

Actor Bhumi Pednekar admits she misses heartland stories that challenge her craft, offering experimentation

LEISURE | P2



Pledge for peace

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas pledges to work with US, Saudi Arabia, France, & UN on Gaza peace plan

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Silver shines

Silver prices surge ₹1,000 to hit a lifetime high of ₹1.40 lakh per kg in the national capital, following strong global cues

BUSINESS | P11



ICC warning for Surya

Indian skipper Suryakumar Yadav receives warning from ICC over his 'Pahalgam' comment during India's group stage clash against Pakistan

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BHUBANESWAR | FRIDAY | SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

Let's make Odisha one of top 3 states in cleanliness: CM

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Thursday called upon people to make Odisha one of the top three states in the country in terms of cleanliness

Majhi said this while tak-

ing part in a cleanliness drive under the 'Swachhta Hi Seva' campaign near Lingaraj Temple in the City. Mayor, ministers, MLAs and

members of the public took part in the drive which was organised by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation. The campaign was launched

to mark the 110th birth anniversary celebrations of BJP ideologue Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay. Born in Mathura, Upadhyay

was the key organisation func-

tionary of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, in which lies the origins of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The CM also planted saplings near the local Devipadhara

pond under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0' programme. Highlighting Upadhyay's vision, Majhi said the state gov-

ernment was committed to providing basic amenities to all. "We all have to work to be in the top three places in the country in cleanliness," Majhi said.

He added that the government has plans to generate energy from waste in the coming

A mass cleanliness drive - Ek Din Ek Ghanta Ek Saath – was also successfully conducted on the premises of Kharabela Bhawan, a government building in

At the end of the programme, Housing and Urban Development department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee administered the 'Swachhata' pledge to all participants, urging them to carry forward the spirit of cleanliness into their communities and homes.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Sorry, no benefits for consumers -all our GST savings went into thank-vou ads and publicity





SPORTS | P12

12 PAGES | ₹5.00



URBAN BLAZE: Smoke billows after a fire broke out at a guesthouse on the top floor of a four-storey building in Kolkata, Thursday

India test-fires Agni-P from rail launcher

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: India has successfully test-fired the Agni-Prime, or Agni-P, missile with a range of 2,000km from a rail-based mobile launcher sys tem, demonstrating its capability to deploy the missile across the country.

The DRDO, in collaboration with the Strategic Forces Command (SFC), carried out the 'successful' launch of in termediate range Agni-Prime missile under a full operational scenario Wednesday, the Ministry of Defence said. It has not disclosed the location of test-fir ing of the weapon system.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Thursday said that it put India in the group of select nations having capability to launch such a weapon system from the rail network. "The 'first-of-itskind' launch carried out from specially designed rail-based mobile launcher, has the capability to move on rail network without any pre-conditions and it allows users to have a cross-country mobility and launch within a short reaction time," Singh said

has put India in the group of select nations having capabilities that have developed canisterised launch system from on the move rail network," he said on X.

"This successful flight test

6 die in Sundargarh bus-truck collision

Bonai, Sept 25: At least six people, including three women, were killed and 17 others injured as a truck collided with a bus in Sundargarh district Thursday, police said.

The accident took place around 11am on NH-520 at Roxy under K Balang police limits, they said. "The bus, on its way to Koida from Rourkela, was travelling on the wrong side as one side of the road was closed for repairs. It collided head-on with a truck coming from the opposite direction at Roxy," K Balang police SI Basudev Behera, who was at the site, said.

"Five people were killed on the spot, and another succumbed to his injuries later. At least 17 people were critically injured," DIG, Western Range, Brijesh Kumar Rai told reporters. "The deceased were identified as Pushpa Gop, 56, Mary Nag, 50, Satyabhama Mahakur,



Koraput/Gunupur: At least four persons were killed in two road mishaps in Koraput and Rayagada, officials said Thursday. In the first four persons rendered critical after two motorcycles collided with each other at Narayanpatna in Koraput in the wee hours of Thursday. The deaka and Sarat Tadingi of Gadbaguda. In the second incident, two persons on board a tipper died after the driver lost control over the vehicle and hit a roadside tree on Bhaleri Kudia main road under Gunupur block in Rayagada Thursday morning. The deceased were identified as Alikh Patika and Ajay Palka of Arjunguda village under Ramnaguda block

55, Karampal Singh, 45, Suru Munda, 45, and bus conductor Shabar Barla, 52," Rai added.

Local police, Fire and Emergency Service personnel were engaged in the rescue operation, he pointed out. "The critically injured per-

sons were shifted to a government hospital in Rourkela, while others are undergoing treatment at Koida and Lahunipada health centres," the DIG said. Meanwhile, tension pre-

vailed in the area as locals and kin of the deceased held demonstrations, demanding compensation. Police deployed three platoon of force to maintain

law and order. Expressing grief, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced a compensation of Rs 4 lakh from the CM's Relief Fund for the next of kin of each deceased. Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik also expressed grief over the incident.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Sept 25: The rupee moved in a tight range and slipped 1 paisa to close at a lifetime low of 88.76 against the American currency Thursday amid a strong US dollar and weak domestic markets.

Forex traders said the H1-B visa fee hike and surge in crude oil prices also pressured the rupee. Investors remained concerned over global trade uncertainties and the impact of the US visa fee hike on India's IT services exports.

However, the selling of greenbacks by exporters and reports of intervention by the RBI prevented a sharp fall in the domestic unit, they added

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 88.65 against the US dollar, and witnessed an intraday high of 88.60 and a low of 88.76 against the greenback

The domestic unit finally settled at a fresh low of 88.76, registering a fall of just 1 paisa over its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee ended 2 paise down at 88.75 against the US dollar.

Wangchuk-founded NGO's FCRA licence cancelled

over alleged

FCRA violations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Thursday cancelled the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, or FCRA, licence of Students' Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL) NGO founded by climate ac-

tivist Sonam Wangchuk – with immediate effect. The MHA's action had also founded was based on sever-

ancies detected in the accounts of the organisation including a fund transfer from Sweden which the ministry found was against 'nation-

al interest'. The development came a day after four persons were killed in widespread clashes between protesters supporting the movement for statehood to Ladakh and security personnel amid a shutdown in Leh. The government blamed

Wangchuk for the mob violence. When contacted, Wangchuk said he was just a donor for the organisation and that he teaches there. Wangchuk also founded Himalayan Institute of Alternatives Ladakh which is facing CBI inquiry over alleged

SECMOL was granted the licence to accept foreign contribution for undertaking cultural and educational programme. The

violations of FCRA norms.

MHA had earlier is The climate activist sued a showcause notice to SECMOL al alleged discrep- Himalayan Institute seeking explanation of Alternatives on various irregular ities observed in the Ladakh which is finances of the NGO facing CBI inquiry

It was alleged that during 2021-22, Wangchuk deposit ed Rs 3.5 lakh into

the FCRA account of the asso ciation in violation of Section 17 of the Act. SECMOL said it was the sale proceeds of the old bus procured July 14, 2015 out of FCRA funds. It said the sale proceeds for any asset which was procured from FCRA funds need to be deposited only in FCRA's account as per norms.

'Petrichor' among 5K new Merriam-Webster additions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, Sept 25: Word nerd alert: Merriam-Webster announced Thursday it has taken the rare step of fully revising and reimagining one of its most popular dictionaries with a fresh edition that adds over 5,000 new words, including 'petrichor', 'teraflop', 'dumbphone' and 'ghost kitchen'.

The 12th edition of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary comes 22 years after the book's last hard-copy update and amid declining US sales for analog dictionaries overall, according to Circana BookScan. It will be released November 18, with preorders now available. Petrichor, by the way, is a pleasant odour after a rainfall following a warm, dry period. Teraflop is a unit of measure

for calculating the speed of a computer. Dumbphones are just that, mobile devices we used before the smartphone revolution. And ghost kitchens, which came into their own during the pandemic, are commercial spaces for hire. Other additions: 'cold brew',

'farm-to-table', 'rizz', 'dad bod', 'hard pass', 'adulting' and 'cancel culture'. There's also 'beast mode', 'dashcam', 'doomscroll', 'WFH' and 'side-eye'. The new 'Collegiate' also

includes enhanced entries for some top lookups, and more than 20.000 new usage examples. All of the added words were already available on Merriam-Webster.com.

How did they make room for The company removed two

sections of the 'Collegiate's' 11th

ical and geographical entries to make room for the new content. Greg Barlow, Merriam-Webster's president, exclusively told The Associated Press ahead of the announcement that people no longer use dictionaries to learn such things as the location of Kalamazoo or who Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was. For that, they reach

> for the internet (It's a city in southwest Michigan, for the eternally curious, and he's a Russian composer who died in 1908.)

edition that had sparse biograph-

Merriam-Webster eliminated some obscure and antiquated words, including 'enwheel', meaning encircle.

"We wanted to make the 'Collegiate' more useful, a better design, more interesting," Barlow said. "We wanted it to be more rewarding to browse, more fun to look through, and to really be practical for research, but also a beautiful book.' What's happening with

dictionary sales in general?

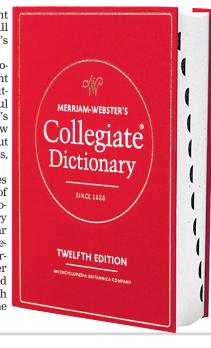
The chunky, linen-cover 'Collegiate' update weighs in at nearly 5 pounds. It comes as adult reference book sales, including dictionaries and atlases, have shown annual declines since 2022, according to Circana BookScan, which captures 85 per cent of the print market. In the 12-month period ending September 6, dictionary sales fell 9 per cent compared with the same period prior.

Merriam-Webster sells about 1.5 million of them a year. Most are regularly revised but not fully overhauled like the 'Collegiate', Barlow said. The company's retail sales overall have generally held steady in the last

few years, he said. Print sales account for a small fraction of the company's

"While the print dictionary is not at all important to the growth and profitability of this wonderful language company, it's still our heart," Barlow said. "There are people out there who just love books, and we love books.

For dictionary sales overall, there's a bit of sunshine at Barnes & Noble. The chain's dictionary sales have gone up so far this year over the same period in 2024, said Kat Sarfas, marketing manager for nonfiction. She noted similar increases for such reference materials as the US Constitution as well.



₹62,370cr deal with **HAL for 97 Tejas jets** AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 25: The Ministry of Defence Thursday sealed a ₹62,370-crore deal with the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) to procure 97 Tejas MK-1A light combat aircraft for the Indian Air Force.

The signing of the contract came over a month after the Cabinet Committee on Security headed by PM Narendra Modi green-lighted the mega procure ment. The delivery of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) would commence in 2027-28 and the supplies will have to be completed over a period of six years officials said. It is the second such contract awarded to the state-run aerospace behemoth

In February 2021, the defence ministry sealed a ₹48,000 crore deal with HAL for procurement of 83 Tejas MK-1A jets for the

eisure



RIHANNA, A\$AP ROCKY WELCOME THIRD CHILD

Grammy-winning musician Rihanna has announced the birth of her third child with longtime partner and rapper A\$AP Rocky. The 37-year-old singer shared the news on Instagram Wednesday, posting two pictures - one of her cradling the newborn, dressed in pink, and another of the baby's pink shoes.

EMMA WATSON SPEAKS ON JK ROWLING RIFT

Emma Watson has addressed her strained relationship with JK Rowling amid the author's anti-trans controversy, saying she still "cherishes" their past bond. Despite previously criticising Rowling's gendercritical views, the Harry Potter star hinted she retains affection and is open to future dialogue about their differences.



accuracy • reliability • trust

Romance will keep you occupied today. Monetary success will lead to peace and the other way round. You must be careful about expenses and buy only that stuff which you really need. Ganesha says this can save you from putting your money into some dubious schemes

TAURUS

Today, you will be ruled by your heart, not your head, says Ganesha. You are likely to be driven by your feelings, emotions and sentiments. Most of the decisions taken today will based on emotion, not your sensitivity and emotionality does not expose you to hurt. Do not let anyone upset you. Stay calm and collected. You will thereby experience love and warmth

GEMINI

You will express your feeling and opinions to people close to you and earn their support and wishes. However, you will still feel the need to be in solitude and peace in the later half of the day. Spending time with mind more effectively, says Ganesha.

Your day can be full of hurdles, feels Ganesha. Be careful of womenfolk. Discord with friends on petty issue is likely. Pending work will be finished. Be optimistic, says Ganesha.

You will interact with many people today. Your friend circle could expand. Businessmen will make new contacts. The later half of the day will see you experience uneasiness and stress, however the source of this will likely fade away in a short while. Hence there is no need to worry, says Ganesha.

VIRGO Luck will be in your favour as,

Ganesha says, nothing will go wrong today, and you will succeed at anything you attempt to do. In certain cases, even without expecting anything, good results will be forthcoming. Bend your back if you must, as being adaptable and flexible will get you a lot of goodwill from others.

Ganesha says that today you should not only look after your outward appearance but also your inner self. You shall be in demand in the office or at social gatherings. Today you will be spending money on entertainof good news from relatives or friends abroad which will make you happy.

SCORPIO

Experience is the best teacher and today you should be thankful to your teacher as it is going to handle many new projects. You may even guide your peers and juniors in their work and enhance their imagination power.

SAGITTARIUS

Your belligerent mood will be taken care of by the good news that may light up your face and cheer you up. Your imagination has just got wings as you become creative and think beyond boundaries. Go on a long drive with friends or beloved in

CAPRICORN

You bring perfection to the table and it impresses your When the deadlines are tight or situations get complicated, people look up to you for directions, and to nobody's surprise, you live up to their expectations. Your efficiency will not go unnoticed as the bosses will acknowledge and reward you efforts, says Ganesha.

AQUARIUS

You'll go on a cleanliness drive, today! Cleaning up the mess will bring clarity to your mind and you will have an idea about what needs to be done at the earliest and what can be put on the back burner. With the wit and intelligence you possess, you will be able to solve prob lems in minutes, foresees Ganesha.

PISCES

Your competitors will find it tough to maintain their footing against your onslaught today. You need not worry about their activities for you will come out with flying colors at the end of it all. You are not by nature ill-tempered, but you will have to encounter situations where you will be opposed needlessly and that could rouse your wrath.

Cycle Mahesh steals the show

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The 6th Indian Documentary Film Festival Bhubaneswar (IDFFB) 2025, organised by the Film Society of Bhubaneswar (FSB), opened Thursday at GKCM Odissi Research Centre with an impressive line-up of films from across India and South Asia.

The inaugural day began with Our Land Our Lives by Telenga Hasa, which highlighted the struggles of displaced indigenous communities from Similipal Tiger Reserve. It was followed by A Room of One's Own, a compilation of short films by 13 FTII women graduates, chronicling five decades of female students' experiences at the institute. Lipika Singh Darai's Room no 2-S-35 was part of the showcase, after which she joined a conversation with FSB president Subrata Beura.

The day followed with Doorasth Collective's Night That Forgot to End, Achal Mishra's Chaar Phool Hain aur Duniya Hai, Kallol Mukherjee's



Lipika Singh Darai in conversation with Subrata Beura

Mic Drop, Nehal Vyas' Amma ki Katha, Girish Kasaravalli's Naada Navaneetha Dr Pandit Venkateshkumar, Rajan Kathet and Sunir Pandey's No Winter Holidays and Elroy Pinto's Bombay Triptych I and Islands of Labour, Bisheshwar Das' A Tale to Begin With was also screened that documents conversation

HE'S BEEN LIVING JUST

OUTSIDE NEEDLES WITH

A BUNCH OF COYOTES

F WARPED VALUES ARE THE

SO BE IT! LET THE BUSINESS

LOOK OUT, THAT

CAR A HALF MILE

AHEAD IS SLOWING

DOWN!

RESPOND TO CONSUMER

DEMAND!

CE OF A VICARIOUS THRILL

with one of the mammoth of Indian Poetry Jayanta Mahapatra.

The day's highlight was Suhel Banerjee's Cycle Mahesh, based on the journey of Mahesh Jena from Jajpur, who cycled 1,700 km from Maharashtra to Odisha during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown. Breaking conventions with fictional insertions and

reflexive storytelling, the film portrayed both Mahesh's ordeal and the larger migrant crisis.

Joining post screening conversation, Mahesh said, "I had no option but to return home. People considered it heroic that I paddled thousands of kilometers, and the news spread so fast that I became famous overnight, featured in almost every newspaper. Along with that, a lot of fake news circulated—that I received money, a job, and many other thixngs after this so-called heroic act. But that's not true. Suhel, who then approached me and made a film on me. I was also part of it, for which I have been paid ₹35,000.'

The opening day drew students and cinephiles, with OrissaPOST and *Dharitri* editor Tathagata Satpathy and Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy among the audience. The two publications are the festival's official print media partners.

RESHMI YADAV, OP

THEATRE TREAT



The fourth evening of Odisha Natya Sangha's 4th National Theatre Festival presented Odia play Ethi Sabhu Bhul, staged at Rabindra Mandap, Thursday. The drama was enacted by Natraj Sanskrutik Anusthana of Bhadrak.

Bhumi's choices

Mumbai: Actor Bhumi Pednekar, who has appeared in a string of glamorous roles recently such as The Royals, and Thank You For Coming, says it's the stories of heartland India that challenge and let her experiment as an actor. Speaking at an event, Bhumi said she misses

stories that are rooted in different places of the country. "As an actor, I miss heartland cinema.

My heart is there, and you realise that once you experiment, and I've experimented. I like playing characters that are away from me, I learn a new dialect, and go to a place where there's no hotel and there's challenges in shooting, but those things teach me a lot about life," the actor said.

At the same time, Bhumi said she doesn't want to limit herself as an artiste.

"I've loved what I've done recently. Like in The Royals, I enjoyed a girl that was close to who I'm. I was experimenting with the wardrobe. I don't want to box myself as type A or B, I'm everything. I need to have the ability and the freedom to do whatever I want to," she added.

Pednekar, who started out as an assistant casting director at Yash Raj Films, made her debut in acting with the studio's 2015 movie *Dum* Laga Ke Haisha.

BACKGROUND?

BECAUSE IT'S

ENTERTAINING

PEANUTS

6000 MORNING! I'M

TRYING TO FIND A HOME

FOR THIS BEAUTIFUL DOG

PEOPLE ASK WHY WE TOLERATE A POPULAR

CULTURE THAT CELEBRATES

VIOLENCE AND DEPRAVITY

BREVITY

SLOW DOWN,

LEAD FOOT!

ARE YOU SURE

WE WERE SUPPOSED

TO TAKE THAT

LEFT TURN?

CALVIN AND HOBBES

ahnvi on mom's legacy

Malavalam, and Hindi, starting her career at the age of four. Trying to reach that level is very difficult," she admitted. "My only true goal is to make my parents proud through my work and to entertain all of you. I just hope that I don't let her legacy After her recent appear-

ance in Param Sundari alongside Sidharth Malhotra, Janhvi is gearing up for Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari, starring Varun Dhawan, Rohit Saraf, and Sanya Malhotra. Additionally, she has another intriguing project, Homebound, featuring Ishaan Khatter and Vishal Jethwa in pivotal roles. Through it all, Janhvi continues to balance her dedication

Mumbai: Janhvi Kapoor, currently busy promoting her upcoming multi-starrer Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari, has been engaging in back-to-back interviews, leaving no stone unturned in her promotional spree. A recent viral clip caught fans' attention, highlighting how her constant love and respect for her late mother, Sridevi, continues to shine through in every interaction. During a press conference, Janhvi opened up about

the immense challenge of living up to her mothextraordinary

legacy. "I don't think this is possible. around

films across Tam-Telugu,

to her craft with heartfelt reverence for her mother's remarkable contributions to cinema

I THINK I'D RATHER

SHOCK AND

GOT MONEY

HAVE ONE OF

THE COYOTES!

ALWAYS

DON'T KNOW

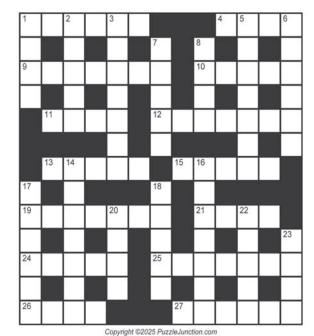
ABOUT THESE

SELF-BACKSEAT

DRIVING CARS.

