

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 taking 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 functionary 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 government 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 days.

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

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-you ads and publicity



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

PTI PHOTO

6 die in Sundargarh bus-truck collision

POST NEWS NETWORK

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,



4 LIVES LOST

Koraput/Gunupur: At least four persons were killed in two road mishaps in Koraput and Rayagada, officials said Thursday. In the first incident, two bikers were killed and four persons rendered critical after two motorcycles collided with each other at Narayanpatna in Koraput in the wee hours of Thursday. The deceased were identified as Abhi Minika 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 persons were shifted to a government hospital in Rourkela, while others are undergoing treatment at Koida and Lahunipada health centres," the DIG said.

Meanwhile, tension prevailed 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.

\$1 = ₹88.76

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Sept 25: The rupee moved in a tight range and slipped 1 paise 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 paise 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

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 activist Sonam Wangchuk – with the immediate effect.

The MHA's action was based on several alleged discrepancies detected in the accounts of the organisation including a fund transfer from Sweden which the ministry found was against 'national 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 violations of FCRA norms.

SECMOL was granted the licence to accept foreign contribution for undertaking cultural and educational programme. The MHA had earlier issued a showcase notice to SECMOL seeking explanation on various irregularities observed in the finances of the NGO.

It was alleged that during 2021-22, Wangchuk deposited Rs 3.5 lakh into the FCRA account of the association 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.

The climate activist had also founded Himalayan Institute of Alternatives Ladakh which is facing CBI inquiry over alleged FCRA violations

'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', 'adulthood' 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 all that?

The company removed two sections of the 'Collegiate's' 11th

edition that had sparse biographical 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.)

Merriam-Webster also 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?

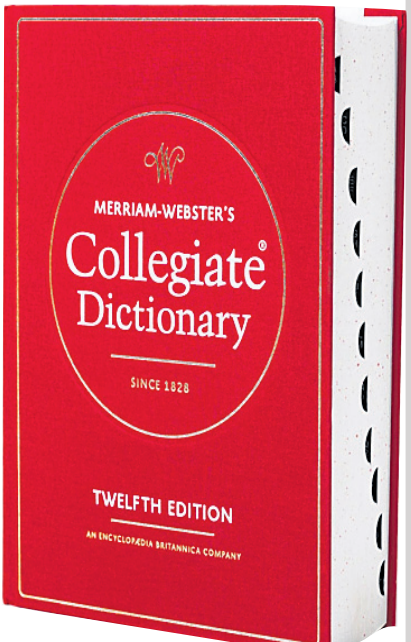
The chunky, linen-cover 'Collegiate' update weighs in at nearly 5 pounds. It comes as adult reference book sales, including dictionaries and atlases, have shown annual declines since 2022, according to Circana BookScan, which captures 85 per cent of the print market. In the 12-month period ending September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

"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 procurement. 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 IAF.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
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 be based on emotion, not reason. You need to be carefully that 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 for one and all.

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 friends and family will ease your troubled mind more effectively, says Ganesha.

CANCER
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.

LEO
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.

LIBRA
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 entertainment. You will also be getting some form of 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 the evening.

CAPRICORN
You bring perfection to the table and it impresses your colleagues to a great extent. 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 your 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 problems 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.



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 gender-critical views, the *Harry Potter* star hinted she retains affection and is open to future dialogue about their differences.



6TH IDFFB: DAY 1

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 Telenaga 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 *The 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

PC: FSB

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

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 things 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 Lagae Ke Haisha*.

PTI

Jahnvi on mom's legacy

Mumbai: Jahnvi 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, Jahnvi opened up about the immense challenge of living up to her mother's extraordinary legacy. "I don't think this is possible. She did around 300 films across Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, 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 down."

After her recent appearance in *Param Sundari* alongside Sidharth Malhotra, Jahnvi 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, Jahnvi continues to balance her dedication to her craft with heartfelt reverence for her mother's remarkable contributions to cinema.

