

4 officials suspended for misbehaviour during evacuation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 26: The state government Saturday placed four officers under suspension on charge of dereliction of duty and misbehaving with people during cyclone-related work.

Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari said three panchayat extension officers (PEO) and one revenue inspector (RI) have been suspended after getting prima facie evidence against them.

As per the allegations, these four officials were engaged in the evacuation of people to cyclone shelters where they misbehaved with some persons.

Pujari said his department has also received complaints against some other officials and they were being verified before initiating any action.

The minister said: "Government officials, who served people with dedication during the emergency cyclone situation, will be rewarded and action will be taken against those found guilty."

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



You're free to poison their minds, sir, but actual poison? No, that's against the law

ISRAEL HITS IRAN

The Middle East is on the boil again. Weeks after Iran's ballistic missile attacks on Israel, the latter unleashed massive airstrikes on the Islamic Republic early Saturday. The Israeli Air Force hit about 20 sites over several hours, killing two soldiers, confirmed the Iranian Army. The targets were drone and ballistic missile manufacturing and launch sites, as well as air defence batteries. Though the Israeli military says the retaliatory attack was 'completed', Iran, terming the attacks violation of international law which has resulted in 'limited damage', asserted that it has every right to protect its sovereignty. This has raised concerns about a potential retaliatory attack on Israel that might worsen the situation. Following Israel's pre-dawn strikes, the world reacted to the development. While many Islamic nations - Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Turkey - consensually condemned the Israeli aggression, the US reacted differently. It called for restraint on Iran's part to stop the cycle of fighting between two arch-enemies



AGENCIES

Jerusalem, Oct 26: Israel unleashed a series of airstrikes against Iran Saturday, saying it targeted facilities used to make the missiles fired at Israel and surface-to-air missile sites.

The attack risks pushing the two nations closer to all-out war at a time of spiralling violence across the Middle East, where militant groups backed by Iran - including Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon - are already at war with Israel.

Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned the Israeli attacks on military bases and said Iran will respond. A statement by the Ministry called the attacks a clear violation of international law and the UN Charter, particularly regarding the

prohibition against threats or the use of force against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of nations.

The Ministry emphasised Iran's inherent right to self-defence, as reflected in Article 51 of the UN Charter, saying it has an obligation to respond to foreign aggression. The Iranian army said two soldiers were killed in Israeli strikes.

On the other hand, Israel's opposition leader Yair Lapid praised the work of the military but said Israel should have struck harder. "The decision not to attack strategic and economic targets in Iran was wrong. We could and should have exacted a much heavier price from Iran," Lapid wrote in a post on X.

WORLD REACTIONS | P10

Flash flood in Balasore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasore, Oct 26: A large area in this district was hit by flash flood due to cyclone Dana induced heavy downpour, an official said Saturday.

Heavy rainfall in Similipal hills in neighbouring Mayurbhanj district led to rise in water level in Budhabalang, Sono and Kansabansa rivers in Balasore district. The most affected blocks are Oupada, Soro, Khaira, Simulia, Bahanaga, Remuna and Sadar according to a preliminary assessment by Revenue officials.

The water level in the above rivers is gradually rising due to heavy rain in catchment areas. About 20 villages in Nilagiri area were marooned for two days, but water receded Saturday morning.

Revenue and Disaster

Management Minister Suresh Pujari said, "So far there is no flood situation in any part of the state. River Budhabalanga is not flowing above the danger mark, but we are keeping a close watch."

The Odisha Fire and Emergency Services in a post on X said, "10 marooned persons were rescued - Katha Sangada, PS/Block-Remuna of Balasore by rescue teams at about 12.30 hrs, 26/10/24."

Panchayati Raj Minister Rabi Narayan Naik Saturday said, "The state government is trying its best to restore normalcy in affected areas and there is no casualty in Balasore district in the cyclone."

Meanwhile, CM Mohan Charan Majhi said the government has launched an evacuation drive in north Odisha due to flooding in some areas and risk of more localities getting inundated.



People wade through floodwaters of Kanshabansa river in Bauripada village under Simulia block of the district, Saturday

Cyclone, rain damaged crops on 1.75L acre: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 26: Severe cyclonic storm Dana and the rain accompanying it are likely to have damaged standing crops in 1.75 lakh acre of land, and submerged another 2.80 lakh acre in Odisha,

a senior official said Saturday, citing preliminary estimations. The state government has directed a joint assessment of crop loss due to the cyclone by officials of the agriculture and revenue departments, he said.

"As per preliminary reports,

the crop area likely to be affected by #CycloneDana is about 1,75,000 acres (69,995 ha). Eye-estimated submerged crop area is about 2,80,000 acres (1,12,310 ha)," Principal Secretary of Agriculture and Farmer Empowerment Arabinda Padhi said in a post on

X. "We've directed field officials of @krushibibhag to assess and enumerate the crop loss (more than 33 per cent and above), jointly with Revenue Dept colleagues in a squad approach under supervision of District Collectors," he said.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi during a review meeting Friday night said the final estimate of the loss in the agriculture sector would be known from the detailed report, on the basis of which the government would decide on compensation for farmers.

KALINGA INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY
Deemed to be University U/S 3 of the UGC Act, 1956

Inaugural Ceremony of

KIIT School of Public Policy

knowledge partner

KIIT SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

This initiative is in collaboration with the **United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC)**, Turin, Italy and the **Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)**, the premier think tank of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. The school is set to become a key hub for public policy education, research, and advocacy in India and beyond.

Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)

UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STAFF COLLEGE

One-year Master's Programme

From 2025-26 Academic Session

Chief Guest

Shri Om Birla

Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha

In the Gracious Presence of

Smt. Surama Padhy
Hon'ble Speaker of Odisha Legislative Assembly

Shri Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Odisha

Shri Prithviraj Harichandan
Hon'ble Minister of Law, Works, and Excise, Govt. of Odisha

Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
Hon'ble MP, Lok Sabha Bhubaneswar

Mr. Otto Ramon Sonnenholzner Sper
Former Vice President of Ecuador

Mr. Shombi Sharp
UN Resident Coordinator in India (virtual mode)

Dr. Jafar Javan
Director, United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC), Turin, Italy

Padma Shri Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi
Indian Actor & Film Director

Ms. Nutan Kapoor Mahawar, IFS
Additional Secretary, Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) Ministry of External Affairs, GoI.

Mr. Akshay Mathur
Senior Director of Asia Society Policy Institute, New Delhi

📅 27th October 2024 | 🕒 5.00 p.m. | 📍 KIIT Convention Centre, Campus-6

KIIT (Deemed to be University) has only one permanent campus in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. It has no other campus / off campus anywhere else in the country and globe. Website: www.kiit.ac.in | Email: kiit@kiit.ac.in

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
If you have children, it's likely you'll spoil them today. After all, it's for days like these that you work hard, says Ganesh. You will also complete pending assignments and it's a productive day for those in medical professions and public services.

TAURUS
You may feel frustrated and stranded in family matters today, says Ganesh. Shower your warmth and care to make up for past mistakes. Your spouse will be supportive and lend you a helping hand to regain your mental composure. Reciprocate with intimacy and go with the flow, suggests Ganesh.

GEMINI
Today, a strong emotional link with someone special may get established, predicts Ganesh. So you will remain delighted and elated for most part of the day. Still, some petty problems may spoil your happy mood later in the day. Diffuse tension with a light-hearted approach.

CANCER
Today, you will realise that in this materialistic world, everything is judged by its appearance, and what is unseen counts for nothing. You will work hard to be seen and will crave for attention. Though Ganesh strongly suggests that this will only bring you grief as the most beautiful of flowers shrivel and your appearance will not help you beyond a point, you are not likely to follow his advice.

LEO
Though God is benevolent, it is but necessary that we reciprocate the magnanimity of the Almighty through our actions. So wake up today with a little prayer on your lips. Make it a point to visit a temple for some peace of mind. The other alternative is to do a small puja at home.

VIRGO
If curiosity killed the cat, it is going to inspire you to go to exotic places and meet new people, says Ganesh. Enriching experiences enter enthusiastically today. But hold on, don't unpack, as you may set off on yet another adventure. Ganesh sees you being crack ductile and malleable.

LIBRA
Lady Luck offers you a mixed bag today, so expect anything and everything. You may also develop a knack for pointing out others' mistakes, while turning a blind eye to your own shortcomings. Ganesh disapproves of this. Look forward to a delightful evening, for, you will have fun in the company of friends.

SCORPIO
You've been keeping things within for too long now, and today may just be the day when you vent it all out, says Ganesh. This overwhelming pressure may have an effect on your health. Ganesh counsels you to spend quality time with your loved ones to ease up a bit.

SAGITTARIUS
Skilled at multi-tasking as you are, today you may just take things one by one. Instincts will rule the roost for most of the time. And govern your actions too. But as peculiar as the day may be, you shall find yourself back to being your own assured self.

CAPRICORN
If trouble happens to knock at your door today, your guardian angel will come to your rescue, foresees Ganesh. Unlike many others who waste life running after impossible goals, you will be content with your achievements. But that does not, by any means, imply that you aren't ambitious.

AQUARIUS
You will seek spirituality as you feel thoroughly dejected by your present situation. Ganesh says that even struggling courageously with circumstances requires a spiritual endeavour. These trying times give you the patience to deal intelligently with challenges and setbacks.

PISCES
Your spiritual and religious streak comes to the fore. You will likely visit a place of worship to soothe your troubled soul. Meditative techniques may also be resorted to in your quest for peace and calm, says Ganesh.



WINSLET'S TIPS FOR ASPIRING ACTRESSES

Oscar winning-actress Kate Winslet has shared some advice for young and aspiring actresses and said that they should not worry too much about making mistakes. Winslet also spoke about how she manages to overcome her own mistakes.

AFFLECK 'READY TO DATE AGAIN'

Ben Affleck is ready to move past his very public split from Jennifer Lopez as he finally feels ready to date again. However, he has one strict condition for the next woman that walks into his life.



Ananya 'terrified' of Sara

Mumbai: In a recent chat, Ananya Panday opened up about her equation with Sara Ali Khan in early school days. Panday revealed that she was very afraid of Sara because she was very outspoken.

The *Liger* actress said, "She was muhfat anyways, like now also, she says... But in school, she was even more muhfat, she used to say anything. So, I used to be like, 'She's going to say something about me'." Ananya went on to add that she would try to avoid Sara. She added, "If she was walking down from a certain staircase, I would walk from the other staircase."

Ananya continued, "She did not know what my name was. She didn't want to know what my name was! We did a play together in school. She was the main (lead) and I was holding her umbrella! She didn't bother to know my name. She

would address me as, 'Ae girl, come here'. I don't think she said 'Ae' because my name started with 'A!'"

"Now when I tell her, she says, 'What rubbish. I treated you so well'."

Ananya and Sara have completed their school education from Dhirubhai Ambani International School, Mumbai. AGENCIES



Rashmika's love for Anime

Mumbai: Actress Rashmika Mandanna revealed that *Naruto* was her first introduction to Anime and that she was 12, when she got close to the genre.

Rashmika took to her YouTube channel, where she was seen talking about her love for Anime. The actress talked about the genre in her vanity van, while she was getting her hair and make-up done to dress up as an Anime character.

Talking about when she was first introduced to the genre, Rashmika recalled: "That was that one year in my schooling that I was a day boarder. When I used to come back home I did not have friends in my neighborhood to play with... So, I remember going back to my room and sitting and watching TV."

The *Animal* actress shared that she used to really enjoy watching *Dragon Ball Z* and *Pokemon* at that time.

"So, when I was changing the channel I found Animax and it was the time they were playing *Naruto*. So, *Naruto* was my first introduction to anime. Cut to I watched season 1 I think and on TV then they stopped." After it stopped airing on television, the actress did her research and watched over 600 episodes of *Naruto*, a Japanese manga series written and illustrated by Masashi Kishimoto. IANS



'Want to make good cinema accessible'

Mumbai: In a landscape dominated by tentpole films and commercial blockbusters, Manoj Bajpayee says his only motive is to make "good cinema accessible" to all.

The actor's recent works *Despatch* and *The Fable* received positive responses at the MAMI Film Festival 2024, affirming his belief that such stories can thrive alongside mainstream movies.

"For me, this is cinema (referring to independent films). Cinema is a medium of art, cinema is sound, VFX, and so many facets are adding up, and adding up not just to entertain but to delve into different stories and do it masterfully and artistically. If you want to entertain, entertain artistically," Bajpayee told this agency.

The actor said it is important to not be "too indulgent" when introducing them to a different kind of cinema.

"So, let's make films accessible. That's how *Joram* is, that's how *Despatch* and *The Fable* are. I don't know (if the audience will come to the theatres) but I want that (to happen). You make films, thinking people will watch them.

Accessibility is important and it is important to get more audience members attracted to good cinema. That should be the motive," Bajpayee said.

In a career spanning three decades, the actor has built a filmography largely dominated by offbeat movies. IANS



OPTING OUT OF BHOOL BHULAIYAA 2

Vidya defends her decision

Mumbai: Actor Vidya Balan says she rejected the offer to star in *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* as she feared that if she didn't perform well in the sequel, it would ruin the impact of her work in the original movie.

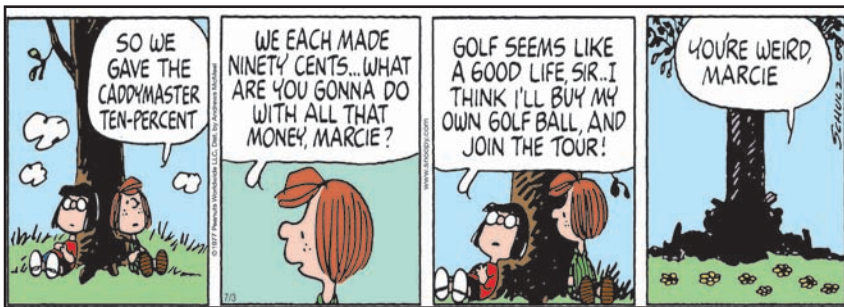
Balan starred alongside Akshay Kumar in Priyadarshan's 2007 hit *Bhool Bhulaiyaa*, playing the role of Avni/Manjulika. Fifteen years later, its sequel, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*, directed by Anees Bazmee and starring Kartik Aaryan in the lead, was released and became a huge blockbuster at the box office.

"I was so scared because *Bhool Bhulaiyaa* has given me so much. So I said, if I did something wrong, then everything will go in vain (sab par paani fir jayega). I told Anees ji that 'I can't take this risk,'" Balan told reporters.

"But when they came back to me with the third part, I loved the script. I was dying to work on this with Anees bhai and Bhushan. And then it only kept getting better," Balan said.

The actor said she liked what the team did with the sequel, which helped her make the decision to say yes to *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*, set to release Diwali, November 1. IANS

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

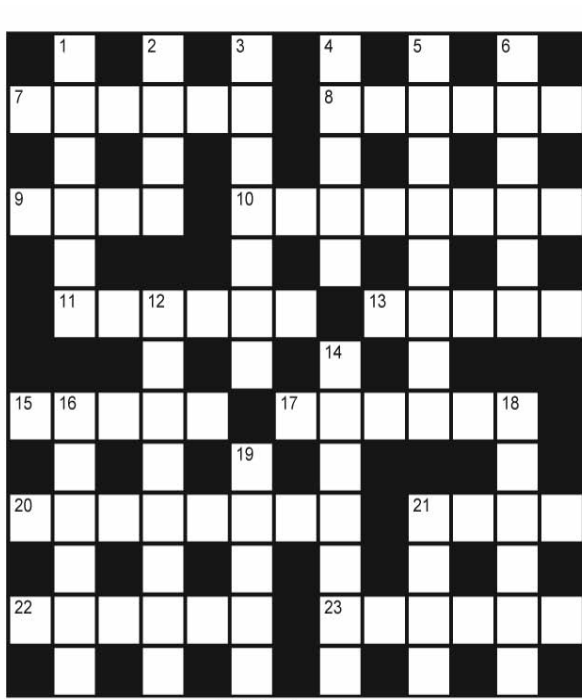


BREVITY



FUN post

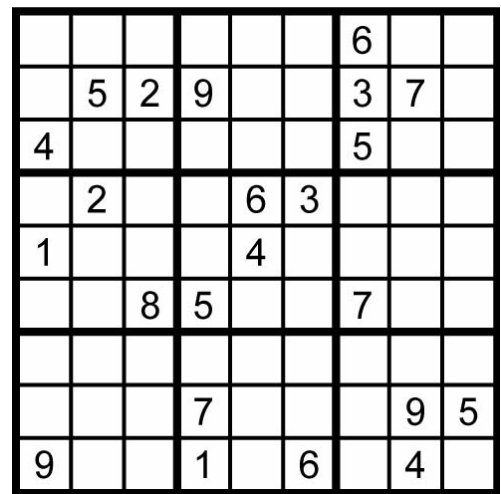
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Naval unit
 - 8 Chase after
 - 9 Soup vegetable
 - 10 Poverty-stricken
 - 11 Snapping reptile
 - 13 Much of Chile
 - 15 Express
 - 17 Large sport fish
 - 20 Pamphlet
 - 21 Pith helmet
 - 22 Retaliate
 - 23 English university
 - 5 Master copy
 - 6 Pear-shaped fruit
 - 12 Taciturn
 - 14 King Arthur's stomping grounds
 - 16 Flourish
 - 18 Table linens
 - 19 Beach sights
 - 21 Sukiyaki ingredient
- Down**
- 1 Pressing
 - 2 Aquarium
 - 3 Trattoria offering
 - 4 Garden tool

SUDOKU

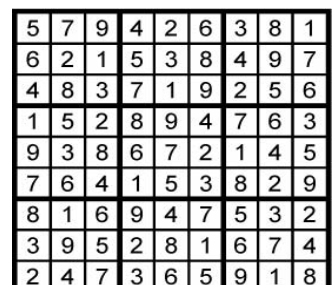
To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

AI can't replace job of journalists in India: N Ram

EDITORS GUILD OF INDIA CONCLAVE

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 26: The concerns of journalists in India that their jobs will be replaced by Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) which has already been impacting job markets across the globe is completely exaggerated, noted journalist and former Editor-In-Chief of 'The Hindu' N Ram said while stressing the need for discussion among industry stakeholders over the advent of AI as it has put some dire concerns before media houses.

