

Kriti's feat

Actor Kriti Sanon makes history as the first Indian actress to speak at the 2025 World Health Summit in Berlin

LEISURE | P2



Madagascar uprising

Madagascar's new military ruler Michael Randrianirina will be sworn in as president after a coup he led to oust the President

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Sensex, Nifty jump

Benchmark Sensex rises by 575 points, while Nifty closes above 25,300 on buying in banking and financial shares



India's CWG dream

Ahmedabad recommended as the proposed host of the 2030 CWG by Commonwealth Sport's **Executive Board**

SPORTS | P12

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PDS: State plans to

give extra 5kg rice

India falls to 85th rank in 2025 passport index

Singapore: India has fallen to the 85th rank in the 2025 Henley Passport Index, offering visa-free access to 57 countries. Last year, India's passport was ranked 80th on the list with visa-free travel to 62 destinations. Singapore continues to be the most powerful passport with visa-free access to 193 countries. South Korea is second on the list this year with 190 countries and Japan is third, allowing travel to 189 countries. The US is at the 12th spot along with Malaysia with visa-free access to 180 countries. This is the first time the US has fallen out of the top 10.

'MAHABHARAT' ACTOR PANKAJ DHEER DIES

Mumbai: Television star Pankaj Dheer, known for playing Karna in BR Chopra's 'Mahabharat' and king Shivdutt in fantasy drama 'Chandrakanta', has died at the age of 68 following a battle with cancer. "He passed away due to cancer this morning. He



had been in and out of hospital in the past months," producer and friend Ashoke Pandit told PTI. Dheer, who hailed from Puniab, started out as an actor in the 1980s, featuring in minor roles in many movies. His big break came in 1988 when he was cast as Karna in the small screen adaptation of Hindu epic 'Mahabharata.



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



ADVENTURE TOURISM: Tourists take part in river rafting in the Ganga in Rishikesh, Wednesday

BUSINESS | P11

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The state government is planning to provide additional 5 kg rice to the poor under the public distribution system (PDS), Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra told reporters here Wednesday.

"We are thinking of providing an additional 5 kg rice to all 3.25 crore people who are covered under food security schemes. The final decision will be taken by the Chief Minister," Patra said.

Currently, the government provides 5 kg rice per person under the PDS.

"As many beneficiaries have said that 5 kg per month is insufficient, the government is considering

kg of rice to each of them,' the minister said.

Meanwhile, the state government has decided to stop the distribution of subsidised rice to beneficiaries who fail to complete their electronic Know Your Customer (e-KYC) verification by next month.

Currently, more than 15.67 lakh beneficiaries across Odisha remain unverified. Although they continue receiving rice, the government will halt distribution for those who do not complete the mandatory e-KYC process by the deadline, he added.

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 distributing an additional 5 consideration," Patra said.

Trade deficit widens BJP names Jay; BJD picks Snehangini NUAPADA BYPOLL

India's merchandise trade deficit, the gap between imports and exports, widened to a 13-month high of \$32.15 billion in September, driven by a surge in imports and a drop in exports to the US following Donald Trump's 50% tariffs on Indian goods. As India imports more than it exports, any decline in exports worsens the deficit. India's lack of export diversification greatly contributes to its persistent trade deficit. It relies heavily on a few sectors – IT services. refined petroleum products, shrimps, gems & jewellery and textiles – for the majority of its exports earnings. This concentration makes India vulnerable if one major country turns hostile, as seen in the case of the US in recent the part of the Indian government. In this context, the recent India-UK Free Trade the government has yet to disclose the details of the deal. Notably, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, during his recent two-day visit to India, chose not to visit Delhi and instead concentrated his engagements in Mumbai - an unusual move for a visiting head of state.



New Delhi, Oct 15: India's merchandise trade deficit widened to a 13-month high of \$32.15 billion in September, due to a surge in gold and silver imports and a drop in exports to the US following Donald Trump's up to 50% tariffs on Indian goods, data showed Wednesday.

India's trade deficit stood at \$34.03 billion in August months. This is a failure on 2024. The first half of the current fiscal year has seen India's merchandise trade deficit widen to nearly \$10 Agreement seems dicey, as billion higher than the same period a year earlier. A wider trade deficit could impact India's current account balance and add to pressure on previous month. the local currency, which has been teetering around record lows against the dollar.

the first full month when In- the imports have grown at

dia faced steep tariffs on exports to the US, lands ahead of a new round of trade talks scheduled with Washington this week. India is promising to increase US energy imports, aiming to address concern over its Russian oil purchases.