POST

CROSSWORD

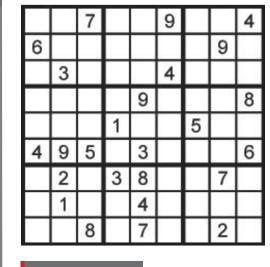


- Across 1 Gibson, for
- 4 Samoan capital
- 9 Not being
- there
- 10 Rival of Paris
- 11 Flightless bird
- 12 Earnest
- 13 Model wood
- 15 Come out of denial
- 19 Accomplish

- 21 Baker's unit
- 24 Leg part 25 Heighten
- 26 Fizzy drink 27 Cuckoo
- Down 1 Heavy cart
- 2 Raw fish
- wrapped in seaweed
- 3 Expensive paintings
- 5 Vesuvius destroyed it
- 6 Homes 7 Honkers
- 8 Small songbird
- 14 Red-faced
- 16 Sea World
- attraction
- 17 Flubs
- 18 Fend off 20 Light brown
- 22 Sleep disorder 23 Lavish party

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

E E D G
FACIALS POLYP
M E A W
TRAPS OPINION A H C SMELLY

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

1 4 2 5 7 3 8 6 9

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

ENACTING PLAY

Students from Ravenshaw University stage a play titled 'Biswasa Ghatakata' during the selection process for Cuttack Natya Utsav at Biju Patnaik Film and Television Institute of Odisha in Cuttack Thursday



18 dists on high alert as IMD forecasts heavy rain

DNN & ACENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The state government Thursday put the Collectors of 18 districts on high alert after the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall in the state when a possible depression crosses its southern coast September 27, officials said.

The instructions to the districts were issued through a videoconference by Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Deoranjan Kumar Singh. All the Collectors of the southern and coastal region participated in the conference.

The government's move came in the wake of the IMD's forecast that a low-pressure area is likely to form over the Bay of Bengal. "It is likely to intensify into a depression by the evening of September 26



and will cross over South Odisha and North Andhra Pradesh by September 27 morning," the IMD said.

The system is likely to cause extremely heavy rainfall in Koraput and Malkangiri districts, while other parts of south Odisha are also likely to experience heavy showers.

The District Collectors of Koraput, Malkangiri and Naba-

rangpur have cancelled leaves of all government employees and asked them not to leave stations as the depression induced rain could cause damage and flooding.

This apart, the Collectors of other districts such as Rayagada, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Ganjam, Puri, Khurda, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Kendrapara, Balasore and Nuapada are also DISTRICT COLLECTORS OF KORAPUT, MALKANGIRI AND NABARANGPUR HAVE CANCELLED LEAVES OF ALL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND ASKED THEM NOT TO LEAVE STATIONS AS THE DEPRESSION INDUCED RAIN COULD CAUSE DAMAGE AND FLOODING

COLLECTORS OF RAYAGADA,
GAJAPATI, KALAHANDI, GANJAM,
PURI, KHURDA, JAGATSINGHPUR,
CUTTACK, KENDRAPARA,
BALASORE AND NUAPADA
ARE ALSO ASKED TO REMAIN
PREPARED FOR THE HEAVY
RAINFALL ACTIVITIES

asked to remain prepared for the heavy rainfall activities.

The SRC told the Collectors to create awareness among the people to remain alert. The districts were also told to engage the rescue teams like Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF), Fire Services personnel in advance in vulnera-

ble places as identified earlier.

"The state government is closely monitoring the situation. We request the public not to panic over the impending

situation," Singh said.

Meanwhile, Water Resources department Engineer-in-Chief CS Padhi said, "All the reservoirs in the southern region are capable of containing rainwater as they are half-filled. There is no flood threat in the region even if there is heavy rain."

He said the water level in river Mahanadi will certainly swell as 20 sluice gates of the Hirakud dam have been opened to discharge excess water from the reservoir. Hirakud dam is almost full with water level remaining at 529.15 ft against the full reservoir level (FRL) of 630 ft.

Padhi said it is expected that around 6 lakh cusec of water will flow at Mundali barrange near Cuttack Friday.

NIT-R develops low-cost force plate for heel pain

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 25: Researchers at National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela have developed a low-cost force plate that enhances gait profiling and enables better development of footwear and treatment strategies to reduce heel pain.

Heel pain is often linked to overloading of the plantar fascia -- a band of tissue that supports the arch of the foot. In many cases, changes in the heel pad -- a fatty tissue under the heel can also cause the problem. This issue acts as a shock absorber when we stand, run, or walk. With too much stress, the heel pad loses its cushioning ability to the foot. The condition can also be caused by aging, injury, obesity, diabetes, and ill-fitting shoes.

The new force plate works by measuring the multi-axial

ground reaction forces (GRF). GRF measured from the force plates is then used to diagnose the abnormal gait patterns.

"Most neuromuscular disorders will affect the gait pattern of an individual. Since gait requires precise coordination of muscle strength and balance, disturbances in any of these can alter the walking pattern and the corresponding GRF," said A Thirugnanam of the NIT.

"Some common neuromuscular diseases like myopathies, peripheral neuropathies, neuromuscular junction disorders, spasticity, ataxia, and Parkinson's disease can alter the GRF. These abnormalities in GRF can be diagnosed using the force plate," he added. Imported force plates cost between ₹30-50 lakh. The indigenously developed force plate will cost between ₹8-10 lakh.

Better & Simpler

CJI to launch Nat'l Mediation Conference in City Sept 27

OST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai is scheduled to inaugurate the second National Mediation Conference here September 27, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan said Thursday.

Mediation is an alternative form of dispute resolution

Mediation is an alternative form of dispute resolution where an attempt is made to resolve differences between parties outside of the formal court system.

Addressing a press conference here, Harichandan said the two-day conference is being held with the objective of enriching the dialogue on mediation while empowering practitioners and citizens with the knowledge and skills to harness its full potential.

Apart from the CJI, several senior judges of the Supreme Court, chief justices and judges of different high courts, vice-chancellors of law universities, top officials from renowned law firms and other stakeholders are

expected to participate in the event, he said.



ister said.
Advocate General of Odisha, Pitambar Acharya,

who was also present in the meeting, said the event will be inaugurated by CJI Saturday, around 6:30pm in presence of Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi, and other dignitaries.

"Our Country has an age-old tradition of resolving differences through dialogue. Long before formal courts, our villages had panchayats where elders helped people reach fair settlements. Mediation offers a meaningful and human-centric approach," Acharya said.

"It is a vibrant movement deeply rooted in the civilisational ethos of dialogue, harmony, and reconciliation. Together, these endeavours promise a justice system that is more responsive and inclusive," said the advocate general.

On the second day of the conference, five technical sessions will be held covering critical themes such as Mediation: Challenges and Way Forward, Enhancing the Ecosystem for Mediation in India, Mediation in State Litigations, Mediation in Commercial Matters under the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 and Development of Institutional Mediation

Each session will feature interactive discussions led by Supreme Court and High Court judges, along with participation from senior lawyers, government representatives, and academic experts.

TPCODL engineer in Vigilance net for bribery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Vigilance sleuths Thursday arrested an executive engineer of a power distribution company on charge of taking bribe from a contractor for furnishing final inspection report for the supply of electricity to install a transformer, an official statement said.

The accused official was identified as Tusharkanta Ray, Executive Engineer (Quality), Circle-I, TPCODL, Bhubaneswar. He was caught red-handed by the anti-corruption officials while demanding and taking a bribe of ₹20,000 from an electrical contractor for giving a final inspection report in his favour for supply of electricity to the transformer of an apartment building.

"On Wednesday night, Ray was apprehended by the Vigilance while demanding and taking a bribe. For the last two months, the contractor had been requesting Ray for furnishing the final report to enable him to get payment against his bill. But, Ray demanded a bribe of ₹20,000 to furnish the report," a statement released by vigilance said.

However, finding no other way, the contractor drew the attention of the Vigilance authorities to the matter who laid a trap and caught him red-handed. The entire bribe money of ₹20,000 has been recovered from the possession of Ray, he said, adding that following the successful trap, simultaneous searches were carried out at three locations associated with Ray.

at three locations associated with Ray.

During searches that continued till early morning, the Vigilance has so far unearthed cash of ₹9,53,200 from his residence and seized it.



Benefits of this Bachat Utsav will reach the poor, middle class,

neo middle class, youth, farmers, women, shopkeepers, traders,

and entrepreneurs alike. In this festive season, every household

will experience increased savings and happiness.

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

downtown



STA drive nets 3,494 challans, ₹54.82 lakh fine in 3-day drive

Cuttack/Bhubaneswar, **Sept 25:** The State Transport Authority (STA), Odisha, has launched a special statewide

enforcement drive to curb traffic rule violations. During the three-day operation, enforcement teams conducted intensive checks across key locations, issuing a total of 3,494 e-challans for various offences. The drive also led to the collection of fines amounting to ₹54.82 lakh, underscoring the government's focus on improving road safety and ensuring strict compliance with traffic

The initiative was carried out under the direction of Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena, with principal secretary Usha Padhee leading the campaign and Transport Commissioner Amitabh Thakur overseeing the enforcement.

regulations.

The crackdown targeted seven major traffic violations, including overloading, carrying passengers in goods vehicles, using mobile phones while driving, operating vehicles without valid fitness certificates or permits, lacking pollution under control (PUC) certificates, and breaching High-Security Registration Plate (HSRP) norms.



₹3.30 lakh, Jharsuguda ₹2.48

During the drive, 176 vehicles were penalised for overloading, while 942 were booked for lacking fitness and permit documents. A total of 977 challans were issued for PUC violations, 214 for carrying passengers in goods vehicles, 130 for mobile phone use while driving, and 204 for non-compliance with

District-wise, Bhubaneswar-I RTO reported the highest action with 424 challans and ₹15.19 lakh in fines. Bolangir followed with ₹4.77 lakh, Balasore with ₹3.71 lakh, Sonepur with ₹3.30 lakh, and Jharsuguda with ₹2.48 lakh. Significant enforcement was also recorded in Nabarangpur, Koraput, Bhadrak, Kalahandi, and Sund-

The Transport department said that its dual approach of strict enforcement along with awareness campaigns is aimed at reducing road accidents statewide. Special weekly enforcement drives will continue, targeting major, with even stricter measures planned in the coming weeks.

Appealing to the public, the STA urged citizens to adhere to road safety rules and contribute to safe travel for everyone.

BJD slams AG over Mahanadi dispute remark

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Describing the Mahanadi water dispute as a political one, Odisha's Advocate General Pitambar Acharya Thursday said he was hopeful that it would be settled outside the court through negotiations

The dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over the sharing of the river's water has been pending before the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal (MWDT) since 2018.

Addressing a press conference on the upcoming National Mediation Conference in Bhubaneswar, Acharya said the Mahanadi water dispute can be settled outside the court through negotiation, and the state government has been making all

"No water tribunal in the history of India has ever been successful in solving the dispute. The previous government had spent ₹33 crore on the dispute by engaging prominent legal luminaries, but there was no result," he said. Acharya said it is a 'political dispute' which should be resolved politically and not through legal means.

efforts in that direction.

pute," he said.

"If the present government is able to resolve the dispute through negotiation, it will be the first-of-its-kind in the history of the country," he added.

Criticising Acharya's statement, the opposition BJD alleged it was intended only for political sensationalism.

"The remarks undermined the dignity of the AG's office. The AG is a constitutional pooffice generally refrain from making political statements. Today's statement is clearly politically motivated, aimed only at blaming the previous government, and lacks any truth," BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty claimed. He said if it was an "artificial dispute", then after a change of government in Odisha, it should not have taken even a minute to resolve, with the BJP in power also at the Centre and in Chhattisgarh.

"Why has the issue re mained unresolved even after 15 months? This clearly proves that the dispute was not artificial, and Acharya's remarks were intended only to create political turbulence," he said.

₹14cr approved for 75 new statues by 2026

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: In a major move to honour Odisha's cultural and historical heritage, the state government has decided to construct 75 new statues of eminent personalities across various districts, celebrating freedom fighters poets, social reformers, and national leaders who have significantly contributed to the state and nation.

The decision, made Thursday under the guidance of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi, will be implemented by the Odia Language, Literature and

Culture department with an estimated budget of ₹14 crore, aiming for completion by the end of next year.

Among the personalities to be commemorated are Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Veer Surendra Sai, Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das, Madhusudan Das, Ramadevi, Bhima Bhoi. Baji Rout, Gangadhar Meher, Upendra Bhanja, Pandit Raghunath Murmu, Chakradhar Behera, Jadumani Mohapatra, Pathani Samanta, and Chan-

drashekhar Azad. Statues of national leaders like Atal Bihari Vaipavee. Lal Bahadur Shastri, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Deendayal Upadhyaya, Swami Vivekananda, and BR Ambedkar will also be installed.

The statues will be placed in prominent locations across districts including Puri, Khurda, Cuttack, Balasore, Jagatsinghpur, Nayagarh, Bargarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Bhadrak, Bolangir, Ganjam, Sambalpur, Kendrapara, Mayurbhanj, Koraput, Kalahandi, Keonjhar, Sonepur, and Ravagada.

Officials said the move aims to preserve the legacy of Odisha's great sons and daughters while inspiring future generations.

CIPET conducts cleanliness drive



Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: In line with Central government's 'Swachhotsav' celebration CIPET: CSTS Bhubaneswar organised a large-scale cleanli ness drive at IDCO Colony and Mancheswar Railway Station here Thursday. The drive was spearheaded

by CIPET director BP Patro and was actively coordinated by administrative officer Jayanta Kumar Das. Faculty members, staffs, and students participated in the effort, ensuring key stretches and adjoining areas were thoroughly cleaned. As part of the broader 'Swachhata Pakhwada' observed last week CIPET also conducted a cleanli ness and awareness campaign at the Kuakhai riverbank. A 'Swachh Rally' was organised in Mancheswar, where students distributed dustbins to residents and sensitised them on maintaining hygiene and sanitation.

To engage young minds, CIPET has organised various competitions, including speech, essay writing, and painting, encouraging students to creatively express the importance of cleanliness. Speaking on the initiative, Das said such activities would continue under the 'Swachhotsay' framework to sustain momentum around cleanliness and inspire collec tive community participation.

Utkal University hosts national symposium

celebrations Thursday with a national symposium on "Global Development Discourse and India's Transformation" on the campus. Vice Chancellor Jagneshwar Dandapat, the chief guest, highlighted India's growing stature in world affairs, stating, "India today is asserting a definitive stand in global leadership across sectors." India's Am bassador to Bulgaria, Arun Kumar Sahu, was the chief speaker at the event. Redefining development as a process rooted in social transformation, he said, "True developmen goes beyond theories—it is about sustainability, human development indices, and grassroots activism." He pointed to challenges such as trade wars, migration, and ecological crises, while projecting technology and AI as key growth drivers. Praising Odisha's journey, he noted, "From Mission Shakti to state-led social engineering, Odisha is a model of inclusive growth." Chairperson of the PG Council and guest of honour Mitali Chinara underscored the importance of South-South cooperation and sustainable development. "The 'Garibi Hatao' campaign and five-year plans remind us that inclusive growth is non-negotiable," she said, quoting NITI Aayog: "The best way to predict the future is to create it." Moderating the programme, Sociology department head Rabindra Garada outlined the evolution of development models, observing 'India's path is a hybrid—neither purely Western nor purely indigenous—often contradictory, yet resilient." The symposium drew faculty, scholars, and students, providing a vibrant platform for critical dialogue on India's development trajectory.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

BY virtue of an Affidavit No.-1434 sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Anandapur, Dist.-Keonjhar, dated-10.04.2025, I Badri Narayan Rout, At/P.O.-Bhandaridiha, PS-Ghasipura, Dist.-Keonjhar, Pin-758025 declare that I have changed my son's name from Satyanarayan Rout to Satya Narayan Rout and my wife's name from Rasmita Rout to Rasmita Jena. Henceforth, they shall be known as Satya Narayan Rout & Rasmita Jena respectively is one and the same persons for all

By virtue of an Affidavit sworn before in the court of Executive Magistrate, Kesinga, Dist.-Kalahandi on dt.17.09.2025 Samsan Kumar At/PO-Tahansir, PS-Kesinga, Dist: kalahandi (Odisha) declare that I have change my name from Samasang Kumar to Samsan Kumar. Henceforth he will be known as Samsan Kumar for all purpose.

purpose.

ECoR warns against misuse of alarm chains

East Coast Railway (ECoR) has urged passengers to refrain from misusing the Alarm Chain Pull-

and unnecessary use of alarm chains causes train delays. disrupts schedules, and incon-

of alarm chain pulling, resulting in five arrests for unlawful use.

in 2024, 1,761 people were arrested for chain-pulling incidents, with fines totaling ₹8,14,800.



ECoR appealed for public cooperation to prevent misuse of alarm chains, emphasising that responsible behaviour ensures safe, punctual, and smooth train operations, guaranteeing a comfortable and reliable journey for all passengers.

Officials warned that frequent

under the Railway Act.

Railway officials reported that

1,480 individuals have already been arrested, including 78 arrests in September alone, caus-



affecting punctuality.

POST NEWS NETWORK

their families.

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The

21st Annual Convocation of

KIIT Deemed to be University

will commence here Friday.

For the first time, the ceremo-

ny will span three days to ac-

commodate the large number

of graduating students and

Distinguished personalities

Prof Mohan Munasinghe, No-

bel Laureate from Sri Lanka;

H.E. Ouided Bouchamaoui,

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

from Tunisia; Justice Abdul-

gawi Ahmed Yusuf, Judge and

former President of the Interna-

tional Court of Justice; and Jus-

tice Dalveer Bhandari, Judge at

the International Court of Jus-

itor of Competition Success

Review; and Anant Mahapatra,

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The

ing (ACP) facility on trains.

veniences thousands of fellow ECoR sources said that September 24 alone, the Khurda Road Division recorded 10 cases

The ACP mechanism is intended strictly for genuine emergencies—such as medical issues, fire hazards, or threats to passenger safety. Misuse not only interrupts train operations but also attracts strict penalties

In 2025, up to September 24,

ing repeated train delays and



FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT



PUJA AHEAD: Artisans decorate a tableau studded with silver ornaments at Sheikh Bazar Durga Puja Mandap in Cuttack, Thursday

will be conferred the Degree of Honoris Causa in recognition of their outstanding contributions to society.

This year, KIIT will confer degrees to 7,235 undergraduates, 2,034 postgraduates, and 195 PhD scholars across various disciplines. The three-day convocation will focus on different schools: Medical Sciences September 26, Law and Management on the second day, and Technology on the third.

KIIT & KISS founder Achyuta Samanta congratulated the students, parents, and emphasising well-wishers. the institution's continued commitment to excellence through research, innovation, international collaborations, accreditations, and community engagement to advance India's progress

21st annual convocation SMPB's 5-yr vision plan gets approval

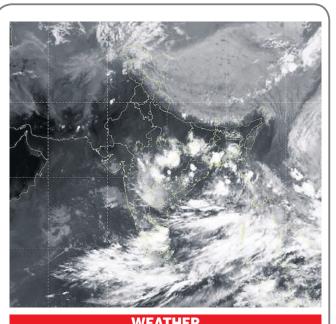
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: With an aim to strengthen conservation, cultivation, and commercialisation of medicinal plants across the state, a five-year vision plan of State Medicinal Plants Board (SMPB) received formal approval from the executive body during its 6th executive body meeting here Thursday.

MoUs in this regard will be signed in November with FRLHT (Bangalore), IRMA (Anand), and MSSRF (Chennai) to strengthen technical collaboration and the products developed under the initiative will be marketed under a new herbal brand named 'Kalinga Herbs'.

The meeting was chaired by Forest, Environment and Climate Change department additional chief secretary Satyabrata Sahu. Addressing the meeting, Sahu informed that the first year's funding will be provided under the Odisha Forestry Sector Development Society (OFSDS). From the second year onwards, the programme will expand through convergence with departments such as AYUSH, Panchayati Raj, and SC & ST Develop-





	WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
/lax Temp	33.2°	30.6°	Partly cloudy sky
/lin Temp	24.9°	22.8°	with one or two spells of rain or
lumidity	79%	92%	thunderstorm
ainfall	0.4mm	3.4mm	

Sd./- Samsan Kumar noted film and theatre director, ment, among others OUR BOOKING STAT

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488

Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816 Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-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.

Child dies after eating fish curry; twin critical

POST NEWS NETWORK

Basudevpur, Sept 25: A threeyear-old boy died and his twin brother was left in critical condition due to suspected food poisoning after consuming fish curry at Natapada village under Barandua panchayat of this block in Bhadrak district Thursday.

The deceased was identified as Sujit Bondh, son of Surendra Bondh in the village. His twin old, is undergoing treatment at Basudevpur hospital.