Speaking on the topic 'Opportunities and Challenges in Regional Media' at a conclave organised by the Editors Guild of India (EGI) at the Press Club of Odisha Saturday, Ram said the role of new-age media would be filled with challenges to secure the core editorial values of an organization as AI becomes widely pervasive in journalistic practices.

"Therefore, it will be interesting to note how it could resist the temptations of sophisticated AI tools which might dampen the ethical standards of journalism," he said.

Deliberating on the future threats posed by AI to the publishing industry, Ram said in spite of its nature to eliminate drudgery and make work effective, the technology has posed an array of challenges in countering disinformation and fake news.

"Much before AI came to fore, disinformation and misinformation were already prevalent in the media ecosystem. However, the present scenario is challenging since free accessibility to AI tools has led to dissemination of disinformation and fake news across mediums, such as social media and online media. Such disinformation being scaled up and weaponised on tech platforms pose serious harm to democracy and media freedom," he said, adding that while misinformation presents scope for correction in journalism, the trend of disinformation is alarming. "The US along with India remains to be most impacted by it," he said.

Ram agreed to the suggestions of Dharitri and OrissaPOST Editor Tathagata Satpathy - who moderated the session - that every publication in the country is regional as they have regional bases. "Every English newspaper is published from a specific region in the country which makes it suitable to be called a regional daily," Ram added.



ANANT NATH



N RAM



TATHAGATA SATPATHY

National media a misnomer: Satpathy

Bhubaneswar: Dharitri and OrissaPOST Editor Tathagata Satpathy said the concept of 'national media' is a misnomer given the fact that every newspaper, or media, is based in some part of the country or the other.

In his welcome address at the opening session of the Editors Guild of India conclave at the Press Club of Odisha (PCO) on 'Opportunities and Challenges in Regional Media' here Saturday, Satpathy said, "There is no national media. For that reason, there is also no national leader. In this country, everybody is regional."

To drive home his point, Satpathy,

who is also the president of PCO, said, "We all belong to different regions. When we get together, we make a nation."

Earlier in his speech, the noted journalist highlighted the glorious past of the state and said, "Those who are aware of Odisha's history know that the state never came under direct occupation by any outside force, be it the Mughals or the British. We have been a tolerant race. We have no hate for anybody."

He said the state has a lot of history and is capable of providing leadership to the country. "We are also endowed with huge mineral and natural resources," he added.

Collective effort need of the hour: Nath

Bhubaneswar: President of the Editors Guild of India (EGI) and Editor of 'The Caravan' Anant Nath called for collective efforts to ensure safety of journalists from vengeful government actions.

Recounting some recent victories of the EGI in protecting journalistic freedom, including the withdrawal of the draft Broadcast Bill and striking down of the IT Rules, Nath, who moderated a discussion

on 'Media Laws, New Criminal Laws, and Challenges for Independent Journalists' at the EGI conclave organised at the Press Club of Odisha here Saturday, highlighted the initiatives taken by the body towards press freedom.

He said the conclave is essentially an initiative to stamp the presence of EGI across the country and dispel the notion that the organisation is Delhi-centric. "In fact, the organisa-

tion is meant to represent editors from across the country," he said.

The EGI is focusing on expanding its activities and membership with an objective to protect the rights of journalists and media freedom, he said. "The focus of the conclave is to understand the challenges faced by journalists, especially in regional media. I think there are enough reasons to be optimistic," Nath added.



Hegde for litigation protection fund

Senior Supreme Court advocate Sanjay Hegde Saturday strongly advocated for the creation of a dedicated fund to give journalists protection against litigations.

"You (journalists) must think about constituting a litigation protection fund which will help you fight cases," Hegde said. While quoting Napoleon who once famously said that "an army marches on its stomach," the senior advocate said simi-

larly, the journalists' quest for truth will be unshaken if they feel protected. This is because even if advocates agree to appear, there are expenses involved in the court procedures.

He also advised journalists to explore legal remedies in lower courts instead of going straightaway to the Supreme Court.

While speaking at the conclave Hegde said a journalist's job is to verify what is said 'facts'. Tanaya Patnaik, Editor

of Sambad, and Tapan Mishra, Editor of Samaja, shared the dais as panelists during a discussion on 'Challenges for Journalists in a State' at the conclave. The panel was moderated by Ruben Banerjee of Editors Guild of India.

Mishra said, "Odisha is a small state and media houses like ours have seen many ups and downs." Stating that regional media has many challenges like financial constraints,

the Samaja editor said that nowadays corporate advertisements are shrinking. Since government is the biggest advertiser, it becomes difficult to strike a balance. A panel discussion on 'Journalism in the Digital Era' was the final part of the conclave which saw the participation of senior journalists Navin Das, Jajati Karan and Manoranjan Mishra. The panel was moderated by senior journalist Sandeep Sahu.

Political power uses law against media: Justice Ananga Patnaik

Bhubaneswar: Delivering a special address at the conclave on 'Opportunities and Challenges in Regional Media' organised by the Editors Guild of India at the Press Club of Odisha here Saturday, former Supreme Court Judge Justice Ananga Patnaik said political power is such that the entire state machinery is mobilised against media criticisms.

Justice Patnaik spoke about Article 19 (2) which imposes restrictions on freedom of press. "Exceptions for freedom of expression are the same for media as it is for common citizens. Whatever limitations are there for the citizens also apply to media," he said.

Justice Patnaik said political power is such that state machinery is mobilised against the criticisms by the media, and unfortunately politicians use the laws against the media

for their benefit. "And this happens in every corner of the country," he added.

As a remedial measure, he suggested Editors Guild and various media houses to pursue the government to bring about some amendments to existing laws in providing checks against wrong arrests.

Justice Patnaik, while encouraging journalists to not be fearful of the judiciary, said, "Even if there is a price to pay for freedom, it is worth it. Independence has certain price."

The former Supreme Court judge said, "For democracy, independence of media and press is as important as the judiciary." He said for the protection of freedom of speech and expression, media houses should not be owned by business houses. "Otherwise, they are bound to come under pressure to run the business," he said.



Dana weakens into low pressure: IMD

Oupada in Balasore received the highest rainfall of 240 mm, followed by 215 mm at Dhamnagar in Bhadrak, 209 mm at Khaira in Balasore and 187 mm at Bont in Bhadrak

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 26: Several parts of Odisha received light to moderate rainfall Saturday as cyclone Dana gradually weakened into a well-marked low pressure within the state, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The IMD, in its latest bulletin, said, "The depression (remnant of severe cyclonic storm DANA) over north Odisha moved slightly westwards during the past six hours and weakened into a well-marked low-pressure area over the same region. It is likely to weaken further and become insignificant during the next 12 hours." Under its influence many places witnessed rain and inclement weather which affected restoration work in the cyclone-affected areas in Bhadrak, Kendrapara and Balasore districts, an official said.

According to IMD sources, Oupada in Balasore district received the highest rainfall of 240 mm, followed by 215 mm at Dhamnagar in Bhadrak district, 209 mm at Khaira in Balasore

CM THANKS ALL

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday expressed gratitude to all members of the Council of Ministers, MPs, MLAs, executive and administrative officers, civil servants, and voluntary organisations for successfully implementing the government's 'zero casualty' policy during cyclone Dana.

Majhi attributed the avoidance of major calamity to the mercy of Lord Jagannath, stating that "such a big calamity was averted in our kingdom."

He said, "Everyone worked day and night to protect the people and provide them with the services they needed."

The CM further stated that district and 187 mm at Bont in Bhadrak district. "At least 16 places received rainfall above 100 mm in last 12 hours including more than 200 mm rainfall in four places," an official said.

The administrations of five districts - Balasore, Bhadrak, Mayurbhanj, Kendrapara and Keonjhar - announced that schools will remain closed Saturday.

As most schools have become shelter homes and housing evacuees, the district Collectors announced school holiday.

after the storm, the relevant departments have been instructed to assess the damage and take appropriate action.

"This government belongs to you (the public). Serving and helping you is our duty and responsibility," Majhi said. The Chief Minister

commended the people of Odisha for successfully weathering the storm with peace, order, and patience, obeying government regulations, and protecting themselves and their families.

"The government has always stood firmly with you," Majhi said, concluding with, "Bande Utkal Janani."

Anganwadi centres will also remain closed in the districts most affected by the cyclone, an official said. Meanwhile, the IMD has forecast light to moderate rain very likely to occur at many places in the districts of north Odisha and at a few places in south Odisha. The state government has cancelled holidays of its employees Saturday and Sunday for cyclone restoration work, an order issued by the Special Relief Commissioner's office said.



'Zero casualty' claims false: BJD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 26: Opposition BJD Saturday alleged that the ruling BJP's claims of 'zero casualty' after severe cyclonic storm Dana struck the eastern state were false, and it failed to handle the natural calamity in a proper manner.

BJD spokesperson Lekhashree Samantsinghar also claimed that four people died in the state due to the cyclone, which triggered torrential rain and high-speed winds. The regional party, headed by former CM Naveen Patnaik, demanded a white paper from the BJD, mentioning the actual evacuation figure, and the number of people shifted to cyclone shelters. "The Odisha government's 'zero casualty' claims are false. We have information regarding the death of four people - one in CM Mohan Majhi's Assembly segment in Keonjhar district and three others at Rajnagar in Kendrapara district," Samantsinghar told a press conference here.

Majhi had Friday said the state had achieved its 'zero casualty' mission, with no reports of fatalities or injuries.

Samantsinghar said the state government was aware about the calamity beforehand, but did not act accordingly. The BJD was yet to yet to make any comment on Samantsinghar's remarks. "Our party demands a white paper on the evacuation of people to cyclone centres. First, they said about evacuating 10 lakh people, later the chief minister said the government evacuated three lakh people, then five lakh. There is confusion regarding this figure."

Woman 'spots' leopard near airport; search op launched

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 26: Forest officials launched a search operation at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here Saturday after a woman claimed that she spotted a leopard near the dump yard area, officials said.

Forest officials, along with the local police, scanned the area carrying nets, traps and other equipment, but could not find any trace of the leopard, they said. Earlier in the morning, the woman, a worker at the dump yard, claimed that she



spotted a leopard there, a Forest official said.

Only pug marks of jackal were found during the search operation of the high-security airport premises. However, there was

no sign of any leopard, he said.

"We have tied a few hens to nearby trees as bait. If a leopard is in the vicinity, we will catch the animal when it comes to feed on the hens," the official said.

In 2019, a leopard was caught from the City airport premises and later released in the nearby Chandaka forest.

Notably, the authorities of BPIA and the Veer Surendra Sai Airport at Jharsuguda had also received threats about the presence of bombs on two different flights Thursday, but those later turned out to be hoax, the officials said.

Nayagarh gangrape: 3 held

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 26: Three persons were arrested in connection with the alleged gang rape of a 21-year-old woman in Nayagarh district, police said Saturday.

The alleged incident happened October 20 evening when the woman and her fiancé were returning from the Fategarh Ram Temple, they said.

A group of men allegedly intercepted them near the Pithakhai forest and forcefully took them to the nearby jungle. There, they gang-raped her, while holding her fiancé at knife-edge, according to the FIR lodged October 24.

The accused persons also filmed the horror and uploaded a video of it on social media. The video has since

The police have arrested three persons in connection with the alleged gang-rape of the woman. Crime Against Women and Children Wing Inspector General S Shyni has been supervising the case

gone viral, it said. "The police have arrested three persons in connection with the alleged gang-rape of the woman. Crime Against Women and Children Wing (CAW&CW) Inspector General S Shyni has been supervising the case," said a statement issued by Odisha Police headquarters.

Sushil Lohani now Additional Secy to Panchayati Raj Ministry

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 26: Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water department Principal Secretary Sushil Kumar Lohani was Saturday appointed as the Additional Secretary to the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

Lohani, a 1995-batch Odisha cadre IAS officer, had also served as the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) in the state.

The Appointments Committee of the Union Cabinet has approved the appointment of Lohani as the Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, said a notification issued by the Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

'Govt committed to provide future-ready skills training'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expresses optimism that India's young professionals will make a lasting impact on the global workforce and play a critical role in its journey to becoming the world's third-largest economy



He further emphasised the vital role of skilled youth as India's greatest strength and the essential contributor to the nation's growth.

In his address, Jayant Chaudhary, Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, said India's skill ecosystem spans a vast network of 15,000 ITIs that have upheld their credibility over the years.

"Through the collaborative efforts of our directorates and state governments, we have established a robust assessment system empowering students to shape their future vision," said the minister.

He pointed out that this year, for the first time in Union Budget's history, ITI (industrial training institutes) improvement has been prioritised, aligning this initiative closely with the government's transformative vision for India.

"Our ITIs should cater to the specific requirements of local industries, ensuring that skill development is relevant and impactful. I encourage companies, as well as MPs and MLAs, to take a personal interest in the upgradation of these institutions," said the minister.

Annual terracotta exhibition Mruttika-2024

Exhibition to continue till October 30, from 11am to 9pm featuring cultural programmes every evening

POST NEW NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 26: Annual terracotta exhibition 'Mruttika' was inaugurated at IDCO exhibition ground at Unit-III here, Friday. Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts department principal secretary Arabinda Kumar



Padhee graced the ceremony as chief guest and inaugurated the exhibition.

The objective of organising the event is to provide market support to terracotta artisans to display their products at an exhibition, in order to expand their business activities.

The exhibition organised by directorate of Handicrafts, under Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts department will continue till October 30. More than 300 terracotta artisans from 27 districts participated in the exhibition.

Special secretary of the department Madhumita Rath, director of Handicrafts Pranati



Chhotray, director of Textiles Shobhan Krushna Sahoo, additional secretary Bikramaditya Barik and joint director Sisir Kumar Ratha were also present at the inaugural ceremony.

Out of 51 approved handi-

crafts by the state government, Terracotta is one of the major craft practiced. Around 36,000 terracotta artisans are spread across different districts, involved in the craft in 40 identified clusters.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured that the government is committed to providing future-ready, globally relevant skills training, with India's policies centred on empowering youth, a release said Saturday.

In a written message to the Skill Convocation Ceremony 'Kaushal Deekshant Samaroh', he expressed optimism that India's young professionals will make a lasting impact on the global workforce and play a critical role in its journey to becoming the world's third-largest economy.

India is increasingly recognised globally as a powerhouse of skilled talent due to the ex-

PM said that India is increasingly recognised globally as a powerhouse of skilled talent due to the expertise and scale of its young workforce

He also emphasised the vital role of skilled youth as India's greatest strength and the essential contributor to the nation's growth

pertise and scale of its young workforce, Modi said.

"The Prime Minister assured that with India's policies centred on empowering youth, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is committed to providing future-ready, globally relevant skill training," an official statement said.

an official statement said.

Farmers affected by 'Dana' to get rightful support: Deo



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 26: A review meeting was held Saturday at Krushi Bhawan here, under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo regarding the crop damage due to cyclone 'Dana'.

After the rain subsides, the district level officers will go on ground and send the geo-tag reports of the damaged crops to the department and based on which

necessary decisions will be taken, Singh Deo said, adding that the government is fully prepared to ensure that farmers receive their rightful support and assistance.

Around 14 districts have been affected by the impact of the storm, while crops in five districts- Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Balasore, Jajpur and Mayurbhanj- are affected and submerged under the floor water. A total of 88,594 hectares of land in seven blocks of Bhadrak has been submerged while 24,827 hectares of agricultural land has been estimated to be affected.

Similarly, in eight blocks of Kendrapara, around 28,426 hectares of land has been affected. 17,666 hectares of land in 7 blocks of Jajpur district were submerged while 2709 hectares of land is affected. 1872 hectares of land is submerged and 2381 hectares of land is estimated to be affected in 16 blocks of Mayurbhanj. 4396 hectares of land in 12 blocks of Balasore is submerged while 3140 hectares of land has been affected.

'H&UD team's effective mgmt ensured zero casualty'

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 26: The proactive actions through effective management and resilient response of the Housing and Urban Development department played a key role in ensuring zero casualty in Cyclone 'Dana', Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra said.

The H&UD team members were led by Commerce and Transport principal secretary Usha Padhee for rescue and relief operations.

Soon after IMD's warning on Cyclone Dana, municipal commissioners and executive officers of ULBs across the regions to be affected swung into action and their coordinated efforts marked not only in operational efficiency but also a strong commitment to community welfare keeping Chief Minister's advice and government guidelines in mind.

Proactive communication strategies of the officers facili-

tated clear and timely contact with communities, sharing real-time updates on evacuation plans, shelter locations, and safety guidelines. The move helped in reducing panic among people and ensured community trust.

The officers organised safe, accessible evacuation routes and temporary shelters, prioritising the needs of vulnerable groups, including the elderly, disabled, and families with children. They also ensured that shelters were stocked with essential supplies, including food, water, and medical aid through effective shelter management.

Executive officers of different urban local bodies (ULBs) in the cyclone-affected areas took pre-emptive steps to minimise waterlogging by clearing drains, coordinating with local engineering teams to deploy pumps, and monitoring flood-prone areas.

Post-cyclone, the department mobilised teams to clear standing water in order to prevent

IIM Sambalpur onboards 30 startups

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Oct 26: IIM Sambalpur Saturday onboarded 30 startups during the inauguration ceremony of the annual business conclave Marmagya 9.0 in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) at its campus with the theme (Re) defining Horizons: Strategic Partnerships for Business Excellence.

The event aimed to bring together industry leaders and academicians to engage in insightful discussions on emerging business trends and challenges.

The conclave was attended by 35 top industry leader such as C-



Suite: Partnership- Driven Leadership for Building- Impact Performance, 'IT& Consulting: Techno fusion- Human-Machine Collaboration', 'Finance: Innovative Finance- New Horizons through Strategic Alliance', 'Marketing: The power of Co-Branding - Creative Value

Proposition, 'Operation: Operational Excellence through Strategic Alliance' and HR, Employment Branding through Strategic Partnership.

Under the Incubation and Acceleration Program 2024-25, which is the first programme of IHub - Incubation Center of IIM

Sambalpur, out of 70 applications, 30 startups have been onboarded for mentorship, training, and other support. From which, 19 of these startups are from Odisha.

