



LEISURE | P2



INTERNATIONAL | P10



BUSINESS | P11

SPORTS | **P12**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Infra push is working – our roads never rest. First under construction, then under repair



He, however, clarified that if the Centre extends the e-KYC deadline, the state will follow suit. "Beneficiaries who are left out can also submit a written appeal for consideration," Patra said.

P11

"Despite turbulence in the global market, our exports have maintained momentum," said Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal, "But the imports have grown at

Chiron's rings, Pereira added, are likely composed mainly of water ice mixed with small amounts of rocky material, like those of Saturn. Water ice may play a key role in the stability of ring systems because its physical properties allow particles to remain separated instead of

DHARITRI YOUTH CONCLAVE 2025

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31ST OCTOBER 2025

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leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will be a compassionate and caring person. Today you are feeling very generous and will give freely of your treasures, which, Ganesha says, will be adequately compensated in future. You have the exceptional ability to combine work and fun, and will treat peers and juniors as your family.

TAURUS
There is a chance that your analytical ability will get noticed today by your boss, predicts Ganesha. Such an analytical skill will add to your awareness and wisdom in the afternoon. You might go on a shopping spree to buy cassettes, CDs and similar electronic gadgets, expects Ganesha.

GEMINI
You will be in a nostalgic frame of mind and will likely revisit old memories from the past. The post noon sessions should see some occurrences that will leave you feeling sentimental. You will take decisions guided by your heart rather than your mind.

CANCER
Love is not just in the air, it is everywhere. The love bug will bite you so hard that it may make you weep. If you are a part of a long-standing relationship, you will fall in love with your partner all over again. Though you may feel restless in the afternoon for not being able to be with your lover, you will more than make up for the lost time in the evening.

LEO
You need to balance your income and expenditure. It is a good time to invest and speculate in shares. Your debts will be settled, and pending dues will be realised. A work or project that has been delayed for some time, will now be completed. Your relations with your business partners will become stronger now, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
The place you dwell in could do well with a new look. At least, that is what you want to do today. Add some lively show pieces and sprinkle some of that personality to get the right effect, says Ganesha. In the evening, be prepared to shine out as a master performer and possibly a valuable helping hand.

LIBRA
Call it a proof of the old saying, 'Blood is thicker than water', but it is your family that will stand you in good stead today, foresees Ganesha. And in keeping with your grateful nature, you are likely to repay your dues later in the day. Don't be surprised if your rivals admit to your feats – it's all in the stars today.

SCORPIO
The faucet of creativity will run wild today, especially when you try sorting things out with your siblings. Today, you shall bypass all incoming troubles with much ease. Your ingenuity will help you bag a job later, perhaps. In the evening, you will be the Good Samaritan and bring peace to someone, predicts Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
Ganesha advises you to flock with birds of the same feather today. The perfection in your ideas may not materialise on paper today. And, it shall be evasive even when you get to the job of executing ideas. But keep working, advises Ganesha, and remain practical later in the day.

CAPRICORN
Emotions are difficult to understand for you, especially of your lover. He/she will be more open and expressive today, and it'll help you both understand your relationship better. Also, spend some quality time with each other and strengthen your bond by giving him/her a pleasant surprise or a gift, suggests Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
If embroiled in a litigation, it is advisable that you settle out of court. Your resilience carries you through tough times. But your conviction and courage is often misunderstood for rigidity.

PISCES
You will find yourself in a nostalgic frame of mind today, and will attempt to reach out to long lost friends and relatives, says Ganesha. It is also a good day for social and religious activities. You will also relate to your work rather emotionally.



CARDI B BELIEVES IN CHERISHING SUCCESS

American rapper Cardi B doesn't believe in being modest about her highs. The rapper shared that she feels 'very proud' of her success. The 33-year-old rapper became visibly emotional during her album release party for *Am I the Drama?*, and confessed to feeling amazed by what she's managed to achieve in the music industry.

EMMA THOMPSON DIDN'T WANT TO BE AN ACTOR

Oscar-winning actress Emma Thompson has revealed that she never planned to become an actor. "I didn't grow up wanting to be an actor at all. It always seemed like a rather precarious job to me. I remember wanting to be a hospital administrator at one point," revealed the 66-year-old.



KRITI IN GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT

Mumbai: Actress and former Bigg Boss 13 contestant Shehnaaz Gill, who is marking her debut as a producer with her upcoming family comedy drama film *Ikk Kudi*, is over-the-moon to bankroll a female-centric narrative about a young woman and the challenges she faces around marriage.

"*Ikk Kudi* is my first film as a producer, and I'm overjoyed to bankroll a female-centric narrative about a young woman and the challenges she faces around marriage. The film is loaded with twists and turns, but it's brimming with warmth, love and fun," Shehnaaz said.

The actress added: "To pick a strong narrative that thrives on a strong message is something that makes me feel proud, and I wouldn't have ever said 'no' to *Ikk Kudi*."

Set to release on October 31, 2025. The film also stars Gurjazz, Juss, Udaybir Sandhu, Nirmal Rishi, Sukhi Chahal, Gurinder Makna, Gurdial Paras, Harby Sangha, Balwinder Bullet Neha Dayal, Nikita Grover, Jass Dhillon, Vishu Uppal, Gurpreet Singh & Baljinder Dara Puri.

Written and directed by Amarjit Singh Saron, *Ikk Kudi* is set for worldwide release under the banner of Karan Johar's Dharma Productions.

In Bollywood, she was last seen in *Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video* starring Rajkumar Rao and Triptii Dimri in a special appearance for the song *Sajna Ve Sajna*.

Mumbai: Kriti Sanon made history as the first Indian actress to speak at the 2025 World Health Summit in Berlin. As UNFPA India's Honorary Ambassador for Gender Equality, she used the global platform to highlight the urgent need for sustained investments in women's health, emphasizing its economic and social importance.

During the high-level session, Women's Health – Global Wealth: Catalyzing Returns on Bold Investments, Sanon stressed that despite women comprising half the world's population, their health remains severely underfunded. She said, "Women's health is not a side issue. It is the cornerstone of humanity's progress, prosperity, and future."

To underline the urgency, she shared a striking statistic: for every USD 300 million invested in women's health, the return can be as high as USD 13 billion — nearly a nine-fold return on investment. "Investing in women's health is not just a moral imperative; it is a strategic investment in our collective future. When women are healthy, they can thrive, and so do their families, communities, and economies," Sanon said. "We must move beyond presenting empirical evidence and commit to bold, decisive action."

She also highlighted the importance of including women in decisions affecting their health, echoing the principle "Nothing about her, without her." Sanon affirmed, "It is time to ensure that women have a seat at the table when decisions about their health and bodies are being made."

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AGENCIES

Shehnaaz is over the moon



ASIM BASU'S 93RD BIRTH ANNIV CELEBRATION



Members of Uttar Purush—one of Odisha's oldest theatre troupes—staged the Odia play *No Expiry* at Bhanja Kala Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Wednesday to commemorate the occasion. Basu was a founding member of the group. Dignitaries in attendance included: Chandrasekhar Hota, Secretary, Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi, Manoranjan Panigrahi, former Culture Secretary, Rakshak Nayak, poet and Creative Editor, Kalinga TV and Deepak Jena, a young entrepreneur. The event was organised by the Asim Basu Foundation. Adapted by Gautam Basu from Manoj Mitra's Bengali play *Shukshari*, the drama was directed by Debadutta Pati.

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK, OP

Zareen's outburst over online toxicity

Mumbai: Actor Zareen Khan, who made her Bollywood debut opposite Salman Khan in the 2010 period drama *Veer*, has strongly condemned the flood of vulgar and obscene comments she's been receiving on social media.

Taking to Instagram on Tuesday, October 14, the actor called out users who have been leaving inappropriate and degrading remarks under nearly all her posts. In a video message addressing her followers, Zareen voiced her frustration over the growing toxicity online.

"Hello everyone. Is this happening to you too? The moment I post something, such comments start flooding in. People post water and peach emojis, some write 'service available', 'boys come over', or even 'need a boyfriend, alone at home'," she said, visibly disturbed by the trend.

She added that the harassment continues no matter what she posts, be it cheerful updates, personal reflections, or even condolence messages. "It doesn't matter what I share; people find a

way to post disgusting remarks. Some comments are so filthy, it's shocking," Zareen said.

She captioned the video as, "What is this about, please someone explain me."

Her outburst has resonated widely, with many users expressing empathy and outrage in the comments. Fans and followers urged her to ignore the trolls and stand strong, sharing that they too face similar online abuse. One user wrote, "People have lost all sense of decency. They write anything just for attention." Another added, "This happens to everyone. Best is to ignore and move on."

AGENCIES



Tea joint named after the legend

Bhubaneswar: West Bengal is dotted with legendary tea stalls christened after iconic personalities such as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Radha Kishore Dutta. Bhubaneswar has now followed suit, dedicating its own adda-hub to the memory of Asim Basu. A dramatist, painter, actor, stage designer, writer, art director and columnist, Basu passed away in 2017.

Opposite Rabindra Mandap—the city's largest auditorium—sits the newly re-christened '*Asim Da' Khati*'. Since the early 1970s the spot has been a haunt for artists, writers, dramatists and journalists. Basu, who designed sets and directed plays at the neighbouring Mandap, virtually lived here; aspirants flocked to him for advice and spirited debate.

After his death, admir-



ers kept the tradition alive, pinning up his photograph and swapping stories over steaming cups. Noticing the spontaneous tribute, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation spruced up the space; patrons formally sealed the homage by re-naming the joint.

On Wednesday '*Asim Da' Khati*' reopened to a gathering of artists, writers and well-wishers, ensuring the legend continues to pour out inspiration, one cup at a time. A humble adda corner now became a living memorial to state's cultural polymath, Asim Basu.

PNN

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.

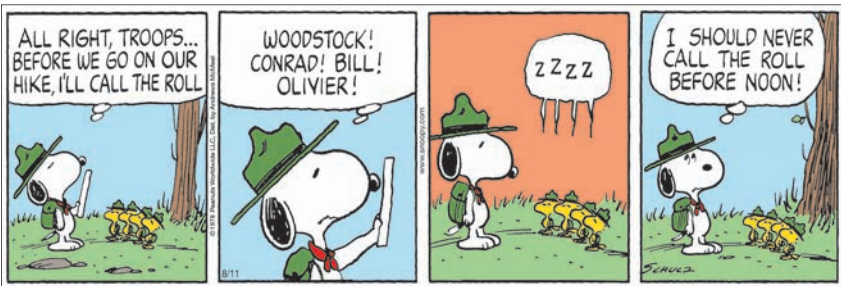
						4	7	
7	4				9			
		8			1			5
				5	2			
9		5			3			
	8					1		
			4					
				8		2	4	3
5				2		9		

SOLUTIONS

A	U	S	T	E	R	E	S	T	E	A	M
M	I	C	X	O	R	A					
A	T	L	A	S	C	A	B	A	R	E	T
T	E	T	E				O	C			
I	N	N	A	B	L	E	A	R	C	H	
C	R	E	T	I	N						
H		C	D	L	O						
A	V	O	W		M	E	R	E	R	O	D
R		R		C	V	E					
T	O	A	S	T	E	R	I	D	L	E	D
E	T	A	E	S	E						
D	R	E	A	M							

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

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			8			
				9		
10						11
12	13		14			
15		16				17
18	19			20		21
22		23	24		25	
26			27			28