Merchandise exports in September rose to \$36.38 billion from \$35.10 billion tronics." He added that the in August, Commerce Ministry data showed. However, exports to the US fell to \$5.43 billion from \$6.87 billion in August, with US tariffs hitting shipments of goods such as textiles, shrimp, and gems and jewellery. Imports from the US rose to \$3.98 billion from \$3.6 billion in the

"Despite turbulence in the global market, our exports have maintained momen-The September data, tum," said Commerce Secwhich reflects shipments in retary Rajesh Agrawal, "But

India's EV subsidies: China moves WTO

Beijing/New Delhi: 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 minis-

faster pace in September, driven by increase in gold, silver, fertilisers and elecsurge in gold demand was ahead of the festival season.

try's statement claimed.

Goods imports rose to \$68.53 billion in September from \$61.59 billion in the previous month, according to the data.

Gold imports surged to \$9.6 billion from \$5.14 billion in the previous month, aided by strong demand for physically-backed gold exchange traded funds amid weak stock market returns.

Crude oil imports rose to \$14 billion in September from \$13.2 billion in August.

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The ruling BJP Wednesday nominated Jay Dholakia as its candidate for Nuapada Assembly bypoll, while the BJD announced the name of former minister Snehangini Chhuria as the party's candidate for the byelection.

Dholakia, son of former BJD MLA Rajendra Dholakia, joined the BJP October 11. He is scheduled to file his nomination papers as a BJP candidate Thursday, party sources said. Chief Minister Mohan Cha-

ran Majhi and other senior leaders of the saffron party will remain present when Dholakia files his papers.

The party has also



planned a massive rally at Nuapada before Dholakia files his papers, they said. BJD president Naveen

Patnaik while announcing Chhuria's candidature said that she has always fought for the poor and the downtrodden, and women in par-



Attabira Assembly segment in neighbouring Bargarh district, was not in the race for the party ticket for the bypoll. Opposition Congress has named Ghasiram Majhi as its candidate for the bypoll.

Rings form around icy celestial body Chiron

CHIRON ORBITS THE SUN IN THE EXPANSE BETWEEN SATURN AND URANUS

of roughly 175,000 miles (280,000 km) as they encircle the giant planet. But smaller organic compounds. celestial bodies in the solar system also boast ring systems that are impressive in scale is not as grand.

Scientists said they have observed for the first time a ring system in the process of formation and evolution, consisting of four rings and diffuse material, surrounding a small icy body called Chiron that orbits the sun in the expanse between Saturn and Uranus.

Chiron is part of a class of objects called centaurs that populate the outer solar system between Jupiter and

and comets. Formally called "(2060) Chiron," it has a di-Washington, Oct 15: The ameter of about 200 km (125 rings of Saturn are among miles) and takes about 50 the wonders of our solar years to complete one orbit system, with a diameter around the sun. Centaurs are composed mainly of rock, water ice and complex Since its discovery in

1977, astronomers have observed Chiron off and on, their own right, even if their and for years had known it (1,400 km) from its centre. This was surrounded by material of some sort. In the new research, scientists obtained their best data on Chiron in 2023 using a telescope at the Pico dos Dias Observatory in Brazil to go along with data from 2011, 2018 and 2022.

The researchers said these observations clearly showed that it is surrounded by well-defined rings - three dense ones about 170 miles (273 km), 202 miles (325 km) and 272 miles (438 km) from Neptune, displaying char- Chiron's centre, and a fourth acteristics of both asteroids one, approximately 870 miles a postdoctoral researcher at remain separated instead of



outer feature, detected for the first time, lies unusually far from Chiron and, they said, requires further observations to confirm its stability as a ring. The three inner rings are embedded within dust swirling around in a disk-like shape.

Comparing data from the various observations of Chiron, the researchers detected significant changes in the ring system, clear evidence that its rings are evolving role in the stability of ring in real time, according to Chrystian Luciano Pereira, properties allow particles to

the National Observatory in Brazil and lead author of the study published in the Astrophysical Journal Letters. "This provides a rare

glimpse into how such struc-

tures originate and change," Pereira said. 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

systems because its physical

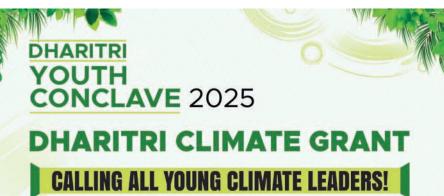
coalescing into a moon. Chiron exhibits occa-

sional comet-like activity ejecting gas and dust into space. In 1993, Chiron even displayed a small tail of material, as comets do.

