



## Value of simplicity

Actor Sara Ali Khan says staying grounded is something that has guided her through the way she lives her life

LEISURE | P2



## US shuts Kyiv embassy

US closes Wednesday its embassy in Kyiv due to 'specific information of a potential air attack' by Russia

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## Nokia's big deal

Nokia wins a multi-year, multi-billion deal from Bharti Airtel to deploy 4G and 5G equipment across key Indian cities

BUSINESS | P11



## Rafa's last bout

Rafael Nadal retires from tennis after losing his last tie for Spain in the Davis Cup against Botich van de Zandschulp

SPORTS | P12



**SIZZLING SHOW:** The Indian women's hockey team pose with the Cup after retaining the Women's Asian Champions Trophy title at Rajgir, Wednesday (Report P12) PTI PHOTO

# High-stakes battle for Maha

Maharashtra has seen three governments, three chief ministers, and four deputy chief ministers since the 2019 Assembly elections, a testament to how cluttered the state's political space is. The stakes couldn't have been higher for all the political parties as Maharashtra went to the Assembly polls Wednesday. With 288 Assembly seats to be won, Maharashtra is vital for all parties. There is a complex interplay of various factors like OBC consolidation, Maratha reservation and the impact of cash doles like the 'Laadki Bahin Yojana' that could significantly influence the fortunes and outcome for the incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Mahayuti and the Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) that is trying to wrest power. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Maharashtra, the MVA won 29 seats against the Mahayuti's 18. This translates to the MVA's dominance in 153 Assembly segments against the Mahayuti's 127. However, that shouldn't be taken as a benchmark in the just-concluded Assembly polls.

## WHAT POLLSTERS SAY

### MAHARASHTRA

Agencies	Mahayuti	MVA	Others
MATRIZE	150-170	110-130	8-10
CHANAKYA STRATEGIES	152-160	130-138	6-8
POLL DIARY	122-186	69-121	12-29
PMARQ	137-157	126-146	2-8

### JHARKHAND

Agencies	NDA	JMM+	Others
Matrize	42-47	25-30	1-4
Axis My India	25	53	3
People Pulse	44-53	25-37	5-9
Times Now	40-44	30-40	1-1

### AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Nov 20:** An estimated 65 per cent voter turnout was recorded in the Maharashtra Assembly elections Wednesday, officials said. In the 2019 elections the turnout was 61.74 per cent, they added. Mumbai's polling figure stood at 51.41 percent.

In the bypoll to the Nanded Lok Sabha constituency, the voter turnout was 53.78 per cent, officials informed.

Polling began at 7.00am in the state, where the ruling BJP-led Mahayuti alliance is vying to retain power

and the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) combine is hoping for a strong comeback. Voting ended at 6.00pm.

A total of 1,00,186 polling booths were set up across the state this time, compared to 96,654 booths in the 2019 Assembly elections, officials said.

Gadchiroli topped the list of districts with 69.63 per cent turnout. The Bandra (East) Assembly constituency registered the lowest turnout with only 49.51% exercising their franchise.

Stray incidences of violence were reported from some constituencies, but overall the

## 68% TURNOUT IN JHARKHAND

**Ranchi:** Over 68 per cent voter turnout was recorded till 5.00pm Wednesday in 38 Assembly constituencies in Jharkhand where voting in the second and final phase ended, officials said. Polling began at 7.00am in 14,218 booths across 12 districts and continued till 5.00pm. The ruling JMM-led INDIA bloc is seeking to retain power riding on its welfare schemes, while the BJP-headed National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is trying to wrest it. "A voter turnout of 68.59 per cent was recorded till 5.00pm. Voting has been peaceful," an Election Commission official said here.

situation remained peaceful, officials stated. An independent candidate contesting from Beed died while visiting a poll booth. Balasaheb Shinde (43), collapsed at the Chhatrapati polling booth and died.

In the Mahayuti alliance, the BJP is contesting 149 seats, Shiv Sena is in fray in 81 seats, and the Ajit Pawar-led NCP has fielded candidates in 59 constituencies.

In the opposition's MVA combine, the Congress has fielded 101 candidates, Shiv Sena (UBT) 95, and NCP (SP) has put up 86.

## CHSE announces Plus-II exam dates

**Bhubaneswar:** The Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) in Odisha announced Wednesday the schedule for the annual Plus-II examinations for 2025. Examinations for the theory papers of Plus-II for Science, Arts, Commerce, Vocational Studies and Correspondence Courses will be conducted from 10.00am to 1.00pm from February 18 to March 27, officials said. Meanwhile the CBSE Class X and XII exams will start February 15, officials of the board said Wednesday.

## Kid abducted, freed because of religion

**New Delhi:** A 46-year-old woman was arrested November 12 for allegedly kidnapping a four-year-old boy from a footpath near Red Fort. However, she abandoned him the same day after realising he is from different religion, police said here Tuesday. The child was rescued a day after he was kidnapped, DCP (north) Raja Banthia, said.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



He has never solved a case nor stopped a crime, but he can identify a voter's religion and caste just by looking... very useful, sir

# 'Uncle' held for raping 6-yr old

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Barang, Nov 20:** A six-year-old girl was allegedly raped by his 'uncle' in Trisulia area Tuesday evening, police said Wednesday.

Addressing the media, Cuttack DCP Jagmohan Meena said the minor's condition is critical. He also informed that the accused has been arrested. "She is currently undergoing treatment at the intensive care unit (ICU) of SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) since Wednesday morning," the DCP said.

Meena said the girl's parents, who hail from Jharkhand and work at a brick kiln in Trisulia area, approached the Barang police early Wednesday



morning alleging Kailash Sonar, 22, of raping the minor. Incidentally Sonar is also from Jharkhand and used to visit the house of the victim regularly.

Quoting the police complaint, an official said Kailash took the girl from her house Tuesday evening to a nearby shop to buy her some snacks.

"However, the accused took her to a temporary shelter in the kiln where he sexually abused her. Unable to

bear the trauma, the minor narrated the ordeal before her parents who rushed her to the Sardar Vallabhai Patel Post Graduate Institute of Paediatrics and lodged a complaint with police," the official said.

According to the DCP, the accused, also employed at the kiln, was arrested following a series of raids in the locality. "As the accused and the girl's family belong to Jharkhand, we formed three police teams. One team was sent to Jharkhand, another to other districts in Odisha and a third team carried out searches in nearby areas. We managed to nab him from the kiln," Meena said.

Incidentally this is the 12th case of rape in the state in the last 50 days.

## Paddy procurement starts

Farmers to get new rate of ₹3,100 per quintal

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, Nov 20:** The kharif paddy procurement process commenced Wednesday in Bargarh district. Food, Supplies, and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra inaugurated the process with a traditional puja ceremony at the Kalapani mandi under the regulated market committee (RMC) in Bargarh.

The Odisha government has taken several measures to ensure a smooth paddy procurement process. A supervisor has been appointed to oversee every 4-5 mandis, while patrolling units will

prevent middlemen from interfering with the process. Farmers will be paid ₹2,300 per quintal and they will be provided an additional subsidy of ₹800 the payment of which will start December 8 onwards. The money will be directly sent to the accounts of the farmers.

Among those present at the event were Bargarh MLA Ashwini Sarangi, District Collector Aditya Goyal, RMC Secretary Govind Nag and other officials. Three farmers who brought paddy to the mandi were felicitated with flowers and gifts by government officials. PS

## 'Spurious' liquor claims two lives

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jagatsinghpur, Nov 20:** Mystery surrounds the death of a man and his nephew, both residents of Shirasta village under Tirtol police limits in this district. While some have alleged that the two breathed their last due to food poisoning, relatives of the deceased said that the liquor the two had consumed was 'spurious'. The two have been identified as Bibhuti Kumar Samal and his uncle Gopinath Samal, 74. Police said that the two died after consuming mushroom pesticide thinking it to be water. They had mixed it with the liquor, they said.

# Earth's 2nd moon set to disappear soon

ASTRONOMERS HAVE SAID THAT 'ASTEROID 2024 PT5' WILL RETURN TO EARTH'S GRAVITY IN 2055

AGENCIES

**New York, Nov 20:** For the last couple of months Earth had a second moon, which is about to disappear by November 25. The 'asteroid 2024 PT5' was initially nicknamed as a 'mini moon' or 'second moon'. 'Asteroid 2024 PT5' was first seen August 7 by a NASA-sponsored asteroid detecting system.



This bus-sized asteroid is currently approaching the end of its close visit to Earth and will vanish until 2055. The asteroid was momentarily trapped by Earth's gravity and became a 'mini moon' September 29 and will continue doing so till November 25. Stargazers

and space enthusiasts have been delighted by this unusual occurrence, but because of its small size and dim brightness, the asteroid was not visible to the naked eye. Most people were not able to see it because only professional telescopes could detect it.

According to *The Metro*, the mini-moon is only 3,760,000km from the Earth. That certainly might sound like a lot, but the distance is barely a stone's throw in the world of space.

The 'mini moon' was first spotted by astronomers at the Complutense University

of Madrid. Richard Binzel, an astronomer at the Massachusetts University shared some insights about these celestial visitors.

"These happen with some frequency, but we rarely see them because they're very small and very hard to detect," Binzel said. "Only recently has our survey capability reached the point of spotting them routinely." 'Mini' is also the key word here. 'Asteroid 2024 PT5' is only 37 feet long - the size of a bus. The new lunar neighbour has travelled far to reach the Earth. Experts think it hails from the Arjuna asteroid belt, a ring of primordial crumbs 93 million miles from the Sun.

**Green Heroes Speak**

CLIMATE CHANGE: BUILDING RESILIENCE

**23 NOV**

**DHARITRI YOUTH CONCLAVE 2024**

CLIMATE CHANGE: BUILDING RESILIENCE

PARTNERS



# leisure



## HERE'S WHY BARRYMORE HID IN LUCY LIU'S BUSHES

Actress Lucy Liu revealed that she once found her Charlie's Angels co-star Drew Barrymore hiding in the bushes outside her home in order to avoid an ex-partner. Liu, during an appearance on *The Drew Barrymore Show*, recalled being shocked to find the movie star hiding in her bushes.

## DENZEL DOESN'T HAVE A LOT OF ACTOR FRIENDS

Hollywood star Denzel Washington, who has a career on screen for more than four decades, said that he does not have many 'actor friends'. The 69-year-old star revealed he hasn't managed to garner a great social circle in the industry.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You may get all nostalgic and wistful today, predicts Ganesh. You will go out of your way to improve your relationships. To you, your commitment is an investment for the future. The result is loving life-long bonds.

**TAURUS**  
Financial gains are on the cards today, predicts Ganesh. Happiness will fly in as you receive some good news from an overseas friend. If you have feelings that you haven't expressed to someone you deeply love, today is a good day to go ahead and let them know. The evening promises rejoicing and relaxation, says Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Some of your personal belongings are very dear to you. You may have to grudgingly share them with someone else. A mild pang of jealousy may kick in. But, you are merely being protective of something very personal, so there is nothing wrong with that, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You will be in high spirits today, foretells Ganesh. It is a favourable day to engage in household activities, like gardening, cooking or even washing laundry. In the evening, work will be eclipsed by the pleasures of love.

**LEO**  
Time is one thing that you have in short change today, says Ganesh. There is every possibility that you shall remain extremely busy. The tasks may be small – like writing a letter to revive old contacts – but it is important that you do them. Chances are that you may also end up giving a few interviews over the phone.

**VIRGO**  
Family matters will matter today. They hold more weight in your thoughts than everything else, says Ganesh. Business will be good today. Spend the evening relaxing and chilling out. On the cards is a visit to a place of worship.

**LIBRA**  
Your concern for your family surmounts all else, that much Ganesh knows. Today, you will fulfil your filial duties in all that you undertake. As Ganesh rightly points out: All good things begin at home, including your fortune and good luck.

**SCORPIO**  
A healthy and hectic day is in store for you today. You are likely to finish your pending tasks with new zeal. But the chaotic day will blossom into a fabulous evening when you hang out with your sweetheart, says Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Chances of you hitting a roadblock today are high. But remember the saying, 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going.' So don't succumb to pressure, advises Ganesh, but rise up to the occasion and show who's the boss.

**CAPRICORN**  
The achievements of the day may make you feel like you were born to succeed in life. Yes, you will be successful in whatever you do today, even if you don't try too hard for it, says Ganesh. But it's important that you at least take an initiative and not expect rewards to come for no reason. Make the most of the day for fortune may not be as favourable tomorrow. Your friends and those you socialise with will praise you for your sterling quality and powerful personality.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will prove yourself today by staying ahead of your rivals in all ways. You will conquer your frustrations, and will soon be raring to go. Your pleasing demeanour endears you to others and you win admiration from all quarters, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
You probably jumped out of bed this morning itching to talk to someone. And why not, since all your latent power of expression will spring out like a jack-in-the-box today. The pearls of wisdom you shower on people who are down-in-the-dumps today will make them feel good about their bluesy, taciturn selves, says Ganesh.

## Secret behind Sara's simplicity

New Delhi: Sara Ali Khan is a jet-setter as she loves exploring places. However, she said that nothing beats exploring India in terms of heritage, culture and landscapes. Asked what she likes more – travelling in the country or abroad, Sara told this agencies: "Both! There's no way I can pick. While I love travelling abroad, in India nothing beats exploring my country in terms of heritage, culture and landscapes and I'd love to explore all of it." The Simmba star has often stated to choose being basic over luxury, which makes her one of the most relatable stars in Hindi cinema. Asked where she imbibes that from?

"Staying grounded has always been something that I have been taught. My mum's that way and it's something that has guided me through the way in which I live my life." Despite all the travel and work, taking out time for mindfulness may not be easy but is important for Sara. "It's not the easiest, there are days where all I want to do is pass out on my bed after an intense shooting schedule or hectic travel day. But what works for me is carving out time, no matter the duration," she said. The actress added: "Even if I have a 10 minute window, I try to get a workout in or start my day with breathwork and deep meditation - it always helps set the tone for a positive start."



## I love SRK: Dua Lipa

Mumbai: Global pop sensation Dua Lipa is set to serve up a slice of musical heaven to her Indian fans. The songstress would be performing in India for the second time. With India holding a special place in her heart, the three-time Grammy winner's enthusiasm performing in the country is palpable. Dua says, "I always love an excuse to come to India. It is such a beautiful country, and I have tons of fond memories from visiting. With all my shows, I'm always wanting to create a fun and energetic space to reconnect with so many of my fans that I have not been able to see in so long." In 2023, a netizen had created a mashup of Dua's hit number *Levitating* and a popular Bollywood track *Woh Ladki Jo*, from the film *Badshah* which featured Shah Rukh Khan and Twinkle Khanna. Revealing who her favourite Bollywood actor is, she says, "I love Shah Rukh Khan!" Dua was also recognised as one of the most influential people in the world in 2024. However, she doesn't look at it as a "responsibility". "I take it as a huge honour but it's always a beautiful thing to hear from fans that my work has influenced their life in a positive way," she signs off.

## Music amplifies voices: Rumit Walia

One of India's popular and environmentally-conscious bands, *Virah*, with its soul-stirring renditions, has been enthralled fans worldwide for years. They gained millions of followers, thanks to their breathtaking performances at national and international events such as the Global Peace Leadership Conference, ITPO Pragati Maidan, the American Centre—US Embassy, and Rockview Air Force Station. The group, comprising singer Rumit Walia, guitarist and vocalist Utsav Bhardwaj, and percussionist Tarun Kumar, will perform November 23 at 'Green Heroes Speak Music For Change' during Dharitri Youth Conclave 2024, to be hosted by Dharitri, one of the biggest and most reputable newspapers in Odisha.

Walia, the band's lead singer, took some time off ahead of the concert to speak to Arindam Ganguly of *Orissa POST* about their goals, journey, and the importance of music in environmental safety.

Excerpts:

### What was the drive that made you work on music about environmental issues?

Like everybody else, we started with Rock music. Our speciality was Sufi Rock. We are also part of the environmental group 'Tears of the Earth'. At the outset, we worked on songs about the environment by recreating popular Bollywood numbers. Our works resonated with the music fans. Then, we shifted our focus to the protection of the environment.

### What has had the biggest impact on your creative process?

All three of us in this band have been influenced by various musical genres. Our percussionist was raised in a musical ambience as his family performed 'Kirtans' using different musical instruments. Our lead guitarist is a multi-instrumentalist and was influenced by choir due to his education in a convent school. About me, I was fascinated by R&B songs. We bonded over



The members of Virah

our shared love of Rock and Sufi music when we first met.

### What role can music play in environmental conservation?

Music plays a significant role. It amplifies voices and issues that are sometimes impossible to express through speaking and discussion. If you look back, music has played a big part in the success of numerous campaigns and movements.

### There are countless songs on love and separation, but very little about the environment. Why?

I beg to differ on this. You can find a lot of songs in rural areas

on nature and earth. But due to a lack of communication, people are not able to connect with them. We are working towards plugging the gap.

### What's your message to the Indian audience on climate issues?

Don't be burdened by climate worries. You just do your part and enjoy life and music.

### Your thoughts on the Dharitri Youth Conclave?

This event appeals to me since it not only includes grassroots activists and local environmentalists but also appropriately acknowledges their work.

## The curious case of two Kumars and their Saira Banus

Mumbai: Grammy and Oscar-winning music composer AR Rahman and his wife Saira Banu confirmed their separation Tuesday. The couple was just short of clocking three decades of marital bliss.