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- Across**

1 Preceded

3 Not many

5 Venus de Milo's lack

10 Like a boastful person

11 Greyhound vehicle

12 Expunge

14 Old master

15 Tie the knot

16 Validation

17 Gibbon, for one

18 Guaranteed
- 20 Crosswise, on deck

22 Roofing material

23 Good luck pieces in Ireland

26 Sail support

27 Crow's cry

28 Future fish
- Down**

1 Kind of change

2 Lion's home

4 Conceit
- 6 Contradict

7 Part of a heartbeat

8 Ad-lib

9 Bay of Naples attraction (4,2,5)

13 Give a hand

15 Affluent

17 Sailor's assent

19 Submarine detector

21 Billiards shot

24 Literary collection

25 One for the road

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

BJP credits CM for Durgapur arrests

Nutrition Month: Experts advocate healthy living

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: Odisha BJP Mahila Morcha president Aiswarya Biswal Wednesday claimed that the West Bengal government took action against the accused in the recent gan- grape of an Odia medical stu- dent in Durgapur only after strong intervention by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi. Addressing a press confer- ence at the BJP state head- quarters here, Biswal described the incident as “barbaric and shameful,” criticising the West Bengal government for its ini- tial inaction. She alleged that the arrests were made only af- ter CM Mohan Charan Majhi intervened and exerted pres- sure on the Mamata Banerjee government. Biswal, accompanied by BJP MP Pratap Sarangi and a delegation of Mahila Morcha



leaders, visited Durgapur to meet the victim. “The girl is under severe mental trauma,” Biswal said, adding that their interaction with local officials and the victim’s family re- vealed several inconsistencies in the statements made by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Biswal accused CM Baner- jee of making false statements about the incident. “The Chief Minister claimed the victim went outside the medical campus after midnight, but the college’s official press re- lease clearly mentions she left

around 8 pm,” Biswal said. “This shows Mamata Banerjee is trying to shield the accused by spreading misinformation in the name of the victim,” she added. Criticising Banerjee’s re- mark that “women should not step out at night,” Biswal said, “Such a statement is deeply unfortunate and insulting to every woman in India. Instead of showing empathy, she has shamed the victim. She must publicly apologise to all moth- ers and sisters of the nation.” The BJP leaders also de- manded immediate compen- sation for the victim and strict measures to ensure the safety of Odia and other women resid- ing in West Bengal. “If Mamata Banerjee truly respects Odias, she must take responsibility for the safety of migrant Odias and women in her state, not just seek their votes,” Biswal added.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: A bal- anced diet and healthy lifestyle are key to maintaining good health, and good habits play a vital role in inspiring the next generation, experts said at the state-level celebration of the 8th National Nutrition Month. Organised by the depart- ment of Women and Child De- velopment, the event was held Wednesday at the conference hall of Lok Seva Bhavan, where speakers emphasised that prop- er nutrition for women and children forms the foundation of a healthy and developed so- ciety. Principal Secretary of the de- partment, Shubha Sharma, at- tended the event as chief guest and said that under the leader- ship of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, this year’s Nu- trition Month has evolved into a people’s movement.



She highlighted that the month-long awareness cam- paign focused on key themes such as reducing sugar and oil intake to prevent obesity, promoting child care, edu- cation, and nutrition during early childhood, encouraging proper infant feeding and newborn care, increasing male participation in nutri- tion awareness, strength- ening convergence and digitisa- tion, and promoting the Vocal for Local initiative to ensure grassroots empowerment and

self-reliance. Awareness activities were held across all levels—from Anganwadi centres to the state—covering 54,81,952 lakh thematic programmes across Odisha. Under the guidance of Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, efforts are underway to ensure safe preservation of children’s educational data through APAAR IDs and secure health information through ABHA IDs. Sharma thanked officials and frontline workers for their

RSC’s science seminar on ‘The Quantum Age Begins’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The Regional Science Centre (RSC) here hosted state-level science seminar 2025 in collaboration with state government. The science seminar, an an- nual national programme of the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM)—an au- tonomous body under the Ministry of Culture—aims to foster scientific curiosity and analytical think- ing among school students. The event is conducted through mul- tiple competitive tiers, beginning from the school level and culmi- nating at the national level. This year’s theme, ‘The Quantum Age Begins: Potentials & Challenges,’ inspired students to explore the possi- bilities and implications of emerg- ing quantum technologies. A total of 30 district-level winners, all students from classes VIII to Class X, partici- pated in the state-level event, representing various districts. Each participant presented their views supported by visu- als, demonstrating a deep un- derstanding of the topic. The event was graced by RSC Bhubaneswar project co- ordinator Kapil Jain and TE & SCERT assistant director Pra- lipta Mishra.

Jatra party owner denied Cong entry



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: High drama unfolded before the Congress headquarters here after a jatra (traditional theatre) personality was denied entry to join the party. Ananta Narayan Dhal, prop-rietor of a jatra party, said he came to join the party after being inspired by Rahul Gandhi’s Bharat Jodo Yatra. State Congress president Bhakta Charan Das, however, said the party cannot induct anyone with a “criminal background.” Dhal and his supporters reached the Congress Bhawan in a massive car rally, waving flags and raising slogans, only to be stopped at the gate. They were also engaged in a heated argument with police personnel who asked them to leave. “Inspired by Rahul Gandhi’s Bharat Jodo Yatra, I have arrived here to join the Congress party. However, I found that the gates were locked,” Dhal said. Dhal also claimed he dis- cussed joining the party with senior leader Tara Prasad Ba-

hinipati, who did not comment on the issue. “Congress Bhawan is not his (Bhakta Charan Das’s) paternal property. These days, he is the OPCC chief; he may not be there tomorrow,” Dhal said, im- plying that the state Congress chief has opposed his entry. Dhal claimed that he and his supporters will travel to New Delhi and assemble at Jantar Mantar to join the Congress in the presence of Rahul Gandhi. The state Congress president responded to the development, saying the party would not ac- cept people with a “criminal background.” Das later said, “One can request a party’s mem- bership, but cannot snatch it. We will not accept him. If he wants, he can go to Rahul Gandhi.” State Congress spokesperson Rajani Mohanty said, “We have no such official communication at any joining ceremony. As the party is busy preparing for Nuapada bypoll, we informed him eight days ago that we will hold the joining ceremony af- ter byelection is over. However, he ignored our instruction and arrived the Congress Bhawan, saying it is an ideal day accord- ing to his horoscope predictions to join the party.” Dhal was recently accused of immoral behaviour and assault by several people, in- cluding actresses.

35 honoured with Odisha Seva Ratna Samman 2025



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The Odisha Seva Ratna Samman 2025 award ceremony, organ- ised by the Bright Odisha Foun- dation, honoured distinguished individuals for their outstand- ing contributions across vari- ous fields of service. A total of 35 accomplished personalities were felicitated at the grand event held at Soochana Bhawan here recently. The award not only cele- brated the achievements of the recipients but also aimed to inspire others to contribute to- wards building a better Odisha and a more inclusive society. Eminent personalities from diverse fields were honoured at the event, including former hock- ey player Dilip Tirkey, veteran actor Pradyumna Lenka, actress Bhoomika Dash and Varsha Priyadarshini, actor Subasish Sharma, psychiatrist Amrit Pat- tojoshi, advocate Dharanidhar Nayak, educationist and Akash Institute director Ajay Bahadur Singh, fashion designer Sabyasa- chi Satpathy, media consultant Haraprasad Mohapatra, human rights activist Abhaya Pattnaik and actress-social worker Swap- na Pati, among others.

Odisha holds meet on draft energy code

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The office of the Engineer-in-Chief (Electricity)-cum-PCEI (O), functioning as the State Desig- nated Agency (SDA) under the department of Energy, organ- ised the first stakeholder con- sultation meeting on the draft Odisha Energy Conservation and Sustainable Building Code (OECSBC) here recently. The event aimed to engage key stakeholders from both government and private sec- tors in reviewing the draft code and its associated rules, in order to gather feedback for customising the code accord- ing to Odisha’s unique climatic and regional conditions and to facilitate its integration into building byelaws and approval processes, ensuring smoother adoption and effective imple- mentation. The meeting was chaired by VSSUT vice-chancellor Dipak Kumar Sahoo, EIC (Electricity) Pyari Mohan Mishra and OUTR School of Electrical Sciences head Lokanath Tripathy. Representatives from various departments and institutions including the Directorate of Town Planning, Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA), Odisha Real Estate Regulatory Authority (ORERA), Indian Institute of Architects (Odis-



ha Chapter), IDCO, Works de- partment, Office of Director of Environment, GRIHA, IGBC, ISHRAE, VSSUT, and OUTR participated in the delibera- tions. The proposed OECSBC is an upgraded version of the Odis- ha Energy Conservation Build- ing Code (OECCB) 2022, which promotes energy efficiency in new commercial buildings with a connected load of 100 kW or more, a contract demand of 120 kVA or higher, or a built-up area exceeding 1000 sqm. The latest draft introduces new sustainability compliance pa- rameters to further enhance energy-efficient building design and operations. During the consultation, discussions were also held on the draft Odisha Eco-Niwas Samhita (OENS)—a state-spe- cific energy conservation and sustainability building code for residential buildings, aligned with the OECSBC framework.

UU observes RTI Day on 20th anniversary

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: To com- memorate two decades since the enactment of the Right to Infor- mation (RTI) Act, the depart- ment of Public Administration at Utkal University (UU) organ- ised a special observance of RTI Day here Wednesday. The RTI Act-2005, the only law that empowers citizens to access official information, was enacted June 15 and enforced October 12. Utkal University’s chairperson of PG Council Mi- tali Chinara graced the occa- sion as chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, Chinara expressed concern over the implementation of RTI in the country and the way citi- zens are using the law. “Frivo- lous and vague RTI applications are causing significant negative consequences, including drain- ing of public resources, harass- ment of public officials, and undermining of law’s original purpose and spirit,” she said. Addressing the students as chief speaker, former State Information Commissioner and senior journalist Dilip Bi- soi shared the very purpose of the law and said the 20 years of implementation have wit- nessed a massive use of RTI by a cross-section of people in seeking various types of infor- mation, demanding account- ability from public authorities, and enforcing transparency in administration.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Khariar, No.- 3455, Dt.- 11.10.25, I, Sashikala Agrawal, W/o- Pawan Kumar Agrawal, R/o- Khariar, Azad Chowk, W.N.- 8, P.O./P.S.- Khariar, Dist.- Nuapada declare that, I have changed my name from SASHI AGRAWAL to SASHIKALA AGRAWAL. That, from today onwards I shall be known as ‘SASHIKALA AGRAWAL’ W/o- PAWAN KUMAR AGRAWAL for all purpose. Sashikala Agrawal

I Sekh Mustak, S/o Sekh Firoj, resident of At-Kasabakamarda, PO/PS : Kamarda, Dist : Balasore, Pin - 756035, Odisha, declare by this affidavit CF No. - 12AA432593 dtd : 22.08.2024 that now onwards I Shall be known as S/o - Feroj Shaikh for all the future purposes.

RASHTRIYA MAHILA KISAN DIWAS

Honouring women farmers’ role in nation building

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: To honour the invaluable contri- butions of women farmers to Indian agriculture and rural development, the ICAR-Cen- tral Institute for Women in Agriculture (ICAR-CIWA), in collaboration with the Exten- sion Division of the depart- ment of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, celebrated ‘Rashtriya Mahila Kisan Diwas’ with great enthusiasm here Wednesday. The programme was graced by Union Minister for Agri- culture and Farmers Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who virtually addressed the gather- ing. In his message, the Minis- ter highlighted the pivotal role of women farmers in sustain- ing the nation’s food and nutri- tional security. Reiterating the government’s commitment to their empowerment, Chouhan outlined several initiatives aimed at enhancing women’s participation in agriculture, improving access to resources, and promoting gender-inclu- sive growth in the farm sector. ICAR-CIWA director Mridula Devi extended a warm welcome to all dignitaries and partici-



pants and highlighted the in- stitute’s dedicated efforts in developing gender-responsive technologies, capacity-building programmes, and livelihood models that strengthen the role of women in agriculture. She emphasised that the cel- ebration serves as a platform to recognise the hard work, inno- vation, and resilience of women farmers who are driving trans- formation in rural livelihoods and shaping the future of Indi- an agriculture. Addressing the event, ICAR, New Delhi Deputy Director General (Agricultural Exten- sion) Rajbir Singh appreciated

the immense contributions of women in agriculture and al- lied sectors and emphasised the importance of science-based empowerment, promotion of women-friendly tools, and strengthening institutional support systems for women farmers to enhance productiv- ity and income. The event was also attend- ed by ICAR, New Delhi for- mer ADG Bimlesh Mann and Raimati Ghiuria, popularly known as the ‘Millet Queen of India’ as special guests. Several progressive women farmers were felicitated for their exceptional contributions

to agriculture and allied fields. A ‘Scientist–Farmer Interac- tion Session’ was organised on themes such as Scientific Crop Production and Animal Hus- bandry Practices, Principles and Practices of Natural Farm- ing, GST Reduction Benefits to Farmers, and Government Schemes for Farmer Welfare. An exhibition titled ‘She Shakti in Krishi’ was also or- ganised, featuring gender-re- sponsive technologies, innova- tive women-friendly farm tools, and women-led agri-enterprises that exemplified the spirit of empowerment and innovation in agriculture. The exhibits showcased the remarkable achievements of farm women and the innova- tive technologies developed by ICAR-CIWA to promote livelihood enhancement, productivity, and sustainable agricultural practices. The celebration saw the en- thusiastic participation of over 250 women farmers, agri-entre- preneurs, members of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and self-help groups (SHGs), as well as public rep- resentatives, students, and in- stitute staff, making the event a resounding success.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	88.14 ▼ 0.73	SENSEX	82605.43 ▲ 575.45	GOLD	₹127,185 ▲ ₹929
EURO	102.63 ▼ 0.19	NIFTY	25323.55 ▲ 178.05	SILVER	₹162,049 ▲ ₹2,545

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	33.4°	34.4°	Partly cloudy sky with Haze.
Min Temp	22.6°	21.6°	
Humidity	77%	83%	
Rainfall	NII	NII	

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To listen to some devout people, one would imagine that God never laughs

SRI AUROBINDO

Test Of Resilience

Although the global economy has proven surprisingly resilient in the face of US President Donald Trump's tariff war and other severe challenges, cracks in the foundation are beginning to appear. The October 2025 update of the Brookings-FT TIGER (Tracking Indexes for the Global Economic Recovery) reveals an economic landscape that seems benign in some ways, but unsettled in others, with household and business confidence weighed down by uncertainty about trade policy, political upheavals in many countries, and geopolitical volatility.