According to their mother, Kanaklata Bondh, she had bought fish from a street vendor who visited the village Wednesday and prepared curry. Both children ate the dish and later began vomiting from evening onwards. Family members rushed them to Basudevpur hospital Thursday morning, where doctors pronounced Sujit dead. Doctors said food poisoning was the likely cause of the tragedy, a bereaved Kanaklata said.

20 sluice gates of Hirakud dam open

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Sept 24: With rising inflow of floodwater into the Hirakud reservoir, authorities opened four more sluice gates Thursday, taking the total number of gates currently discharging excess water to 20.

According to officials, 13 gates on the left dyke and seven on the right dyke have been opened. As of 9:30pm Thursday, the water level at the reservoir dropped to 628.83 feet. The latest reports said the inflow was about 297,903 cusecs. while the outflow stood at 361.432 cusecs. Of this. 327,040 cusecs are being released into the Mahanadi through the 20 sluice gates, 31,949 cusecs through the power channel for electricity generation, 243 cusecs for industrial use, and 2,200 cusecs for irrigation including 2,193 cusecs into the Bargarh canal and 7 cusecs into

the Sambalpur canal. The reservoir's flood control office reported 54.18 mm of rainfall in the upstream areas and 7.08 mm in the downstream areas over the past 24 hours.

2 govt officials held

climate change

adaptation grants

retired Chief District Vet-

for misappropriating

Bhubaneswar/Nuapada: The

anti-corruption wing of Odisha Police Thursday arrested a

erinary Officer (CDVO) and a

staff of the Animal Husbandry

department on the charge of

embezzling Rs 18 lakh central

adaptation grants for climate change. "Trilochan Dhal, for-

mer CDVO of Nuapada district

and Ashok Kumar Dau, statisti-

office of CDVO, Nuapada, have

cal enumerator posted at the

been arrested for misappro-

priation of government mone

of over Rs 18 lakhs by way of

transferring it to the personal

account of Dau allotted under

National Adaptation Funds for

Climate Change (NAFCC)," the

anti-corruption wing said in a

registered against the duo un

Prevention of Corruption Act

and Indian Penal Code. They

will be later produced before

the court, read the statement.

Villagers oppose

GP's inclusion

in municipality

Chhatrapur: Villagers from

Kanamana gram panchayat

presented a demand letter to

Vasan opposing the inclusion of some villages in the newly

formed Chhatrapur municipal

includes erstwhile NAC wards

of Chhatrapur in addition to the

gram panchayats of the adioin-

ing Podapadar, Chikalkhandi,

villages under Kanamana gram panchayat. Villages appreciated

the government's decision of

though they oppose the inclu

sion of four to five villages un-

der Kanamana gram panchayat

Villages including Takiria Bram-

under Chhatrapur municipality

according to sources. However,

they fear of losing out on vari-

ous state government schemes

designed for gram panchayats.

Additionally, 90 per cent of the

used for Kevda flower farming

happen to be their sole source

of income. If these villages are mapped in the municipality, they fear that they may lose

landscape in these areas are

and cattle breeding, which

their livelihood in future.

and benefits that are exclusively

hapur, Kanamana, Matikhalo.

Chasakanamana, IRE colony

are planned to be mapped

conversion into municipality

Agasti Nuagan and some

ity. Chhatrapur municipality

the Ganjam Collector V Keerthi

der the relevant sections of the

statement. Cases have been

quo on Padampur bus stand project



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Bargarh, Sept 25: The National Green Tribunal (NGT), Thursday, ordered a status-quo on the construction of a proposed bus stand by the state Transport department, which involves diverting an old water body at Padampur in Bargarh district.

The tribunal issued the order on a plea challenging the diversion of a water body for the construction of a block level bus stand at Padampur.

While the actual construction work has not yet begun, the Transport department has already started filling the pond for the purpose of building the proposed bus stand.

"The plea alleges that the authorities proceeded without considering the availability of alternative land, the adverse impact of filling the water body on the environment and local residents, and the risk of future inundation of the locality as storm water would no longer have a natural outlet." said applicants' advocate Sankar Prasad Pani.

The petitioners, in his application, also alleged that the pond has long served as a natural catchment for rainwater and a vital recharge point for the groundwater table, benefiting not only the residents of the locality but also the surrounding wells and farmlands.

The applicants told the tribunal that in a region like Padampur that frequently faces water scarcity, the disappearance of such natural water bodies is irreplaceable.

Such natural resources' disappearance will not only disrupt the local water cycle but will also undermine the availability of water for future generations.

They also complained that the removal of the pond, in the absence of a proper drainage system, will increase the risk of severe waterlogging in adjoining low-lying areas.

The petitioners also said that their homes, which became vulnerable due to the newly elevated land created by the fill-up, are now at a higher risk of backflow and flooding in the absence of the natural water body.

During the hearing of the plea, the tribunal said, "In view of the averments made in the original application, attaining facts and circumstances of the case and precautionary principle embodied in Section 20 of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010. the respondents are directed to maintain status-quo as prevailing today with respect to the nature and further construction over the above-mentioned land claimed to be water body/pond."

NGT orders status Minor tribal student assaulted by Sebashram hostel inmates

Koraput, Sept 25: Concerns over student safety in government-run residential schools have resurfaced after a Class VIII tribal student was allegedly tied up and brutally assaulted by four fellow inmates at Panchada Sebashram hostel under Laxmipur block in Koraput district.

The victim, identified as Abhilash Saunta of Lachamani village, was reportedly bound at the hands and feet before being beaten brutally on the face and back inside the hostel premises.

According to reports, the severely injured student managed to escape and was later found sitting by the roadside. An auto-rickshaw driver spotted him and took him to the Kakirigumma Health Centre. Due to the severity of his in-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

with her, police said.

Malkangiri, Sept 25: A

21-year-old nursing student

allegedly died by suicide in

Malkangiri district Thursday

after her boyfriend broke up

The deceased, Ankita Biswas

was a nursing student at a pri-

vate college. She was a resident

Ankita's father Brundaban

said she was in a relationship

with a youth from the MV-60

village who promised to mar-

Two days ago, after an ar-

of MV-13 village, they said.

Locals have reported repeated cases of ragging and violence over the past year and accused school authorities of negligence

juries, he was referred to the Laxmipur Community Health Centre for further treatment.

Saunta's family alleged that when they informed the school's headmaster, Sunil Kumar Burudi, he showed no concern and dismissed the complaint. The family later shifted the boy in a government ambulance and filed a police complaint.

The victim also alleged that the accused students threat-

gument with him, Ankita con-

sumed some pills and was ad-

mitted to the district headquar-

ters hospital. She recovered

and was discharged Wednesday

Ankita had told me Wednes-

day evening that the man would

take her to his home the next

day. However, before they

could leave, Ankita hanged her-

self Thursday morning, he said.

headquarters hospital, where

doctors declared her dead.

She was rushed to the district

Brundaban demanded strict

punishment for the boyfriend,

alleging that his daughter had

The body was sent for

post-mortem examination,

and an investigation started,

night, he said.

been deceived.

Nursing student hangs self

after break-up with lover

about the assault.

"Preliminary inquiry suggests there were earlier disputes among the students, which escalated into an argument and led to the incident.' said Sub-Divisional Police Officer Manoj Behera. "We have called their parents for further inquiry and are investigating the matter. The child is currently safe and receiving treatment.'

This is not the first such incident at Panchada Sebashram, which houses more than 400 students. Locals have reported repeated cases of ragging and violence over the past year and have accused school authorities of negligence.

Community members and child rights activists have demanded a thorough investigation and strict action against those responsible.

stuffed in sack

Girl's body found

Balasore, Sept 25: Police Thursday recovered the body of a minor girl stuffed in a sack from a house near Samalpur village under the Industrial po lice limits in Balasore district

The girl had been staying in the area along with two other girls. Her native is reported to be in Bahanaga. Locals said the trio survived by collecting and selling scrap materials.

Industrial police Inspector-In-Charge Shyamaghana Behera reached the spot and launched an investigation While the cause of death re mains unclear, police suspect it to be a case of murder. The IIC said the exact circumstances of the girl's death would be known after completion of the probe.

The body was sent to the dis trict headquarters hospital for autopsy. The girl's identity has not yet been established.

<u>east coast railway</u>

File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/25-26/

Approx cost of the work: ₹441.29 lakh, EMD ₹3,70,700/-.

(2) Tender No. e-Tender-CENTKUR-248-

Description: MANUAL DEEP SCREENING
OF TRACK, POINTS & CROSSINGS AND
OTHER ENABLING WORKS UNDER THE

JURISDICTION OF ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL

ENGINEER/DHENKANAL OF KHURDA

(3) Tender No. e-Tender-CenKUR-249-202

Date: 11.09.2025

Description: YARD IMPROVEMENT
UPGRADATION WORKS ON DIFFERENT

YARDS OF TALCHER-PARADEEP SECTION

Completion Period of the work: 12 (Twelve

Date & time of Tender Closing: 06.10.2025

No manual offers sent by Post/ Courier/Fax or i

etter head and received in time. All such manua

offers shall be considered invalid and shall b

OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION

Months (for SI. No. 3).

(1) Tender No. e-tender-CENTKUR-246 2025, Date: 09.09.2025 Description: EXECUTION OF WORKS RELATED TO DAILY TRACK MAINTENANCE AS PER DIRECTION OF SENIOR SECTION

EAST COAST RAILWAY ENGINEER (P-WAY)/ INCHARGE AT MCI WIRE AS ANTI CREEP WIRE IN PLACE OF SIDING, TALCHER OF KHURDA ROAL DIVISION UNDER DEPOSIT SCHEME FOR

GALVANIZED STEEL WIRE IN KHURDA Advertised Value: ₹79,10,763.04, EMD ₹1,58,200/-, Period of Completion: 365 days. Bidding Start Date: 26.09.2025, Tender Closing date & time: 10.10.2025, 1300 hrs.

tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Complete information including e-Tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available

n website http://www.ireps.gov.in. Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD)

me of Work: PROVISION OF MONKEY ANTI

CLIMBING DEVICE ON OHE STRUCTURES AS PER RDSO MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTION NO.TI/MI/0059 REV-2 IN KHURDA ROAD

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD)/
PR-630/Q/25-26 Khurda Road

DIVISION.

Advertised Value: ₹95,00,321.60, EMD:
₹1,90,000/-, Period of Completion: 180 days.

Bidding Start Date: 26.09.2025, Tender Closing date & time: 10.10.2025, 1300 hrs.

Complete information including e-Tende documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website http://www.ireps.gov.in.

ejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tende documents of the above e-Tenders is available website http://www.ireps.gov.in

of closing of tender to note any change corrigendum issued for this tender.

Chola

CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED CORPORATE OFFICE : "CHOLA CREST", C54 & 55, Super B-4, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, India

Branch Office : 3rd Floor Sreemaa Construction Building, Naya Chowk, Madhupatna, Cuttack, Odisha, Pin - 753 010.

DEMAND NOTICE

DEMAND NOTICE ISSUED UNDER SECTION 13[2] OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002

You, the under mentioned Borrower / Mortgagor is hereby informed that the Company has initiated proceedings against you under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and that the Notice under 13(2) of the Act sent to you by Registered Post Ack. Due for Borrower/s has been returned undelivered. Hence, you are hereby called upon to take notice and pay the outstanding loan amount mentioned against the said account with nterest accuring there from within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the Company will proceed against you by exercising its right under Sub Section (4) of Section 13 of the Act by enforcing the below mentioned security to realize its dues with interests and cost. It is needles to mention that this notice is addressed to you without prejedice to any other remedy available to the Company.

Loan A/c. No. HE01BHU00000011153 & HE01BHU00000015158 Name and Address of Borrower / Co- Borrower : Applicant : Sangram Patra, S/o. Sachidananda Patra, Gangeswar, Bhatapatna, Kuanilo, Near Sadananda School, District - Khurda, Odisha, Pin - 752115

Co-Applicant : Alika Purabi Patra Alias Alka Patra W/o. Sangram Patra, Gangeswar, Bhatapatna, Kuanilo, Near Sadananda School, District - Khurda, Odisha, Pin - 752115

Co-Applicant: M/s. Sangram Transport and Services Gangeswar, Bhatapatna, Kuanilo, Near Sadananda School, District - Khurda, Odisha, Pin - 752115

Date: 26.09.2025 Place : Khurdah (Odisha) Description of the Immovable Property: All that part and parcel of the property bearing Khata No. 392/282, Plot No. 302/2044, Area 0.34 Decimal, corresponding to Khata No. 401/2, Plot No. 302, Sub Plot No. 14, Kisam Gharbari, Mouza - Gangeswar, P. S. - Cuttack Sadar, P. S. No. 183, Tahasil - Baranga, Tahasil No. 388. Distict - Cuttack. Odisha. Bounded by - North : Plot No. 302 (P), Sub Plot No. 15, South: Boundary, East - Plot No. 302(p) - Sub Plot No.12, West - Road.

Loan Amount: Rs. 23.00.000.00 (Rupees Twenty Three Lakh only) & Rs. 2,00,000.00 (Rupees Two Lakh only) = Total Rs. 25.00.000.00 (Rupees Twenty Five Lakh only) Date of Demand Notice: 08.09.2025 NPA Date: 03.09.2025 Outstanding Amount : Rs. 23,14,730.00

(Rupees Twenty Three Lakh Fourteen Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty only) as on 08/09/2025

Authorised Officer Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited



Bank of India

Zonal Office: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Mob.: 7978330922

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE E-Auction Sale Notice Under Rule 8(6) of security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

(E-Auction) Sale of secured movable / immovable Assets under SARFAESI Act, 2002

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE / IMMOVABLE ASSETS UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISO TO RULE 8(6) / 9(1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/Co-Applicants/Mortgagor that the below describe immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Bank of India, the possession of which have been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of India, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis on Auction Date mentioned hereunder for recovery of balance due to the Bank of India from the Borrower as mentioned in the table. Details of Borrower Co-Applicants/Mortgagor, amount due, short description of the immovable property and encumbrances known thereon, possession type reserve price, earnest money deposit and Bid increment amount are also given as under. Reserve Price /

SI. Vo.	BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/
lo.	Co-Applicants/Mortgagor/ Total Dues
1	ARB, CUTTACK, PH.: 8249067773 /

Borrower: Mr. Satyaranjan Maharana

Date: 26.09.2025

Co-Applicants: 1) Mr. Bishnu Prasad Maharana, 2) Mrs. Geetanjali Maharana, All are At: Ramagarh. P.O.: Kotasahi, Tangi, Dist.: Cuttack, Odisha-754022 / Total Dues: ₹75.50.736.32 + interest, costs and expenses, less any part amount repaid.

Description of the Property

All that part and parcel of Land and Building situated over Khata No.: 223. Plot No.: 693. Area: Ac.0.080 Dec. i.e. 3484.80 Sqft., Kissam: Gharabari, Mouza: Kotasahi, P.S. Tangi, P.S. No.: 96, SRO: Jagatpur, Tahasil: Tangi-Choudwar, Dist.: Cuttack, Standing in the name of Mr. Satyaranjan Maharana, Bounded by North: Plot No.: 694, South: Road, East: Plot No.: 692, West: Plot No.: 695

₹1,78,42,000/-(excluding GST & other tatutory dues) ₹17,84,200/-₹ 50,000/-

EMD / Bid

ncrement Amount

Date & Time of E-Auction: 30.10.2025 From 11.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 10 (Ten) minutes each.

Last Date & Time for submission of EMD & Documents: 30.10.2025 upto 4.00 P.M. Inspection will be provided to the prospective bidders on any working day before 29.10.2025 with prior appointment of

the authorised officer *Successful Bidder to deposit 25% of the bid amount by next working day which includes EMD money. The balance

amount to be paid on or before 15th Day of confirmation of sale. The sale shall be subject to the terms and conditions and provisions prescribed in the SARFAESI Act 2002 read with the

Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. This is also a 30 days sale notice to the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) of the aforesaid loan account for settlement of their outstanding dues with the Bank and to participate in the public auction on the above mentioned date. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://baanknet.com Place: Bhubaneswar **Authorised Officer**

Bank of India

said Rigan Kindo, the Inspector In-Charge of Malkangiri police

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER 🚁 KHARIAR (R&B) DIVISION, KHARIAR. DIST.NUAPADA. ODISHA E-mail: eeroads.khr@rediffmail.com

No.5219, Date:24.09.2025

TENDER CANCELLED

No.B-573:The Tender Call Notice bearing E-procurement Notice-13, Bid Identification No.SER&BKHR-13/2025-26 vide letter no.6105 dated 18.09.2025 is hereby cancelled due to administrative reasons/issues. Sd./- Superintending Engineer

OIPR-34062/11/0042/2526

Khariar (R&B) Division

EAST COAST RAILWAY

E-AUCTION PROGRAMME FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER & DECEMBER-2025 FOR DEPOT & DIVISIONS

SCHEDULE OF E-AUCTION

NOVEMBER- 2025	Depot Mancheswar	03.11.2025, 10.11.2025, 17.11.2025 & 24.11.2025	
	Khurda Road Division	04.11.2025, 11.11.2025, 18.11.2025 & 25.11.2025	
	Waltair Division	06.11.2025, 12.11.2025, 19.11.2025 & 26.11.2025	
	Sambalpur Division	06.11.2025, 13.11.2025, 20.11.2025 & 27.11.2025	
DECEMBER- 2025	Depot Mancheswar	01.12.25, 08.12.25, 15.12.25, 22.12.25 & 29.12.25	
	Khurda Road Division	02.12.25, 09.12.25, 16.12.25, 23.12.25 & 30.12.25	
	Waltair Division	03.12.25, 10.12.25, 17.12.25, 24.12.25 & 31.12.25	
	Sambalpur Division	04.12.25, 11.12.25, 18.12.25, 26.12.25 & 31.12.25	
Condemned rolling stocks (Loco, Coach, Wagon), Scrap rail, Miscellaneous P. Way fittings			

(switches, crossings, fish plates, sleepers, fish bolt etc.), Miscellaneous workshop scrap (drums, bogie frame, buffer casing, buffer plunger, turning and boring etc), Miscellaneous ferrous, non-ferrous, non-metallic scrap, condemned machinery and plants, Condemned Vehicles, Condemned office equipments of Sambalpur, Khurda Road & Waltair divisions and scrap materials of Railway Electrifications are expected to be offered on "AS IS WHERE IS" basis. Railway administration shall be at liberty to include other items too in the e-auction and the complete details of materials and terms and conditions will be as per Auction Catalogue, which shall be available with the respective auction conducting authority of East Coast Railway or from our website: www.ireps.gov.in within 07(seven) days prior to the date of auction.

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Bhubaneswar

and IITs for detailed information on GATE 2026.

evisit the website 10 (ten) days before the date

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.)

EAST COAST RAILWAY e-Tender Notice No. EPC-CECONIVBE 2025041, Dated: 18.09.2025 Name of Work: CONSTRUCTION OF MAJOR

BRIDGES, ROAD OVER BRIDGES AND ROAD UNDER BRIDGES IN CONNECTION WITH SAMBALPUR CITY-JARPADA 3RD 8 4TH LINE PROJECT ON EPC MODE.

Approx Cost of the work: ₹41036.00 lakh, EMD: ₹2,00,00,000/-, Completion Period of the work: 24 (Twenty Four) Month Tender Closing Date & Time: 18.11.2025, 200 nrs.

person shall be accepted against such e-Tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall rejected summarily without any

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in

Complete information including e-tende documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website http://www.ireps.gov.in

Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website fifteen days before the date of closing of tender to note any Change Corrigenda issued for this tender. The changes tenderers/ bidders must have Class-III Digita Signature Certificate and must be registered or IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder

can participate on e-tendering. The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of

all instructions Chief Administrative Officer (Con) PR-118/CI/25-26



न्युक्लियर पॉवर कॉपोरिशन ऑफ इंडिया लिमिटेड **Nucler Power Corporation of India Limited**

(भारत सरकार का उद्यम) (A Government of India Enterprise)

सीआईएन/CIN: U40104MH1987GO1149458

Be a partner, join NPCIL for a Challenging & Progressive Career Advt. No. NPCIL/HQ/HRM/ET/2025/04

RECRUITMENT OF ENGINEERING GRADUATES IN NPCIL THROUGH GATE NPCIL is a premier Public Sector Enterprise under the Administrative Control of the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India having a comprehensive capability in all facets of Nuclear Technology namely Siting of NPPs, Design, Construction, Commissioning,

Operation, Maintenance, Renovation, Modernization & Up-gradation, Plant Life Extension,

Waste Management and Decommissioning of Nuclear Reactors in India, under one roof. NPCIL is planning to recruit Engineering Graduates as Executive Trainees (ET-2026) in

Mechanical, Chemical, Electrical, Electronics, Instrumentation and Civil Disciplines. Interested candidates should possess valid GATE Score for the year 2024 /2025/2026 in any of the disciplines mentioned above at the time of applying online in NPCIL. Shortlisting of candidates for interview will be done based on the GATE Score. The detailed advertisement will

be available on NPCIL website www.npcilcareers.co.in & www.npcil.nic.in tentatively within 10 days from the date of announcement of GATE-2026 results. Candidates may visit https://gate2026.iitg.ac.in or any of the GATE zonal websites of IISc

Any further information/corrigendum/addendum would be uploaded only on the NPCIL websites mentioned above

NPCIL strives to have a workforce which reflects gender balance and women candidates are encouraged to apply.