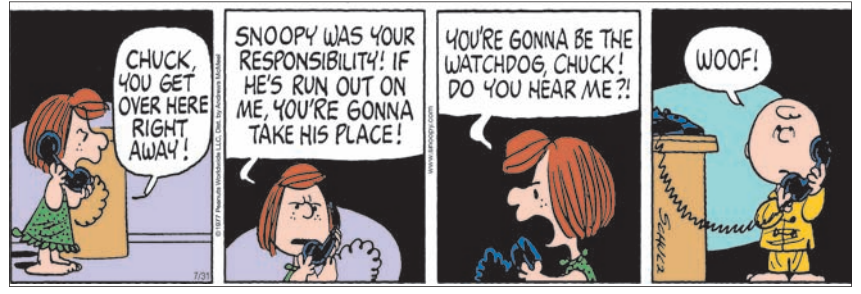
The divorce was initiated by Rahman's wife. However, Rahman and his marriage has an interesting connection with the late actor Dilip Kumar. Rahman, who was born AS Dileep Kumar, converted to Islam at the age of 23, and was married to Saira

Banu, the namesake of Dilip Kumar's wife. While the actor couple stayed together until the passing away of Dilip Kumar, Rahman and his wife parted ways after 29 years.

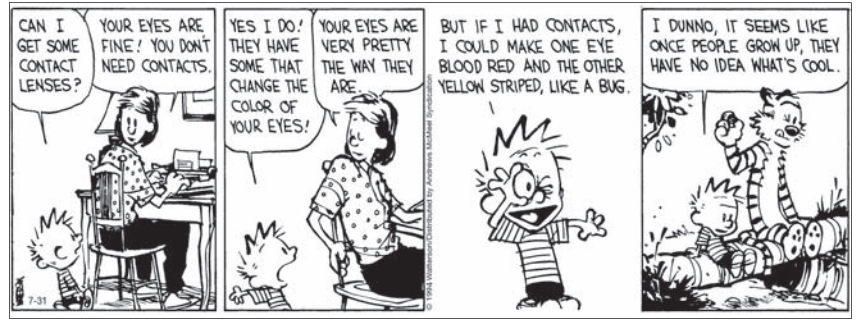


Also, while Rahman converted to Islam and changed his name, Dilip Kumar was born Muhammad Yusuf Khan and changed his name to appeal to a wider audience.

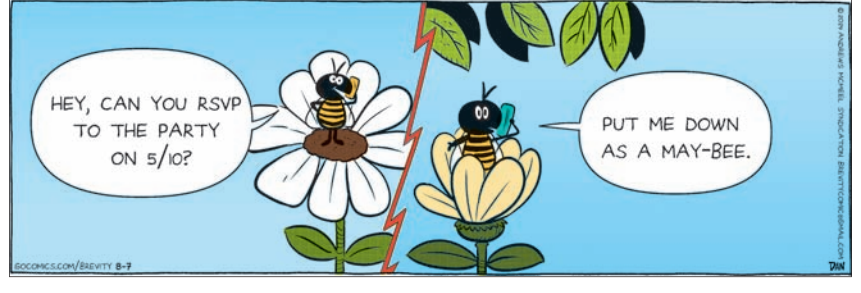
### PEANUTS



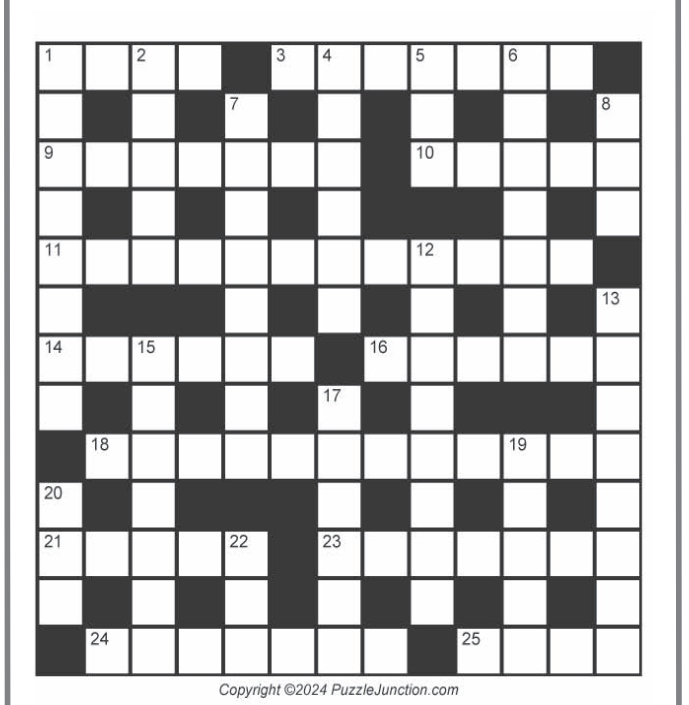
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



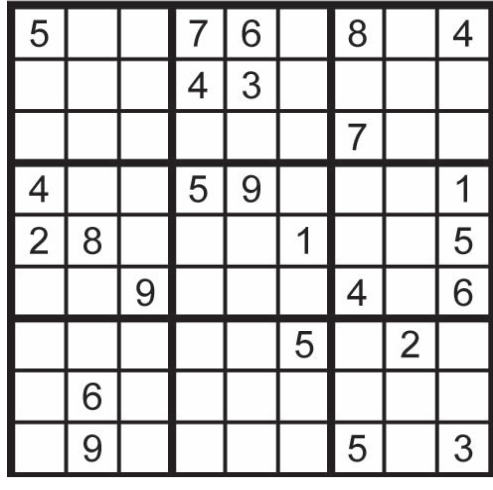
### CROSSWORD



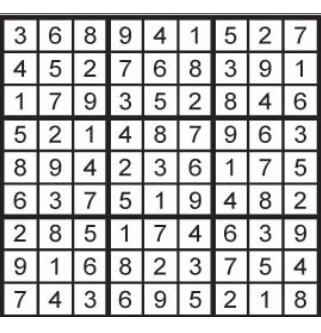
- Across**
- 1 Almanac tidbit
  - 3 Makeup item
  - 9 Refined
  - 10 Thin biscuit
  - 11 Narrow step on old cars (7,5)
  - 14 Chewy candy
  - 16 Take to the cleaners
  - 18 Word to assess certain outcomes
  - 21 Mountain lakes
  - 23 India rubber
  - 24 Type of speaker
  - 25 Road turn
  - 6 Umpire
  - 7 Fragile
  - 8 Unit of energy
  - 12 Obscurity
  - 13 Clergyman
  - 15 Rattle
  - 17 Mute
  - 19 Pickling liquid
  - 20 Airport posting: Abbr.
  - 22 Cambodian coin
- Down**
- 1 Statuette
  - 2 Religious law
  - 4 Make an accusation
  - 5 Cattle member

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





Inauguration of  
**125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary celebration of  
Utkal Keshari Dr Harekrushna Mahtab**  
&  
**Release of the Commemorative Stamp & Coin**

Chief Guest

**Smt Droupadi Murmu**

Hon'ble President of India



Program highlights

Book release

Digital exhibition

Cultural program

**21<sup>st</sup> November 2024 | 11:30 am**  
**Vigyan Bhawan, Delhi**

August Presence

**Sh Dharmendra Pradhan**  
Minister of Education

**Sh Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**  
Union Minister of Culture and Tourism

**Sh Mohan Charan Majhi**  
Chief Minister of Odisha

Watch the live telecast on DD News



# CM invites Singapore president to Odisha



AGENCIES

**Singapore/Bhubaneswar, Nov 20:** Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has invited Singapore president Tharman Shanmugaratnam to visit the state in January 2025 and said Singapore's petrochemical industry and port models will be adopted in the development of Paradeep Port in the coastal state.

"We have invited president Tharman to visit Odisha in January," Majhi said, listing out studies he and his delegation carried out during their four-day tour to Singapore.

"Jurong Island Petrochemical Industrial base and Tuas Port models will be adopted in the ongoing multi-billion-dollar development at Paradeep Port," Majhi said Wednesday. An agreement is being worked out with Surbana Jurong, a Singapore government-owned engineering consultancy, to help work on the Jurong and Tuas models, he added.

The Chief Minister informed that construction of the second phase of the World Skill Centre at Bhubaneswar, modelled on Singapore's Institute of Technical Education (ITE), will start next month. "The second phase campus will have capacity to accommodate 2,000 students each year," he said.

Majhi visited various facilities including a port logistics centre, a semiconductor plant and an electronics hub as well as international shipping group AP Moller-Maersk. A Maersk managing director is expected to visit Odisha later this month for the planned logistics hub in the state.

"We are studying the urban transportation network and road planning of Singapore," Majhi said, adding that there is a need to study Singapore's road management and public transport system.

## Majhi thrust on Odia diaspora

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday said the support and engagement of the Odia diaspora are crucial to strengthening the state's global outreach.

Majhi was speaking at an interactive session with more than 400 members of the Odia diaspora in Singapore on the concluding day of his visit to the island country.

During the tour, the delegation, led by the CM participated in a series of high-level meetings, investment roadshows, visits to major industrial and infrastructure hubs, paving the way for future collaborations across key sectors, an official statement said.

"Our visit to Singapore has been highly productive, allowing us to explore new avenues and gain valuable insights for Odisha's growth journey. The support and engagement of the Odia diaspora here are crucial to strengthening our global outreach," Majhi said. The meaningful discussions with industry leaders from diverse sectors like chemicals and petrochemicals, green energy,

logistics, financial services, port-based industrial infrastructure have opened doors for potential collaborations, he said. Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain said the visit to Singapore has been a significant step in showcasing Odisha's potential as a thriving investment destination.

"We are committed to improving port-based industrial infrastructure and expanding skill development initiatives to build a highly capable workforce. Our focus remains on sustainable growth, leveraging global expertise to drive innovation and boost economic progress," Swain said. Later, Majhi, in a post on X, said, "I had a discussion with Mr Rene Pill Pedersen from AP Moller-Maersk Group about establishing a ship recycling facility in Odisha. We also discussed enhancing port-based industrial infrastructure and logistics, including container terminals and the Multimodal Logistics Park (MMLP), which will significantly empower the state economy."

Besides, 24 interns from Phase I of World Skill Centre, designed by ITES of Singapore, are now studying in Singapore's top engineering institute, said the Chief Minister, adding that plans are to continue sending more batches of interns to Singapore.

During his visit, Majhi also met senior executives of Singapore-based companies including those from GIC, Sembcorp, Everstone Capital and Linde.

Talks are in progress for 25 Singapore-based companies for participation in the 'Utkarsh Odisha - Make in Odisha Conclave 2025'. These companies will be led by Enterprise Singapore, a state agency for promotion of investment and trade. The Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Singapore Business Federation have been urged to lead delegates to the conclave, he said. Majhi held a roundtable with 15 companies, led by Enterprise Singapore. He called on Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Kiat and met Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sim Ann and Transport Minister Cheng.

# Onus on forest officials for wildlife deaths: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 20:** Expressing concern over the recent elephant deaths in Sambalpur, and killing of leopard and eating its meat in Nuapada district, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia Wednesday said the top forest officials, along with their lower-rank employees, will be held accountable for these incidents.

The minister said this during the state-level divisional forest officers' (DFOs) conference at Aranya Bhawan here Wednesday. He advised the DFOs to work with sincerity and honesty for the protection of forests and wildlife. "The death of elephants, killing tigers and



eating their meat are distressing to the people of our state," said the minister.

Speaking on the occasion, Singh Khuntia said, "Forest and wildlife habitats should be protected, and a check and balance must be maintained while approving forest land for developmental works. It is essential to find a solution on elephant-human conflict. Compassionate assistance and

compensation for crops should also be provided immediately. Recent death of elephants and poaching of tigers are distressing to people of our state."

The minister also suggested alternative livelihoods for the people living around the forests, especially the tribals. Horticulture, fishing, poultry, bee-keeping, fruit farming and involvement in eco-tourism projects are some of the alter-

natives, he suggested.

The minister also lauded the contribution of DFOs in preventing and controlling forest fires. He also advised the officers to be more vigilant and carry out extensive field visits regularly. "In today's changing times, there are many challenges. Allegations of corruption are being made in plantation programmes. Our government has a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption," he added.

Department's additional chief secretary Satyabrata Sahu, who joined the event as guest of honour, said with the efforts of forest officers, around 5.20 crore saplings have been planted in the state under 'Ek Ped Ma Ke Naam' campaign, launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

## ODISHA INFRASTRUCTURE CONCLAVE 2024

### Govt to build grand ring road linking key commercial hubs

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 20:** Law, Works and Excise Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan Wednesday said the government will construct a six-lane grand ring road connecting all major commercial hubs of the state.

The six-lane road will connect Mottu in Malkangiri district to Tiring in Mayurbhanj district. It will reduce travel time across Odisha to just 26 hours, linking all commercial hubs, Harichandan told media persons on the sideline of Odisha Infrastructure Conclave 2024.

The All-Odisha Contractors Welfare Association (AOCWA) in association with the All-Odisha Contractors Association (AOCA) organised the conclave here Wednesday.

The minister alleged the previous BJD government had clubbed several infrastructure projects while inviting tenders, for which, the Odia contractors were found ineligible to take part in the tender process.

"Now, we have completely stopped it. However, there will be competition among contractors," he said.

Harichandan said the state government is going to amend the Odisha public works department code to enhance the limit of B and C class contractors.

He emphasised that contractors and engineers are essential members of the system and a vital part of the family, noting that no work can be accomplished without the involvement of contractors.

## Nudge Foundation to tackle distress migration in Odisha



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 20:** The Odisha government has partnered with the Nudge Foundation, a leading poverty-alleviation organisation, to address the issue of distress migration in the state.

The initiative was discussed during a high-level task force meeting chaired by Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Agriculture, Farmers' Empowerment, and Energy Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo at Lok Seva Bhawan Wednesday.

Speaking at the meeting, Singh Deo highlighted the dual reasons behind migration: aspirations for higher earnings and the lack of sustainable livelihood options in the state. "A significant number of people from districts like Ganjam, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Jharsuguda, and Bargarh migrate to other states, either in search of better income opportunities or to repay debts," he said. He emphasised the need for targeted measures to create sustainable livelihoods within the state.

The Nudge Foundation, known for its successful interventions in West Bengal and Jharkhand, will conduct an in-depth study in Odisha's migration-prone districts. The study will identify the root causes of migration and propose region-specific solutions. Based on the findings, the foundation, in collaboration with the government, will implement measures tailored to the local climate and socio-economic conditions.

### The foundation, in collaboration with the state government, will propose region-specific solutions tailored to the local climate and socio-economic conditions

Food security, social security, sustainable livelihoods, and prospective employment programs will form the foundation of the initiative. Singh Deo said the government aims to ensure that these interventions provide long-term benefits and that beneficiaries' progress will be assessed at regular intervals.

Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari suggested a cluster-based approach, targeting panchayats or blocks with high migration rates.

Rural Development Minister Rabi Narayan Naik, Forest, Environment & Climate Change, Labour and ESI Minister Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia, Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary Anu Garg, and Principal Secretary Saswat Mishra also participated in the meeting.

The initiative is seen as a significant step toward reducing distress migration by enhancing local livelihood opportunities and ensuring socio-economic stability for vulnerable communities in Odisha.

## Niramaya centres to operate non-stop

**Bhubaneswar:** In a bid to enhance healthcare services across Odisha, Housing, Urban Development, and Public Enterprises Minister Krishna Chandra Mahapatra has directed all Niramaya centres in the state to operate round-the-clock. This directive came during a review meeting held on Wednesday to discuss the functioning of Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMCL).

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Smt Rekha Sahu, W/o Uma Sankar Sahoo resident of at Sangram Club Lane P.S. - Kumbharpada, Puri - 02, Dist. - Puri, Odisha, PIN - 752002, Odisha, declare by this Affidavit No. 32, Dtd 26.10.2024, that now onwards, I shall be known as Rekha Sahoo for all future purposes.

# Organic date palm jaggery shines at IITF 2024 Odisha Pavilion

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, Nov 20:** Odisha's organic date palm jaggery, known as 'Odisha Khajuri Guda', has emerged as a major attraction at the ongoing India International Trade Fair (IITF) 2024 in New Delhi. The GI-tagged natural sweetener has quickly become a best-seller at the 'Odisha Mandap', located in Hall Number 2 of Bharat Mandapam. The stall showcasing this traditional delicacy has witnessed significant business, generating over ₹ 35,000 in sales by Tuesday.

Date palm jaggery, an integral part of Odisha's rich culinary heritage, is garnering attention not only for its distinctive taste but also for its numerous health benefits. Visitors from various parts of the country have shown great interest in this organic product, with many returning each year

to purchase it at the Odisha Pavilion.

"We have been purchasing date palm jaggery every year from this trade fair. What draws me in is its unique taste, and we are also aware of its health benefits. It's a wonderful product from Odisha, and we make sure to take some home every year," said Bharat Bhushan Arora, a Delhi resident visiting the fair.

The date palm jaggery, which is enriched with essential minerals and considered a healthier alternative to refined sugar, has seen a surge in demand in recent years. It is particularly popular for its digestive benefits and natural sweetness, making it a preferred option for health-conscious consumers.

The Odisha Pavilion at IITF, which also features the state's famous handlooms, handicrafts, and tribal produce, has attracted a steady footfall.



In addition to date palm jaggery, visitors are also interested in eco-friendly handicrafts made from date and palm leaves, such as household items, which are on sale at the stall. These items have further

added to the popularity of Odisha's traditional products at the event.