Advanced economies are grappling with rising debt burdens, aging populations, and political gridlock, while emerging-market economies, despite being helped somewhat by a weaker dollar (which alleviates financing pressures), are showing signs of strain.

Trump's tariffs, and the protectionist tendencies they have triggered, are rippling through labour markets and dampening consumer demand around the world, compounding structural weaknesses in trade-dependent economies. Meanwhile, financial markets, which were initially spooked by America's erratic trade policies, are forging ahead, with equity indexes across the world reaching new highs even as growth prospects weaken. In the United States, stock prices have been bolstered by exuberance about the potential benefits of AI.

Still, the US economic expansion is losing steam as the Trump administration's erratic economic policies, harsh immigration enforcement tactics, and cuts in social expenditures take a toll on growth and employment. While the probability of a recession in the US remains low, aggregate labour-market indicators (some of which had masked weakness in the manufacturing sector) now look less robust than they did a couple of months ago. Inflation remains in check, so far, but that will change when companies can no longer absorb the cost of Trump's tariffs and are forced to pass them on to consumers. The US Federal Reserve's room for manoeuvre is becoming increasingly constrained by the recent uptick in inflation, a weakening labour market, and explicit political pressures to cut policy rates.

In the eurozone, core economies are floundering, with Germany facing a potential third consecutive year of economic contraction. The German economy is confronting a loss of manufacturing competitiveness and skill shortages, and a revival of industrial production has done little to reverse the decline in job numbers or boost private spending. Meanwhile, France is on the brink of a fiscal crisis driven by excessive public spending, with political turmoil impeding essential reforms.

There are a few bright spots. Southern European countries, especially Italy, Spain, and Greece, have continued to improve their fiscal positions and benefit from robust service-sector performance and wage growth.

Elsewhere, growth in the United Kingdom has flatlined as a beleaguered Labour government struggles to deal with high living costs and strained public services, which have reduced confidence. In Japan, rising inflation has prompted a shift to hawkish monetary policy, despite the danger of a decline in global demand and the risks that tariff uncertainty pose to its export-oriented economy. South Korea is already confronting weak domestic household demand, and its export growth could soon be dented if high tariffs hit its automobile and chip exports.

The Chinese economy has maintained stable aggregate growth, but the expansion has become increasingly unbalanced. Weak household demand and cutthroat corporate competition ("involution") have resulted in persistent deflationary pressures, even as exports to non-US markets have continued to grow rapidly. While the Chinese government's anti-involution drive aims to restrain competition that is destructive to corporate profits, it has not been accompanied by policy stimulus or reforms to boost consumption demand. China's equity markets have surged, fueled by an AI boom and government measures aimed at encouraging retail investors to participate in stock markets. The housing market, though, is still unraveling and remains a drag on private-sector confidence.

India's economy continues to post strong growth, driven by a resilient urban consumer base and high levels of manufacturing investment. Falling inflation and disciplined fiscal policy have created room for monetary easing, if needed, to support growth. The challenge of creating jobs for its young and expanding workforce, however, has intensified following the sudden, unexpected turmoil in US-India economic relations. With this development, India may have lost some of its lustre as a destination for foreign investors.

At the same time, soaring military outlays and falling energy prices have dampened Russia's growth prospects, following several years in which its economy had successfully weathered Western sanctions. And emerging markets in Latin America continue to contend with low growth and large current-account deficits. Brazil's economy is slowing, owing to lower household consumption and falling investment, while Mexico has fared better, with resilient exports and easing inflation supporting a modest expansion. That said, weak investment, policy uncertainty, and exposure to US tariff risks have tempered growth momentum.

In short, despite rising geopolitical risk and enormous uncertainty, economic growth has been surprisingly stable in most of the world. But as growth slows, even moderately, structural issues that have been simmering beneath the surface will become harder to ignore. For now, however, the divergence between growth prospects and equity market performance suggests a more benign outlook, perhaps buoyed by the transformative potential of AI and the hope of less uncertainty about trade, even if tariff barriers settle at a higher level than in the pre-Trump period.

Policymakers need to use this period of relative calm to push forward with reforms and disciplined policies. Doing so will improve their economies' resilience in the face of greater volatility engendered by the breakdown of the rules-based order.

Eswar Prasad & Caroline Smiltneks

ADVANCED ECONOMIES ARE GRAPPLING WITH RISING DEBT BURDENS, AGING POPULATIONS, AND POLITICAL GRIDLOCK, WHILE EMERGING-MARKET ECONOMIES, DESPITE BEING HELPED SOMEWHAT BY A WEAKER DOLLAR, ARE SHOWING SIGNS OF STRAIN

Dasarathi Mishra

UPI IS THE LARGEST REAL-TIME PAYMENT SYSTEM IN THE WORLD BY VOLUME

Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change.

STEPHEN HAWKING

Whoever is happy will make others happy too.

ANNE FRANK

Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.

CARL JUNG

FOCUS SCIENCE

A DROP OF WATER



Astronauts benefit us with their scientific knowledge. However, their other valuable message is that fresh, potable water is precious. It is essential for us on Earth to try our best to conserve it



Nikhilanand Panigrahy

IF OUR BODY WEIGHT DECREASES BY 2% DUE TO LACK OF WATER, OUR MENTAL ACTIVITY DECREASES

Water is also known as life. To understand its significance, we can look at the "Rule of Threes." According to this rule, a person needs three essential elements to survive: air (oxygen) for three minutes, water for three days, and food for more than three weeks. If one is deprived of any of these for longer than the specified time, their life is in danger. The three days mentioned for water refer to drinking water. This limit can vary slightly depending on an individual's environment and health. A study by Dr. Claude Piantadosi of Duke University in North Carolina concluded that this time limit can be extended to one hundred hours in certain cases. Since food also contains water, it can sometimes compensate for the lack of water. Without both food and water, an 18-year-old boy from Austria survived for 18 days before he died. This is a world record.

If our body weight decreases by 2% due to lack of water, our mental activity decreases. We become disinclined to work, and our productivity is severely hampered. According to experts, just as drinking too little water is harmful to health, so is drinking too much. For this reason, it is recommended to drink an average of one and a half litres of water daily. If the body takes in more water without paying due attention to this limit, a person can suffer from "water intoxication," leading to a lack of sodium chloride in the body.

When discussing the need for water, we must also consider other factors. These include a person's weight, age, gender, body temperature, en-

ergy, health, medications, and environment, as well as type of food and the level of activity in their job. In addition, factors like humidity, temperature, and ventilation of surroundings play a major role.

It is clear from this background that the same importance of water that a person feels on Earth takes on a different form in space. In this context, the topic of astronauts can be brought up. The first step towards establishing the International Space Station (ISS) was taken in 1998 with the cooperation of five space agencies from different countries: Russia's Roscosmos, America's NASA, Europe's ESA, Japan's JAXA, and Canada's CSA. Located in a low orbit approximately 400 km above Earth, it continuously orbits our planet. It takes about 93 minutes to complete one revolution, and it does so 15.5 times a day. Astronauts go there for extended stays. Sometimes, their stay can last

for months, as was the case with NASA astronaut Frank Rubio, who remained for 371 days.

The question arises: during such a long stay, the need for water is naturally high. When we leave our homes, we usually carry a water bottle. It weighs 500 grams, and does not feel like a burden. However, this so-called "light" water bottle is extremely heavy and unnecessary for an astronaut. Furthermore, transferring items to space is expensive. For example, it costs \$1,800 per pound (0.45 kg) to send a single SpaceX rocket. Additionally, space in a spacecraft is limited. It is unrealistic to transport water tanks from Earth repeatedly to meet the needs of astronauts.

Due to these difficulties, astronauts are trained to meet their own water needs. Their breath and sweat contain water vapor, which they collect mechanically. These components also maintain humidity

inside the vehicle. The water used for washing hands, bathing, and even urine is reused for ablution and other tasks. For this to happen, the useless substances in the raw material are converted and made reusable. This kind of recycling-based water management is indispensable for astronauts. While it may initially feel disgusting to use this water, this is a misconception based on our preconceived notions. According to scientific opinion, this water is not only pure but also favourable for the body.

This process benefits us by saving the expense and hassle of transporting 40,000 pounds of water for four ISS astronauts each year. Astronauts benefit us with their scientific knowledge. However, their other valuable message is that fresh, potable water is precious. It is essential for us on Earth to try our best to conserve it.

The British poet Coleridge (1772-1834) wrote in his timeless poem, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner": "Water, water, every where,...But not a drop to drink." He wrote this with the ocean in mind. However, one day this may apply to our sacred freshwater river, the Ganges. When a person dies, two drops of Ganges water are given to them for salvation. But a day may come when even two drops of polluted Ganges water will make a healthy person sick and lead to their immediate salvation! May this extreme irony not come to pass!

The writer taught Physics in colleges and retired as Director, Odisha Text Book Bureau.

SPECTRUM DIGITAL ECONOMY

UPI ecosystem – present perfect



Dasarathi Mishra

UPI IS THE LARGEST REAL-TIME PAYMENT SYSTEM IN THE WORLD BY VOLUME

Unified Payments Interface – popularly known as UPI – has taken unique space in the payment ecosystem of the country. It is an instant payment system developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), an RBI regulated entity. Launched in 2016, it is now ubiquitous and has emerged as the most popular retail payment system. Ranging from small market places, to malls, airports, railway stations, citizens are adept to do the retail payment through UPI, with utmost ease and confidence. As on date, there are 37 UPI apps available for citizens.

According to a latest IMF report, UPI is the largest real-time payment system in the world by volume. In August 2025, it scaled new heights with more than 20 billion transactions aggregating ₹24.85 lakh crore, which is a stellar achievement within a short span. Payment system in India is regulated by RBI under the Payments and Settlement System Act, 2007. After demonetization of November 2016, one of the immediate objectives of UPI was to replace cash for low-value, high volume transactions. The objective is eminently achieved.

It may be recalled that on 11 April 2016, NPCI conducted a pilot launch of UPI with

21 member banks in the presence of Dr Raghuram Rajan, then Governor of RBI and entrepreneur Nandan Nilekani. Banks started uploading their UPI-enabled apps on Google Play Store from 25 August 2016 onwards. NPCI data shows that from just 21 banks with 9 lakh transactions and ₹3.09 Crore value as on August 2016, it has gone up to cover 688 banks (public, private sector, foreign banks, RRBs, LABs, cooperative banks, urban cooperative banks) as on 31 August 2025.

UPI is a payment system through which one can link one's bank account to a mobile app and make transactions safely and is available 24x7x365. Over time, UPI has also become a popular payment option for initial public offerings (IPOs) since its availability from 1 January 2019. The transaction limit in the UPI system was enhanced from ₹1,00,000 to ₹2,00,000 in March 2020 and further to ₹5,00,000 in December 2021.

