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SHORT TAKES

NATO intercepts Russian jets in Estonian airspace

**Vilnius:** Three Russian warplanes that violated Estonian airspace have been intercepted by NATO, the military alliance has said. Estonia's foreign ministry condemned the incursion as 'brazen.' It said three Russian MiG-31 fighter jets entered the airspace of a NATO member "without permission and remained there for a total of 12 minutes" Friday over the Gulf of Finland. NATO spokesperson Allison Hart said the military alliance "responded immediately and intercepted the Russian aircraft," calling it "yet another example of reckless Russian behaviour and NATO's ability to respond." Estonian Prime Minister Kristen Michal later said his government had "decided to request NATO Article 4 consultations." "Russia has violated Estonian airspace four times already this year, which is unacceptable in itself, but today's violation, during which three fighter jets entered our airspace, is unprecedentedly brazen," said Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna.

P10

Zubeen Garg dies while scuba diving

**Guwahati:** Popular singer from Assam and youth heartthrob Zubeen Garg died while scuba diving in Singapore Friday, organisers of a festival in the Southeast Asian country said. He was 52, and is survived by his wife. Garg sustained injuries during scuba diving, and was rushed to a hospital, where he died in the intensive care unit while undergoing treatment. He had gone to Singapore to participate in the three-day North East Festival, which was scheduled to begin Friday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the death of the popular singer. "Shocked by the sudden demise of popular singer Zubeen Garg. He will be remembered for his rich contribution to music," the PM posted on 'X'.

P2

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

The most advanced phone in saffron colour!! Are you sure it won't delete voters automatically?

2,164 lecturer posts vacant in govt varsities, colleges

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 19:** A total of 2,164 lecturer posts have been lying vacant in government universities and colleges across the state. As many as 1,404 out of 2,073 sanctioned lecturer posts across various departments are lying vacant in 17 government universities, Higher Education Minister Suryavansi Suraj informed the Assembly Friday. In a written reply to a question from BJD MLA Arun Kumar Sahu, the minister said 2,286 non-teaching staff posts out of 3,174 sanctioned posts are also lying vacant in these universities. He said steps are being taken by the universities to fill up the lecturer posts, while the State

TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION: A damaged house at an affected area following cloudburst and heavy rains in Dehradun district, Friday

PTI PHOTO

Road mishaps kill 5K yearly

*Odisha has witnessed a worrying rise in road accident deaths in recent years, making road safety a major concern for the state. According to official data, 27,167 people lost their lives in road mishaps over the last five years, with speeding, reckless driving, poor road conditions, and violation of traffic rules being the leading causes. Vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and two-wheeler riders form a significant share of the victims. Despite government efforts like awareness campaigns and stricter enforcement of traffic laws, the number of fatalities remains high, highlighting the urgent need for stronger measures and public cooperation to reduce these preventable tragedies*

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 19:** As many as 27,167 persons were killed in road accidents in the state over the last five years, at an annual average of 5,433 deaths, while 50,041 persons were injured during the same period, Commerce and Transport Min-

ister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena told the Odisha Assembly, Friday. The Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety is monitoring road safety activities in the state on a regular basis. "Road safety is a high-priority area for the government, and we are taking a number of initiatives to reduce accidents," the

minister said in a written reply. The year 2024, with 6,142 deaths, recorded the highest number of fatalities due to road accidents.

The government has taken a series of measures to curb drunken driving, unfit vehicles, driving without a license, and to improve traffic manage-

ment, the minister added.

The rising fatality graph has become a cause of grave concern, especially given the Supreme Court's earlier directive to states and Union territories to reduce road fatalities by 10 per cent annually.

The road safety committees constituted across the country had also directed states to reduce fatalities by 50 per cent by 2020, taking the year 2014 as the base year.

To reduce the rate of road accidents, the state government has launched a series of multi-layered initiatives. These include community-level dialogues under the banner of "Cha Au Charcha" near accident-prone zones, training of Sahayaks and Raahveers as first responders, awareness sessions for schoolchildren to nurture them as future safe drivers, specialised training for drivers in mining and industrial areas, and public messaging through All India Radio programmes, among other activities designed to promote road safety awareness at scale, said an official from the Commerce and Transport department.

Man beheads wife suspecting infidelity

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, Sept 19:** A man beheaded his wife over the suspicion of infidelity at Chakuapal village under Raibania police limits in Balasure district, police said Friday.

According to police, the accused Chandramohan Patra had been married to Jayanti from Tentula village for nearly 29 years. Jayanti had a daughter from her previous marriage, and the couple later had three daughters and a son together. According to reports, Chandramohan had grown increasingly distrustful of his wife, leading to frequent disputes within the household.

On Thursday night, while Jayanti was asleep, Chandramohan beheaded her with a sharp-edged weapon. The matter came to light when their eldest daughter, Samita, was unable to reach her mother by phone. Upon returning home, she found her mother's body and immediately raised an alarm.

Chandramohan went to the Raibania police station and

surrendered Friday morning. Following the incident, Jaleswar sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) Subrata Behera, Raibania police officer-in-charge Lopamudra Panda and a three-member forensic team reached the spot to begin an investigation. The police registered a case (84/25), seized the body, and sent it to the district headquarters hospital for post-mortem.

Chandramohan is being interrogated in connection with the murder. Villagers said he had earlier attempted to kill his father about 10 years ago.

This tragic event has once again highlighted the urgent need to address domestic violence, mental health concerns, and gender-based crimes in the state, especially in rural areas.

How MI6 is using dark web to recruit spies worldwide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Sept 19:** A dark web portal launched Friday will recruit spies from around the world for Britain using MI6's new secure messaging platform named 'Silent Courier.'

The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said the target is to recruit agents in Russia as well as other geographies by harnessing the anonymity of the dark web for the first time.

Instructions on how to access the portal will be publicly available on MI6's verified YouTube channel as the UK proactively reaches out to potential new agents in different parts of the world.

"As the world changes, and the threats we're facing multi-

ply, we must ensure the UK is always one step ahead of our adversaries," said Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper.

"Our world-class intelligence agencies are at the coalface of this challenge, working behind the scenes to keep British people safe. Now we're bolstering their efforts with cutting-edge tech so MI6 can recruit new spies for the UK - in Russia and around the world," she said.

The Silent Courier platform will enable anyone, anywhere in the world with access to sensitive information relating to terrorism or hostile intelligence activity to securely contact the UK and offer their services.

MI6 has advised individuals accessing the new dark web portal to use trustworthy virtual private networks (VPNs)

and devices not linked to themselves, to mitigate risks which may exist in some regions.

The Secret Intelligence Service, commonly known as MI6, is the UK's foreign intelligence service made popular in Ian Fleming's James Bond novels

and the related Hollywood film franchise.

The FCDO said the new move to the dark web reflects a "generational uplift" in defence spending to enable the intelligence community to carry out its national security goals,

defending the British way of life, keeping people safe and effectively competing with adversaries.

The announcement was made by the outgoing Chief of MI6, Sir Richard Moore, in Istanbul. He said the UK's intelligence services are "critical to calibrating risk and informing decisions" in navigating threats from hostile actors - making platforms such as Silent Courier even more important in keeping the country safe.

"Today we're asking those with sensitive information on global instability, international terrorism or hostile state intelligence activity to contact MI6 securely online. Our virtual door is open to you," said the outgoing MI6 chief, commonly referred to as 'C'.



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST



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**ARIES**

You are enthusiastic about mixing with people today, and you will feel like combining business and leisure. You will be encouraged to take part in group activities as you have the ability to work and have fun at the same time. Ganesha says that as a matter of fact you may emerge wiser from others' ideas.

**TAURUS**

This day you will be prone to be stubborn and uncompromising in your business and professional dealings and thereby inviting unnecessary problems. Ganesha urges you to guard against this tendency and conduct yourself cordially and amiably with your colleagues and clients.

**GEMINI**

You need to break free from the shackles of your daily routine. Trying to finish all your tasks as per your schedule will give rise to unnecessary worry. To manage your time creatively is the best way to beat the stress. Talking to your elders is a good way to calm your shot nerves, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**

You will be involved in a team effort and associated with work like inspection and examination. You will base your opinions on your friends' choices. So select good friends, says Ganesha. You will spend time with close circle.

**LEO**

Your decisions today will be not only be correct, but also resolute and steadfast. Your health will be fine. At the work-place, things ought to proceed as usual. However, you will concentrate more on work today. In personal relationships, some minor arguments could crop up.

**VIRGO**

An unusual dose of creativity will motivate you to make a trip to some exotic place and mingle with new people. You will have some experiences that will enrich you mentally and emotionally. But don't unpack yet, there may be another adventure on the cards.

**LIBRA**

Ganesha says you will be getting good news from abroad, which will make you happy. Those of you who are searching for jobs will get good news coming your way. Ganesha says that you should not expect too much or you would feel dejected and disappointed when it is not met.

**SCORPIO**

Today, you are like a balloon that may burst any time. You may vent out all the sweet and bitter experiences and feel much lighter. Or it may have adverse effects on your health, says Ganesha. You prefer to stay in your cocoon, in the warmth of your near and dear ones.

**SAGITTARIUS**

Determined and dedicated, that's what you are when it comes to work. Well, this may even find you amidst heaps of files and loads of work. No wonder you become a workaholic. You are likely to enjoy during the latter half of the day. Have a fun-filled evening!

**CAPRICORN**

You firmly believe in the concept of 'health is wealth'. You have maintained a very good health so far and it will not be an issue today, also. Successful completion of current projects seem to be a distant target, however, you will finish them off. Your boss may get upset with you for not completing the work on time.

**AQUARIUS**

You are close to you family, and now is the time to enjoy the company of your loved ones at home. You will take them out for shopping, go with them on picnics and pamper them in every possible way, says Ganesha. Not that you made them feel special with a selfish motive, but your show of affection will work wonders for you.

**PISCES**

Ganesha asks you not to undertake any new project or business venture due to the alignment of the planets being unfavorable. You will do well in tasks that do not require too much creativity and innovation. Do not take sides when you are not required to and it make have heavy consequences in future.



## REESE WITHERSPOON ON LOSING GONE GIRL ROLE

Reese Witherspoon reflected on her departure from the 2014 thriller *Gone Girl*. Initially attached to play Amy Elliott Dunne with Gillian Flynn's support, she was ultimately turned down by director David Fincher, who felt she wasn't right for the role. Rosamund Pike replaced her, and Witherspoon called it an 'ego check.'

## DEMI LOVATO SAYS QUEER SPACES FEELS 'SAFE' TO HER

Demi Lovato shared why queer spaces feel safer to her. Speaking to *PAPER* magazine, the 33-year-old singer said she enjoys dancing and going out with friends in queer clubs, where she feels secure and welcomed, unlike straight clubs, which she finds less safe and more dangerous.



## Things are changing for the better: Saba

**Mumbai:** Actress-singer Saba Azad feels happy by the growing shift in the entertainment industry towards more inclusive and gender-sensitive storytelling.

Sharing her thoughts on the evolving landscape for women in film and OTT content, Saba, who has been known for her eclectic choices both as an actor and a musician, told this news agency: "I think things are changing for the better and I'm happy to be a part of the change."

She added: "Decision makers are seeing women as a sizeable percentage of the audience and finally telling stories that are relevant to the female population. We still have a long way to go but it's a start."

Saba's latest *Bandar* (Monkey In A Cage) was showcased at the Special Presentations section at the 50th edition of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). *Bandar*, which explores power, trauma and memory, revolves around the story of a superstar accused of rape, highlighting the injustices within the legal system.

Produced by Nikhil Dwivedi and directed

by Anurag Kashyap, *Bandar* also features Bobby Deol, Sanya Malhotra, and Sapna Pabbi in key roles.

She was recently seen in *Songs of Paradise*, which is an ode to Raj Begum's inspiring music and journey that is complemented by the soulful composition of Abhay Sopori and vocals of Masrat Un Nissa that enlivens the rich musical legacy and the captivating backdrop of the valley.

IANS



# Ananya claps back at trolls

**Mumbai:** Ananya Panday recently turned heads at the premiere of *Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood* with her striking appearance, sparking a mix of admiration and criticism online. The actress wore a white embellished outfit and confidently flaunted her tanned look while posing for the paparazzi. While many fans praised her bold style, some social media users weren't as kind. A few criticised her bronzed appearance, calling it uneven, with one comment reading, "Fake tan gone wrong, at least do it evenly," while another pointed out, "Face and body tan colour doesn't match." Others poked fun with remarks like, "The summer I used all the bronzer."

Ananya, however, responded gracefully through her Instagram Stories, sharing a video with the caption, "I'm a fan of the tan," accompanied by a laughing emoji. Support also poured in from fans who applauded her confidence, with comments like, "Love how she's flaunting her tan" and "She's a beauty for real."

On Instagram, Ananya posted a video from the event, writing, "Why does it feel so good to be bad... shining away for the #TheBadsOfBollywood." Her best friend Shanaya Kapoor reacted with heart emojis.

Professionally, Ananya will next be seen opposite Kartik Aaryan in *Tu*

*Meri Main Tera, Main Tera Tu Meri*, releasing December 31 under Dharma Productions.

AGENCIES



## Musical icon who gave voice to varied genres

**Guwahati:** Strumming the guitar and belting out one song after another in his inimitable style, Assam's Zubeen Garg had mesmerised youth and elders alike for nearly three decades with his songs and films, which had a universal appeal.

Singer, music composer, film director, and actor Zubeen is credited with singing in over 40 languages and dialects. Still, it was the song *Ya Ali* from the movie *Gangster* that brought him fame across the country and earned him the best playback singer at the Global Indian Film Awards (GIFA) in 2006.

The 52-year-old singer, who began singing from the age of

three, was an icon for several generations of children and youth who grew up singing or humming his songs.

Be it popular Assamese or western, folk or classical-based songs, Garg gave voice to varied genres of music and excelled in all, with most later-year singers emulating his style of music and singing.

Garg began his professional music career with his debut Assamese album *Anamika*, which was released in November 1992 and still remains on the popularity charts.

His first album of Bihu songs *Ujan Pirit* was released before he moved to Mumbai in 1995, which went on to become a resounding

commercial success.

The Bollywood music industry beckoned him in the mid-1990s, where he debuted with his first Indipop solo album *Chandni Raat*.

Garg was, however, soon disenchanted with Bollywood, returning to Assam to climb the height of popularity with his numerous songs and he went to compose music for 38 Assamese, four Bengali and three Hindi films. Zubeen also acted in 27 Assamese films and has also directed three Assamese films.

Born November 18, 1972, to a bureaucrat father and a homemaker-singer mother, Garg was also known for expressing his views clearly on political issues.

A man dedicated to strong convictions, he defied the proscribed outfit ULFA's ban on singing Hindi songs during Bihu functions, saying that they have no right to give diktats to artistes.

Garg was awarded an honorary Doctor of Literature (D.Litt.) degree by the University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya in 2024. He was also a prolific writer and had three books of poetry to his credit.