"We appreciate that the jaggery is produced organically, which makes it a wonderful addition to our diet," said

Dharamveer Agarwal, another visitor at the Odisha Pavilion. "Our family consumes jaggery regularly, and we always look forward to purchasing it here."

Anil Kumar Behera, the Marketing In-Charge of Odisha Rajya Talgur Samabaya Sangh Ltd. (ORTSS), an apex cooperative body under the state government, highlighted the ongoing success of the stall. ORTSS is responsible for promoting the production and sale of date palm jaggery from across the state. The cooperative works with local farmers who collect sap from date palm trees before dawn to preserve its distinct flavor. This sap is then boiled to produce jaggery, which is packaged and distributed for sale. The entire process is carried out organically, without the use of chemicals or artificial additives.

"The interest in our traditional date palm jaggery is

overwhelming," said Behera. "People from all over India, and especially from Delhi, are increasingly aware of its health benefits. We're delighted to see such an encouraging response at the trade fair."

ORTSS operates in nine districts of Odisha, including Angul, Bhubaneswar, Boudh, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Jajpur, Kendrapara, and Puri. The primary talgur cooperatives in these districts facilitate the production of date palm jaggery and generate livelihood opportunities for local communities.

To enhance market connectivity, ORTSS has established sales outlets in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack and frequently participates in state and national trade fairs to promote Odisha's organic products. This exposure is helping date palm jaggery reach a broader audience while boosting the livelihoods of local farmers and artisans.

## FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

**Acharya Vihar-Doyal 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-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid 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, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.**



# Six gangrape accused sentenced to life term

### Three others arrested for making video of the crime viral on social media platforms were acquitted for want of sufficient evidence

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, Nov 20:** A local court in Kalahandi district sentenced six persons to life imprisonment after convicting them in 2019 gangrape of a woman at Ghana jungle near Banamalipur village under Junagarh police limits.

Dharamgarh Additional District and Sessions Judge Suresh Chandra Pradhan passed the verdict after examining the statements recorded by the witnesses, police chargesheet and other relevant documents. Government advocate Purna Chandra Nag pleaded the matter on behalf of the state government. The convicts were identified as Lalindra Sabar of Parla village, Labanya Chhatra, Aniruddha Chhatra, Prakash alias Luku Nayak, Shanta Nayak, and Amit Nayak of Buxi Tulsipali village.

Three others arrested for making video of the crime viral on social media platforms were acquitted for want of sufficient evidence.

According to reports, Lalindra Sabar, a bus conductor by profession from Parla village, offered the survivor lift from Bhawanipatna to her resi-



dence on his bike, September 14, 2019. However, he took her to the dense Ghana reserve forest near Banamalipur and raped her.

Later, five other youths, took turns to rape the woman, threatening her with knives. They also filmed the act and later circulated the video on social media platforms.

The survivor's family lodged a formal complaint at the Junagarh police station. Based on the report, Junagarh police registered a case (224/19) September 23, 2019 and launched an investigation. Later, police arrested the accused and pro-

duced them in court.

The case drew significant attention across the district and hogged the headlines. The then chairperson of the State Women's Commission, Minati Behera, intervened and visited the site for an independent investigation. Additionally, former Superintendent of Police B. Gangadhar expedited the investigation, ensuring swift arrest of the accused.

This incident serves as a grim reminder of the heinous crimes faced by women and the importance of prompt legal and administrative action to ensure justice.

# Miscreants attack Dharmasala MLA

**Jajpur:** Independent MLA Himanshu Sekhar Sahoo from Dharmasala attacked that miscreants attacked him in this district Wednesday evening. Sekhar alleged that the attack took place near Budha river bridge. No FIR has been filed in this regard, police said. However, Jajpur SP Yashpratap Shrimal said appropriate action will be taken against persons indulging in violence and attacking the MLA. "I was going to Jajpur Town to attend an urgent official meeting at the DM office this evening. When I reached near Budha river bridge, my vehicle got stranded on the road due to a road blockade by locals. As I was waiting, some unidentified miscreants armed with lethal weapons rushed to my vehicle and vandalised it," the MLA said. "They also attacked me and my personal secretary officer and snatched my gold chain from my neck," said the MLA. When news of the attack on the MLA reached the Dharmasala area, hundreds of his supporters reached the spot. There was a faceoff between the supporters of the Sahoo and the attackers. This faceoff prompted local police and even Jajpur SP to rush to the spot to rescue the MLA.

# Top Maoist leader wants to pursue MA from prison

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, Nov 20:** Top Maoist leader Sabyasachi Panda, currently lodged in Berhampur Circle Jail serving a life sentence, expressed his interest in pursuing Masters of Arts (MA) in Public Administration through the Odisha State Open University (OSOU) this year, a prison official said Wednesday.

Panda, who did his Bachelors of Arts (BA) from Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) two years ago, is one of six inmates who have submitted documents to enroll in the two-year MA (Public Administration) correspondence course at OSOU.

Of the six, four are convicts, including the 55-year-old Panda, and two are undertrials.

"We have submitted the documents of six inmates including Panda who are interested to enrol in the two-year MA (Public Administration) correspondence course," said DN



Barik, senior superintendent of Berhampur Circle Jail.

"After their admission, study materials will be provided, and inmates will prepare independently and appear for exams," said Sanatan Khillar, a jail teacher.

Panda was arrested July 18, 2014, in Berhampur and has since been in jail. He is accused in over 130 Maoist-related cases across various districts. A local court sentenced him to life imprisonment for waging war against the nation.

# Dharitri Youth Conclave 2024: We owe it to our mother, says Padma Shri awardee Jamuna Tudu

## Lady Tarzan's fight for forest preservation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 20:** In a world racing against time to save its dwindling green cover, Jamuna Tudu has emerged as a fierce advocate for India's forests, dedicating her life to this cause. Born in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, Tudu's environmental journey began in Jharkhand's Potka village, where she witnessed the destruction of forests at the hands of the timber mafia first-hand.

Unafraid and determined, she fearlessly confronted them at great personal risk. Until then, it was unheard of for a woman armed with an axe to take on gun-toting smugglers in the hinterlands of Jharkhand to save forests. This, however, marked the beginning of an extraordinary initiative that many other women from her community would believe in and join later.

Thus started Van Suraksha Samiti (Forest Protection Committee), uniting local communities, especially women, in the fight to protect their forests. Under her leadership, the committee successfully safeguarded vast stretches of forest, empower-

ing villagers to take collective action against environmental degradation.

For her unwavering commitment to environmental conservation and her unique method of patrolling the forest by foot, she was addressed as 'Lady Tarzan' by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In recognition of her remarkable achievements, Tudu was honoured with the Woman Transforming India (WTI) award by NITI Aayog in 2017. Two years later, she was bestowed with India's fourth-highest civilian honour - Padma Shri - by the President.

"I don't do it for the awards. The forest is our mother. If we don't protect her, no one else will," she quips.

True to her words, on each World Environment Day, she ties rakhis—symbolic of sibling bonds—around trees. Through this simple yet meaningful act, she aims to highlight a deep personal



connection to the cause.

Tudu's efforts have had a ripple effect. She now leads a network of over 300 women across 30 villages, all committed to protecting their forests. Together, they have not only preserved thousands of trees but also nurtured a sense of environmental stewardship that could well outlast their lifetimes.

As climate change accelerates and natural resources dwindle, the world could learn from Tudu's example. Her fight is a reminder that the frontlines of conservation are often local—and that

real change begins with those willing to defend their patch of earth, irrespective of the odds.

Dharitri Youth Conclave on Climate Change, scheduled to be held in Bhubaneswar November 24, will see the presence of Jamuna Tudu, who will share her journey with the participants. Organised by Dharitri, one of Odisha's largest and most trusted newspapers, the conclave is part of its ongoing mission to combat climate change by empowering young climate warriors.



# Human faeces forced into tribal woman's mouth in Bolangir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 20:** A 20-year-old tribal woman was allegedly assaulted and human faeces were forced into her mouth in Bolangir district, police said Wednesday.

The incident happened in Jurabandha village in Bangamunda police station area November 16, they said. The accused, a non-tribal man, was operating a tractor on the woman's agricultural land, causing damage to crops, to which she protested. The accused then assaulted her, and forced human faeces into her mouth, according to the FIR.

When her aunt went to rescue her, she was also assaulted by the accused, it alleged.

Addressing a press conference in Bhubaneswar, BJD MP Niranjan Bisi alleged that the police have not taken any action against the accused, which has angered the tribals. He said if the law and order situation in Bangamunda deteriorates, the state government would be responsible.

Bolangir's Superintendent of Police Khilari Rishikesh Dnyandev told PTI that the accused has been on the run since the incident.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jagatsinghpur, Nov 20:** Mystery surrounds the death of a man and his nephew, residents of Shirasta village under Tirtol police limits in this district. While some have alleged that the two breathed their last due to food poisoning, relatives of the deceased said that the liquor the two had consumed was 'spurious'. The two have been identified as Bibhuti Kumar Samal and his uncle Gopinath Samal, 74.

Police said that the two died after consuming mushroom pesticide thinking it to be water. They had mixed it with the liquor. The claim of the police was supported by Gopinath's son Ashok.

Sources informed that the two

# 2 killed, 2 injured in road accident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Balasure, Nov 20:** At least two people died and two others were injured when the motorcycle they were riding skidded off the road in Balasure district Wednesday morning, police said.

The injured were admitted to the district headquarters hospital, they added.

According to police, four youths, aged 20 to 25, were riding a motorcycle when it skidded off the road while crossing a narrow bridge, resulting in two deaths and two injuries.

Balasure Sadar police station Inspector in-Charge (IC) Dayanidhi Das said one injured youth managed to crawl to a nearby petrol pump and alerted its staff about the accident following which police reached the spot.

# Adani Group buys 112.86 acre land near Gandhamardan hills

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bolangir, Nov 20:** Adani Group, through its subsidiary Mahanadi Mines and Minerals Pvt. Ltd., has acquired 112.86 acre land in Bolangir district reportedly for compensatory afforestation. The land spans three locations - 18.39 acre in Bharuamunda mouza under Khaprakhol tehsil, 61.2 acre in Bhalujori mouza under Patnagarh tehsil, and 33.27 acre in Dudukamal mouza under Belpada tehsil.

According to officials of the Bolangir Forest Division, the acquisition is linked to environmental compensation requirements for the proposed Bijahan open-cast coal mining project in Sundargarh district. Under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, companies undertaking deforestation for projects must purchase land for reforestation. Officials said the land will be handed over to the Bolangir Forest Division for afforestation and eventually declared as protected forest.

The move has sparked controversy among nature lovers, environmentalists, political leaders, and local communities. Critics fear the move may pave way for mining activities in the ecologically sensitive Gandhamardan hills, which are known for their rich biodiversity and cultural significance.

Former minister and Congress leader Narasingha Mishra and Rajya Sabha member Niranjan Bisi warned that mining in the region could lead to irreversible ecological damage. They warned that whoever will touch Gandhamardan will be destroyed. Local MP Pradip Purohit also expressed opposition, stating that no part of Gandhamardan should be disturbed. A few days back, Pramod Mishra, chairman of Koshal Rajya Sammanwaya Samiti had hinted at efforts to start mining activities on Gandhamardan hills at a press conference.

Deputy Chief Minister and Patnagarh MLA Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo defended the purchase, stating it was in line with legal requirements for compensatory afforestation. However, the acquisition has added to growing concerns about the Adani Group's plans in western Odisha.

The company initially proposed acquiring 1,119 acre land in Bolangir for afforestation purposes. However, it has secured 112.86 acre land in the district to date. Additionally, reports suggest the company has purchased 23 acre land in Juvakhola village under Gaisilet tehsil in Bargarh district, fueling further opposition.

Environmental activists, devotees of the Harishankar and Nrusinghanath shrines in Bolangir and adjoining Bargarh district, and local communities have demanded government intervention and immediate clarification on the issue.

They allege that mining operations would threaten both the environment and the cultural heritage of the region. Opposition leaders have accused the ruling BJP government of prioritising corporate interests over conservation and transparency.

**पावरग्रिड POWERGRID NOTICE**

1. Approval under Regulation-86 of CERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations'1999 and CERC (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations'2019 i) Truing up of Transmission tariff for 2019-24 tariff block and ii) Determination of Transmission tariff for 2024-29 tariff block for Assets under Rangit Transmission System in Eastern Region.

2. The beneficiaries of the above mentioned Transmission system are: (i) Bihar State Power (Holding) Company Ltd, (ii) West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd., (iii) Grid Corporation Of Orissa Ltd., (iv) Damodar Valley Corporation, (v) Power Department, Govt Of Sikkim, Gangtok, (vi) Jharkhand Biji Vitran Nigam Ltd.

3. Tariff details:		Rs. In lakhs						
Asset detail	COD as on 31.03.2024	Completion Cost as on 31.03.2024	Tariff	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Asset -1	01.12.1998	4387.65	Revised AFC based on truing up	565.16	567.50	569.94	573.20	577.91

b) 2024-29 block		Rs. In lakhs					
Asset detail	Completion Cost as on 31.03.2029	Tariff	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Asset -1	4387.65	AFC	563.25	567.68	572.35	577.28	582.46

4. A copy of the application made for determination of tariff is posted on the website of the applicant at [www.powergrid.in](http://www.powergrid.in)

5. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the application be filed by any person, including the beneficiary before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, 3 & 4th floor, Chandralok Building, Janpath, New Delhi - 110 001 (or other address where the office of the Commission is situated), with a copy to the applicant at the address of its corporate office within 30 days of publication of this notice.

Date: GURUGRAM Sd/ - 21.11.2024 CGM (Commercial/RC)

**POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED**  
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)  
Corp. Off.: "Saudamini", Plot No. 2, Sector-29, Gurugram-122001, (Haryana), Tel: 0124-2571700-719  
Regd. Office: B-4, Qutub Institutional Area, Kirti Khera, New Delhi-110016  
CIN : L40101DL1989GO038121 | Website: [www.powergrid.in](http://www.powergrid.in)  
A MAHARATNA PSU

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
Tender Notice No. ST-OT-AI-MC-DATALOGGER-440, Dt. 13-11-2024

**Name of Work: PROVISION FOR COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR DIFFERENT MAKE: DATA LOGGERS OF EFFICIENT CAPACITY AT VARIOUS STATIONS/LOCATIONS INCLUDING MAINTENANCE OF VARIOUS CENTRAL MONITOR EQUIPMENT/ SOFTWARE AT KHURDA ROAD DATALOGGER ROOM AND HEADQUARTER [BHUBANESWAR] OVER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.**

Tender Value: ₹1,74,21,571.14, EMD: ₹2,37,100/-, Cost of Tender Document: ₹5,900/-

Bidding Start Date: 21.11.2024, Date & time of Tender Closing: 05.12.2024 at 11:00 hrs.

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-Tenders, even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-Tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/ corrigendum issued for this tender.

Divisional Railway Manager (S&T)/ PR-735/P/24-25 Khurda Road

**ବନଖଣ୍ଡ ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରୀ ବନଖଣ୍ଡ, ବାଉବାଲି**

**OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, BHADRAK WILDLIFE DIVISION**

AT/PO./P.S.-CHANDBALI, DISTRICT-BHADRAK, PIN-756133  
Phone/Fax: 06786-220472, Mob.-91 9437041541, Email: dfo\_bhadrakwl@odisha.gov.in

No.MM-252: **e-Procurement Notice**

**Bids Identification No. DFO-BDK-01/2024-25**

Office Order No.189-1F-405/2024, Dated Chandbali the 19th November 2024

- Name of Works : Construction of Buildings : 15.00 Lakh to 18.00 Lakh
- Approximate estimated cost : "C" & "D" Class (As per Annexure)
- Class of Contractor : 03 (Three) Calendar Months
- Period of Completion : Rs.6,000/- towards cost of bid as mentioned in Annexure (for each work)
- Tender Paper Cost : Dt.21.11.2024 at 12.00 P.M.
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal : Dt.29.11.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal : Dt.30.11.2024 at 11.00 A.M.
- Date of opening Bid : Divisional Forest Officer, Bhadrak Wildlife Division, Chandbali
- Name and address of the Office Inviting Bid : The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only.
- All other details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>.

Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer Bhadrak (WL) Division

OIPR-08048/11/0001/2425

**VACANCY CIRCULAR**

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), an autonomous organization under the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Government of India invites applications for filling up of the post of Sr. Financial Advisor in Level 14 of Pay Matrix (Rs. 1,44,200-2,18,200) on deputation basis on foreign service terms basis.

- Willing & eligible officers may submit their application in the prescribed format through cadre controlling authority, so as to reach the Assistant Director General (Admn.), Indian Council of Medical Research, V.Ramalingaswamy Bhawan, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi - 110029 on or before 15.12.2024. Advance copy may be sent but only those applications will be considered for whom approval of Cadre Controlling Authority is received.
- For prescribed format, eligibility condition, age, other information & condition etc. please visit ICMR's website <http://icmr.nic.in>. > Career Opportunity > detailed advertisement for the post of Senior Financial Advisor (Pay Level-14).
- The application received after the last date or applications incomplete or those not received through proper channel shall not be considered.