According to RBI Annual Report 2023-24, the scope of UPI was expanded by enabling transfer to/from pre-sanctioned credit lines at banks in addition to deposit accounts. In other words, UPI network will facilitate payments financed by credit from banks. This can reduce the cost of such offerings and help in de-

velopment of unique products for Indian markets.

The Payments Vision Document of RBI has outlined expanding the global outreach of UPI and RuPay cards as one of the key objectives for internationalisation. To take it forward, in July 2023, RBI and the Central Bank of the UAE (CBUAE) signed an MoU for interlinking their payments infrastructure. Under this MoU, the two central banks agreed, inter alia, to cooperate on linking their Fast Payment Systems [UPI of India with Instant Payment Platform (IPP) of UAE].

Further, in February 2024, UPI connectivity between India and Mauritius; and India and Sri Lanka was launched. This connectivity has enabled Indian travellers to make QR code-based payments at merchant locations in Mauritius and Lanka using UPI apps.

Furthermore, there is positive development in India-Singapore UPI linkage. Account-holders of participating banks and financial institutions in India and Singapore can do cross-border remittance transactions through the UPI-PayNow linkage. There is a daily transaction limit of ₹60,000 in a day (equivalent to around SGD 1,000) for undertaking cross-border remittance transactions through the UPI-PayNow linkage. Pres-

ently, only Person to Person remittances for the purposes of "Maintenance of Relatives Abroad" & "Gift" are allowed.

RBI, along with NPCI International Payments Ltd. (NIPL) are taking UPI to 20 countries with initiation timeline of 2024-25 and completion timeline of 2028-29.

According to an article: India's Frictionless Payments published in Finance & Development, IMF (September 2025), "UPI's is a story of digital acceleration unlocked by interoperability. Interoperability was a key driver of India's success in expanding digital payments." In the next level one issue is required to be addressed to make the system fully interoperable. Presently Customer X having PhonePe can't effect payment to Customer Y having Google Pay. This needs to be addressed.

NPCI has a UPI Dispute Redressal System. An aggrieved customer can raise a complaint with respect to a UPI transaction, on the Payment Service Provider/Third Party Application Provider app. The complaints can be uploaded by the customer on NPCI website giving details of the transaction, bank name, amount involved and nature of complaint.

The writer is an ex-CGM, RBI.

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



Growing intolerance

Sir, The attempted shoe-hurling on CJI BR Gavai by a 71-year-old advocate has shocked Indian judiciary. Despite the disruption, the Chief Justice remained composed, instructing courtroom staff to ignore the incident and continued with the proceedings. An attempt to attack the Chief Justice in the highest institution of justice is not merely an assault on the judiciary, but a grave insult to our democracy. Recently a religious orator and a YouTuber had also made provocative remarks against the CJI that went viral on social media. These behaviours threaten the foundation of a democracy and show that intolerance in our country has reached its highest levels. It reflects a deliberate attempt to erode public confidence in the judiciary. This incident lays bare the precarious intersection of religious fervour, caste prejudice, and institutional respect in India's democracy. The polarisation being spread in our country now refuses to respect even the highest constitutional institutions.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Honouring growth

Sir, The 2025 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences rightly returns focus to the core question of economics—how societies grow. The laureates, Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion, and Peter Howitt, were recognised for explaining innovation-driven economic growth, a theme that bridges history, theory, and policy. Mokyr's work as an economic historian reveals why the Industrial Revolution transformed human prosperity after centuries of stagnation. He traced this breakthrough to the fusion of prescriptive knowledge—the practical "how" of making things—and propositional knowledge—the scientific "why" behind them. His studies showed how Enlightenment openness and Britain's skilled artisans turned ideas into engines of productivity, while more closed systems, like Ming China's, stifled progress. Aghion and Howitt, meanwhile, modernised the theoretical foundations of growth by placing Joseph Schumpeter's idea of "creative destruction" at the heart of their models. In their view, progress depends on the constant replacement of the old by the new, just as the automobile displaced the horse carriage. This year's Nobel, refreshingly, honours economists who made sense of the forces that tangibly shape everyday life.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

of the day quote

Violence in society will stop if people follow his mantra -- I am in everyone, and everyone is in me



MOHAN BHAGWAT | RSS CHIEF

India is on track to lead the world in rail technology systems and is at the forefront of engineering innovation. It is a vital exercise to bring Indian and global equipment manufacturers and the entire railway ecosystem together on one platform



ASHWINI VAISHNAW | RAILWAY MINISTER

Dr Kalam ji's vision continues to inspire every Indian to innovate, serve, and lead with integrity



C P RADHAKRISHNAN | VICE PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Two cardboard factories gutted
New Delhi: Two adjoining cardboard factories were gutted after a fire broke out in Delhi's Bhorgarh Industrial Area, officials said Wednesday. Police said the factories were owned by a person named Ashish, and were engaged in the manufacturing of cardboard. "Due to a short-circuit, a fire broke out in the basement area of one factory Tuesday evening. A call was made to the police by a labourer named Gulsher, following which the owner, firemen and an ambulance reached the spot," DCP (Outer north) Harehsvar Swami said.

Cross-border arms, drug racket busted
Chandigarh: The Punjab Police Wednesday unearthed a cross-border organised arms and narcotics smuggling module having links to Pakistan, with the arrest of three people, an official said. The Amritsar Police also recovered 10 sophisticated pistols along with 500 grams of opium from them. Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said the accused have been identified as Rajan alias Sagar (28), a resident of Faizpura in Amritsar, Surinder Singh alias Pali (24), from Fazilka's Tali Wala village and Jagjit Singh (25), a resident of Cheema Kalan in Tarn Taran. The recovered weapons include four 9MM Glock pistols and six .30 bore pistols.

5 UDF activists held over Perambra clash
Kozhikode (Kerala): Five United Democratic Front (UDF) activists were arrested in connection with the alleged hurling of explosives during a recent police lathi charge in Perambra, in which MP Shafi Pambail sustained injuries, police said Wednesday. The arrests followed early-morning raids at the houses of party activists allegedly involved in the violence. Speaking to reporters in New Delhi, AICC general secretary K C Venugopal described the arrests as "unacceptable" and accused the police of targeting complainants instead of those responsible for the violence.

3 suspected Bangladeshi killed in clash with locals
Agartala: Three suspected Bangladeshi cattle lifters were killed and two Tripura residents sustained injuries in a clash between the two sides in a border village in Khowai district Wednesday, police said. The villagers noticed a group of suspected Bangladeshi cattle lifters moving around Padmabilli area, close to the India-Bangladesh border, around 11.30 am.



The truth is that this government has never been honest with farmers, nor are its decisions fair to them

AKHLESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

TRAFFIC JAM: MORE THAN 500 STUDENTS STUCK FOR 12 HOURS
A massive traffic jam on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad National Highway in Maharashtra's Palghar district stranded more than 500 students and commuters for nearly 12 hours, officials said Wednesday



8 days after suicide, Haryana IPS officer cremated in C'garh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Oct 15: Haryana IPS officer Y Puran Kumar was cremated here Wednesday following his postmortem at the PGIMER, eight days after he allegedly shot himself dead with his IAS wife saying she gave consent for his autopsy after assurance of an impartial probe from the Chandigarh Police into the matter.

Earlier in the day, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini visited the family of Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Sandeep Kumar, who allegedly died by suicide on Tuesday, and offered his condolences. The ASI had purportedly levelled corruption allegations against the late Inspector General Puran Kumar.

At the Sector 25 cremation ground, Puran Kumar's wife Amneet P Kumar and two daughters paid their last respects before the last rites were performed. A gun salute was given to the deceased IPS officer by a police contingent. Among those present at the

cremation included a few politicians from across parties, senior officers including Haryana DGP O P Singh, and state's Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Sumita Misra.

Representatives of various Dalit bodies were also present. After the completion of the postmortem at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) earlier, the body was taken to Amneet Kumar's residence here.

Later, the mortal remains were taken in a funeral van with Puran Kumar's photograph in police uniform at the front side of the vehicle to the cremation ground here.

The impasse over the autopsy of Puran Kumar, who allegedly committed suicide October 7, ended after his family gave consent to conduct postmortem, officials said.

The development came a day after the Chandigarh Police moved a court here to seek direction to his family to identify the body for postmortem examination.



Indian Navy hosts the 5th edition of the Indo-Indonesian Joint Bilateral Maritime Exercise Samudra Shakti 2025 at Visakhapatnam , Andhra Pradesh

SC allows limited green crackers in Delhi-NCR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: In a significant relaxation ahead of Diwali, the Supreme Court Wednesday permitted the sale and bursting of green firecrackers in Delhi and the National Capital Region during the festival with conditions aimed at balancing traditions with environmental and health concerns.

The court made it clear that use of green crackers will be confined to specific hours on the day before Diwali and on the festival day itself. The sale of green crackers will be permitted from October 18 to 20 when Diwali will be celebrated.

It also made clear that the relaxation was only on a "test case basis and the same shall be only for the period specified". A bench of Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran allowed the joint request of the Centre and the Delhi government and the pleas of manufacturers of green crackers seeking relaxations in view of the complete ban imposed earlier by the Delhi government in 2024. "Aggravated environmental pollution resulting in serious health hazards is pitted against the right to life and the right to carry on a profession; as available to the persons engaged in the firecrackers industry and their workmen," the court said. "Bursting firecrackers is an expression of the festive spirit and it enhances the mood in religious and other auspicious ceremonies, embedded in the cultural milieu of India," it added. "However, that cannot lead to a situation of causing long term or even short term



damage to health by an uncontrolled use, based only on traditions and cultural or religious norms. We cannot but reiterate, as this Court held often than ever, that the commercial considerations and the festive spirit should take a back seat when it concerns the environment and health," the CJI, writing a 21-page order, said.

Passing directions as a temporary measure, the bench followed the approach adopted in the 2018 verdict in the Arjun Gopal case by which the concept of green crackers came into being. "The sale of green crackers as uploaded on the website of NEERI (National Environmental Engineering Research Institute) shall be permitted commencing from October 18, and continuing only till October 20," it said.

"The district administration and the police shall ensure that use of firecrackers shall be confined between 6:00 AM to 7:00

AM and 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM on the two days i.e., the one before and on the Diwali day," it said. The sale of green crackers shall be permitted only from the designated locations in the NCR which shall be identified by the district collectors in consultation with the district Superintendent of Police and given wide publicity, it said. Crackers can be sold through licensed traders only, it said, adding they have to be manufactured by those registered with NEERI and PESO.

Crackers seized, which are not manufactured by registered manufacturers, shall be confiscated, it said, adding no firecrackers will be allowed into the NCR region from outside.

The Central Pollution Control Board, in consultation with the SPCBs shall monitor the air quality index (AQI) from October 14 till 25, it said, adding that a report be filed specifying the AQI of each day.

The court made it clear that use of green crackers will be confined to specific hours on the day before Diwali and on the festival day itself

The sale of green crackers will be permitted from October 18 to 20 when Diwali will be celebrated

BIHAR POLLS

Tejashwi, Dy CM file nominations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Oct 15: Several top leaders of Bihar, including RJD's Tejashwi Yadav and Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha, a senior BJP leader, Wednesday filed their nomination papers for the Assembly elections.

Yadav, who is the INDIA bloc's face, scoffed at rumours that he was thinking of contesting more than one seat and exuded confidence that the voters of Raghapur, who have elected him twice, would give him a third chance in a row.

Sinha, who seeks a fourth consecutive term from Lakhisarai, filed his nomination papers in presence of Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, who had flown to the poll-bound state to boost the morale of party colleagues.

Meanwhile, the JD(U), headed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, also released its first list of 57 candidates. Kumar was said to be in a sulk over the seat-sharing deal in which his party has to contest the same number of constituencies as the BJP, which was a junior ally earlier.

The list includes several ministers, who have been fielded from their sitting seats, besides other prominent leaders like state president Umesh Kushwaha and don-turned-politician Anant Singh, both of whom filed their nomination papers from Mahnar and Mokama, respectively, a day ago.

Some political observers were left wondering whether the absence of Muslims in the list was indicative of a dilution of the party's "secular character", which the longest serving



In a significant development, Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor Wednesday announced that he will not contest the Bihar Assembly polls, a decision, he claimed, was taken by the party for its greater good

chief minister took pride in having maintained despite having been an NDA partner.

