** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's promises to press on with Israel's wars in Gaza and Lebanon dashed hopes Friday that the killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar might help end more than a year of escalating conflict in the Middle East.

Sinwar, a mastermind of the October 7, 2023, attack that triggered the Gaza war, was killed during an operation by Israeli soldiers in the Palestinian enclave Wednesday, a pivotal event in the year-long conflict.

Netanyahu called Sinwar's killing a milestone late Thursday but vowed to keep up the war, which in recent weeks expanded from fighting against Palestinian group Hamas in Gaza into an invasion of southern Lebanon and the bombardment of large swathes of the country.

"The war, my dear ones, is not yet over," Netanyahu told Israelis, saying fighting would continue until hostages held by Hamas are released.

"We have before us a great opportunity to stop the axis of evil and create a different future," he added, referring to Iran and its militant allies across the region in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

Netanyahu's comments contrasted with Western leaders, including US President Joe Biden, who said Sinwar's death offered a chance for the conflict to end. The US wants to kick-start ceasefire talks and secure the release of hostages, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said, adding



**We have before us a great opportunity to stop the axis of evil and create a different future**

**BENJAMIN NETANYAHU** | PM, ISRAEL

that Sinwar had been refusing to negotiate.

"That obstacle has obviously been removed. Can't predict that that means whoever replaces (Sinwar) will agree to a ceasefire, but it does remove what has been in recent months the chief obstacle to getting one," he said.

One senior diplomat working in Lebanon told Reuters that hopes Sinwar's death would end the war appeared misplaced.

"We had hoped, really throughout this, that getting rid of Sinwar would be the turning point where the wars would end where everyone would be ready to put their weapons down. It appears we were once again mistaken," the diplomat said.

and Hezbollah have failed as Israel has pressed on with its wars, and its arch foe Iran has looked largely powerless to match Israel's military might, including US weapons.

The conflict has caused the first direct Iranian-Israeli confrontations, including missile attacks on Israel in April and October 1. Netanyahu has vowed to respond to the October attack, which caused little damage. Washington has pressed Israel to limit targets and not strike Iranian energy facilities or nuclear sites.

Sinwar, Hamas' overall leader following the assassination of political chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in July, was believed to have been hiding in the warren of tunnels Hamas has built under Gaza over the past two decades.

He was killed during a gun battle Wednesday by Israeli troops initially unaware they had caught their number one enemy, Israeli officials said.

Months of efforts by Israel's chief backer the United States to broker ceasefires with Hamas

### Hezbollah pledges new phase in war

**The** Lebanese militant group Hezbollah vowed to launch a new phase of fighting against invading Israeli troops Friday, a day after Israel said its forces in the Palestinian enclave of Gaza had killed Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, the chief architect of last year's brutal attack on Israel that sparked the current war. Sinwar's killing in what appeared to be a chance frontline encounter with Israeli troops offers a potential window to shift the dynamic in the Gaza war even as Israel presses its offensive against Hezbollah along its northern border with Lebanon and continues its aerial bombardment in other areas of Lebanon. Both Hamas and Hezbollah are backed by Iran, which hailed Sinwar as a martyr who can inspire others in challenging Israel. Hamas has not yet commented directly on the Israeli announcement, but photos which were apparently taken by Israeli troops on the scene showed the body of a man who appeared to be Sinwar half-buried in rubble with a gaping wound in his head. A statement issued by one of Hamas' political leaders abroad Friday seemed to be a reference to Sinwar's death and said Israel is mistaken if it "believes that killing our leaders means the end of our movement and the struggle of the Palestinian people."

### Pak shuts educational institutions for 3 days to contain student protests

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lahore, Oct 18:** Pakistan's Punjab government has closed all educational institutions in the province for three days and arrested over 600 students in the face of the growing student protests against an alleged on-campus rape.

The Maryam Nawaz-led government has also banned all forms of public gatherings to address both the student protests and the jailed former premier Imran Khan's party's call for demonstrations in the country after Friday prayers for the "independence of the judiciary".

"All public and private schools, colleges, and universities will remain closed from Friday to Sunday" the Punjab government said.

Punjab police Friday said it arrested over 600 students across the province in connection with violent protests. A spokesperson for Punjab police however claimed that several of the arrested students have been released after taking an undertaking from their parents.

# 'Russia won't let Ukraine obtain nuclear weapons'

**Russian President Vladimir Putin says any move by Ukraine to get nuclear weapons will draw an appropriate Russian response**

REUTERS

**Moscow, Oct 18:** Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday Russia would not let Ukraine get nuclear weapons, after Ukraine's leader said that since Kyiv had given up its Soviet-era nuclear arms, it must join NATO.

Putin said any move by Ukraine to get nuclear weapons could not be concealed and would draw an appropriate Russian response. "Russia will not allow this to happen, no matter what," he told reporters.

Meanwhile, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff said Ukraine is not considering developing nuclear



weapons and recent reports on the topic were driven by an incorrect interpretation of remarks by the President.