CBC-17152/12/0026/2425



FOCUS ECONOMIC POLICY

FAVOURING BIG BUSINESS



Recently, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal stated that the RBI should cut interest rates in order to boost the economy and stop using food inflation as the bogey to justify its inaction on interest rates

Government functionaries, specifically ministers, are known to give lectures on various subjects from Hindu Rashtra to welfarism to economic growth and development and a certain section of people think that their observations carry value. But when they try to talk on basic economics and seek to influence institutions such as the Reserve Bank of India, where top experts are there to take decisions, their intentions are far from judicious. Recently, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal stated that the RBI should cut interest rates in order to boost the economy and stop using food inflation as the bogey to justify its inaction on interest rates. At an event, he said "growth needs a further impetus," meaning that cutting interest rates would favour business houses and this would result in growth. Goyal's comments came just a few days after retail inflation in October surged to a 14-month high of 6.21%, largely driven by food prices, which surged to 13.54%. It was indeed surprising to hear from him targeting food inflation as a "flawed theory" for consideration of the interest rate structure. He even wanted policymakers and economists to deliberate "whether food inflation should at all be a part of the decision-making for inflation or interest rates." The minister's enthusiasm for cutting interest rates is obviously a manifestation of the demands of business houses, which want to borrow at lower rates. The politician-business nexus in the country is well known and this found manifestation in his observations. However, it would have been better if he had something to say of what the government intended to do to bring down food inflation as such high prices primarily affected the vulnerable and backward sections of society. Goyal's comment also rekindled concerns about the independence of the central bank in deciding the country's monetary policy and whether pressure was being created ahead of the Monetary Policy Committee meeting in December. The same sentiment was expressed in the Economic Survey, which stated the inflation targeting framework should consider targeting inflation, excluding the food aspect. The reason for this observation has, however, not been mentioned in the latest Survey. It may be mentioned here that at the height of the battle between the Centre and then RBI deputy governor Urjit Patel, former deputy governor, Viral Acharya also articulated his fears about the erosion of RBI's independence. "Direct intervention and interference by the government in operational mandate of the central bank negates its functional autonomy," Acharya had stated in a paper presented in October 2018. The first thing that is important here is whether the government is interested to curb the independence of RBI.

As has been manifest, the government has for quite a long time been seen interfering in institutions of higher education and now it is possibly the turn of the apex bank of the country. This obviously does not augur well for formulating the right strategy for judicious economic growth. While the minister's concern for growth is well understood, the question that needs to be asked is whether the strategy for growth that is being pursued by the ruling dispensation would help the overall economy, especially the larged majority of the population. RBI governor Shaktikanta Das, who was present at the event, said "India's economic growth remains resilient; inflation is expected to moderate despite periodic humps, and the external sector is robust." It is worth recalling that corporate houses are being subsidised in various ways. Whether it is ensuring land for them by evicting common people with nominal compensation in towns and semi-urban areas for starting nursing homes and even schools, apart from industries, there are also rampant incidents of polluting

the atmosphere and local water bodies. The situation calls for introspection. On the one hand, it is being contended that the private sector is not investing sufficiently in expansion as also in research and development to make their products globally acceptable and achieve economies of scale. On the other hand, more and more incentives are being contemplated in this sector. While it is well known that some top businessmen, reported to be close to the ruling dispensation in New Delhi, have been accused of non-performance but no action has been taken. There is thus a dichotomy in the thinking and policy formulation of the government. Does the government believe that making business groups richer would bring about balanced and inclusive development? Obviously not. The government is not quite serious in tackling social and economic problems plaguing the country. All this has resulted in increasing the disparity between the upper echelons and the low-income groups. It is worth mentioning that the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has recently proposed that the Centre issue 'consumption vouchers' to citizens in the lower income group, which can be used to buy specified goods and services. Another more significant suggestion is a 40% hike in daily wages under MGN-REGA and 33% increase for PM-KISAN beneficiaries. These are more valid suggestions, and coming from a business organisation these gain credence. The decision over interest rates should be better left to economists of RBI. There is thus a need for a change in policy formulation of the ruling dispensation and making it more wedded to the interests of the people.



Dhurjati Mukherjee

DOES THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVE THAT MAKING BUSINESS GROUPS RICHER WOULD BRING ABOUT BALANCED AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT?



Barak Barfi

TRUMP WILL LIKELY GIVE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER BINYAMIN NETANYAHU CARTE BLANCHE, LIFTING THE FEW RESTRAINTS US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN HAS IMPOSED IN A FAILING EFFORT TO PREVENT A WIDER WAR

Trumpian Turmoil

Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election has left many world leaders feeling dejected. European leaders fear that he will browbeat them on issues ranging from trade to defense spending, while those in Latin America are terrified that he will punish them for immigration flows. In the Middle East, however, the reaction has been more mixed. Some leaders are crestfallen, others elated. But those who are cheering now may be pining for a less capricious leader once Trump takes office. Authoritarian rulers such as Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdo an stand to gain the most from a second Trump term. Trump has praised both men, referring to el-Sisi as his "favorite dictator" and calling himself a "big fan" of Erdo an, and will thus likely refrain from pressing them on human rights and democratic values, as prior US administrations have done. These leaders will be pleased with Trump's laissez-faire approach to foreign policy and lack of interest in details. And because America runs a trade surplus with Egypt and a small deficit with Turkey, they will not draw his administration's trade-related ire, unlike Germany, Japan, and South Korea. The Persian Gulf sheikhdoms will also benefit from a Trump presidency. Unlike el-Sisi and Erdo an, the leaders of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates seek a muscular US foreign policy to weaken Iranian influence. Trump's revival of his hawkish rhetoric and "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran would likely distract the mullahs from stirring up the tiny island's Shia majority. The Gulf states are also well placed to exploit Trump's transactional nature and his predilection for showmanship over substance: they can announce billion-dollar weapons deals with no intention of following through. Other US allies in the region will suffer. Republicans will pummel Qatar for its support of Hamas and other Islamist groups. And American envoys will cease shuttling between Jerusalem and Beirut to end the bombing of Lebanon. But the biggest loser of a Trump presidency may end up being the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD). The group is the Syrian branch of the Turkish Kurdistan Workers' Party, which has been fighting an intermittent insurgency against Turkey's government since 1984, and most recently killed five people at an aerospace company in Ankara. Trump's aversion to American troop deployments, coupled with his affection for Erdo an, could lead him to recall the roughly 900 soldiers stationed in Syria. Ostensibly there to prevent a resurgence of the Islamic State, they also protect the PYD from Syria and Turkey. A PYD that lacks US support on the ground and fears a Turkish onslaught is likely to ask Russian or Syrian forces to redeploy to the border. For this reason, Syria could indirectly benefit from a Trump administration. But America's adversaries - Iran and its proxies Hamas and Hezbollah - should be most concerned about Trump's return to the White House. Trump will likely give Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu carte blanche, lifting the few restraints US President Joe Biden has imposed in a failing effort to prevent a wider war. The recent revelation of an Iranian plot to kill Trump is sure to incite his ire and may even influence his response. It is hard to imagine Trump objecting to Israeli attacks on Iranian oil and nuclear infrastructure, or expressing anguish about civilian carnage in Gaza or growing violence by Israeli settlers in the West Bank. During Trump's first term, Netanyahu merely wanted him to leave Israel alone - all would go smoothly so long as he did not promote a Palestinian state or criticise the expansion of West Bank settlements. But Israel now needs robust American backing for the bold policies that Netanyahu has been pursuing. Trump will undoubtedly be happy to subcontract a war against Iran to Israel. But if the mullahs respond by targeting American interests, Trump may blame Netanyahu for dragging him into the type of conflict that he pledged on the campaign trail to avoid. And when Netanyahu reneges on his promises - like he did to Biden, who reportedly responded by calling him "a liar" and "a bad guy" - Trump will be just as furious, if not more so. It is an act Trump knows well. After Netanyahu declared his intention to annex settlements at a White House event in 2020, a blindsided Trump apparently said, "I feel dirty," and mused about endorsing his political rival. Biden has tolerated Netanyahu's dissemblance because he knows that weakening the Iranian axis is in America's interest. Trump, with his sole focus on genuflection, may not be as understanding. The return of Trump will upend US foreign policy, not least in the Middle East. A region that has endured wars, revolutions, and jihadist insurgencies can survive a bully in the White House. But whether America's allies and adversaries gain and lose in equal measure remains to be seen.

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The writer is a former research fellow at New America and a former visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution.

WISDOM CORNER

- Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated. CONFUCIUS
He who has a why to live can bear almost any how. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
The greatest use of a life is to spend it on something that will outlast it. WILLIAM JAMES

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1620: Signing of Mayflower Compact. On this day in 1620, 41 male passengers on the Mayflower, prior to landing at Plymouth, Massachusetts, signed the Mayflower Compact, by which they agreed to abide by the laws of the new government they would establish.
1806: The Continental System, a blockade designed to close the entire European continent to British trade, was proclaimed when Napoleon issued the Berlin Decree.

SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS

Dollar threatened by demotion



KV Ramesh

A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES HAVE NOW BEGUN TO TRADE IN MUTUAL CURRENCIES. THE INDIA-RUSSIA TRADE IS NOW 90% IN MUTUAL CURRENCIES

The rise of BRICS and its recent successful summit in Russia have signalled a subtle shift in the world economic order which has been considerably frayed following a clear divide between the collective West and the rest over the Ukraine war, and Israel's genocidal war in Gaza. The position of the US as the world's sole Super Power, backed by its G7 allies and the EU, is now under challenge by a host of middle powers supported by the Global South. The BRICS summit at Kazan indicated that the dollar, the world's reserve currency for over eight decades, is now threatened by demotion. It was a demotion that was coming. The unprecedented economic sanctions imposed on Russia by the US and its allies sent a shockwave among rising economies. The seizing of Russia's financial assets amounting to over \$300 billion in the European clearing exchange, and in US banks, may not have brought Moscow to heel, but it sent the wrong signal to emerging powers and the developing world. It confirmed the fears of the emerging economies that the

US, using its global primacy, was prepared to take even actions blatantly violative of the rules-based world order, and weaponise the dollar. The refusal of the Bank of England, respected as a safe haven for gold reserves of countries, to return Venezuela's deposits worth \$2 billion last year, only deepened suspicion about Western banks. India and many other countries have now begun buying gold and withdrawing their physical stocks of the yellow metal placed in the custody of the BoE, the symbol of Western economic power. India has withdrawn 214 tonnes of gold from BoE over the last year or so. Out of its total sovereign holding of 854 tonnes, more than half is now within India's borders. The Western sequestration of Russian money, and the blatant decision to arm Ukraine with the interest accrued on it, convinced an overwhelming majority of the nations that the financial systems of the West, were not safe, and deepened wariness about US control over the global economy through the dollar. There is no international oversight on the

US printing of the greenback, and in the wake of the 2008 meltdown, countries across the world began pondering over the advisability of keeping all their eggs in the greenback. They began diversifying to a basket of reliable international currencies. A number of countries have now begun to trade in mutual currencies. The India-Russia trade is now 90% in mutual currencies. The dollar became the world's premier currency at the closing stages of WW II when it was guaranteed by the US Fed at 1/35 of an ounce, or \$35 per ounce, thanks to the power of the US, which was the only country to have a surplus post-war. It was already dealt a body blow when President Nixon took the dollar off gold standard in 1971, but its pre-eminence continued for much longer. But its reign may now be under threat. The BRICS declaration about bringing about a change in the international financial system dominated by the West may not lead to a new global reserve numeraire in the immediate future, but there is greater openness about the

concept of an alternative to the dollar, backed by precious metals, mainly gold. Delhi is sore at the refusal of US and Canada to rein in Khalistani elements, the unctuous American lectures over religious freedoms, the arm-twisting over purchase of Russian oil, and the sanctioning of Indian companies accused by Washington of supplying dual-use items to Russia. It is also upset over the developments in its neighbourhood. The regime change in Bangladesh, which has American fingerprints all over it, as well as the renewed relationship between the US and the Pakistani defence establishments have left it worrying about the West's intentions. Prime Minister Modi decided to attend the Kazan summit just three days before it began, after agonising for days, indicating that Delhi has decided to assert its multilateralism and strategic autonomy. The India-China agreement to cool down the border tensions is yet another indication of that resolve. The writer, a senior journalist, is an analyst of geopolitics.

Letters TO THE EDITOR Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 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

A special medium Sir, A German delegation declared at the United Nations (UN) in 1996 that "Television is a rich man's medium." It was opposing the observance of "World Television Day" on 21 November. The opponents were not impressed about the ability of television to catch people's imagination as effectively as the radio. From JJ Thomson's cathode ray days of 1887, to its primitive form in the 1920s, to what it is today, from the black and white beauty to the coloured marvel, the evolution of television is surprising and inspiring as well. Surpassing radio and newspapers wasn't easy. The vivid accounts of winners and losers, the distressed and the saviours, politicians and governments, the celebrities and the ordinary make television a special medium. It is a compact package of three in one: education, news and entertainment. Cultural exchange, family bonding, settling questions, creative documentaries are its obvious benefits. Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Guard against fraud Sir, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has taken a significant step towards strengthening the financial system's defenses against financial crimes with its recent issuance of the 'Internal Risk Assessment Guidance for Money Laundering/Terrorist Financing Risks'. As the number of fraud cases continues to escalate, this directive emerges as a crucial tool to combat money laundering, terrorist financing, and credit fraud. At the core of these guidelines is a data-driven and risk-based approach. By leveraging advanced analytics and continuous monitoring, financial institutions can proactively identify and mitigate risks. This shift from reactive to proactive measures is essential in an era where fraudsters are constantly evolving their tactics. Money laundering, a complex and insidious crime, involves a three-step process: placement, layering, and integration. Illicit funds are introduced into the formal financial system, disguised through intricate transactions, and eventually legitimised. The international nature of these schemes, particularly trade-based money laundering, poses a significant challenge for global regulators. Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH



### SECURITY PREPAREDNESS

# Sea Vigil underway off Goa

Conceived in 2018, the exercise was basically to derive the lessons and actions to be taken after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, Nov 20:** The second phase of the multi-agency Sea Vigil exercise to check the preparedness of security forces began off the Goa coast Wednesday, officials said.

Conceived in 2018, the exercise was basically to derive the lessons and actions to be taken after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, Commodore Dushyant Purohit, Chief Staff Officer, naval officer in-charge of the Goa naval area, told reporters at Vasco (in South Goa).

The first phase of the exercise was held from November 12 to 19.

The second phase, which began Wednesday, will continue for 36 hours, the official said.

"A lot of improvement in the coastal security happened subsequent to the attacks. Presently, the fourth edition of this exercise is in progress. The aim of



The security awareness programme for fishing community which is going on throughout the year has also been intensified

this exercise is to find our vulnerability and where we need to improve in the process of coastal security and defence," he said.

"Another aim is to generate lot of consciousness about coastal security in our population for which, this time, we have deployed children from Scout and Guides as well as NCC cadets," the official said.

The security awareness programme for fishing community

which is going on throughout the year has also been intensified, he added.

Commodore Purohit said the Sea Vigil exercise was being conducted in two phases.

"The first phase commenced from November 12 and was in progress till Tuesday, in which a joint team was made under the leadership of the Indian Navy with personnel from the Indian Coast Guard, coastal security police (Goa

Police), Intelligence Bureau as well as the state Fisheries department and other coastal security agencies," he said.

The joint team went to various positions across both North and South Goa, such as fish landing points, ramps, coastal security police stations, and carried out a "realistic evaluation of what is our capability and where we need to improve," he said.

"This audit is going to be very helpful in finding out what we need to do in the future," he said.

"In this exercise, we have a realistic simulation of the coastal security threat and there will be people who will act as infiltrators and there would be attempts to catch them," the official said.

This time, it will be the largest exercise including coastal states, island territories in which more than six ministries and 20 organisations are involved, he said.

The defence forces have established a coastal radar network after 26/11, and lot of improvement has happened in the coastal surveillance, the official said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, Nov 20:** The long-pending demand of Goa's tribals and forest dwellers for rights over their land will soon be a reality as the state government has fast-tracked their claims, officials have said. So far, 871 such claimants have received ownership documents, they said.

According to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, his government has stepped up efforts to give land rights to those living in forests under the Forest Rights Act.

"We have given special attention to these cases, which has helped these tribals," said Chief Minister Pramod Sawant.

Ajay Gaude, the nodal officer for the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, told PTI that 10,136 claims filed by the tribals and other traditional forest dwellers were pending for a long time.

Of these, 9,757 pertain to individuals, while 379 are community claims, according to government records. The government under CM Sawant has prioritised the matter, the official said.

"The process to dispose of the claims by handing over the (ownership) rights to the trib-



After following the process under the Forest Rights Act, 871 tribals and other traditional forest dwellers have been issued 'sanads' (ownership documents) as of October 10, 2024

als and other traditional forest dwellers has been initiated in all the applications received," he said.

The BJP-ruled Goa government has appointed a specialised agency that conducts spot verification of the claims submitted by the tribals and other traditional forest dwellers. It has carried out the spot verification for 6,997 claims so far.

While gram sabhas (village assemblies) have approved 4,760 claims, the sub-division level committee has cleared 2,629 claims, which were forwarded to the district-level committee, the official said, explaining the process.

The district-level commit-

tee cleared 1,741 claims. After following the process under the Forest Rights Act, 871 tribals and other traditional forest dwellers have been issued "sanads" (ownership documents) as of October 10, 2024, he said.

Gaude said the CM has been reviewing the work on these claims every month, while a state-level monitoring committee has been formed to plug any loopholes in implementing the Act.