एनपीसीआईएल, भारत सरकार द्वारा चलाएँ गए स्वच्छ भारत मिशन को प्रोत्साहित करता है। न्यूक्लियर विद्युत - एक अपरिहार्य विकल्प







Love is the keynote, Joy is the music, Knowledge is the performer, the Infinite All is the composer and audience





Edgar Morin &

of trying to

world, we

must learn

to care for it.

That means

embracing

complexity,

the best of

us human

what makes

and reclaiming

conquer the

Claudio Pedretti

After centuries

Renewed Humanism

"n 1999, one of us (Morin) introduced the term polycrisis to describe the web of interconnected catastrophes threatening our world. At the time, the concept was meant to serve as a warning; but it has since become our reality. We are facing a confluence of escalating ecological, political, economic, technological, and existential crises, each of which is reinforcing the others.

The polycrisis is best understood as a cascade: a tangle of intertwined non-linear causes and ripple effects. Climate change leads to human displacement and forced migration, which fuels xenophobia and nationalism, weakening global cooperation and further accelerating ecological collapse. Economic inequality erodes trust, fueling authoritarianism and violence. Technological innovation offers solutions, but also causes new problems: fractured communities, destabilized work patterns, and distorted public discourse. The COVID-19 pandemic, new wars, growing mental-health crises, and democratic backsliding are not isolated phenomena, but rather symptoms of a deeper systemic rupture.

To grapple with so much complexity, we must first reject reductive thinking. Our institutions, divided by rigid disciplines and linear cause-and-effect models, are no longer fit for purpose. We need an approach that acknowledges networks and relationships, accepts con-

tradictions, and recognizes the limits of our understanding; one that combines critical rigor with creative intuition, and scientific clarity with poetic vision. We must meet complexity with humility, not denial.

We also need something deeper: a new perspective that centers on our shared humanity. Call it Renewed Humanism. Born during the Renaissance, Humanism put dignity at the heart of artistic and intellectual pursuits. But as the Enlightenment advanced the values of reason, liberty, equality, and progress, Humanism lost its way, elevating the individual over the planet, justifying colonial conquest and ceaseless commodification, and erasing the spiritual dimension from our shared consciousness.

A Renewed Humanism would reclaim the value of humility. It would ground dignity in relationality, recognizing that every person is bound to all others in a shared community. It would operate globally, encouraging ecological prudence, spiritual dialogue, and cultural diversity. It would not reject science, but it would ground the scientific disciplines in a shared ethics. It would not view technology with fear, but it would steer innovation

The point is not to retreat into nostalgia, but to open new paths to the future. Today's environmental crises, democratic decline, and erosion of meaning are not obstacles; they are opportunities to redefine what it means to be human together.

This is not naive optimism. Our hope is firmly grounded in an awareness of humanity's current predicament. As Václav Havel wrote, "hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out." Even in the face of darkness, we can bring the light, because Humanist values $\,$ are embedded in human nature itself. These include an appreciation for complexity, interdependence, dignity, the responsibilities that accompany freedom, mutual understanding, spirituality, a politics of civilization, and an integral ecology.

Rather than fight those who act destructively, we should dissent with love. We must embrace them, trusting that every human being holds the potential to arrive at Humanist values. We can already see this awakening around the world, especially among young people. They are using the tools at their disposal to advocate for climate justice, preserve Indigenous wisdom, build feminist economies, practice regenerative agriculture, and foster interfaith dialogue. By rejecting the false dichotomies between reason and emotion, analysis and empathy, humanity and nature, they embody a Renewed Humanism.

The polycrisis cannot be addressed with isolated measures or slogans. It demands cultural and ethical metamorphosis, a rebirth of collective consciousness, institutions, and values. That is why we are deeply encouraged by the launch of the World Humanism Forum, an intergenerational gathering of thinkers, dreamers, leaders, and wisdom-keepers. Rather than simply lamenting the risks we face, they will ask what it means to be human in a wounded world, and what we can repair, reimagine, and rekindle.

Though we will not arrive at definitive answers, we can at least consider the same questions. For example, how can we ground education in curiosity and compassion? How can we build economies that affirm life rather than exploit it? And which stories can we tell to reconnect humans with the natural environment?

In a world that has privileged technical rationality over emotional depth, reclaiming the passions is not a sign of weakness, but a source of strength. We need minds that feel and hearts that think. We need to muster the courage to let others' suffering move us. Emotion and reason are not enemies. When they are integrated, the combination is far more powerful than either on its own.

We won't overcome the polycrisis without multilateralism, but nor can we maintain the technocratic approach that has dominated global gatherings. We need a humanistic multilateralism that is inclusive. participatory, and built on trust and shared responsibility. Climate action must go beyond finance and science. Reducing emissions is not enough. We must regenerate ecosystems, protect biodiversity, and transform our way of inhabiting Earth.

Climate is ultimately the metric of our planetary consciousness. Renewed Humanism will not solve everything, but it will give us a compass. After centuries of trying to conquer the world, we must learn to care for it. That means embracing complexity, and reclaiming the best of what makes us human.

> Edgar Morin is a leading French philosopher and sociologist. Claudio Pedretti is Founder and Chair of the World Humanism Forum.

WISDOM CORNER

No valid plans for the future can be made by those who have no capacity for living now

Happiness must happen, and the same holds for success: you have to let it happen by not caring about it

VIKTOR E. FRANKL

People don't realize that now is all there ever is; there is no past or future except as memory or anticipation in your mind

FOCUS ELECTIONS

MOSTLY FREE, BUT NOT FAIR

free and fair? That's the debate triggered by Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi's fierce attack on the Election Commission of India (ECI). Not surprisingly, in the hyper-polarised times in which we live, public opinion is sharply divided. Modi government supporters accuse the Congress leader of wilfully spreading lies only to discredit a prized democratic institution. Gandhi loyalists argue that Rahul is the only leader who is daring to raise inconvenient questions on those in power. Lost in the cacophony is a non-partisan answer to the original question posed: are elections in India truly free and fair?

Here is my proposition: Indian elections are mostly free but not necessarily fair. When Jawaharlal Nehru (yes, the much derided but staunchly idealistic Nehru ji) pushed for universal adult franchise soon after Independence, there were many who dismissively referred to it as the 'Biggest Gamble' in history, even warning that it could only lead to a further splintering of a nascent republic. Eighteen general elections later, Nehru could well claim that his commitment to electoral democracy was not a 'gamble' but an investment in the future that has paid rich dividends.

The facts speak for themselves. The first election in 1952 was spread over almost six months because of the challenging climatic and logistical issues. A total of 1.96 lakh polling booths were set up, of which 27,527 were reserved for women. Around 17.32 crore people were eligible to vote, and the turnout was 45%. Contrast that with the 2024 elections when 96.8 crore voters were eligible to vote across 10.5 lakh booths, 64.6 crore voters or 65.9% participated, of which 31.2 crore were women, the highest female participation in any election. These are staggering figures: to conduct an election at such scale relatively peacefully is a remarkable achievement.



A 'fair' election needs an ECI that acts and is seen to act with fairness. Sadly, the neutral umpire is now seen to be batting only for one side

Do also flashback to the period when entire booths would be captured by hired musclemen and when bogus voting was the norm not an exception in some parts of the country. I was witness to a booth 'capture' in 1990 during a Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha election in Mumbai's Umerkhadi area. The Muslim League was pitted against the Shiv Sena in a communally surcharged election: we saw gangs on both sides over-powering the somnolent local constabulary, taking over booths and stamping ballot papers in their favour. This was a pre-EVM, pre TV age but our reportage and photographs forced a repoll. Yes, there is still unusually high pre-poll violence in parts of West Bengal even now and there were disturbing reports in 2024 of voter suppression abetted by local police in parts of western UP, especially in Muslim-dominated areas.

But truthfully, voters are far more aware and empowered than before. I recall on one of my travels in Haryana being told by a group of Dalit villagers how their grandparents could not vote in a previous era because of Jatdabangs (strongmen) spreading fear in the neighborhood. Amidst the changing caste dynamics and a 24x7 media glare that is less likely to happen now. In a sense, voting day remains a celebration of an all-too-rare 'equality' of citizen power in a grossly unequal society.

But while Indian elections have become freer, they are

much less fairer. At the heart of electoral democracy is the belief in a 'Level Playing Field' (LPF): every candidate and party who contests should begin from the same starting point. Instead, now we have a totally skewed race where those in power have a massive advantage over their rivals. This is the result of a deadly combination of unchecked money power and brazen misuse of state power. The money power always existed: when the Congress dominated Indian politics, its access to funds was far greater than the competition.

While big money often cuts across the political divide, the real game-changer is just how state power has been 'weaponised' for total domination and a complete distortion of the idea of a LPF. Firstly, state agencies are now shamelessly misused to target the competition ahead of an election. Be it Central agencies like the ED or the local police, there is now an unabashed targeting of political rivals. It is not just the Opposition leaders who face fear of arrest. In the 2024 Delhi elections for example, AAP and Congress candidates suddenly found even their supporters being picked up and harassed on the eve of elections.

Secondly, state power also translates into easy access to public finances. Ahead of every election it is now standard practice for every ruling party to distribute taxpayers' monies to key voting blocs in the guise

Thirdly, state power is used to set and control the media narrative. The party in power uses government monies to fund the media juggernaut with a pre-election advertising blitz. This creates a situation where the Opposition is often almost totally invisibilized while the ruling party monopolizes the public mind space almost uni-directionally.

Which leaves us with the ECI

itself. A body with enormous

powers during elections, it has simply refused to address the absence of a LPF issue. Ahead of the 2024 general elections, the I-T department issued notices to the Congress dating back to the 1990s and even froze their accounts. The ECI did not act. During the elections, rabid communal dog-whistles went mostly unchecked. Paid news and untrammeled money power is an untreated cancer that has now reached a near-terminal stage. And now, when reports of mysterious additions and deletions in electoral rolls surface, the ECI's response is to kick off a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise that in Bihar at least is riddled with opacity and mismanagement. And even when an FIR is filed for possible voter fraud as in Karnataka, the ECI seems reluctant to join police investigation. A 'fair' election needs an ECI that acts and is seen to act with fairness. Sadly, the neutral umpire is now seen to be batting only for one side.

Post-script: Netflix has recently commissioned a biopic on India's first election commissioner, Sukumar Sen. Few may know of the mathematician turned civil servant but Sen's legacy as a maker of modern Indian democracy is assured. I do hope the entire ECI will watch the film when it is released and get inspired. India desperately needs an ECI that will regain a critical part of the human anatomy: its spine.

> The writer is senior iournalist and author

SPECTRUM

Rajdeep Sardesai

DESPERATELY

NEEDS AN ECI

CRITICAL PART

OF THE HUMAN

THAT WILL

ANATOMY:

ITS SPINE

REGAIN A

INDIA

NATURAL SCIENCE

An evolutionary tale of the tail



Nikhilanand Panigrahy

HUMANS' CLOSEST LIVING **ANCESTORS ARE THE OLD WORLD MONKEYS** WHICH LIVE IN AFRICA, ASIA, **AND SOUTHERN EUROPE**

TO THE EDITOR

are most welcome to contribute letters

requested to send their contact

address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and

suggestions, preferably by email, to:

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Readers of Orissa Post

(100 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

numbers and full postal

columns (between 600-1000

our ancestors were monkeys and the tail was very useful for their surviyal. Some monkeys in Central and South America, known as "New World monkeys," use their tails like an extra hand. For instance, if they want to displace a log, they can use their tail to grip one end of the log while moving it with their feet. Monkeys can also wrap their tails around a tree branch and hang upside down to exercise. The tail is strong and powerful enough to support their entire body weight. However, humans' closest

living ancestors are the "Old World monkeys," which live in Africa, Asia, and Southern Europe. These are known as the large baboons and macaques (a type of monkey with cheek pouches). In the human family tree, they are special because. unlike earlier monkeys, they are largely unable to hold objects with their tails. Despite not having a prehensile tail, they climb, sleep, and eat on trees. Macagues from the Western Ghats of India have a tuft of hair at the ends of

Humans, apes, gorillas, chimpanzees, gibbons, and orangutans are considered highly evolved mammals, or primates. This family of primates is different from other mammals because their brains are proportionally larger. They have better eyesight and use different senses, not just their sense of smell.

A subgroup of primates is called hominoids. Hominoids are divided into two groups: i) "Lesser apes," such as the gibbon, which live in trees and have small bodies; and ii) "Great apes," including orangutans and humans.

Humans (Homo sapiens) evolved from some of these great apes. Characteristics of Homo sapiens include short arms, long legs, the ability to walk on two feet in straight posture, an advanced brain. and living in complex social groups. To reach this stage, they had to pass through the Homo erectus stage, which first appeared about 1.89 million years ago.

They resembled modern humans, weighing 40 to 68 kg and standing 4 feet 1 inch to 6 feet 1 inch tall. They stopped living in trees and learned to live on the ground. They made tools from stone and used them to cut things. This indicates an advanced brain. They lived in Java, Indonesia, and likely used fire to cook meat. Of course, man was capable to prepare tools out of stone, before three lakh years of this stage. Hence, he was called Able or Hand Man.

A later stage was Homo neanderthalensis, which existed from 400,000 to 28,000 years ago, mainly in parts of Europe and Asia. They adapted to cold climates and are believed to have lived together in caves

and hunted in groups for food. Modern humans (Homo sapiens) are named from two Latin words: "homo" meaning "man" and "sapien" meaning "wise" or "clever." Their unique trait is their advanced cognitive ability. They made tools like the Neanderthals, but their tools were more advanced and artistic. Their skull and jawbone were more rounded than earlier hominoids. The size of their brain

The evolution of humans took millions of years and involved different stages that sometimes overlapped. For example, Neanderthals and modern humans lived together in Europe for about 5,400 vears. Genetic studies show that they interbred. Although Neanderthals are now extinct, some of their DNA still exists in us today.

It is known that about 25 million years ago when Great Apes were separated from monkeys, they lost their tails. This was a result of evolution. Sometimes, when a human baby is born, a "vestigial pseudotail" can be seen. This is a fleshy outgrowth that contains muscle, connective tissue, and cartilage. This unnecessary growth is typically surgically removed. Even though it's removed, it serves as a reminder that our primitive ancestors once had tails. It's easy to imagine what a nuisance it would be to still

The writer is an author and retired director. Odisha Text Book Bureau.

Residue disposal

Sir, Every winter, till the end of November or more, farmers burning stubble in neighbouring states such as Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh augments the pollution levels in Delhi. On an average, twenty three million tonnes of rice straw are burnt in north India by farmers to make way for wheat production. A small gap between rice harvesting time and wheat sowing period means the farmers quickly burn the stubble to remove the paddy stubble causing severe air pollution. Manual removal of stubble is not cost effective for a farmer. Bio decomposer technology that can then crop residue into manure in about twenty days has not practically helped because of the use of fungal strains. Happy seeders that integrate stubble into the soil as mulch thereby reducing the need to burn the stubble are considered the biggest hope. Subsidised combined harvesters are helpful but again a farmer may have to shell out quite a considerable amount towards rent and fuel. .

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Urban heat island

Sir, Cities are experiencing unpredictable heavy rains due to the urban heat island effect. Concrete surfaces, high-rise buildings, dense traffic, and widespread air-conditioner use raise city temperatures several degrees above surrounding rural areas. This heat draws in moisture from nearby districts, forming cumulonimbus clouds that trigger intense, erratic downpours. Hyderabad experienced this recently, with Banjara Hills recording over 100 mm of rainfall, while Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, and Kolkata show similar patterns. In Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, rapidly urbanising areas such as Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Chandigarh, Shimla, and Solan require close monitoring. Shrinking green cover and increased construction can amplify city heat, disrupting normal rainfall and raising flash flood risks. Authorities must track urban temperature rises, expand green belts, regulate high-rise development, and strengthen early warning systems to minimise the impact of sudden heavy rainfall on residents and infrastructure.

RS Narula, PATIALA



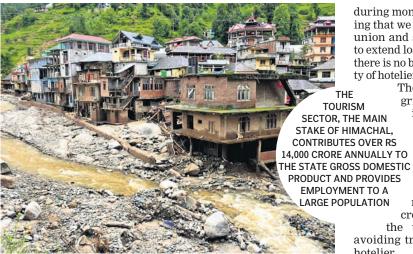
TWO STATES





MONSOON CURSE HAUNTS HP TOURISM

Excessive rains becoming perpetual curse for HP tourism industry, room occupancy down to 20%



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla. Sept 25: Excessive rains wreaking havoc in the form of cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides are becoming a perpetual curse for tourism in Himachal Pradesh during the monsoon season.

However, with the withdrawal of monsoon, the hospitality industry is pinning hope on revival.

"The room occupancy in the state which ranged between 70-80 per cent in 2019 beforethe Covid pandemic, stood between 10-20 per cent this monsoon, a sharp decline as torrential rains damaged infrastructure and washed away roads in several districts", Federation of Himachal Hotels and Restaurants Association (FOHHRA) President Gajender Thakur told the PTI Thursday.

Monsoon withdrew from eight out of 12 districts Wednesday. The tourism industry is unable to bounce back after the COVID pandemic, as the 2023 monsoon fury rubbed salt on the healing wounds, and even in 2025, the number of tourists dropped sharply due to the Ma-

RAIN PAIN

HIMACHAL RECEIVED 41 PER CENT **EXCESS RAINS FROM JUNE 20 TILL** SEPTEMBER 25 AND THE STATE SUFFERED LOSSES OF ₹4.861 CRORE

THE STATE WITNESSED 47 CLOUDBURSTS, 98 FLASH FLOODS AND 148 MAJOR LANDSLIDES AND RAIN-RELATED INCIDENTS HAVE SO FAR CLAIMED 262 LIVES

ha Kumbh, then the Indo-Pak conflict and now the monsoon disaster, he said.

In early July, major tourist destinations witnessed almost zero hotel bookings, with National Highways like the Chandigarh-Manali route severely damaged and sensational coverage of disasters and panic-driven content online further discouraged tourists even from unaffected areas, exacerbating losses, Thakur

A permanent solution of building flyovers on flood and landslide prone areas especially in Manali is the need of the hour to ensure that the road connectivity is not affected

during monsoons, he said adding that we have requested the union and state governments to extend loan installments are there is no business and majority of hoteliers have taken loans.

Thousands of pilgrims going for Manimahesh were stranded in Chamba district

with floods and landslides blocking the road connectivity and the news reports have created panic among

the tourists who are avoiding travel to HP, said a

'There is no business, bookings were cancelled after the monsoon disaster, and trains are empty. We are hoping that the tourist inflow would pick up during Navratras as now the weather is pleasant and roads are open", said Lucky, coordinator of Taxi Union at Shimla Railway station.

The Shimla-Kalka railway track was also obstructed in the monsoon. Although the services have resumed, trains are running empty and there is no work, says Nisar Ahmed, a

A large number of people used to come to Shimla during Navratras from West Bengal, but this year, the majority of bookings were cancelled due to disaster as people saw videos and news of landslides, floods and casualties, which created fear, says temple priest of Kali Bari temple in Shimla.

Straight cutting of hills, deforestation, lack of proper planning, construction of houses and commercial establishments on drains and river hanks, unscientific dumping of muck and climate change are leading to disaster during monsoon, opined experts.