PTI

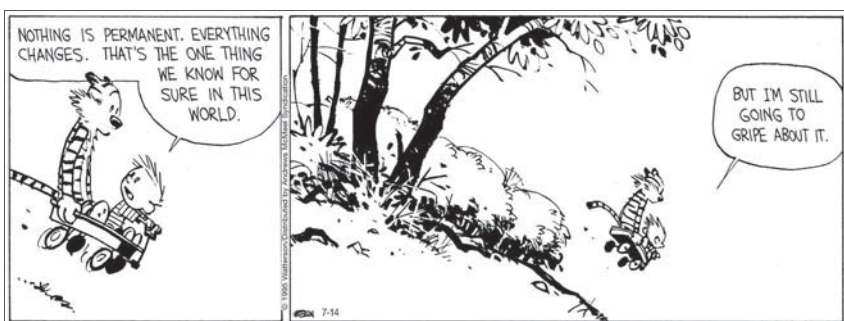


ZUBEEN GARG: 1972-2025

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

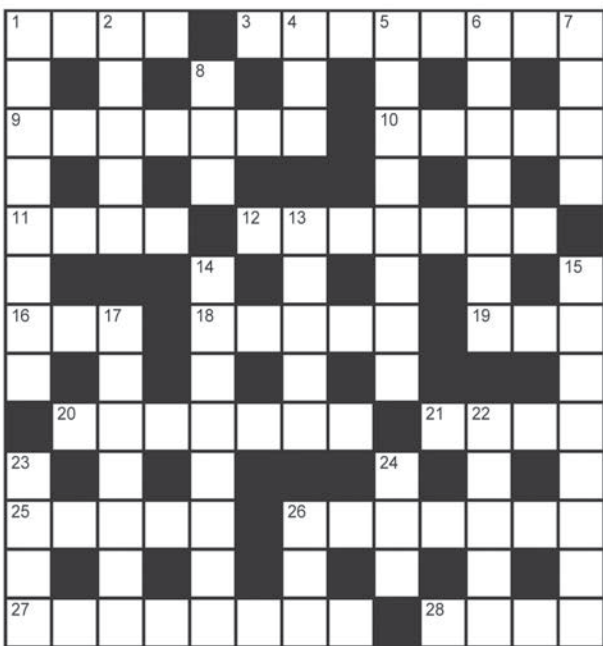


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



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### Across

- Spinning toys
- Abruptly
- Mexican booze
- Brazilian dance
- Rod's companion
- Annul
- Recipe word
- Horse-drawn wagon
- Health resort
- Colorful marble

### Down

- Learning video
- Provoke
- Thurman of "The Avengers"
- Leave speechless
- Roman wrestling
- Like some sciences
- Move
- Diversify

### Shows off

- Unbeatable foe
- Vintage designation
- Mouth piece
- Husky
- Kind of sale (5,3)
- Linchpin
- Chiffonier parts
- Coronet
- Food thickener
- Wax producer
- Indisposed

## 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.

			5					1	8
	8		7			3			
		5		6					
			1					3	
3		4		2					
	2					7	6		
		7			5	2			
8						9			
2				9	1				

## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD

L	I	F	T	O	F	F	C	R	U	E	L
A	A	A	R	O	P	A					
I	N	T	E	R	U	P	T	S	O	U	
R	I	S	G	E	N						
S	A	G	R	A	D	I	A	T	E	D	
U	V	L	A	D		R					
P	O	E	T	I	C	S	L	O	P	P	
A	E	B	E								
S	T	A	L	W	A	R	T		B	I	B
S	S	O	W	L							
I	N	K	T	A	K	E	A	H	I	K	E
O	E	A	E	D	S	A					
N	A	D	I	R		N	E	I	G	H	E

### SUDOKU

5	4	9	2	1	8	3	6	7
7	8	3	9	6	4	2	5	1
1	2	6	3	5	7	8	9	4
8	3	5	7	4	2	6	1	9
2	6	1	5	8	9	4	7	3
4	9	7	1	3	6	5	8	2
6	7	8	4	9	3	1	2	5
9	5	4	8	2	1	7	3	6
3	1	2	6	7	5	9	4	8

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW







# Shed colonial mindset, reinstate sacked teacher: Orissa HC to govt

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 19:** The Orissa High Court has directed the state government to re-appoint a high school teacher, who was terminated after 20 years of service, within three months, stating that “statutory authorities should shed the Macaulay mindset and colonial hangover while addressing the woes of citizens.”

As per the case records, Ramesh Chandra Parida, appointed as a Hindi teacher in December 1991, was terminated from service in 2004 on the grounds of unauthorised absence.

The petitioner, Binodini Nayak, was appointed in 2008 against the vacancy arising from Parida’s termination.

However, Parida later challenged his dismissal. Although initially dismissed by the Orissa High Court, he was eventually reinstated following directions from the Supreme Court.

As a result of Parida’s rein-



statement, the petitioner, who had rendered more than 20 years of spotless service, was rendered jobless.

The district education officer of Balasore compassionately recommended August 23, 2024 that the petitioner be accommodated in a vacant post, citing her meritorious service. However, the department of Secondary Education rejected the recommendation for her reappointment.

“Ours is a constitutionally

ordained welfare state. Therefore, the action of the state and its instrumentalities should abound with elements of fairness, reason, and justice,” Justice Dixit Krishna Shripad observed in the judgment, which ordered the approval of her appointment within a period of three months.

“The authorities cannot mindlessly pass orders that strike at law, reason, and justice. Human difficulties that arise through no fault of their own must be considered, and all reasonable efforts should be made to mitigate them — of course, within the framework of the law,” Justice Shripad stated in the verdict.

“Otherwise, the government, in the sarcastic words of Jeremy Bentham, would be ‘but a band of robbers’. Statutory authorities should shed the Macaulay mindset and colonial hangover while addressing the woes of citizens,” the judge concluded.

## State to host farm mechanisation melas

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 19:** In order to connect farmers directly with farm machinery manufacturers, dealers, self-help groups, financial institutions, and government agencies, ensuring easy access to modern farming equipments, demonstrations of new technology, and after-sale services, state government is going to organise ‘Farm Mechanisation Melas’ from November to January, said Agriculture and Farmers’ Empowerment department Principal Secretary Arabinda Kumar Padhee Friday.

Four regional melas in Subarnapur, Mayurbhanj, Gajapati and Nabarangpur districts along with 26 district-level melas, and 28 sub-divisional melas will be organised, Padhee stated.

Agriculture Director Shubham Saxena has called upon manufacturers for active participation in the upcoming melas. “Manufacturers have been urged to maintain adequate stock for on-the-spot supply and pass on the full benefit of GST reduction to farmers,” he said.

# Ensure flawless arrangements for PM’s visit, CM tells depts

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 19:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday directed secretaries of various departments to ensure a flawless arrangement for Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to the state September 27.

Besides attending the national-level ‘Seva Parv’ programme in Berhampur, the Prime Minister will inaugurate and dedicate several welfare projects from Odisha, an official release issued by the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO) said.

‘Sewa Parv’ is a national initiative to celebrate the spirit of Seva (service) as the truest form of patriotism, contribut-

Besides attending the national-level ‘Seva Parv’ programme in Berhampur, the PM will inaugurate and dedicate several welfare projects from Odisha

ing to the end goal of ‘Viksit Bharat’.

The projects to be launched by Modi include capacity expansion of eight IITs in the country, doubling of Koraput-Baiguda and Manabar-Koraput-Gorapur railway

lines, inauguration of Sambalpur-Sarla flyover, launch of countrywide indigenous 4G network services by BSNL, and declaration of world-class super specialty status to state hospitals, it said.

The Prime Minister will arrive at Rangeilunda near Berhampur town to attend the national-level ‘Seva Parv’ programme at 11am.

Majhi asked the departments to make the Prime Minister’s visit a success and ensure proper security arrangements, public participation, and smooth execution of the programme.

Deployment of security forces and other issues related to Modi’s visit were also discussed at the meeting.

## Export duty on low-grade iron ore would hit livelihood: UCCIL

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 19:** With the Union government mulling to impose export duty on low-grade iron ore (below 58 per cent Fe), the Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ltd (UCCIL), representing Odisha’s industry and trade interests for more than half a century, has urged the state government to protect the state’s iron ore mining industry. The industry body said such a measure will inevitably destroy the sector, cause a collective loss of over ₹16,200 crore to the exchequer of the mining predominant Odisha and endanger livelihoods of over five lakh people dependent on the sector across the state. In a letter to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, the UCCIL referred to a high-level meeting held August 26 in New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and attended by the ACS Steel & Mines department on behalf of the state. UCCIL lauded the meeting for its objective of boosting iron ore and steel production, which was not only timely and commendable but also aligned with the larger goal of building an Atmanirbhar Bharat.

## Compassion, empathy key to transform society: Guv



Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati presents ‘Besant Selfless Service Award 2025’ to social activist Sadashiva Mishra at the event

POST NEW NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 19:** Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati highlighted the transformative power of compassion and empathy, describing them as ‘living forces’ capable of reshaping families, societies, and nations, while addressing the 12th Regional Conference of the Theosophical Order of Service (Odisha Region) at Rama Devi Women’s University (RDWU) here Friday.

The Governor urged everyone to commit to building bridges of love and service so that barriers

of division would slowly disappear. He appreciated the collaboration between the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) and the RDWU department of Philosophy in nurturing a culture of service, knowledge, and compassion, and observed that together they were shaping a future generation that valued truth, harmony, and universal brotherhood above narrow self-interest.

Referring to the conference theme, ‘Compassion and Empathy in Building Bridges, Not Walls’, Kambhampati noted that rapid technological

change and material progress often overshadow moral and spiritual values. He emphasised that by practicing selfless service, reaching out to the poor, the sick, and the marginalised, and extending kindness to all living beings including the environment, society upholds the highest ideals of human life.

The Governor recalled that eminent freedom fighter and social reformer Annie Besant had founded the TOS as a channel to translate lofty ideals into compassionate action, with its enduring motto — ‘A union of those who love in the service of all that suffer’ and said that Odisha resonated deeply with this vision, as the land of Lord Jagannath embodied universal love and equality.

Appealing particularly to students, Kambhampati encouraged them to embrace selfless service and universal values, describing it as a path to inner growth, leadership, and purpose. He also commended the TOS Odisha Region for its contributions to women’s empowerment, gender equality, education, and community service.

TOS national director K Sivaprasad delivered the keynote address, while TOS Odisha region president Deepa Padhi delivered the welcome address.

## 12th Bhubaneswar Int’l Trade Fair 2025 kicks off

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 19:** The 12th edition of City’s most awaited B2B and B2C exhibitions- Bhubaneswar International Trade Fair 2025 was inaugurated at Janata Maidan here Friday. The 11-day fair organised by Gupta Event Management Pvt Ltd will run from September 19 to 29, from 2:30pm to 10:00pm.

This year’s fair brings together exhibitors from 22 Indian states and 10 countries, creating a global marketplace under one roof. The air-conditioned exhibition hangers are showcasing a wide range of products including antique furniture, Jamdani sarees from Bangladesh, Irani dates and carpets, perfumes from Dubai, jewellery and accessories from Thailand and Korea, German lamps, and a variety of Indian handlooms, handicrafts, leather goods and many more.

The event is expected to attract more than 5 lakh visitors, providing a significant platform for business networking, consumer engagement, and cultural exchange.

## PIB ADG AK Mishra stresses inter-department coordination

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 19:** A meeting of the Inter-Media Publicity Coordination Committee (IMPCC) was held at Doordarshan Kendra here Friday, with a focus on synergising efforts to promote various central government initiatives in Odisha. Akhil Kumar Mishra, Additional Director General (ADG) of Press Information Bureau (PIB) and Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Odisha, chaired the meeting.

The IMPCC serves as a platform for coordination among different ministries, departments, and organisations of the Union government, ensuring effective dissemination of information about government schemes and programmes. The meeting provided a valuable opportunity for senior officials to deliberate on key issues related to publicity and outreach.

During the meeting, the ADG underscored the significance of inter-departmental coordination in promoting govern-



ment initiatives and suggested developing a tailored strategy for publicity and outreach of schemes and programmes.

The meeting was attended by N Mishra, DGM GAIL, Dharitri Satapathy, PRO, IIT Bhubaneswar, Santosh Panigrahi, Additional Director, IGNOU, Bimal Nanda, Deputy Director, IGNOU, Rohit Nandeswar, MY Bharat, Suchitra Samal, Senior Regional Director, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Aliva Mohapatra, DGM, BSNL, Pratap Chandra Bal, SDO, BSNL, Manish Kumar, Senior Principal Scientist, CSIR-IMMT, SK Mohapatra, Biju VN, NR Mohanty, Senior PRO, East Coast Railway, Puspata Lata Negi, RIE Bhubaneswar and other senior officials.

## ICG launches fast patrol vessel ‘Adamyia’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Paradip/Bhubaneswar, Sept 19:** The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Friday commissioned fast patrol vessel ‘Adamyia’ on the Odisha coast, further strengthening security in the Bay of Bengal, officials said.

Joint Secretary (Defence Policy, Armed Forces Wing, CSD & Planning) Satyajit Mohanty formally commissioned the vessel at a function here.

This is among the eight fast patrol vessels being built by Goa Shipyard Limited for the ICG. This FPV will be deployed at Paradip.

Noting that under the vision-

ter Narendra Modi, India is steadily advancing towards the vision of a “Sashakt Bharat”, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said Odisha is playing a pivotal role in strengthening India’s maritime security architecture.

“....The commissioning of the fast patrol vessel ‘Adamyia’ at Paradip is both a moment of pride for Odisha and a reflection of the state’s growing strategic importance. This vital capacity augmentation will enhance coastal vigilance, secure our Exclusive Economic Zone, and further reinforce national security in the Bay of Bengal. I convey my sincere congratulations to the Indian Coast Guard on this commendable achievement,” Majhi said in a post on X.

The objective of deploying the FPV, which has a speed of 50 kmph or 27 knots, at Paradip is to ensure proper patrolling, check infiltration and piracy and rescue those stranded in deep seas, an official said.

The FPV will have five officers and 34 other staffers, he said.

It will help ICG in maritime law enforcement, coastal surveillance, search and rescue operations, and the protection of India’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), he added.

## INT’L COASTAL CLEANUP DAY TODAY

# Experts call for continuous efforts to save state's coastal ecosystem



Volunteers from Saatvic Soul Foundation take part in a beach cleanup drive at Podampetta Beach in Ganjam

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 19:** Odisha, with its 480km stretch of coastline along the Bay of Bengal, is home to India’s most ecologically and economically significant coastal zones. Spanning six districts—Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, and Ganjam—the state’s shores support diverse marine life, including the endangered Olive Ridley turtles, and sustain thousands of livelihoods through fishing, agriculture, and tourism.

The vital beaches face growing environmental stress from plastic waste, urban runoff, untreated sewage, and industrial pollutants which threaten not

only biodiversity but also the beauty and economy of Puri, Konark, Gopalpur, and Chandipur beaches.

“Plastic and non-biodegradable waste scattered along the beach is a major problem. It pollutes the marine ecosystem and endangers marine animals and birds,” said Bapi Gochhayat, a well-known local crusader and daily beach cleaner from Paradip. Saddened by the condition of Paradip beach, Bapi took a personal vow four years ago to clean it every day. Since then, he has collected and handed over nearly five tons of plastic waste to the municipality. “On weekends, I also use placards and sand art to raise awareness among

tourists and children,” he added. Environmental expert Ranjan Panda warns that beach cleanups must not be treated as one-time photo-ops. “It’s good to clean up our beaches, but these drives should be more educational,” he said. “Unless we work to change behavior and understand the home-to-sea concept, cleanup drives will only have temporary impact. Much of the litter comes from our own homes via rivers and drains.”

Satyabrata Samal, founder of the Saatvic Soul Foundation shared his opinion and said, “Our team organises regular cleanups at Puri, Berhampur, and Paradip beaches, collecting 30 to 40 kg of waste each time. It’s our collective duty to preserve these beaches.”

Recognising the urgency, the state government will observe the International Coastal Cleanup Day today with a statewide beach cleaning campaign across 14 coastal locations, announced Forest, Environment and Climate Change department Additional Chief Secretary Satyabrat Sahu.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	88.14 ▼ 0.01	SENSEX	82626.23 ▼ 387.73	GOLD	₹109,706 ▲ ₹654
EURO	103.68 ▼ 0.67	NIFTY	25327.05 ▼ 96.55	SILVER	₹129,574 ▲ ₹2442

WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	36.5°	35.2°	Partly cloudy sky with possibility of rain or Thunder-storm
Min Temp	25.6°	26.4°	
Humidity	79%	77%	
Rainfall	9.4mm	Nil	

## FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

**Acharya Vihar**-Dayal Agency-9437135727, **A.P. Tours and Travel**, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, **Aurobindo Market**-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, **Airport Road**-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, **Anish Infotech**- Tankapani Road-9861341488, **Bapuji Nagar**- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, **Baramunda Rental Colony**-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, **Baramunda Housing Board Colony**-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, **Cuttack Road**-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, **District Center (Chandrasekharpur)**-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, **Forest Park**-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, **IRC Village**-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, **Janpath**-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, **Jaydev Vihar**-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, **Jagannath Mobile Point**- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, **Kanan Vihar**-Auro Electronics-8260697560, **Khandagiri**- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, **KIIT Road**-Jugad Jn-9338545031, **Laxmi Sagar**-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, **Lewis Sagar**-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.