The researchers said its rings may be made of leftover material from a possible collision that destroyed a small moon of Chiron or from some other crashes of space debris, or could be from the stuff ejected from Chiron itself - or perhaps some combination of these factors

All four of the solar system's big outer planets - Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune - have rings, with Saturn's the largest. But astronomers since 2014 have discovered that some of its smaller bodies have them, too. Chiron brings that number to four, joining fellow centaur Chariklo and two icy worlds beyond Neptune

- Haumea and Quaoar.



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LAST DATE OF ENTRY

31ST OCTOBER 2025

WINNERS WILL BE AWARDED AT THE DHARITRI YOUTH CONCLAVE **IN NOVEMBER 2025, BHUBANESWAR**

JOIN A NETWORK OF YOUTH AND CLIMATE EXPERTS

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woman and

the challenges

tress and for-

mer Bigg Boss

contestant



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-yearold 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.



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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

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

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 occurences 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 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

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 husiness partners will become stronger now, says Ganesha.

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

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 Gane sha. 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 you 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.

KRITI IN GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT

CARDI B BELIEVES IN

CHERISHING SUCCESS

Mumbai: Kriti Sanon made history as the first Indian actress to speak at the 2025 World Health Shehnaaz Gill, who is marking her debut Summit in Berlin. As UNFPA as a producer with her India's Honorary Ambassador upcoming family comedy for Gender Equality, she used drama film Ikk Kudi, is the global platform to highlight the urgent need for over-the-moon to bankroll a female-centric narrative sustained investments in about a young woman and the women's health, emphachallenges she faces around sizing its economic and social importance.

the world's popu-

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underfunded. She

health is not a

side issue. It is the

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about their health and

bodies are being made.

AGENCIES

said.

'Women's

marriage. "Ikk Kudi is my During the high-level first film as a Women's session, producer, and Health – Global Shehnaaz over-Wealth: Catajoyed lyzing Returns to bankroll a on Bold Investis over the female-cenments, Sanon stressed that tric narradespite women tive about moon young comprising half

she faces around marriage. The film is loaded with twists and turns, but it's brimming with warmth, love and fun," Shehnaaz 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 Oc-

tober 31, 2025. The film also stars Guriazz. Juss, Udaybir Sandhu, Nirmal Rishi, Sukhi Chahal, Gurinder Makna, Gurdial Harby Paras. Sangha, Balwinder Bullet Neha Dayal, Nikita Grover, Jass Dhillon, Vishu Uppal, Gurpreet Singh & Baljinder Dara Puri. Written and

directed by Amariit 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 WohWala Video starring Rajkummar Rao and Triptii Dimri in a special appearance for the song *Sajna* Ve Sajna. IANS



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 express-

ing 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 attention." Another added, "This happens to evervone. Best is to ignore and

move on."

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 Manoi Mitra's Bengali play Shukshari, the drama was directed by Debadutta Pati. PIC: BIKASH NAYAK, OP

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-

7

9

5

SUDOKU

4

8

8

5

SOLUTIONS

4

8

2



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 renaming 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.

4

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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.

PEANUTS



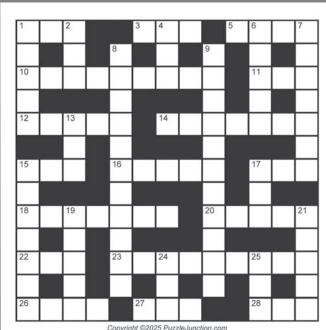
CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY



FUN **CROSSWORD**



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deck

22 Roofing

material

23 Good luck

pieces in

Ireland

26 Sail support

27 Crow's cry

28 Future fish

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
- Down
- 2 Lion's home 4 Conceit
- 1 Kind of change
- - 24 Literary collection

19 Submarine

detector

6 Contradict

heartbeat 8 Ad-lib

13 Give a hand

17 Sailor's assent

15 Affluent

9 Bay of Naples

attraction (4,2,5)

7 Part of a

- 21 Billiards shot

- 25 One for the road



SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

CRACKER-LADEN SCOOTER CATCHES FIRE; 2 INJURED

Bhubaneswar: Two people, including a minor, sustained critical injuries after their scooter loaded with crackers caught fire and exploded on Acharya Vihar flyover Wednesday evening. The mishap brought vehicular moment on the flyover to a standstill for around 30 minutes. On being informed, police and fire services personnel reached the spot and doused the flames. The injured were rushed to Capital Hospital

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against her.

in Odisha.