Telangana claims 70% of Krishna water Telangana, which was carved out of united Andhra Pradesh in 2014, is now seeking a fresh allocation Hyderabad, Sept 25: Telangabased on basin parameters na is fighting for an equitable share of Krishna River waters

ing its final arguments over the past several months through senior advocate S Vaidvanathan. who has been allotted three days to argue the state's case Reddy said that it's perhaps

unprecedented in India for a sitting Irrigation Minister to personally attend tribunal hearings, and this reflects the seriousness with which the Congress government is pursuing the issue. He made it clear that Telangana was determined to secure its fair share and correct the historical injustice it had suffered in the past.

made earlier, he recalled that the KWDT-II had awarded 1.005 TMC of Krishna waters to the then united Andhra Pradesh, which included 811 TMC at 75 per cent dependability, 49 TMC at 65 per cent dependability, and 145 TMC from average flows. In addition, 45 TMC was allotted from Godavari diversions. The tribunal had also granted liberty

Outlining the allocations

the average flows. The minister said Telangana's claim was built on rational and internationally accepted

to use waters over and above

area, population within the basin, extent of drought-prone regions, and cultivable land. Based on these calculations, Telangana has demanded 555 TMC out of the 75 per cent dependable waters, 43 TMC from the 65 per cent dependable wa ters, 120 TMC from the aver age flows, and the full 45 TMC from Godavari diversions. Al together, this amounts to 763 TMC of dependable water for Telangana, besides liberty to utilise the entire surplus over

parameters such as catchmen

Reddy stressed that these figures were not arbitrary but based on scientific and equitable sharing principles that are recognised globally in river

average flows.



Family members of Yug Gupta, the four-year-old child murdered in 2014, and locals hold a protest rally demanding justice, in Shimla, Himacha

Lahaul's cash crops hit by delay in restoring roads



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Manali, Sept 25: Farmers settled in the cold desert of the landlocked Lahaul Valley in Himachal Pradesh, which has been normally flushing with vegetables, mainly the high-value exotic broccoli and lettuce, have been facing losses with their cash crop decaying in fields.

The reason -- there was abnormal delay in restoring road connectivity by the government after multiple landslides left a trail of destruction with shutting of the Keylong-Manali-Kullu-Mandi highway several times in August and September.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

is in focus.

Hyderabad, Sept 25: Amid

concerns over US President

Donald Trump's proclamation

imposing a \$1,00,000 fee on H1B

visas, a famous Balaji temple

on the outskirts of Hyderabad

Known as 'Visa Balaji tem-

ple', the shrine located in

Chilkur has been popular for

over two decades as many dev-

otees believed that they would

get a visa if they worship here.

H1B aspirant, who visited the

temple after not getting a vi-

sa this year, hoped for divine

blessings. "We don't know

who is going to be imposed

the \$100,000 [fees] and who is

Vinay, a technology analyst in a private company and an

Even public transport and tourist vehicles remained stuck for days. BJP leader and former Chief Minister Jairam Thakur, who began his twoday tour Wednesday of the arid Lahaul Valley that bears a single crop in a year through glacial-fed streams, told IANS in an interview over phone that the cauliflower, peas, potatoes, broccoli and lettuce have been rotting in fields.

"Since the government failed to restore the road connectivity on time owing to its gross negligence, a majority of farmers preferred not to harvest the crops. Rotting of cauliflower, broccoli and peas is a common sight and at many places villagers told us that no government official came to villages to assess the losses." the Leader of Opposition told IANS.

He said that since the farmers depend on a single crop in a year, their economy was badly

not going to be imposed that

fee. We do not have a clarity

on that yet. We will only get to

know at the next lottery. And

the lottery is always a matter

of luck. Whatever the stakes

may be, I am here to believe in

Balaji and I hope he guides me,"

As per their belief, the devo-

tees perform 11 or 108 'pradak-

shinas' (circumambulation)

around the temple for their

around here like the famous

Chaitanya Bharati (Institute of

Technology). The students used

to come here and pray with 11

rounds, they got the visa and

he told PTI Videos.

wish to be fulfilled.

L&T exits, T'gana takes charge of metro

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

before the Krishna Water Dis-

putes Tribunal-II and placed a

claim for nearly 70 per cent of

the water earlier allocated to

the united Andhra Pradesh,

Irrigation Minister N Uttam

He was addressing the media

in New Delhi, where the hear-

ing by KWDT-II resumed. The

minister is personally attend-

Reddy said that the matter

has reached the final stage

with Telangana presenting its

concluding arguments since

February this year.

ing the tribunal's hearing.

Kumar Reddy said Tuesday.

Hyderabad, Sept 25: Telangana government has agreed to take over Phase-I of Hyderabad Metro Rail project from L&T Group by paying Rs 2,000 crore for the equity in the concessionaire L&T Metro Rail Hyderabad Ltd, official sources said Thursday.

It was agreed that the state government would also take over the company's debt of Rs 13.000 crore, they said, L&T has about 90 per cent equity in the project.

Last month, the infra major expressed its desire to offload its stake, the Metro Rail project-about 70 KM, to either the state or central government through a new Special Purpose vehicle (SPV), citing operational and accumulated losses.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, along with senior officials of the state government, held a meeting with L&T group CMD SN Subrahmanyan and others Thursday to discuss the

Faith over fees: 'Visa Balaji temple' draws H1B hopefuls

With the Trump administration imposing a staggering \$1,00,000 fee for new H1B visas, the Chilkur Balaji temple has become

a spiritual anchor for many devotees, especially IT professionals, the primary beneficiaries of these visas



TAKE IN HYDERABAD METRO RAI PROJECT FOR ₹2000CR

HE REVENUE FROM OPERATIONS AND OTHER INCOME FOR THE FY2024-25 REGISTERED A

"After detailed negotiations, with an objective to expedite the phase 2 approval by GoI, it was agreed in principle that the State government would take over Phase-I Metro Rail project by taking over the debt of the project, which now stands at about Rs 13,000 cr. Further, the state government will pay about Rs 2.000 cr to L&T towards their equity investment in LTMRHL as a one-time settlement," sources said.

The conditions of the take-

over shall be worked out with mutual discussions, and the process will be carried forward in a carefully calibrated and mutually agreeable manner, duly ensuring all legal and statutory compliances, they

According to the latest annual report of L&T Metro Rail, the revenue from operations and other income for the financial year 2024-25 was Rs 1,108.54 crore as against Rs 1,399.31 crore in the previous financial year, registering a decrease of 21 per cent in revenue.

The loss before and after tax was Rs 625.88 crore for the financial year under review as against the loss before and after tax of Rs 555.04 crore for the previous financial year, registering an increase of 13 per cent in loss.

The company signed the Concession Agreement with the then Government of Andhra Pradesh (undivided) in September 2010 and completed the financial closure for the Project

HP breeds record number of golden mahseer in captivity

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shimla, Sept 25: In a first, the Himachal Pradesh Fisheries Department has succeeded in breeding in captivity a record 87,000 golden mahseer fingerlings, a popular freshwater sport and food fish, at a farm, and 34,500 of them have been released into nature, Director-cum-Warden of Fisheries, Vivek Chandel, said.

The fingerlings were raised in the Machhval Mahseer Farm. which was established in 2016.

Since then, its annual production had never exceeded 5,000. Of the 87,000 reared finger

lings, 20,000 were stocked in the Pong dam reservoir and 14,500 in the Gobind Sagar reservoir.

The population of the golden mahseer, being a game fish, is declining in the state for var ious reasons, including construction of dams, barrages, pollution, indiscriminate fishing of brood and juvenile fish. introduction of exotic species and habitat deterioration.

No.C-1186

CUTTACK MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE Tender ID:2025 ORULB 118646

Bid Reference No.MC(CMC)CTC_Div_I_No9/2025-26 Tender Call Notice No.11878 (PW) Date:25.09.2025

Name of Works: Civil Works No. of Works: 02 Nos. Bid Value: Rs.3.81 Lakh to Rs.24.31 Lakh

Period of Completion: Fifteen Days to One Calendar Month Date and Time Schedule: Start End Opening 5.00 PM on 11.00 AM on 11.00 A.M. on

dt.26.09.2025 dt.09.10.2025 Dt.13.10.2025 Tender Details: Can be seen from the procurement portal www.tendersorissa.gov.in

OIPR-13031/11/0226/2526

Executive Engineer City Div-I

🚵 ZILLA SWASTHYA SAMITI, BARGARH 🙈 Dept. of Health & Family Welfare, Govt.of Odisha O/o. CDM&PHO, Bargarh-768028, Phone/Fax:06646-231763

TENDER CALL NOTICE

No.E-408:Sealed tenders are invited from individuals/Tour Operators/Travel Agency/Society/Firm for hiring of commercial light diesel vehicles on a monthly & daily basis of District Programme Management Unit (DPMU), NHM, Bargarh. Details regarding eligibility criteria, terms & conditions and the formats for submission of bids Technical & Price Bid) are mentioned in the tender document which nay be downloaded from the website: www.bargarh.odisha.gov.in nterested agencies have to submit their tenders in a sealed envelope super-scribing on the top of the sealed envelope as "Tender for Hiring of Vehicles on Monthly & Daily Basis in pursuance to advertisemen no: 77/Dt.24.09.2025". The tenders should reach to the office of the undersigned by Dt.18.10.2025 (till 4 P.M.) through Speed Post/ Regd ost/Courier only. Sealed Tenders will be opened on Dt.23.10.2025 a 11.00 AM. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. The undersigned reserves

he right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason

thereof. The authority will not held responsible for any postal del Sd./- CDM&PHO cum DMD. OIPR-10124/11/0025/2526 NHM, Bargarh

"At that time, there was a boom of foreign travel – I am talking about 1990s. There were a lot of engineering colleges

Many devotees share stories of their visa dreams coming true after worshipping in this

me my visa is approved. This was my H1B renewal. I came to Chilkur Balaii on 10th. Yeah, it's always been a lucky charm for me," said Sai Row-

receive the Lord's blessings. "We had visited the Balaji temple earlier as well, when our daughter went from India to the US, then from the US to Canada, and from Canada to the US again. In total, we have visited this temple six times,' said Suguna, a devotee.

tik, a Game Developer.

Not just the aspirants, but al-

so parents of those already in

the US visit the temple, praying

that their children continue to

Though the shrine gained popularity as 'Visa Balaji temple', it is well-known among devotees in Telangana and neighbouring Andhra Pradesh for not having a 'hundi' in its premises and for not accepting any mon-

view on 18th. It was a normal interview. They asked me a chief priest of the temple. single question and they told

then they gave the name Visa Balaji," said CS Rangarajan,

temple. "I got my H1B on 19 September and I had my inter-

ey from devotees. VIPs have no privilege in this temple.

national



What are the people of **Ladakh demanding?** They are simply asking for their right to vote, the right to choose their government. But the BJP is suppressing their voice

SC ALLOWS RAM LEELA IN UP SCHOOL GROUND

The Supreme Court Thursday disapproved the use of school grounds for religious festivities, but allowed a "Ram Leela" event being organised for a century in Uttar Pradesh's Tundla



crore for this purpose."Asked about the BJP's protest against potholes, he conceded that there are potholes in Bangalore and it is being filled on a war

D K SHIVAKUMAR | K'TAKA DY CM

A special meeting will be convened in 15 days to resolve issues faced by mathadi workers. We will discuss and resolve concerns related to housing costs for Mathadis in CIDCO as well as

Children are falling ill from excessive use of mobile phones. Environmental

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHA CM

the long-pending Wadala issue

pollution is also causing health issues. We are creating problems ourselves, and we must find solutions too HEMANT SOREN | JHARKHAND CM

SHORT TAKES

Prez Murmu in Mathura

Mathura (UP): President Droupadi Murmu arrived in Mathura for a day-long visit Thursday, Murmu, who reached Vrindavan Road railway station at 10 am aboard Maharaia Express. deemed one of the most luxurious trains in the world and features a presidential suite, deluxe suites. restaurants and lounges. She was welcomed by Minister Laxmi Naravan Chaudhary and Mayor Vinod Kumar Agarwal.

Custodial death: SC raps MP govt, CBI

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Thursday slammed the and the CBI for the delay in suspending absconding police officials accused in a custodial death case and warned of contempt action. A bench of Justices B V said the police officials have been absconding since April The top court was hearing a contempt plea of the mother of the 24-year-old victim alleging non-compliance of the top court's May 15 order, transferring the investigation from Madhya Pradesh Police to the CBI. The local police was observed to have attempted a cover up besides influencing the probe into

Fire at Kolkata quest house

Kolkata: A fire broke out at a guest house in south Kolkata's Prince Anwar Shah Road area Thursday afternoon, officials said. The blaze was spotted around 1.10 pm on the rooftop of the four-storied building, they said. Three fire tenders doused the blaze at 3.50 pm, they said.

into 20-ft deep well

Ramgarh: An elephant and its calf fell into a 20-footdeep well while crossing a farmland in Jharkhand's Ramgarh district, a forest official said Thursday. The forest department has rescued both the jumbos safely after two hours of operation, he said. The incident happened at Hesapoda village in Parsadih forest under Gola

MoD seals ₹62,370cr deal for 97 Tejas jets with HAL



New Delhi, Sept 25: The defence ministry Thursday sealed a Rs 62,370 crore deal with the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) to procure 97 Tejas MK-1A light combat aircraft for the Indian Air Force.

The signing of the contract came over a month after the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi green-lighted the mega procurement. The delivery of the Light Com-

bat Aircraft (LCA) would commence in 2027-28 and the supplies will have to be completed over a period of six years, officials said. 'The Ministry of Defence

signed a contract with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for procurement of 97 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk1A, including 68 fighters and 29 twin seaters, along with associated equipment, for the Indian Air Force, at a cost of over Rs. 62,370 crore (excluding taxes),'

The signing of the contract came over a month after the **Cabinet Committee** on Security headed **by Prime Minister**

Narendra Modi

green-lighted the

mega procurement

according to an official readout.

tract awarded to the state-run aerospace behemoth. In February 2021, the defence ministry sealed a Rs 48,000 crore deal with HAL for procurement of 83 Tejas MK-1A jets for the IAF.

"The aircraft will have an indigenous content of over 64 per cent, with 67 additional items incorporated, over and above the previous LCA Mk1A contract signed in January 2021," the defence ministry said.

"The integration of advanced

tems such as the Uttam Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) Radar, Swayam Raksha Kayach, and control surface actuators will further strengthen the Aatmanirbharta (self-reliance) initiatives," it said. The single-engine Mk-1A wil

be a replacement for the IAF's MiG-21 fighters. "The LCA Mk1A is the most advanced variant of the indigenously designed & manufactured fighter aircraft and will serve as a potent platform to meet the operational requirements of the IAF, the ministry said in the read out. The sealing of the contract comes a day before the IAF bids farewell to MiG-21 fleet.

The ministry said the project to procure the 97 Tejas jets is being supported by a robust vendor base of nearly 105 Indian companies directly engaged in the manufacture of various components.

It said the production of the jets is expected to generate close to 11,750 direct and indirect jobs per year for the duration of six years, giving a major boost to the domestic aerospace ecosystem. "The acquisition, under the 'Buy (India-IDDM)' category of Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020, is in line with the government's thrust on indigenisation," the ministry said. The IAF is looking at inducting the warplanes as the number of its fighter squadrons have gone down to 31 from officially sanctioned strength of 42.

Forty minor girls found locked inside **UP madrassa toilet**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

the district administration received repeated complaints regarding the functioning of an illegal madrassa inside a three-storey building in Pahalwara village under Payagpur

went to the building for an inspection, the madrassa operators initially tried to stop us from going upstairs. In the presence of police, we entered the premises and found the toilet on the terrace locked." he said. When the door was opened by female police personnel, 40 girls, aged between nine and 14, hiding inside the toilet came out one by one. The girls looked frightened and were unable to

The SDM said District Minority Welfare Officer Mohammad Khalid has been asked to verify the registration and lepoll in-charge for Bihar, Bhupender for Bengal PRESS TRUST OF INDIA come from the Other Backward New Delhi, Sept 25: The BJP Thursday named Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Bhupender Yadav, both key

Workers spread paddy for drying at a wholesale grain market in Jalandhar, Punjab

BJP names Pradhan as

poll managers of the party, as its in-charge for the Assembly elections in Bihar and Bengal, respectively. Making important appointments for three poll-bound states, including for next year, the BJP named Baijayant 'Jay' Panda, one of its vice-presidents, its in-charge for the

Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu

OBC faces and most seasoned

where it is a junior partner to the AIADMK.

The Bihar elections are expected in November, followed by West Bengal and Tamil Nadu which are likely to go to

polls in March-April 2026 A BJP statement said Union minister C R Paatil, who heads the party's Gujarat unit and is considered a capable organisation hand, and Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya have been named co-incharges for the Bihar polls.

Former Tripura chief minister Biplab Kumar Deb is the co-incharge for West Bengal, while Union minister Murlidhar Mohol is the co-in-

charge for Tamil Nadu, it said. Both Pradhan and Yaday

Classes (OBCs) and are among the most experienced poll managers of the BJP. Maurva also belongs to an OBC caste, while Deb is a Bengali, an aspect which can be politically helpful for the party in the states assigned to them.

Pradhan was the in-charge for Haryana elections, while Yadav helmed a similar role for Maharashtra polls, both held in 2024, with the BJP pulling off wins of a stunning scale in the two states. Pradhan's formal appointment for the Bihar polls came very close to the elections, though he had been involved in the state's affairs.



He was the party's co-incharge for the 2010 Bihar polls, when the BJP-JD(U) alliance scored its most emphatic victory. He was also the in-charge in for the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Karnataka, while Yaday oversaw polls in Bihar and Gujarat, among others, in the past.

With the BJP's national leadership plays a central role in shaping the party's campaign for Assembly polls, election incharges play a critical part as their bridge with state leaders and implementing the party's strategies on the ground. The co-incharges assist them in implementing the agenda.

K'taka HC refuses to halt caste survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Sept 25: The Karnataka High Court Thursday declined to stop the state's socio-economic and educational survey, widely referred to as the caste survey, but imposed strict safeguards on how it is conducted and how the col lected data is handled.

A division bench com prising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice C M Joshi clarified that while the exercise could continue, the data gathered must remain confi dential and cannot be shared with anyone.

The bench further ordered that participants be expressly told that their involvement is voluntary.

"We do not find reason to interdict the ongoing survey. However, we state that data collected shall not be disclosed to any person. The Commission shall ensure that data is fully protected and kept confidential. We further direct the Commission to issue a public notification clarifying that participation in this survey is voluntary and no person is obligated to disclose any information," the bench stated.

The court added that this clarification must be given at the outset of the survey process. Enumerators, it said cannot pressure or persuade individuals who refuse to participate. The Commission has also been asked to file an affidavit within one working day outlining the steps taken to safeguard data collected and stored. Earlier this week, the Karnataka government defend ed the survey, arguing that the Union government was adopt ing contradictory positions Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for the State, pointed out that the Centre itself piloted the 105th Constitutional Amendment in 2021, which reinstated the pow ers of states to identify and list backward classes.

Nagarathna and R Mahadevan of Bollywood'. but have not been suspended.

Elephant, its calf fall

police station limits.

SRK's production house Wankhade's plea has sought permanent and mandatory injunction,

Sameer Wankhede sues

declaration and damages against the Red Chillies Entertainment Private Limited, Netflix and others, for what he alleges is "false, malicious and defamatory video" of the production house and broadcast by Netflix as part of their television series

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: IRS officer and former NCB zonal director Sameer Wankhede Thursday filed a defamation suit in the Delhi High Court against actor Shahrukh Khan and Gauri Khan owned Red Chillies Entertainment and Netflix for allegedly maligning his reputation in their series 'The Ba***ds

Wankhade's plea has sought permanent and mandatory injunction, declaration and damages against the Red Chillies **Entertainment Private Limit**ed, Netflix and others, for what he alleges is "false, malicious and defamatory video" of the production house and broadcast by Netflix as part of their television series.

Wankhade sought Rs 2 crore in damages which he wants to to be donated to the Tata Memorial Cancer Hospital for cancer



This series disseminates a misleading and negative portrayal of anti-drug enforcement agencies, thereby eroding public confidence in law enforcement institutions." Advocate Aditya Giri, one of the lawyers representing Wankhade,

The plea said the series has been deliberately conceptualised and executed with the intent to malign Wankhede's reputation in a colourable and prejudicial manner, especially when the case involving the officer and Shahrukh Khan's son Aryan khan is pending and sub-judice before the Bombay High Court and the NDPS Spe-

cial Court in Mumbai. It claimed that the series depicts a character making an obscene gesture—specifically, showing a middle finger after the character recites the slogan "Satyamev Jayate" which is the part of the National Emblem.