The BJP, which like the JD(U) is contesting 101 seats, came out with its second list of 12 candidates, raising to 83 the total number of names declared so far.

The list includes names like folk singer Maithili Thakur, who was inducted into the party a few days ago and has been fielded from Alinagar, where the sitting MLA Mishri Lal Yadav has resigned alleging that Dalits and backward classes were getting a raw deal in the BJP.

Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) of Union minister Chirag Paswan, which has got 29 seats as part of the NDA seat-sharing deal, also came out with a list of 15 candidates, including state president and former MLA Raju Tiwari, who will seek to reclaim Govindpur seat.

India to send man into space by 2027, land on Moon by 2040

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Oct 15: ISRO chairman V Narayanan on Wednesday said the space agency has set a target of landing Indians on the Moon by 2040, while its maiden human spaceflight mission 'Gaganyaan' is on track for launch in 2027.

Narayanan said a slew of ambitious space projects and sector reforms were currently underway, including a national space station by 2035, and three uncrewed 'Gaganyaan' missions by 2026, with the first one that includes a half-humanoid robot 'Vyommitra', targeted for December 2025.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a guideline for an indigenous crewed lunar mission by 2040, under which we have to land our own cit-

izens on the moon and bring them back safely. A Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM) has also been approved to study the planet," Narayanan said in an exclusive interview with PTI.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief said the Bharatiya Antriksh Station (BAS) is expected to come up by 2035, and initial modules in space are expected as early as 2027.

He was here to attend the 35th convocation ceremony of Ranchi-based Birla Institute of Technology (BIT) Mesra as the chief guest. "There are a lot of developments in 'Gaganyaan'. We are planning some more experiments. Before the crewed mission, we are planning three uncrewed missions. 'Vyommitra' is going to fly on that in December this year. Two



more uncrewed missions will take place next year. Crewed 'Gaganyaan' mission would be possible by 2027 first quarter," Narayanan added.

With Modi defining a clear roadmap and rolling out reforms for the space sector, ISRO is moving with confidence

and clarity towards realising the dream of a self-reliant and vibrant space ecosystem, he said. He said India's upcoming projects include Chandrayaan-4 and Chandrayaan-5, a new Mars mission, and AXOM, a high-priority astronomical observatory mission.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief said the Bharatiya Antriksh Station (BAS) is expected to come up by 2035, and initial modules in space are expected as early as 2027

He was here to attend the 35th convocation ceremony of Ranchi-based Birla Institute of Technology (BIT) Mesra as the chief guest

"The Aditya-L1 mission has already yielded over 15 terabits of solar data, with valuable insights into coronal mass ejections and space weather," Narayanan added.

"We are open to international collaborations," he said, emphasising that while India is committed to self-reliance, climate science and space

research, which are global concerns, "how and where we collaborate will be debated and decided based on scientific and strategic priorities."

Highlighting the role of reforms, Narayanan said the space sector has been transformed through the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), which integrates startups and private players into the national ecosystem.

For missions like crewed lunar landing, India needs to enhance its launch capacity and space infrastructure and has already started work to build its space station.

Talking about Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, and Big Data, he said these are becoming integral to space missions.

Congress governments have always worked to weaken Sanatan culture and its religious traditions. The Congress ideology has been against the cow progeny. Cow slaughter was promoted during its rule



UMA BHARTI | SENIOR BJP LEADER

A day of immense joy and pride for India. Heartiest congratulations to every citizen of India on the Commonwealth Association's approval of India's bid to host the Commonwealth Games 2030 in Ahmedabad



AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

Sardar Patel served as the president of the Ahmedabad Municipality from 1924 to 1928, and 100 years ago, he demonstrated how an ideal city can be built through well-organised urban planning. His decisions provided the nation with the first model of city-centric local administrations at that time



BHUPENDRA PATEL | GUJARAT CM

POST OF THE DAY

WORLDWIDE AZADI HAI

RISE UP

RISE UP

The World Meteorological Organisation has just revealed that the atmospheric carbon dioxide levels reached 424 parts per million in 2024. This is, by far, the highest annual increase that has taken place since such measurements began in 1957. Of course this demonstrates continued use of fossil fuels. Increased wildfires are also being held responsible. But, more importantly, this also points to the fact that the absorptive capacity of carbon sinks like oceans and forests themselves is declining because of global warming. The growth of renewable energy capacity has been impressive. But clearly that is not having its desired impacts. To compound the crisis, soon the one year notice period for the US's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change will get over. Will Prime Minister Modi try and convince his good friend to the contrary?

@Jairam_Ramesh

SHORT TAKES

Jaisalmer bus tragedy: 2 DTO officers suspended

Jodhpur: A day after 20 people were burnt alive in a bus fire in Jaisalmer and another succumbed at a hospital in Jodhpur Wednesday, the Rajasthan government suspended two officers of Chittogarh District Transport Office for alleged laxity, officials said. The Jodhpur-bound private sleeper bus, according to primary investigation, was registered in Chittorgarh October 1 and had several modifications. It was an AC bus but registered as non-AC, they said.

Drug addict attempts suicide on hospital roof

New Delhi: Upset over a family dispute, a 25-year-old drug addict climbed onto the roof of Sanjay Gandhi Hospital in Delhi's Mangolpuri area on Wednesday and threatened to commit suicide, but was rescued safely, officials said. The man, identified as Rahul Mandal, has a history of substance abuse and had bruises all over his body. He was heavily intoxicated, drowsy and sweating profusely, making the rescue operation difficult as officers fear he may slip out of their grip when they try to pull him down from the six-storey building, the officials added.

This time, Bihar is going to have a double Diwali. First, people celebrated Diwali on the first day of Navratri due to GST. Now, Diwali is October 20, and we are going to celebrate that. But this time, Bihar is in a mood to celebrate the NDA's victory November 14. Bihar's sisters and daughters will play a major role in this



NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

SC: GOVT OPPOSES LETHAL INJECTION FOR EXECUTIONS

The problem is that the government is not ready to evolve, the Supreme Court observed Wednesday after the Centre said it may not be “very feasible” to give the option to death row convicts to choose lethal injection as a mode of execution



DURGAPUR GANGRAPE

WB Governor files report to Prez, MHA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Oct 15: West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose has submitted a report on the gang rape of a medical student in Durgapur to President Droupadi Murmu and the Union Home Ministry, a Raj Bhavan official said Wednesday.

In the report, Bose has given a detailed account of his findings in the case and also about his interactions with the survivor and her parents who hail from Odisha, he said.

"A report has been submitted to President Droupadi Murmu in connection with the governor's findings in the Durgapur case. A copy of the report was sent to the Home Ministry as well," the official told PTI.

The President also belongs to Odisha. Talking to the media earlier in the day, the governor said that the feelings of the survivor's parents about taking their daughter back to Odisha should be respected.

"We have to understand their feelings. Whatever steps are required to help them in this hour of crisis and in future should be taken," he said.

Earlier Wednesday, BJP MP

from Odisha's Balasore, Pratap Chandra Sarangi, met Bose at the Raj Bhavan here and briefed him about his findings of the Durgapur incident.

Referring to his meeting with the MP, the Bengal Governor said that he received some suggestions from them.

"Today I had a representation from the MP of Balasore. They also gave some suggestions. I do not want to divulge them because they should be kept confidential," Bose said, adding that he has also received a report from the National Women's Commission.

Bose had gone to Durgapur in Paschim Bardhaman district and spoken to the victim and her parents.

Meanwhile, Sarangi, after meeting the Bengal Governor, expressed doubts about whether those arrested by the police were the actual culprits or "scapegoats". "The TI (Test identification) parade should be carried out to identify the real criminals. It is still not clear that those arrested in this case are the real culprits or they have been made to shield others," Sarangi said.

The second-year MBBS student was allegedly gang-raped when she had gone out of the private medical college campus with a male friend to fetch food on the evening of October 10. Police have so far arrested six people, including the friend, for their alleged involvement in the crime, which has sparked a huge political uproar in the state.



Only 3 districts now most affected by Naxalism: MHA

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Home Affairs Wednesday said that the districts most affected by Naxalism have been brought down to three. Now, only Bijapur, Sukma and Narayanpur in Chhattisgarh are the most affected districts by Left Wing Extremism (LWE), the ministry said in a statement that came as 88 members of CPI (Maoist) surrendered in Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra in yet another success for the anti-Naxal campaign. "In a giant stride towards the Modi government's vision of building a Naxal-free Bharat, the number of districts most affected by Naxalism has been brought down to three from six," the ministry said.

the next two years" against a possible final retaliatory attack.

Fadnavis promised proper rehabilitation for the surrendered Naxalites and highlighted major development plans for Gadchiroli, which he said is becoming a steel hub with investments of around Rs 3 lakh crore aimed at creating over one lakh local jobs. The remaining cadres, who are in Chhattisgarh, have also understood that they have lost the ideological war and that the dreams they were chasing were wrong. They have

understood that only the Indian Constitution can ensure them justice, he said. Adding a crucial element to rehabilitation, private firm Lloyds Metals and Energy Ltd (LMEL) announced it would train and employ surrendered Naxalites in the industrialising district. Following the event in Maharashtra, Naxal-affected districts in Chhattisgarh reported three significant surrenders on Wednesday, involving 78 Maoist cadres.

In Kanker district, 50 cadres, including 32 women and key

EPFO RULES CHANGE

OPPN ALLEGES SALARIED PEOPLE BEING ‘PUNISHED’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: The Opposition Wednesday slammed the Narendra Modi dispensation over the change in EPFO rules, alleging salaried people were being punished for the government's "mishandling of the economy" and urged Labour and Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya to scrap the "draconian" provisions.

The government, however, issued a point-by-point rebuttal of the Opposition's charges through a fact-check and said the claims were "misleading".

In a post in Hindi on X, Mandaviya said EPF withdrawal is now even simpler and faster as 13 different categories and countless conditions associated with them have been simplified to create uniform provisions, allowing withdrawals to be made easily without any documentation process. "Withdrawal Limits have been simplified - whether it's the amount or frequen-

cy. Previously, withdrawals for marriage and housing were possible after five to seven years of service, but now they can be withdrawn after just one year. The limits for withdrawals for education and medical treatment have been made even more flexible," he said.

Additionally, in any special circumstances or emergencies, the full eligible amount can be withdrawn up to twice a year without any questions asked, Madaviya said.

The opposition had hit out at the government over the specific change to the period for availing premature final settlement of EPF from the existing two months to 12 months, and final pension withdrawal from two months to 36 months. They also slammed the provision of earmarking 25 per cent of the contributions in the members' account as a minimum balance to be maintained by the member at all times.

ZUBEEN DEATH

Protesters clash with police, set vehicles on fire outside prison

The situation turned worse after a while, with the protesters setting ablaze some vehicles, including those belonging to the police department and television channels, with the law enforcers firing tear gas shells to bring the situation under control

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Oct 15: Assam Police Wednesday resorted to lathi-charge and fired tear-gas shells to disperse an agitated mob that attacked and set ablaze some vehicles and hurled stones at the convoy carrying the five accused arrested in cultural icon Zubeen Garg's death case as they were being brought to Baksa District Jail, police said.

Prohibitory orders have been imposed under Section 163 of BNSS in Mushalpur town and adjoining areas of the jail, while internet and mobile data services have been suspended in the entire Baksa district till further orders, District Com-

missioner Gautam Das said. Several people, including police personnel, journalists and local residents were injured and glass panes of vehicles were smashed, a senior officer said.

A large number of protesters gathered outside the prison in Mushalpur area, and as the convoy of vehicles carrying the accused for being lodged in the prison arrived, they started pelting the vehicles with stones, he said.

Some even demanded that the accused be handed over to the public to ensure "justice for Zubeen". Although the convoy managed to enter the jail premises, the protesters scuffled with the policemen deployed



at the gates as they attempted to breach the cordon, the officer said.

Despite the requests of the policemen to the protesters to move back, they kept pressing forward, following which the law enforcers resorted to lathi-charge to control the situation, he said.

The situation, however, turned worse after a while, with the protesters setting ablaze

some vehicles, including those belonging to the police department and television channels, with the law enforcers firing tear gas shells to bring the situation under control.

IGP (Law and Order) Akhilesh Singh, who rushed to the spot, said that "minimum force was used to bring the situation under control". Asked about the number of people who have suffered injuries, Singh said,

"Our immediate priority was to bring the law and order situation under control. It is now under control and we will do the documentation part after this."