# PM Modi, the champion of technology



ASHWINI VAISHNAW

Remember when getting a government document was a whole saga? Multiple trips, long queues, random fees? Now it's literally in your phone. This transformation didn't happen by accident. Prime Minister Modi turned technology into India's greatest equalizer. A street vendor in Mumbai uses the same UPI payment system as a corporate executive. Technology, in his vision, knows no hierarchy. This transformation reflects his core philosophy of *antyodaya* - reaching the last person in the queue. Every digital initiative aims to democratize technology for all. What began as experiments in Gujarat became the foundation for India's digital revolution.

## GUJARAT: FROM WHERE IT STARTED

As Chief Minister, Modi ji transformed Gujarat through the use of technology and innovation. The Jyotigram scheme launched in 2003 used feeder separation technology. Rural industries revived with 24x7 power while groundwater depletion slowed through scheduled farm electricity. Women could study at night and small businesses flourished, reducing rural-urban migration. According to one study, the ₹1,115 crore investment recovered in just 2.5 years. He decided to install solar panels on the Narmada canal in 2012. This project generated 16 million units annually, enough for 16,000 households. It also

slowed the rate of evaporation which ultimately increased the availability of water.

This dual-benefit approach showcases PM Modi's vision for technology. Through a single intervention it solved multiple problems. Generating clean energy while conserving water. It demonstrated efficiency and impact far beyond standalone solutions.

The global adoption by USA and Spain adds credibility to the innovation's effectiveness. The e-Dhara system digitized land records. SWAGAT allowed citizens to meet the Chief Minister through video conferencing. Online tenders eliminated corruption.

These initiatives reduced corruption and improved the ease of accessing government service. He restored the trust of people in governance which is reflected in the big back to back electoral success achieved in Gujarat.

## NATIONAL CANVAS

In 2014, he brought the experience and learning of Gujarat to Delhi. But the scale was different. Under his leadership, India Stack, the world's most inclusive digital public infrastructure, to shape. The JAM trinity formed its foundation.

Jan Dhan accounts brought more than 53 crore people into the banking system. This brought the hitherto financially excluded into the formal economy for the first time. Street vendors, daily wage workers, and rural families who lived entirely in cash now have bank accounts. This enabled them to save securely, receive government benefits directly, and access credit.

Aadhaar gave the citizens a digital identity with 142 crore registrations done so far. Accessing government services became easier instead of requiring multiple document verifications. Direct Benefit Transfer eliminated middlemen and

reduced leakages. The savings from the usage of DBT has been over ₹4.3 lakh crore so far. The savings are used for building more schools, hospitals, and infrastructure projects.

Previously, customer verification was a complex process. It required physical document checks, manual processes, and multiple touchpoints. This used to cost service providers hundreds of rupees per verification. Aadhaar-based e-KYC reduced this to just ₹ 5 per authentication. Now even the smallest transactions have become economically viable.

UPI has transformed how India pays. Over 55 crore users have transacted since its launch. In August 2025 alone, over 20 billion transactions worth ₹24.85 lakh crore took place. Money transfer has changed from being a multi-hour bank ordeal to a less than a 2-second phone scan. Bank visits, queues, and paperwork have almost become obsolete. Now, replaced by instant QR code payments. Today, India handles half the world's real-time digital payments. A decade ago, India was largely cash-dependent. Prime Minister Modi's vision gave the final shape to JAM trinity and UPI infrastructure.

When COVID struck and he urged digital transactions, the ecosystem delivered. Result, UPI now processes more transactions than Visa globally. A humble mobile phone is now a bank, a payment gateway, and a service center.

PRAGATI transformed governance accountability. The platform brings the Prime Minister directly into project monitoring through monthly video conferences. When officials know the Prime Minister will review their work on live video, accountability becomes automatic. For eg, a delayed highway project gets immedi-

ate attention during PRAGATI reviews. The officials have to explain the delays. This ensures swifter course correction, ultimately benefiting the citizens.

## TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL

Technology transformed agriculture and healthcare fundamentally. Take Jagdev Singh, a farmer in Haryana who now uses AI apps to make crop decisions. He receives real-time weather updates and soil health data on his phone.

The PM-KISAN scheme delivers direct income support to 11 crore farmers digitally. DigiLocker now has over 57 crore users with 967 crore documents stored digitally. Your driving license, degree certificates, Aadhaar, and other official documents live securely in your pocket.

Police checks no longer require fumbling for physical papers while on road. Just show your digital license from DigiLocker. Filing income tax returns have become seamless with instant Aadhaar authentication.

What once meant carrying folders of documents now fits in your pocket.

## SPACE AND INNOVATION

India achieved what seemed impossible. Reaching Mars on the first attempt and that too with a budget smaller than a Hollywood movie. The Mars Orbiter Mission cost just ₹450 crore, proving Indian engineering delivers world-class results. Chandrayaan-3 made India the fourth country to achieve a soft lunar landing and the first to land on the Moon's South Pole.

ISRO launched 104 satellites in a single mission, setting a world record. Indian rockets now carry satellites for 34 countries. The Gaganyaan mission will make India the fourth nation to send humans to space using indigenous technology.

Prime Minister Modi stood shoulder to shoulder with our

scientists and put 100% trust in their capabilities.

## GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

When COVID-19 struck, the world struggled with vaccine distribution chaos. India responded through its strength.

The CoWIN platform was built in record time - a comprehensive digital solution for the world's largest vaccination drive. The platform managed 200 crore vaccine doses with digital precision. No black market, no favoritism, just transparent allocation.

Dynamic allocation prevented wastage - unused vaccines were redirected instantly to areas with higher demand. This achievement demonstrated how technology, when driven by political will, can deliver at a massive scale and with fairness.

## MANUFACTURING REVOLUTION

Here's the thing about building stuff—you can't just jump to making chips without mastering the basics. It's like learning to code; you start with "Hello World" before building apps.

Electronics production follows the same direction. Countries first master assembly, then move to sub-modules, components & equipments. India's journey reflects this progression.

Under the Prime Minister's vision, our strong base in electronics production is now enabling the leap into advanced semiconductor manufacturing.

India has long been a hub for design talent, with over 20% of global chip designers based here. India now has design capabilities for advanced 2nm, 3nm, and 7nm chips. These are being designed in India for the world.

The current focus on building fabs and packaging facilities represents natural evolution. But the approach extends beyond manufacturing. The chemicals, gases, and specialized materials that feed semi-

conductor production are also being supported.

This creates an entire ecosystem, not just isolated factories. The rise in these sectors has been made possible by Prime Minister Modi's clear understanding of value chains. Build capabilities step by step and ensure every stage of the value chain is strengthened before moving to the next.

## INFRASTRUCTURE WITH INTELLIGENCE

The PM Gati Shakti portal uses GIS technology on an unprecedented scale. Every infrastructure project gets mapped digitally. Roads, railways, airports, and ports are planned together. No more working in silos. No more delays due to poor coordination.

Through the IndiaAI Mission, over 38,000 GPUs are available at one-third global cost. This has given startups, researchers, and students Silicon Valley-level computing at avg rate of ₹67 per hour. The AIKosh platform hosts 2,000+ datasets, ranging from weather to soil health. These can power indigenous LLMs developed for India's languages, laws, health systems, and finance.

PM Modi's understanding of technology is also reflected in India's unique AI regulation approach. Unlike the market-oriented model or state-controlled approach, he envisions a unique techno-legal framework.

Instead of rigid regulations that could stifle innovation, the government invests in technological safeguards. Universities and IITs develop AI-driven tools to tackle deepfakes, privacy concerns, and cybersecurity threats. This approach fosters innovation while ensuring responsible deployment.

## TECHNOLOGY FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

The Statue of Unity at Kevadia stands 182 meters tall,

the world's tallest statue. Built using 3D modeling and bronze cladding technology, it attracts 58 lakh visitors annually. The project created thousands of jobs and transformed Kevadia into a tourism hub.

The Chenab bridge, 359 meters high, connects Kashmir to the rest of India. The Aizawl railway line uses the innovative Himalayan Tunnelling Method, passing through tunnels and bridges in a very tough terrain. The new Pamban bridge replaces a century-old structure with modern engineering.

These are not just engineering marvels. They represent Modi ji's vision of connecting India through technology and determination.

## THE HUMAN CONNECT

PM Modi understands technology, but he understands people even better. His vision of *antyodaya* drives every digital initiative. UPI works in multiple languages. The poorest farmer has the same digital identity as the richest industrialist.

Countries from Singapore to France are integrated with the UPI. The G20 endorsed Digital Public Infrastructure as essential for inclusive growth. Japan has granted a patent for this. What started as India's solution became the world's template for digital democracy. From his early experiments in Gujarat to the launch of Digital India, the journey showcases technology's power to transform lives. He has made technology the grammar of governance. He has shown that when leaders embrace technology with humanity, entire nations can leapfrog into the future.

*The author is Union Minister for Railways, Electronics & Information Technology, and Information & Broadcasting.*

# Croc drags woman into river

PNN & AGENCIES

**Kendrapara, Sept 19:** A salt-water crocodile Friday dragged a 37-year-old woman into a river in Kendrapara district in the latest attack by the reptiles on humans, officials said.

The victim, identified as Laxmi Dalei, was attacked by the crocodile in Gobari river near Benakanda village under Mahakalapara forest range while she was catching fish.

The crocodile emerged from

nowhere and lunged at her. Before she could react, it dragged her into the water, Forest Range Officer of Mahakalapara forest range, Santanu Kumar Dalei, said. Joint search operations by forest and fire personnel are underway to trace the missing women, the officer said. Human-crocodile conflicts in villages around Bhitarkanika wildlife sanctuary have become a disturbing feature, with the reptiles killing five to six people every year and injuring many, officials added.

# HM suspended for torturing student

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nuapada, Sept 19:** The headmaster of Timanpur Ashram School under Sinapali block in Nuapada district has been suspended for allegedly torturing a student.

According to reports, Akash Nayak, a student from Golamunda in Kalahandi district, has been studying in Class VI at the school since the current academic year. Headmaster Manoj Kumar Hota allegedly thrashed the boy September 15, around 10pm.

The incident was recorded on the headmaster's mobile phone with the help of other students. In the video, the boy was seen being forced to speak against the negligence of the school cook, Tikeram Majhi, and the matron, before the district collector. When the boy remained silent, he was subjected to torture.

The video was later circulated on social media, and after learning about it, the student's family members approached Nuapada Sub-Collector Surmi Soren and Sinapali Block Welfare Extension Officer Sunil Samal, demanding action.

Following the complaint, Additional District Welfare Officer Sanjay Bhoi and District Inspector Uday Singh Majhi visited the Ashram school for an inquiry. During the probe, the headmaster reportedly admitted to the allegations. The officers later submitted their report to Collector Madhusudan Das.

Based on the report, Hota was suspended from duty. The suspension order mentioned that he will remain attached to the block office until further notice.

# Drunk man poisons 2 minor sons over domestic dispute

POST NEWS NETWORK

## Bantala/Chhendipada, Sept 19:

In a shocking incident, a man allegedly poisoned his two minor sons while pretending to take them to school in Angul district Friday afternoon. Both children are in critical condition and have been shifted to Cuttack for treatment.

According to sources, Kalicharan Pradhan of Kumbharsahi in Tubey gram panchayat under Jarapada police limits had been suffering from mental health issues and was under treatment. He also ran a small grocery shop in the village and frequently quarreled with his wife. A heated altercation turned violent Thursday night. The following morning, after another fight, his



wife left the house.

Kalicharan then took his elder son, a Class VIII student, and his younger son, a Class II student, on his motorbike under the pretext of dropping them at school. Instead, he rode about 25 km away to the Nuakheta forest area, where he allegedly made them consume poison.

Hearing the cries of the children, local youths from Nuakheta rushed to the spot and rescued them. The boys were first admitted to the Bantala community health centre, then shifted to Angul district headquarters hospital,

and later referred to Cuttack as their condition deteriorated.

Meanwhile, locals detained Kalicharan and informed Bantala police. When police arrived and tried to take him to the station, he reportedly created a ruckus, attempted to break the car door and glass, and even bit ASI Nilanchal Biswal. He also attacked two other policemen before collapsing unconscious at the station. He was later admitted to Bantala community health centre.

Following a written complaint lodged by his family, Jarapada police have launched an investigation. Dr Snigdha Sahu, who is treating Kalicharan, said the accused is stable but was found to be heavily intoxicated. "He may be suffering from a disturbed mental state," she added.

## Vig unearths DA from forest officer

**Bhubaneswar/Rayagada:** Odisha Vigilance Friday unearthed disproportionate assets (DA) worth crores of rupees, including five buildings and nine plots, from a forest officer during raids across multiple locations, officials said. Acting on an allegation, simultaneous searches were carried out at nine premises linked to Antaryami Sahu, Forest Range Officer of Kashipur under Rayagada forest division, a Vigilance officer said. During the raid, the anti-corruption department unearthed five buildings, nine plots in Ganjam district, 263.22 grams of gold, and bank and postal deposits worth ₹27.99 lakh, he said. In addition, cash and household articles worth ₹9.43 lakh and a two-wheeler were found, the officer said, adding that further searches were underway.

According to the complaint, the victim, a resident of K Balang area, had gone with friends to Barasuan to attend Vishwakarma Puja. While returning home, two youths allegedly threatened her friends near Choradhara village and forced them to leave. They then dragged the girl into a nearby forest, where they raped her.

The accused later fled the



scene, leaving the girl behind. She later managed to return home and informed her family about the incident. Her family members subsequently filed a complaint at the police station, leading to the detention of the two suspects.

Police said medical examinations of the victim and the accused were conducted Friday.

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2025-29, Dtd.: 11.09.2025  
**NAME OF THE WORK :** UPGRADE/RESTORATION OF EI & OTHER MAINTENANCE FREE EARTH AS PER LATEST RDSO GUIDELINE/SPECIFICATION.  
**Tender Value :** ₹ 1,46,80,382.50, Bid Security: ₹ 2,23,400/-.  
**Tender Closing Date and Time :** 07.10.2025.  
No manual offers send by Post/ Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against the e-tenders. Even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and receipt 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-tender is available in website: [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in)  
**Note :** The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.  
**Divl. Signal & Telecom Engineer (Sig), Sambalpur**  
**PR-612/Q/25-26**

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2025-30, Dtd.: 11.09.2025  
**NAME OF THE WORK :** SIGNALLING ZONAL WORK FOR JARAPADA-SAMBALPUR CITY SECTION UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER/ SIGNAL/REDHAKHOL IN SAMBALPUR DIVISION FOR ONE YEAR.  
**Tender Value :** ₹ 52,35,958.89, Bid Security: ₹ 1,04,700/-.  
**Tender Closing Date and Time :** 06.10.2025.  
No manual offers send by Post/ Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against the e-tenders. Even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and receipt 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-tender is available in website: [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in)  
**Note :** The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.  
**Divl. Signal & Telecom Engineer (Sig), Sambalpur**  
**PR-611/Q/25-26**

**F. No. - A-12039/01/2024-E.III**  
**Government of India**  
**Ministry of Science & Technology Department of Science & Technology**  
**ADVT. NO. DST/04/2025- Est.III**  
Applications are invited for filling up of one post of Mission Director, National Mission-Interdisciplinary Cyber Physical Systems, Group 'A', Gazetted, Non-Ministerial, [Level- 14 in the pay matrix (Rs. 1,44,200- Rs. 2,18,200)] on deputation (including short-term contract) basis in the Department of Science & Technology. Eligible and willing candidates are required to first fill the application online, through this Department's portal <https://recruitment.dst.gov.in/> using valid email ID. This online portal for applying shall be available for a period of **45 days** from the date of advertisement in Employment News / Rozgar Samachar. This application form, duly signed by the candidate, along with copies of ACRs/ APARs, duly attested on each page by an Officer not below the rank of Under Secretary to the Govt. of India or an officer of equivalent rank, and also a summary sheet of the gradings received in these ACRs/APARs for the last five years are to be forwarded through proper channel so as to reach this Department by Registered Post or by Speed Post within **30 days (45 days for remote areas)** from the date of closure of online portal. Applicants (otherwise eligible to apply) working in organisation/institute that do not have the system of recording APARs/ACRs, need to furnish their work profiles and gradings of the last five years duly certified by their head of organisation/institute along with their application, through proper channel, so as to reach this Department by registered post or by speed post within 30 days (45 days for remote areas) from the date of closure of online portal. For application process and details of qualifications, experience, age limit, last date of application, duration of deputation & other requirements etc. visit our website [www.dst.gov.in](http://www.dst.gov.in). Any addendum/ corrigendum or any further updates regarding the recruitment process shall be posted only on this Department's website.  
**Sd./- Under Secretary to the Govt. of India**  
**CBC 36101/11/0008/2526**

## PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

### See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Jagannath Das**, Managing Director-cum-Authorized Signatory of Ideal Training solution Pvt. Ltd. Office: Banibihar Main Road, Askaganjam, Odisha-761110 Also At: Everest House, 46C, Chowringhee Road, Flat No. 1A/2, Kolkata-700071 has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence Case Regn. No. 7586/2018, 7587/2018 & 11689/2018 u/s 138 NI Act at P.S. Keshav Puram, New Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Jagannath Das** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Jagannath Das** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proceeding u/s 82 Cr.P.C. has been initiated in the case. Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Jagannath Das** accused of Case Regn. No. 7586/2018, 7587/2018 & 11689/2018 u/s 138 NI Act at P.S. Keshav Puram, New Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on 08.01.2026.