Bahraich (UP), Sept 25: Forty girls aged between nine and 14 years were found confined inside a toilet of an unregistered madrassa here during an inspection, officials said Thursday. Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Payagpur Ashwini Kumar Pandey told PTI that

"On Wednesday, when we

say anything clearly, he added.

gality of the institution.

Centre defends women officer policy; SC reserves verdict

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: The Centre Thursday defended its policy on the grant of permanent commission to Short Service Commission women officers and said the apex court's verdicts on the aspect were being followed without discrimination.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Uijal Bhuvan and N Kotiswar Singh reserved its verdict on a batch of 84 officers of the Army. The officers have challenged the denial of grant

of permission commission. Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre and the Army, submitted that the 2020 verdict in Babita Puniya case and 2021 verdict in Nitisha case had actually upheld the policy and whatever faults which were still there and pointed out by

the court were eventually cor-

rected. Justice Kant told Bhati it did not mean that the Army had corrected its policy on permanent commission and whatever faults existed were removed post Nitisha verdict.

Concluding her arguments, Bhati said, "No process can satisfy everyone and there will always be heartburn. She said elimination was

also part of policy to keep the forces young and it was equally applied to all without discrimination. Senior advocates Maneka

Guruswamy, V Mohana, Abhinav Mukherjee and Rekha Palli, appearing for the SSC officers, advanced counter submissions. The bench said it would al-

so hear similar pleas related to permanent commission from



the Navy, followed by the Air Force and coast guard.

On September 24, the Centre denied any discrimination in granting permanent commission to SSC officers when compared with their male counterparts while assuring the top court that all parameters were being duly followed.

Bhati said uniform policy is

followed for all in grant of permanent commission. Countering the arguments of the women officers, who moved court, Bhati had said the annual confidential reports of those officers were actually gender neutral without an element of discrimination.

She had submitted that the methodology adopted is uniformly applicable to all officers. "The aim of a confidential report is to have an objective assessment of an officer's competence, employability and potential as observed during the

period covered by the report,

primarily for organisational

requirements," she had said.

Bhati said it was an impression sought to be created that there was discrimination but statistics since 1991 showed women officers were not discriminated against their male

counterparts. "In the Army, we have been following a very strict regime and there is no question of discrimination, as the selection board does not have the name of the officer before it. We are a professional army and do err sometime and AFT and courts have corrected us, she had said.

Dealing with the arguments of non-consideration of "crite ria appointment" or difficult area posting in the ACR of women officers, Bhati had said such appointments were incon sequential and the officers were marked in average in the annu al confidential reports.

Bhati elaborated that there were no marks or distinction of "criteria" or "non criteria" appointments for PC selection board and criteria appointments are specified for promotion to colonel, brigadier,

major general and lieutenant general ranks.

She said below seven years of service, all confidential reports (CR) are non criteria reports and there are inherent checks available within the system for internal assessment of CRs to guard against subjectivity and bias assessment.

national



Eleven ambulances have been launched todav. By October. 53 more will be added. We are working to take the total strength to 1,000 to ensure every resident has timely access to emergency medical services

REKHA GUPTA DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

DRUG ADDICT SWALLOWS 29 SPOONS. 19 TOOTHBRUSHES

In a bizarre medical case, doctors at a private hospital in Hapur removed two pens, 19 toothbrushes and 29 spoons from the stomach of a man undergoing treatment for drug addiction, officials said Thursday





sectors, and poli-

and authentic data. Empowering governance at the local level is not only the need of the hour but also the key to fulfilling the aspirations

NAYAB SINGH SAINI I HARYANA CM

Amendments have been made in the Mahatma Gandh NREGA Act, 2005, to give precedence

to water-related works in water-stressed rural blocks. This historic step ensures that a minimum expenditure on water conservation and harvesting activities will now be mandatory in rural blocks SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN I RURAL

DEVELOPMENT MINISTER

When Congress workers mingle their thoughts and lives gress committees

will become such sacred places that will provide solutions to the problems of men and women suffering from injustice

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE CONGRESS PRESIDENT





simple source image.

getting insane. Alibaba just released Wan 2.2 Animate, a new model that can

It nails facial expressions and fullbody movements like nothing else

@dhakshana8484

SHORT **TAKES**

■ Delhi HC to pass interim order on Nagariuna's plea

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court Thursday said it would pass an interim order on actor Akkineni Nagarjuna's plea seeking protection of his personality and publicity rights. Justice Tejas Karia said. "When you can identify the URLs, the best is to direct them to take down..... Will pass orders," Recently, Bollywood actors Aishwarya Bachchan and her husband Abhishek Bachchan and filmmaker Karan Johar also approached the high court seeking protection of their personality and publicity rights and the court granted them similar relief.

Paper leak: Youths demand CBI query

Dehradun: The Uttarakhand Berozgar Sangh, protesting against the alleged leak of three pages of a graduatelevel examination's question paper, Thursday demanded that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) investigate the "irregularities in the examination". Amid the uproar caused by the leaking of three pages of the question paper during the competitive examination for various departments September 21, a delegation led by union president Ram Kandwal met Chief Minister Pushkar Singh

Trade talks: Indian team back from US

Dhami, but it yielded no results.

New Delhi: The Indian team **Industry Minister Piyush** Goyal, who led the team, will be back Friday.

LADAKH VIOLENCE

Uneasy calm, heavy police deployment in Leh; 50 held



between demonstrators and police during a protest demanding statehood for Ladakh, outside BJP headquarters building, in Leh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Leh, Sept 25: An uneasy calm prevailed in Ladakh Thursday as police and paramilitary troops strictly enforced a curfew in Leh town, a day after clashes between security personnel and protesters demanding statehood and constitutional protection left four people dead and more than 80 injured. At least 50 people have been

detained so far in connection with the violence that broke out Wednesday during the shutdown called by Leh Apex Body (LAB) to demand an extension of the Sixth Schedule and statehood for Ladakh.

The protesters, according to officials, indulged in arson and violence, with mobs burning the BJP office, a number of vehicles, and ransacking the Hill Council headquarters. "The situation in the cur-

few-hit areas is under control. There are no incidents to report from anywhere," a police officer told PTI, confirming the detentions. The escalation of violence had led climate activist Sonam Wangchuk to abandon his fortnight-long hunger strike, which he was undertaking in favour of the demands. Wangchuk has denounced the violence. The Centre, however, blamed the activist for the unrest, alleging that the mob violence was guided by his

"provocative statements" and

claiming that "politically mo-

tivated" people were unhappy

with the progress of ongoing

talks between the government

and Ladakhi groups.

The Union Home Ministry, which reiterated its commitment to providing "adequate constitutional safeguards. also noted that police are probing the possible involvement of foreign hands, citing that three of the injured were Nepalese citizens. Ladakh Lt Governor Kavinder Gupta chaired a high-level security review meeting, calling for heightened vigilance and inter-agency coordination, while terming the Wednesday's

■ The escalation of violence had led climate activist Sonam Wangchuk to abandon his fortnight-long hunger strike, which he was undertaking in favour of

Wangchuk has denounced the

events "heart-wrenching" and a result of a "conspiracy"

The tragic events triggered sharp political reactions with Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, while appealing for peace in Ladakh, came

out in strong defence of the Congress, saying the BJP was habitual for blaming others for their failures.

Speaking to reporters in Reasi district of Jammu region, the Chief Minister urged the LG-led administration of Ladakh to introspect on its "own failure" to maintain

"The government in Ladakh is theirs (the BJP's). When they fail, they blame someone else. If the Congress is so powerful that it can cause riots in Ladakh, then why did they not form a council?" Abdullah said.

Opposition parties strongly condemned the violence in Ladakh and placed the blame squarely on the Central government for allegedly creating the circumstances that led to the unrest. Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti attributed the violent protests in Ladakh to the "wrong policies" of the Centre and argued that the unrest was an "outburst" resulting from a breach of public tolerance following six years of unfulfilled promises by the Union Home Ministry.

73-yr-old Sikh lady deported to India after 33 years in US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Sept 25: A 73-year old "undocumented" Sikh woman, who lived in the US for more than 30 years. was deported to India earlier this week after being detained by immigration authorities in California without being given the chance to even say goodbye to her relatives, her advocate said.

In an Instagram post Wednesday, Deepak Ahluwalia, the advocate, said, 'Bibi ji (Harjit Kaur) is on her way back to Punjab. She has already landed in India.'

Kaur was detained by immigration authorities in California after she went for a routine check, triggering protests and concerns among her family and community members.

Kaur, a resident of East Bay in northern California for more than 30 years, was detained by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials during a routine check, a report in Berkeleyside, a nonprofit news portal, said earlier.

Her family along with hundreds of community members organised a protest, demanding the immediate release of Kaur, who was detained after the ICE officials asked her to come to its San Francisco office for additional paperwork.

She was then taken to a detention centre in Bakersfield, Ahluwalia said.

In the post, Ahluwalia claimed Kaur was taken from Bakersfield to Los Angeles where she was put on a flight to Georgia and thereafter to New Delhi.

He also claimed that Kaur's family members urged the authorities to give her a chance to say final goodbye to her relatives before she was sent back, but permission was denied.

India open to global investment in food processing sector: PM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday invited global companies to invest in India's food processing sector as the country's triple strength of crop diversity, demand, and scale make it an attractive destination.

The government has given a big push for the food processing sector in the last ten years, with supportive initiatives like production-linked schemes and mega food parks, resulting in a 20 times increase in capacity and doubling of exports, he said.

Addressing the fourth edition of World Food India here, Modi also urged the industry to invest in environment-friendly biodegradable packaging for processed foods. "Bharat ne khule man se apne

desh ke darwaze, duniya ke live khol rakhe hain. Hum food chain se jude har investors ke live open hain. Hum collaboration ke liye khule dil se taiyar hain. (We have kept our doors open for the world. We are open to investors engaged in the food chain. We are ready for collaboration)," Modi said.

The Prime Minister invited global food companies to make the "maximum investments" in India. There are huge opportunities in India's food processing

sector, and the global compa nies should take advantage of this, he said. Modi further said global investors are looking at India with great hope because the country has triple strength -- diversity, demand and scale, making it the most attractive destination for investment. India is unique in the world

as the country has production diversity, growing all kinds of foodgrains, fruits, and vegeta bles. There is a huge demand for different types of food in India making it a preferred destination for investors, he noted. The scale at which India is working is "unprecedented"

which has helped lift 25 crore people out of poverty and become part of the neo-middle class, Modi pointed out. The neo-middle class is the

country's most energetic and aspirational class, which is going to set food trends in the coming years, he added.

On GST reforms, Modi said the food processing sector has also benefited, with most food items falling under the zero or

5 per cent slab. The Prime Minister also mentioned that the govern-

ment has reduced the GST from 18 per cent to 5 per cent on biodegradable packaging to promote environmentally friendly packaging.

86 dead in rain-related incidents in Marathwada region during monsoon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Sept 25: Rain-related incidents have claimed the lives of 86 persons across eight districts of the Marathwada region in Maharashtra so far during the ongoing monsoon season, officials said.

The region in the central part of the state comprises Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Jalna, La tur, Parbhani, Nanded, Hingoli Beed and Dharashiv districts.

Flooding caused by heavy rains destroyed crops on lakhs of acres in this region and claimed the lives of some people in the past few days. "Excessive rainfall was recorded multiple times in various pockets of Marathwada. On September 20, flooding occurred in the districts of Dharashiv, Latur, and Beed, leaving crops over lakhs of hectares of land under water," an official said.

SNIPPETS

PM to transfer ₹10k each to 75 lakh women in Bihar

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch Bihar's "Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana" Friday and transfer ₹10,000 each to the bank accounts of 75 lakh women across the state, totalling ₹7,500 crore. Officials said the scheme is aimed at making women "aatmanirbhar" (self-dependent) and promoting empowermen through self-employment and livelihood opportunities. PM Modi will attend the function via video-conferencing. The scheme is universal in nature, under which financial assistance will be provided to one woman from each family in the state,

Man sentenced to death for killing 5 members of family

Seraikela: A man was sentenced to death by a court in Jharkhand's Seraikela-Kharswan district Thursday for killing five members of his family, including three children, over a land dispute. District and Additional Session Judge Sachindra Nath Sinha convicted Chunnu Manjhi under IPC Section 302 (murder). A piece of land owned by the family was sold, and the proceeds were distributed among four brothers. However, Chunnu believed that he got less money, according to the prosecution. In a fit of rage, Chunnu killed his brother Ravi, his wife Kalpana and their three children.

Top court seeks reply of Govt on PIL seeking import curbs on yellow peas

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Thursday sought the Centre's response on a PIL seek its supply was affecting the livelihood of farmers. Yellow peas (pisum sativum) belongs to the legume family (pulses) which is not traditionally grown in India and is an imported quality of pulses being used in India as a substitute for tur/arhar, chana, etc.



A boat anchored near the shore as birds fly over on a cloudy day in Patna, Bihar

Grieving father of captain says investigators insinuated son cut fuel

AIR INDIA CRASH

New Delhi, Sept 25: The father of the crashed Air India flight's captain said officials from India's accident investigation bureau visited him last month and implied his son cut the fuel to the plane's engines after takeoff, correspondence obtained by Reuters showed.

Pushkar Raj Sabharwal, 91, emailed the Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP) last week to say that Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) officials had visited him at home August 30 "under the pretext of offering condolences", and implied his son, Captain Sumeet Sabharwal, was the one who moved the fuel switches.

"During this interaction ... they went beyond their mandate - speaking in innuendos and insinuating, on the basis of selective CVR (cockpit voice

recorder) interpretation and a so-called 'layered voice analysis', that my son had moved the fuel control switches from RUN to CUTOFF after take-off," the September 17 email said.

The day before the AAIB visit, he wrote to the civil aviation ministry - in a letter dated August 29 - to request India's government open an additional investigation into the deadly crash, criticising what he said were investigators' "selective" releases of information, which had led to speculation about his son's actions. The crash of Air India flight 171 in June, moments after it took off from Ahmedabad, killed 241 of the 242 people on board the Boeing Dreamliner, as well as 19 on the ground. A preliminary investigation report by the AAIB showed the plane's fuel engine switches had almost simultaneously flipped from run to cutoff

just after takeoff. The AAIB did not respond to Reuters queries. On Thursday, a Reuters reporter seeking comment was stopped by building security and denied access to Pushkar Raj Sabharwal's home in Mumbai. The FIP condemned the AA-

IB visit and said it had "taken up the matter" with the minis-

ter of civil aviation.

"In any court of law the judge or the prosecutor does not go to the house of victims and cross question individuals," Captain CS Randhawa, the organisation's president, told Reuters in a text message. India's civil aviation ministry and Air India did not respond to Reuters requests for comment.

'INTEGRITY'

Pushkar Raj Sabharwal, himself a former official of India's aviation safety regulator, in his email to the pilots federation requested its support for a fair, transparent investigation.

The AAIB's preliminary report in July said one pilot was heard on the cockpit voice recorder asking the other why he had cut off the fuel. "The other pilot responded that he did not do so," the report said, without identifying who said what.

A source briefed on US officials' early assessment of evidence in July told Reuters the cockpit recording of dialogue between the two pilots supported the view that Captain Sabharwal had cut the flow of fuel to the engines. The first officer was at the controls of the Boeing 787 and asked the captain why he had moved the fuel switches into a position that cut off supply to the engines and requested that he restore the fuel

flow, the source told Reuters. "My son's dignity and the integrity of due process must be preserved," Pushkar Raj Sabharwal wrote in the email to the pilots federation, calling the investigator's alleged remarks "procedurally improper and professionally indefensible."

In July, the AAIB urged the public and media to refrain from spreading "premature narratives" that risked undermining the investigation's integrity.

In his letter to the minis try, Sabharwal's father said the "speculation" had caused him personal anguish, adding another investigation by the government would help in "safeguarding the truth and ensuring the safety of future passengers."



international



Italy had proposed a compromise whereby aid supplies could be dropped off in Cyprus and handed over to the Catholic **Church's Latin Patriarch**ate of Jerusalem, which would then distribute them in Gaza

STARBUCKS TO CLOSE STORES

Starbucks is laying off around 900 nonretail employees and closing some US and Canadian stores as it focuses more of its resources on a turnaround. The Seattle coffee giant will notify employees whose positions are being eliminated early Friday and said that it plans to close an undetermined number of stores in North America in the coming days





omy-wide net

cent from peak levels, striving to

XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

America's claim of a desire for diplomacy is nothing but deception and blatant contradiction: one cannot

simultaneously bomb a country while engaging in diplomatic nego tiations and speak of diplomacy

ESMAEIL BAGHAEI MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, IRAN

NATO militaries are trained to assess such threats and determine whether they can escort Russian take further action



MARK RUTTE | SECRETARY GENERAL, NATO

SHORT TAKES

Slovenia imposes travel ban on Netanyahu

Slovenia: Slovenia Thursday imposed a travel ban on Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, according to a government statement, after last year officially recognising Palestine and in July banning two farright Israeli cabinet ministers. "With this action Slovenia confirms its commitment to international law, the universal values of human rights and a principled and consistent foreign policy," Neva Grasic, the Secretary of State at the Foreign Ministry, said according to the government's

PIO charged with murder of sex offender

New York: An Indian-origin man has been charged with the murder of a 71-year-old sex offender in Fremont. California, US media reported Varun Suresh, 29, is suspected of chasing and stabbing the victim last week in the 600 block of Upper Vintners Circle. CBS News reported Tuesday. According to court documents. Suresh allegedly said that he wanted for years to kill a sex offender because "they hurt children," adding that he thought they "deserve to die". Fox KTVU news portal reported. Suresh has also been charged with being an armed individual, causing great bodily iniury and residential burglary.

Russian warplanes spotted near Alaska

Washington: US fighter jets scrambled to identify and intercept four Russian warplanes flying near Alaska, the North American Aerospace Defense Command said Thursday. It's the third time in about a month and the ninth time this year that NORAD has reported such an incident involving Russian aircraft flying near Alaska. This latest incident happened Wednesday.

Singapore, Indian shipyards sign MoU

Singapore: Singapore's Seatrium Offshore Technology Pte Ltd (SOT) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), India's largest shipbuilder and ship repairer, to strengthen cooperation in the offshore sector across Asia. Under the MoU, the two companies will combine their complementary strengths -SOT's engineering excellence, specialised equipment and offshore solutions, and CSL's extensive infrastructure, fabrication facilities and ship repair expertise to leverage business opportunities

Hamas will have no role in post-war Gaza: Abbas

United Nations, Sept 25: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas pledged at the United Nations Thursday to work with US President Donald Trump, Saudi Arabia, France and the United Nations on a peace plan for Gaza overwhelmingly backed by the world body

The 193-member UN General Assembly earlier this month overwhelmingly endorsed a seven-page declaration that aims to advance a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians and end the war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas militants

The declaration emerged from an international conference at the UN in July hosted by Saudi Arabia and France - on the decades-long conflict. The United States and Israel boycotted the event and have rejected the international efforts.

Separately, US special envoy Steve Witkoff said Wednesday that Trump had presented a 21-point peace plan for the Middle East and Gaza during a meeting with leaders of several Muslim-majority countries on the sidelines of this week's UN General Assembly.

Abbas addressed the annual gathering of world leaders Thursday via video after the United States said it give him a visa to travel to New York.

"Despite all that our people have suffered, we reject what Hamas carried out October 7th acts that targeted Israeli civilians and took them as hostages because such actions do not represent the Palestinian people nor their just struggle for



ATrump, others on UN-backed

S has put forward 21-point peace plan for Middle East and

Abbas rejects Hamas actions, calls for disarmament and governance by Palestinian

freedom and independence," Abbas said.

"We have affirmed — and will continue to affirm — that Gaza is an integral part of the State of Palestine, and that we are ready to assume full responsibility for governance and security there. Hamas will have no role in governance, and it along with other factions - must hand over its weapons to the Palestinian National Authority," he said. "We reiterate that we do not want an armed state.'

The points he raised are included in the declaration endorsed by the General As-

"We declare our readiness to work with President Donald Trump, with Saudi Arabia,

France, the United Nations, and all partners to implement the peace plan" backed by the General Assembly, Abbas said

An October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel triggered the war in Gaza. Hamas killed 1.200 people, mostly civilians. and about 251 were taken hostage, according to Israeli tallies More than 65,000 people, also mostly civilians, have since been killed during the war in Gaza, according to local health authorities.

ISRAEL DEEPENS GAZA CITY OFFENSIVE

Israeli forces advanced deeper into Gaza City Thursday as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu headed to New York to address the United Nations General Assembly, with US President Donald Trump pursuing a deal to end the Gaza war.