AGENCIES

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

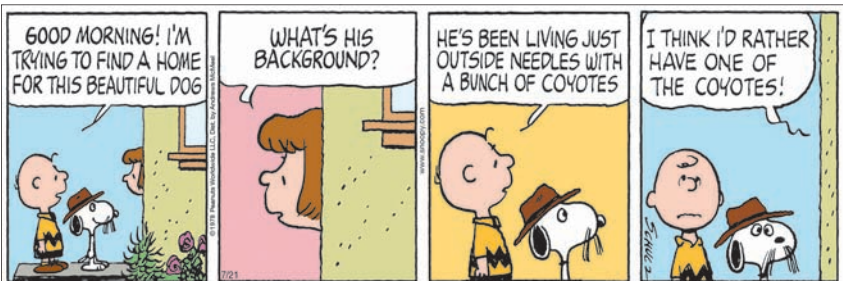
CROSSWORD

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

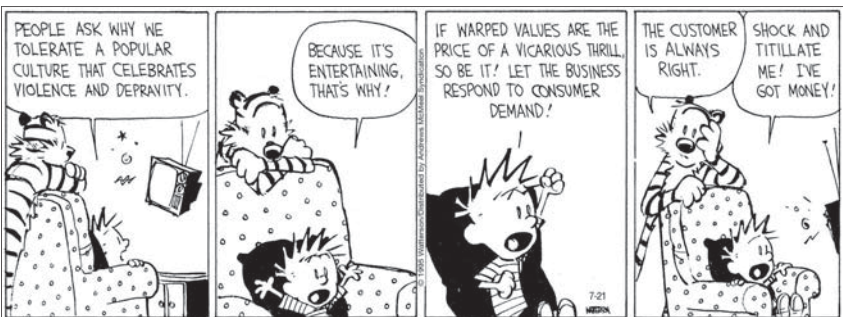
SUDOKU

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

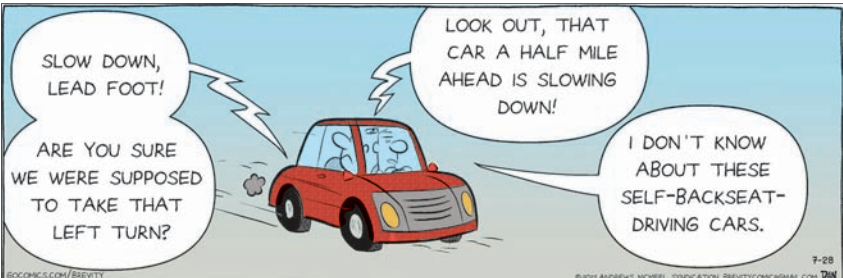
PEANUTS



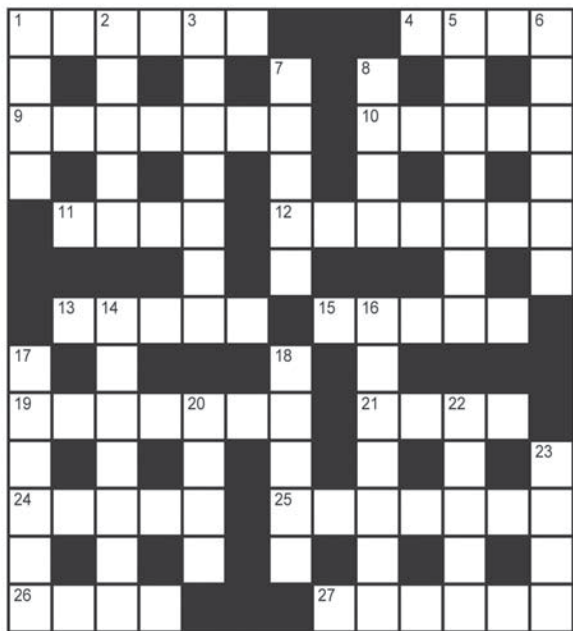
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD



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Across

- Gibson, for one
- Samoan capital
- Not being there
- Rival of Paris
- Flightless bird
- Earnest
- Model wood
- Come out of denial
- Accomplish

Down

- Heavy cart
- Raw fish wrapped in seaweed
- Expensive paintings
- Baker's unit
- Leg part
- Heighten
- Fizzy drink
- Cuckoo

Across

- Vesuvius destroyed it
- Homes
- Honkers
- Small songbird
- Red-faced
- Sea World attraction
- Flubs
- Fend off
- Light brown
- Sleep disorder
- Lavish party

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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

BJD slams AG over Mahanadi dispute remark

POST NEWS NETWORK

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 regulations.

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.

The crackdown targeted seven major traffic violations, including overloading, carrying passengers in goods vehicles, using mobile phones while driving, lacking fitness or permits, lacking pollution under control (PUC) certificates, and breaching High-Security Registration Plate (HSRP) norms.



The drive targeted seven major violations: overloading, carrying passengers in goods vehicles, using mobile phones while driving, lacking fitness or permit documents, missing PUC certificates, and HSRP non-compliance.

Bhubaneswar-I RTO led with 424 challans and ₹15.19 lakh in fines; Bolangir ₹4.77 lakh, Balasore ₹3.71 lakh, Sonepur ₹3.30 lakh, Jharsuguda ₹2.48 lakh

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

HSRP rules.

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 Sundargarh.

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.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 efforts in that direction.

"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.

"It's rather an artificial dispute," 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 po-

sition, and persons holding this office 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 remained 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 Majhi, 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, Bajji Rout, Gangadhar Meher, Upendra Bhanja, Pandit Raghunath Murmu, Chakradhar Behera, Jadumani Mohapatra, Pathani Samanta, and Chandrasekhhar Azad.

Statues of national leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee, 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 Rayagada.

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

Utkal University hosts national symposium

Bhubaneswar: Utkal University's Sociology department kicked off its golden jubilee celebrations Thursday with a national symposium on "Global Development Discourse and India's Transformation" on the campus. Vice Chancellor Jagdishwar 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 Ambassador to Bulgaria, Arun Kumar Sahu, was the chief speaker at the event. Redefining development as a process rooted in social transformation, he said, "True development 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 Rabintra 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/PO.-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 purpose.

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. Sd./- Samsan Kumar

ECoR warns against misuse of alarm chains

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The East Coast Railway (ECoR) has urged passengers to refrain from misusing the Alarm Chain Pulling (ACP) facility on trains.

Officials warned that frequent and unnecessary use of alarm chains causes train delays, disrupts schedules, and inconveniences thousands of fellow passengers.

ECoR sources said that September 24 alone, the Khurda Road Division recorded 10 cases of alarm chain pulling, resulting in five arrests for unlawful use.

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 under the Railway Act.

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

In 2025, up to September 24, 1,480 individuals have already been arrested, including 78 arrests in September alone, causing repeated train delays and



affecting punctuality.

ECoR appealed for public co-operation 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.



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

OP PHOTO

21st annual convocation of KIIT-DU kicks off today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The 21st Annual Convocation of KIIT Deemed to be University will commence here Friday. For the first time, the ceremony will span three days to accommodate the large number of graduating students and their families.

Distinguished personalities Prof Mohan Munasinghe, Nobel Laureate from Sri Lanka; H.E. Ouided Bouchamaoui, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate from Tunisia; Justice Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, Judge and former President of the International Court of Justice; and Justice Dalveer Bhandari, Judge at the International Court of Justice will attend the event.