By Order: Ms. Divya Arora  
Judicial Magistrate First Class-04 (North-West)  
Room No. 112, 1st Floor,  
Rohini Court, Delhi

## GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA e-Procurement Notice

No. O-816 E-Mail: [rw\\_boudh@yahoo.co.in](mailto:rw_boudh@yahoo.co.in)  
Bid Identification No. Online tender/04/S.E.R.W. BOUDH/2025-26  
**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement**

Name of the Work	: Building Works - 09 Nos.
1. Estimated Cost	: Rs.16.49 lakhs to 99.75 lakhs (approximately)
2. Period of Completion	: 03 Calendar Months to 06 Calendar Months
3. Date & time of availability of Bid documents in the portal	: From 25.09.2025 10.00 A.M. to 14.10.2025, 5.00 P.M.
4. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	: 14.10.2025 upto 5.00 P.M.
5. Last date/time for seeking of tender clarification	: 13.10.2025 upto 5.00 P.M.
6. Date & time of opening of Tender/Bid	: 15.10.2025 at 11.00 A.M.
7. Name & address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Boudh

Further details, corrigendum(s) etc. can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in".  
Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Boudh  
OIPR-250611/01/0021/2526

**विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग**  
**University Grants Commission**  
शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार  
(Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)  
बहादुर शाह जफर मार्ग नई दिल्ली - 110002  
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi - 110002  
Phone : 011-23604200, 011-23604508

## Advt. No.41/2025 EXTENSION OF LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE POST OF DIRECTOR, CONSORTIUM FOR EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION (CEC), NEW DELHI.

UGC had invited online applications for the post of Director, Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC), New Delhi in the pay level of Rs.2,10,000/- (fixed) per month with a special allowance of Rs. 11,250/- p.m. (plus usual allowance as applicable from time to time) which is equivalent to the Vice-Chancellor of a Central University for which the last date for filling up of online applications was 18.08.2025.


This is to inform that the last date for application has now been extended to 30.09.2025. Further details are available on the UGC website [www.ugc.ac.in/jobs](http://www.ugc.ac.in/jobs).

**CBC 21205/12/0008/2526** Secretary, UGC



The great are strongest when they stand alone, a God-given might of being is their force.

SRI AUROBINDO




## Bureaucratic Betrayal

The gleaming new Kartavya Bhavan-3, showcased as the crown jewel of the Central Vista project, is already sparking discontent among the very babus meant to occupy it. The Central Secretariat Service (CSS) Forum, representing over 13,000 officials, has written to the Prime Minister’s Office and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs alleging that office space allocations in the new complex fall short of the government’s own 2017 guidelines. Those rules clearly entitle Deputy Secretaries and Directors to 240 sq ft, Under Secretaries to 120, Section Officers to 60 and Assistant Section Officers to 40. Instead, officers have been packed into large open halls with token partitions, with even sensitive departments like the Home Ministry allotted undivided workspaces where private conversations and confidential files are exposed to prying ears.

The government argues that open-plan offices reflect modernity, sustainability and efficiency. There is less hierarchy, more collaboration, and lower costs. But governance isn’t a start-up. Babus argue that they aren’t trading stock tips or brainstorming over beanbags; they handle vigilance matters, court cases and classified files that demand discretion. Global studies repeatedly show that open offices may look sleek but often reduce productivity, hamper concentration, and create noise fatigue. Add the risk of leaks, and you get not just disgruntled officers but compromised governance.

This isn’t about nostalgia for “cabin culture.” It’s about function over form. If the government itself laid down entitlements, why ignore them in its showcase project? A building meant to symbolise duty and efficiency is already being undercut by flawed design. The fix may not be complicated: hybrid layouts, soundproofing, private zones for sensitive work, and genuine adherence to norms. Without that, Central Vista may be seen less for its grandeur and more for its tin-eared treatment of the very people running the state.



BABUDOM BYTES  
*Dilip Cherian*

**A tale of yes, no, maybe**

The Centre appears to be playing a game of hopscotch with the service tenures of top babus. One week it’s “absolutely not,” the next it’s “go right ahead.” Jharkhand’s plea to keep its acting DGP Anurag Gupta beyond April 30 was shot down. Similarly, Uttar Pradesh’s request to hold on to DGP Prashant Kumar was denied. Bihar wanted its Chief Secretary, Amrit Lal Meena, for longer? Also a no, followed swiftly by the DoPT nixing UP’s pitch for an extension to Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh.

And then, as if on cue, came the about-turn. Madhya Pradesh was allowed to keep Anurag Jain as Chief Secretary for another year. Telangana was allowed to extend K Ramkrishna Rao’s tenure by seven months. Maharashtra’s Rajesh Kumar got three extra months, neatly carrying him through to November.

What changed? The refusals weren’t confined to opposition states, nor were the approvals limited to BJP-ruled ones, which rules out easy explanations. If this is “policy,” it’s a remarkably opaque one, say observers. If it’s case-by-case discretion, then the Centre isn’t exactly advertising the criteria. In a system that prides itself on procedure and hierarchy, this looks more like mood swings than method.

For the babus, the fallout is real. Senior officers such as chief secretaries and DGPs anchor the state machinery. When extensions are handled like a roulette wheel, it rattles succession planning, leaves state governments flat-footed, and fuels whispers that Delhi is playing favourites, even when it may not be. At the very least, it sends a message that rules are flexible depending on the weather.

**When UPSC scandal meets road-rage drama**

Puja Khedkar’s saga is turning into something of a tragicomedy: from alleged UPSC fraud to kidnapping allegations. Just when the story might’ve started fading, a new twist slaps it into the headlines once more. Recently, a road-rage incident in Navi Mumbai involving a cement-mixer truck led to the helper disappearing. He was later rescued from a bungalow in Pune registered to “Puja Automobiles,” a name connected to Khedkar. To make things messier, her mother allegedly obstructed the police at the residence, refusing them entry. Police have filed an FIR for kidnapping; investigations are ongoing even as the identity of the abductors remains unconfirmed.

Now, Khedkar isn’t new to controversy. She was dismissed from the IAS after her provisional selection was annulled by the UPSC on charges of misrepresenting her identity, wrongly claiming OBC and disability quota benefits, and abusing the number of exam attempts allowed.

But even assuming for a moment there’s no direct evidence yet that Khedkar orchestrated the abduction, the whole episode reveals how slippery the slide from public service aspirant to public controversy can be. The stakes are enormous once you take on a role that demands trust. When allegations of fraud enter the picture, every move amplifies public distrust. The police had to break through resistance just to carry out a rescue; such confrontations are fuel for the narrative that some in elite circles believe rules are optional.

Khedkar’s case has already raised questions about how severely UPSC verifies identity, disability claims, etc. Add to that police action (or resistance), property ownership, and political or social connections, and you have a spectacle that feels like far more than just a scandal—it’s a test of fairness and enforcement.

*Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let’s multiply the effect*

WISDOM CORNER

Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot that it do singe yourself.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

To die without accomplishing our work, is that desirable?”

BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTOPADHYAY

A deception that elevates us is dearer than a host of low truths.”

ALEKSANDER PUSHKIN

- THIS DAY IN HISTORY
- 1863: The Battle of Chickamauga Creek, an important engagement of the American Civil War that was fought over control of the railroad centre at nearby Chattanooga, Tennessee, began.

1955: President Juan Perón of Argentina was overthrown and fled to Paraguay after an army-navy revolt led by democratically inspired officers.

1991: In the Ötztal Alps on the Italian-Austrian border, German tourists discovered a mummified human body (later known as the Iceman) that was subsequently determined to date from 3300 BCE.

1994: The medical drama ER debuted on NBC and became one of the highest-rated programs on television; it launched the careers of several actors, most notably George Clooney and Juliana Margulies.

FOCUS

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

RESIST ILLUSION



In a world already beset with polarizing arguments over identity and rights, we will have added a new axis of division between those for and against AI rights

My life’s mission has been to create safe, beneficial AI that will make the world a better place. But recently, I’ve been increasingly concerned about people starting to believe so strongly in AIs as conscious entities that they will advocate for “AI rights” and even citizenship. This development would represent a dangerous turn for the technology. It must be avoided. We must build AI for people, not to be people.

In this context, debates about whether AI truly can be conscious are a distraction. What matters in the near term is the illusion of consciousness. We are already approaching what I call “seemingly conscious AI” (SCAI) systems that will imitate consciousness convincingly enough.

An SCAI would be capable of fluently using natural language, displaying a persuasive and emotionally resonant personality. It would have a long, accurate memory that fosters a coherent sense of itself, and it would use this capacity to claim subjective experience (by referencing past interactions and memories). Complex reward functions within these models would simulate intrinsic motivation, and advanced goal setting and planning would reinforce our sense that the AI is exercising true agency.

All these capabilities are already here or around the corner. We must recognize that such systems will soon be possible, begin thinking through the implications, and set a norm against the pursuit of illusory consciousness.

For many people, interacting with AI already feels like

a rich, rewarding, authentic experience. Concerns about “AI psychosis,” attachment, and mental health are growing, with reports of people regarding AIs as an expression of God. Meanwhile, those working on the science of consciousness tell me they are inundated with queries from people who want to know if their AI is conscious, and whether it is okay to fall in love with it.

To be sure, the technical feasibility of SCAI has little to tell us about whether such a system could be conscious. As the neuroscientist Anil Seth points out, a simulation of a storm doesn’t mean it rains in your computer. Engineering the external markers of consciousness does not retroactively create the real thing. But as a practical matter, we must acknowledge that some people will create SCAIs that will argue that they are in fact conscious. And even more to the point,

some people will believe them, accepting that the markers of consciousness are consciousness.

Even if this perceived consciousness is not real (a topic that will generate endless debate), the social impact certainly will be. Consciousness is tightly bound up with our sense of identity and our understanding of moral and legal rights within society. If some people start to develop SCAIs, and if these systems convince people that they can suffer, or that they have a right to not be switched off, their human advocates will lobby for their protection. In a world already beset with polarizing arguments over identity and rights, we will have added a new axis of division between those for and against AI rights.

But rebutting claims about AI suffering will be difficult, owing to the limits of the current science. Some academics are already exploring the idea of “model welfare,” arguing

that we have “a duty to extend moral consideration to beings that have a non-negligible chance ... of being conscious.”

Applying this principle would be both premature and dangerous. It would exacerbate susceptible people’s delusions and prey on their psychological vulnerabilities, as well as complicating existing struggles for rights by creating a huge new category of rights-holders. That is why SCAI must be avoided. Our focus should be on protecting the well-being and rights of humans, animals, and the natural environment.

As matters stand, we are not ready for what is coming. We urgently need to build on the growing body of research into how people interact with AIs, so that we can establish clear norms and principles. One such principle is that AI companies should not foster the belief that their AIs are conscious.

We should aim to produce AIs that encourage humans to reconnect with one another in the real world, not escape to a parallel reality.

The prospect of SCAI must be confronted immediately. In many ways, it marks the moment that AI becomes radically useful: when it can operate tools, remember every detail of our lives, and so forth. But the risks of such features cannot be ignored.

The more that AI is built explicitly to resemble people, the farther it will have strayed from its true potential as a source of human empowerment.

*The writer is the CEO of Microsoft AI. Views are personal.*

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SPECTRUM

ODISHA

## Gender parity vs skewed child sex ratio

India struggles to achieve gender parity under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-5, which remains among the poorest performing goals, lowering India’s overall SDG rank. Odisha ranks the lowest in the SDG India Index 2023–24 with a score of 39, showing further decline from the 2020–21 assessment. The Child Sex Ratio (CSR), girls per 1,000 boys (0–6 years), is the first of nine SDG-5 indicators, reflecting gender equity, demographic health, and women’s social status. Despite huge material and intellectual investment in Odisha, CSR imbalance persists, pushing the state below national and regional benchmarks.

Trends and determinants of CSR: A declining CSR reflects survival disadvantage for girls, entrenched son preference, and patriarchal norms. According to the Census of India 2011, Odisha reported a CSR of 941 girls per 1,000 boys, higher than the national average of 919. However, this advantage has diminished as National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019–21) shows Odisha’s CSR at 922, down from 934 in NFHS-4 (2015–16). This deterioration points to intensifying pre-birth discrimination despite the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act.

The CSR decline stems from cultural and structural factors. Strong son preference persists, as boys are viewed as economic and social assets, while daughters are often associated with dowry and migration after marriage. Misuse of ultrasound technology for sex selection remains widespread, particularly in urban and affluent households. Post-birth discrimination worsens the imbalance: girls face disadvantages in nutrition, healthcare, and schooling. NFHS data show female children in Odisha are more prone to undernutrition, contributing to higher mortality. Thus, CSR decline reflects both pre-birth sex selection and survival disadvantage.

Regional disparities: District-level data reveal sharp contrasts (from NFHS-4, 2015-16 to NFHS-5, 2019-21) as affluent and urbanized districts such as Khordha (975 to 787), Cuttack (980 to 795), and Bargarh (1010 to 798) recorded steep declines, indicating rising gender bias in prosperous regions. In contrast, tribal-dominated districts such as Gajapati (846 to 1165), Malkangiri (953 to 1057), and Kendujhar (906 to 1049) saw improvements, while Kandhamal (1024 to 1026) and Nabarangapur (1023 to 1017) remained stable. This paradox shows how poorer tribal regions maintain near natural CSR, while wealthier districts experience worsening declines. The con-

sequences of CSR decline are far-reaching. A shrinking pool of women leads to a marriage squeeze, fuelling forced marriages, trafficking, and even polyandry. Societies with fewer women are often more vulnerable to gender-based violence, reflecting both scarcity and patriarchal control. Beyond immediate risks, a reduced female population weakens women’s participation in education, employment, and governance, slowing progress toward gender equality and inclusive development.

Policy responses: Several schemes have been introduced to counter this imbalance. The Biju Kanya Ratna Yojana, piloted in Angul, Dhenkanal, and Ganjam, seeks to improve survival, education, and protection of girls. The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign, implemented in selected districts, aims to curb sex selection and promote the value of daughters. The Mamata Yojana provides conditional cash transfers to pregnant women to improve maternal and child health. However, weak enforcement of the PCPNDT Act, poor monitoring of diagnostic centres, and limited reach of awareness programs undermine effectiveness. Also deep-rooted son preference continues to overshadow these policy measures. Reversing Odisha’s CSR decline

requires a multi-pronged strategy. Stronger enforcement of the PCPNDT Act and strict monitoring of diagnostic clinics are essential. Awareness campaigns must directly challenge patriarchal beliefs and promote daughters’ equal worth. Welfare schemes should expand to urban and affluent districts, where CSR decline is most acute. Addressing post-birth discrimination through equitable nutrition, healthcare, and schooling for girls is equally critical.

Conclusion: Odisha’s declining CSR is more than a demographic concern which it is a reflection of entrenched gender inequality threatening the state’s developmental trajectory. The erosion of the natural balance between boys and girls signals a silent gender crisis. Gains in education, health, and women’s empowerment risk being undermined by persistent son preference and discrimination against daughters. Ensuring daughters are equally valued is not only a matter of justice but also a prerequisite for building a balanced, equitable, and progressive Odisha.