Israeli strikes killed at least 19 people across the Palestinian enclave Thursday, local health authorities said. They included 11 people from two families in Zawavda town in the central Gaza Strip, where planes hit a residential building.

Drones disrupt Danish airports again, Russia denies involvement

REUTERS

Copenhagen, Sept 25: Denmark said Thursday that drone incursions overnight, which briefly closed two airports and affected military installations. were hybrid attacks aimed at spreading fear, though authorities could not identify the perpetrators.

The incident, the second in two days in Denmark alone. is part of what some Europe an officials see as a pattern of Russian disruption that has exposed the vulnerability of European airspace at a time of high tensions between Moscow and NATO.

Poland shot down suspected Russian drones in its airspace September 10. Danish authorities said Thursday they decided not to take down any of the drones in their airspace for safety reasons, despite the disruption caused to air traffic

Russia's embassy in Copenhagen rejected as "absurd' speculation about Moscow's involvement in the Danish in cursions

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said she had spoken Thursday with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte about the drone incidents and that they had agreed to work together to ensure security.

The incursions forced Aalborg airport, used for commercial and military flights to shut for three hours, while Billund airport, Denmark's second-largest, was closed for an hour, police said. Both reopened Thursday morning. Drones were also seen near Esbjerg and Sonderborg airports. as well as Skrydstrup airbase, home to Denmark's F-16 and F-35 fighter jets, and over a military facility in Holstebro, police confirmed. They are all located in the western Jutland region.

Ex-French Prez Sarkozy handed 5-year jail term

Paris, Sept 25: Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy was sentenced to five years in jail Thursday for criminal conspiracy over attempts to raise campaign funds from Libya and will soon become the first former president of France to serve time in prison.

The sentence was harsher than many expected and Sarkozy, who was president between 2007-2012, will spend time in jail even if he appeals the ruling - which he said he would do.

As he exited the courtroom, Sarkozy, visibly moved, expressed his anger at what he said was a "scandalous" ruling.

"What happened today is of extreme gravity in regard to the rule of law, and for the trust one can have in the justice system," he told reporters. "If they absolutely want me

to sleep in jail, I will sleep in jail, but with my head held high," he said, adding that he was innocent. "I will not apologise for something I didn't do."

Sarkozy was found guilty of criminal conspiracy over efforts by close aides to procure funds for his 2007 presidential bid from Libya during the rule of late dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

He was acquitted by the Paris court of all other charges, including corruption and receiving illegal campaign financing. SARKOZY WILL GO TO JAIL

However, the prison sentence is enforceable immediately, with the judge saying Sarkozy would have just a short period to put his affairs in order before prosecutors call on him to head to jail. That should happen within a month.

Sarkozy, who has always



Sarkozy sentenced to 5 years in jail

ormer French president had denied charges, claims political motivation

Sarkozy remains influential in France despite legal issues

denied the charges, was ac cused of making a deal with Gaddafi in 2005, when he was France's interior minister, to obtain campaign financing in exchange for supporting the then-isolated Libyan government on the international stage

The judge said there was no proof that Sarkozy made such a deal with Gaddafi, nor that money that was sent from Lib ya reached Sarkozy's campaign coffers, even if the timing was "compatible" and the paths the money went through were 'very opaque'

But she said Sarkozy was guilty of criminal conspiracy for having let close aides get in touch with people in Libya to try and obtain campaign financing.

The 70-year-old has been on trial since January in a case he said was politically motivated

The court found him guilty of criminal conspiracy between 2005 and 2007. After that he was president and covered by pres idential immunity, the court added. This was the second time this year that a French court handed down a ruling with immediate effect on a major political figure.

SNIPPETS

Pak PM Sharif holds meeting with Yunus, Dissanayake in New York

Islamabad: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held separate meetings with Chief Adviser of Bangladesh Muhammad Yunus and President of Sri Lanka Anura Kumara Dissanayake and discussed bilateral ties, it was announced Thursday. The meetings were held Wednesday on the sidelines of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly in New York where all three leaders were present to attend the session. During Sharif's "warm and cordial" meeting with Yunus, the two leaders reviewed the current state of Pakistan-Bangladesh bilateral relations and discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation in diverse areas including trade, regional connectivity and people-topeople exchanges, according to an official statement by Pakistan. The Prime Minister emphasised Pakistan's commitment to building constructive and forward looking ties with Bangladesh, rooted in mutual respect, trust, and shared aspirations of regional peace and prosperity, it said.

China sanctions 6 US companies as trade frictions continue

Beijing: China announced sanctions on six US companies Thursday as frictions continue to escalate in the countries' trade relations despite a highly anticipated meeting between US President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Three US companies have been added to China's "unreliable entity list," effectively banning them from trade with China, according to a statement by the Commerce Ministry. The ministry said the companies have "engaged in so-called military-technical cooperation with Taiwan, severely undermining China's national sovereignty, security and development interests." The companies are unmanned vehicle maker Saronic Technologies, satellite technology company Aerkomm and subsea engineering firm Oceaneering International.

Israel strikes Yemen's Sanaa a day after Eilat drone attack

Sanaa: The Israeli military said it struck military targets linked to Yemen's Houthis in Sanaa Thursday, a day after the group claimed a drone attack on a hotel in Israel's Red Sea resort of Eilat. The Houthi general staff's control headquarters, security and intelligence compounds, and military camps where among the targets attacked by the Israeli air force, the military said in a statement. "We have now delivered a powerful strike on numerous terror targets of the Houthi terror organization in Sanaa", Israel's defence minister Israel Katz said in a post on X. The strikes are the latest in more than a year of attacks and counterstrikes between Houthi militants in Yemen and

Why Nobel experts aren't betting on Trump for this year's Peace Prize

Oslo, Sept 25: US President Donald Trump will not win the Nobel Peace Prize he so covets as he is dismantling the international world order the award committee cherishes, according to experts.

His lobbying is likely to be counterproductive too. The award-giving committee prefers to work independently, one of its members told Reuters, sheltering from outside pressures.

Instead, the five-strong body may wish to highlight a humanitarian organisation working in an environment that has become more challenging partly due to Trump's US aid cuts. The

announcement is October 10. This could mean an award for the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, the UN children's agency, UNICEF, the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, or a local grassroots group such as

Sudan's Emergency Response

Rooms, among others.

A woman takes a selfie photo with a seagull in a park in St. Petersburg, Russia, Wednesday

"He has no chance to get the Peace Prize at all," said Asle Syeen, a historian of the award. citing Trump's support for Israel in the war in Gaza and his attempts at rapprochement with Russian President Vladimir Putin, among the reasons.

Alfred Nobel's will, the award's foundation, says the award should go to the person "who has done the most or best to advance fellowship among nations". That is something Trump is

not doing, according to Nina Graeger, director of the Peace Research Institute Oslo.

"He has withdrawn the US from the World Health Organization and from the Paris Accord on climate, he has initiated a trade war on old friends and allies," she told Reuters.

That is not exactly what we think about when we think about a peaceful president or someone who really is interested in promoting peace.'



PRIZE LAUREATES

To be sure, many surprising candidates have won the Nobel Peace Prize in the past - Barack Obama less than eight months after he became US President or US National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger at the height of the Vietnam War

"Sometimes people have received the Peace Prize in spite of a brutal record, an authoritarian record, a background where they've contributed to evil, or at least wrongdoing,"

said Henrik Syse, a former member of the Norwegian No bel Committee

Israel, part of a spillover from the war in Gaza.

"But they had explicitly seen the things that they had contributed to were wrong, and therefore took the steps necessary to correct these wrongs. he said, citing the example of FW de Klerk, the last apartheid-era leader of South Africa, who won the prize jointly with Nelson Mandela in 1993.

Should Trump be able to put pressure on Putin to end the war in Ukraine or on Israeli This year's Nobel Peace Prize will be announced October 10

Trump's actions counter to Nobel Peace Prize criteria, analysts say

Lobbying counterproductive, says committee member

Potential winners include aid groups, UN bodies, journalists

leader Benjamin Netanyahu to stop the war in Gaza, he could well be discussed as a possible candidate, Graeger said.

AN INTENSE LOBBYING CAMPAIGN

Many have lobbied to win the Nobel Peace Prize, but no one has done it more intensely than Trump. He has used his platform as US president repeatedly to argue he should win the award, including when addressing the UN General Assembly Tuesday. But lobbying is generally counterproductive, according to the deputy leader of the present Norwegian Nobel Committee.

"These types of influence campaigns have a rather more negative effect than a positive one. Because we talk about it on the committee. Some can didates push for it really hard and we do not like it," Asle Toje said. He was speaking generally about lobbying and not about any particular candidate.

"We are used to work in a locked room without being at tempted to be influenced. It is hard enough as it is to reach an agreement among ourselves, without having more people trying to influence us," he added, with a smile

WHO COULD WIN INSTEAD? Marking the UN's 80th anni

versary, the Nobel Committee might honor institutions like the International Court of Jus tice, press freedom groups such as Reporters Without Borders, or grassroots peacebuilders me diating ceasefires and aid access in conflict zones worldwide.

business



Paper is a necessity, not a luxury. It is integral to education, literacy and eco-friendly packaging. We were expecting paper to be brought under the 5 per cent slab. but instead, it has been hiked to 18 per cent. This decision will have far-reaching adverse conse-

PAWAN AGARWAL | IPMA PRESIDENT

SKODA OCTAVIA TO MAKE COMEBACK IN INDIA

Skoda Auto India is all set to re-launch its premium sedan Octavia in a sportier version in the country, a senior company executive said Thursday. The Czech automaker is set to introduce Octavia RS as a fully-built unit (FBU), in limited volumes, with bookings commencing next month and deliveries expected in November. Octavia was the company's first model in India. The company later discontinued it in 2023. The pre-bookings for the model start, October 6, and only 100 units would be imported for this year



RBI allows 2FA process

for digital payments

But amidst certain global situations, India's resilience stands favourable factors,

such as strong macroeconomic phy, and greater reliance on domestic demand, provide the core strength to the Indian economy

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

We discovered a price as low as 49.75 per kilogram. That is approximately 55 US cents per kilogram. So

we offer the most competitive prices discovered anywhere in the world. This demonstrates that green hydrogen derivatives in India are rapidly becoming economically competitive PRALHAD JOSHI UNION MINISTER

Across India ports are introducing solar and wind power projects. LNG and hydrogen fuel infrastruc



handling equipment SARBANANDA SONOWAL | PORTS, SHIPPING

AND WATERWAYS MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

India's logistics cost New Delhi: The country's

logistics cost is estimated at 7.97 per cent of India's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023-24, according to a **Department for Promotion** of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) report. With this, the country has now a tifically derived estimate of logistics costs. Further, as per the report, rail logistics emerges as a cost-efficient mode, with an average cost significantly lower than road transport (Rs 11.03), in cases where the first/last mile of the consignment is not taken into consideration.

Maruti's UV INVICTO gets **NCAP 5-star safety rating**

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India Ltd Thursday said its premium strong hybrid utility vehicle INVICTO has secured 5-star safety rating in the Bharat New Car Assessment Program (Bharat NCAP). The achievement strengthens the company's 5-star Bharat NCAP portfolio alongside the all-new Dzire and VICTORIS. Maruti Suzuki India said in a statement.

Coca-Cola bottlers

Indian investment New Delhi: Three Coca-

Cola bottlers in India will jointly invest Rs 25,760 crore (\$2.96 billion) to expand the country's food processing infrastructure and have signed memoranda of understanding with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries for greenfield and brownfield projects, according to an industry official. SLMG Beverages, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (Coca-Cola's wholly-owned bottling arm), and Kandhari Group of Companies have committed to the investment, which will span nine states, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Gujarat, Punjab,

Indigo, SBI Card launch co-branded credit card

Rajasthan and Jammu

Mumbai: Domestic carrier IndiGo Thursday announced the launch of a co-branded premium credit card in collaboration with SBI Card, offering a host of benefits to the customers of the two companies. Launched in two variants--IndiGo SBI Card and IndiGo SBI Card ELITE -- as part as part of the IndiGo BluChip loyalty program.

SILVER PRICES HIT RECORD HIGH

Gold prices, on the other hand, dropped by ₹630 to ₹1,17,370 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: Silver prices rallied Rs 1,000 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 1.40 lakh per kilogram in the national capital on Thursday following strong global cues, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Gold prices, on the other

hand, dropped by Rs 630 to Rs 1,17,370 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) due to poor offtake by retailers. The precious metal had closed at Rs 1,18,000 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity

declined by Rs 700 to Rs 1,16,700 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from Rs 1,17,400 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver prices marched ahead

in line with global trends. In international markets, spot silver rose more than 2 per cent to hit a high of \$45.03 per ounce.

In futures trade, silver prices scaled new record levels. The December contract of white metal zoomed Rs 3,528 or 2.63 per cent to hit a record high of Rs 1,37,530 per kilogram. The March 2026 contract soared by



Rs 3,431 or 2.53 per cent to hit a record peak of Rs 1,38,847 per kg on the MCX

Gold for October delivery also increased by Rs 223 or 0.2 per cent to Rs 1,12,778 per 10 grams. Similarly, the December contract appreciated by Rs 262 or 0.23 per cent to Rs 1,13,909 per 10 grams.

"Global uncertainties and declining dollar dependence continue to fuel buying interest in gold and silver," said Jateen

CBDT EXTENDS DEADLINE

Unique registered investor base on NSE crosses 12cr

September 23, it was announced Thursday. The total number of investor

Mumbai: The unique registered investor base on the National Stock

accounts (Unique Client Codes) registered with NSE stands at 23.5

crore (as of September 23), having crossed the 23 crore mark in July

2025. It includes all client registrations done till date and clients can

register with more than one trading member. This steady growth is

(KYC) process, enhanced financial literacy through stakeholder-led

accelerated meaningfully over time. The registered investor base hit

the 1 crore mark 14 years after NSE started operations, the next 1 crore

additions took about seven years, the subsequent 1 crore addition took

BOB launches festive campaign

investor awareness programmes, and sustained positive market

about three-and-half years, and the next one a little over a year.

sentiment. The structural expansion of the investor base has

supported by several key drivers: a streamlined Know Your Customer

Exchange of India (NSE) crossed the 12 crore (120 million) mark as

Trivedi, VP Research Analyst Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities.

Globally, gold futures for December delivery went up marginally to \$3,768.82 per ounce. Silver futures appreciated by more than 2 per cent to hit a high of \$45.39 per ounce.

Meanwhile, spot gold rose by \$21.40, or 0.57 per cent, to \$3,757.54 per ounce. Spot silver also rose more

than 2 per cent to hit a high of

\$45.03 per ounce.

On the macroeconomic front the US data scheduled to release later in the day include initial jobless claims, durable goods orders, and the final reading of the US GDP for the second

Sandip Raichura, CEO, Retail Broking & Distribution and Director at PL Capital, said: "This year has placed gold right at the centre of financial history, with spot gold prices reaching an alltime high of \$3,791.11 per ounce on September 23, almost double its levels exactly two years ago and past our 2024 targets of \$3,700 per ounce.'

Raichura further stated that "We saw three-year high daily inflows into gold ETFs further exacerbating strength in the metal." In the middle of this historical move, it becomes difficult to decide on further levels and we believe gold is eventually going to rise beyond \$4,800 level. However, caution is warranted going ahead as any explosive moves like the one we are in may be subject to sudden corrections, he added.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Sept 25: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Thursday announced that new rules on digital payments, which allow the Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) beyond the SMS-based one-time password, will come into effect, April 1.

The factors of authentication can be from "something the user has", "something the user knows" or "something the user is" and may comprise, inter-alia, password, SMS-based OTP, passphrase, PIN, card hardware, software token, fingerprint, or any other form of biometrics (device native or Aadhaar-based), the central bank said.

India is among the markets in the world which insist on 2FA, and financial sector players have been relying on the SMS-based alerts to execute transactions The RBI launched the (Au-

thentication mechanisms for digital payment transactions) Directions, 2025, making it clear that 2FA will continue to be mandatory and SMS OTP can also be used. The central bank had first

announced the move in February 2024 to enable the payments ecosystem to leverage the technological advancements for implementing alternative authentication mechanisms. The new rules specify that

at least one of the factors of authentication is dynamically created or proven, wherein the proof of possession of the factor, being sent as part of the transaction, is unique to that transaction.

Additionally, the system should also be robust, wherein compromise of one factor does not affect reliability of the oth-

Apart from this, the RBI said that from a risk management perspective, the financial sys tem stakeholders can also identify transactions for eval uation against behavioural contextual parameters such as transaction location, user behaviour patterns, device at tributes, historical transaction profile, etc.

"Based on the perceived risk associated with the transaction additional checks beyond the minimum two-factor authen tication may be resorted to Issuers may also explore using DigiLocker as a platform for no tification and confirmation for high-risk transactions," it said If any loss arises out of trans

actions effected without complying with these directions the issuer shall compensate the customer for the loss in full without demur, the central bank said. It also asks card issuers

to put in place a mechanism to validate non-recurring cross-border card not present (CNP) transactions, where request for authentication is raised by an overseas merchant or overseas acquirer from Oc tober 1, 2026.

said it has received represen-New Delhi: The Income Tax tations from various profes-

department Thursday extended the deadline for submission of audit reports for the 2024-25 fiscal year by one month till October 31. In a statement, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said the income tax

Bhubaneswar: Bank of Baroda

(BoB) has unveiled its annual

festive campaign "BOB Ke Sang

Tyohaar Ki Umang – Shubh

Bhi. Labh Bhi.", rolling out

a host of attractive offers for

retail and MSME customers

the festive season more re-

warding with concessional

interest rates, processing fee

waivers, lifestyle benefits, and

Under Home Loans, the Bank

is offering rates starting at 7.45

per cent pa with nil processing

fees, along with additional con-

cessions for women, Gen Zs and

millennials. Customers can al-

so avail easy top-up facilities

with daily reducing balance

Car Loans come with attrac-

tive rates, nil pre-payment

charges on floating ROI, extend-

ed repayment up to 84 months

(96 months for EVs), financing

The initiative aims to make

across the country.

value-added features

calculation.



return filing portal is working smoothly and more than 7.57 crore ITRs have been filed till

up to 90 per cent of on-road

price, and 50 per cent conces-

sion in processing charges for

Adding to its product suite,

the bank has launched Lite

Savings Account, offering

lower balance requirements,

travel and lifestyle benefits,

free remittances, discounts on

lockers, and lifetime free Eter-

na Credit Card. For businesses,

Smart Current Account offers

free digital transactions, POS/

QR solutions, and lifetime free

On the MSME front, bob Digi-

Udvam provides collateral-free

loans from Rs 10-50 lakh with

concessional processing fees

and 100 per cent digital process-

ing, while bob Property Pride

offers OD facilities up to Rs 25

The festive offers are avail-

able both through BoB's na-

tionwide branch network and

crore with flexible terms.

digital platforms.

corporate credit cards.

September 23, 2025. The CBDT sional associations, including chartered accountant bodies. highlighting certain difficulties being faced by taxpayers and practitioners in timely completion of the audit report. Faced with glitches on the por-

had September 15 extended the deadline for filing ITR by individuals and those who do not have to get their accounts audited by one day. Over 7.54 crore ITRs were filed till Sep tember 16. Of these, 1.28 crore taxpavers had paid self-assessment tax till September 16.

UBI Cuttack organises Vigilance Awareness Week CUTTACK: Union Bank of India, Regional Office Cuttack

organized a walkathon program on the theme of Swachhotsav" "Ek Din, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath" Shramdaan under Vigilance Awareness Week. The walkathon started from Cantonment Road to Barabati Stadium. On this occasion, Bibekananda Sarangi, Regional Head, Cuttack Region, Bishnu Charan Behera, Deputy Regional Head, Sidharth Shankar Das, Deputy Regional Head, Chinmaya Behera, Chief Manager, Binod Meher, Chief Manager, H K Sahoo, Chief Manager, P V Premanandan, Chief Manager, Pravakar Sahoo, Chief Manager along with MLP and RLP branch heads of all local branches and senior officers of Regional Office were present.