Several vehicles have been set ablaze, government property damaged and a number of people injured and so "an inquiry will be conducted into the matter".

"Certain anti-social elements may have instigated the incident and we will conduct a thorough inquiry into it," the IGP said. He appealed to the people to maintain peace and "not take law into their hands".

"We all want justice for Zubeen Garg, but there is a certain procedure to be followed," he said. Singh said that additional forces have been deployed in the area.

Though there was adequate deployment of forces and barricades were set up around the jail, the situation suddenly worsened, he said.

Baksa District Commissioner Gautam Das said that according to the prohibitory orders, assembly of five or more persons in places within 500 metres periphery of the jail, carrying of lethal weapons or firearms in public places, including sticks, spears, swords and others, will not be allowed.

Public rallies, processions, demonstrations, strikes, hunger strikes, dharnas or shouting of slogans within 500 metres of the jail along with throwing of stones, bursting of crackers or other inflammable materials on streets will also be prohibited.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home and Political Department) Ajay Tewari, in an order, stated that due to serious law and order situation in Baksa district, the state government apprehends that social media and internet may be used to further spread inflammatory messages, rumours, which may lead to further aggravation of the situation.

of the day

quote

The heat trapped by CO2 and other greenhouse gases is turbo-charging our climate and leading to more extreme weather



KO BARRETT | WMO DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

Britain could take a leading role in helping to disarm Hamas in Gaza, based on its experience of encouraging militant groups in Northern Ireland to lay down their arms



KEIR STARMER | PRIME MINISTER, UK

China is a command-and-control economy. They are neither going to command (nor) control us. We are going to assert our sovereignty in various ways



SCOTT BESSENT | TREASURY SECRETARY, US

SHORT TAKES

Ex-Kenyan premier Odinga dies at 80

Nairobi: Raila Odinga, a former prime minister of Kenya and perennial presidential candidate whose populist campaigns rattled authorities and gave him an outsized influence on political life in his East African country, died Wednesday of a heart attack while travelling in India. He was 80. His death was confirmed by the Devamatha Hospital in India's Kerala State, where he was taken after he collapsed during a morning walk. A statement from the hospital said Odinga suffered a cardiac arrest and didn't respond to resuscitation efforts. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on the social platform X that he was saddened by the death of Odinga, describing him as "a towering statesman." Other tributes to Odinga paid tribute to his commitment to democracy in Kenya.

China protests US airspace plan

Hong Kong: China's biggest state-owned air carriers have hit back at a US proposal to bar them from flying over Russia when travelling to or from the US. The US side has said such flights give Chinese airlines an unfair cost advantage over American carriers, which cannot cross through Russian airspace. Moscow closed Russian airspace to US air carriers and most European airlines in 2022 in response to Western sanctions for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Air China, China Eastern and China Southern are among six Chinese airlines filing complaints over the order proposed last week to prohibit such flights by Chinese carriers.

Pak, IMF seal \$1.2bn deal

Islamabad: Pakistan and the IMF Wednesday reached a staff-level agreement (SLA) on the country's loan programmes, paving the way for Islamabad to access \$1.2 billion, pending approval from the global lender's board. The Washington-based International Monetary Fund (IMF) will provide Pakistan with \$1 billion under its Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and \$200 million under its Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) after approval from the fund's board. Last week, an IMF mission led by Iva Petrova concluded talks with Pakistani authorities on the second review of the EFF agreed in 2024 and the first review for the RSF climate loan agreed this week, but it left Pakistan without signing a staff-level agreement.

Pak, Afghanistan reach temporary truce

The ceasefire came hours after Pakistan conducted 'precision strikes' in Afghanistan's Kandahar province and capital Kabul, killing dozens of foreign and Afghan operatives

AGENCIES

Islamabad/Kabul, Oct 15: Pakistan Wednesday said a 48-hour ceasefire has been agreed with Afghanistan, amid border clashes between the two countries that have killed dozens of people on both sides.

"A temporary ceasefire has been decided between the Pakistani government and the Afghan Taliban regime, with the mutual consent of both parties, for the next 48 hours from 6 PM today, at the request of the Taliban," the Foreign Office said.

However, the Taliban-led Afghan government's chief spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said that "at the request and insistence of the Pakistani side, a ceasefire between the two countries will take effect today after 5:30 PM."

In a post on social media, Mujahid said the government has directed all its forces to respect the ceasefire, unless any aggression takes place.

Pakistan's Foreign Office said that during the ceasefire, both sides "will make sincere efforts to find a positive solution to this complex but solvable issue through constructive dialogue."

The ceasefire came hours after state-run PTV News reported that Pakistan conducted "precision strikes" in Afghanistan's Kandahar province and



capital Kabul, killing dozens of foreign and Afghan operatives.

"Pakistan Army's retaliatory action against Afghan Taliban aggression, key hideouts destroyed. Key hideouts of Afghan Taliban successfully targeted by Pakistan Army," it said in a statement on X, quoting security sources. "These precision strikes were carried out in Afghanistan's Kandahar province. As a result of these strikes, Afghan Taliban Battalion Number 4 and Border Brigade Number 6 completely destroyed. Dozens of foreign and Afghan operatives killed."

It added that the Pakistan Army possessed the "full capability to give a strong and complete response to any external aggression".

Earlier in the day, the Pakistani Army said that it repulsed multiple attacks by the Afghan

Taliban while killing over 40 attackers in separate incidents of border clashes.

The Afghan Taliban attacked four locations in the Spin Boldak area of Balochistan province, which were effectively repulsed by Pakistani Forces, the army said.

"While repulsing the attack, 15-20 Afghan Taliban have been killed and many injured," the army said, adding that the situation is still developing as there are "reports of further build up in staging points of Fitna Al Khwarij and Afghan Taliban."

The Pakistan government last year notified the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as "Fitna al-Khawarij", a reference to a group in earlier Islamic history which was involved in violence.

The attack was orchestrated

through divided villages in the area, with the Taliban showing no regard for the civilian population, it said.

"The Afghan Taliban also destroyed Pak-Afghan Friendship Gate on their side that clearly displays the mindset with regard to mutual trade and easement rights of the divided tribes," the army said.

The attack in Spin Boldak was not an isolated event, as on the night of October 14, the Afghan Taliban and TTP tried to attack Pakistani border posts in the Kurram Sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"These attacks were effectively repulsed, causing heavy losses to Afghan Posts. Eight posts, including six tanks, were destroyed in the effective yet proportionate response of Pakistani troops, (and) 25-30 Afghan

- Pakistan, Afghanistan agree on 48-hour ceasefire after clashes
- Each says truce reached at the request of the other
- Taliban orders forces to hold fire unless attacked first
- Truce follows airstrike and ground fighting
- More than 15 Afghans killed, 100 injured, says Taliban

Taliban and Fitna Al Khwarij fighters were suspected to have been killed," it said.

The army rejected the insinuations that Pakistan initiated the attack by calling it "outrageous and blatant lies, just like the claims of capturing Pakistani posts or equipment".

It further said that the propaganda of the Taliban regime can be debunked with basic fact checks.

The army further asserted that all acts of aggression against Pakistan will be responded to with full force.

Islamabad has consistently urged the Taliban government to prevent terrorist groups from using Afghan territory for cross-border attacks.

Kabul, however, denies these allegations, insisting that Afghan soil is not being used against any neighbouring country.

The situation deteriorated between the two neighbours following repeated terrorist attacks by the TTP, allegedly using the Afghan soil, including one in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Orakzai district recently, which claimed the lives of 11 military personnel, including a Lt Colonel and a Major.

Coup leader claims Presidency

REUTERS

Antananarivo/Nairobi, Oct 15: Madagascar's new military ruler Michael Randrianirina said Wednesday he would soon be sworn in as president of the African island nation after a coup he led to oust President Andry Rajoelina.

Rajoelina, who was impeached by lawmakers after fleeing abroad at the weekend, has condemned the takeover and refused to step down despite Gen Z demonstrations demanding his resignation and widespread defections in the security forces.

Randrianirina has told Malagasy citizens that the military has taken power and dissolved all institutions except the lower house of parliament or National Assembly. "We will be sworn in soon," the army colonel told a press briefing Wednesday, a day after the High Constitutional Court invited him to serve as president of the



Army colonel led push to topple elected president

Rajoelina has fled Madagascar, believed to be in Dubai

Youth protests precipitated crisis on Indian Ocean island

former French colony.

"We took responsibility yesterday."

Two sources close to him earlier told Reuters he would be sworn in as president in the next day or two.

Randrianirina said Tuesday that a committee led by the military would rule for up to two years alongside a transitional government before organising new elections.

Randrianirina was a commander in the elite CAPSAT army unit that played a key role in the 2009 coup that brought Rajoelina to power but broke ranks with him last week, urging soldiers not to fire on protesters.

PUTIN, SHARAA HOLD TALKS

REUTERS

Moscow, Oct 15: Syrian President Vladimir Putin Wednesday he would honour all past deals struck between his country and Moscow, a pledge suggesting Moscow's two main military bases in Syria are safe.

Sharaa, who once headed the Syrian branch of al Qaeda and who toppled predecessor Bashar al-Assad, a close Russian ally, late last year, was speaking at the start of Kremlin talks with Putin on his first visit to Russia since coming to power.

"There are bilateral relations and shared interests that bind us with Russia, and we respect all agreements made with it. We are working on redefining the nature of relations with Russia," Sharaa, who was speaking in Arabic, told Putin.

Putin told him that Moscow was ready to do all it could to act on what he called "many interesting and useful beginnings" that had already been discussed between the two sides when it came to renewing relations.



There are bilateral relations and shared interests that bind us with Russia, and we respect all agreements made with it. We are working on redefining the nature of relations with Russia

AHMED AL-SHARAA | SYRIAN PRESIDENT

Fate of Russian bases in Syria is being discussed

Sharaa will ask Putin to hand over former president Assad, Syrian sources say

OIL PROJECTS AND MILITARY BASES

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak told reporters after the talks that Moscow was willing to work on oil projects in Syria and help it to restore energy, rail and other infrastructure destroyed during years of civil war. The

two leaders had discussed this at length, he said.

"Russian companies have been working in Syria for a long time, at oil fields. There are fields that require development, those that are moth-balled, and new fields. We are ready to participate," Novak said. The Kremlin said before

Aid trucks roll into Gaza as dispute over hostage bodies paused

REUTERS

Jerusalem/Cairo, Oct 15: Aid trucks rolled into Gaza Wednesday and Israel resumed preparations to open the main Rafah crossing after a dispute over the return of the bodies of dead hostages that had threatened to derail the fragile ceasefire deal with Hamas.

Israel had threatened to keep Rafah shut and reduce aid supplies because Hamas was returning bodies too slowly, showing the risks to a truce that has stopped two years of devastating warfare in Gaza and freed all living hostages held by Hamas.

However, the militant group returned more Israeli bodies overnight, and an Israeli security official said Wednesday preparations were under way to open Rafah to Gazan citizens,

while a second official said that 600 aid trucks would go in.

DISPUTE OVER RETURN OF HOSTAGE BODIES

Hamas returned four bodies confirmed as dead hostages Monday and another four bodies late Tuesday, though Israeli authorities said one of those bodies was not that of a hostage.

The dispute over the return of bodies still has the potential to upset the ceasefire deal along with other major issues that are yet to be resolved.

Later phases of the truce call for Hamas to disarm and cede power, which it has so far refused to do. It has launched a security crackdown, parading its power in Gaza through public executions and clashes with local clans.

Longer-term elements of the ceasefire plan, including how



Gaza will be governed, the make-up of an international force to take over there and moves towards the creation of a Palestinian state have yet to emerge.

Twenty-one bodies of hostage-

es remain in Gaza, though some may be hard to find or recover because of destruction during the conflict. An international task force is meant to find them.

The deal also requires Israel to return the bodies of 360 Pal-

- Rafah border crossing due to open
- Aid trucks start entering
- Israel identifying hostage remains
- Hamas continues crackdown

estinians. The first group of 45 was handed over Tuesday and the bodies were being identified, said Palestinian health authorities.

AID ENTRY AND BORDER CROSSING

The war has caused a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, with nearly all inhabitants driven from their homes, a global hunger monitor saying famine was present in the enclave and health authorities overwhelmed.