"I am delighted after receiving sanad for my property," said Datta Velip, who lives in Avali ward of Cotigao village in Canacona taluka of South Goa, nearly 100 km from state capital Panaji.

# Kochi-Muziris Biennale to begin in Dec 2025: Vijayan

The Biennale has facilitated cultural exchange and dialogue, bringing together artists, curators, and audiences from varied backgrounds to engage with contemporary issues through art

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 20:** The 6th edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, the country's largest contemporary art exhibition, will commence in December 2025, with renowned Indian contemporary artist Nikhil Chopra curating the nearly four-month-long event, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced Wednesday.

Highlighting Chopra's achievements, Vijayan described him as a distinguished artist whose work spans drawings, paintings, photographs, sculptures, and installations.

Chopra, the founder of the Goa-based HH Art Spaces—an artist-run collective and movement—will collaborate with his team to curate the 2025 Biennale.

The upcoming edition will feature 60 artists and artistic practices from India and across the globe, the Kochi Biennale Foundation (KBF)

stated in a release.

According to Chopra's Instagram profile, his artistic practice "interweaves live art, drawing, photography, sculpture, and installations."

Explaining his curatorial vision, Chopra said, "For me, the process or the journey of creating artwork is more central than the destination itself. I envision this Biennale as a series of moments where one can seamlessly enter and exit. We are focusing on works that emphasise the process—those still in the making—rather than the conventional norm of valuing only completed pieces. It's important to embrace the unfinished and the journey."

Scheduled to run from December 12, 2025, to March 31, 2026, the Biennale promises to be one of its most memorable editions, according to Vijayan. "Let us come together to celebrate this spectacular occasion that fosters the spirit of art, community, and dialogue," he said.



A voter gets his finger marked with indelible ink before casting vote during Kerala's Palakkad Assembly constituency bypoll, in Palakkad, Kerala, Wednesday

# Govt approves major industrial project for Kerala

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 20:** The Kerala government has granted approval for the implementation of an ambitious industrial and economic growth triangle project, with the aim of transforming the southern region of the state into a vibrant industrial and economic hub, according to Finance Minister KN Balagopal Tuesday.

He said that the Vizhinjam-Kollam-Punalur Industrial and Economic Growth Triangle project will be implemented

through the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) and has been designed to capitalise on the potential of Vizhinjam port, India's largest upcoming transshipment port, to benefit Kerala.

The announcement was made during a press conference held here as part of the KIIFB project announcements.

The government envisions a project spanning 1,456 square kilometres across the southern districts of Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram, centred around the Vizhin-

jam port, he said.

The Finance Minister added that the potential of this project is not limited to the economic growth of South Kerala.

The goal is to achieve the overall development of Kerala by integrating coastal areas, central regions, and hilly areas into the industrial corridor through key road and rail networks.

The Minister stated that the government envisions creating an industrial zone centred around growth triangles, growth nodes, sub-nodes, and

corridors, combining transport, logistics, and industrial parks.

The aim is to develop a smart industrial ecosystem in areas located near major highways and rail networks, based on the unique characteristics of those regions, enabling them to compete on a global scale, he said.

The Vizhinjam-Kollam-Punalur development corridor is a crucial step towards transforming South Kerala into an industrial and economic hub and, through this, elevating the state to a port-based economy, Balagopal added.

# IFFI 2024 kicks off in Goa

AGENCIES

**Panaji, Nov 20:** Goa is playing host to the 55th edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), from today, November 20 to November 28. With 180 international films from 81 countries and a special segment on Goan Films celebrating local talent and culture, the cinematic extravaganza is set to enthral the delegates. Ishaan Khattar and Sunny Kaushal will perform at the opening ceremony, which will be hosted by Bhumi Pednekar and Abhishek Banerjee.



Vani Tripathi Tikoo, the convenor of the steering committee of the international section, spoke about the importance of supporting independent filmmakers at film festivals. She said, "Film festivals are nurturing grounds for attendees and aspiring filmmakers. While we are all champions of Indian cinema, it is independent filmmakers who create films through their own efforts and resources. That is what film festivals must celebrate."

Discussing how Shekhar Kapur, as the festival director, has shaped this year's edition, she adds, "He is a global filmmaker who has brought a filmmaker's perspective to the festival. This is reflected in the lineup, screenings, and the relevant conversations that form part of this year's programme."

# Kerala to host Argentina football team featuring Lionel Messi

Sports Minister V Abdurahiman said that the world-renowned team would play two friendly matches in Kerala, with the event being conducted under the complete supervision of the state government

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 20:** The Kerala government announced Wednesday that the Argentina national football team, led by legendary player Lionel Messi, will visit the state next year for an international friendly match.

Addressing a press conference, Sports Minister V Abdurahiman said that the world-renowned team would play two friendly matches in Kerala, with the event being conducted under the complete supervision of the state government.

The venue and the opponent team would be decided at a later stage, Abdurahiman said, reacting to a query.

"The world's number one football team, Argentina, including Lionel Messi, is coming to Kerala. There will be two matches," he said.

The management of the Argentina team would make an official announcement in this regard upon arriving in the state, Abdurahiman said.

Representatives of the football team are expected to visit the southern state within one and a half months, the minister said.

"We (government) have decided to make a joint announcement in this regard with the Argentina national team management," he said.

The minister said that he had recently visited Spain to hold discussions with representatives of



the Argentina national team and to extend an official invitation for their visit to the state.

He said that talks were held with individuals associated with the team, who agreed to visit India in 2025 and participate in the friendly match event.

Responding to a question, he

said that the decision regarding the team's arrival has been finalised, and there are no changes to it.

He noted that the government would directly oversee the match, security, and other arrangements.

The minister said that the

match would take place next year, but the date would be announced by the Argentina Football Association (AFA) in accordance with their procedures.

Making it clear that the match would be held in a stadium with a capacity of at least 50,000 people, he indicated that Kochi is likely to be the venue.

The minister pointed out that India has the largest support base for the Argentina football team, with one-fourth of the fans residing in Kerala. This is the primary reason for the Argentina team's decision to visit the state.

Financial support for organising the high-profile football event will be provided by the traders of the state, he added.

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1 Name of the Work	: Civil Work
2 No. of works	: 1 No.
3 Estimated Cost	: Rs. 64.86 Lakhs
4 Period of Completion	: As per DTCN
5 Date & time of Bidding	: From 10.00 A.M. of 20/11/2024 to 29/11/2024 up to 5.00 P.M.
6 Last date & time for receipt of Bids in portal	: Dt. 29/11/2024 at 5.00 P.M.
7 Bids received online shall be opened on	: 4.00 P.M. hours of Dt. 29/11/2024
8 Name and address of the Officer inviting Bid	: Executive Officer, Umerkote Municipality
Further details can be seen from the procurement portal	: <a href="http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in">www.tendersorissa.gov.in</a>

**OIPR-13180/11/0005/2425** **Sd./- Executive Officer, Umerkote Municipality**



# national



“Batogto katogto is the most negative and unconstitutional slogan in the country's history. The BJP leaders and its allies are distancing themselves from the slogan”  
AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

## DELHI HC GRANTS BAIL TO LAVA MD HARI OM RAI

The Delhi High Court Wednesday granted bail to Hari Om Rai, the MD of Lava International mobile company, in a money laundering case involving smartphone-maker Vivo. Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri granted relief to the Lava official, who was in custody since his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in October last year



## of the day uote

Memories of our past inspire us to guide society in the right direction. Unity is our greatest strength and when we stand together, no force in the world can weaken us  
YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM



It is the responsibility of the Election Commission to conduct elections peacefully and fairly, but this is not happening in the country. The news of violence in today's election is also the result of its failure  
KISHORI LAL SHARMA | CONGRESS MP



I want to directly ask Chandrababu Naidu. Even you have a family, and there may be differences within our families. But the way you speak and post about mine, no one else engages in such cruel politics. Only you do  
Y S JAGAN MOHAN REDDY | YSRCP CHIEF



# Assembly bypolls in 4 states: 50-70% turnout

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow/Chandigarh, Nov 20:** A voter turnout ranging from 50 to 70 per cent was recorded in the bypolls to 15 assembly seats spread across Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Kerala and Uttarakhand Wednesday amid stray incidents of violence and complaints of irregularities against police officials and misuse of government machinery.



Polling was held in Katerhari, Karhal, Meerapur, Ghaziabad, Majhawan, Sisamau, Khair, Phulpur and Kundarki seats in Uttar Pradesh, Gidderbaha, Dera Baba Nanak, Chabbewal (SC) and Barnala constituencies in Punjab, Palakkad in Kerala and Kedarnath seat in Uttarakhand. While the polling percentage in Kerala was 70.51, it was 63 in Punjab, 57.64 in Uttarakhand and 49.3 in Uttar Pradesh. The final figures are likely to change.

Acting on complaints by SP president Akhilesh Yadav against police officers checking voter cards and Aadhaar IDs, the Election Commission ordered suspension of five police personnel in Uttar Pradesh violating its guidelines on checking of voters and stopping them from casting votes. The voter turnout in Ghaziabad was 33.30 per cent, Katerhari 56.69

per cent, Khair 46.43 per cent, Kundarki 57.32 per cent, Karhal 53.92 per cent, Majhawan 50.41 per cent, Meerapur 57.02 per cent, Phulpur 43.43 per cent and Sisamau 49.03 per cent. The SP claimed that in some places the police personnel were checking the IDs of people and deterring them from voting. The BJP also sought the intervention of the EC

for checking identity of burqa-wearing women voters, claiming their IDs did not match with their faces.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Election Officer Navdeep Rinwa said five police personnel on poll duty have been suspended taking note of complaints - two each in Kanpur and Muzaffarnagar and one in Moradabad.

An incident of stone pelting was reported in Kakroli village during voting for the Meerapur assembly bypoll following a confrontation between two groups.

SP candidate Sumbul Rana alleged that police were harassing voters in the name of checking their identification cards. Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) candidate Mithlesh Pal claimed that she was informed about people from outside the constituency being called in for "bogus voting". "These people have been

accommodated in Madrasas and schools," she alleged. Pal also claimed that bogus voting was being done by "women in burqa".

In neighbouring Uttarakhand, a voter turnout of 57.64 per cent was recorded in the Kedarnath assembly bypoll. The Kedarnath assembly seat in Rudrapur district fell vacant after the death of BJP MLA Shaila Rani Rawat in July.

In Punjab, a voter turnout of 63 per cent was recorded in the bypolls to four Assembly segments. The Gidderbaha seat recorded a high 81 per cent polling, Dera Baba Nanak 63 per cent, Barnala 54 per cent and Chabbewal 53 per cent. A minor clash took place between the AAP and Congress supporters at Dera Pathana village in the Dera Baba Nanak segment. Workers of both parties were also engaged in heated arguments.

## Kallakurichi hooch tragedy: Madras HC orders a CBI probe



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, Nov 20:** The Madras High Court Wednesday transferred to CBI, the investigation into the Kallakurichi hooch tragedy case, in which 67 people died after consuming illicit liquor.

A division bench comprising Justices D Krishnakumar and P B Balaji passed the order on the petitions filed by AIADMK Legal Wing Secretary and former MLA I S Inbadurai, K Balu, President Advocates Forum for Social Justice and two others, which sought a CBI probe into the Kallakurichi hooch tragedy.

The bench said, "In view of the foregoing discussion, with specific reference to the authoritative pronouncements of the Supreme Court in the matter of transfer of cases to the CBI, this Court is of the prima facie view that this Kallakurichi hooch tragedy case is one of the rarest of rare cases which warrants a fair and impartial investigation by the CBI".

The bench directed the state police to hand over the entire case diaries in CB-CID, Villupuram to the CBI within two weeks.

The bench directed the CBI, Chennai to investigate all aspects of the three cases and file final reports before the jurisdictional court as expeditiously as possible.

Needless to state, the state police shall extend their fullest cooperation to the CBI for the smooth conduct of investigation, the bench added.

The bench said even as per the stand of the state, in certain cases, there has been involvement of accused from states like Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka and Union territory of Puducherry from the stage of procurement of raw materials.

## SCHOOL JOBS SCAM

### HC delivers split verdict on granting bail to Partha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Nov 20:** A two-judge division bench of the Calcutta High Court Wednesday delivered a split verdict on a bail petition moved by former West Bengal education minister Partha Chatterjee and four other high-profile accused, indicted by the CBI in the School Service Commission (SSC) recruitment scam.

While Justice Arijit Banerjee approved the bail of all the 10 accused who appealed before the bench, Justice Apurba Sinha Roy decided against granting bail to Chatterjee and four other former education department officials - Subirish Bhattacharya, Ashok Saha, Kalyanmoy Gangopadhyay and Shanti Prasad Sinha.

Bhattacharya served as the erstwhile state SSC chairman and, subsequently, as vice-chancellor of North Bengal University, while Saha acted as the former assistant secretary to the commission during the time period of the scam.

Gangopadhyay was president of the state secondary education board during the period, and Sinha is the former advisor to the state SSC. The corruption, which has run into several hundred crores and adversely affected the career of thousands of school job aspirants in Bengal, reportedly exposed a host of people in the power corridors of the state's education sector who were directly involved in manipulation of marks, destruction and tampering of OMR sheets, and appointments in lieu of money.

Both judges, however, agreed on granting bail to five other suspects in the case - Kaushik Ghosh, Subrata Samanta Roy alias Babu, Sk Ali Imam, Sk Shahid Imam and Chandan Mondal alias Ranjan. All five were slapped with charges of acting as agents and middlemen for collecting money from undeserving candidates in the cash-for-jobs scam.

## AIR EMERGENCY

# Delhi govt announces WFH for 50% staff

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 20:** The Delhi government Wednesday announced half of its staff and those of the MCD will work from home as the city continued to battle high level of pollution with a thick layer of smog over the city that choked residents and kept authorities on toes.

The Air Quality Index recorded marginal improvement - coming down to 419 from 460 the previous day - but it still was in the 'severe' category.

The Delhi government announced that all its departments and MCD offices will work at 50 per cent capacity while the remaining staff will work from home under the fourth stage of Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP).

Addressing a press conference here, Environment Minister Gopal Rai urged private offices, industries and businesses to take similar steps to help mitigate the city's air pollution crisis. However, offices which are engaged in essential and emergency services will operate with full capacity.

## EC suspends 7 cops in UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 20:** At least seven police personnel were suspended and many others removed from poll duty in Uttar Pradesh Wednesday for flouting Election Commission guidelines and stopping electors from casting votes in the ongoing assembly bypolls, officials said.

The action by the poll authority came amid complaints by opposition parties, mainly Samajwadi Party (SP) that people from a particular community were being prevented from casting vote.

Acting on the Commission's directions, district election officers and super-



ate with full capacity.

The 24-hour average AQI, recorded daily at 4 pm, stood at 419 Wednesday, down from 460 the previous day, while the city's Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 494 Monday.

Out of 37 monitoring stations in Delhi, nine stations were in the "severe plus" category, with AQI readings exceeding

450, while 22 stations were in the "severe" category, with AQI readings above 400.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51-100 'satisfactory', 101-200 'moderate', 201-300 'poor', 301-400 'very poor', 401-450 'severe', and above 450 'severe plus'.

According to the Air Quality Early Warning System for Del-

hi, the air quality is expected to remain in the "severe" category Thursday and Friday and improve to the "very poor" category Saturday.

The report states that shallow fog or smog conditions, accompanied by predominantly northwest surface winds with speeds ranging from 6 to 12 kmph, prevailed during the day. On November 21, northwest winds with speeds of less than 8 kmph are likely during the morning hours.

According to an order issued by the General Administration Department (GAD), all government offices under the Government of NCT of Delhi will operate with half of their staff present, while the other half will work remotely.

Administrative Secretaries and Heads of Departments are instructed to ensure that essential services remain uninterrupted, with relevant officers attending the office as needed.

The order will remain in effect until Stage-IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) is lifted.



A worker spreads 'Finger Fryums', a finger shaped food made from seasoned dough, for drying under the sun at a factory, on the outskirts of Agartala, Tripura  
PTI PHOTO

# 'Wife entitled to matrimonial amenities during pendency of divorce'

THE COURT ADDED THAT THE FAMILY COURT COMPARED THE STATUS, STANDARD OF LIFE, INCOME SOURCE, PROPERTIES, ITS POSSESSION, RIGHTS AND LIABILITIES OF THE HUSBAND AND FOUND THAT THE WIFE CANNOT BE DENIED THE PRIVILEGES AS ENJOYED BY THE HUSBAND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 20:** During pendency of divorce petition, a wife is entitled to the same amenities of life as she would have been in her matrimonial home, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and P B Varale enhanced the interim maintenance of ₹1.75 lakh per month to the estranged wife of a Kerala-based cardiologist. The interim maintenance had been reduced by the high court. The family court awarded ₹1.75 lakh in-

terim maintenance to the wife while the Madras High Court reduced the amount to ₹80,000 per month.

"The high court has overlooked certain aspects relating to the income of the respondent (husband) which were looked at by the family court. Further, it is also on record that the appellant is not working as she sacrificed her employment after the marriage.

"The appellant was accustomed to a certain standard of living in her matrimonial home and, therefore, during the pendency of the divorce



petition, is also entitled to enjoy the same amenities of life as she would have been entitled

to in her matrimonial home," the bench said. It added that the family court compared the

status, standard of life, income source, properties, its possession, rights and liabilities of the husband and found that the wife cannot be denied the privileges as enjoyed by the husband.