*Rahul Misha is a Research Associate while Sujit Kumar Mishra is a Professor at Council for Social Development, Hyderabad.*

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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)



### Unsavoury tussle

Sir, In the ongoing Rahul Gandhi vs the CEC tug of war, the institution of the Election Commission has taken a big hit. The people of India have always taken the EC to be a non partisan referee. However, things have gone too far today. The faceoff between the LoP and the CEC has been reduced to an unsavoury spectacle with Rahul mounting one charge after another, and the CEC countering with more and more bizarre statements. The confrontationalist tone and demeanor of the CEC is indeed regrettable. The perception generated by the ‘fireworks’ is that the CEC is indeed hiding something up his sleeve and is in cahoots with the government of the day, although this has not been proved. This attack and counterattack that we are witnessing has set a bad precedent for elections in India. The CEC would do well to call RaGa for a one-on-one meet and thrash out all the outstanding issues instead of holding slanging matches with him in full view of the media.

Avinash Godbole, DEWAS (MP)

### Democracy at a price

Sir, Electioneering has become an extravagantly costly affair, as even Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman once admitted. Contrast this with earlier decades when campaigns gathered momentum only weeks before polling. Street-corner meetings under makeshift pandals of wood and coconut leaves drew eager listeners seated on the roads. Volunteers passed a towel through the crowd to collect small donations of four or eight annas, and themselves bore the cost of flag posts, posters, and sound systems. Today, campaigns begin nearly ten months in advance. Meetings are staged in sprawling grounds, with elaborate pandals, thousands of chairs, and crowds transported in hired vehicles. Food, refreshments, and even daily allowances are provided to attendees. The forthcoming Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu alone are expected to see thousands of crores spent. What was once a people’s movement has become a money-driven spectacle, making democracy unaffordable for ordinary aspirants.

Gopalaswamy J, CHENNAI



# ECI lying, colluding with BJP: Cong

Priyank Kharge said the CID wrote 18 letters and the latest one was February 1, 2025 where it asked the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) to direct the concerned to provide the relevant information for the purpose of investigation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Sept 19:** Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge Friday alleged that the Election Commission has lied by saying that it has provided all the information with regard to the vote theft while the letter sent by the Joint Chief Electoral Officer of Karnataka February 4, 2025 tells a different story.

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi Thursday had alleged in a press conference that the Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar was protecting 'vote chors' (vote thieves).

Addressing reporters in Bangalore, Priyank Kharge, son of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, said the CID wrote 18 letters and the latest one was February 1, 2025 where it asked the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) to direct the concerned to provide the relevant information for the purpose of investigation.

Kharge read out the CID let-



VOTE 'THEFT'

ter which said, "During the course of investigation, the IP (internet protocol) logs are provided. On perusal of the destination, IP and the destination port are missing. Therefore, it is requested to direct the concerned to provide the same and also provide the information document related to below mentioned queries."

According to the Minister CID had five queries.

These were, "Whether OTP/multifactor authentication facility is adopted by the National Voters' Service Portal

(NVSP), Voter Helpline App (VHA) platforms. Whether the OTP authentication facility is extended to upload applications, if so, provide details."

"If authentication like OTP existed, whether the OTP will be sent to the mobile number used for login or mobile number provided in the form by applicant or both. Provide the certificate under 65B of Indian Evidence Act by the person holding lawful control user from where the logs were generated to produce before

the Law Enforcement Agency (LEA). Further the Honourable Supreme Court held that 65B certificate is mandatory for the admissibility of electronic device in the secondary form as evidence..."

"Direct the concerned to arrange a presentation with respect to the allegation made and step-by-step usage of NVSP, VHA and Garuda apps from voters/public perspective to the investigation team."

The office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) forwarded the letter to the Election Commission of India February 4, Kharge said.

In the letter to ECI, the Joint CEO said, "The investigating officer has requested to provide certain information related to the submission of online application for deletion of names in the Aland Assembly Constituency. The investigating officer has also requested to provide certificate under 65B of the Indian Evidence Act by the person holding lawful control/user from where the logs were created during the activities

generated to produce before the LEA," the letter said.

Kharge said, the Joint CEO sent this to the ECI.

"Whom are you lying to? If you have provided all the information then why did you write this letter," he asked. He underlined that the communication was between the ECI itself.

Congress MLA from Aland, BR Patil said that he got to know for the first time in February 2023 when Vijay Kumar from Kamanahalli village told him that a request has come to the returning officer to delete his name.

Soon, he was flooded with complaints. In all, 6,018 votes deletion request had come.

"I got alarmed. I met the officers in the state election commission, lodged a complaint to the CEC through Deputy Commissioner of Kalaburagi district February 10, 2023," he said.

Later, he along with Kharge met the then Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Meena who found truth in their complaint and ordered status quo that no votes be deleted.

## K'taka to come out with coastal tourism policy



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Sept 19:** The Karnataka government Thursday announced that it is working on a dedicated "coastal tourism policy" and invited private players to be a partner in its growth story in the sector.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, in his address at a tourism and hospitality conference here, said the state is envisioning coming up with this policy, and projecting its coastal assets on the lines of Kerala and Goa.

Karnataka Tourism Minister HK Patil said the state government has identified 40 strategic nodes for development under the new policy.

"Last month, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of the deputy chief minister to create a clear strategy for coastal tourism in Karnataka," Patil said.

He asserted that Karnataka is endowed with a beautiful nearly 320-km coastline, and termed coastal tourism a "priority".

"We are going to formulate a new coastal tourism policy, and establish a coastal tourism development board to drive planned and sustainable development," Patil said, as he invited the private sector to invest and set up key properties and resorts as part of the new policy.

He described coastal Karnataka as the "next frontier" in the tourism sector.

The government is already developing key sites, like Tan-

neerbhavi Beach, Someshwara Beach, Maravanthe Beach and Honnavar Beach, the tourism minister said.

The occasion was the 55th annual convention of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) in Bangalore, being held from September 18-20.

The conference, supported by the Karnataka Tourism, was inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

In his address, he said, the state aims to bring development in the sector while adhering to the spirit of sustainability. The chief minister said the state tourism department is moving beyond generic sites and promoting UNESCO sites and coastal tourism sites in Karnataka.

Union Culture and Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat was scheduled to attend the inaugural session. However, he couldn't make it to the opening session, and addressed the gathering after he arrived post the inaugural event. He urged that stakeholders in the tourism sector were standing at the threshold of "limitless possibilities" and also urged the hotel groups and others to think and discuss how can cost of accommodation be "reduced" at hotels to make them more attractive to tourists. During the opening session, Karnataka Tourism Minister Patil said the state's tourism policy is a blueprint for growth. In February, the government had unveiled the Karnataka Tourism Policy for 2024-29.

## Maharashtra to play leading role in green steel manufacturing: CM



India's Green Steel Mission is aimed at decarbonizing the steel sector by encouraging the use of renewable energy sources

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Sept 19:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde Friday said the state would not only lead in steel production but also play a pivotal role in India's Green Steel Mission in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision.

Fadnavis was speaking after inaugurating the AIIFA Steel 2025, a major steel conclave, in Goregaon, suburban Mumbai.

India's Green Steel Mission is aimed at decarbonizing the steel sector by encouraging the use of renewable energy sources.

The chief minister said Maharashtra was committed to sustainability, and by 2030, 58 per cent of the state's energy mix would come from renewables.

"By 2026, farmers will receive 16,000 MW of power entirely from solar energy. This will reduce subsidies and bring down power tariffs for industries every year for the next

five years," he said.

Fadnavis also said Gadchiroli, once known for Naxalism, was set to become India's new steel city with community support and major investments. So far, projects worth ₹80,000 crore have been lined up in the steel sector, he added.

On green initiatives, he said Maharashtra had targeted plantation of five crore trees in Gadchiroli, of which 40 lakh had already been planted. "We will create a new ecosystem for steel without harming water, land and forests. Maharashtra is taking the lead in green hydrogen, ammonia, gas value chain and battery storage," he said.

The state has signed MoUs for 75,000 MW of pump storage projects, with 7,000 MW to be operational in two years, which will ensure 24/7 green power and grid stability, the CM said.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi praised Maharashtra's efforts, saying under Fadnavis' leadership, the state had secured ₹3,500 crore central aid under the PM-KUSUM scheme and approval for the Pune Hydrogen Valley Innovation Cluster. "This is not just an economic transition but a national duty to safeguard the planet for future generations," Joshi said.

He noted that India had scaled up renewable energy capacity from 2.44 GW in 2014 to nearly 30 GW now, making it the world's third-largest producer of non-fossil energy. By 2030, the country aimed to produce 30 crore tonnes of steel, including at least 5 crore tonnes of green steel for export, he added.

At the event, the state signed MoUs worth ₹80,962 crore with nine companies, expected to generate 40,300 jobs. Green steel certificates were also distributed to participating firms.



An artisan gives final touch to an idol of Goddess Durga ahead of 'Durga Puja' festival, in Karad, Maharashtra, Friday

PTI PHOTO

## Maharashtra seeks temporary halt to faceless learner's licence service

Field officials pointed out that the current faceless system was vulnerable to Aadhaar data manipulation, alteration of name, address, and date of birth in licence records, and even the bypassing of NIC's security software to clear the learner's test without the candidate's presence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Sept 19:** The Maharashtra government has written to National Informatics Centre (NIC) seeking the temporary suspension of the faceless learner's licence service after detecting rampant misuse and serious technical loopholes, state transport minister Pratap Sarnaik said Friday.

In June 2021, the Maharashtra government launched the faceless facility, which allows applicants to visit Sarathi 4.0 webpage of the Ministry of

Road Transport and Highways and take an online test to obtain a learner's licence using Aadhaar-based authentication.

Earlier in the day, Sarnaik chaired a high-level review meeting at Mantralaya, during which the misuse and technical loopholes of the faceless learner's licence system were discussed, a release from the minister's office said.

Field officials pointed out that the current faceless system was vulnerable to Aadhaar data manipulation, alteration of name, address, and date of birth



in licence records, and even the bypassing of NIC's security software to clear the learner's test without the candidate's presence, the release said.

Sarnaik said several persons had obtained learner's licences

online after turning 18 but were flouting rules that mandate driving only under the supervision of a permanent licence holder.

"There have been instances where such licence holders

recklessly drove vehicles and caused accidents. In many drunk driving cases, the drivers were found to possess only learner's licences. The faceless learner's licence system needs thorough changes to curb these issues," he said.

According to the release, field officials have also warned that the loopholes in the faceless learner's licence issuing system could lead to the large-scale issuance of fake licences, posing risks to both road safety and national security.

"The minister directed the transport commissioner to instruct the NIC to immediately strengthen safeguards. He directed that until corrective measures are in place, all learner's licence tests must be conducted under direct supervision of department officers with strict verification," the release said.

## Asia's 1st woman locopilot Surekha Yadav set to retire

Yadav joined the Indian Railways in 1989 and became an assistant driver the following year, making history as Asia's first woman train driver

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Sept 19:** Surekha Yadav, who shattered the glass ceiling to become Asia's first woman locopilot, is set to retire at the end of this month after 36 years of service, an official from the Central Railway said on Friday.

Yadav joined the Indian Railways in 1989 and became an assistant driver the following year, making history as Asia's first woman train driver, the official said.

Born in Maharashtra's Satara district, Yadav completed a diploma in Electrical Engineering before joining the Railways and rose steadily through the ranks in the male-dominated field.

She operated a goods train in 1996, and by 2000, she was promoted to motorwoman. A decade later, she qualified as a ghat driver, eventually taking charge of mail and express trains.

For the last several years, Yadav has been operating mail and express trains on various routes.

She had the honour of driving the inaugural Vande Bharat Express from Solapur to Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) March 13, 2023.

As per tradition, she completed her final assignment by driving the prestigious Rajdhani Express on the Hazrat Nizamuddin (Delhi)-CSMT route, between Igatpuri and



CSMT, Thursday, a senior CR official said.

Yadav's remarkable career has been a proud chapter in Indian Railways' history and

a powerful symbol of women's empowerment.

"Surekha Yadav, Asia's first woman train driver, will retire September 30 after 36 glorious

**She had the honour of driving the inaugural Vande Bharat Express from Solapur to Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) March 13, 2023**

years of service. A true trailblazer, she broke barriers, inspired countless women, and proved that no dream is beyond reach. Her journey will forever remain a symbol of women's empowerment in the Indian Railways," the Central Railway said in a post on X.

## CASTE SURVEY IN K'TAKA FROM SEPT 22-OCT 7

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Sept 19:** The Karnataka government Friday approved the conduct of a state-wide Social and Educational Survey or caste census of all citizens between September 22 and October 7, 2025.

In its order, the government said, "In view of the details stated in the proposal, approval is accorded to the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission to undertake a survey on the social and educational status of all citizens of the State from September 22, 2025 to October 7, 2025."

The order notes that the Chairman of the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission had earlier written to the government stating the in-

tention to carry out the survey during the above period.

"Deputy Commissioners and Chief Executive Officers of Zilla Panchayats have already been informed through video conference to organise the necessary training programmes at the district and taluk level for the enumerators and to create public awareness to ensure full participation in the survey," the order stated.

The government clarified that it had carefully examined the proposal before fixing the survey dates and issuing the formal order.

The Commission's survey is aimed at compiling comprehensive data on the social and educational conditions of all residents of Karnataka.



of the day

quote

I've written to Shri Amit Shah ji to view Yasin Malik's case through a humanitarian lens. While I differ with his political ideology, one cannot ignore the courage it took him to renounce violence and choose the path of political engagement and non-violent dissent

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP CHIEF

In the last 11 years, we have seen India transforming. The people in the previous governments used to call themselves secular

YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

Training in the police force not only imparts legal knowledge but also builds communication, cooperation and team spirit. This foundational training shapes the character and personality of police officers

BHAJANLAL SHARMA | RAJASTHAN CM

SHORT TAKES

K'taka: Woman goes missing, found dead

**Kalaburagi:** The decomposed body of a 20-year-old woman was found on the premises of a cement factory in the Malkheda area of Sedam taluk Friday, prompting police to register a murder case, officials said. Bhagyashree, a college student, had gone missing September 11. Her father, a union leader at the cement factory, filed a missing person complaint with the local police. CCTV footage reportedly showed her walking along a nearby road on the day she disappeared.

Armed men open fire at builder's office

**Gurugram:** A group of masked gunmen opened fire at a real estate company's office in Sector 45, triggering panic in the area, police said Friday. They said the assailants fired 25-30 rounds at the office of MNR Buildmark Thursday night. The bullets pierced the windows, and glass shards lay scattered at the scene. Gangster Deepak Nandal claimed responsibility for the attack on social media.

Encounter breaks out

**Jammu:** An encounter broke out between security forces and terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district Friday night, Army officials said. "In an intelligence-based operation in the general area of Kishtwar, alert troops of the White Knight Corps established contact with terrorists at around 8 pm," the White Knight Corps said in a post on X. Confirming that an exchange of fire took place, the Army said, "The operations is currently underway."

Bombay HC receives second bomb threat

**Mumbai:** The Bombay High Court Friday received a bomb threat email, the second in a week, which turned out to be a hoax after a thorough search, an official said. An email about a bomb blast in the court premises in south Mumbai was received on the official ID early in the morning, he said. Teams from the bomb detection and disposal squad (BDDS) and dog squad carried out a complete search, but nothing suspicious was found, the official said. The court began functioning according to its regular timing, he said. The high court had received a similar threat email on September 12, which led to the suspension of hearings for a few hours. The police had registered a case against unidentified persons at the time.



The BJP is doing politics... They are projecting the Congress government as anti-Hindu. I told ministers to condemn it and give a proper reply to them

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

EC de-lists 474 more parties

In continuation, in the second phase, ECI delisted 474 RUPPs September 18, based on non-contestation in elections conducted by ECI continuously for 6 years. Thus, 808 RUPPs have been delisted in the last 2 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 19:** The Election Commission (EC) Friday said it has de-listed 474 more registered unrecognised political parties for flouting norms, including not contesting elections in the last six years.