India's Nayara Energy Limited on UK's new Russian oil sanctions list

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Oct 15: The UK government Wednesday announced 90 new sanctions targeting Russia's oil giants and Indian petroleum company Nayara Energy Limited, which it said had imported billions of dollars' worth of Russian crude in 2024.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said the coordinated action with the UK Treasury will strike at the heart of Russian President Vladimir Putin's war funding, targeting companies to cut off oil revenues reaching the Kremlin.

It claimed the move will help take Russian oil "off the market" and choke off energy revenues that flow into Putin's "war chest" in the conflict with Ukraine.

"Today's action demonstrates the government's determination to cut off Putin's revenue streams – targeting Russian companies and their global enablers," the FCDO said.

"Four oil terminals in China, 44 tankers in the 'shadow fleet' transporting Russian oil, and Nayara Energy Limited – which imported 100 million barrels of Russian crude worth over \$5 billion in 2024 alone – have all been hit by this latest wave of sanctions," it stated.

Earlier, Nayara Energy had been hit by European Union (EU) sanctions, a move it strongly condemned.

"Nayara Energy operates in full compliance with the laws and regulations of India. As an Indian company, we are deeply committed to supporting the nation's energy security and fostering economic growth," Nayara Energy said in a media statement at the time.

of the day

quote

Scientific innovation is happening globally, but commercial access and scale-up remain fragmented

DONN RUBIN | CEO, BIOSTL

Every government and company needs to respond whenever there is a challenge, and he has also seen a lot of such activity in Asia. The key question before all is how data is to be protected, AI models are to be controlled and how workforces are to adapt to the changed ways

HANS DEKKERS | GM (ASIA PACIFIC, IBM)

Given the population and the expected motorisation in India, there are projections that small cars market will become "more than 5.6 million" units annually

JOSE MUNOZ | CEO, HYUNDAI MOTOR

SHORT TAKES

Gold jumps higher

New Delhi: Rising for the third straight session, gold prices Wednesday rallied by ₹1,000 to scale an all-time high of ₹1,31,800 per 10 grams in the national capital on continuous buying by retailers and jewellers amid the ongoing festive season. In the local bullion market, gold of 99.5 per cent purity appreciated by ₹1,000 to hit a record of ₹1,31,200 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes), from the previous close of ₹1,30,200 per 10 grams. However, silver prices retreated from the record levels, plunging by ₹3,000 to ₹1,82,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes). The white metal had surged ₹6,000 to hit a new peak of ₹1,85,000 per kg Tuesday. In the international markets, spot gold rose to hit a lifetime high of \$4,218.32 per ounce. Spot silver was trading 2.81 per cent higher at \$52.84 per ounce in the overseas markets.

Zepto wins startup race

New Delhi: Quick commerce platform Zepto has secured the top spot on the 2025 LinkedIn Top Startups India list for the third consecutive year, followed by enterprise cloud storage firm Lucidity and 10-minute food delivery platform Swish. The list, released Wednesday, ranks emerging companies where careers are most likely to thrive, based on proprietary data across four key metrics: employee growth, member engagement, job interest, and the ability to attract top talent. Beyond Zepto, the quick commerce sector sees expansion into adjacent services with FirstClub (ranked 13) and Snabbitt (ranked 14) offering instant grocery and home assistance solutions.

Airtel, IBM JV

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel plans to set up two new multizone regions for Airtel Cloud in Mumbai and Chennai, in collaboration with US IT company IBM, the telecom operator said Wednesday. Bharti Airtel has signed a strategic partnership with IBM to augment its recently launched Airtel Cloud to jointly provide enterprise solutions. Bharti Airtel Vice Chairman and Managing Director Gopal Vittal said the company is extending the footprint of Airtel Cloud availability zones in India from four to ten, comprising next-gen sustainable data centres. The multizone region for cloud services entails setting up several physical independent datacentres in a geographic location.

The scarcest resource today in our world is not pilots. It's not mechanics. It is aeroplanes because if I had 10 planes today, 10 wide-bodies (aircraft) -- even if I had zero bilateral (in a particular country), I would fly those planes. So, what is really scarce are planes. And nobody has planes. And it's going to be like that for the next five years

ANTONALDO NEVES | CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ETIHAD AIRWAYS GROUP

HYUNDAI TO INVEST ₹45K-CR IN INDIA

South Korean auto major Hyundai Motor Co President & CEO Jose Munoz Wednesday said the company's Indian arm will invest ₹45,000 crore by FY30, aiming to make India its second-largest region globally. Addressing investors here in his first visit to the country, Munoz said Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) has set a target of up to 30 per cent export contribution. The company also aims to increase its revenues by 1.5 times and cross the ₹1 lakh crore milestone by FY2030 under its 2030 growth roadmap



India open to raise energy purchases from USA: Comm Secy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal will join the Indian delegation in the US tomorrow for trade talks, with India indicating its readiness to step up energy imports from America.

In the past 7-8 years, energy purchases from the US, largely crude oil, have come down from \$25 billion to around \$12-13 billion.

“So, there is headroom of around \$12-15 billion, which we can purchase without worrying about the configuration of refineries,” Agrawal said.

“And there is a bilateral com-

mitment, and in discussions we are in, we have indicated very positively that India as a country would like to diversify its portfolio as far as energy imports are concerned. That's the best strategy for a big buyer like India.”

These remarks are important as purchasing more crude oil from the US will address Washington's concerns on the merchandise trade deficit with India, which stood at \$45.8 billion in 2024-25.

“As a country, we will be very happy to buy more energy from the US, subject to... availability at the right price,” Agrawal said.



He also said the US is in shutdown, and because of that, their manpower strength is down as they are not working. “So, that's not the right time to have a full-fledged negotiation. Hav-

ing said that, there is a movement on both sides where we are trying to see if there is a pathway to address the current trade challenges. Both sides are discussing to see if there are

WTO DISPUTE

China challenges India's EV subsidies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing/New Delhi, Oct 15: China has filed a complaint against India in the World Trade Organization (WTO) over New Delhi's subsidies for electric vehicles (EVs) and batteries.

The Chinese Commerce Ministry has alleged that the measures by India violate several WTO obligations, including the principle of national treatment, and constitute import substitution subsidies, which are explicitly prohibited under the multi-lateral trade rules.

These measures unfairly benefit India's domestic industries and undermine China's legitimate interests, the ministry's statement claimed.

China's complaint about India's reported EV subsidies comes as Beijing seeks to boost exports of its electric vehicles to India. This follows the two countries' initiative to normalise relations after a five-year freeze in ties due to the Eastern Ladakh military standoff.

Considering the size and scope of India's auto market, Chinese EV automakers see it as a major source to expand sales.

According to recent reports, facing overcapacity with large production of EVs and declining domestic sales and profits amid price wars, Chinese hybrid car makers like BYD are looking for overseas markets, especially in the EU and Asia.

When asked about the issue, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said that the ministry will look at the detailed submissions made by China.



India's trade deficit with China has widened to \$99.2 billion during 2024-25.

According to the data from China Passenger Car Association (CPCA), 50-odd EV builders of China exported a total of 2.01 million pure electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles overseas in the first eight months of the year, up 51 per cent from the same period a year earlier.

But the Chinese EV makers are facing push back abroad as EU has imposed a 27 per cent tariff on Chinese EVs to limit their sales in the bloc.

The Indian government has taken a host of measures, such as the electric-vehicle policy and the production-linked incentive scheme, to boost domestic manufacturing of EVs.

any answers," he added.

Apart from tariff, the Indian industry has also raised concerns over Trump's new policy on H1B visas.

However, the recent phone conversations between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump have raised hopes for a positive outcome from the ongoing negotiations for the trade deal.

After a brief gap, Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch held talks with Indian officials here in New Delhi September 16. In that meeting, both sides agreed to push for an early and mutually beneficial

conclusion of the agreement.

Last week, US Ambassador-designate to India Sergio Gorr held talks with the Commerce Secretary on India-US economic ties.

The proposed pact aims to more than double the bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030 from the current \$191 billion.

The US remained India's largest trading partner for the fourth consecutive year in 2024-25, with bilateral trade valued at \$131.84 billion (\$86.5 billion exports).

It accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in the country's total merchandise trade.

PV despatches up 4% in Sept

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: Passenger vehicle despatches from companies to dealers rose 4 per cent year-on-year in September to 3,72,458 units, industry body SIAM said Wednesday.

The overall passenger vehicle despatches last month rose 4.4 per cent to 3,72,458 units, as against 3,56,752 units in September 2024.

Two-wheeler sales witnessed a 7 per cent on-year rise to 21,60,889 units last month, as compared to 20,25,993 units in the year-ago period, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) said.

Total three-wheeler despatches increased to 84,077 units last month, an increase of 5.5 per cent, as compared to 79,683 units in the same month the previous year.

"In spite of the new GST rates coming into effect from September 22, i.e. only for 9 days of the month, passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and three-wheelers have already posted their highest-ever sales of September," SIAM President Shailesh Chandra told reporters here.

Looking ahead, the outlook for the sector remains encouraging due to key tailwinds, he added. "The GST 2.0 reform is a landmark decision of the government, which, apart from catapulting the Indian auto industry to the next level, would bring in vibrancy in the entire economy, as this industry is closely intertwined with strong forward and backward linkages," Chandra stated.

In the July-September quarter, passenger vehicle sales stood at 10,39,200 units, a drop of 1.5 per cent, as compared to 10,55,137 units in the same quarter of last fiscal.

India's Veg oil imports surge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: India's vegetable oil imports jumped 51 per cent to 16.39 lakh tonnes in September from a year earlier, driven by a surge in crude palm oil shipments, while refined oil imports dropped to zero for the first time since 2021, an industry body said Wednesday.

Total vegetable oil imports, comprising both edible and non-edible oils, stood at 10.87 lakh tonnes in September 2023, the Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEAI) said in a statement.

The shift away from refined oils followed the government's

decision to widen the import duty gap between crude palm oil and refined RBD palmolein to 19.25 percentage points from 8.25 percentage points, effective May 31, making refined oil imports uneconomical.

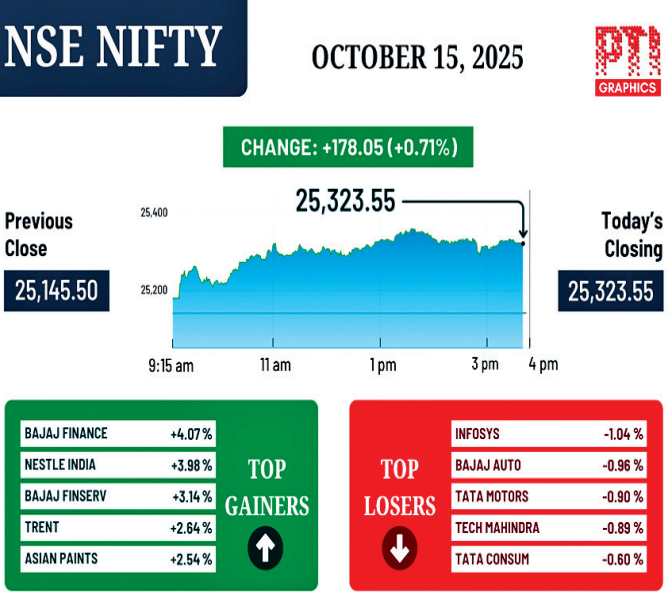
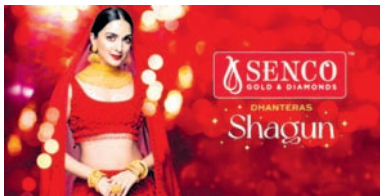
Imports of refined RBD palmolein were zero in September, compared with 84,279 tonnes a year earlier, the SEA said.

The country imported 16.04 lakh tonnes of edible oils and 35,100 tonnes of non-edible oils during the month.

Crude Palm Oil (CPO) imports nearly doubled to 8.24 lakh tonnes from 4.32 lakh tonnes a year earlier.