Among the selected handloom startups were Sukanti Handloom Private Ltd, founded by Sukanti Meher from Bargarh and Prasanta Enterprise, which focuses on producing sanitary pads for women and is led by Payal Patel from Jharsuguda.

IIM Sambalpur director Mahadeo Jaiswal, emphasised upon importance of strategic alliances during the inaugural ceremony.



contamination and waterborne diseases.

Officers made arrangements to provide safe drinking water, deploying tankers to areas without access and ensuring that shelters were well-stocked, Padhee said.

They also worked with water supply authorities to address pipeline damages swiftly, recognising the critical importance of clean water access, thus ensuring drinking water supply.

Soon after the cyclone hit the coast causing widespread damages, officers coordinated in road clearance operations, removing

debris, and restoring connectivity to isolated areas. The road connectivity facilitated quick access for emergency services, supply vehicles, and public transportation, helping communities regain a sense of normalcy.

The executive officers worked closely with local leaders, volunteers, and NGOs to mobilise community resources for mutual aid, such as volunteer networks for door-to-door checks. These collaborations succeeded as community engagement and support was accelerated.

After the cyclone passed, officers were quick to organise

clean-up drives, restore basic utilities, and assess infrastructure damage. They implemented psychosocial support measures, understanding the trauma and mental stress caused by natural disasters.

The team's efforts demonstrated a deep consideration of the human element, not just in safeguarding lives but also in re-enforcing a compassionate, community-centered response. Humanity took centre-stage in entire operations, officials said.

Padhee, through a video conference, Saturday, took stock of the post-cyclone scenario and reviewed department's activities and infra-upgradation in ULBs.

She was informed that a total of 35,723 people were evacuated from affected areas and safely shifted to 150 shelter-centres under 11 ULBs of Bhadrak, Balasore and Kendrapara districts. Padhee also instructed the officers to be more sincere and committed in service delivery.

Musical event on Bhikari Bal today

Bhubaneswar: Yours Organisation of Unity, Trust & Help (YOUTH) will organise 'Bhikari Bal Sangeet Pratiyogita-2024' at Gita Gobinda Sadan here Sunday to mark the death anniversary of Bhajan Samrat Bhikari Bal, organisers said Saturday. Participants from different districts will take part in the competition that would be held in three categories - Class I to V, Class VI to X and 17 years and above - beginning 11am. Odia Language, Literature and Culture principal secretary Bishnupada Sethi will inaugurate the event.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	26.3°C	25.6°C
Min Temp	23.2°C	23.0°C
Humidity	95%	80%
Rainfall	8.0	1.6
FORECAST		
CLOUDY SKY		

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Short shrift to Subarnapur in appointment of doctors



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, Oct 26: Subarnapur district has received a raw deal in the appointment of doctors by the state government as the western district has only 45 doctors against the sanctioned 123 posts. The issue assumes significance as the state government appointed 134 new doctors, Saturday in various hospitals of the state following completion of their Post Graduation (PG) in medical science by the state Health and Family Welfare department. However, Subarnapur district's share is zero if we make a quick check of the list of newly appointed doctors. The state government has not appointed even a single doctor for the district sparking sharp resentment among the residents. A new building of the district headquarters hospital was constructed at an expense of ₹100 crore at the district headquarters town Sonepur. The new seven-storey hospital building was inaugurated in last February. However, healthcare service in the district is in tatters due to absence of adequate number of doctors and nursing officers at the district headquarters hospital. Patients fail to avail proper

healthcare services due to lack of doctors.

Odisha has witnessed a change in government but the district has not seen any betterment in healthcare services. If this is the condition of the district headquarters hospital at Sonepur, then it is better not to speak of the condition of other hospitals in the district, residents alleged. Reports said that the posts of Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) and public health officer (PHO) have been lying vacant since the month of May. In this situation, one could very well assume the condition of healthcare services in the DHH at Sonepur. People visiting the hospital allege that the exterior of the hospital is shining but the interior is almost empty due to lack of doctors and other healthcare personnel.

The DHH has 123 sanctioned posts of doctors including specialist doctors, senior consultants, senior medical officers and general duty medical officers (GDMOs). However, only 45 professionals are in the DHH. A leave training reserve medical officer (LTRMO) and senior specialist of anesthesia department are absent from their service for years but no action has been

taken against them. The DHH has 81 posts of LTRMO doctors but only 24 are working. The hospital has 125 posts of sanctioned nursing staff out of which 53 posts are lying vacant. Similarly, there are several vacancies in 34 sanctioned posts of laboratory testing assistants. The new building constructed in the hospital has a modern laboratory, operation theatre, outdoor ward, indoor wards of various departments, patient registration kiosk and a blood bank. However, healthcare services are in shambles due to inadequate numbers of doctors and nursing officers. The hospital is daily visited by several accident victims, but the hospital has only two surgeons making it difficult to treat them. Dr Durgadutta Dash is working as the superintendent of the DHH with the additional charge of the CDMO. He mostly remains busy in the administrative works of the hospital, which is why emergency patients have failed to avail proper treatment in the health facility. The post of specialists in the medicine, ophthalmology, skin and venereal diseases, gynaecology and obstetrics departments are also lying vacant in the hospital. The hospital also lacks an orthopaedician and persons with even minor fractures are often referred to Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital (BBMCH) in Bolangir or to VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR). Residents have demanded the state government to intervene and fill up the vacant posts in the DHH on a priority basis.



INUNDATED: A biker negotiating a road overflowing with floodwaters of Kanshabansha following rain triggered by the cyclonic storm 'Dana' at Anandapur village in Balasore district, Saturday

Man gets 20-yr RI for kidnap, rape of minor girl in Balasore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasore, Oct 26: A local court in Balasore district Saturday sentenced a man to 20 years of Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) after convicting him of kidnapping and raping a 12-year-old girl.

Special Judge Ranjan Kumar Sutar of Balasore POCSO Court awarded the sentence to Rajendra Jena (24) from Balasore Town area for sexually assaulting the victim after abducting her when she went to a local market in the evening of April 6.



The court also imposed a penalty of ₹5,000 and ordered an additional two years of imprisonment if the convict fails to pay the fine. According to the prosecution, the victim's mother lodged a complaint with police April 7, 2024. Following an investigation, police arrested the accused and he was tried under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 6 of the POCSO Act. After examining 15 witnesses and 26 pieces of evidence, the court pronounced its verdict. "The convict will serve 20 years of RI and pay the penalty. The court further ordered ₹4 lakh in compensation for the victim to be paid through the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA)," said Special Public Prosecutor Pranab Kumar Panda.

Beat constables at Rourkela parks from November



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, October 26: The police administration here has finally heard the long pending demand of citizens to make the 100-odd public parks in the City safe and secure. During a recent interaction with senior police officers, IICs and members of the civil society, Rourkela SP Nitesh Wadhvani said that from the coming month (November), beat constable concept will be revived as the first step towards making the parks safe for visitors, especially after sundown. "They (constables) will be deployed in the parks to connect with people and address their daily concerns. They shall be available for the public during the crucial hours," Wadhvani told them, adding that stress will be laid on improving community-police relationship rather than enforcement.

QR codes will be put up at strategic points in the parks to keep tab on the presence of the deployed personnel. "Also people can send their grievances or call them instantly by scanning the QR code. Feedback from the public would decide the performance of the cops," the SP said. He said after the pilot launch at selected parks in November, the beat constable scheme will be extended to other such places following discussion with the stakeholders. It is worth mentioning here that the parks in the city have, of late, become a haven for anti-social elements, drug addicts and alcoholics. Besides, complaints of people indulging in sexual acts in the public have been received from the parks. This has made visitors, senior citizens in particular feel unsafe to use the parks, especially after sunset. Significantly, the majority of the parks remain totally or partially dark owing to the failure of the Rourkela Municipal Corporation in providing proper illumination. Three months ago RMC Commissioner Ashutosh Kulkarni, who is also the ADM, took more than 15 public hearings, and in all those occasions the main complaints he received was about the poor lighting inside the parks. Though he promised to address the issue at the earliest, no steps were taken in that direction.

Toddler dies after falling into ditch

BALASORE: A toddler died after she fell into a ditch near her house at a village in Balasore district, police said. The incident took place at Pallasahi village, when the two-and-a-half-year-old girl slipped into the ditch while playing, and was then swept away in flood water following heavy rainfall, they said. She was rushed to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared her dead. The minor has been identified as Adyasa Maharana, a police officer said, adding, investigation is underway.

Man held for raping minor sister-in-law

MALKANGIRI: MV-79 police in this district arrested a 28-year-old man Saturday for raping and impregnating his minor sister-in-law. The accused has been identified as Amit Biswas, a resident of MV-82 village. According to sources, Amit had brought his minor sister-in-law to his home for some work. He took the girl to the bank of a nearby river and raped her there. After committing the crime, he threatened her of dire consequences if she disclosed the matter to anybody. Fearing social backlash, the girl did not disclose the matter to anybody. However, after some months she fell ill and was taken to hospital by her family members. The matter came to light when the girl was found to be pregnant at the hospital. The mother of the minor girl then lodged a complaint against her son-in-law at MV-79 PS following which police registered a case (148/24) under POCSO Act and arrested the accused. He was forwarded to court after investigation, said MV-79 OIC Subhas Karkara.

Police bust gambling den, arrest 26

ROURKELA: Biramitrapur police have got a major success against illegal gambling just before Diwali with the arrest of 26 persons during a raid on the Upper Bazar of Biramitrapur. The raid was conducted at around 11pm Friday night following a tip-off received by the Biramitrapur SDPO Susant Dash. Speaking about the raid, the officer said it was based on a very definite input from his informers. "We got information that gambling was going on in the Upper Market and a large number of people were involved in it. We also got the information about the involvement of some policemen," said the officer. Police arrested 26 persons, seized cash worth ₹72,500, five motorcycles, 18 mobile phones and over two dozen playing card packs. The SDPO further added that a few managed to escape the raid and exuded confidence that they will be arrested soon. "The main accused, Rajesh, is absconding at this moment. We will continue with the raids during and after Diwali and will never allow the practice of gambling to flourish."



CLAY CRAFT: Students of Department of Education, Central University of Odisha, Koraput make earthen diyas and diya holders, Saturday

OP PHOTO

Bhitarkanika National Park shut till Oct 28

KENDRAPARA: The Bhitarkanika National Park authorities have extended the park's closure for tourists until October 28 due to the extensive damage left by severe cyclonic storm Dana, according to Sudarshan Gopinath Yadav, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Rajnagar Mangrove Forest and Wildlife Division. Yadav explained that the park was closed as a precautionary measure to prevent potential issues for tourists during the post-cyclone period. Several mangrove trees were uprooted, and tourist infrastructure sustained significant damage due to cyclone Dana, which made landfall near Habalikhathi Nature Camp. The storm also damaged windows and doors of tourist cottages at Habalikhathi and uprooted casuarina trees along the Habalikhathi coast. "We have closed the park until October 28 to facilitate repair and restoration work and to clear fallen trees to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for tourists in the coming days," Yadav said.

'Mangroves helped reduce devastation by Dana'

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, Oct 26: The devastation could have been severe if cyclone Dana had not made landfall in the mangrove-covered Bhitarkanika area under the Rajnagar block, said Sudarshan Gopinath Yadav, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Rajnagar Mangrove Forest and Wildlife Division. The severe cyclonic storm Dana made landfall on Habalikhathi Island situated within the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary of Bhitarkanika National Park. During its landfall, several forest cottages and the doors and windows of tourist cottages were damaged, and many casuarina trees were uprooted along the sea coast at Habalikhathi. Even the branches of several tall mangrove species were damaged, and some mangrove trees were uprooted within Bhitarkanika National Park. The DFO, however, reported that there was no significant damage caused by cyclone Dana.



Some sections of the Nasi-2 beach, a favoured nesting site for the endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles, experienced erosion due to strong winds and tidal waves from the turbulent sea. Due to the rough sea conditions, Forest personnel could not visit Nasi beach to assess its condition, Yadav stated. He noted that the mangrove cover helped protect the lives and property from the cyclone's impact. This event has once again demonstrated the vital role that mangrove forests play in shielding areas from natural disasters like cyclones and tsunamis, as they serve as natural barriers against gale-force winds by reducing wind velocity and tidal surges in nearby coastal villages. Mangrove forests help prevent

Greater devastation, including more damaged electric poles and houses, would likely have occurred if the mangrove cover had not acted as a protective wall against the wind

SUDARSHAN GOPINATH YADAV | DFO, RAJNAGAR MANGROVE FOREST AND WILDLIFE DIVISION

Tidal water might have inundated several areas, but thanks to the mangrove forest, the damage was minimised during the landfall, he added. According to Forest officials, the Bhitarkanika mangrove forest, which spans over 213km and is the second-largest mangrove forest in India after the Sundarbans in West Bengal, is home to 55 of the 58 true mangrove species. However, this vital ecosystem is rapidly disappearing. Assistant Chief Engineer of Irrigation and Executive Engineer of Aul Saline Embankment, Umesh Chandra Sethy, mentioned that no major inundation occurred in the area due to tidal waves. He said sandbags were placed along vulnerable embankments at Talachua, Bajarapur, Satagaon, Bagapatia, and Koilipur, which prevented the tidal water from overtopping the embankments. For the first time during a cyclone, no large areas were inundated with tidal water, stated Sethy.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No. MCSW-BOGIE-24-25-23

NAME OF WORK : STRIPPING, SEGREGATION, RECLAMATION, STACKING & FITMENT OF ICF & FIAT BOGIE COMPONENTS AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES OF BG COACHES AT CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR.

Advertised Value : ₹ 2,90,29,622.88, EMD : ₹ 2,95,200/-, Period of Completion : 24 Months.

Bidding Start Date : 28.10.2024

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 11.11.2024.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer (POH), PR-658/P/24-25 CRW/Mancheswar

FOCUS POLITICS

ENLIGHTENED DICTATORSHIP



Through a de facto partial suspension of democracy, Macron kept the far right out of power and restored stability. For that, he deserves congratulations and support. With neo-fascism on the rise globally, similar measures may prove necessary elsewhere

which was imposed by Charles de Gaulle at the establishment of the Fifth Republic in 1958 – stipulates that the president nominates the prime minister, whose appointed government can operate even if its members have not been confirmed by the National Assembly. It was owing to this peculiarity that François Mitterand later defied the Fifth Republic as undemocratic, describing it in 1964 as a “permanent coup.”

National Rally ultimately finished third, and other parties have de facto supported his handling of the situation by not calling for a no-confidence vote against his recently appointed prime minister, Michel Barnier. Something similar happened in France during the historic May 1968 protests, which almost toppled de Gaulle and his government – or so it seemed – only for him to return with a new National Assembly in place. Notably, the protests erupted at the very high point of the French welfare state, when the standard of living was higher than it had ever been before.

this summer. His decision to dissolve parliament was certainly risky, but it was a risk worth taking. The new fascism must be fought with haste and vigor wherever it appears. Though National Rally’s Marine Le Pen was denied her victory in the second round, CNN described the result well: “Macron’s gamble has kept the far right out of power, but plunged France into chaos.” Because Macron and Jean-Luc Mélenchon (the key figure in the NPF) are so far apart, no deal to forge a grand coalition seemed possible. Instead, the country seemed set for a prolonged period of instability and anti-left subterfuge – bad news for an already brittle economy and efforts to fend off the far right in the 2027 presidential election.

Instead, France has not been plunged into chaos. For now, at least, it seems that Macron’s gamble has restored a semblance of normality. Some will wonder whether a non-elected government can drag on indefinitely; but others will answer, “Why not?” It is certainly preferable to a hung parliament, prolonged political unrest, and social and economic chaos. Through a de facto partial suspension of democracy, Macron kept the far right out of power and restored stability. For that, he deserves congratulations and support. With neo-fascism on the rise globally, similar measures may prove necessary elsewhere. As the philosopher Jon Elster concluded in 2020: “We can reverse the common dictum that democracy is under threat, and affirm that democracy is the threat, at least in its short-termist populist form.”

The writer, Professor of Philosophy at the European Graduate School, is International Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities at the University of London.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

The great are strongest when they stand alone. A God-given might of being is their force.
SRI AUROBINDO



The Dominant Class

Let us discuss what is called merit. The British middle class is 60 per cent of the population. The working class, the set of people employed in labour and other blue collar work, is 14 per cent. In India, what is called the middle class is so small that it is statistically just a blip. Statisticians sometimes speak of a plus/minus 2 per cent error in numbers. Such an error would wipe out the entire Indian ‘middle class.’ And yet, it is the most dominant and visible set of our population. It is this set that controls the media which is locked into it because it survives on advertising. What you and I consume pays the media. So it is not surprising that the media’s content is focused on us, the three per cent, and not the many. Dalits (23 crore), Adivasis (11 crore) and Muslims (20 crore) make up nearly 40 per cent of India’s population. How much representation do they have in our economy, our political power structure and in our media? An Oxfam study in India, conducted between October 2018 and March 2019, found that 106 of 121 newsroom leadership positions were occupied by the upper castes. Three out of every four anchors (among a total of forty anchors in Hindi channels and forty-seven in English channels) of debates are upper caste. Not one was Dalit or Adivasi. News channels drew the majority of the panellists from the upper castes, for over 70 per cent of their primetime debate shows: No more than 5 per cent of all articles in English newspapers are written by Dalits and Adivasis. Only ten of the 972 articles featuring on the cover pages of the twelve magazines under the study were about issues related to caste. The idea that their rightful places are ‘stolen’ by the Dalit and the Adivasi and that reservations are the undoing of ‘merit’ is universally accepted by India’s elite. Stories with headlines such as ‘Over 60 per cent OBC, SC positions vacant in IIMs’ clearly debunk this belief. More than 90 per cent of the posts of professor reserved for Adivasis in universities were not filled. Of over 6,000 vacancies in forty-two universities, 75 per cent were those that dealt with reserved categories. Even our institutions of learning where reservation was legally mandated were uncomfortable with Dalit and Adivasi faculty. They need the rest of us to show solidarity with them. This was the issue I touched upon briefly in a talk once at an elite Bangalore school. The idea that we were privileged and that it was incumbent upon us to recognise that and to act towards it. If we meant to be good Indians and good patriots, the most important contribution we could make was our own participation in its improvement. We could set aside some of our privilege and give it to those who did not have it. Our Constitution tells us India is a society of equality, liberty and fraternity but it cannot be the responsibility of the government or of political parties to hold these values. They must be held by us, the citizenry. We could cede some of our space to those less fortunate purely because of an accident of birth and willingly give them reservation. This did not go down well at that school. The students were hostile to the idea. They felt they had earned their position in life (‘merit’) and their place in the school through their merit. If others had not, this was not their concern. Even the parents were angered by the idea of reservation. There was unanimity among the audience—and I would call it a consensus—that reservation was bad and that they, the individuals in this school, were unconnected to any notion of privilege. I was disappointed, of course, but not surprised. This is who we are as a society. The school could not be expected to be very different from the society which had produced it. Would the audience, and the children in it, especially, have continued to hold their views if they had been better acquainted with the reality of India and with the data? I do not think so. We are all humans and fraternity is at the heart of humanity. If they had known how things really were, they would have a different opinion of other Indians, one arising out of empathy. But a talk is not a book and it is not possible to communicate something of the magnitude of what was being attempted to be communicated in a thirty-minute lecture. My intervention was not meaningful: I left the children and their parents knowing nothing more than what they had already known. It is because we have become inured to poverty, deprivation and marginalisation that we can continue to ignore it while still assuming that India will rise to become a great power. The reality is that the vast majority of its population alive today will die in poverty or destitution. Change will come to India—it comes to all societies in time. But we can quicken it. Crores will continue to suffer in a nation whose defence spending is four times that of health. Whose arms and weapons spending is five times that of education. Where a bullet train will soon speed past slums.