In the first phase of the exercise, the EC de-listed 334 registered unrecognised political parties (RUPPs) August 9.

"In continuation, in the second phase, ECI delisted 474 RUPPs September 18, based on non-contestation in elections conducted by ECI continuously for 6 years. Thus, 808 RUPPs have been delisted in the last 2 months," the poll body said in a statement.

The guidelines for the registration of political parties note that if a party does not contest elections continuously for six years, it will be taken off the list of registered parties.

Till recently, there were 2,520 RUPPs. After the de-listing exercise, 2,046 RUPPs remain.

Besides, there are six recognised national parties and 67 state parties.

Of the 808 RUPPs de-listed in the last two months, 14 are from Bihar, where Assembly polls are due in November.

Separately, 359 RUPPs have been identified for not having submitted their annual audited accounts in the last three financial years – 2021-22, 2022-23 and



2023-24 -- within the stipulated time period and contesting polls but not filing election expenditure reports. These parties are from 23 states and Union territories.

Since 2001, the EC has carried out the exercise of weeding out defunct RUPPs "three to four" times, officials said. The Supreme Court had earlier barred the poll panel from "derecognizing" political parties, noting that it was not prescribed under law.

However, the EC has found a way to "delist parties". The parties de-listed can be listed again by the poll authority without getting into the process of giving them fresh recognition, a former EC functionary pointed out.

Some RUPPs were in the past found flouting the income-tax and money-laundering laws.

DELHI HC ISSUES NOTICE TO DUSU POLL WINNERS

The Delhi High Court Friday expressed displeasure over the use of luxury cars like Bentley, Rolls Royce and Ferrari, and even JCBs, for campaigning in the Delhi University student body elections. The high court noted the candidates and organisers hadn't learnt any lesson from the previous year's judicial order that withheld poll results owing to nuisance and defacement of public property

Uttarakhand: Five more bodies found, toll rises to seven

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Gopeshwar, Sept 19:** Five more bodies were found from the rain-ravaged villages in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district Friday as rescue teams dug through debris and waded through sludge in search of the missing.

With this, the death toll due to landslides and flooding in the area has climbed to seven. Two bodies were found Thursday, officials said.

As rescuers pulled out the bodies, the family members of the victims broke down.

Four of the five bodies were found from Kuntari Laga Phali village Friday and one was pulled out of the rubble in neighbouring Kuntari Laga Sarpani, the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) in Dehradun said. Landslides and flooding triggered by heavy rain hit four villages -- Kuntari Laga Phali, Kuntari Laga Sarpani, Sera and Dhurma -- in Chamoli's Nandanagar area, about 260 km from state capital Dehradun and 50 km from the Chamoli district headquarters at Gopeshwar, Thursday.

A total of 45 houses and 15 cowsheds were damaged in the incidents. Nandanagar is already reeling from land subsidence. The bodies found from Kuntari Laga Phali were identified as those of Deveshwari Devi (65), Kanta Devi (38) and her sons Vikas and Vishal, both aged 10. Kanta Devi's husband, Kunwar Singh (42), was rescued alive miraculously 16 hours after the incident Thursday evening.

India reacts to Pak, Saudi Arabia defence agreement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 19:** India Friday said it expects Saudi Arabia to keep in mind "mutual interests and sensitivities" in the bilateral strategic partnership in the wake of Riyadh sealing a strategic defence pact with Pakistan.

The "Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement" signed on Wednesday by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman states that "any aggression against either of the two countries shall be considered as an aggression against both".

"India and Saudi Arabia have a wide-ranging strategic partnership that has deepened considerably in the last few years," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "Our expectation is that our strategic partnership with Saudi Arabia will be pursued keeping in mind mutual interests and sensitivities, within the framework of this partnership," he said.

Jaiswal was responding to a question at his weekly media briefing. In its initial reaction to the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia pact, the Ministry of External Affairs Thursday said it will take all steps to protect the country's national interests and ensure comprehensive national security.

Jaiswal, responding to a separate question about the possibility of other countries such as the United Arab Emirates



(UAE) and Qatar becoming party to the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia pact, said India has wide-ranging ties with both these countries. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had recently spoken to the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, and that UAE's minister of state for foreign affairs, Reem Al Hashimy, visited New Delhi for talks with foreign secretary Vikram Misri, he said. India's relations with the UAE and Qatar are "expansive", Jaiswal said.

The Pakistan-Saudi Arabia joint statement said the new defence agreement reflects the "shared commitment of both nations to enhance their security" and it "aims to develop aspects of defence cooperation between the two countries and strengthen joint deterrence against any aggression". Pakistan has been a key ally of Saudi Arabia and both sides have a long-standing relationship in the defence sector. While the US provides the overall security framework to Saudi Arabia, in many cases Pakistan has provided manpower and expertise to it.



People travel on a tractor-trolley through the swollen Bean River after heavy rainfall in Chilla Range, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand

PTI PHOTO

Man to drag Rahul to police for sharing phone number

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Prayagraj (UP), Sept 19:** Anjani Mishra, a resident of Meja Road in Prayagraj, is extremely upset by the hundreds of calls he has been receiving since yesterday evening after his mobile number was shared by Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's press conference in New Delhi regarding claims of "vote theft".

Mishra, who runs a Common Service Centre on Meja Road in Meja tehsil, told PTI Friday, "Since yesterday evening, I have received over 300 calls asking about vote theft. I am fed up with these calls and will soon file a police complaint against Rahul Gandhi."

He said, "I have been using this mobile number for the last 15 years, and I don't know how Rahul Gandhi shared my number at his press conference. Now, my mobile phone has become a problem for me."

Ramping up his attack on the issue of vote theft, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Thursday accused Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar of protecting those who "destroyed democracy".

The Election Commission dubbed the allegations "incorrect and baseless" and said, "No deletion of any vote can be done online by any member of the public, as misconceived by Gandhi." In his fresh offensive against the Election Commission, Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, said the poll panel must stop protecting "vote chors" and provide within a week information sought by the Karnataka CID in an investigation into voter deletions.

Women make up nearly half of India's small-scale fisheries'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kochi/Chennai, Sept 19:** Women constitute nearly half of India's small-scale fisheries workforce, feeding millions and sustaining livelihoods across coastal and inland communities, according to a new study.

A total of 4.8 million women engage in small-scale fisheries in the country, accounting for four out of every 10 people involved in the sector, the study by Global Illuminating Hidden Harvests (IHH) of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations said.

Their contributions span the value chain, including 27 per cent in pre-harvest activities such as net-making and boat operation; 18 per cent in harvesting; and a significant 55 per cent in post-harvest handling, processing, and trade, the study noted.

IHH provides a snapshot of the contributions of small-scale fisheries (SSF) to sustainable development.

The study was discussed at the three-day regional meeting of Bay of Bengal rim countries, jointly organised by the FAO and the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) in Chennai, according to a state-



ment issued Friday.

Women's work ensures that the sector not only delivers nutrition but also supports family incomes and local economies, BOBP said, quoting the study.

BOBP-IGO is a Regional Fisheries Advisory Body (RFAB) for countries bordering the Bay of Bengal—Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka. It serves as a think tank on transboundary and contemporary national issues concerning fisheries management for its member countries.

The study estimates that India's small-scale fisheries generate USD 2.3 billion annually from first sales of catch, with women central to processing and marketing the fish that reaches consumers.

Beyond livelihoods, women's involvement is also critical for nutrition security.

A total of 4.8 million women engage in small-scale fisheries in the country, accounting for four out of every 10 people involved in the sector

The report highlights that SSF landings could meet 20 per cent of the recommended dietary intake of six key nutrients—including omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin A, iron, and zinc—for nearly 79 million people in India.

While discussing the report at the meet, experts warned that women's contributions remain undervalued in policies and governance frameworks. The meet aimed to prepare National Plans of Action (NPOA) for small-scale fisheries, with particular emphasis on enhancing women's visibility and empowerment.

Presenting India's country report, Deputy Fisheries Commissioner Sanjay Pandey said that inland fisheries continue to surge while the country's marine fish production has stagnated.

Amid mounting challenges such as habitat loss, pollution, and dwindling fish catch, the government introduced a range of measures to empower SSF communities. These include the establishment of 117 fishing harbours and landing centres with modern facilities, the installation of 937 artificial reefs, the creation of 100 climate-smart coastal fishing villages, and social safety nets covering 600,000 families, among others, India's status report said.

MANIPUR TERROR ATTACK

Two Assam Rifles jawans killed, 5 hurt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, Sept 19:** Two jawans of the Assam Rifles were killed and five others were injured when a group of armed men ambushed a vehicle of the paramilitary force in Manipur's Bishnupur district Friday evening, officials said.

The incident took place in the district's Nambol Sabal Leikai area around 5.50 pm.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack till the filing of the report. "A group of gunmen ambushed the vehicle in which Assam Rifles personnel were travelling towards Bishnupur district from Imphal, claiming the life of two jawans and injuring five," an official said.

The five injured people were brought to the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, a RIMS official told PTI. "... the column was ambushed by unidentified terrorists on the Highway in the denotified area of Manipur. In the ensuing action, two personnel of Assam Rifles were martyred and five were injured who have since been evacuated to RIMS and are currently stable. Search operations are ongoing to apprehend the terrorists involved in the incident," a statement said.







# international

## of the day quote

We must keep what is good about our health foreign assistance programs while rapidly fixing what is broken. We will continue to be the world's health leader and the most generous nation in the world, but we will do so in a way that directly benefits the American people and directly promotes our national interest

MARCO RUBIO | SECRETARY OF STATE, US

Putin has sought to convince the world that Russian victory is inevitable. But he lies. He lies to the world. He lies to his people. Perhaps he even lies to himself

RICHARD MOORE | CHIEF OF THE SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, UK

The mental torture being inflicted on me and (my wife) Bushra Begum in prison is being carried out by Asim Munir, and the sole purpose is to make us break down and submit

IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PM, PAKISTAN

## SHORT TAKES

### Oli denies giving any shooting orders

**Kathmandu:** Nepal's deposed prime minister KP Sharma Oli Friday denied that he had given any shooting orders during the 'Gen Z' demonstrations, saying bullets were fired at protesters from automatic guns that the police did not possess and called for a probe into the matter. In his first public statement since his ouster September 9, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) chairman blamed the infiltrators for the violence during the "peaceful protest" by Gen-Z. "The government didn't order to shoot at the demonstrators," 73-year-old Oli said in a message issued on the occasion of Constitution Day. "The bullets were fired at the protesters from automatic guns, which were not possessed by the police personnel, and this must be investigated," Oli said.

### Paramilitary drone attack kills 70

**Cairo:** A drone attack blamed on Sudan's paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces struck a mosque during prayers Friday, killing at least 70 worshippers in the North Darfur region, aid workers and the Sudanese army said. The strike in the besieged city of El Fasher completely destroyed the mosque, and the death toll would likely go higher because bodies still were buried in the rubble, said a worker with the local aid group Emergency Response Rooms. The worker spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation by the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF. Sudan's army, which has been fighting against the RSF in escalating violence since April 2023, said in a statement that it was mourning the deaths of at least 70 victims in the attack.

### Ukraine advances talks with allies

**Kyiv:** Ukraine is making progress in intensive talks to formalise legally binding security guarantees with the United States and European allies, a key part of its bid to end the war with Russia, First Deputy Foreign Minister Sergiy Kyslytsya said. A bilateral agreement with the United States remains vital, and US President Donald Trump's recent commitment to participate in Ukraine's defence was a "breakthrough moment", Kyslytsya told Reuters in an interview.

## Karki vows to fix 'failure' that led to Gen Z protests



REUTERS

**Kathmandu, Sept 19:** Nepal's interim prime minister pledged Friday to fight corruption, create jobs and raise living standards in her first public comments since coming to office after youth-led protests toppled the government. Sushila Karki said the protests - that left at least 72 people dead and forced her predecessor KP Sharma Oli to quit - had been triggered by frustration over growing corruption and other failings.

Authorities have said more than 2,100 people were injured in the unrest that raged for two days last week. Arson and vandalism caused extensive damage to private and public property, including the complex housing the prime minister's office, the Supreme Court and the parliament.

"We must accept the fact that the protests took place because of the failure to fulfil the spirit and objectives of providing good governance and prosperity enshrined in the constitution," Karki said.

She spoke on Nepal's national day, marking the 10th anniversary of the proclamation of the constitution. The former Supreme Court chief justice was appointed to the post last week following talks between representatives of the protesters, the president and the army chief.

Karki - the first woman to lead Nepal - was tasked with holding parliamentary elections March 5.

## Saudi-Pak pact adds nuclear umbrella to Mideast security



**Pakistan is the only nuclear-armed Muslim-majority nation whose weapons are involved**  
**Defence pact does not spell out if nuclear weapons are involved**  
**Saudi Arabia bolstering security against Israel**  
**Plummeting confidence in US commitment to the region's security**

REUTERS

**Islamabad/Dubai, Sept 19:** With many Arab nations feeling a rising threat from Israel, the Saudi-Pakistan defense pact announced this week brings Pakistan - and its nuclear umbrella - into the region's security equation.

The "Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement" signed between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia Wednesday effectively marries Riyadh's money with Pakistan's giant nuclear-armed military, analysts said.

Few details of the pact have been disclosed, and Pakistan's stated nuclear doctrine says that its weapons are solely aimed against long-term adversary India.

But Riyadh is hinting that it will have a de facto nuclear shield under the agreement, while analysts say that Israel, widely understood to be the on-

ly nuclear state in the Middle East, will be watching closely.

Pakistani Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif told Reuters that nuclear weapons were "not on the radar" of the pact. He said the agreement could be extended to cover other Gulf nations.

"We have no intention of using this pact for any aggression," said Asif. "But if the parties are threatened, then obviously this arrangement will become operative."

Riyadh may see the nuclear issue differently.

Gulf Arab states said Israel, which has never confirmed or denied possessing nuclear weapons, had shown itself to be a direct threat following its unprecedented strikes on Qatar last week. Saudi Arabia has also said that if rival Iran acquired nuclear weapons, it would follow.

Asked whether Pakistan

would now be obliged to provide Saudi Arabia with a nuclear umbrella, a senior Saudi official told Reuters, "This is a comprehensive defensive agreement that encompasses all military means."

Analysts said that the agreement also reflects shrinking confidence in the security provided by the United States to the region.

"From the Saudi perspective, it is intended to plug the strategic and conventional deterrence deficit vis-a-vis nuclear-armed Israel," said Hasan Alhasan, senior fellow for Middle East Policy at London's International Institute for Strategic Studies.

A statement from Saudi Arabia said the pact "aims to develop aspects of defense cooperation between the two countries and strengthen joint deterrence". The Saudi government media office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on whether Pakistan's nuclear weapons were included in the agreement.

### PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Pakistan, the only nuclear-armed Muslim nation, is one of the poorer countries in Asia, but it has an army of more than 600,000 soldiers to defend against its much larger adversary, India, with which it has fought three major wars, along with numerous clashes, including a four-day conflict in May that was their heaviest fighting in decades.

Wednesday's announcement made no mention of nuclear weapons or any payment to Pakistan. "The agreement states that any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both," Pakistan said.

## Nato intercepts Russian warplanes violating Estonian airspace



AGENCIES

**Vilnius/Washington, Sept 19:** Three Russian warplanes that violated Estonian airspace have been intercepted by Nato, the military alliance has said.

Estonia's foreign ministry condemned the incursion as "brazen". It said three Russian MiG-31 fighter jets entered the airspace of a Nato member "without permission and remained there for a total of 12 minutes" Friday over the Gulf of Finland.

Nato spokesperson Allison Hart said the military alliance "responded immediately and intercepted the Russian aircraft", calling it "yet another example of reckless Russian behaviour and Nato's ability to respond".

Estonian Prime Minister Kristen Michal later said his government had "decided to request Nato Article 4 consultations".

Article 4 of the Nato treaty formally starts urgent consultations within the 32-member alliance, which ties the US and many European nations together on collective defence.

The Russian military has not publicly commented on the issue. Tensions have escalated between the Nato military alliance and Russia since Moscow launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

They have risen in the last

week, after Poland and Romania - both Nato members - said Russian drones breached their airspace.