"We have not these thoughts about nuclear, we refuse it," Andriy Yermak told a think-tank event in Brussels.

Ukraine inherited nuclear weapons after the breakup of the Soviet Union but voluntarily relinquished them in the 1990s in return for guarantees of its territorial integrity, a deal it says Moscow reneged on by invading its land.

Zelenskyy said he spoke with Trump about Ukraine's negative experience with the Budapest Memorandum, a 1994 deal that gave Ukraine security "assur-

ances" from Britain, Russia and the United States in return for relinquishing the nuclear weapons it had inherited with the breakup of the Soviet Union.

"I told him: What is the way out, either Ukraine will have nuclear weapons, and then this is defence for us, or we should have some kind of an alliance," the Ukrainian leader told reporters at a European Union summit in Brussels.

**Russia returns soldier's bodies**  
Russia Friday returned to Ukraine the bodies of 501 soldiers, Ukrainian authorities said, in what appeared to be the biggest repatriation of war dead since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Most of the soldiers were killed in action in the eastern Donetsk region of Ukraine, mostly around the city of Avdiivka that Russian forces captured in February after a long and grueling battle, Ukraine's Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War said.

# THE PLASTIC BOTTLE CAP GETS A MAKEOVER

*'You have to basically relearn how to drink'*

**A**bby Gendell encountered one after a hot July day touring Vatican City. "I open a water bottle," the 22-year-old New Yorker said, "and I was like, 'Oh my gosh, why is this touching my face?'"

The thing on her face was a bottle cap. As of July, caps in Europe no longer fully come off water and soda bottles due to a European Union law aimed at getting more of the caps recycled rather than littered. When the caps are screwed off, they stay there, dangling from the top of bottles and bumping into drinkers' lips, noses and cheeks.

It has become a new source of culture shock for those crossing the Atlantic, like encountering a bidet or driving on the left side of the road. On TikTok, some posted videos with patriotic music when they arrive home, saying they're happy to be back in America, where at least they

know their bottle caps are free. Gendell said the Vatican City bottle cap brought out her American rage. "I was so thirsty and then that was just an added thing," she said of the cap, which she managed to rip off. She prefers the bottles in the U.S. "They're just easier to drink out of," she said.

Malcolm McKie, a 35-year-old tax accountant in Toronto, said the serrated plastic edges of the caps tickled his mustache while sipping sugary sodas this summer in London. He said the cap also pushed his lips away from the bottle's opening, causing him to spill.

"I'd have a sticky soda beard," he said. "You have to basically relearn how to drink."

The EU tried to help. In July, its environmental office posted instructions on X titled, "Drinking from a bottle for dummies." "It's really not that diffi-



cult," the post said, along with a cartoon on how to hydrate. "Open bottle! Drink! Do not remove cap."

Dave Corlett, a retired police officer in Cincinnati, said he didn't rip off the caps while traveling during his three-country tour this summer, even though the caps kept hitting his lips.

"I kind of just went with the flow," said the 55-year-old, "and then complained about it." At restaurants he found a way

to keep his lips from getting clogged. Pouring drinks into glasses instead of swigging from the bottle, something he never does back home.

The EU said it targeted bottle caps because they are one of the most found pieces of trash on its beaches. Legislation was passed in 2019, giving beverage companies until this past July to have the attached caps on plastic bottles that are three liters or smaller. The hope is that if the

cap is attached, it is more likely to be recycled with the bottle.

The caps have also been unpopular with some Europeans, even spilling into Italian politics.

Matteo Salvini, a far-right Italian politician, posted a photo of a man drinking from a bottle with the cap nearly shoved up his nostrils. "Do you want environmental regulations from Brussels?" he asked, referring to the headquarters of the EU. "No, grazie," he wrote, urging people to vote for his anti-EU party.

The dangling caps are worse than another environmentally-friendly way to drink: the paper straw, said McKie, the tax accountant from Toronto.

Paper straws don't start to disintegrate until several minutes into drinking, he said. The caps make their presence known from the first gulp. "It's an instant annoyance," McKie said.

"We recognize that this change takes getting used to," said Coca-Cola, which sells water and soda in Europe, in a statement. It added that customers generally

have been supportive of the new caps, especially when they find out the goal is to reduce litter.

Asked if it would bring the caps to the U.S., the company said "we will continue to look at the value of the attached cap innovation in other markets, where we think it can be impactful."

Nestlé and Danone, which have several water brands in Europe, declined to comment. Soda maker PepsiCo didn't respond to a request for comment.

Nathan Baschez, a startup founder in Los Angeles, said he didn't think the caps were bad. He just found them odd.

"My entire life—I'm 35 years old—bottle caps have been one way," he said. "I never imagined bottle caps to be a different way."

But after sipping a few bottles of water in Spain this summer, he found them useful. He could hold his toddler with one hand, a bottle in the other and not have to worry about how to hold the cap.

"I sort of came to appreciate the convenience factor a little bit," he said.