On the occasion, Fidel Reyes Lee, rector and member of Congress, Republic of Guatemala; Huzaifa Khorakiwala, executive director of Wockhardt Ltd. and Global Humanitarian Advocate; Norbert Sauer, founding chairman of Youth for Understanding Foundation, Germany; Sunjoy Hans, founder chairman of Lalchnd Group; SK Sachdeva, chairman & editor of Competition Success Review; and Anant Mahapatra, noted film and theatre director,



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 well-wishers, emphasising the institution's continued commitment to excellence through research, innovation, international collaborations, accreditations, and community engagement to advance India's progress.

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 Development, among others.

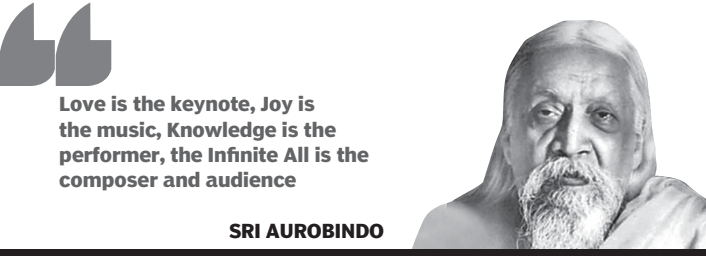
MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	88.69 ▼ 0.04	SENSEX	81159.68 ▼ 555.95	GOLD	₹112,591 ▲ ₹36
EURO	104.18 ▼ 0.13	NIFTY	24890.85 ▼ 166.05	SILVER	₹136,672 ▲ ₹2670

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	33.2°	30.6°	Partly cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thunderstorm
Min Temp	24.9°	22.8°	
Humidity	79%	92%	
Rainfall	0.4mm	3.4mm	

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Renewed Humanism

In 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 contradictions, 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 proactively.

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.

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WISDOM CORNER

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

ALAN WATTS

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

ECKHART TOLLE

power post

FOCUS ELECTIONS

MOSTLY FREE, BUT NOT FAIR

Are Indian elections 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.

SPECTRUM NATURAL SCIENCE

An evolutionary tale of the tail

Thousands of years ago, our ancestors were monkeys and the tail was very useful for their survival. 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. Macaques from the Western Ghats of India have a tuft of hair at the ends of

their tails. 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

of welfare benefits. 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 untrammelled 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 journalist and author



Nikhilanand Panigrahy

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

Letters TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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

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

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 before the 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 (FOHRA) 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 maintained.

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 as there is no business and majority of hoteliers have taken loans.

Thousands of pilgrims going for Manimahesh yatra 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 hotelier.

"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 coolie.

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 banks, unscientific dumping of muck and climate change are leading to disaster during monsoon, opined experts.



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

PTI PHOTO

Telangana claims 70% of Krishna water

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, Sept 25: Telangana is fighting for an equitable share of Krishna River waters before the Krishna Water Disputes 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 Kumar Reddy said Tuesday.

He was addressing the media in New Delhi, where the hearing by KWDIT-II resumed. The minister is personally attending the tribunal's hearing.

Reddy said that the matter has reached the final stage with Telangana presenting its concluding arguments since February this year.

Telangana has been present-

Telangana, which was carved out of united Andhra Pradesh in 1953, is now seeking a fresh allocation based on basin parameters

ing its final arguments over the past several months through senior advocate S Vaidyanathan, who has been allotted three days to argue the state's case in detail.

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.

Outlining the allocations made earlier, he recalled that the KWDIT-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 to use waters over and above the average flows.

The minister said Telangana's claim was built on rational and internationally accepted

parameters such as catchment 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 waters, 120 TMC from the average flows, and the full 45 TMC from Godavari diversions. Altogether, this amounts to 763 TMC of dependable water for Telangana, besides liberty to utilise the entire surplus over average flows.

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

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.

Even public transport and tourist vehicles remained stuck for days. BJP leader and former Chief Minister Jairam Thakur, who began his two-day 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 impacted.

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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 Subrahmanyam and others Thursday to discuss the way forward.