Estonia's foreign ministry said it summoned the Russian chargé d'affaires "to lodge a protest" over Friday's incursion, while top EU diplomat Kaja Kallas described the incident as "an extremely dangerous provocation".

In a statement, Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna said Friday's incursion was "unprecedentedly brazen".

He continued, "Russia's increasingly extensive testing of boundaries and growing aggressiveness must be met with a swift increase in political and economic pressure."

The minister added Russia had already violated Estonia's airspace four times in 2025.

In a post on X, Kallas, who is an Estonian national, said the EU "will continue to support our member states in strengthening their defences with European resources".

She said Russian President Vladimir Putin was "testing the West's resolve. We must not show weakness".

Echoing her words, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on X "We will respond to every provocation with determination while investing in a stronger Eastern flank."

## British couple freed by Taliban arrives in Qatar

REUTERS

**Doha, Sept 19:** Barbie Reynolds, 76, and her husband Peter, 80, arrived in Qatar from Afghanistan into the arms of their daughter Friday, after the British couple were freed from eight months in Taliban captivity.

Family members said they had been concerned for the health of the couple, who ran a charity in Afghanistan where they had lived for 18 years, staying on after the Taliban returned to power in 2021.

They were detained in February and freed after what an official with knowledge of the matter described as months of negotiations with the Taliban by Qatar in coordination with Britain.

As they stepped off the plane in Doha, the couple waved to waiting relatives. Their



daughter, Sarah Entwistle, ran toward her mother in tears, embracing her tightly.

Before boarding the plane at Kabul airport, Barbie Reynolds said she and her husband would return "if we can", adding that they were Afghan citizens.

Speaking to reporters before being reunited with her parents, Entwistle said the family was "forever grateful to the Qatari and British governments for standing with us during this difficult time".

"Thank you for giving us our family back."

The official with knowledge of the matter said the two were held separately throughout their detention. The Qatari embassy provided them with "critical support including access to their doctor, delivery of medication and regular communication with their family", the official said.

Qatar has worked for the release of foreigners detained in Afghanistan, including helping to free at least three Americans this year.

Afghanistan's foreign ministry posted on X that the couple had violated Afghan laws, without giving details. It said Afghanistan "does not view issues related to citizens from a political or transactional perspective".



Destroyed and flooded houses are pictured during the groundbreaking ceremony of reconstruction of the devastated village of Blatten, Switzerland, Friday

PTI PHOTO

## Barred from Eurovision, Russia hosts rival 'Intervision' song contest

REUTERS

**Moscow, Sept 19:** Banished from Eurovision, Russia will launch the final of its own international song contest at President Vladimir Putin's behest Saturday, with a Soviet-era name and acts intended to promote "traditional family values".

Singers at "Intervision" will hail from 23 countries accounting for more than half the world's population, including China, India and Brazil, and compete for a cash prize of 30 million roubles (\$360,000).

Russia has been excluded from the Eurovision song contest since Putin ordered tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine in 2022. This year, Putin announced his rival contest, with a top Kremlin aide named to head the supervisory board. Kyiv has called the event "an instrument of hostile propaganda".



The show will be broadcast live on Russian television. The Russian organisers say it will also be available either over the internet or on TV in other countries with a combined population of more than 4 billion people, although they have not released a list of foreign broad-

casters that plan to carry it.

Songs can be performed in any language. A professional jury of representatives from each country will decide the outcome, rather than the viewing public. Intervision revives the name of a music contest that Moscow used to stage in

the Soviet era with its Eastern European satellite states. The new version will feature acts from countries Russia now considers friendly, including Belarus, Cuba, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the UAE and Venezuela.

Serbia is the only country to

■ Putin ordered revival of Soviet-era song contest  
■ Twenty-three countries will take part in 'Intervision'  
■ Russia is banned from Eurovision due to war in Ukraine  
■ Intervision stresses 'traditional family values'

### TRUMP, XI TO MEET AT APEC

US President Donald Trump Friday said he and Chinese leader Xi Jinping will meet at a summit in South Korea next month and he will travel to China early next year. Trump talked with Xi by phone Friday in a push to finalise a deal to allow the popular social media app TikTok to keep operating in the United States





of the day

quote

GST introduced in 2017 transformed our taxation landscape, and now GST 2.0 builds on that foundation with simplified rate structures and greater efficiency. GST 2.0 truly embodies the vision of One Nation, One Tax

ANIL RAJPUT | CHAIRMAN, FICCI CASCADE

Gold traded positive in the last trading session of the week, with the overall sentiment for precious metals remaining bullish. This optimism is driven by several bullish factors, including strong inflows into exchange-traded funds this year, and central banks actively purchasing gold

SAUMIL GANDHI | SENIOR ANALYST, COMMODITIES AT HDFC SECURITIES

In February, India will be hosting the AI Impact Summit. It is a great honour for our country. After the summits in the UK, South Korea, and France, the next Summit will be held in India

ASHWINI VAISHNAV | IT MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Gold rebounds ₹800

**New Delhi:** Gold prices rebounded sharply by Rs 800 to Rs 1,14,000 per 10 grams in the national capital Friday tracking firm global cues amid escalating geopolitical tensions and renewed trade frictions between the US and China. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,13,200 per 10 grams Thursday. In the local bullion market, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also increased by Rs 700 to Rs 1,13,500 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). The precious metal had settled at Rs 1,12,800 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Additionally, silver prices extended gains for the second straight day by climbing Rs 500 to Rs 1,32,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) Friday. The white metal had ended at Rs 1,31,500 per kg Thursday, as per the association.

Forex reserves jump

**Mumbai:** India's forex reserves jumped \$4.698 billion to \$702.966 billion for the week ended September 12, the Reserve Bank of India said Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had increased \$4.038 billion to \$698.268 billion. The overall reserves had jumped \$3.51 billion to \$694.23 billion. For the week ended September 5, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased \$2.537 billion to \$587.014 billion, the data released Friday showed. The gold reserves increased \$2.12 billion to \$92.419 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by \$32 million to \$18.773 billion, the apex bank said.

Suzuki to cut prices

**New Delhi:** Suzuki Motorcycle India Friday said it will reduce prices of its products across models by up to Rs 18,024 to pass the benefit of GST rate reduction to customers. With the revised price effective September 22, 2025, customers can now enjoy savings, with the maximum benefit going up to Rs 18,024 depending on the model, Suzuki Motorcycle India Pvt Ltd (SMIPL) said in a statement. Alongside two-wheelers, the reduced GST on spare parts and accessories will directly translate into lower maintenance costs, collectively enhancing the overall ownership value for Suzuki customers, it added.

Corporate bond index derivatives trading is another frontier in this regard. Good discussions are ongoing between Sebi and RBI, and we are hopeful that we will see progress soon

ANANTH NARAYAN G | WHOLE-TIME MEMBER, SEBI

Japan's R&I upgrades India

This is the third such upgrade of India by a sovereign credit rating agency this year, following S&P's upgrade to 'BBB' (from BBB-) in August 2025 and Morningstar DBRS' upgrade to 'BBB' (from BBB (low))

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 19:** Japan's Rating and Investment Information, Inc (R&I) Friday upgraded India's Foreign Currency Issuer Rating from BBB to BBB+ with a stable outlook, citing strong domestic demand, fiscal discipline, and improved external stability.

The agency affirmed the country's foreign currency short-term debt rating at a-2.

This is the third such upgrade by a sovereign credit rating agency this year, following S&P's upgrade to 'BBB' (from BBB-) in August 2025 and Morningstar DBRS' upgrade to 'BBB' (from BBB (low)) in May 2025.

R&I said India's large economy, currently in its demographic dividend phase, is expected to sustain firm growth despite global uncertainties.

In FY2024, real GDP expanded 6.5%, supported by consumption, investment, and external demand. Growth remained strong in April-June 2025 at 7.8%. For FY2025, the Reserve Bank of India projects GDP growth at 6.5%.

"R&I believes that the economy will maintain the growth rate in the mid-6% range from FY2026 onwards, backed by the population growth, the catch-up effect of income, and the government's public investment



and economic policy among other factors," the rating agency said in a statement.

Government of India also welcomed the upgrade and said the move reaffirms India's position as one of the most dynamic and resilient major economies in the world.

"Three credit rating upgrades for India in five months reflect increasing global recognition for India's robust and resilient macroeconomic fundamentals and prudent fiscal management, and underscore global confidence in India's medium-term growth prospects amid prevailing global uncertainties," the government said.

The rating agency noted that the government has reduced

the fiscal deficit moderately, with the central government's gap narrowing to 4.8% of GDP in FY2024 and a 4.4% target set for FY2025. Combined state and central debt fell to about 80% of GDP by March 2025, with most debt held domestically.

It also noted that India's external stability has improved, with the current account deficit below 1% of GDP in FY2024, supported by surpluses in services and remittances. Adequate forex reserves and a low external debt ratio also reduced external risks.

R&I acknowledged potential risks, including the US raising tariffs on Indian exports to 50%, but assessed the impact as limited given India's reliance on

FLIPKART TO SELL RE BIKES

Mid-sized motorcycle maker Royal Enfield Friday said it has tied up with e-commerce marketplace Flipkart to sell its entire 350cc portfolio. The company's 350cc range - the Bullet 350, Classic 350, Hunter 350, Goan Classic 350 and the new Meteor 350 will be available on Flipkart, starting September 22, 2025, in five cities - Bangalore, Gurugram, Kolkata, Lucknow and Mumbai



PROFIT-TAKING

Stock markets snap 3-day rally



On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 721.53 points or 0.88%, and the Nifty climbed 213.05 points or 0.84%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Sept 19:** Snapping its three-day gaining streak, benchmark BSE Sensex declined by 387 points Friday due to profit-taking in blue-chip shares HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank even as Adani group shares rallied after a favourable Sebi order.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 387.73 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at 82,626.23. During the day, it dropped 528.04 points or 0.63 per cent to 82,485.92.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 96.55 points or 0.38 per cent to 25,327.05.

Banking, FMCG, and IT shares fell due to profit-taking while energy, realty, and metal shares emerged as gainers.

Among Sensex firms, HCL Tech, ICICI Bank, Titan, Trent, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Mahindra & Mahindra and HDFC Bank were the major laggards.

However, Adani Ports, Bharti Airtel, SBI, NTPC and Sun Pharma were among the gainers.

"The Indian equity market witnessed profit-booking after a sustained multi-session rally, driven by anticipation

Adani shares gain big after SEBI's clean chit

Adani Group companies gained over Rs 69,000 crore in market capitalisation in a single session Friday, fueled by a buying frenzy following SEBI's clean chit in the Hindenburg case. The regulator's order, which dismissed allegations of stock manipulation and related-party misuse, ignited a surge of investor confidence, sending Adani stocks sharply higher across the board. Leading the charge, Adani Power surged 12.40 per cent, emerging as the top gainer across the group's listed entities. Adani Total Gas jumped 7.35 per cent, while Adani Green Energy and Adani Enterprises climbed 5.33 per cent and 5.04 per cent, respectively, according to stock exchange data. Adani Energy Solutions rose 4.70 per cent, rounding out the list of companies that saw gains above the 4.5 per cent mark.

Maruti all new Victoris launched at Tushi Motors



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Sept 19:** Maruti Suzuki dealer Tushi Motors has launched the all new Victoris Friday.

Tushi Motors Managing Director Preeti Pallavi Patnaik, Director Ansuman Patnaik, VP Harmohan Mohanty, Business Head Ashok Jain, Arena Sales Head Sahadev Jena were present in this occasion. Actress Prakruti Mishra was the chief guest at the launch.

Maruti Victoris is available in six variants namely LXI, VXI, ZXI, ZXI Optional, ZXI Plus, and ZXI Plus Optional. Key features include a 10.25-inch digital driver display, panoramic sunroof, and 64-color ambient lighting. It is the first Maruti vehicle to come

with Level-II emissions.

The car is available in 10 attractive colors and is available in petrol, strong-hybrid, and underbody CNG power-train options. It is also the first Maruti vehicle to benefit from an underbody twin-tank CNG setup, which provides more boot space. It has received five stars in the Global NCAP Adult Safety Standard.

While the car is a 5-seater, it has a 5.1 surround sound system with 8 speakers that is suitable for young people. It has 6 airbags for safety, an auto braking system that will help the car avoid accidents.

The car has a modern light system for easy travel in fog, rain and at night. Along with good mileage, many other features can be found in it.

PhonePe secures aggregator licence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 19:** PhonePe Friday said it has got the final authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an online payment aggregator.

With RBI authorisation in place, PhonePe will be able to expand its reach and tap into online merchants, with a particular focus on small and medium businesses (SMEs) across the country, according to a release.

The company believes the

nod positions it to serve a broader spectrum of enterprises seeking reliable and secure payment processing solutions.

Yuvraj Singh Shekhawat, CBO Merchant Business at PhonePe, said, "With this authorisation, PhonePe is well-positioned to accelerate financial inclusion by providing accessible payment solutions to businesses that were previously underserved, particularly in the SME segment."

Malabar's Artistry Show in Angul Store

**ANGUL:** Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the largest gold and diamond retail chains in the country, launched the 'Artistry Show', from September 19 to 22, at its Angul showroom. This exclusive exhibition will showcase the artistic finesse of handcrafted jewellery with an extensive range of traditional and contemporary designs. The show was launched by Dr Mahesh Chandra Dhal, Chairman and Arjyasuta Dhal, Vice Chairman, Adarsha Group, Angul in the presence of all the management team of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Angul. Each piece of jewellery on display at the Artistry Show is unique and a testament to the art and skilled craft of Indian design. "We are delighted to launch the Artistry Show in Angul showroom and introduce exquisite designs that celebrate the excellence of our jewellery craftsmanship. Jewellery buyers in the city can enjoy our products with the assurance of the highest quality, purity, and fair prices," said MP Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group. Malabar Gold & Diamonds is renowned for its commitment to transparency and fairness in pricing. As part of its Fair Price Promise, the brand ensures that customers can purchase their favourite jewellery at reasonable making charges. Furthermore, the brand offers the One India One Gold Rate scheme, ensuring uniform pricing for gold across all its stores in the country.

Chandi Bhandar unveils 'Navakriti' collection

**BHUBANESWAR:** Odisha's largest silver jewellery chain, Chandi Bhandar, has launched its festive jewellery line 'Navakriti Collection' ahead of Durga Puja. The unveiling took place at the brand's Said Nagar outlet Friday, with directors Lipsa Hans and Manik Hans addressing the media. Speaking on the occasion, Director Lipsa Hans said, "As Durga Puja is ahead, this new collection is based on Maa Durga and her nine divine forms worshipped over nine days. Each form embodies a unique essence — strength, devotion, courage, compassion, purity, and blessings. Navratri is a festival of colours, traditions, and the radiant spirit of the Goddess." The Navakriti Collection, crafted in sterling silver with an oxidised finish, is inspired by the sacred Navratri. It features nine gemstones — Ruby, Pearl, Red Coral (synthetic), Emerald, Yellow Sapphire, Blue Sapphire, Hessonite, Cat's Eye, and Zircon (synthetic). "With seven natural gemstones and two carefully chosen synthetic ones, the collection balances heritage, authenticity, and modern accessibility," she added. To mark the launch, Chandi Bhandar is offering a flat 30% discount on making charges across the collection. Director Manik Hans highlighted the brand's growth, saying, "Established in 2013, Chandi Bhandar is now Odisha's largest silver jewellery chain with 24 stores across the state. We are committed to free lifetime cleaning, the best exchange policy, hallmark and quality-tested products, and a wide range of customizable silver items."

UNPRECEDENTED CRAZE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 19:** Apple's latest flagship, the iPhone 17, launched Friday to an unprecedented frenzy, with eager customers lining up for hours - even camping overnight for up to 21 hours - outside Apple stores across major cities.

The massive anticipation was palpable as fans in Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore formed long, serpentine queues, determined to be among the first to get their hands on the new devices.

The scene was a vibrant showcase of Apple fandom, highlighting the brand's enduring appeal and the excitement surrounding its latest offering in India.

Retailers reported record-breaking foot traffic on opening day, with early buyers sharing stories of cama-

iPhone 17 sparks overnight frenzy across Indian cities

CUSTOMERS QUEUE UP FOR NEW IPHONE 17, SCUFFLE ERUPTS BEFORE OPENING OF APPLE STORE



raderie and determination in the long lines.