Aakar Patel

Crores will continue to suffer in a nation whose defence spending is four times that of health. Whose arms and weapons spending is five times that of education. Where a bullet train will soon speed past slums



Slavoj Žižek

THE NEW FASCISM MUST BE FOUGHT WITH HASTE AND VIGOR WHEREVER IT APPEARS

In Agatha Christie’s novel *The Hollow*, the eccentric Lucy Angkatell holds a dinner party for the Christows (John, a famous doctor, and his wife, Gerda), various members of her extended family, and her neighbour, detective Hercule Poirot. The next morning, Poirot witnesses a scene that seems strangely staged: Gerda stands with a gun in her hand next to John’s body as it bleeds into the swimming pool. Lucy, Henrietta (John’s lover), and Edward (a cousin of Lucy’s) are also present. John utters a final urgent appeal, “Henrietta,” and dies. It seems obvious that Gerda is the murderer. Henrietta steps forward to take the revolver from her hand, but apparently fumbles and drops it into the pool, destroying the evidence of Gerda’s fingerprints on the handle. Poirot realises that the dying man’s “Henrietta” was a call to his lover to protect his wife from imprisonment for his death.

Without any conscious plan, the entire family joins in the plot and deliberately misdirects Poirot. Each of them knows that Gerda is the murderer; so they stage the crime scene, but in a reflexive way: the deception lies in the very fact that it appears staged. The truth masks itself as artifice, such that the faked elements are, in fact, “clues.” As another of Christie’s famous detectives, Jane Marple, remarks in *They Do It with Mirrors*: “Never underestimate the power of the obvious.”

If we replace John’s body with democracy and Gerda with French President Emmanuel Macron, we can open a window onto France following its parliamentary election this summer. After the far-right National Rally won the first round, Macron was caught holding a smoking gun. But in the weeks and months thereafter, he managed to protect French democracy by partly suspending it, thus denying the second-round winner – a leftist coalition called the New Popular Front (NFP) – the fruits of its victory. The French constitution –

SPECTRUM NATION

The oath-taking show-off

Having ruled over India for 200 years, the British have left long-lasting marks on Indian polity. Some of the legacies have stood in good stead like the parliamentary form of government. Other key legacies of the British rule are the English language and the legal system. Till recently, we have had the Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code among other statutes written during the British rule.

After attaining Independence in 1947, India adopted the British model of parliamentary democracy. Our colonial masters had been the pioneers of parliamentary form of democracy. The other model of democracy, the one followed by the United States of America, is the Presidential form of governance. Under the British model, there are two Houses of Parliament: House of Lords and House of Commons. In India, the two Houses of Parliament are called

Lok Sabha (Lower House) and Rajya Sabha (Upper House). Under the parliamentary system both Britain and India have titular heads. In Britain, the titular head is the Monarch while in India the titular head is the President.

One conspicuous practice that India has however deviated from the Britain tradition is the custom of oath-taking ceremony when a new government assumes power either at the Centre or in the states. I noticed the divergence when the new Labour Party Prime Minister Keir Starmer took over the reins of the governance of the United Kingdom on 5 July, 2024. To my utter surprise, there was no pomp and show in the garb of oath-taking ceremony. The newly designated Prime Minister just presented himself before the Monarch who gave some sort of non-verbal communication by which Starmer was anointed the Prime Minister. Subsequently, the new Prime Minister made

announcements about the names of his cabinet colleagues in a phased manner. There was no such fuss, which is created around oath-taking ceremonies in India. The winning party’s nominee for premiership, Keir Starmer, took over the reins of the government in a most unobtrusive manner.

Extrapolate the British practice with what recently happened in an Indian state which recently went to the polls. The results of the Assembly elections had been declared on 8 October. The oath-taking ceremony took place on 17 October, a good nine days after the declaration of the results. All this while the present incumbent was to continue without any change of guard. Therefore, the extravagant way the oath-taking ceremony was organised contrasts starkly with the unostentatious manner of transfer of power in the UK.

The preparations for oath-taking went on for nine days as

the top brass from the Centre and several states were to grace the occasion. The gala show seemed more unreasonable because the same incumbent was to continue. It was not as if a new dispensation came to power by ousting the old one.

The seamless and unpretentious transitioning to the next government is one British practice that is worth emulating. Organising extravagant oath-taking ceremonies, with the presence of security-sensitive VVIPs and a big gathering of crowd, entails inconvenience to the general public and is a burden on the state exchequer. Victorious parties may organise their own celebrations at their party offices or at private venues. As oath-taking is constitutionally mandated in India, the solemn ceremony should however be held in an austere manner.

The author is a retired banker and freelance writer.

WISDOM CORNER

Accept the things to which fate binds you, and love the people with whom fate brings you together, but do so with all your heart.
MARCUS AURELIUS

The only true measure of success is the ratio between what we might have done and what we might have been on the one hand, and the thing we have made and the things we have made of ourselves on the other.
HG WELLS

If there were in the world today any large number of people who desired their own happiness more than they desired the unhappiness of others, we could have a paradise in a few years.
BERTRAND RUSSELL

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1492: Christopher Columbus sailed to Cuba and claimed the island for Spain.
- 1795: Pinckney’s Treaty, an agreement between the United States and Spain, was signed, giving the United States navigation rights on the Mississippi River.
- 1961: The first Saturn rocket was successfully launched, and years later the Saturn V was the launch vehicle used in the Apollo Moon-landing flights.
- 1978: Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin awarded Nobel Peace Prize. On this day in 1978, Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Menachem Begin of Israel were awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace for negotiations that resulted first in the Camp David Accords, then in a peace treaty between their countries.



Chander Gupta

THE SEAMLESS AND UNPRETENTIOUS TRANSITIONING TO THE NEXT GOVERNMENT IS ONE BRITISH PRACTICE THAT IS WORTH EMULATING

Unfilled vacancies

Sir, The Central government has directed states to fill school teacher vacancies as soon as feasible. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand stand up as having the most empty teaching positions. Overall, North Indian states have the highest number of empty teacher vacancies. More than eight lakh positions are currently vacant across the country. Because education cannot be envisioned without teachers, filling unfilled teaching positions should be prioritised. The state governments’ failure to replace vacant teacher positions demonstrates that they are not serious about enhancing the quality of education. The difficulty is that many instructor positions remain unfilled, especially at higher education institutions such as colleges and universities. Unfortunately, these include Central universities too. It is apparent that the Union government will need to pay attention to Central universities while also advising the states. It is not only vital to fill vacant primary and secondary school teaching positions as soon as possible. It is also vital to focus on enhancing teacher quality. Beside, many schools in the country also face a lack of resources. Another issue is that primary and secondary schools are unable to progress in accordance with the new educational policy.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

Judges’ judge

Sir, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, who will lay down his office shortly on superannuation after a tenure of two years, has always been a judges’ judge. Throughout his career as a High Court judge, and later in the Supreme Court, he never put a foot backward in ensuring the friendliness of the top court towards subordinate judges as well as to litigants. Digital initiatives at the SC like live streaming of select court proceedings and digitalisation of records owe their massive patronage to Chandrachud. It is important for the common man to get access to judgements; linking of the SC to the National Judicial Data Grid was viewed as a step in the right direction. Translation of judgements into regional languages was almost akin to people’s participation in justice delivery. Chandrachud also made sure that vacancies in the top court and at high courts were filled expeditiously.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

GULMARG TERROR ATTACK

Jaish offshoot claims responsibility; search op enters second day



AGENCIES

Srinagar, Oct 26: An offshoot of the terrorist outfit, Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) calling itself the People's Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF) has claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack at Botapathri in the Gulmarg sector of Jammu and Kashmir by releasing a video on social media.

The PAFF has released a video that showed a terrorist firing a rocket at the army vehicle from the dense forest in the Botapathri area.

While showing concern at the use of a rocket by the terrorists, officials confirmed that the rocket did not hit the army vehicle, but fell some distance away from it. Had the rocket hit the vehicle it would have caused greater damage.

Three to four militants are believed to have carried out the deadly attack on the Army convoy that left four people, including two soldiers, dead, a senior police official said Saturday.

The search operation, which entered the second day, was halted at the last light Friday and was resumed Saturday morning, the official said.

"According to the evidence we got from there, 3-4 militants were involved in the attack," Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Baramulla, Mohammad Zaid Malik told reporters in the north Kashmir district.

The police, Army and paramilitary forces are carrying out

the search operation, which has been extended to Baba Reshi and forest areas in Gulmarg as well as the built-up area before it, the SSP said.

The SSP said security forces had been carrying out many input-based search operations on the militants in the Pattankreeri area of the Baramulla district in the days ahead of the attack.

Two soldiers and two Army porters were killed in the attack Thursday, while another porter and a soldier were injured. Terrorists opened fire on an Army vehicle, 6km from the tourist hotspot Gulmarg in the Bota Pathri area, when it was headed for the Nagin post in the Affarwat range.

Security forces Friday deployed drones and helicopters for a massive search operation in the area and along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Gulmarg sector.

Security forces were also using human and technical intelligence inputs to aid the search operation launched to trace and neutralise the terrorists behind the attack, officials said.

Senior officers of the police and Army are overseeing the operation.

The area is completely dominated by the Army and there were reports recently that a terrorist group had infiltrated during early summer and taken shelter in the higher reaches of the Affarwat range.

Accession and its implications for Jammu & Kashmir

The accession of Jammu & Kashmir to India October 26, 1947, stands as a pivotal event with enduring consequences. The Maharaja's decision to join the Indian Union was legally and politically sound, rooted in the need for security and long-term stability

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 26: The accession of Jammu & Kashmir to India October 26, 1947, was a landmark event in the history of the Indian subcontinent.

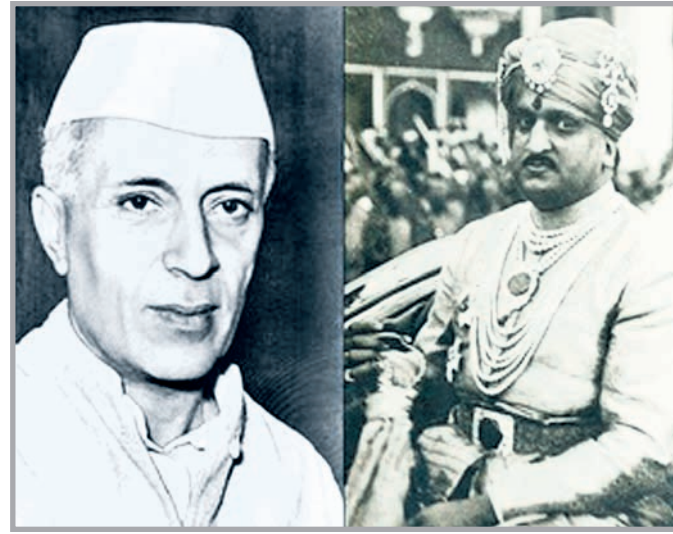
On this day, Maharaja Hari Singh, then ruler of Jammu & Kashmir, formally signed the Instrument of Accession, thus integrating the Princely State into the newly formed Indian Dominion. This decision was a progressive and strategic step that to date, continues to shape both the internal and external dynamics of Jammu & Kashmir.

The geopolitical environment as an immediate aftermath of British decolonisation was characterised by uncertainty and conflict mostly provoked by a newly formed Pakistan. Following the Partition of India, October 22, 1947, Jammu & Kashmir found itself surrounded by chaos and destruction in the wake of an illegal tribal invasion backed by Pakistan forces. Maharaja Hari Singh decided to accede to India in order to secure Indian assistance with the vision of a peaceful and prosperous future. This accession was not only a response to immediate security concerns but

also a decisive political act that altered the course of the region's future for the better.

The Maharaja's decision to accede to India was a highly strategic and futuristic approach to support growth in Jammu and Kashmir. Faced with the pressures of an external invasion and the internal demand for stability, the Maharaja made a calculated choice in favour of India, seeking military and political support to preserve the integrity of his state. Contrary to claims of coercion or haste, the decision to accede was informed by a clear understanding of the consequences, reflecting a preference for the governance structures and democratic principles offered by India, in contrast to Pakistan's military-backed aggression.

The Instrument of Accession signed by Maharaja Hari Singh remains legally valid and unassailable under international law. Enacted in accordance with the Government of India Act, 1935, and the Indian Independence Act, 1947, the accession granted India jurisdiction over Jammu & Kashmir's defence, communications, and foreign relations, while maintaining the state's internal autonomy.



The aftermath of the accession saw Pakistan engaging in sustained efforts to distort the United Nations resolutions concerning Jammu & Kashmir. Central to this narrative is the selective emphasis on the plebiscite clause, which suggests that the people of Jammu & Kashmir should have the right to determine their own future. However, this interpretation overlooks critical preconditions set by the UN, including the requirement for the withdrawal of Pakistani forces from territories they occupied during the conflict.

Two additional clauses of the UN resolutions emphasise the need for a ceasefire and the establishment of a line of control, which have also been misrepresented by Pakistan in its mis-

chievous quest to challenge India's claim. The UN Resolution 47, adopted in 1948, called for a ceasefire, urging both parties to withdraw their forces and facilitate a plebiscite, conditional upon the complete withdrawal of Pakistani troops. Furthermore, subsequent resolutions stressed the importance of demilitarisation as a precursor to any future plebiscite, conditions that remain unfulfilled.

Despite Pakistan's continued efforts to undermine the legal framework of the accession, India took the matter to the United Nations, seeking international mediation to address the conflict. This decision marked a significant moment in the global discourse surrounding the Kashmir issue, placing the regional dispute within the con-

text of international law and human rights.

Over time, the decision to accede to India has been vindicated by the socio-economic progress observed in Jammu & Kashmir. The region's development trajectory, supported by substantial investments from the Indian government, has contrasted sharply with the economic challenges faced by Pakistan. Jammu & Kashmir's development budget now exceeds the bailout packages secured by Pakistan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), highlighting the region's progress within India. This comparative analysis underscores the long-term benefits of the accession, as Jammu & Kashmir continues to experience significant improvements in infrastructure, education, and economic opportunities.

The accession of Jammu & Kashmir to India October 26, 1947, stands as a pivotal event with enduring consequences. The Maharaja's decision to join the Indian Union was legally and politically sound, rooted in the need for security and long-term stability. Pakistan's continued misrepresentation of UN resolutions and its selective interpretation of historical events cannot diminish the legal and historical legitimacy of the accession. In retrospect, the development and progress of Jammu & Kashmir serve as a testament to the correctness of the decision, reinforcing the region's integration into India.

J&K panchayat polls likely in January 2025

ELECTIONS FOR THE PANCHAYATS AND ULBs WERE LAST HELD IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2018

AGENCIES

Jammu, Oct 26: After the successful and peaceful conduct of the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, the Jammu and Kashmir administration is again in action mode as the panchayat elections are expected in Jammu and Kashmir in January next year.

Official sources said that the Panchayat elections are expected to be announced in January 2025.

"The State Election Commission (SEC) has issued instructions to all the Deputy Commissioners of all the districts, who are also the District Election Panchayat Officers (DEPOs) to conduct annual revision of the existing panchayat voter lists and fresh delimitation of 'Halqas' (Revenue Villages)," official sources said.

They stated that annual revision of the existing panchayat voter lists to follow the special revision camps.

The tenure of over 28,000 panchayat members ended January 9 this year in Jammu and Kashmir.

The panchayat polls in Jammu and Kashmir are not conducted by the Election Commission of India (ECI) but by the J&K State Election Commission.

Elections for the panchayats and Urban Local Bodies were last held in November and December 2018.

"After the conduct of panchayat and urban body polls,

including the very grassroots level, will be completed in Jammu and Kashmir post abrogation of Article 370," they said.

"After the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections were conducted peacefully, preparations are in progress to conduct the panchayat elections," official sources said.

The eligible voters attaining the age of 18 years or above can get their names included in the voter list.

"The revision is being done under Section 38 of the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act 1989 while six special camps," official sources said.

"The District Deputy Commissioners have been asked to deploy BDOs for smooth conduct and monitoring of the process while the BDOs will receive all claims and objections and comprehensive information will be submitted to the office of the respective District Commissioners," they said.

The final panchayat voter lists are likely to be published January 6, 2025 following which elections are expected to be announced, sources said.

A total of 27,281 Panches (panchayat members) and Sarpanches (village heads) were elected in the 2018 elections.



A worker makes candles at a factory ahead of Diwali festival, on the outskirts of Jammu, Saturday PTI PHOTO

Stalin to begin statewide tour from Nov 5

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Oct 26: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin is set to embark on a statewide tour beginning November 5, seeking to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of state government schemes and welfare projects.

According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office, the tour will commence in Coimbatore, where Stalin will be present November 5 and 6.