THE STATE TO ACQUIRE L&T'S STAKE IN HYDERABAD METRO RAIL PROJECT FOR ₹2000CR

THE REVENUE FROM OPERATIONS AND OTHER INCOME FOR THE FY2024-25 REGISTERED A DECREASE OF 21% YOY

"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 LTMRL 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 further said.

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 in March 2011.

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 Machhyal Mahseer Farm, which was established in 2016.

Since then, its annual production had never exceeded 5,000.

Of the 87,000 reared fingerlings, 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 various reasons, including construction of dams, barrages, pollution, indiscriminate fishing of brood and juvenile fish, introduction of exotic species and habitat deterioration.

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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 is in focus.

Known as 'Visa Balaji temple', the shrine located in Chilkur has been popular for over two decades as many devotees believed that they would get a visa if they worship here.

Vinay, a technology analyst in a private company and an H1B aspirant, who visited the temple after not getting a visa this year, hoped for divine blessings. "We don't know who is going to be imposed the \$100,000 [fees] and who is

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," he told PTI Videos.

As per their belief, the devotees perform 11 or 108 'pradakshinas' (circumambulation) around the temple for their wish to be fulfilled.

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



then they gave the name Visa Balaji," said CS Rangarajan, chief priest of the temple.

Many devotees share stories of their visa dreams coming true after worshipping in this temple. "I got my H1B on 19 September and I had my inter-

view on 18th. It was a normal interview. They asked me a single question and they told me my visa is approved. This was my H1B renewal. I came to Chilkur Balaji on 10th. Yeah, it's always been a lucky charm for me," said Sai Row-

tik, a Game Developer.

Not just the aspirants, but also parents of those already in the US visit the temple, praying that their children continue to 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.

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

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
11.00 AM on dt.26.09.2025	5.00 PM on dt.09.10.2025	11.00 A.M. on Dt.13.10.2025

Tender Details: Can be seen from the procurement portal:
www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Executive Engineer
City Div-I

OIPR-13031/11/0226/2526

ZILLA SWASTHYA SAMITI, BARGARH

Dept. of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Odisha

O/o. CDM&PHO, Bargarh-768028, Phone/Fax:06646-231763

Advt. No.77/NHM/2025-26

Date:24.09.2025

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 may be downloaded from the website: www.bargarh.odisha.gov.in. Interested 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 advertisement 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. Post/Courier only. Sealed Tenders will be opened on Dt.23.10.2025 at 11.00 AM. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. The authority will not held responsible for any postal delay.

Sd./- CDM&PHO cum DMD,
NHM, Bargarh

OIPR-10124/11/0025/2526

international

of the day quote

China will, by 2035, reduce economy-wide net greenhouse gas emissions by 7 per cent to 10 per cent from peak levels, striving to do better

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 negotiations and speak of diplomacy

ESMAEL BAGHAEI | MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, IRAN

NATO militaries are trained to assess such threats and determine whether they can escort Russian planes out of allied territory or 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 far-right 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 X account.

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 injury 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.

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

GIORGIA MELONI | PRIME MINISTER, ITALY

STARBUCKS TO CLOSE STORES

Starbucks is laying off around 900 non-retail 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



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

REUTERS

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 gave 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



Abbas pledges cooperation with Trump, others on UN-backed plan

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

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

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 Assembly.

"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 Zawayda 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 European 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 incursions.

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

REUTERS

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

Former French president had denied charges, claims political motivation

Sarkozy remains influential in France despite legal issues

denied the charges, was accused 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 Libya 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 presidential 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-to-people 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 Israel, part of a spillover from the war in Gaza.

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

REUTERS

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.

"He has no chance to get the Peace Prize at all," said Asle Sveen, 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."



UNLIKELY NOBEL 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 Nobel Committee.