"Consequently, we allow the appeal of the appellant wife and set aside the order of the Madras High Court dated December 1, 2022 and restore the order of the family court. The respondent husband is directed to pay a sum of ₹1,75,000 per month as interim maintenance as per the order of the family court dated June 14, 2022," it said in its or-

der of Tuesday.

The bench said the documents produced by the husband and evidence of both parties in this regard clearly reflect the fact that he is a renowned expert in cardiology and has a number of "worthful properties" and is the only legal heir to his father who has passed away.

It added that the high court, on the other hand, while allowing the appeal of the husband, modified the order of the family court, noting that the hospital in Kerala had agreed to pay a sum of ₹1.25 lakh per month as salary to him in 2017.



# national



Cleared over ₹85,000 crore investments in the SIPB (meeting), which will generate 34,000 jobs

## ATISHI LAUNCHES DELHI SOLAR PORTAL

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi Wednesday launched the 'Delhi Solar Portal' as a single window solution for installing rooftop solar panels by the people in the city



### of the day quote

If we can complete the project before December 10 this year, it will be inaugurated prior to it. Else, we will inaugurate it at some later date. One thing is for sure, the 'Swahid Smarak Kshetra' will be opened for public in 2025

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER

It has been nearly 10 months since their incarceration, and there has been no communication regarding their status or the efforts being made towards their release

M K STALIN | TAMIL NADU CM

I am telling the chief minister (Naidu), not just five years, you have to continue as the CM of this state for a decade. You have to continue this spirit

PAWAN KALYAN | AP DY CM

# Bitcoin scam allegations shake Maharashtra polls

ED officials said the agency has widened its ongoing money laundering probe into a crypto (Bitcoin) assets ponzi scam and is investigating the "links" of Mehta and some others with politicians, politically exposed persons and bureaucrats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Nov 20: The ED and the CBI Wednesday ramped up their investigations against Bitcoin Ponzi 'scam' suspect Gaurav Mehta, a day after BJP made public purported voice notes to allege that Congress and NCP (SP) leaders were trying to encash cryptocurrency to influence Maharashtra Assembly polls.

The allegations were refuted by NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule and Congress leader Nana Patole who termed the voice notes released by the BJP on the eve of polling as fake. Gaurav Mehta, an audit company employee, was at the centre of the action taken by the two federal probe agencies Wednesday with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) carrying out searches at his Raurpur residence while the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) issued summons to him seeking his presence before the investigation officer as soon as possible.

The ED questioned him and recorded his statement during the searches. It also seized some computers and digital devices. ED officials said the agency has widened its ongoing money laundering probe into a crypto (Bitcoin) assets ponzi scam and is investigating the "links" of Mehta and some others with politicians, politically exposed persons and bureaucrats.

The agency attached assets worth ₹98 crore of actor Shilpa Shetty and her husband Raj Kundra in April as part of this crypto-ponzi probe. The cou-



ple challenged the ED action and got relief from the Bombay High Court.

It was alleged by the ED that the bitcoins were to be utilised for mining and investors were supposed to get huge returns in crypto assets but the promoters "cheated" the investors and have been concealing the "ill-gotten" bitcoins in obscure online wallets. Kundra, the ED alleged, received 285 bitcoins from the "mastermind" and promoter of Gain Bitcoin Ponzi "scam" Amit Bhardwaj for "setting up" a bitcoin mining farm in Ukraine.

These bitcoins were sourced from the "proceeds of crime collected by Amit Bhardwaj from gullible investors," it said. The agency arrested three people - Simpy Bhardwaj, Nitin Gaur and Nikhil Mahajan - in the case last year.

The main accused Ajay Bhardwaj and Mahendra Bhardwaj are absconding, the ED said, adding that it attached properties worth ₹69 crore in the case earlier. Two

chargesheets have been filed in the case till now - the first in June 2019 and the second in February this year.

The BJP Tuesday played purported voice notes of Baramati MP Supriya Sule and Maharashtra Congress chief Patole alleging attempts were being made to encash bitcoins to influence the elections.

Sharing the audio clips, in which voices and signal chats purportedly of Sule and Patole allegedly indicate that bitcoins were used for funding the poll campaign, BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi had said it is clear that the MVA has seen the writing on the wall that it will be defeated in the polls.

The allegations were strongly refuted by both leaders who said that the voice recordings were not theirs. Sule said she has filed a complaint with the Election Commission and the cybercrime department of the state against the false allegations.

## Bengal BJP chief held en route to Beldanga

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Nov 20: The West Bengal Police Wednesday afternoon made "preventive arrest" of BJP's state president and Union minister Sukanta Majumdar in Krishnanagar area in Nadia district when he was on his way to violence-hit Beldanga in adjoining Murshidabad to take stock of the situation there, a senior officer said.

The Union minister of state for education was later released on bail. The action against Majumdar was taken under Section 170 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), which states that such arrests are made to prevent the commission of cognisable offences, he said.

"Majumdar's preventive arrest was made under Section 170 of BNSS. He was heading towards a place where prohibitory orders were in place," a senior officer of Krishnanagar Police District told PTI.

"I was trying to go to Beldanga to review the situation there. Our party workers have put up road blockades in other areas in protest against the police preventing us from going to Beldanga," Majumdar said.

Following Majumdar's arrest, BJP party activists staged protests in different parts of the state. Earlier in the day, Majumdar's convoy was stopped by the police while he was on his way to Beldanga, where around 17 people have been injured in clashes between two communities.

Police cited the imposition of prohibitory orders in the area and that the BJP leader's visit might have disrupted peace. Clashes erupted between two communities in Beldanga on Saturday night over an objectionable message on a display board at a temporary gate erected for Kartik Puja.

## DMK criticises Centre for 'sidelining state languages'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Nov 20: Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK Wednesday condemned the BJP-led Centre, alleging it ignored state languages including Tamil and celebrated Hindi, month and week.

The party urged its cadres to right away begin the campaign for 2026 Assembly election, by reminding people of the momentous schemes and the visionary leadership of Chief Minister M K Stalin, and expressed confidence of winning the polls. Fare-free travel for women in government town buses and the ₹1,000 monthly assistance for women under the Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thogai (Kalaignar scheme for women's right) Thittam are among the host of schemes being implemented by the DMK regime.

The Dravidian party, in its high-level panel meeting chaired by party president and Chief Minister M K Stalin, also targeted the Union government for what it called 'delaying' the caste census. Several resolutions were adopted at the meeting which outlined the party's stand on various issues and one of the resolution condemned the Centre over a string of issues including the 9.2 per cent unemployment rate.

It condemned, "ignoring state languages including Tamil and conducting celebratory events of Hindi month and Hindi week." The ruling party hit out at the Central government for its proposed Waqf Amendment Bill and said it was tantamount



to taking away the rights of minorities.

It condemned the BJP-led regime for its "anti-democratic, anti-people, and anti-constitutional" pursuits and alleged that the rule of reservation was not fully implemented in all the Central government departments. Also, the DMK slammed the Centre for 'not preventing rail accidents that are continuing to kill people' and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure the safety and security of all sections of people in Manipur.

The party reiterated its opposition to the 'One nation, one election' proposal and decried what it called non-release funds to the state under the Central schemes such as the Samagra Shiksha.

The DMK alleged that the union government usurped the rights conferred on the states by the Constitution.

It alleged reduction in allocation of funds for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in the budget and blamed the Centre for 'sluggish governance.'

The Dravidian party also targeted the Union government for what it called 'delaying' the caste census

## POST OF THE DAY

SHOCKING BJP alliance candidate Vikhe Patil caught using his college students for fake voting in Shirdi Thousands of fake voters who don't even know Marathi or their village/locality name What is this match fixing, ECI? #MaharashtraElection2024

## SHORT TAKES

### Police bust online gambling call centre

Gurugram: Gurugram Police busted an illegal call centre which was running betting through an online app, leading to the arrest of nine accused from a residential society on Sohna Road, police said. The police have recovered three laptops, 38 mobile phones, 25 bank account kits and 22 ATM cards from their possession. According to the police, they received information Tuesday regarding fraud committed by some people in GLS Homes Society Sohna by running a call centre, running games and betting through an online gaming app and transferring money to banks.

### One dead in reactor blast

Hyderabad: A 42-year-old man died, and three others sustained serious injuries following a flash fire triggered by a reactor blast at a pharmaceutical company here Wednesday, police said. The incident occurred while the four workers were repairing the reactor, they added. The injured workers were immediately rushed to a hospital, where one of them succumbed to injuries during treatment, an official from the Suraram police station stated. A case has been registered, and an investigation is underway to determine the cause of the blast.

### Boy falls into borewell

Jaipur: A four-year-old boy fell into an open borewell in Rajasthan's Barmer district Wednesday evening, officials said. The incident occurred in Arjun ki Dhani in Gudhamalani area where Nareish fell into the borewell while playing. The family members started rescue efforts and immediately informed police following which a rescue team was sent from the district headquarters.

## India, China agree to work to rebuild trust

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 20: India and China Wednesday agreed to work towards a roadmap for rebuilding mutual trust and understanding with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh calling



for drawing lessons from the "unfortunate border clashes" of 2020 during talks with his Chinese counterpart Dong Jun.

The two defence ministers met in Vientiane, the capital city of Laos, weeks after Indian and Chinese militaries completed disengagement of troops from two last face-off points in eastern Ladakh. The defence ministry said both sides agreed

to work together towards a roadmap for rebuilding mutual trust and understanding. In the delegation-level talks, Singh highlighted that amicable relations between India and China would have positive implications for global peace and prosperity, it said.

"Considering that both countries are and will continue to remain neighbours, he mentioned that 'we need to focus on cooperation rather than conflict,'" it said.

Singh called for reflecting on the lessons learnt from the unfortunate border clashes of 2020, taking measures to prevent the recurrence of such events and safeguarding peace and tranquility along the India-China border, the ministry said in a statement. Indian and Chinese militaries completed the disengagement exercise in Demchok and Depsang in eastern Ladakh late last month after the two sides reached an agreement following a series of negotiations to resolve the festering border row.



Folk artists perform during the inauguration of the 78th Annual Technical Meeting of the Indian Institute of Metals (IIM-ATM), in Bangalore, Karnataka

# Google Maps launches Air View+ in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 20: Users across India can now access hyperlocal air quality information on Google Maps, the tech titan said Wednesday announcing Air View+, an AI-powered and ecosystem-based solution.

Google said Air View+ enables valuable air quality insights to government agencies responsible for environmental monitoring and urban planning, by offering citizens hyperlocal air quality information on Google Maps.

The company's latest move assumes significance as Delhi's air quality index (AQI) touched a high of 491 earlier this week, as toxic haze engulfed the national capital prompting the government to restrict vehicle movement and construction activities, and schools to shift

to online classes. Google, in a blogpost penned by Yael Maguire, VP and GM, Google Maps Platform and Google Earth, along with Miriam Daniel, VP and GM, Google Maps, announced Air View+ which it said is an ecosystem-based solution to empower government author-

ities and people with hyperlocal air quality information. As India continues its "incredible growth momentum", backed by tech innovation and demographic advantage, it is crucial to also mitigate risks which could slow it down, Google said in the blogpost, adding that environmental issues are one such



stumbling block, with air pollution topping the list. While this aspect is widely understood and appreciated, the ability to take targeted action has been limited due to imperfect data around air quality at the hyperlocal level, Google said.

Powered by Google AI,

modelling a wide range of data inputs, Air View+ enables valuable air quality insights to government agencies responsible for environmental monitoring and urban planning. It would also enable real-time hyperlocal air quality information in Google Maps for users across India.

Air View+ adopts an ecosystem-based approach, bringing together local organisations working to enable real-time hyperlocal air quality information, including local sustainability startups, researchers/climate action groups, corporations, city administrators, and citizens.

These sensors measure various air quality parameters, PM2.5, PM10, CO2, NO2, Ozone, and VOCs, along with temperature and humidity, taking measurements every minute.



# international



We have a special secure line for communication between the two presidents, Russia and the United States. Moreover, even for video communication but it is not currently being used

## POPE FRANCIS TO FOREGO CENTURIES-OLD PRACTICE

Pope Francis, who has shunned much of the pomp and privilege of leading the global Catholic Church, has decided that a simple wooden casket will suffice when the time comes for his funeral



### of the day quote

We are seeing an early impact of the Trump administration coming in that has created pressure on China to ease dealing with India. So that's why border patrolling has been agreed upon. Direct flights have been agreed upon

MUKESH AGHI | PRESIDENT OF THE US-INDIA STRATEGIC AND PARTNERSHIP FORUM

We are situated along the equator, therefore we have more than plenty of sunlight to fuel solar-based energy. We have other sources of renewables and that's why we are very optimistic that we can achieve net zero before 2050

PRABOWO SUBIANTO | PRESIDENT, INDONESIA

With Pakistan, the main issue we have is of terrorism. Terrorist activities in India have eroded the trust. The first issue in engaging with Pakistan is the cessation of terrorism. That is a key issue

PARVATHANENI HARISH | PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

# US vetoes Gaza ceasefire

The 15-member council voted on a resolution put forward by 10 non-permanent members that called for an 'immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire'

REUTERS

United Nations, Nov 20: The United States Wednesday vetoed a UN Security Council resolution for a ceasefire in Gaza, drawing criticism of the Biden administration for once again blocking international action aimed at halting Israel's war with Hamas.

The 15-member council voted on a resolution put forward by 10 non-permanent members that called for an "immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire" in the 13-month conflict and separately demanded the release of hostages.

Only the US voted against, using its veto as a permanent council member to block the resolution.

Robert Wood, deputy US ambassador to the UN, said Washington had made clear it would only support a resolution that explicitly calls for the immediate release of hostages as part of a ceasefire.

"A durable end to the war must come with the release of the hostages. These two urgent goals are inextricably linked. This resolution abandoned that necessity, and for that reason, the United States could not support it," he said.

### UNSC RESOLUTION



US veto criticised by UN members, including Malta and France

China and Russia accused of influencing resolution stance

A durable end to the war must come with the release of the hostages. These two urgent goals are inextricably linked. This resolution abandoned that necessity

ROBERT WOOD | DEPUTY US AMBASSADOR TO THE UN

Wood said the US had sought compromise, but the text of the proposed resolution would have sent a "dangerous message" to Palestinian militant group Hamas that "there's no need to come back to the negotiating table."

Israel's campaign in Gaza killed nearly 44,000 people and displaced nearly all the enclave's population at least once. It was launched in response to an attack by Hamas-led fighters who killed 1,200 people and captured more than 250 hostages in Israel October 7, 2023.

Members roundly criticised the US for blocking the resolution put forward by the council's 10 elected members: Algeria, Ecuador, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, South Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia and Switzerland.

"It is deeply regretted that due to the use of the veto this council has once again failed to uphold its responsibility to maintain in-

ternational peace and security," Malta's UN Ambassador Vanessa Frazier said after the vote failed, adding that the text of the resolution "was by no means a maximalist one."

"It represented the bare minimum of what is needed to begin to address the desperate situation on the ground," she said.

Food security experts have warned that famine is imminent among Gaza's 2.3 million people.

US President Joe Biden, who leaves office January 20, has offered Israel strong diplomatic backing and continued to provide arms for the war, while trying unsuccessfully to broker a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas that would see hostages released in exchange for Palestinians held by Israel.

After blocking earlier resolutions on Gaza, Washington in March abstained from a vote that

# US shuts down Kyiv embassy

The US Embassy in Kyiv announces temporary closure following specific intelligence of a potential large-scale air attack

REUTERS

Kyiv, Nov 20: The United States shut its embassy in Kyiv Wednesday morning due to "specific information of a potential significant air attack" amid jitters in the capital over possible Russian retaliation a day after a big Ukrainian strike.

The Italian and Greek embassies said they had also closed their doors after the unusual US warning, while the French embassy remained open but urged its citizens to be cautious.

Air raid sirens briefly sounded in Kyiv in the afternoon, as the air force told people to seek shelter because of a missile threat. Senior officials told Ukrainians not to ignore the alert.

Ukraine Tuesday used US ATACMS missiles to attack an arms depot inside Russia, making use of newly granted permission from the outgoing administration of US President Joe Biden on the 1,000th day of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Russia has been signalling to the United States and its allies for weeks that if they give permission to Ukraine to strike deep into Russian territory with Western-supplied missiles then Moscow will consider it a major escalation.

"Out of an abundance of caution, the embassy will be closed,



and embassy employees are being instructed to shelter in place," the US Department of State Consular Affairs said in a statement on the embassy's website.

The Kremlin said it had no comment. Russian foreign intelligence Chief Sergei Naryshkin said in an interview published Wednesday that Moscow would retaliate against NATO countries that facilitate long-range Ukrainian missile strikes against Russian territory.

### Ukraine fires UK cruise missiles

Ukraine fired a volley of British Storm Shadow cruise missiles into Russia Wednesday, the latest new Western weapon it has been permitted to use on Russian targets a day after it fired US ATACMS missiles.

The strikes were widely reported by Russian war correspondents on Telegram and confirmed by an official on condition of anonymity. A spokesperson for Ukraine's general staff said he had no such information at present.

Moscow has said the use of Western weapons to strike into Russian territory far from the border would be a major escalation in the conflict.