During his visit, he will meet with government officials, and elected representatives such as local Members of Parliament, MLAs, and members of local governing bodies.



In a letter addressed to party cadres, Stalin announced his plans to conduct on-the-ground inspections to assess the functioning of schemes implemented by the Dravidian

model of governance under his leadership.

He emphasised his intention to visit all districts in the state to inform the public about the achievements and successes of these people-centred welfare initiatives.

However, the Chief Minister has not specified a timeline for his tour, indicating that it will not be a continuous journey. Since assuming office in May 2021, the Stalin-led government has introduced various schemes aimed at uplifting the most marginalised sections of society.

Key initiatives include the Kalaigalar Magalar Urimai Thittam scheme which provides ₹1,000 monthly to 1,15,16,292

women, free bus travel for women, the Makkalai Thedi Matuthuvam (Health at Doorstep) scheme, and the Chief Minister's Free Breakfast Scheme for schoolchildren.

Another notable scheme, Pudhumai Pen, offers ₹1,000 per month to female students from government and government-aided schools pursuing a college education.

Around 3.28 lakh female students have benefitted from this initiative. Following its success, the scheme was extended to boys in government and government-aided schools through the Tamizh Pudhalvan scheme, which now aids approximately 3.18 lakh boys.

PDP dissolves full structure of party

Srinagar: Days after reviewing the poll debacle, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) dissolved the full structure of the party with immediate effect. A statement by the PDP said the decision to dissolve the party structure was taken by party president Mehbooba Mufti. The party said that new office bearers, different wings and bodies will be framed after consultation with party senior leaders in near future. The PDP was virtually routed in the recent Assembly election and won only three seats. This was the worst electoral result of the PDP since its formation 25 years back in 1999. In the 2014 Assembly election the PDP had bagged 28 seats and emerged as the single largest party. The senior party leaders Thursday discussed the party's future strategy, focusing on rebuilding and reconnecting with the people across the region.

Chennai Metro Rail Phase II to be completed in time: CM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Oct 26: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin assured that the state government is making every effort to complete Phase II of the Chennai Metro Rail project as per schedule.

Speaking to media after reviewing the project's progress with Union Minister for Urban Development Manohar Lal Khattar at the Chennai Metro Rail Corporation headquarters Saturday, Stalin expressed confidence in meeting the project timeline.

The Chief Minister thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government for approving the ₹63,246 crore Phase II project, which spans 118.9 km. "My government and officials are making every effort to complete the project within the stipulated time," Stalin said.

He added that Phase II of the Chennai Metro Rail is progressing swiftly, with ₹19,229 crore spent on the project so far. Stalin highlighted the impact of the first phase of the Chennai Metro, completed at a cost of ₹22,150 crore.

Migratory birds flock to Point Calimere as rains set in

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Oct 26: Following the arrival of the northeast monsoon in Tamil Nadu in mid-October, migratory birds have begun arriving at the Kodyakarai Bird Sanctuary in the southern state.

According to officials from the Tamil Nadu Forest department, birds from various parts of the world have arrived at the Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary in Kodyakarai, located in Nagapattinam district.

The species that have arrived include little stilts, flamingos, painted storks, pelicans, crab



plovers, Heuglin's gulls, marsh sandpipers, curlew sandpipers, great knots, red knots, and little egrets.

Most of these are water birds, particularly waders. Significant rainfall in the areas surrounding the sanctuary, brought by the

northeast monsoon, has encouraged the arrival of these migratory birds in large numbers.

A senior official from the Tamil Nadu Forest department mentioned that, compared to 2023, the increased rainfall this year has led to a larger influx of migratory birds.

The official stated, "With the arrival of migratory birds, the issue of poaching has also resurfaced. We have initiated measures to prevent poaching in villages across Vedaranyam taluk, where the sanctuary is located, as the number of migratory birds continues to grow." He added that the department

is patrolling these villages to protect the birds. KV Balakrishnan, an avid bird watcher and ornithologist in Tamil Nadu, commented, "The Forest department must ensure minimal human interference in these areas where migratory birds arrive in large numbers. Backwater fishing should be reduced during this period to limit human activity in these regions."

He also urged the Tamil Nadu government to fairly compensate fishers who are restricted from backwater fishing during this time. It is noteworthy that Tamil Nadu is home to fifteen bird sanctuaries.

of the day quote

I am happy that I could come to inaugurate the media centre during the state's assembly elections. I will continue to visit here with good events in the future. I believe, the media will write about us (BJP) in a positive manner

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

Deepavali is approaching. The Supreme Court has given guidelines on what kind of crackers should be burst. Only green crackers should be sold and they should be burst from 8 pm to 10 pm

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

It is necessary to instil Indian values in the education system for the overall development of the students

SHIV PRATAP SHUKLA | HIMACHAL GOVERNOR

SHORT TAKES

Siddique murder: 1 more detained

Chandigarh: A man was arrested from Ludhiana in connection with the murder of NCP leader and former Maharashtra minister Baba Siddique, Punjab Police chief Gaurav Yadav said Saturday. Surjeet Sushil Singh was held in a joint operation of the Punjab Police and the Mumbai Police. He has been handed over to the Mumbai Police, Yadav, the Director General of Punjab Police said on X.

Slight improvement in Delhi's air quality

New Delhi: Favourable winds have brought a slight improvement to Delhi's air quality over the last two days, moving it to the "poor" category, compared to the "very poor" levels recorded a few days ago. The 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded at 4 pm on Saturday was 255 against 270 a day earlier, data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) showed.

Arms, explosives found in Manipur

Imphal: Arms and ammunition were recovered by security forces in Manipur's Bishnupur and Imphal West districts, police said Saturday. During a search operation in Uyungmakhong in Bishnupur district Friday, a 7.62 mm self-loading rifle with a magazine, six grenades, four grenade arm rings, two tear gas grenades, three stinger grenades and an IED weighing 2.3 kg were among the items recovered, they said.

Man convicted in rape case

New Delhi: A court here has convicted a man for repeatedly raping and impregnating a 19-year-old woman in 2018, saying it can be safely concluded that there was no consent from the victim. Additional Sessions Judge Preeti Parewa was hearing a case against a man, who was accused of raping, abducting and criminally intimidating the victim.

Militant shot dead

Itanagar: A hardcore cadre of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim-Khaplang's Yung Aung faction (NSCN-KYA) was shot dead by security forces in Arunachal Pradesh's Longding district Saturday, officials said. A defence spokesman said that acting on specific information about the movement of cadres of the NSCN-KYA, which has not signed a ceasefire agreement with the Centre, in Longding, Assam Rifles troops launched an operation Friday.

AAP accuses BJP of 'conspiracy' to kill Arvind Kejriwal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 26: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Saturday alleged a "deep conspiracy" to eliminate its convener Arvind Kejriwal and warned that the BJP will be responsible if anything happens to him.

AAP leaders Friday claimed Kejriwal was attacked by "BJP goons" during his 'padyatra' campaign in west Delhi's Vikaspuri.

In a press conference, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh charged, "Police complicity in the incident clearly shows a deep conspiracy to kill Kejriwal. The BJP has become an enemy of his life."

No immediate reaction was available from the police or the BJP over Singh's allegations.

The AAP leader, however, said that despite the Vikaspuri incident, Kejriwal will continue to undertake 'padyatra' campaign as per the schedule.

When asked why the AAP has not filed any complaint in the incident, Singh said that the incident wouldn't have happened if the police were "impartial" and its officers did not do anything to stop the group of attackers who, he said, belonged to the BJP's youth wing.

Echoing similar sentiments, Delhi cabinet minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, in another press conference said, "BJP Yuva Morcha functionaries attacked

AAP leaders Friday claimed Kejriwal was attacked by "BJP goons" during his 'padyatra' campaign in west Delhi's Vikaspuri

Kejriwal. One of the attackers is the vice president of BJP Yuva Morcha of Delhi and the second attacker is the general secretary of BJP Yuva Morcha, Delhi."

The two BJP members who were dancing after attacking Kejriwal lost the councillor election, claimed Bharadwaj. Sanjay Singh further alleged that BJP leaders are supporting Kejriwal's "attackers".

The police can take cognisance of the incident and conduct its probe, he said, adding that the AAP is taking legal opinion for further action in the matter.

BJP leaders have rubbished the AAP's claim, saying he was facing protests by locals over the supply of dirty water to their homes.

Singh asserted that Kejriwal will "neither stop nor bow down" and continue to fight for the people of Delhi. He said if anything happens to Kejriwal then BJP will be responsible for it.

Even if Kejriwal gets a scratch, Delhi's people will take revenge on the BJP, he added.



HORSE-TRADING ALLEGATIONS

Congress targets Vijayan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Malappuram (Kerala), Oct 26: The horse-trading allegations that cropped up against ruling LDF MLA Thomas K Thomas continued to create political ripples in Kerala Saturday with Opposition Congress targeting Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for not ordering a probe into the charges despite having knowledge of it.

NCP leader and MLA Thomas, who represents Kuttanad constituency in the state Assembly, reiterated that charges against him were false and said he welcomed any investigation into the allegations.

His party colleague and Forest Minister A K Saseendran, however, said the NCP leadership would discuss the matter and take further action in this regard.



Lapping up the opportunity, the Opposition Congress accused CM Vijayan of doing nothing even after coming to know days ago that a ruling MLA had tried to woo two other LDF legislators into the Sangh Parivar-led front

A controversy has erupted in Kerala over media reports claiming that Thomas, aligned with Sharad Pawar, offered Rs 50 crore each to two other Left legislators to join the Ajit Pawar-led NCP, an ally of the BJP. Lapping up the opportunity, the opposition Congress accused CM Vijayan of doing nothing even after coming to know days ago that a ruling MLA had tried to woo two other LDF legislators

A four tonne satellite carries 2-2.5 tonnes of fuel. In case of electric propulsion, the fuel requirement reduces to just 200 kg

S SOMANATH | ISRO CHAIRMAN



NITISH INSPECTS GANGA GHATS

Ahead of the approaching Chhath Puja festival, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar took proactive steps to oversee preparations in Patna to ensure a smooth experience for devotees



Workers pack different crackers for upcoming Diwali festival, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

PTI PHOTO

Coldplay, Diljit tickets: ED lodges PMLA case

The ED said in a statement that it initiated an investigation after numerous reports emerged that individuals and fans were being "deceived/cheated" through "fraudulent" ticket sales after the rapid sellout of entry passes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 26: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Saturday said it has detected alleged irregularities after it conducted raids in a money laundering case to probe "black marketing" of tickets for two "highly anticipated" music concerts by British rock band Coldplay and actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh. The searches were undertaken Friday at 13 locations in five

states -- Delhi, Maharashtra (Mumbai), Rajasthan (Jaipur), Karnataka (Bengaluru) and Punjab (Chandigarh) -- after the federal investigation agency filed a criminal case under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). While the 'Dil-Luminati' concert by Dosanjh is scheduled to be held over the weekend October 26-27 at the Jawaharlal Nehru (JLN) stadium in the na-

tional capital, the Coldplay event 'Music of the Spheres World Tour' is slated for January 2025 at Navi Mumbai.

The ED said in a statement that it initiated an investigation after numerous reports emerged that individuals and fans were being "deceived/cheated" through "fraudulent" ticket sales after the rapid sellout of entry passes. The agency took cognisance

of multiple police FIRs filed in the case across the country, including one filed by online ticket booking portal BookMyShow, against several suspects "believed to be exploiting concert-goers."

The FIR alleges that these individuals engaged in selling counterfeit tickets and drastically inflated prices, taking advantage of the high demand for these coveted concerts, the ED said. It said these concerts were an "electrifying" and "highly anticipated" announcement for music enthusiasts across India.

Both events, it said, generated immense excitement and official ticketing partners like BookMyShow and Zomato Live reported that tickets were sold out in just minutes on their platforms, which "ultimately led to black-marketing of tickets at exorbitant prices."

Many fans have discovered that they were sold fake tickets or charged exorbitant prices for legitimate ones, the agency said.

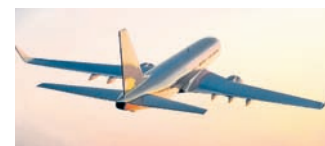
MORE THAN 30 FLIGHTS GET BOMB THREATS SATURDAY

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 26: As many as 33 flights received bomb threats Saturday, according to sources. In 13 days, more than 300 flights operated by the Indian carriers have received hoax bomb threats. Most of the threats were issued through social media.

Amid the threats, the IT Ministry has asked social media platforms to observe due diligence obligations and promptly remove or disable access to misinformation within the strict timelines prescribed under IT rules. The sources in the know said 11 flights each of IndiGo, Air India and Vistara received the threats Saturday. In a statement, an Air India spokesperson said a number of its flights were subject to security threats received on social media Saturday.

"Following the laid down protocols, relevant authorities were immediately alerted, and all se-



10 Rajkot hotels receive bomb threat

Rajkot: Police swung into action and initiated extensive security measures after at least 10 hotels in Gujarat's Rajkot received bomb threats via email. Authorities deployed bomb squads and dog squads to conduct thorough checks at all affected locations. The hotels which received bomb threats included the Imperial Palace, Grand Regency, Sayaji Hotel, and Hotel Seasons, among others.

curity procedures strictly adhered to, as per guidance from the regulatory authorities," the spokesperson said.

AAP not to contest Maha polls, Kejriwal to campaign for MVA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 26: The Aam Aadmi Party will not contest the upcoming Assembly elections in Maharashtra. Instead, party chief Arvind Kejriwal will campaign for the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition, AAP leader Sanjay Singh said Saturday.

The MVA coalition comprises Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT), Sharad Pawar's NCP-SP, and the Congress.

"In the Maharashtra elections, the party's National Convener, Arvind Kejriwal, will campaign for the MVA candidates. Aam Aadmi Party will not contest elections in Maharashtra," Singh, who is a Rajya Sabha MP, said on X.

According to AAP sources, the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP-SP contacted the party about Kejriwal campaigning in Maharashtra.

Kejriwal is also set to campaign for Hemant Soren's ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha in Jharkhand Assembly polls, they said.

There are 288 Assembly seats in Maharashtra, and voting will take place November 20. In Jharkhand, polling will be held in two phases November 13 and 20, while the counting of votes in both states will take place November 23.

AAP and the MVA constituents are part of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), which was formed before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls to take on the BJP. AAP entered into an alliance with the Congress, the largest constituent of the INDIA bloc, in Delhi, Gujarat and Haryana for the Lok Sabha polls.

CJI advocates for fair salaries for young lawyers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 26: Lawyers must learn to pay proper salaries and emoluments to the youngsters who enter their chambers to learn, Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud has said

In an interview with the All India Radio, Chandrachud said the legal profession is a difficult one where the foundation laid in the initial years keeps the young lawyers in good stead throughout their careers.

"There are always ups and downs in a profession. Initially, the amount you make at the end of your first month in the legal

profession may not be very high," the CJI said. So it is important to encourage the first timers to hang in, put in the hard work, and be sincere in what they do, Chandrachud said.

"Equally, our structures must change as well. For instance, lawyers must learn how to pay proper wages, salaries and emoluments to the young lawyers who enter their chambers," he said. "Youngsters come to their chambers to learn. They also have a great deal to share, so it is a two-way process



of absorption and sharing and mentorship which we have to

provide to the younger lawyers," the CJI added. Chandrachud

also recalled his days as a presenter in the All India Radio during his college days in Delhi.

The CJI said his mother, a classical musician, often took him to the AIR studios in Mumbai when he was in third or fourth standard. Later, after moving to Delhi in 1975, he auditioned for Akashvani and began hosting programmes in Hindi and English.

He also recalled how he grew up listening to AIR bulletins in Hindi, English and Sanskrit with his parents, getting enchanted by the iconic voices of Devki Nandan Pandey, Pamela Singh and Lotika Ratnam.

There are always ups and downs in a profession. Initially, the amount you make at the end of your first month in the legal profession may not be very high

D Y CHANDRACHUD | CJI



“The Supreme Court order is binding on all citizens. The Gandhi family is not above law. There can be only one outcome. If somebody furnishes wrong information in the affidavit, they have no right to contest elections”
GAURAV BHATIA | BJP NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON

DEEPLY CONCERNED: MEA

India Saturday said it was deeply concerned over the “evolving escalation” in West Asia and urged all sides to exercise restraint and return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy



of the day quote

If infiltration is taking place, then the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre is responsible for this. The BJP has been in power at the Centre for the last 10 years, he should blame his own government
DIPANKAR BHATTACHARYA | CPI (ML) LIBERATION GENERAL SECY

Ninety or eighty-five seats – no formula has been fixed. Whoever can win, that party will be considered. Our effort is to put forth our best candidate
JAYANT PATIL | MAHA PRESIDENT OF NCP (SP)

My deepest condolences to the family of our @BJP4Assam karyakarta from Samaguri. Late Bipul Saikia, who was violently attacked and killed by goons of @INCAssam
HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

POST OF THE DAY

According to sources Iran is soon going to start its operation “True Promise 3” against Israel
@dhruvrahtee

SHORT TAKES

AP: Six killed in road accident

Amaravati: Six people died Saturday after a car in which they were traveling collided with a truck coming in the opposite direction at Singanamala mandal in Anantapur district, police said. The victims were returning from Tadipatri town in Anantapur District after attending a programme by ISCON, they said. As per the initial reports, it appears that the truck driver, after noticing the car, may have tried to halt the vehicle by applying brakes as there are skid marks on the road, they said.

Leopard sighted on KV premises

Patna: A leopard was spotted on the Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV) premises located at the Air Force station in Patna’s Bihta, prompting immediate closure of the school until further notice. The leopard was captured on the school’s CCTV camera Thursday night. The Air Force station, which spans thousands of acres, provides ample cover for wildlife, complicating efforts to locate and safely capture the wild cat.

Union minister Bittu slams Punjab govt

Chandigarh: Union minister Ravneet Singh Bittu lashed out at the AAP government in Punjab Saturday over the “tardy” paddy lifting in the state, calling it “ineffective” and “immature”. Rejecting the accusation of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which has blamed the BJP-led Centre for not evacuating the foodgrain stock from Punjab, Bittu claimed that at a meeting with the Union food minister, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann had said the state had double the space required for storing fresh crop. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader said they will meet the Punjab governor for his intervention in the matter. Meanwhile, the AAP hit back at Bittu, accusing him of lying and trying to mislead people.