Kolkata, Oct 15: Two days

after claiming that West

Bengal is under 'Aurang-

zeb's rule', the father of the

Durgapur gangrape victim

Wednesday described Chief

Minister Mamata Baneriee

as a 'mother-like figure' and

urged her to forgive him if

he had said anything wrong

He also appealed to Baner-

jee to help his daughter get

justice, but said he wants to

take his daughter back home

"Mamata Banerjee is like

a mother-like figure to me. If

I have said anything wrong,

I request her to forgive me

I will render countless obei-

sances at her feet. But I ask

her to help my daughter get

justice," he told television

The father of the MBBS

student Monday criticised

channels Wednesday.



Odisha Urban Conclave to focus on sustainable devpt

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department will organise a two-day Odisha Urban Conclave-2025 here on the theme 'Sustainable Urban Development & Governance -Towards Viksit Odisha @2036 and Viksit Bharat @2047', beginning October 23. The event will bring together all urban local bodies (ULBs) of the state to deliberate on key aspects of urban governance, service delivery, and sustainable growth.

According to the department sources, the conclave will mark a milestone in charting the roadmap towards 'Viksit Odisha @2036' and contributing to the national vision of 'Viksit Bharat @2047'

Set to be inaugurated by H&UD Minister Krushna Chandra Mohapatra, the conclave will see participation and deliberations by senior government officials, representatives of urban institutions, and delegates from ULBs across Odisha.

Speaking about the event, Mohapatra said, "Odisha's cities are not merely engines of economic growth but reflections of our collective aspirations. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, we are committed to building sustainable, resilient, and citizen-centric urban

H&UD department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee said, "The Odisha Urban Conclave-2025 is designed



The two-day event will focus on citizen-centric governance, improvement of urban infrastructure, enhancement of water supply and sanitation services, and promotion of digital governance initiatives

as a collaborative platform for all urban local bodies to share ideas, innovations, and best practices. Our focus is on strengthening local institutions, enhancing urban service delivery, and promoting digital transformation for effective, transparent, and citizen-first governance.

The event will lay stress on citizen-centric governance, improvement of urban infrastructure, roads, and drainage systems, enhancement of water supply and sanitation services, and promotion of digital governance initiatives such as SUJOG, ORTPSA, OS-WAS, and the Integrated Call

Centre (1929)

Deliberations will also focus on empowering ULBs-both financially and administratively—to drive inclusive and accountable urban development.

Each ULB will be represented by the PD (DUDA), Municipal Commissioner/Executive Officer, and a Municipal Engineer (AE/JE).

The Odisha Urban Conclave-2025, Padhee said is envisioned as a dynamic platform for knowledge and experience sharing, and collaborative planning, reaffirming the state's commitment to sustainable, inclusive, and people-centric urban governance.

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The

Indian Institute of Technolo-

gy (IIT)-Bhubaneswar and the

Simulator Development Divi-

sion (SDD) of the Indian Army

have signed a Memorandum

of Understanding (MoU) to col-

laborate on advanced research,

training, and innovation in

emerging technologies such as

Augmented Reality (AR), Vir-

tual Reality (VR), Artificial In-

telligence (AI), and Robotics, of-

ficial sources said Wednesday.

by Brigadier GS Bedi, Commandant, SDD, Secunderabad,

and Dinakar Pasla, Dean

(Sponsored Research and In-

dustrial Consultancy), IIT-Bhu-

bine academic expertise and de-

The partnership aims to com-

baneswar.

The MoU was signed online

Guv, CM pay tributes to former Prez Kalam

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: Odisha leaders, including Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik, Wednesday paid rich tributes to former President APJ Abdul Kalam on his birthday.

Taking to social media, Kambhampati said, "Remembering #bharatratna Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, the #MissileManOfIndia and former President of India, on his birth anniversary. A visionary scientist, inspiring teacher and true patriot, his life and legacy continue to ignite the spirit of innovation and service in every Indian."

Similarly, in a post on X, CMMajhi said, "Devotional salutations on the birth anniversary of the great scientist, renowned educationist and former President of India, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. His simple lifestyle, noble thoughts and hard work continue to inspire all of us even today. Let us resolve to work with dedication towards building a powerful and prosperous India inspired by his ideals.