### SHORT TAKES

#### 12 security personnel killed in Pakistan

Peshawar: Twelve security personnel and six terrorists were killed as a suicide bomber rammed an explosive laden vehicle into a joint check post in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the army said Wednesday. The terrorists attempted to attack a joint check post in general area Malikhel in Bannu district late Tuesday night but their attempt to enter the post was effectively thwarted by troops, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Army's media wing, said. The suicide blast led to collapse of portion of perimeter wall and damaged the adjoining infrastructure, resulting in the death of "12 brave sons of soil" including 10 soldiers of the security forces and two soldiers of the Frontier Constabulary, the ISPR said.

#### France Oppn warns to topple govt

Paris: French far-right leader Marine Le Pen on Wednesday threatened to seek to topple Prime Minister Michel Barnier's fragile coalition government if her National Rally (RN) party's cost-of-living concerns were not incorporated into the 2025 budget. Le Pen's warning shot comes as she faces a major potential setback, with prosecutors seeking an obligatory five-year ban from public office for her alleged role in embezzling EU funds. She denies the allegations. If judges convict Le Pen and uphold the sought sentence, she would be barred from running in the 2027 presidential election which many believe she could win.

### SNIPPETS

#### Khan gets bail in state gifts case, his party says

Islamabad: A court in Pakistan granted bail to jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan in a case relating to the illegal sale of state gifts, his party said Wednesday. Khan, 71, has been in prison since August last year, but it was not immediately clear if the embattled politician would be released given that he faces a number of other cases too, including inciting violence against the state. "If the official order is received today, his family and supporters will approach the authorities for his release," one of his party's lawyers, Salman Safdar, told journalists, adding that, to his knowledge, Khan has been granted bail or acquitted in all the cases he faces. The case in which he was granted bail Wednesday by the Islamabad High Court is known as the Toshakhana, or state treasury case. It has multiple versions and charges that all revolve around allegations that Khan and his wife illegal procured and then sold gifts worth more than 140 million rupees in state possession, which he received during his 2018-2022 premiership.



#### S'pore honours doyenne of Indian dance

Singapore: Singapore's doyenne of Indian dance Uma Rajan was Wednesday honoured by the Indian business community for her contributions to both public healthcare and the arts in the city-state for over 40 years. A pioneering contributor to Public Health, Uma served as Director of the School Health Service and the Elder Care Department at the Ministry of Health and played a pivotal role in shaping school health programmes and child wellness initiatives, noted the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) in honoring the octogenarian here. She was instrumental in introducing the health booklet for students in the 1980s, a groundbreaking initiative that bridged healthcare and education and continues to be a vital tool for parents/schools. Born into a family of doctors and artists in 1940, Uma Rajan grew up surrounded by the arts as a child, and was six years old when she first performed solo public dance performance at Sri Thandayuthapani temple here.



SpaceX's mega rocket Starship lifts off for a test flight from Starbase in Boca Chica, Texas

# Iran offers to cap uranium stock

REUTERS

Vienna, Nov 20: Iran has tried in vain to prevent a Western push for a resolution against it at the UN nuclear watchdog's board meeting by offering to cap its stock of uranium just shy of weapons grade, the watchdog and diplomats said Tuesday.

One of two confidential International Atomic Energy Agency reports to member states, both seen by Reuters, said Iran had offered not to expand its stock of uranium enriched to up to 60%



purity, near the roughly 90% of weapons grade, and had made preparations to do that. The offer is conditional, however, on Western powers abandoning their push for a resolution against Iran at this week's quarterly meeting of the

IAEA's 35-nation Board of Governors over its lack of cooperation with the IAEA, diplomats said, adding that the push was continuing regardless.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi told his French counterpart Jean-Noel Barrot that the push from France, Germany and Britain to submit a resolution against Tehran would "complicate matters" and contradict the "positive atmosphere created between Iran and the IAEA", the Iranian foreign ministry said Wednesday.

# London tops World's Best Cities 2025, India not in the list

The annual rankings produced are an analysis of large urban regions around the world that are leading in aspects most important to attracting workforce, visitors, and businesses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

to make the cut based on the criteria of perception and performance.

The annual rankings produced by Resonance Consultancy in partnership with Ipsos are an analysis of large urban regions around the world that are leading in aspects most important to attracting workforce, visitors, and businesses.

The 2025 report marks a first in incorporating perception-based data by surveying more than 22,000 people in 31 countries for the first time, the results of which also demonstrate that people all over the world still very much aspire to live, visit, and work in the world's largest cities.

"Mumbai and Delhi are just outside of the top 100; those cities in the Asia Pacific context are in the top but at



a global scale don't make the top 100," Chris Fair, President & CEO of Resonance Consultancy, told PTI in response to a question at the launch of the

report in London. "Mumbai and Delhi have some particular strengths, but they have some particular weaknesses from a livability

perspective relative to these other cities and from a livability perspective as well. But in our Asia-Pacific report in February, they are in the top 20," he said.

The World's Best Cities ranking is drawn up on "livability", or the physical sense of a city based on the quality of its natural and built environments; "lovability", or the quality of life in terms of culture, dining and nightlife; and "prosperity", or the human capital of a city and the support it receives to thrive.

The goal is to create the most comprehensive and holistic approach to measuring and benchmarking both perception and performance of the cities.

"London continues to set the bar for what a truly great city should be," said Laura Citron,

CEO of London & Partners, the UK capital's growth agency.

"Our iconic attractions, world-class financial sector, and fast-growing tech industry are proof of our city's strength. But it's the diversity of our people and ideas that drives the innovation, opportunities, and progress that shape our future. No city embodies this quite like London," she said.

After London (UK), New York (US) and Paris (France), Tokyo (Japan), Singapore, Rome (Italy), Madrid (Spain), Barcelona (Spain), Berlin (Germany) and Sydney (Australia) complete the top 10.

While the United States is in the lead with 36 cities in the Top 100, Canada comes in a distant second with six cities and Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro make a mark as new entrants to the 2025 ranking.

# UN authorises first mpox vax for kids

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Geneva, Nov 20: The World Health Organisation has authorised the first mpox vaccine for children, a decision experts hope will help make immunisations more widely available to one of the hardest-hit populations during the ongoing outbreaks of the disease in Congo and elsewhere in Africa.

In a statement late Tuesday, the UN health agency said it had approved the mpox vaccine made by Japanese company KM Biologics for use in children over 1 year of age as a single dose.

Earlier this month, the charity Save the Children said cases among children younger than 18 had increased by more than 130% in Congo, noting there were now more than 25,000 suspect cases.

The charity said children were almost four times more likely than adults to die from the newest form of mpox first detected in eastern Congo earlier this year. Mpox, related to smallpox, mostly causes symptoms including fever, rash, lesions and fatigue.

"Children are especially vulnerable to mpox," Save the Children's Dr Katia Veira de Moraes Lecaes said in a statement. "They explore by touch and taste, don't always understand health guidance and have weaker immune systems than adults."

Scientists have previously noted that mpox appears to be disproportionately affecting children in Congo and Burundi, which account for more than 90% of all mpox cases in Africa's current outbreak.

WHO had previously approved the mpox vaccine made by Bavarian Nordic for people 18 and over, but said the shot could be used in younger populations if doctors thought the benefits might outweigh potential risks, given the lack of data in children and other groups including pregnant women.

Last week, WHO said cases of mpox in the Congolese region where the new, more infectious form was first identified appeared to be "plateauing," even as cases were rising elsewhere, including Burundi and Uganda. So far, about 50,000 people in Congo have been immunised against mpox with the vaccine made by Bavarian Nordic.





**We have been very patient with the steel ministry. We are trying to convince the government to stop the circumvention of Chinese steel coming via the Free Trade Agreement countries into India**  
SAJJAN JINDAL | CHAIRMAN, JSW GROUP

**EPFO NET MEMBER ADDITION RISES**

Retirement fund body EPFO logged 9.33 per cent growth in net member additions in September at 18.81 lakh compared to the year-ago month, showed payroll data released Wednesday. Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) enrolled around 9.47 lakh new members in September 2024, representing an increase of 6.22 per cent over September 2023, the labour ministry said



**of the day quote**

**India's jet fuel pivot to Asia is probably the result of the closure of the arbitrage window to Europe**  
SERENA HUANG | HEAD OF APAC ANALYSIS, VORTEXA

**The new rules put in place pursuant to amendments to the competition provide legal certainty to stakeholders and also aim to ensure an optimal regulatory balance**  
RAVNEET KAUR | CHAIRPERSON, CCI

**So far, 228 projects have been assessed under the initiative worth ₹1,588,919 lakh crore**  
RAJEEV SINGH THAKUR | ADDITIONAL SECRETARY, DPIIT

# Growth outlook looks gloomy

**ECONOMIC GROWTH LIKELY TO HAVE SLOWED IN Q2, FY25 CAPEX MAY UNDERSHOOT BUDGET ESTIMATES, SAYS ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SECRETARY**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 20: India's economic growth may have slowed in the September quarter, but overall there is not much downside risk to 6.5-7 per cent growth projections for the current fiscal year, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said Wednesday.

Seth said there may be some "undershooting" in the ₹11.11 lakh crore capex target set for FY25, but the actual spending would be "significantly" higher than ₹9.5 lakh crore made in FY24.

On inflation, he said food prices have been a concern area. But, other than that, inflation is not a challenge for India. Retail inflation had touched a 14-month high of 6.21 per cent in October with a spike in prices of food items.

"We started the year with estimates in the Economic Survey of 6.5-7 per cent growth. I don't see any significant downside risk to this. The numbers in the second quarter do indicate that some of the products or some of the services may not be at the same level where they were about a year back or even two quarters earlier," Seth said at a Ficci event here.

He, however, added that some other indicators, especially e-way bills or e-invoices in October, do not show any signs of slack in activity.

"That does not indicate that there is any significant possibility of any downside risk from 6.5-7 per cent goal that has been estimated at the beginning of the year," Seth said.

The Indian economy grew 6.7 per cent year-on-year in the April-June period of FY25. Although this marks the slowest growth in five quarters, India ranks among the fastest-growing major economies globally.



On capex spending, Seth said while some sectors are a bit slow, additional demands coming up in a few others. Capex has been slow on account of national elections that took place in the

first quarter of current fiscal. In the first half (April-September) of FY25, the government has spent 37.3 per cent of its budgeted target of ₹11.11 lakh crore, compared with 49



per cent of the previous year's target.

"This year capex was budgeted at ₹11.11 lakh crore and there may be some undershooting, but I do expect that will be a significant increase over last year. Even last year, it was budgeted for ₹10 lakh crore, but expenditure was about 95 per cent. I see even this year we should be around the same percentage," Seth added.

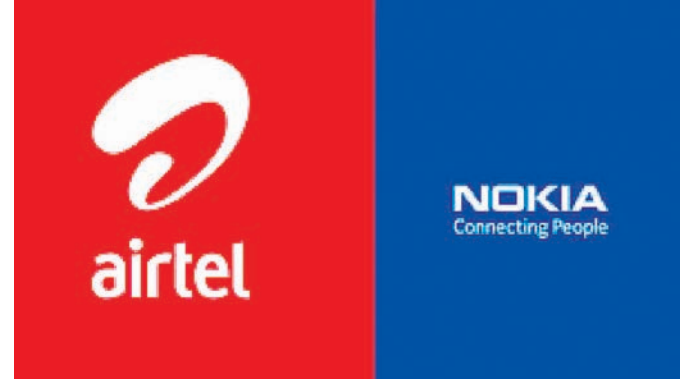
## GDP GROWTH LIKELY TO SLIP AT 6.5%: ICRA

MUMBAI: Domestic rating agency IcrA Wednesday said India's real GDP growth for the September quarter is likely to decline to 6.5 per cent due to heavy rains and weaker corporate performance. The agency, however, maintained its FY25 growth estimate at 7 per cent on expectations of a pick-up in economic activity in the second half of the fiscal. The estimates and commentary on the outlook come at a time when there are concerns around the growth slowdown on a slew of factors like slowing down urban demand. The RBI is sticking to its estimate of 7.2 per cent growth for the fiscal, but a majority of watchers expect it to be under the 7 per cent figure and many have been revising down in the last few weeks. Official data for the Q2 economic activity is expected to be published November 30. In Q1, the GDP expansion had come at 6.7 per cent. IcrA said the dip in Q2 will be due to factors like heavy rains and weak corporate margins. "While government spending and kharif sowing have shown positive trends, the industrial sector, particularly mining and electricity, is expected to slow down," it said. The services sector is projected to improve, and a back-ended recovery is anticipated, leading to a full-year GDP growth of 7 per cent, it added. "Q2 FY2025 saw tailwinds in terms of a pick-up in capex after the Parliamentary Elections as well as healthy expansion in sowing of major kharif crops. Several sectors faced headwinds on account of heavy rainfall, which affected mining activity, electricity demand and retail footfalls, and a contraction in merchandise exports," its chief economist Aditi Nayar said. She said benefits of the healthy monsoons lie ahead, with upbeat kharif output and replenished reservoirs likely to lead to a sustained improvement in rural sentiment. There is considerable headroom for the GoF's capital expenditure, which needs to expand by 52 per cent in Y-o-Y terms in H2 FY2025 to meet the budget estimate for the full year, Nayar added.



# Airtel partners Nokia for 4G, 5G expansion

Nokia has collaborated with Airtel for over two decades providing 2G, 3G, 4G, and 5G network equipment



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 20: Finnish telecom gear supplier Nokia has won a multi-year, multi-billion deal from Bharti Airtel to deploy 4G and 5G equipment across key Indian cities and states, a release said Wednesday.

According to the contract, Nokia will deploy equipment from its 5G AirScale portfolio, including base stations, baseband units and the latest generation of Massive MIMO radios, all powered by its energy-efficient 'ReefShark System-on-Chip technology'.

"Nokia has been awarded a multi-year, multi-billion extension deal by Bharti Airtel to deploy 4G and 5G equipment across key Indian cities and states," the release said.

These solutions will enhance Airtel's network with exceptional 5G capacity and coverage and support its network evolution. Nokia will also modernise Airtel's existing 4G network with multiband radios and baseband equipment, which can also support 5G.

Gopal Vittal, Vice Chairman and MD of Bharti Airtel said, "This strategic partnership with Nokia will future-proof our network infrastructure

and provide customers with unparalleled user experience along with a network that will be eco-friendly to minimise environmental impact."

Pekka Lundmark, President and CEO of Nokia, said the strategic agreement further solidifies the company's footprint in India, as well as its long-standing collaboration with Airtel.

"This strategic agreement further solidifies our long-standing collaboration with Airtel and our footprint in India. Our industry-leading AirScale portfolio and AI-based services will enhance the energy efficiency of Airtel's network, enabling premium 5G capacity and connectivity with the highest quality of service for subscribers," Lundmark said.

Nokia has collaborated with Airtel for over two decades, providing 2G, 3G, 4G, and 5G network equipment.

"Their partnership has recently reached new heights with the launch of the Green 5G initiative, aimed at improving the energy efficiency of Airtel's network and reducing carbon emissions, in line with the company's ambitious emission reduction targets," the release added.

**RESULTS CORNER**

**Parle Agro revenue down, profit dips**

New Delhi: Parle Agro, which operates in the beverage market with brands such as Frooti, Aппy, SMOOTH and Bailey, has reported a 12.3 per cent decline in its consolidated revenue to ₹3,126.06 crore for FY24, according to a RoC filing from the company. Its total profit plummeted 89.1 per cent to ₹17.29 crore for the financial year ended March 31, 2024, according to financial data accessed through the business intelligence platform Tofler. Parle Agro Pvt Ltd, an unlisted entity which operates in the Indian beverage industry, posted revenue from operations of ₹3,565.96 crore and a profit of ₹158.78 crore in FY23.

**Apple net profit up, revenue rises**

New Delhi: iPhone maker Apple India posted a 23 per cent increase in net profit to ₹2,745.7 crore in the financial year 2023-24, according to the company's regulatory filing shared by Tofler. Apple India had posted a net profit of ₹2,229.6 crore in FY23. The company posted a 36 per cent increase in total income to ₹67,121.6 crore in FY24 from ₹49,321.8 crore in FY23. "Apple India Private Limited, provides and markets Apple brand products and software, including mobile devices and laptops, reported its revenues for the financial year 2023-24 as ₹67,122 crore, a 36 per cent jump since the last financial year. The company's total expenses for the fiscal were reported as ₹63,397 crore," Tofler said.

**BIZ BUZZ**



**Punjab National Bank ED visits Odisha**

BHUBANESWAR: Punjab National Bank (PNB), Executive Director Bibhu Prasad Mahapatra visited Odisha recently. On this occasion, he inaugurated a stall of PNB at Bali Yatra Ground in Cuttack. Mahapatra visited Hotel Mayfair and addressed the staffers. The officials present were Rajesh Kumar, Zonal Manager, Kshetrabasi Mishra, Deputy Zonal Manager, heads of all five circles, heads of various verticals, local branch heads of 19 CM headed branches' officials from Zonal Office. He emphasised on various aspects to improve performance of the bank in Odisha. He encouraged officials to focus on labour intensive sectors which employ skilled and semi-skilled manpower. He also emphasised to prioritise the focus areas like credit and CASA growth of the bank with the help of upgraded technology and products. He conveyed all to work as a team and to extend bank's special OTS schemes to all eligible borrowers to reduce the NPA percentage of the bank. As a part of CSR programme, Mahapatra donated an ambulance in presence of Dr Achyuta Samanta. Samanta also went through memory lane where he emphasised upon PNB's contribution in his growth in the initial phase of his professional life. He reviewed performance of all circles, business verticals and selected branches. He highlighted the bank's scope in the state in number of sectors, MSME, real estate in particular. He met customers who have defaulted in their loan taken from bank due to various compelling factors, devised resolution plan for their recovery from current situation. He also met HNI customers from all over the state and appreciated all for their continuous patronage.