BOMB THREATS

Govt asks social media platforms to act

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 26: Amid a spate of hoax bomb threats to domestic airlines, the government has issued an advisory to social media platforms such as Meta and X to promptly remove misinformation, report threats, and assist authorities within stipulated timelines.

The Centre has also reminded intermediaries about their obligations under IT rules and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and warned of “consequential action” if norms are not complied with. Talking tough with the social media intermediaries, the government said platforms are obligated under IT Rules, 2021 to timely assist authorised government agencies in investigations and cybersecurity “not later than 72 hours”.

The advisory made it amply clear that any non-compliance with ‘due diligence’ requirements will lead to revocation of protection (the safe harbour shield against third party content) under section 79 and may invite “consequential action” under any law. Turning up the heat on intermediaries, the Ministry of Electronics and IT’s (MeitY) advisory underlined the responsibility of social media platforms to crack down on spread of hoax bomb threats. Dubbing the hoax bomb threats as misinformation, the advisory said it is massively disrupting the public order, operations of airlines and security of travellers.

MeitY stressed that social media platforms must adhere to the IT Act, 2000, the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 and that these platforms are required to promptly remove unlawful content to maintain public order and security.



UNSC debate: India slams Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Oct 26: India slammed Pakistan’s “mischievous provocation” and “political propaganda” during a Security Council meeting on women, peace and security, saying the condition of women belonging to minority communities, notably Hindus, Sikhs and Christians in the country remains deplorable.

“It is despicable yet entirely predictable that one delegation has chosen to indulge in mischievous provocation based on their tried and tested tactic of spreading misinformation and disinformation,” India’s Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador P Harish said in the UNSC Friday.

J&K TERROR ATTACKS

LG: Every drop of blood spilled will be avenged

Addressing the passing out-cum-attestation parade of the Border Security Force (BSF) at the STC, Humhama here, LG Sinha said Pakistan has persisted with its unholy action of carrying out terror activities in Jammu and Kashmir



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Oct 26: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Saturday said every drop of innocent blood spilled in the valley will be avenged and all capabilities will be used to dismantle the terror ecosystem.

Addressing the passing out-cum-attestation parade of the Border Security Force (BSF) at the STC, Humhama here, Sinha said Pakistan has persisted with its unholy action of carrying out terror activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

“Unfortunately, we have a neighbour who since the time of independence has continuously engaged in terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir. Despite the poverty and hunger afflicting its citizens, it persists with its unholy actions of supporting terrorism and trafficking narcotics,” he said.

Referring to recent terror attacks in Ganderbal and Baramulla districts, the LG said the terrorists targeted “our brave soldiers, civilians, workers in-

A local doctor and six non-local labourers were gunned down by terrorists at a tunnel-construction site in the Gagangir area of Ganderbal Sunday

involved in infrastructure projects and some labourers who had come from other places”.

“It has been resolved that every drop of blood shed will be avenged by our security forces. In such a situation, India’s first line of defence must fulfil its duties with greater vigilance,” he added.

A local doctor and six non-local labourers were gunned down by terrorists at a tunnel-construction site in the Gagangir area of Ganderbal Sunday, while the attack near the popular tourist destination of Gulmarg in north Kashmir’s Baramulla Thursday left four people, including two soldiers, dead.

Sinha said the objective of the

government and security forces is to uproot terrorism and create an environment where citizens can realise their dreams and aspirations.

“The Border Security Force has consistently played its role in achieving this vision. We must assure the public that continuous, effective and strict action will be taken against terrorists and their support structure.”

“Using the whole-of-government approach, we are committed to utilising all available capabilities to dismantle the ecosystem of terrorism,” he said.

The LG said strengthening the anti-terrorism grid through coordination between the BSF, Army, police and other agencies is a priority for the government.

“The counter-terror grid has been strengthened with coordination between the security agencies. A multi-pronged strategy has been put in place to prevent infiltration,” he said.

Sinha said the security forces have launched a massive crackdown against narco-terror networks.

A significant progress has been made in choking terror finance and taking exemplary action against those aiding and abetting terrorism, he said.

The LG called for regular engagements of security forces personnel with youngsters, especially with the NCC cadets from the Kashmir valley, to motivate them to join the forces. The BSF plays a crucial role in all operations to prevent infiltration and safeguard India’s borders, he said.

The ceremony marked the induction of 629 recruits into the border-guarding force.

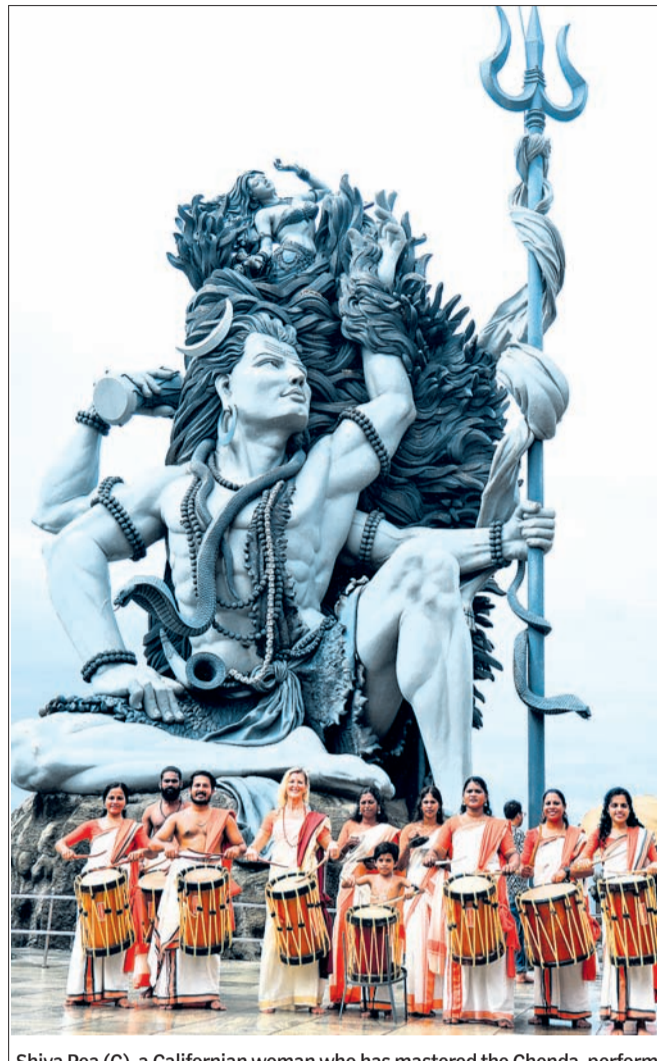
The LG congratulated the new recruits for becoming an integral part of the BSF and asked them to discharge their responsibilities towards the nation and people with utmost dedication and sensitivity.

“It is despicable yet entirely predictable that one delegation has chosen to indulge in mischievous provocation based on their tried and tested tactic of spreading misinformation and disinformation”
P HARISH | INDIA’S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN

nority communities, as per data of Pakistan’s Human Rights Commission, are subject to “abduction, forced religious conversions and forced marriages every year. Anyway, I could go on, but I’ll end here.”

At the debate, India reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Harish stressed that sustainable peace requires women’s full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation at all levels of decision-making including poli-

tics, governance, institution-building, rule of law, the security sector, and economic recovery. Needless to say that economic and social well being of the population in general and women in particular are integral to sustainable peace. Highlighting the significant strides in implementing the WPS agenda, Harish said that as the fifth-largest troop contributor, India deployed the first-ever all-female Formed Police Unit to Liberia in 2007, setting a precedent in UN peacekeeping.



Shiva Rea (C), a Californian woman who has mastered the Chenda, performs in front of the Shiva temple at Azhimala, in Thiruvananthapuram

MAHA POLLS

‘Seat-sharing deal eludes Opposition’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 26: MVA constituents- Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT), and NCP (SP)- are still struggling to resolve internal differences over certain seats and fix an agreeable formula for the Assembly polls even though the deadline for filing nominations is closing October 29.

Thorat met Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray at his residence Saturday. Asked if the Congress would contest more than 100 seats, Thorat said he didn’t keep a count. He said that the Congress is contesting as an MVA member, adding that the Opposition bloc will win over 180 seats and install its Chief Minister.

The Congress leader further said the MVA has kept 18 seats for other friendly parties. “AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge asked me to conduct negotiations through mutual understandings. Talks are on about certain seats in Mumbai,” he said.

Thorat said he and Thackeray discussed planning for campaign meetings and the manifesto. The growing unease in MVA over finalising a seat-sharing deal was reflected in Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut’s remarks expressing the need for “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas” in the Opposition bloc.

Talking to reporters, Raut also expressed displeasure over smaller parties like the Peasants and Workers Party (PWP) and Samajwadi Party (SP) unilaterally declaring candidates on



Statements by some Congress leaders from Maharashtra about different seat allocation formulas have added to the confusion, with the BJP watching gleefully

The Maha Vikas Aghadi members last week announced to contest 85 seats each in the November 20 elections to the 288-member Assembly

Separately, senior Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat proposed a ‘90-90-90’ arrangement for allies

seats with overlapping claims.

Notably, SP’s Maharashtra president Abu Azmi Friday said if the MVA does not reach a consensus with smaller parties, they will field candidates on 20-25 seats. “Haryana Congress contested on all seats but could not form the government. So they have to take everyone along. If anyone needs the ‘Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas’ slogan, it is the MVA,” Raut said. He said talks are on with Abu Azmi.

State NCP (SP) Jayant Patil said no seat-allocation formula has been finalised among MVA constituents.

Govt to give boost to infra for panchayats, border areas in focus

ACCORDING TO A SOURCE, A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS WERE PUT FORTH IN THE MEETING OF THE CENTRAL EMPOWERED COMMITTEE (CEC) ON THE REVAMPED GRAM SWARAJ ABHIYAN EARLIER THIS MONTH AND WERE RECENTLY APPROVED BY THE MINISTRY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 26: Seeking to address infrastructure gaps, the Panchayati Raj Ministry has approved a series of proposals for building new panchayat buildings and resource centres and upgrading existing ones across the country. These include a proposal for building around 400 Gram Panchayat buildings in border areas of Arunachal Pradesh, ministry sources said.

According to a source, a number of proposals were put forth in the meeting of the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) on the revamped Gram Swaraj Abhiyan earlier this month and were recently approved by the ministry. In the CEC meeting

chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Vivek Bhavadwaj, issues of infrastructure and training for panchayats were in focus.

“In a bid to boost Panchayat infrastructure in the ‘Vibrant Villages’ in the border areas, the construction of 400 Panchayat Bhawans-cum-Common Service Centres in Arunachal Pradesh has been approved by the Ministry,” the source said.

Under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, the Ministry has supported the construction of Panchayat Bhawans as well as the setting up of Common Service Centres, especially in border states. In Jammu and Kashmir, the Ministry has supported the construction of 970



Gram Panchayat Bhawan and the co-location of 1,606 Common Service Centres during 2024-25, according to information provided by the Panchayati Raj Ministry. Similarly, panchayat infrastructure has been sup-

ported for the other states of the Northeast including Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Assam and Manipur. Overall 1,633 Gram Panchayat Bhawans and 514 CSCs have been approved for the States of North East.

The source said that the establishment of these facilities will empower local governance, enabling better access to public services and fostering community participation in decision-making processes.

The Ministry has also approved the construction of 3,301 Gram Panchayat Bhawans with Common Service Centre (CSC) co-locations and sanctioned 22, 164 computers for Gram Panchayats across various States, including Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, and Telangana. A decision has also been taken to modernise the Panchayat Resource Centres at state and district levels across the country. Computer labs in State Panchayat Resource Centres

(SPRC) in 25 States as well as in District Panchayat Resource Centres in 395 Districts will be upgraded with more computers of the latest specification.

Apart from this, the Central Empowered Committee also approved the standardisation of honorarium rates for Master Trainers, Guest Faculties, and Eminent Resource Persons across states/UTs. The source said it will bring uniformity and quality in training delivery across the country from larger states like Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra to smaller ones like Sikkim and Goa, and will be particularly important for states like Bihar, Gujarat, Punjab and West Bengal, which are scaling up their training initiatives.

international



It is possible that there are now more than 3,000 troops from North Korea that have been dispatched to Russia for outfitting and for training
JOHN KIRBY | WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY SPOKESMAN, US

OLDEST AMERICAN NO MORE

Elizabeth Francis, who was the oldest living person in the United States, has died at the age of 115. At the time of her death, Francis was the oldest living person in the US and the third-oldest person in the world



of the day quote

It's an existential election. It will determine whether Georgia gets back on track to EU membership or if it embraces authoritarianism and falls into Russia's orbit

SALOME ZOURABICHVILI | PRESIDENT, GEORGIA

We are well aware that the condition of women belonging to minority communities, notably Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians in that country (Pakistan), remains deplorable

PARVATHANENI HARISH | INDIA'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN

Let me first be clear that the slave trade, slave practice, was abhorrent, and it's very important we start from there. Abhorrent is the right word

KEIR STARMER | PM, BRITAIN

SHORT TAKES

Astronaut in hosp after space travel

Cape Canaveral: A NASA astronaut was taken to the hospital for an undisclosed medical issue after returning from a nearly eight-month space station stay extended by Boeing's capsule trouble and Hurricane Milton, the space agency said Friday. A SpaceX capsule carrying three Americans and one Russian parachuted before dawn into the Gulf of Mexico just off the Florida coast after undocking from the International Space Station mid-week. Soon after splashdown, NASA said one of its astronauts had a "medical issue" and the crew was flown to a hospital in Pensacola, Florida, as a precaution. The astronaut, who was not identified, was in stable condition and remained at the hospital as a "precautionary measure", the space agency said in a statement.

Grammy-winning rapper arrested

Fort Lauderdale: Grammy Award-winning rapper Lil Durk has been arrested in Florida on federal charges that he paid for the attempted 2022 revenge killing of rapper Quando Rondo at a Los Angeles gas station, a shooting that resulted in the death of Rondo's cousin. Durk, 32, is charged with conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire in the slaying of Savaiya Robinson, 24, who was gunned down August 19, 2022, according to an FBI affidavit released Friday. Five other members of Durk's Chicago-based rap collective, "Only the Family" or "OTF", have also been arrested and at least two more arrests may be forthcoming, according to court documents that have been filed. Durk was arrested Thursday night in South Florida as he attempted to flee the country, the FBI says.

Pak's polio crisis: Toll surges to 41

Islamabad: Pakistan has reported two new polio cases, taking the country's tally of the crippling disease to 41 this year, according to media reports Saturday. The fresh cases were reported Friday and Thursday, coinciding with the global observance of the Polio Day October 24, the Dawn newspaper reported. Reported in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, the cases jolted the country's efforts to eradicate the poliovirus. As polio cases rise in the country, the Pakistan Polio Programme is launching a nationwide vaccination campaign next week to vaccinate more than 45 million children. Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only countries in the world where polio remains endemic, according to the World Health Organisation.

ME stares at wider conflict

THE RISK OF A WIDER CONFLAGRATION BETWEEN HEAVILY ARMED ISRAEL AND IRAN HAS CONVULSED A REGION ALREADY ON FIRE WITH WARFARE IN GAZA AND LEBANON

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Doha, Oct 26: Qatar, Jordan, UAE and Saudi Arabia condemned the airstrikes launched by Israel on the territory of Iran Saturday while expressing deep concern over the continued escalation and its repercussions on security and stability in the region.

"The State of Qatar expresses its strong condemnation and denunciation of Israel's targeting of the Islamic Republic of Iran, considering this act a blatant violation of Iran's sovereignty and a clear breach of the principles of international law," read a statement issued by Qatar's Foreign Ministry.

The ministry emphasised the country's deep concern regarding the serious repercussions that may result from this escalation and urged all concerned parties to exercise restraint, resolve disputes through dialogue and peaceful means, and avoid anything that could destabilise security and stability in the region.

It also reiterated Qatar's call for the international community to intensify efforts aimed at de-escalation, reducing tensions, and ending the suffering of the peoples of the region, particularly in Gaza and Lebanon.

Jordan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates asserted that Israeli airstrikes were in violation of international law and could lead to a dangerous escalation and more tension in the region.

Ambassador Sufian Al-Qudah, the spokesperson for Jordanian

foreign ministry, stressed the Kingdom's "absolute rejection" of the dangerous escalation in the region and violations of international law, warning against slipping into a conflict that threatens the stability of the region and international security.

"We call on the international community to assume its responsibilities and take immediate measures to impose a halt to the Israeli aggression in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon as a first step towards reducing the escalation, stopping Israel's violations of international law and UN resolutions, and protecting the security and stability of the region from the disastrous consequences of continued Israeli attacks," remarked Al-Qudah.

The UAE, while strongly condemning the military targeting of Iran, expressed its deep concern over the continued escalation and its repercussions on security and stability in the region.

In a statement, the UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed the importance of exercising maximum restraint and wisdom to avoid risks and the expansion of the conflict.

"The ministry reiterated the UAE's belief that enhancing dialogue, adhering to international laws, and respecting the sovereignty of states are the best foundations for resolving current crises. In this context, the UAE stresses the need to resolve disputes through diplomatic means, away from the language of confrontation and escalation," it mentioned.



The strikes mark the first time Israel's military has openly attacked Iran, which hasn't faced a sustained barrage of fire from a foreign enemy since its 1980s war with Iraq

Earlier, Saudi Arabia expressed its "condemnation and denunciation" of the Israeli military's action of targeting Iran, which it said is a violation of its sovereignty and a violation of international laws and norms.

"The Kingdom affirms its unwavering position in its rejection of the continued escalation in the region and the expansion of the conflict that threatens the security and stability of the countries and people of the region. The Kingdom urges all parties to exercise the utmost restraint and reduce escalation, and warns of the consequences of continuing military conflicts in the region," read a statement issued by

the Saudi foreign ministry.

The nations called on the international community and influential and active parties to carry out their roles and responsibilities towards reducing escalation and ending the conflicts in the region.

Israel's attack is a 'response' to Iran's air strikes Oct 1 when over 200 rockets and ballistic missiles rained down on Israel to avenge the killing of ally Hezbollah's chief, Hassan Nasrallah.

base south of Tel Aviv and targeted an intelligence base in northern Safed with rockets.