Senco Gold & Diamonds unveils 'Shagun Collection'

Mumbai: Senco Gold & Diamonds, has launched its new festive range, the Shagun Collection, ahead of Dhanteras, with a heartwarming campaign featuring Bollywood star Kiara Advani. The Shagun Collection showcases an elegant mix of yellow gold, diamond, antique, and polki jewellery, crafted to celebrate the essence of togetherness and tradition. The range also includes the trendy Lotus Collection by Everlite, the contemporary Tattwa Collection by Gossip Silver and Fashion Jewellery, the men's Aham Collection, and the Perfect Love Collection featuring hearts & arrows cut diamonds. "Dhanteras is a time of joy, love, and new beginnings. Through this campaign, we wanted to capture the warmth of family traditions and the meaningful gestures that make the festival special," said Joita Sen, Director and Head of Marketing & Designs, Senco Gold & Diamonds. Adding sparkle to the festivities, Senco is offering ₹700 - ₹1,000 per gram cashback on gold jewellery, up to 15 per cent off on diamond jewellery, and 100 per cent value on old gold exchange. The Shagun Collection is now available across all Senco stores and online.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 15: Benchmark Sensex spurred by 575 points while Nifty closed above 25,300 Wednesday on buying in banking and financial shares, driven by a rally in Asian and European markets amid hopes of a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve later this month.

The 30-share BSE Sensex

jumped 575.45 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at 82,605.43. The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 178.05 points or 0.71 per cent to 25,323.55.

Among Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance and Bajaj Finserv were the biggest gainers. Asian Paints, Larsen & Toubro, Trent, UltraTech Cement, Eternal and Adani Ports were also among the winners.

China extend TT supremacy



China sweep Asian Table Tennis Championships with men's and women's titles

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: China underlined their undisputed dominance in world table tennis by capturing both the men's and women's team titles in the Asian Table Tennis Championships here Wednesday.

The victory not only extended China's extraordinary reign in the sport but also showcased their remarkable depth, adaptability, and poise under pressure, qualities that continue to set them apart at the world stage.

The men's team blanked Hong Kong 3-0 while the women outplayed Japan 3-0.

The opening rubber in the women's final between world No 2 Wang Manyu and Honoka Hashimoto, ranked 11th, was a microcosm of China's resilience.

Hashimoto snatched the first

game 12-10 through sharp defensive placements and precise counter-blocks, forcing Wang onto the back foot early. Yet Wang quickly re-calibrated, shifting from heavy topspin rallies to flatter, quicker attacks that pinned the Japanese defender out of position.

From there, her rhythm was unstoppable as she stormed through the next three games 11-3, 11-6, 11-3, securing the all-important first point for China.

Next came Sun Yingsha — the undisputed anchor of the Chinese lineup and world No 1 — facing Japan's teenage sensation Miwa Harimoto.

The match, though ending in straight games of 11-9, 11-5, 11-7, was far from one-sided. Harimoto's fearless shot-making and early-ball countering briefly kept Sun on the edge, but the Chinese star's tactical intelligence soon prevailed.

That 2-0 lead effectively broke Japan's resistance. The closing rubber featured rising Chinese star Kuai Man against Japan's Hina Hayata, the experienced left-hander known for her creative topspin play.

Hayata started brightly, tak-

ing the first game 11-8 with sharp cross-court placements that kept Kuai on the move. But the momentum shifted dramatically in the second game, where Kuai saved multiple game points to snatch it 12-10 — a crucial psychological turning point that changed the complexion of the match.

Her serve-return precision also improved, breaking up Hayata's rhythm and limiting her trademark wide-angle finishes. Kuai closed out the next two games 11-6, 11-9, sealing both the match and the championship in emphatic style.

In the men's team final, China swept aside Hong Kong (China) with an emphatic 3-0 victory, demonstrating precision, power, and composure in every match.

World No 1 Lin Shidong gave China the perfect start, dismantling Wong Chun Ting 11-8, 11-4, 11-4 in a one-sided affair. Lin's aggressive forehand play and rapid transitions kept Wong constantly under pressure, setting the tone for the rest of the tie.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Odisha Governor Hari

Babu Kambhampati said that true victory in sports lies not only in winning medals but also in giving one's best, respecting opponents, and inspiring others through sportsmanship.

Kambhampati described the event as a proud moment for Odisha, noting that the city once again brought together nations through the power of sport. "Over the past five days, the Kalinga Stadium has echoed with enthusiasm and the spirit of international excellence," he said. "For the first time, Odisha hosted this prestigious championship, adding another milestone to its sporting journey."

RESULTS

Women: China bt Japan 3-0 (Wang Manyu bt Honoka Hashimoto 10-12, 11-3, 11-6, 11-3; Sun Yingsha bt Miwa Harimoto 11-9, 11-5, 11-7; Kuai Man bt Hina Hayata 8-11, 12-10, 11-6, 11-9)

Men: China bt Hong Kong 3-0 (Lin Shidong bt Wong Chun Ting 11-8, 11-4, 11-4, Wang Chuqin bt Chan Baldwin 12-10, 11-9, 5-11, 14-12, Liang Jingkun bt Yiu Kwan Go 13-11, 11-6, 12-10)

SHORT TAKES

Women in Blue fined

Visakhapatnam: India were Wednesday fined five per cent of their match fees for maintaining a slow over-rate during their Women's ODI World Cup match against Australia here. India lost the high-scoring contest by three wickets with Australia pulling off a record chase Sunday in Visakhapatnam. India next take on England in a must-win clash Sunday at Indore. The ICC said India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur pleaded guilty to the offence while accepting the sanction and there was no need for a formal hearing.

Pak end SA's streak

Lahore: Pakistan ended world test cricket champion South Africa's 10-match winning streak with a clinical 93-run victory in the first test Wednesday. Left-arm spinner Noman Ali continued to prosper on turning home wickets with a rich match haul of 10-191 as the Proteas were bowled out for 183 after lunch on Day 4.

Colts lose to Australia

Johor: The Indian junior men's hockey team suffered its first defeat in the ongoing Sultan of Johor Cup, going down to Australia 2-4 in a pool match, Wednesday. India are placed second with seven points from four games, having won two, drawn one and lost a game. Australia are leading the table with 10 points.

GAURAV, BADAL MAKE RANJI TROPHY DEBUT



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Oct 15: Gaurav Choudhary and Badal Biswal made their First-Class debut against Baroda on day one of the Ranji Trophy season here Wednesday. Gaurav received his cap from Captain Subhramshu Senapati, while Badal received his from Govinda Poddar.

After winning the toss, Odisha opted to bat first and got off to a steady start, with their openers putting together a 49-run partnership. However, a flurry of wickets saw the team



slump to 49/4.

The Odisha innings was then steadied by captain Subhramshu Senapati and Rajesh Dhuper, who shared a crucial 156-run partnership off 405 balls. Senapati was dismissed on the last ball of Day 1 for 79 (193), while Rajesh Dhupar remained unbeaten on 76 from 212 balls, taking the team's total to 205/5 in 89.5 overs at stumps on Day 1.

BRIEF SCORES

Odisha 205/5 in 89.5 overs (Rajesh Dhuper batting 76; Atit Seth 2/41) versus Baroda

Gambhir tightlipped about Ro-Ko

Rohit and Kohli, with a combined experience of 567 ODIs, have managed to retain their places for the three ODIs in Australia but their future beyond the series looks uncertain

REUTERS

New Delhi, Oct 15: The 2027 World Cup dreams of India's batting stalwarts Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma appear slim, with head coach Gautam Gambhir refusing to look that far even if he does not doubt their quality.

Both Kohli and Rohit are active internationally only in the 50-overs format, but India appear keen to control a transition rather than be caught in its throes.

Rohit, who captained India to the Champions Trophy title earlier this year, has been replaced by Shubman Gill as the new captain of the one-day squad ahead of the team's Australia tour.

Rohit and Kohli, with a combined experience of 567 one-day internationals, have managed



to retain their places for the three ODIs in Australia but their future beyond the series looks uncertain.

"Look, the 50-over World Cup is still two-and-a-half years away, and I think it is very important to stay in the present," Gambhir told reporters after India swept a test series against West Indies on Tuesday.

"Obviously, they are quality players, they are coming back, their experience is going to be a handful in Australia as well. Hopefully, those two guys will have a successful tour, and more importantly, as a team, we will have a successful series."

Rohit, who captained India to

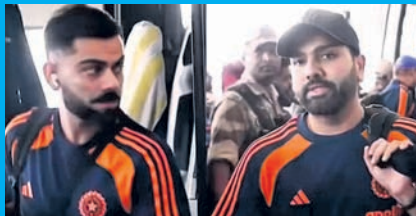
The 50-over World Cup is still two and a half years away. It is very important to stay in the present. Obviously they are quality players. They are coming back. Their experience is going to be valuable in Australia

GAUTAM GAMBHIR | HEAD COACH, INDIA

the final of the 2023 ODI World Cup, will be 40 by the next edition of the showpiece to be co-hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe, and

Team India heads Down Under

Senior stars Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma were among the first batch of Indian cricketers who flew off Wednesday for a three-match ODI series against Australia beginning October 19. Kohli and Rohit were joined by Test and ODI skipper Shubman Gill, opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy, and pacers Arshdeep Singh and Prasidh Krishna along with some members of the support staff. The group made their way into the Indira Gandhi International Airport in the morning with a handful of fans lining up outside the entrance to catch a glimpse of them. Head coach Gautam Gambhir and some other members of the coaching staff will leave in the evening. India is due to play three ODIs starting Sunday in Perth followed by Adelaide and Sydney. It will be followed by a five-match T20 International series and the format specialists will leave October 22 tentatively. The series will begin October 29.



Norway tour gets nod for combined world title

REUTERS

Paris, Oct 15: The International Chess Federation (FIDE) has approved a new global competition set up by Norway Chess that will crown a "World Combined Champion" across three time formats — Fast Classic, Rapid and Blitz, organisers said Wednesday.

The tournament series, called the Total Chess World Championship Tour, will feature four events a year in cities around the world, with the overall winner taking the FIDE title. A one-off pilot event is scheduled for late 2026 before the full championship season begins in 2027.

"We are looking for the total chess player — a versatile, tactically intelligent and technical-

This seems like a well-thought-out step to further develop chess. Bringing multiple formats together under a single title will provide a more complete view of the players' strengths, while the time controls suit today's players and audience

MAGNUS CARLSEN | WORLD NUMBER ONE

Chess CEO Kjell Madland said. "It will be a game-changer, both for the players and the fans."

GAMES SHORTENED TO 45 MINUTES

The Fast Classic format shortens traditional games to 45 minutes plus a 30-second increment per move — part of an effort to make chess more ap-

pealing for broadcasters and online audiences.

The launch comes months after former world champion Magnus Carlsen, also Norwegian, unveiled a separate "Free-style Chess" tour, which uses a randomised starting position inspired by Fischer Random chess.

That tour has not been sanctioned by FIDE, highlighting tensions between the world governing body and independent organisers seeking to modernise the sport.

World number one Carlsen, the undisputed world champion from 2013-23, opted out of defending his title citing a lack of motivation and focused more on Freestyle chess and faster time controls, winning the Esports World Cup title this year.

Ronaldo makes WC qualifiers history

Unarguably one of the greatest goalscorers of all time, Cristiano Ronaldo added another feather to his extremely decorated cap as he scored a brace for Portugal in the FIFA World Cup qualifier against Hungary Tuesday. Though Portugal could only draw the match 2-2, the tightly-contested affair didn't prevent Ronaldo from unleashing his true goalscoring abilities on the field. As the 40-year-old scored from close range in the 22nd minute, he recorded his 40th strike in a World Cup qualifying match, breaking a tie with former Guatemala player Carlos Ruiz. The Al-Nassr striker then added a second in first-half stoppage time to extend his record to 41 goals in the 50 World Cup qualifiers he has played. Ronaldo now has a record-extending 143 goals in men's internationals. Despite playing more games than Ronaldo, Messi sits third in the list, with 36 goals in 72 World Cup qualifying matches for Argentina.



Most assists: Messi shatters record

One of the most decorated footballers of all time, Lionel Messi was at his influential best again, as he provided two assists in Argentina's 6-0 victory against Puerto Rico in an international friendly encounter. Lautaro Martinez and Alexis Mac Allister recorded a brace each in the goal-fest for Argentina as Messi donned the playmaker's hat. The two assists that Messi gave in the match helped him break the world record for most assists in international football, previously held by his former Barcelona teammate Neymar Jr. Messi stood behind Neymar, who held the number one spot with 59 assists for Brazil to his name. However, the conclusion of the Puerto Rico match brought Messi's tally up to 60, helping him dethrone the Brazilian forward.