# Gold prices ease from week high as dollar gains strength

Bullion hits highest level since November 11

REUTERS

Mumbai, Nov 20: Gold prices eased from a one-week high Wednesday as the dollar strengthened, though safe-haven demand linked to Russia-Ukraine tensions helped cap further losses.

Spot gold was down 0.2% at \$2,627.60 per ounce, after hitting its highest level since November 11 earlier in the session. USgold futures were steady at \$2,631.30.

The US dollar rebounded after hitting a one-week low. A stronger US currency makes bullion more expensive for



overseas buyers.

The current decline in gold can be attributed to profit-taking and a stronger dollar, but developments in the Russia-Ukraine situation are crucial and should be closely observed, said Zain Vawda, market analyst at MarketPulse by OANDA.

Russian President Vladimir Putin lowered the threshold for a nuclear strike in response to

a broader range of conventional attacks, days after reports said Washington had allowed Ukraine to use US-made weapons to strike deep into Russia.

Meanwhile, several Federal Reserve officials are expected to speak this week, which could provide insights into the future path of interest rates. Traders see a 59.1% chance of a 25-basis-point cut in December and a 40.9% chance of rates being held steady.

"A December pause in Fed rate cuts could subdue the gold price, in the short term, but the easing monetary cycle, macro-economic and geopolitical uncertainty, and healthy physical demand will maintain positive gold market sentiment," ANZ said in a note.

# ANI sues OpenAI for unsanctioned use of content in AI training

REUTERS

New Delhi, Nov 20: News agency ANI has sued OpenAI in a New Delhi court, accusing the ChatGPT creator of using its published content without permission to help train the artificial intelligence chatbot, something that OpenAI says it has stopped doing.

ANI is the latest news organisation globally to take OpenAI to court following lawsuits in the US by newspapers including the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune.

The first hearing in the case took place in the New Delhi High Court Tuesday, where the judge issued a notice to OpenAI to provide a detailed response to ANI's accusations.

In a statement, ANI said "the court is required to decide the legitimacy of the use of publicly available proprietary content by AI platforms."

ANI also accused OpenAI's ChatGPT of attributing fabricated news stories to the publication, according to its court submission dated Monday, a copy of which was reviewed by Reuters.

The court filing contained emails sent by OpenAI's lawyers in India to ANI saying the Indian news agency's website had been placed on an internal block list since September, ceasing usage of its content in future training of AI models.

ANI, however, argues that its published works are "permanently stored in the memory of ChatGPT" and "there is no programmed deletion".

Asked about the ANI lawsuit, a spokesperson for OpenAI said in a statement: "We build our AI models using publicly available data, in a manner protected by fair use and related principles, and supported by long-standing and widely accepted legal precedents".

# Skills shortage hobbles India's clean energy aspirations

Industry snags cast doubts about ambitious manufacturing drive, seeks more govt support and warns of missing clean energy goal

REUTERS

New Delhi, Nov 20: India's ambitious plan to expand domestic manufacturing is coming up short in the solar industry which is grappling with inadequate government funding and a skills shortage, potentially jeopardising its clean energy targets, industry leaders said.

The hurdles faced by manufacturers of solar panels, cells and storage batteries are raising costs and delaying projects, threatening India's ability to reduce its carbon footprint and meet international climate

commitments, they said. It also throws into sharp relief the challenges facing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Make in India" programme, which seeks to bolster 15 sectors, including renewable energy and electronics, in an effort to turn the South Asian nation into a global manufacturing hub.

Modi's government has imposed 40% tariffs on Chinese solar panels and 25% on cells, allocating about \$3 billion in production-linked incentives for local manufacturers as part of a plan for net zero carbon emissions by 2070.

However, industry executives say India - the world's third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases - must significantly step up funding and training programmes in the renewables



**SKILLS SHORTAGE HITS FIRMS' EXPANSION PLANS, RAISES COSTS**  
**RENEWABLE INDUSTRY FACES SKILL GAP OF 1.7MN BY 2027**  
**INDIA AIMS TO ADD 500 GW RENEWABLE CAPACITY BY 2030**

sector to meet its goal of expanding non-fossil fuel capacity by 50 GW annually to 500 GW by 2030.

They caution that the absence of stronger government action could also thwart its broader manufacturing drive that has seen it plough nearly \$24 billion in state incentives over a five-year period, with

another roughly 20 billion rupees set aside annually for upskilling and training.

A shortage of skilled manpower is a major problem, said Dwipen Boruah, managing director of renewables consultancy firm GSES India, which has trained over 7,000 people in renewable technologies and wants the government to substantially lift subsidies for education and

**The skill gap spans all levels of industry especially in emerging technologies like cell manufacturing, battery storage, and advanced grid integration. Industry is facing near 20% attrition of talented workers annually, posing a risk to production plans**

ASHWANI SEHGAL | PRESIDENT, INDIAN SOLAR MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

training in the sector.

"Hundreds of private institutes exploit these subsidies but offer subpar training," he said, adding that small subsidies - often just a few thousand rupees per student - hinder effective education.

Boruah and other industry executives note that while India produces over a million engineering graduates annually, traditional colleges are not equipped to teach solar, wind and other renewable



# EVES RECLAIM ACT CROWN

China Masters: Lakshya, Sindhu, Satwik-Chirag win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shenzhen, Nov 20: PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen progressed to the women's and men's singles second round respectively after comfortable victories while the doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty notched a hard-fought win in their first match after the Paris Olympics at the China Masters Super 750 badminton tournament here Wednesday.

In-form Malvika Bansod ranked 36th in the world, also registered an upset, defeating Denmark's world No 21 Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt 20-22, 23-21, 21-16 to advance to the second round.

World No 19 Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, dispatched the higher-ranked Busanan Ongbamrunphan 21-17, 21-19 in 50 minutes, notching up her 20th win in 21 meetings with the Thai shuttler.

The 29-year-old from Hyderabad will next face Singapore's Yeo Jia Min, while Malvika will meet eighth-seeded Supanida Katethong.

Returning to action after a break following the Paris Olympics, defending champions Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty beat Chinese Taipei's Lee Jhe-Huei and Yang Po-Hsuan 12-21, 21-19, 21-18 in a gruelling opening-round match that lasted one hour and six minutes.

The Asian Games gold medallist Indian duo will meet the Danish pair of Rasmus Kjaer and Frederik Sogard in the pre-quarterfinals.

In the women's doubles, the Indian pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand also sailed into the second round with a 21-15, 21-14 win over Chinese Taipei's Hu Ling Fang and Jheng Yu Chieh to almost seal their spot for the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals.

## It was India's third ACT triumph after winning the top honours in 2016 and 2023

failed to find the net even once. In the 23rd minute, it was India's turn to concede another penalty corner but the first rusher defended bravely to deny the Chinese.

Minutes later, skipper Salima Tete created a fine ball for Sharmila Devi whose first time hit to the near post went wide as the deadlock continued at half-time.

India kept up the pressure on the Chinese defence and secured their fifth penalty corner with the first move after the change of ends.

Deepika this time finally found the net with a reverse hit after building on from a miss-trap push.

In the 42nd minute Deepika had a bright chance to increase her tally when she earned a penalty stroke for a deliberate push inside the circle.

But Chinese goalkeeper Li Ting pulled off a stunning reflex save to deny the star Indian striker.

Minutes later, Ting once again came to China's rescue as she saved Sushila Channu's shot from India's sixth penalty corner.

Trailing by just a solitary goal, the Chinese employed high-pressure hockey thereafter and also managed to breach inside the Indian circle on a few occasions but the home team's defence didn't break.



Rajgir, Nov 20: Young striker Deepika turned out to be the star once again with a fine reverse hit goal as India retained their women's Asian Champions Trophy title after edging past Olympic silver medallist China 1-0 in a pulsating final here Wednesday.

Deepika scored the winner for India from a penalty corner in the 31st minute to finish as the tournament's highest goal getter with 11 strikes.

India had earlier stunned China 3-0 in the league stages of the tournament.

It was India's third ACT title after winning the top honours in 2016 and 2023.

The Indian team is now the most successful side in the tournament's history alongside South Korea with three titles each.

China, on the other hand, will have to settle for their third runner-up finish.

Japan finished third on the podium after defeating Malaysia 4-1 in the third-fourth place classification match earlier in the day.

It was neck and neck fight between the two sides throughout the contest. Both India and China made many promising circle penetrations but the backline of both the sides was rock solid in the first two quarters.

The 17-year-old Sunelita Toppo was brilliant with her dribbling skills and defence splitting runs from both flanks for India.

Three minutes into the

second quarter, China secured the first penalty corner of the match but India's second goalkeeper Bichu Devi Kharibam made a terrific diving save to

keep out Jinzhuang Tan. In the next two minutes the Indians earned as many as four penalty corners but as has been the case in the tournament so far, they failed to utilise a single with Deepika taking most of the chances.

Penalty corner conversion has been a concern for India in the tournament as in the semifinal against Japan they managed 13 set pieces, but

## Bihar announces ₹10L award

The Bihar government has decided to award ₹10 lakh to each and every playing member of the Indian women's hockey team that won the Asian Champions Trophy here Wednesday, beating reigning Olympic medallist China 1-0 in the final. "Each player in the squad will receive ₹10 lakh in recognition of their outstanding performance at the Rajgir Hockey Stadium during the course of the tournament," a press release stated. Even chief coach Harendra Singh and his support staff will be handsomely rewarded by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's government. "In addition to this, chief coach Harendra Singh was rewarded with ₹10 lakh, while the rest of the support staff received ₹5 lakh each." Top tier hockey returned to Bihar after many years and all of Indian women's team matches were held in front of a packed house.



Deepika stars with solitary goal, India retain women's ACT hockey title with win over China

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## Border Gavaskar Trophy: India not ruling out Gill

REUTERS

Perth, Nov 20: India will give Shubman Gill every chance to prove his fitness to start the opening test against Australia at Perth Stadium with the batsman showing improvement after fracturing his left thumb, bowling coach Morne Morkel said Wednesday.

Gill, 25, sustained the injury while fielding at slip last week as India were gearing up for the match, which starts Friday, with squad sessions instead of a tour game against a local side.

"Shubman is improving every day. Obviously he picked up a nasty blow in that intra-squad warm-up game. I think with him it's going to be a day-to-day process," Morkel told reporters.

"Fingers crossed for that improvement. We'll wait to take a call on him up until the morning of the test match."

With skipper Rohit Sharma set to miss the match following the birth of his second child, Gill's absence could heap more pressure on India's less experienced batsmen on fiery Australian pitches but Morkel backed



It's going to be great learning for these young guys, who can front up against a quality test bowling attack. Australia aren't going to bowl you many bad balls

MORNE MORKEL | BOWLING COACH, INDIA

them to rise to the occasion.

"It's going to be great learning for these young guys, who can front up against a quality test bowling attack. Australia

aren't going to bowl you many bad balls," Morkel said.

"But in saying that there's good leadership within the group that can help and settle the nerves with that. As a group, we're all excited for the challenge."

Seamer Mohammed Shami is not part of the squad for the five-match series having only returned to action this month after suffering an ankle injury at last year's 50-overs World Cup and a knee issue during his recovery.

## Hardik reclaims top spot, Tilak shines in T20 all-rounders' list

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Nov 20: Star India player Hardik Pandya Wednesday re-claimed the top spot in the T20I all-rounders' list while rising star and teammate Tilak Varma made a massive jump of 69 rungs to occupy the third place among batters in the latest ICC men's player rankings.

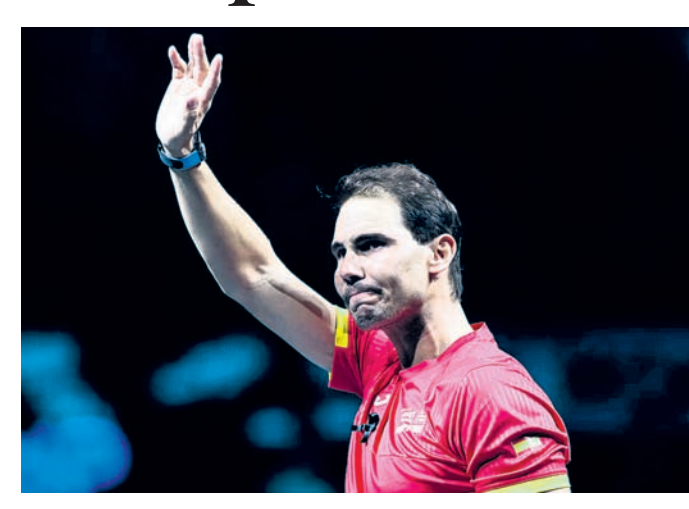
Pandya overtook England dasher Liam Livingstone and Nepal dynamo Dipendra Singh Airee at the top of the T20I all-rounder charts on the back of some strong form during India's recent series in South Africa, with the 31-year-old producing some eye-catching efforts with both bat and ball.

His innings of 39 not out in the second game of the four-match series helped balance India's innings, while his spell of 1/8 from three overs during the decisive fourth contest ensured his side claim an impressive 3-1 series triumph.

It is the second time Pandya has held the No 1 ranking for T20I all-rounders, with the consistent India performer first rising to the top at the end of this year's ICC men's T20 World Cup.

## KING OF CLAY

# Rafa bids adieu with painful loss



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Malaga, Nov 20: Rafael Nadal's last match as a professional was a 6-4, 6-4 loss to No. 80 Botić van de Zandschulp in the Davis Cup as Spain was eliminated by the Netherlands.

Spain lost 2-1 in the quarterfinals of the team event that marked the last tournament for Nadal after more than 20 years on tour and 22 Grand Slam titles.

The crowd yelled "Rafa, Rafa, Rafa" when it was all over, and a special ceremony took place at center court to celebrate his career. After speaking to the fans, he cried while a video with his career highlights was shown.

"The truth is that nobody ever wants to arrive at this moment," Nadal said. "I'm not tired of playing tennis, but it's my body that doesn't want to play anymore, so I have to accept the situation. Honestly, I feel super privileged for having been able to make a career out of my hobby, and for having played for much longer than I could ever have imagined. I can only be grateful to life and to all the people that I have here behind me."

After the ceremony was over, Nadal hugged his teammates and left the court while waving both arms and saluting the crowd one last time.

"I'll speak in the name of Spanish tennis and in the name of the tennis world," Spain captain David Ferrer

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RAFAEL NADAL | TENNIS GREAT

said moments earlier. "You know very well what you have meant to the tennis world. We will miss you a lot. The 'Vamos, Rafa' chant will always be part of history."

Carlos Alcaraz had extended Nadal's career for a little longer by defeating No 40 Tallon Griekspoor 7-6 (0), 6-3 in the second singles match, but Alcaraz and Marcel Granollers then lost the decisive doubles 7-6 (4) 7-6 (3) to van de Zandschulp and Wesley Koolhof.

The Dutch will play in Friday's semifinals against either Germany or Canada, which meet Wednesday. The Netherlands hadn't played in the semifinals since 2001.

Nadal was used to winning in the Davis Cup, earning 29 singles victories in a row in the tournament. He helped Spain win the Davis Cup in 2004, 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2019.

"It's in some ways good, maybe, if that was my last match," Nadal said. "I lost my first match in the Davis Cup, and I lost my last one. So we close the circle."

## Ray of hope for football's 'worst' national team

Ranked 210 by FIFA, San Marino rise toward 2026 World Cup chance after Nations League group win

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Geneva, Nov 20: The official worst national team in men's soccer is within sight of entering qualifying playoffs for the 2026 World Cup in North America.

San Marino's stunning progress this year, as the team ranked No 210 by FIFA, was capped Monday by a 3-1 win over Liechtenstein that sealed winning a UEFA Nations League group.

It was San Marino's second victory over Liechtenstein — the first in September ended a 20-year winless run in all games for a team whose all-time record in World Cup qualifiers is zero wins, two draws and 76 losses across more than three decades.

"I even cried among the boys, I hugged the captain and it was an incredible thing," San Mari-



no soccer federation president Marco Tura said after Monday's game that set several firsts for the landlocked microstate in Italy with a population of fewer than 35,000.

Now, the door to the next World Cup is ever-so-slightly open because UEFA tweaked

in March 2026.

San Marino being just two games away from the tournament in the United States, Canada and Mexico is still the stuff of dreams but winning its Nations League group was real, as was the congratulations posted Tuesday by FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

The game in Liechtenstein was the last fixture in a three-team, round-robin group of minnows also including Gibraltar, which had topped the standings before kickoff in Vaduz.

San Marino trailed 1-0 at half-time, not a good sign for a team that had never rallied to win a game since starting to play international soccer 34 years ago.

Then goals started to flow for coach Roberto Cevoli's team: Lorenzo Lazzari racing clear to

beat the advancing goalkeeper in the 46th minute, Nicola Nanni's penalty in the 66th and substitute Alessandro Golinucci's calmly placed shot in the 76th.

"They have shown incredible values, going behind, coming back," Lura said. "It's the first time we win a match by coming from behind, it is the first time we score more than one goal in a (competitive) match, it's the first time we get to the next stage, I think there's little left to say."

A bigger story could yet be told.

Winning the group promoted San Marino to the Nations League third tier that starts in September 2026 after the next World Cup, where Europe will send 16 entries in the first 48-team tournament.