Israel said it had struck Hezbollah facilities in Beirut's southern Dahiyeh suburb including a weapons-making site and an intelligence headquarters.

The conflict in Lebanon, which has greatly intensified in recent weeks, has also led to strikes on sites linked to Iran and Hezbollah in Syria.

Israel launched airstrikes against some military sites in central and southern Syria early Saturday, Syrian state news agency SANA reported. Israel has not confirmed striking Syria.

Efforts to secure a ceasefire and hostage-release deal in Gaza, which could help cool the wider conflict, are expected to resume in Doha when negotiators fly there Sunday.

US-INDIA MATTERS

US hires chartered flight to send back Indians who stayed in country illegally

Washington: The United States hired a chartered flight to send back Indian nationals who stayed in the US illegally, the Department of Homeland Security said Friday, noting that this has been done in cooperation with the Indian government. "Indian nationals without a legal basis to remain in the United States are subject to swift removal, and intending migrants should not fall for the lies of smugglers who proclaim otherwise," said a senior official performing the duties of Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Kristie A Canegallo. The charter flight was sent to India October 22. The statement said DHS continues to enforce US immigration laws and deliver tough consequences for those who enter unlawfully by swiftly returning those without a legal basis to remain in the United States while encouraging the use of lawful pathways.



FAKE RAPE NEWS

16 vloggers, TikTokers arrested in Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, Oct 26: Law enforcement agencies have arrested more than a dozen vloggers and TikTokers accusing them of spreading fake stories about an alleged rape of a girl student that led to violent protests across Punjab province over a week ago.

Senior Punjab police officer Imran Kishwar said Saturday that police have also identified 40 students involved in vandalism and violence.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and the local police have already arrested 16 individuals, mostly vloggers and tiktokers, during the week for their alleged involvement in spreading a fake rape story, he said, adding, those identified for vandalism and violence will be arrested soon.

"We have also blocked 138 social media accounts spreading fake news about the incident," he added.

Eastern Ladakh disengagement going on 'smoothly', says China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Oct 26: China has said that the disengagement of troops in eastern Ladakh by the Chinese and Indian armies is going on "smoothly" following a recent agreement between the two nations.

On October 23, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping endorsed the agreement on patrolling and disengagement along the LAC in eastern Ladakh during their bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Kazan in Russia.

"In accordance with the resolutions that China and India reached recently on issues concerning the border area, the Chinese and Indian frontier troops are engaged in relevant work, which is going smoothly at the moment," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told a media briefing here Friday. India announced the agree-



ment to pull back troops from the friction points on October 21 and China confirmed a day later saying the two sides have reached "resolutions on relevant matters" and Beijing will work with New Delhi to implement these resolutions.

Following the agreement, the two countries have begun troop disengagement at the two friction points at Demchok and Depsang Plains in eastern Ladakh and this process is likely to be completed by October 28-29, Indian Army sources said Friday.

The agreement was arrived at only for these two friction points, and "talks are still un-

derway" for other areas, they said.

The sources said that patrolling will begin at these points once the disengagement that began two days back is completed and both sides will move their respective troops and dismantle temporary structures.

Eventually, they added, the areas and patrolling status are expected to be moved back to the pre-April 2020 level.

The ties between the two Asian giants nosedived following a fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

Climate change lighting a fuse under Iceland's volcanoes

SCIENTISTS ARE RACING TO FIND OUT WHETHER THE RAPID RETREAT OF GLACIERS COULD DRIVE A SURGE IN ERUPTIONS AS MAGMA BUILDS UNDER THE ISLAND NATION - AND IF SO, WHETHER THE SAME MIGHT OCCUR AT ICE-COVERED VOLCANOES AROUND THE WORLD, PUTTING MANY LIVES AT RISK

REUTERS

Reykjavik, Oct 26: Toxic sulphurous gas, carrying the telltale reek of rotten eggs, wafted through vents in the steep walls of Iceland's Viti crater, while carbon dioxide bubbled to the surface of the milky blue crater lake. Veils of steam wreathed the landscape of loose rock in eerie half-light.

Through this forbidding terrain - "Viti" is derived from the Icelandic for "hell" - Michelle Parks, a volcanologist with the Icelandic Meteorological Office, picked her way toward the water's edge one day last August. With a monitor strapped to her hip to warn her if the gases reached dangerous levels, she stooped to submerge a temperature probe in the lake - 26.4 degrees Celsius (79.5 degrees Fahrenheit), consistent with re-

There's so much uncertainty on when this will erupt - if it will erupt. It could be years, or decades, or it could be sooner

MICHELLE PARKS | VOLCANOLOGIST, ICELANDIC METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

cent readings.

That was reassuring, at least for the time being. The crater was formed when Askja, a volcano in Vatnajokull National Park in Iceland's central highlands, uncorked in an explosive eruption in 1875. Askja's last eruption, in 1961, was milder, and for decades after, the volcano was quiet. But in 2021, Parks and other scientists keeping tabs on it were shocked to find that in just a few months, the volcano had rapidly expanded, uplifting by 11 centimetres (4.3 inches). This phenomenon, called



inflation, occurs when magma or pressurised gases accumulate under a volcano, pushing the ground upwards and outwards.

In the three years since, Askja's bloated has reached about 80 cm (32 inches). That uplift, scientists estimate, is the result of 44 million cubic metres (1.6 billion cubic feet) of magma flowing

into the existing reservoir around three km (two miles) beneath the surface.

Volcanologists have established a correlation between magma buildup under a volcano and subsequent eruption. But they don't know exactly how much magma is needed to help trip an eruption. That

is why Parks and her colleagues are closely monitoring

the temperature and acidity of Viti's crater lake. A jump in either, indicating that more gases are pushing in from below, would suggest the volcano is moving closer to an eruption. So far, those metrics have remained stable, but the scientists watching Askja don't take that for granted.

An eruption could be catastrophic, though smaller ones are much more likely. On the scale volcanologists use to measure the size of explosive eruptions, Askja is capable of one equivalent to that of Mount St

Helens in the US state of Washington in 1980, although its eruptive style would differ.

That eruption, which sparked the Australia-born Parks' life-long passion for volcanoes, unleashed a force equivalent to 25,000 Hiroshima-type atomic bombs. The aim of the volcano observatory at the Icelandic Meteorological Office is to monitor the country's volcanoes for changes in activity, like those now observed at Askja, helping to protect the nation's nearly 400,000 citizens and the hordes of foreign tourists who visit every year to enjoy Iceland's world-renowned geothermal attractions.

The crater was formed when Askja, a volcano in Vatnajokull National Park in Iceland's central highlands, uncorked in an explosive eruption in 1875



Main quote
Like in our business itself, we've said the best of beauty and fashion should be available to Indian consumers, and we work very hard to bring a lot of international brands into the country

FALGUNI NAYYAR | NYKAA FOUNDER AND CEO

ESIC ADDS 20.74L NEW MEMBERS IN AUG

Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) logged a 6.8 per cent increase in new enrollments of members to 20.74 lakh under the ESI Scheme in August 2024 compared to the year-ago period. ESIC had added 19.42 lakh new members in August 2023, a labour ministry statement said.



कर्मचारी राज्य बीमा निगम
Employees' State Insurance Corp

of the day quote

I don't think anything is holding the Indian economy back. The policies are working. Reforms are still happening and it shall continue to happen. Greater liberalisation of the economy will be there. We are accessing newer and newer friends and also speaking more about Indian economy in more revenues, more platforms that will probably be even better attractive for investors

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN
UNION FINANCE MINISTER

The increasing participation from smaller cities, with over 50 per cent of new investor folios coming from beyond major urban centres, highlights the expanding reach of mutual funds and their role in driving financial inclusion

IMTAIAZUR RAHMAN | CEO, UTI AMC

The scale of the opportunity across our markets remains substantial. A young and fast-growing population, combined with low levels of SIM and banking penetration on one hand and increasing smartphone and digital payment adoption across our existing base on the other, provides a unique opportunity to leverage our sustained infrastructure for extensive growth in Sub-Saharan Africa

SUNIL TALDAR | AIRTEL AFRICA CEO

Q2 RESULTS CORNER

ICICI Bank net profit up 18%

Mumbai: ICICI Bank Saturday reported an 18.8 per cent jump in its consolidated profit after tax to ₹12,948 crore compared to the year-ago period. On a standalone basis, the second largest private sector lender's net profit rose by 14.5 per cent to ₹11,746 crore in the July-September period this year. The total standalone income increased to ₹47,714 crore during the quarter under review against ₹40,697 crore in the same quarter last year. Its core net interest income grew 9.5 per cent to ₹20,048 crore on the back of a 15.7 per cent growth in the domestic loan portfolio but was held back by a decline in margin at 4.27 per cent as against 4.53 per cent in the year-ago period.

BoB net profit rises 23%

New Delhi: State-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) Friday reported a 23 per cent growth in net profit to ₹5,238 crore in the September quarter. The bank had earned a net profit of ₹4,253 crore in the second quarter of the previous fiscal. Total income rose to ₹35,445 crore in the quarter under review from ₹32,033 crore in the same period a year ago, BoB said in a regulatory filing. Interest income of the bank increased to ₹30,263 crore in the July-September quarter from ₹27,862 crore in FY24. Asset quality of the bank witnessed improvement with gross non-performing assets (NPAs) falling to 2.50 per cent of gross advances at the end of the September quarter of 2024 as against 3.32 per cent a year ago.

REC net profit grows 7%

New Delhi: State-owned REC Ltd Saturday posted around 7 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to ₹4,037.72 crore for the September 2024 quarter, mainly on the back of higher income. Its consolidated net profit stood at ₹3,789.90 crore in the quarter ended September 2023, a BSE filing showed. The total income rose to ₹13,706.31 crore in the quarter under review from ₹11,684.89 crore a year ago.

Nvidia world's most valuable company

THE CHIPMAKER'S MASSIVE GAINS HAVE HELPED BOOST THE STOCK'S APPEAL FOR OPTION TRADERS AND THE COMPANY'S OPTIONS ARE AMONG THE MOST TRADED ON ANY GIVEN DAY IN RECENT MONTHS

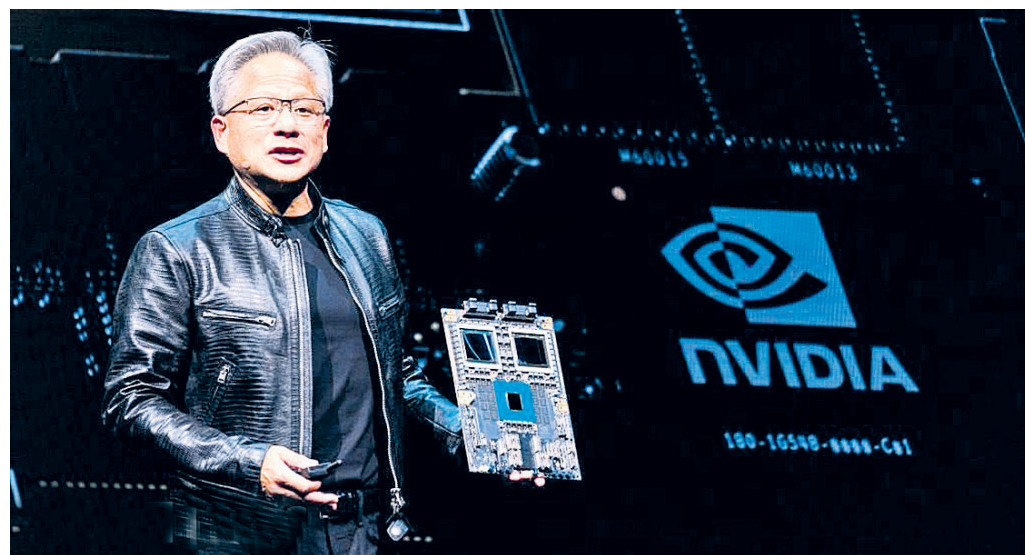
REUTERS

San Francisco Oct 26: Nvidia dethroned Apple as the world's most valuable company Friday following a record-setting rally in the stock, powered by insatiable demand for its specialized artificial intelligence chips. Nvidia's stock market value briefly touched \$3.53 trillion, slightly above Apple's \$3.52 trillion, LSEG data showed.

Nvidia ended the day up 0.8%, with a market value of \$3.47 trillion, while Apple's shares rose 0.4%, valuing the iPhone maker at \$3.52 trillion.

Known since the 1990s as a designer of processors for videogames, Nvidia's stock has risen about 18% so far in October, with a string of gains coming after OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, announced a funding round of \$6.6 billion.

Nvidia and other semiconductor stocks got a lift Friday after data storage maker Western Digital reported quarterly profit that beat analysts' estimates, buoying optimism about data



center demand.

"More companies are now embracing artificial intelligence in their everyday tasks and demand remains strong for Nvidia chips," said Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell.

"It is certainly in a sweet spot and so long as we avoid a big economic downturn in the United States, there is a feeling that companies will continue to invest heavily in AI capabilities, creating a healthy tailwind for Nvidia."

Nvidia's shares hit a record high Tuesday, building on a rally from last week when TSMC, the world's largest contract chipmaker, posted a forecast-beating 54% jump in quarterly profit driven by soaring demand for chips used in AI.

Meanwhile, Apple is struggling with tepid demand for its smartphones. iPhone sales in China slipped 0.3% in the third

quarter, while sales of phones made by rival Huawei surged 42%.

With Apple set to report its quarterly results Thursday, analysts on average see its revenue climbing 5.55% year over year to \$94.5 billion, LSEG data showed.

That compares with analysts' projections for Nvidia of nearly 82% revenue growth to \$32.9 billion.

Shares of Nvidia, Apple and Microsoft have an outsized influence on the richly valued technology sector as well as the broader US stock market, with the trio accounting for about a fifth of the S&P 500 index's weight.

Optimism about the prospects for AI, expectations that the Federal Reserve will considerably bring down US interest rates, and most recently, an upbeat start to the earnings season, helped lift the benchmark S&P

500 to an all-time high last week.

Nvidia's massive gains have helped boost the stock's appeal for option traders and the company's options are among the most traded on any given day in recent months, according to data from options analytics provider Trade Alert.

The stock has surged nearly 190% so far this year as the boom in generative AI led to a series of blowout forecasts from Nvidia.

"The question is whether the revenue stream will last for a long time and will be driven by the emotion of investors rather than by any ability to prove or disprove the thesis that AI is overdone," said Rick Meckler, partner at Cherry Lane Investments, a family investment office in New Vernon, New Jersey. "I think Nvidia knows that near term, their numbers are likely to be quite remarkable."

BIZ BUZZ
Shivani Sangita unveils Reliance Digital's new store

Bhubaneswar: Reliance Digital, India's leading electronics retailer, inaugurated its latest store in Bapuji Nagar near Sishu Bhawan Square, Bhubaneswar. The event featured popular Bollywood actress Shivani Sangita as the chief guest, marking a significant milestone for the brand's expansion in the city. Spread across 9,800 square feet, the store showcases an extensive selection of over 2,000 products from 500 global and national brands. Customers can explore a wide range of consumer electronics, including smartphones, smart TVs, washing machines, refrigerators, home theaters, digital cameras, laptops, and accessories. In addition to product variety, the store is equipped with an Expert Tech Squad for on-site assistance and a resQ service team for post-purchase support, ensuring a seamless experience for customers. With fast delivery and installation options, shoppers can quickly bring home their new tech purchases. To celebrate the opening, Reliance Digital is offering customers up to ₹15,000 in instant discounts on select bank cards and early bird deals. Finance options, including easy EMI plans, are also available, aligning with the brand's "Personalising Technology" motto by providing affordable and accessible technology to customers across all segments.



Cryptocurrencies huge risks to financial stability: RBI Governor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Oct 26: Cryptocurrencies are huge risks to financial stability, and monetary stability, Reserve Bank of India Governor Shantikanta Das said Friday, asserting it may create a situation where the central bank may lose control of money supply in the economy.

"I am actually of the opinion that this is something which should not be allowed to dominate the financial system. Because it has huge financial stability risks, it has huge monetary stability risks, it also poses risks to the banking system. It also may create a situation where the central bank may lose control of money supply in the economy," RBI Governor Shantikanta Das said during his appearance at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a think-tank.

"If the central bank loses control of money supply in the economy, how does the central bank check liquidity available in the system? How does a central bank control inflation by squeezing money supply or by losing money supply in times of crisis? So, we see crypto as a big risk, and there has to be an international understanding because the transactions are cross-country," he said in response to a question.

"There has to be (an) inter-



national understanding on this issue, being fully mindful of the huge risks associated with cryptocurrencies. It is not something which I feel it's not something which should be encouraged. This view is not a very popular view, but I think as custodians of financial stability it is a major concern for central banks world over. Governments are also becoming increasingly aware of the possible downside risks in cryptocurrencies," Das said.

India, he said, was the first country to raise questions about cryptocurrencies. In the G20 under the Indian presidency, there was an agreement to develop an international understanding with regard to how to deal with this whole crypto ecosystem. Some progress has been made in this regard, he added.

"I think more work still needs to be done. From India, from the Reserve Bank's perspective, I

Tough week for investors: FIIs selloff drags down sentiment

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Oct 26: The stock market experienced a tough week with both Sensex and Nifty facing a significant decline. The main indices, Nifty and Sensex, declined by 2.7 per cent and 2.2 per cent, respectively.

Going forward, domestic macros are largely favouring the market with the unveiling of strong Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) data and strong economic growth forecast by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for FY25, market experts said Saturday.

India's manufacturing industry regained growth momentum in October and the acceleration was supported by quicker increases in factory production and services activity. India's private sector economy continued to showcase robust growth in October, according to the latest HSBC 'flash' PMI survey compiled by S&P Global.

This week was challenging for investors and traders as markets saw a broad-based sell-off throughout, with Nifty closing down by over 2.65 per cent, slipping below 24,200 after two weeks of consolidation.

"October has been particularly tough, with the benchmark down more than 6 per cent so far. The hardest hit was in individual stocks, particularly in the mid-cap segment, which has sharply declined over the last couple of weeks," said Rajesh Bhosale, Equity Technical Analyst, Angel One.