BJD president Naveen Patnaik said, "Humble tributes to former President and Bharat Ratna Dr #APJAbdulKalam on his birth anniversary. He was a visionary scientist, beloved teacher, eloquent speaker, noted author, and had a deep bond with #Odisha. His life of humility and mission to ignite young minds will continue to inspire.

Kalam, who spent a major part of his life in Odisha's ITR at Chandipur in Balasore district and Wheeler Island in Bhadrak district, was a household name in the state for his simplicity and contribution to the nation.

Banerjee's remarks that 'women should not venture out at night', saying that he no longer felt safe in West

Durgapur shame: Victim's

dad apologises to Mamata

"It seems Bengal is under the rule of Aurangzeb. I want to take my daughter back to Odisha. Her life comes first, career later," he had said.

On Wednesday, he said he would take his daughter back home once she was declared fit by the treating doctors.

"I have been demanding a CBI probe into this case. I think that would be good. But that depends on the state administration as well," he said.

He said he does not want his daughter to stay in the state any longer.

"Let Sonar Bangla be So nar Bangla, but I'm taking my daughter back home. We will never come back again. I had high hopes that she would become a doctor by study ing here. I don't want other daughters in Bengal to face the same torment," he said.

The second-year MBBS student was allegedly gangraped 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 male friend, for their alleged involvement in the crime which has sparked a huge political uproar in the state

Male friend sent to 7-day police custody

Acourt in West Bengal's Durgapur Wednesday sent the arrested male friend of the gangrape victim to seven days of police custody.

According to sources, no lawyer appeared for the accused, Wasif Ali, when he was presented in the Durgapur court. However, as per the Supreme Court rules, a lawyer from the Durgapur Sub-divisional Legal Aid Centre represented him.

Meanwhile, the police have conducted DNA tests on five people who were arrested

On Tuesday, Asansol-Durgapur Police Commissioner Sunil Kumar Choudhary informed that only one person was involved in the physical sexual assault. He also said that the role of the victim's male friend is also being investigated. Ali was arrested after investigators found inconsistencies in his response during interrogation.

On Tuesday, the police took the arrested accused and the male friend to the forest area for reconstruction of the crime scene.

Meanwhile, according to hospital sources, the victim is now much better than before. She is slowly recovering and is in stable condition. On Tuesday, she recorded her statement before a judicial magistrate.

Curtains down on spl film festival 'Dhwani'

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: People with disabilities are capable, creative, and contribute meaningfully to society. This powerful message resonated at the 10th edition of 'Dhwani' The Disability Film Festival of Diversity and Inclusion that concluded at Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odisha Research

Centre here, Wednesday. The two-day film festival, organised jointly by the state Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department and voluntary organisation AAINA, celebrates a decade of promoting in-

clusion through cinema and art. The concluding day marked the much-awaited announcement of winners across various film categories. In One-Minute Film category, 'Sakhyam', directed by Ananya Kanungo. won the first prize for its impactful storytelling within a brief timeframe while 'Silence Vision' by Abhinandan Satpathy bagged second prize.

In Five-Minute Film category, 'Tune of Life' by Akash Manohar Fuke secured the first position, while 'Beula' by Suresh Kumar won the second prize, and 'Issai: The Voice Unheard' by Shamil Raj received the third prize. The 30-Minute Film category showcased some exceptional narratives, with 'Katty's Katty' (a story about two differently-abled friends) by Aditya Yadav bagging the first position. Similarly, 'The Way We Are' by Daria Tchapanova stood second, while 'Ashruta – The Unheard' by Riddhibesh Bhattacharjee secured the third position.

Among the dignitaries present on the second day of the event were Principal Secretary to Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Arabinda Padhee and State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities Bratati Harichandan.

The winners were felicitated with cash prizes and trophies during an award ceremony Wednesday.

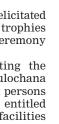
Earlier, inaugurating the event, City Mayor Sulochana Das emphasised that persons with disabilities are entitled to equal rights and facilities as per the Constitution. "Our responsibility as a society is to create an environment that nurtures their inherent potential and ensures they are part of the mainstream," she said.

Former chairman of Odisha

guest of honour, renowned Assamese filmmaker Manju Borah shared her experience of learning from the resilience and strength of differently-abled people. She noted the growing role of media in amplifying their stories and inspiring inclusion.