"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 candidates 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 attempted 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 anniversary, the Nobel Committee might honor institutions like the International Court of Justice, press freedom groups such as Reporters Without Borders, or grassroots peacebuilders mediating ceasefires and aid access in conflict zones worldwide.

of the day

QUOTE

But amidst all these uncertain global situations, India's resilience stands out and several favourable factors, such as strong macroeconomic fundamentals, a young demography, 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 infrastructure, and electrification of cargo 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 comprehensive and scientifically derived estimate of logistics costs. Further, as per the report, rail logistics emerges as a cost-efficient mode, with an average cost of Rs 1.96 per tonne per km, 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, Rajasthan and Jammu.

Indigo, SBI Card launch co-branded credit card

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.



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 consequences

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



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

GOLD & SILVER



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

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 quarter.

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 all-time 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.

CBDT EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR TAX AUDIT REPORT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi: The Income Tax 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



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

September 23, 2025. The CBDT said it has received representations from various professional 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-

tal, the income tax department 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 September 16. Of these, 1.28 crore taxpayers 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.



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 along with all staff members.



Wonderla Bhubaneswar marks first anniversary

BHUBANESWAR: Wonderla Amusement Park Bhubaneswar celebrated its first anniversary, unveiling exclusive Puja 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 Bhubaneswar has showcased Odisha's potential as a vibrant hub for family entertainment," said Arun K Chittilapilly, 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."



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.



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 wellbeing while complementing our broader initiatives in education, healthcare, skills, and livelihoods."

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 impose 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)

services 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.

Between October 2023 and 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 medium term.

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

ASIA CUP ROW

Tensions rise: Surya warned, Pak duo next

Surya 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 of anonymity.

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 Naqvi 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 daish with the ACC Chairman is something that remains to be seen.

Bumrah available for both Tests vs WI

Doors shut on Karun, Easwaran; Jadeja vice-captain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 long-term investment along with the 23-year-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 Ahmedabad.

"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 England. 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 traveler with the squad for the last three to four years but never

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

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 (Yashasvi) 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 Africa Tests.

"Rishabh is the vice-captain at the moment and a key play-

er. 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 performers," 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 two-three years, I think he's played one match for Bengal and one match in the Duleep Trophy," the chairman said.

Squad:

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 advanced to the final on the basis of their position in the points table.

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 Tigers, 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.

Shooters sweep women's 50m rifle prone

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: India made a strong start in the ISSF 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 competition here Thursday.

Young Anushka Thokur carried 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 Karan Singh Ranges with a score of 621.6.

Another 18-year-old, Anshika bagged the silver totalling 619.2, while 20-year-old Aadhy Agrawal took the bronze with a score of 615.9 in the non-Olympic discipline.

Deependra Singh Shekhawat and Rohit Kanyan bagged their



maiden international medals, clinching silver and bronze respectively 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.

Rohit Kanyan took the bronze with a score of 616.3.

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

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 Table Tennis Team C'ships



POST NEWS NETWORK

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 confer-

ence 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 excellence at the international level."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gwangju (South Korea), Sept 25: India assured themselves at least three medals at the Para Archery World Championships here Thursday, with an all-India final set up in the men's compound open category and teenage sensation Sheetal Devi storming into the women's compound final.

Rakesh Kumar, the Paralympic bronze medallist from Paris, and relative international newcomer Toman Kumar marched into the gold-medal match of the men's compound open individual section after contrasting semifinal wins.

Rakesh, seeded seventh, con-



tinued his fine form to overcome third seed Nathan Macqueen of Great Britain 147-143, while Toman edged past compatriot Shyam Sunder Swami by a single point, 144-143.

Shyam, who had qualified as the 17th seed, will now fight for bronze against a British

Top Tennis stars push Slams for more pay, power

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 July 30.

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 Club, which runs Wimbledon; the French Tennis Federation,



which runs Roland-Garros; Tennis Australia, which runs the Australian Open; and the US Tennis Association, which runs the US Open.

All four were asked to reply

to the July 30 letter, and all four did.

The USTA's response, dated August 18 and obtained this week by the AP, was signed by Brian Vahaly, the group's inter-