The week's focus has been the steep drop in mid-caps, but some



selective positive traction could emerge, especially with the festive season. Also, investors with a long-term view might consider staggered buying of quality stocks from these levels, advised experts.

Investor psychology turned a bit gloomy due to the ongoing geopolitical tensions and a knee-jerk reaction from FIIs, which dragged the sentiment.

The sustained selling by FIIs and lack of triggers in the domestic market may impact the near-term sentiment in the market, said market experts.

However, the resilience of recent manufacturing data suggests the plausibility of an economic recovery in H2 FY25, which should encourage investors to accumulate quality stocks. A moderation in valuation, a pickup in earnings in H2 FY25, and an expectation of an RBI rate cut in 2025 will provide support to the market. Sectors to watch include consumption, FMCG, infrastructure, new-generation companies, manufacturing, and chemicals, experts said.

ITR filing deadline for corporates extended till Nov 15

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 26: The income tax department Saturday extended the deadline for filing income tax returns by corporates by 15 days till November 15 for assessment year 2024-25.

In a circular, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said the deadline will be extended from the earlier target date of October 31.

The new deadline for Assessment Year 2024-25 (for furnishing tax returns for fiscal 2023-24) is November 15.

Nangia Andersen LLP Tax Partner Sandeep Jhunjhunwala said this extension would not apply to the Tax Audit Report, transfer pricing certification in Form 3CEB and other income tax forms like Form 10DA, for which the deadline would remain October 31, 2024.

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said the CBDT's decision to extend the deadline for filing income tax returns for AY 2024-25, though not accompanied by an official explanation, seems aligned with the upcoming festive season.

"By extending the deadline to November 15, 2024, taxpayers and professionals alike can prioritise accuracy and compliance without the stress of last-minute filings amidst celebrations," Mohan said.

PREMIUM FMCG BRANDS SEE GROWTH SURGE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Oct 26: As private consumption surges especially in the rural parts of the country, premium brands in FMCG are consistently growing - approximately twice as fast as their non-premium counterparts -- and 50 per cent of e-commerce sales stem from the premium and luxury segment, according to a new report.

Similar trends are observed in the tech and durables sector, driven by increasing income levels, urbanisation, smartphone penetration and a more aspirational consumer base, as per findings by NielsenIQ (NIQ), a leading consumer intelligence company.

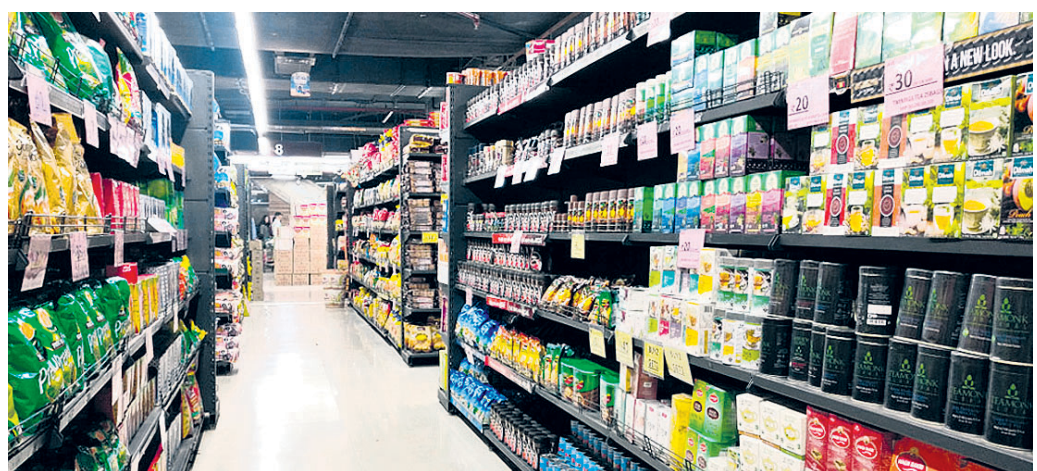
Notably, smaller manufac-

urers or emerging brands in this space are registering faster growth in premium and luxury products compared to larger industry players.

Roosevelt Dsouza, Commercial Head-India, NielsenIQ, said they are observing an increasing convergence of aspirational consumer preferences with higher disposable incomes, as well as the presence and access to premium products.

"This shift is driven by digital platforms, contributing to nearly half of the sales. Market mix, channel diversity, and new entrants will further drive the adoption of premiumisation in the future," Dsouza mentioned.

Tier 1 and 2 cities are emerging as the fastest-growing markets, reflecting rising aspira-



tions and greater availability of premium brands.

According to the report, the growth in premium FMCG is

more organic than price-driven, with consumption volumes rising at almost twice the pace of price increases.

Home care and processed foods have seen particularly strong growth, with consumers gravitating towards premium brands

in these categories.

"Despite overall FMCG in India facing challenges to achieve double-digit growth, the premium segment consistently grows at double-digit rates across all markets and categories, driving half of the incremental sales for the Indian FMCG industry. The trend is visible particularly in the South and West zones," the report mentioned.

According to NIQ, modern trade is playing a key role in introducing premium and luxury products to the Indian consumer. Of all new product launches in modern trade, 58 per cent are from premium+ segment - significantly higher compared to traditional trade, where premium launches account for 38 per cent of new products.

SPIN-SHOCK FOR MEN IN BLUE

INDIA'S HOME DOMINANCE ENDS

NZ end India's 12-year home Test dominance with historic 2-0 series win Rohit defends team

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Oct 26: India crashed to their first Test series defeat at home in 12 years with Mitchel Santner yet again exposing their frailties against quality spin bowling...

The Kiwis have been travelling to this part of the world since 1955 but Black Caps could never break the Indian citadel all these years.

Indian batters, once considered the best players of the spin bowling, danced to the tune of Santner, who dominated the home line-up with 13 wickets in the match, including seven in the first innings.

In pursuit of 359, Indian batters cut a sorry figure once again. They were bowled out for 245 with Yashasvi Jaiswal's 77 and Ravindra Jadeja (42) being the only ones to resist the Kiwis.

India's successive batting collapses, beginning with the historic low of 46 all-out in the first test essay of



Hosts endured their first defeat after 18 Test series victories on the trot, New Zealand celebrated their first ever series-victory on the Indian soil in nearly 70 years

Bangalore Test which they lost by eight wickets, culminated with first series loss at home since 2012-13 when England vanquished them.

Kiwis broke India's string of 18 consecutive Test series wins at home. It was also India's only fourth Test series defeat in their own backyard since turn of the

century. On Saturday, facing an uphill battle to keep the series alive and safeguard their record, none of the specialist Indian batters barring the 22-year-old Jaiswal, who smashed a 65-ball 77, could withstand the challenge of Santner's orthodox left-arm spin.

Santner's (7/53 and 6/104) 13 wickets in the game heralded a remarkable triumph for New Zealand, who mastered the con-

ditions and played better cricket than India to beat Rohit Sharma's team in their own game. The Kiwis gave India a taste of their own medicine after putting first-innings runs on the board and squeezing the opposi-

The target could have been much bigger had India not fought back on the third morning to snaffle the remaining five wickets for 57 runs to keep New Zealand to 255.

After losing the top and middle order, packed with greats of the game, India did not have much hopes left in the game but the pair of Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin (18) did their best to delay the inevitable.

It was a pitch where batters did not have any assurances unless they had a game plan — which Jaiswal showed on the final day of the contest.

Jaiswal waged a lone battle of sorts with nine fours and

three sixes but none of the famed Indian batters, including mainstays Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, could pose any challenge to the Kiwis.

From a promising 81/1 at lunch, the home team lost six wickets for 97 runs, struggling to negotiate Santner who yet again weaved his magic around the Indian batters.

Skipper Rohit, caught at short leg off bat-pad to defend as he charged down, was first to depart in the first session.

Jaiswal though took the Kiwi attack by the scruff of its neck, batting with confidence and aggression. With Shubman Gill (23 off 31) he added 62 runs for the second wicket.

The partnership broke when Gill was squared up by Santner to edge to the first slip and Jaiswal, the best of the lot by a long margin, too edged one to the first slip soon.

Superstar Kohli (17) started off with a powerful flick for a four on the backfoot. He ran hard between wickets and batted with resolve until Santner forced him on the backfoot and trapped him in front of the wickets.

Santner kept chipping away as the pitch played perfectly to his

tunes, getting some deliveries to turn away from the bat while some to straighten up while pitching them all in some areas.

Jaiswal, who was beaten by one from the left-arm New Zealander before he was dismissed, could not reach to the pitch of the ball before it kissed

BORDER GAVASKAR TROPHY AHEAD

Before travelling to Australia for the Border Gavaskar Trophy, it was imperative for India to win the series at home and consolidate their top position to ensure that they make the WTC final. India's task has only got tougher now because of the sheer challenge Australia are going to pose before them.

the bat's edge to settle in Daryl Mitchell's hands. India's misery compounded with Rishabh Pant (0) getting run-out after a miscommunication with Kohli.

In a final blow to India's resistance, Sarfaraz Khan (9) failed to read the turn of the ball which crashed onto his off-stump as he jarred his bat into the ground in defence.

Washington Sundar's resistance lasted 47 balls for 21 and ended shortly before tea as Glenn Phillips (1/37) got his named added to the list of wicket-takers, getting the Indian all-rounder caught at short leg.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Oct 26: India skipper Rohit Sharma says he won't "overreact" after the embarrassing series defeat against New Zealand but he underlined the necessity to have a "quiet chat with certain individuals" to discuss the way forward.

"You don't need to overreact. But you need to have a quiet chat with certain individuals and let them know where they are at and what, as a team, we require from them," said Rohit in the post-match press meet.

Driving home the reality might be on top of his agenda now, but Rohit did not want to make a spectacle out of it.

"I don't think you need to make them sit in a team room on a one-on-one basis and go through their innings and tell them this is what you should be doing. I don't think this is the right forum to do that. Just because we have lost a series, I don't think there is anything that we need to talk differently or do differently. But yeah, we need to find ways to come out of those situations," he said.

Rohit said he trusts his teammates, who have won India so many matches.

Some of the seniors in the side such as batting star Virat Kohli, senior spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja were quite pe-

I do not doubt anyone's ability. I won't do much postmortem of this, but batters must come with their plans and trust on the plans like New Zealand batters showed

ROHIT SHARMA | SKIPPER

ripheral in their impact on this series, which India lost 0-2.

The seasoned triumvirate apart, even skipper Rohit could not fire in the ongoing series as his last four innings read: 2, 52, 0 and 8.

The Mumbaier understands that such a measured approach is the need of the hour since India will depart next month to Australia for a five-match Test series.

"This is not how we want to play the cricket. But, again, it's important that when we (the current lot of seniors) were in the place of having played only five or six Test matches, all we wanted was the support from the team, the captain, the coach and the management. That is what I'm going to try and do with a lot of guys who haven't been to Australia or playing their first or second Test matches. So, clear messages, keeping them nice and calm, making them feel that they belong here. That is our responsibility," he explained.

As an extension, Rohit said he would not want an atmosphere in the team where players start doubting their skills. "Of course, if (series defeat) is important to look at. But not react so much where the guys who are within the team start feeling that something different is happening. I don't want to create that kind of environment where people start doubting themselves, people start taking unnecessary pressure," he said.

SHORT TAKES

Manika in quarters

New Delhi: Star Indian paddler Manika Batra shocked world No 14 Bernadette Szocs of Romania to enter the women singles quarterfinals of the WTT Champions event in Montpellier, France. The world No 30 Indian won 3-1 (11-9 6-11 13-11 11-9) in 29 minutes against the eighth-seeded Szocs in a round of 16 match Friday night. Batra, a multiple Commonwealth Games medallist, saved two game points in the third game to keep her nose ahead and then sealed the tie in the next game, converting her second match point. Batra now enjoys a 6-5 lead in the head-to-head record against Szocs.

Golfers miss out

Venice (US): Indian golfers Sneha Singh and Avani Prashanth, who skipped the Hero Women's Indian Open as it clashed with the LPGA Q-Series Qualifying, failed to reach the Final Stage. Sneha, the 2023 domestic Order of Merit winner, shot rounds of 73-72-73-78 to finish at 8-over and was Tied-144th, while Avani with rounds of 80-74-72-72 was 10-over and T-167 at the Plantation Golf and Country Club. Meanwhile, first-generation Indian-American, Gurleen Kaur, who had a low key first year on the LPGA, will make an attempt to get back to the Tour as she made the Q-Series finals. The 24-year-old, who played 15 events and made the cut in five, finished T-12 with cards of 70-70-70-69 to be 9-under as the top 35 and ties moved into the Final Stage.

Pak's Test feat

New Delhi: After losing the first Test in Multan, Pakistan completed a sensational turnaround to win the three-match home Test series against England. Riding on the performances of spinners Sajid Khan and Noman Ali, Pakistan won the final two Tests to clinch the series 2-1. This helped Pakistan register a feat for the first time in nearly 30 years. This is the first time Pakistan have won a three-match Test series after losing the first Test since they beat Zimbabwe in similar fashion in 1995.

SULTAN OF JOHOR CUP

Colts claim bronze

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Johor Bahru (Malaysia), Oct 26: Goalkeeper Bikramjit Singh showcased nerves of steel, making three crucial saves as the India outwitted New Zealand 3-2 in a thrilling shootout to secure the bronze medal at the Sultan of Johor Cup men's hockey tournament here Saturday.

After the match ended in a 2-2 stalemate in regulation time, strikers Gurjot Singh, Manmeet Singh, and Sourabh Anand Kushwaha converted their penalties in the tense shootout, while Bikramjit made three outstanding saves to secure victory against New Zealand.

Earlier in regulation time, Dilraj Singh (11') and Manmeet Singh (20') had given India a roaring start but New Zealand thwarted India's plans in the final quarter with goals by Owen Brown (51') and Jonty Elmes



(57'). India got off the blocks with tactical and compact attack. Swift, short passes and skillful dribbling helped them find success as early as in the 11th minute when Dilraj scored from an assist made by Mukesh Toppo to put India ahead 1-0.

India controlled the game in the second quarter too. Their defence was on point and stalled New Zealand forwards from creating scoring opportunities. However, a defensive error in

the 19th minute saw India concede a PC. But the defence line did well to block back-to-back PCs.

The 2-0 lead in the 20th minute put India in good stead. Riding on a good start, India created a flurry of chances before the second hooter but they could not extend the lead.

While the third quarter was goalless, New Zealand bounced back in the fourth quarter scoring two crucial goals that put India's hopes of winning the bronze in a limbo.

Baroda bowl out Odisha for 193

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 26: Odisha witnessed a lacklustre performance against Baroda at Vadodara's Kotambi Stadium on the opening day of Odisha's Ranji Trophy fixture Saturday.

Young off-spinner Mahesh Pithiya bagged five wickets, while veteran left-arm spinner Bhargav Bhatt and left-arm seamer Akash Singh claimed wickets each to bowl out Odisha for 193.

In reply, Baroda were 501 when stumps were drawn Saturday. On a pitch aiding the slower bowlers, part-time offie Poddar surprised many by sharing the new ball with Suryakant Pradhan and struck with his third delivery, having Jyotsnir Singh caught behind by Aashirwad Swain.

Fellow-opener Shivalik Sharma and Shaswat Rawat negotiated the rest remaining 20 overs without any more dam-

age to push Odisha to the backfoot.

The Odisha innings got off on a dismal note as Anurag Sarangi fell for 3 in the fifth over to seamer Akash. Shantanu Mishra (23), the other opener, and Sandeep Patanaik (9) tried to stitch a partnership but struggled to get the scoreboard moving as the spinners kept them under check.

Shantanu, Sandeep and Poddar fell to the spinners in a span of 11 runs. When Akash sent back Kartik Biswal for 16, Odisha were down to 73/5.

Biplay Samantaray and Aashirwad Swain put their heads down to build the only meaningful partnership of the Odisha innings — 72 runs for the sixth wicket. The experienced Samantaray (58) scored his 24th first-class half-century, while teenaged wicketkeeper-batter Swain made a strokeful 37 with seven boundaries.

McLaren loses plea over Norris penalty



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mexico City, Oct 26: Amid an unexpectedly tight championship battle between Max Verstappen and Lando Norris, their teams brought the fight to the Mexico City Grand Prix over an officiating dispute in last week's race.

McLaren lodged a complaint into the penalty Norris received last week at the United States Grand Prix — a step in trying to get it overturned and put three-time reigning world champion Verstappen back within his reach. The appeal was denied late Friday night.

Norris received a five-second penalty for passing Verstappen off the track late in the race in Austin, Texas. The two were racing for third at the time, and the penalty gave the final podium finish to Verstappen.

The change in position widened Verstappen's lead to 57 points headed into Sunday's race at Mexico City, and there are only five races remaining to decide the title.

Norris has maintained he did nothing wrong and, along with many other drivers, argued that Verstappen should have been penalized for his defensive driving. "He did what he thought was right, and I did what I thought was right. I still disagree, and as a team, we disagree," Norris said.

"It is something I am sure we will discuss as it has been a big talking point since last weekend. A lot of other drivers didn't agree with it, teams didn't agree with it."

Odisha FC seek to better away record

OFC prepares for Mumbai City test in season's second away game

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 26: Fresh off a thrilling home victory against East Bengal, Odisha FC will seek to break their away game losing streak when they face Mumbai City FC in the ISL here Sunday.

The game will mark the return of former Islanders' head coach Sergio Lobera to familiar territory, this time at the helm of Odisha FC.

Lobera, who led Mumbai City FC to a historic double in the 2020-21 season, remains cherished by the West Coast Brigade, promising an emotional return for the Spaniard. Odisha FC would want to im-



prove upon the fact that they have conceded two-plus goals in each of their last four matches on the road.

Lobera will insist on greater defensive discipline from his players especially when they are travelling, and given Mumbai City's constant appliance of pres-

sure in the final third, the visitors need to be wary of giving Petr Kratky's side too much space to work around with as well.

Despite a mixed start to the season, Mumbai City FC head into the fixture on the back of a confidence-boosting 2-1 win over

FC Goa.

Goals from Nikos Karelis and Yoell van Nieff helped secure their first victory of this season. The Islanders, currently outside the top six in the table, will be banking on their home advantage.

Mumbai have demonstrated