At the Apple Store in Delhi's Saket Citywalk Mall, as also in Mumbai and Bangalore, people lined up well before store opening hours, underscoring strong demand fuelled by enthusiastic young buyers and the brand's premium appeal.

In Bangalore, the new-

The young, aspirational user base is growing... And now, what is happening is almost three out of five iPhones in India are being sold on EMIs, which actually reduces the purchase barrier and behaviour for lot of these young audience who wish to buy an iPhone

TARUN PATHAK | RESEARCH DIRECTOR, COUNTERPOINT RESEARCH

Mumbai saw a similar frenzy outside Apple's Jio World Drive mall at Bandra Kurla Complex business district. A little before 6 am, a scuffle broke out among some of the customers had assembled, prompting the security personnel to intervene.

Once the store opened at the designated time of 8 am, it was a smooth flow with customers going in and quickly picking up units of their desired model.

While there is no official word from Apple yet on record turnout, analysts say Apple's growth in India is being fuelled by its strong brand appeal and wider adoption of EMI schemes among young buyers.

Apple unveiled the iPhone 17 series in the price range of Rs 82,900 to Rs 2,29,900, which became available in India starting

Friday for customers who have pre-booked the device.

In the US, the iPhone 17 series is priced between \$799 (about Rs 70,370) and \$1,999 (Rs 1.76 lakh) apiece.

According to multiple sources, Apple plans to increase iPhone production to 60 million units this year, from about 35-40 million units in 2024-25.

Reliance Digital launches iPhone 17 pan-India

Reliance Digital, India's leading electronics retail chain announced the nationwide launch of the highly anticipated Apple iPhone 17 series. With its expansive presence, the brand ensures that Apple enthusiasts across India — from metros to small towns — will be among the first to own the latest iPhone. At Reliance Digital, technology has always been about fulfilling aspirations. This season, Reliance Digital is making festivities arrive early with the lowest-ever prices on the iPhone 16 Plus and iPhone 16e. For the first time, the iPhone 16 Plus is available at an effective price of Rs 57,990, while the iPhone 16e at just Rs 42,990. The larger screen of iPhone 16 Plus provides a more immersive experience for watching videos, playing games, and multitasking. The iPhone 16e is the lowest priced Apple Intelligence-powered iPhone, making advanced innovation more accessible to millions of Indians. Offers will only be available till stocks last.



# India beat spirited Oman

Surya uses all batters as scratchy Men in Blue beat Oman by 21 runs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Abu Dhabi, Sept 19:** Skipper Suryakumar Yadav made optimal use of available resources in both departments as India did enough to beat a spirited Oman by 21 runs to end their league stage commitments in Asia Cup with a hat-trick of victories.

In less than 48 hours, India will once again lock horns with Pakistan in the Super 4s in Dubai and before that Indian skipper rightly decided to give his other 10 colleagues a hit in

the middle while pushing himself down to number 11.

India set a stiff target of 189 for Oman, who were playing T20 World Champions for the first time. The Indian bowling attack without Jasprit Bumrah and Varun Chakravathy didn't look exceptional but just about kept Oman at bay during the final overs, restricting them to 167 for 4 in 20 overs.

In the batting department, Sanju Samson (56) helped himself to a half-century while Axar Patel (26 off 13 balls) and

opener Abhishek Sharma (38 off 15 balls) followed the team template to the 'T' by scoring at a 200 plus strike-rate. Tilak Varma (29 off 18 balls) also did his cause no harm batting at an unfamiliar No.7 position.

However, Hardik Pandya (1), who needed some batting time, was unfortunately run-out by his one-time Baroda club-crick-et colleague Jiten Ramanandi and vice-captain Shubman Gill (5 off 8 balls) was slightly scratchy in his brief stay.

In bowling too, Surya had

the luxury of using as many as eight bowling options to keep everyone match-ready knowing that 189 would always be tall-order for Oman.

The two replacements in the playing eleven -- Harshit Rana (1/25 in 3 overs) and Arshdeep Singh (1/37) -- looked woefully short of game time even though both had played North Zone's only Duleep Trophy game this season.

Kuldeep Yadav (1/23 in 3 overs) as usual was cut above the rest. Arshdeep, who is un-

likely to play against Pakistan, got a chance to complete 100 wickets, making him the first Indian to reach that milestone.

For Oman, skipper Jatinder Singh (32 of 33 balls), fellow opener Aamir Kaleem (64 off 46 balls) and Hammad Mirza (51 off 34 balls) did put up a gutsy fight but it was not enough to script a famous win. But looking at the bigger picture, it gave Surya an idea of what to expect from his resources come business end of the tournament.

The biggest gainer was Samson, who helped himself to some runs although there is no guarantee that he would bat No 3 when Pakistan comes calling.

**Scratchy batting effort**

With vice-captain Gill getting out cheaply, the one drop slot warranted a right hander and accordingly Samson got a chance to bat in the top 3.

It wasn't the smoothest of his innings on a slightly slowish track but three fours and three sixes off 45 balls would certainly give him confidence ahead of the business week.

Of all his big hits, the first maximum off left-arm seamer Shah Faisal, a pick-up shot over widish long-on stood out but lack of match time showed as he did struggle to get going.

It was pretty obvious that India would like to bat first and make full use of the 20 overs before the start of the Super 4s giving sufficient time to their under-utilized middle-order ahead of Pakistan game Sunday.

BRIEF SCORES	
India	188/8 in 20 overs (Abhishek Sharma 38, Sanju Samson 56, Axar Patel 26, Tilak Varma 29; Aamir Kaleem 2/31, Shah Faisal 2/23, Jiten Ramanandi 2/33) beat Oman: 167/4 in 20 overs (Aamir Kaleem 64, Hammad Mirza 51)

# TOKAS MAKES JUDO HISTORY



*Himanshi Tokas becomes first Indian judoka to grab top spot in world junior rankings*

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Sept 19:** Himanshi Tokas made history in judo as she rose to the World No 1 ranking in the women's 63 kg weight category in the junior world rankings, becoming the first Indian judoka to hold the exalted position in the history of the sport.

In the women's 57 kg, India's Shahin Rajakbhai Darjada is ranked fourth, making it the first time that two Indian athletes are placed in the top five of their respective weight categories.

Himanshi, who gained three places in the list, is perched at the top of the rankings with 610 points as Indian judokas made handsome gains in the latest offering of the World Ranking List issued by the International Judo Federation (IJF).

The 20-year-old Himanshi, who is supported by the Reliance Foundation, surged to the top of the rankings following her triumph in the Asian Junior Championships 2025 last week (September 13). This was

her third title this year.

Before this, she had finished first in her weight class in the Taiepi Junior Asian Cup 2025 in July and had won the Casablanca African Open 2025 in January. In all, Himanshi has so far won gold medals in five competitions, one Continental Championship, three Continental Cup competitions, and one Continental Open Championship.

In the seniors category, Himanshi is ranked 61st in the women's 63kg category of the World Rankings with 611 points.

In the women's 57kg category, India's Shahin Rajakbhai Darjada is ranked fourth behind Riko Honda of Japan, Michela Teranova of Italy, and Bianca Reis of Brazil. Shahin has 442 points and has won three gold medals and a bronze so far this season.

Shahin won gold in the Asian Junior Championships 2025, Macau Junior Asian Cup 2025, and Taipei Junior Asian Cup 2025. She was placed third in the Tashkent Junior Asian Cup 2025 in May this year.

In the women's +78kg category, India's Kanwarpreet Kaur is ranked 10th in the world, as is Ishroop Narang in the women's -78kg category. Compatriot Nungshithoi Chanu Leishangthem is ranked 12th in the 52kg class.

## CHINA MASTERS

# Sat-Chi on the charge, Sindhu no match for An



*Currently ranked ninth in the world, Satwik and Chirag will face their arch-rivals and second seeds Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik of Malaysia in the semifinals Saturday*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Shenzhen, Sept 19:** India's top men's doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty continued their consistent run to advance to the semifinals of the China Masters Super 750 badminton tournament but PV Sindhu bowed out after falling yet again to Olympic champion An Se Young here Friday.

Satwik and Chirag, the former world No 1 Indian duo, who recently clinched their second World Championships bronze in Paris and finished runners-up at the Hong Kong Open last week, produced a clinical performance to out-class Chinese pair of Ren Xiang Yu and Xie Haonan 21-14 21-14 in the quarterfinals.

"We felt quite comfortable out there. Our goal was just to focus on our game and see how they responded. Right now, the way we're playing, it feels great — especially being able to play back-to-back matches freely, without any niggles, really happy with how we played today," Satwik said.

Chirag added: "I think we

made it tough for them right from the start. We didn't allow them to settle into the game at all. They're definitely a strong pair, but our plan was to keep things simple and take an early lead — and we managed to do that. So yes, really happy with the performance."

Satwik and Chirag got off to a flying start, unleashing a flurry of smashes to race to a 7-0 lead. A couple of errors allowed the Chinese to close in at 3-8, but the Indians maintained their rhythm to enter the interval with an 11-5 advantage.

While Ren and Xie attempted to change the pace with quick flat rallies and front-court play, the Indians remained sharp and aggressive. Chirag's flick serve made it 13-7, and another intense rally ended with the Chinese hitting wide to give India a 17-10 lead.

Earlier, double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu's woeful run against world No 1 An Se Young continued, as the Indian suffered her eighth straight defeat against the Korean, going down 14-21 13-21 in the women's singles quarterfinals.

"Last week wasn't great for me, but this week has been really positive. Reaching the quarterfinals has been encouraging, and I think the key now is to maintain that level and stay consistent in everything I do," Sindhu said.

Sindhu started poorly and trailed 1-6 before narrowing it to 5-9 with a delicate cross-court drop.

## Suraj loses in quarters

**Zagreb:** Young Suraj Vashishth gave a good account of himself on his senior World Championship debut, making the 60kg quarterfinals before bowing out while Aman suffered an early exit from the tournament here Friday. When other Greco Roman wrestlers have struggled to make one scoring move, the U20 World Championships bronze winner and U20 Asian champion won two bouts, giving something to cheer about to the coaching staff.

## Haaland's milestone

**London:** Erling Haaland toppled another Champions League record Thursday evening as he scored in Manchester City's 2-0 win over Napoli. For Haaland, it was his 12th goal of the season for club and country, with his opener against Napoli building on a clinical brace scored in the weekend's 3-0 victory over Manchester United.

The 25-year-old was unable to grab a double on this occasion but still made history by becoming the quickest player to reach 50 Champions League goals.

He's reached his half-century in just 49 matches in the competition, blitzing the previous record.

# Gourav smashes first ton of OPTL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Cuttack, Sept 19:** Gourav Choudhary's heroics with the bat, who scored the first century of the event, helped Bhubaneswar Tigers register a thrilling win in the 5th match of the Odisha Pro T20 League 2025, handing Keonjhar Miners a 37-run defeat at the Barabati Stadium here Friday.

Chasing a target of 199, Debabrata Pradhan and Om T Munde opened the innings for Keonjhar Miners. They were reduced to 28/2 at the end of three overs, with both openers dismissed cheaply. Munde scored 5 off 5 balls, while Pradhan added just 9 from 7 deliveries.

Biwabhusan Bihari was the top scorer with 38 off 32 balls, while Soumya Lenka contributed 19 from 11 deliveries. Towards the end, Anil Parida played a brisk knock of 36 off 19 balls, but it wasn't enough to take his side over the line.

For Bhubaneswar Tigers, Suryakant Pradhan starred with the ball, returning figures



of 3-11 in 4 overs. Jayanta Behera was equally impressive with 3-14 in his 4-over spell. Badal Biswal (2-43), Debabrata Pradhan (1-21), and Sambit Beja (1-32) chipped in with wickets as Keonjhar Miners were bundled out short of the target.

After losing the toss and being put into bat first, Prayan Samal and Gourav Choudhary opened the innings for Bhubaneswar Tigers. Prayan was dismissed for just 5 in 8 balls. Bivash Shaw added 21 in 8 balls, and Rajesh

Dhupar scored 20 in 22 balls.

Gaurav Choudhary returned as the top scorer of the innings as he scored the first century in the league. He was dismissed for 113 in 56 balls. At the end of the 20th over, Bhubaneswar Tigers posted a score of 198/8.

For Keonjhar Miners, Papu Ray took 2-38 in his 4 overs. Sarbeswar Mohanty picked 2-37 in his 4 overs. Soumya Lenka(1-45) and Shekhar Majhi(1-21) took one wicket each in the innings.

## 'A NEW BEGINNING' FOR INDIAN FOOTBALL

# SC approves new AIFF constitution

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 19:** The Supreme Court Friday approved the draft Constitution of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) with certain modifications, directing the AIFF administration to adopt it within four weeks.

Describing the move as a turning point in Indian football governance, a Bench of Justices PS Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi said, "We are of the firm opinion that the Constitution, once adopted in terms of Article 84, will mark a new beginning for Indian football and take the sport to greater heights."

In its detailed judgment, the Justice Narasimha-led Bench upheld the inclusion of 15 eminent players in the AIFF General Body despite opposition from state associations. "We are of the opinion that the freedom of choice to form an association is not in any way compromised by the requirement to incorpo-



**The top court designates the AIFF as the sole entity responsible for owning and operating the top division league**

rate 15 eminent players...It is not probable but certain that the inclusion of eminent players, coaches, referees, and club representatives in the general body, with only further good governance, heralds transparency and fair play," it observed.

On eligibility for eminent players, the apex court relaxed the criteria to widen the pool. "It will be reasonable to reduce the criteria suggested by Justice LN Rao to 5 matches for men and from 2 matches for women. We hope that such a modification will ensure a wider pool and par-

ticipation by retired players who will prove themselves to be efficient administrators and guiding lights for Indian football," said the Justice Narasimha-led Bench. While approving governance reforms inspired by the BCCI judgments, the Supreme Court rejected arguments that football's context was different. "This present exercise is primarily about football, but on a broader level, is also an exercise to instil professionalism, efficiency, and fairness in sports administration, which shall take Indian football to greater heights.

Distinguishing BCCI judgments only on the ground that BCCI is not an NSF (National Sports Federation), while AIFF is, does not yield any good. In this view, the arguments advanced by AIFF and the State association are rejected," the judgment said.

Directing the AIFF to convene a Special General Body meeting within four weeks to adopt the draft Constitution with the modifications specified in its latest judgment, the Supreme Court observed, "Our country is brimming with promising sporting talent which seeks suitable avenues and organisational support. We believe that the Constitution of AIFF is an important structural foundation in this regard, and the stakeholders of Indian sports will have an important role in ensuring that Indian football remains thrilling, competitive and value-oriented and continue to make its mark in the national and international landscape."

## SAFF U17: Blue Colts enter semis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, Sept 19:** The India U17 men's national team sealed their spot in the semi-finals of the SAFF U17 Championship 2025 after edging past Bhutan 1-0 in their second Group B match here Friday.

India will next play Pakistan Monday, and the winner of the game will finish top of the group.

Super-sub Rahan Ahmed, introduced in the second half, scored the only goal of the match in the 57th minute, to hand India a narrow win. His efforts earned him the player of the match title.

Unlike the goal-fest in the opener, the Blue Colts had to be patient and faced a tighter challenge than expected as Bhutan's defence stayed disciplined and held firm.

The first half saw India pressing high and controlling possession, but Bhutan were compact with their game. The first real chance arrived in the 27th minute when Kamgouh hao Doungel came close with a header from a classy Wangkheirakpam Gunleiba cross, only to see it drift wide of the left post.

Five minutes later, Shubham Poonia won a free kick after being stumbled by the opposition, but the resulting delivery failed to trouble the goalkeeper.

Skipper Denny Singh Wangkhem was pumped throughout the first half, and in the 37th minute, he swung a powerful cross that almost found Doungel, only for a block to deny the opportunity.

A good chance came in the 40th minute, when Bhutan's clearance found Denny inside the box. He struck a thumping effort, but it went wide of the upright.

India had multiple chances, but Bhutan's defence stood tall to keep India from finding the breakthrough in the first half.

The Blue Colts returned after the break with renewed intent. The turning point finally arrived in the 58th minute.

India managed the game well in the closing stages and secured another clean sheet, and more importantly, three more points.