FOR TAX AUDIT REPORT



PNB organises 'Swachhata Hi Seva Campaign'

BHUBANESWAR: As part of Swachhata Hi Seva 2025 "SWACHHOTSAV" under the Swachh Bharat Mission, staff members of Zonal Office, Bhubaneswar, actively participated in a one hour cleanliness drive. The initiative, led by Bhushan Sharma, Zonal Head and Kshetrabasi Mishra, Dy Zonal Head



Wonderla Bhubaneswar marks first anniversary

BHUBANESWAR: Wonderla

Amusement Park Bhubaneswar celebrated its first anniversary, unveiling exclusive Puia

offers and a festive lineup of cultural performances, priced at Rs 799 for online bookings, valid from September 27

to October 7. "In just one year, Wonderla Bhubaneswa has showcased Odisha's potential as a vibrant hub for family entertainment," said Arun K Chittilappilly. Executive Chairman & MD, Wonderla. Adding to this, Dheeran Choudhary, COO, Wonderla, said, "This Durga Puja, we're curating an atmosphere of celebration, connection, and joy. Every element has been designed to reflect the vibrance of the line-up festive season.'

Vedanta Lanjigarh distributes Shakti Kit

LANJIGARH: Vedanta Aluminium has launched a special community initiative this Navratri, distributing over 600 'Shakti Kits' to more than 1,500 women across nine villages in Lanjigarh. Each Shakti Kit focuses on women's health, hygiene, and nutrition, featuring sanitary napkins, soap, handwash, millet-based sweets, and iron cookware, along with festive items. The nine-day programme dedicates each day to a different village, including Putribhata. Khalguda, Balabhadrapur, Kadamguda, Kendubardi, Banigaon, Similibhata, Bundel, and Chanalima, Community engagement activities like rangoli-making and traditional games add to the festive spirit. Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, CEO, Vedanta Alumina

Business, said, "Navratri is

a celebration of Shakti - of

strength, care, and resilience.

Through these kits, we aim to

invest in women's health and

our broader initiatives in

and livelihoods.'

education, healthcare, skills,

wellbeing while complementing

Arundhati jewellers celebrates 11th anniversary

SAMBALPUR: Odisha's leading jewellery brand, Arundhati Jewellers, celebrated the 11th anniversary of its Sambalpur branch Thursday, the 25th, with grandeur in the presence of numerous well-wishers, customers, and distinguished guests. On this occasion, Founder Brahmananda Meher expressed heartfelt gratitude and best wishes to all. To mark the celebration, Arundhati Jewellers has announced a special anniversary offer, giving 51 customers the chance to become lakhpatis. Customers can avail 50 per cent discount on gold jewellery making charges, along with assured festive gifts on every purchase. In addition, the brand is offering advance booking at the lowest gold rates, a 'Pay Zero for Easy Jewellery Purchase Plan,' and free gold coins on the purchase of diamond jewellery.



H1B visa fee hike impacts Indian IT sector: Crisil report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Sept 25: US President Donald Trump's move to levy higher fees for granting the H1B visas will impact Indian IT majors' profit margins by only 0.20 per cent, an arm of a domestic rating agency said, Thursday.

This is because the reliance of IT companies on H1B visas has been reducing since 2018, when the denial rates for the visa applications increased to 24 per cent, Crisil Intelligence said. "The US decision to imservices companies next fiscal," it said in a note.

These companies, which had operating margins of 22 per cent in FY25, are likely to share the incremental cost with clients, the note said, adding that the pass-through is estimated at 30-70 per cent.

IT firms have expanded offshore delivery, opened near shore centres and hired locally in the US, it said, adding that this trend has continued even as the denial rate eased to 3 per cent in 2024.

Citing official US data, it said the number of Indian employees on H1B visas working for TCS, Infosys, Wipro and HCL Technologies almost halved from 34,507 to 17,997 between

2017 and 2025.

India's IT services industry is expected to reel in \$143-145 billion this fiscal year, marking a revenue growth of 2-4 per cent over last fiscal year, it said, adding that from next fiscal year, growth is expected to be only

marginal or flat.

September 2024, total H1B visas issued for four IT companies, which account for 50 per cent of the industry revenue, stood at 34,507, it said, adding that over 35 per cent was for initial

employment and 65 per cent for continuing employment. The share of initial employment is expected to decline over the medium term, it said. Visa expenses come at 0.02-

0.05 per cent of the total employee cost, with H1B visa fees ranging between \$2,000 and \$5,000 per person, it said.

Over a third of the approved H1B applications from October 2023 to September 2024 were for initial employment and if this share remains constant next fiscal year, the new fee structure could crank up visa cost to 1 per cent of total employee cost. If the share is reduced, visa-related costs are expected to remain 0.3-0.6 per cent of the total employee cost.

Tier-1 IT companies such as TCS, Infosys, Wipro and HCL generate 96 per cent of their revenue from the international markets, and 53 per cent with the US alone.

Last fiscal year, the industry exported \$119 billion in services, reflecting its scale in global outsourcing.

India remained the top recipient of remittances at \$118.7 billion in FY24, with about 23 per cent of it coming from the US. The visa fee hike is likely to reduce both the inflows and the share of the US over the me-

The visa fee hike is expected to also accelerate offshoring and deter students considering higher studies in the US.

pose a \$100,000 fee on new H1B visas for foreign workers will snip just 10-20 basis points from the operating margins of Indian information technology (IT)

Between October 2023 and

Tensions rise: Surya warned, Pak duo next

Surva told to refrain from making political statements, Pakistan players Rauf, Sahibzada to face heat Friday over political gestures

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Sept 25: Indian skipper Suryakumar Yadav was Thursday told to refrain from making any comments that could be construed as political in nature by the ICC match referee Richie Richardson during an official hearing of the global body on a complaint filed by Pakistan Cricket Board.

The hearing against Pakistan's Sahibzada Farhan and Haris Rauf, on a complaint filed by the BCCI, will be held on Friday as the two are playing in their Asia Cup match against Sri Lanka Thursday.

It is understood that the PCB had filed the complaint within the stipulated seven-day period after the September 14 game between India and Pakistan in which Suryakumar had refused to shake hands and then dedicated the victory to the Indian armed forces for carrying out Operation Sindoor in May. He had also expressed solidarity with the victims of Pahalgam terror attack

"Surya attended the ICC hearing today. He was accompanied by BCCI's COO and Cricket Operations Manager. Richardson explained to him that he shouldn't be making any comments that could be seen as political in nature. The sanction can't be ascertained. Since it falls under Level 1, it could either be a warning or a financial penalty of 15 percent deductions in match fees," a tournament source privy to the details told PTI on conditions

Earlier, India had filed an official complaint with the ICC against Pakistan cricketers Rauf and Farhan for their provocative gestures during the two sides' Asia Cup Super 4 game here last Sunday.

It is reliably learnt that the BCCI filed the complaint against the duo Wednesday and the ICC is in receipt of the e-mail.



Pak set up Asia Cup final against India

Pakistan booked their place in the Asia Cup summit clash against India with a hard-fought 11-run victory over Bangladesh in their Super Fours clash here Thursday. Defending a modest 135 for eight, Pakistan's bowlers produced a disciplined effort to restrict Bangladesh to 124 for nine, Left-arm pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi led from the front with 3/17, while Haris Rauf impressed with 3/33 in the back-end. Saim Ayub (2/16) and Mohammad Nawaz (1/14) added crucial strikes to complete Pakistan's disciplined effort. Bangladesh, who had Pakistan tottering at 71 for six in the 14th over after opting to bowl, will regret letting the game slip with sloppy fielding and dropped catches. Late cameos from Mohammad Haris (31 off 23) and Mohammad Nawaz (25 off 15) powered Pakistan, who added 80 runs in the last eight overs to post a competitive total. Taskin Ahmed was the pick of the attack with 3/28, while Rishad Hossain (2/18) and Mahedi Hasan (2/28) also impressed. With this, the two arch-rivals will cross swords for the third time in the tournament, having already met once in the group stage and again in the Super Fours.

Rauf, Sahibzada gestures

During the September 21 match, Rauf had made gestures to depict the bringing down of a plane to mock India's military action after Indian supporters chanted "Kohli, Kohli" referring to the couple of match-winning sixes that the Indian legend hit off the pacer at MCG during a T20 World Cup game in 2022.

During the match, he hurled abuses at Indian openers Shubman Gill and Abhishek Sharma during his bowling spell, and the two youngsters responded with their bats.

Sahibzada, during the same match, celebrated with a gun-firing gesture using his bat as a machine gun prop, something that has been widely criticised. "That celebration was just a moment at that time. I do not do a lot of celebrations after scoring 50. But, it suddenly came to my mind that let's do a celebration today. I did that. I don't know how people will take it. I don't care about that," Farhan had told reporters after the match.

Both Rauf and Sahibzada will have to explain their gestures at the hearing and if the players' answers are not convincing, then they could face sanctions as per the code of conduct.

Naqvi posts cryptic CR7 video

Adding fuel to the fire, Asian Cricket Council (ACC) chairman Mohsin Nagyi Wednesday posted a slow-motion video of Cristiano Ronaldo on 'X', where the Portuguese legend is seen gesturing that an aircraft suddenly crashed, something that Rauf indicated on-field last Sunday.

Naqvi, apart from also being the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman, is the interior minister' of his country and is known to make provocative statements against India. Ronaldo, in the video, could be explaining how his direct free-kick dipped and entered the goal. After this, whether the Indian team, which is now the finalist of the Asia Cup, share the dais with the ACC Chairman is something that remains to be seen.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

compound final.

25: India assured themselves

Para Archery World Champi-

an all-India final set up in the men's compound open category

vidual section after contrasting

Rakesh, seeded seventh, con-

tition here Thursday. Young Anushka Thokur car-

of 621.6.

ka bagged the silver totalling 619.2, while 20-year-old Aadhya Agrawal took the bronze with a score of 615.9 in the non-Olym-

Deependra Singh Shekhawat and Rohit Kanyan bagged their

Bumrah available for both Tests vs WI

Doors shut on Karun, Easwaran; Jadeja vice-captain

Dubai, Sept 25: Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was Thursday named in India's Test squad for the home series against the West Indies, while Devdutt Padikkal replaced Karun Nair, who could not deliver fully on what was "expected" of him in the opportunities offered so far.

While announcing the 15-member squad at the Indian team hotel here, Chairman of Selectors Ajit Agarkar dropped elaborate hints that Nair and Bengal opener Abhimanyu Easwaran are no longer in the scheme of things.

Rishabh Pant's absence has resulted in Ravindra Jadeja's elevation as vice-captain for the West Indies, while stylish Karnataka left-hander Padikkal, 25, is being seen as a longterm investment along with the 23-vear-old Sai Sudharsan, who has locked the No 3 slot.

On Bumrah, Agarkar was clear that the pacer is well-rested and good to go in the series that gets underway October 2 in Ahmedahad.

"This is a team for both the Test matches. So, he's available for both. We've had a fair break after England. He didn't play the fifth Test either. There's been a month or five weeks of break," he said in response to a PTI query.

"This tournament (the ongoing Asia Cup here where Bumrah is playing) has been fairly



spaced out till this last week. He's ready and keen to play both Test matches," Agarkar explained.

However, while speaking on Nair, he was clear that the 30-year-old burly Bangalore man didn't make full use of opportunities, scoring one fifty in eight innings during the tour of England. "We feel Padikkal offers a little bit more at this point and I wish we could give everyone 15 or 20 Tests. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way," Agarkar said.

"Padikkal's been in the Test squad. Frankly, we expected a bit more from Karun in En gland. Devdutt was in the Test squad in Australia, played in Dharamsala against England, got a 50 there. He's shown some decent form within the race, the former pacer stated.

No place for Easwaran Easwaran, a frequent travel-

ler with the squad for the last three to four years but never

Shooters sweep women's 50m rifle prone

a member of the playing team, now finds himself out of the

Agarkar urged people not to read too much into it, although with no foreign tours for the next one year, Easwaran's Test debut looks unlikely with N Jagadeesan being looked at as a potential third opener.

"Normally, when you travel abroad, you carry 16 or 17, you take a third opener. KL Rahul and (Yashasyi) Jaiswal haven't done too badly. At the moment, we don't need a third opener just sitting out in the squad," Agarkar said.

"If need be, we can always fly him and play the Test."

Pant to be fit for SA Tests

Agarkar also informed that Jadeja, being the senior-most player, was announced vice-captain as Pant will only be available for the South Af-

"Rishabh is the vice-captain at the moment and a key player. But unfortunately, he hasn't quite recovered to make this particular Test series. We're hopeful that he'll be available for South Africa. And Jadeja has been one of your top per formers," he said.

The series against South Africa will feature two Tests in Kolkata and Guwahati from November 14 to 26. A three match ODI and five-match T20 International series will follow

the red-ball rubber. The full tour by the Proteas will conclude with the final T20I December 19.

No update on Shami

On the status of veteran pacer Mohammed Shami, Agarkar said he is unaware of how fit he is and hinted that he is not in the scheme of things

"I don't have an update," was his quick retort when asked about Shami.

"He's played a couple of matches. But he's not had a lot of cricket. In the last twothree years, I think he's played one match for Bengal and one match in the Duleep Trophy, the chairman said.

Shubman Gill (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Sai Sudharsan, Devdutt Padikkal, Dhruv Jurel (WK), Ravindra Jadeja (VC), Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Axar Patel, Nitish Kumar Reddy N Jagadeesan (WK), Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Kuldeep Yadav.

WASHED OFF

Sambalpur Warriors enter OPTL final on basis of points table

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Sept 25: The first semi-final of the Odisha Pro T20 League 2025 was abandoned due to continuous rain and a wet outfield at the Barabati Stadium Thursday.

Following a brief wait for conditions to improve, the officials were left with no choice but to call off the match. As a result, Sambalpur Warriors ad vanced to the final on the basis of their position in the points

The Warriors had finished second in the league stage with 14 points from 5 matches, compared to Bhubaneswar Tigers who were placed third with 12 points from 5 matches. The final will be played Friday.

The match had a promising start with Sambalpur Warriors winning the toss and electing to field first. For Bhubaneswar Ti gers, Satyakam Bharadwaj and Gaurav Chaudhary opened the innings.

While Satyakam scored 12 off 9 balls, Gaurav was dismissed for 6 off 12 deliveries. Bivash attempted to accelerate the scoring rate but was removed for 14 off 10 balls. Later, Sambit Beja and Aryashree Bhatta built a steady partnership for the fifth wicket before rain interrupted play. Sambit (33*) and Bhatta (18*) remained unbeaten when the umpires decided to halt proceedings after the 14th over.

For Sambalpur Warriors Vimal Kumar (2/20) and Sumit Sharma (2/4) were the only wickettakers.

The second semi-final will be played between Puri Titans and Cuttack Panthers, with the winner set to face Sambalpur Warriors in the final Friday.

New Delhi, Sept 25: India made a strong start in the ISSF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Junior World Cup with the women making a clean sweep of the podium spots in 50m rifle prone, while the men bagged a silver and a bronze in the same event on day one of the compe-

ried on from where she had left off at the Asian Championships in Kazakhstan, where she had won the junior gold in 50m rifle 3 positions recently, taking the top podium spot at the Dr Karni Singh Ranges with a score

Another 18-year-old, Anshipic discipline.



tional medals, clinching silver and bronze re-

spectively in the men's 50m rifle prone. The gold in the event went to an Individual Neutral Athletes (AIN).

Deependra, who had competed in the men's 50m rifle 3-positions event at the Asian Championships in Kazakhstan recently, finished second with an aggregate of 617.9 over six rounds of 10 shots each

athlete Nuriakhmetov took the gold tallying 618.9 points in the 11-shooter field.

took the bronze

with a score of

The other three Indians in the fray, Nitin Waghmare (615.6), bronze-medallist in Kazakhstan recently. Kushagra Singh (611.6) and Kunal Sharma (590.9) finished 5th, 8th and 11th respectively.

In a first, Odisha to host Asian Para Worlds: Archers assure three medals Rakesh, Toman set up all-India final; Sheetal assures third medal



Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: For the first time, Odisha will host the 28th ITTF-ATTU Asian Table Tennis Team Championships 2025. The championship will be held from October 11 to 15 at the Athletics Centre of Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar.

The event is being jointly organized with the support of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF), Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI), Asian Table Tennis Union (ATTU), Odisha Table Tennis Association, and the Sports & Youth Services Department, Government of Odisha.

Nearly 500 participants including players and support staff from 22 countries such as India, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Singapore, Macau-China, Bangladesh, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Oman, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Uzbekistan will take part in the competition. Both men's and women's teams will compete.

The top-performing teams will qualify for the ITTF World Table Tennis Team Championships 2026 scheduled to be held in London. Addressing a press conference at Kalinga Stadium today, Sports Minister Suryabanshi Suraj said, "It is a matter of pride and honour that Odisha is hosting the Asian Table Tennis Team Championships for the very first time. The Sports and Youth Services Department is ensuring all preparations for the smooth conduct of the event, from world-class infrastructure to accommodation, hospitality, and security for the players." He further informed that

along with this international event, Odisha will also host the 40th National Junior Athletics Championships at Kalinga Stadium from October 10 to 14 and the ITF Masters 100 Tennis Tournament in Bhubaneswar from October 11 to 15. "Hosting three national and international sporting events simultaneously is a testament to our commitment to sports and sportspersons. The Asian Table Tennis Team Championships will inspire table tennis talents across the country and

Odisha," Suraj added. President of the Table Tennis Federation of India, Kamlesh Mehta, expressed confidence that Odisha would successfully host the championship and said, "Odisha has carved out a special place for itself in sports excel-

lence at the international level.



and teenage sensation Sheetal Devi storming into the women's Rakesh Kumar, the Paralymtinued his fine form to overpic bronze medallist from Paris, come third seed Nathan Macand relative international newqueen of Great Britain 147-143, comer Toman Kumar marched while Toman edged past compainto the gold-medal match of triot Shyam Sunder Swami by the men's compound open indi-

a single point, 144-143. Shyam, who had qualified as the 17th seed, will now fight for bronze against a British opponent Saturday. ensuring India remain in contention for a clean sweep of medals in the For Toman, it has been a

dream debut at the World

Championships. Seeded fifth after qualification, he stunned higher-ranked rivals en route to the summit

clash against the vastly experienced Rakesh India's medal tally received another boost from star para-ar-

cher Sheetal Devi. The 18-year-old Jammu and Kashmir girl, who shoots without arms using her feet and chin, produced a commanding 145-140 win over Great Britain's

Jodie Grinham to advance to

a repeat of Pilsen 2023, where Turkiye's Oznur Cure Girdi

had narrowly beaten Sheetal 140-138. This time, the second-seeded Indian will look to turn the ta-

the women's compound final.

The top-seeded final will be

bles against the world No 1. Earlier, India suffered a blow when world No 1 and Paralym-

pic champion Harvinder Singh was forced to withdraw from the recurve men's open competition. Singh, the country's bright-

est hope for an individual title in the recurve section, could not start his round-of-32 match due to illness after a bout of flu worsened overnight.

Top Tennis stars push Slams for more pay, power

semifinal wins.

New York, Sept 25: A collection of top-10 tennis players sent a second letter to the four Grand Slam tournaments to push for a greater share of revenues — aiming to rise from the current 16% to 22% by 2030 contributions to pension, health and maternity benefits that would go from zero to \$12 million annually by that same year, and greater say via a new player council.

This letter, signed by stars such as Aryna Sabalenka, Iga Swiatek, Coco Gauff, Carlos Alcaraz, Jannik Sinner and Jack Draper — but not, unlike the original letter sent by players to the Slam events in March,

Novak Djokovic — was dated

The second letter, which was seen this week by The Associated Press, set out specific benchmarks for ways in which the sport's four most prestigious, and profitable, tournaments could offer more money and influence to the athletes.

The players are working with Larry Scott as a consultant; he used to be the chairman and CEO of the WTA women's tennis tour and, later, ran the Pac-12 conference in American college sports.

There have been meetings among Scott, some players and the leaders of the All England US Tennis Association, which runs the US Open. Club. which runs Wimbledon: All four were asked to reply the French Tennis Federation,



to the July 30 letter, and all four which runs Roland-Garros; Tennis Australia, which runs the Australian Open; and the The USTA's response, dated

August 18 and obtained this week by the AP, was signed by Brian Vahaly, the group's interim co-CEO, and Stacey Allaster, the USTA's chief executive of professional tennis who just completed her last US Open as tournament director. "As you are aware, we have

always been willing to increase

compensation for players - as evidenced by the 57% growth of the US Open purse over the past five years — particularly when additional collaboration on the part of the players helps to create additional revenue,' Vahaly and Allaster wrote "For example, this year's significant increase in compensa tion to \$90 million reflects the addition of an extra day to the main draw singles competition and the resulting contribution made by players.

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