Festival Committee chaircapable. Awareness initiatives like 'Dhwani' are spreading the sion across the world," he men-

Altogether 37 shortlisted films were screened across competitive categories one-minute, five-minute, and thirty-minute films - on the



Eminent playwright Anant Mahapatra lauded the festival's sustained efforts, stating that initiatives like 'Dhwani' play a crucial role in breaking stereotypes and encouraging social integration.

Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) Lenin Mohanty highlighted the importance of positive communication and awareness building. He said, "Every individual has the right to express and raise awareness in their own way — and that voice must be positive and empowering.'

Attending the event as a

man Jitendra Biswal opined that the word disability should not define limitations. "There is no such word as disability - every person is differently message of diversity and inclu-



FOR A CAUSE: Students take out a rally, being organised by the SSEPD department, in Unit 8 area of Bhubaneswar on the occasion of White Cane Safety Day, Wednesday

City IIT-Indian Army pact for research in emerging tech

remain in force for five years, **IIT-Bhubaneswar will extend** academic and research support through its Virtual and Augmented Reality Centre of Excellence, while SDD will provide practical exposure and collaborative development opportunities in defence simulation and technology prototyping

he collaboration also includes short-term training and certification programmes, student internships, shared access to research facilities, and joint innovation initiatives such as hackathons and ideation challenges

Excellence (VARCoE), while SDD will provide practical exposure and collaborative technology prototyping.

The collaboration also includes short-term training and certification programmes, student internships, shared access to research facilities, and joint innovation initiatives such as hackathons and ideation challenges.

Dinakar said the partnership reinforces IIT-Bhubaneswar's commitment to national defence and technological self-re liance, while Brigadier Bedi noted that the MoU would foster synergy between the Indian Army and academia, promoting indigenous innovation aligned with operational requirements.

The MoU will remain in force for five years, enabling longterm collaboration and knowl edge exchange between the two institutions in frontier areas of technology development and application.

fence innovation to strengthen simulation-based training, enhance defence capabilities, and develop indigenous technological solutions.

Under the IIT-Bhubaneswar will extend academic and research support through its Virtual and Augmented Reality Centre of

agreement, development opportunities in defence simulation and **OrissaPOST**

downtown



BJP credits CM for Durgapur arrests Nutrition Month: Experts advocate healthy living

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 gangrape of an Odia medical student in Durgapur only after strong intervention by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP state headquarters here, Biswal described the incident as "barbaric and shameful," criticising the West Bengal government for its initial inaction. She alleged that the arrests were made only after CM Mohan Charan Majhi intervened and exerted pressure 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 revealed several inconsistencies in the statements made by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Biswal accused CM Banerjee 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 release clearly mentions she left

'This shows Mamata Banerjee is trying to shield the accused by spreading misinformation in the name of the victim," she

Criticising Banerjee's remark 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 mothers and sisters of the nation."

The BJP leaders also demanded immediate compensation for the victim and strict measures to ensure the safety of Odia and other women residing 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.

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: A balanced 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 Development, the event was held Wednesday at the conference hall of Lok Seva Bhayan, where speakers emphasised that proper nutrition for women and children forms the foundation of a healthy and developed so-

Principal Secretary of the department, Shubha Sharma, attended the event as chief guest and said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, this year's Nutrition Month has evolved into a people's movement.

She highlighted that the month-long awareness campaign focused on key themes such as reducing sugar and oil intake to prevent obesity, promoting child care, education, and nutrition during early childhood, encouraging proper infant feeding and newborn care, increasing male participation in nutrition awareness, strengthening convergence and digitisation, 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 nutrition at the grassroots and encouraged them to share their experiences on social media Department director Moni sha Banerjee urged adopting healthy habits like exercise yoga, and nutritious diets to build a healthier society.

School and Mass Education department Additional Secre tary Madhumita Rath high lighted initiatives promoting nutrition, noting that nutritious midday meals are served to students from pre-primary to Class X under the PM Poshan

Awareness activities conducted under the Jan Andolan initiative during Poshan Pakhwada 2025 were uploaded to the Ministry of Women and Child Development's Jan An dolan Dashboard, where Puri Bhadrak and Kendrapara dis tricts were recognised as the top three performers.

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 annual national programme of the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM)—an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture—aims to foster scientific curiosity and analytical thinking among school students. The event is conducted through multiple competitive tiers, beginning from the school level and culminating at the national level.

This year's theme, 'The Quantum Age Begins: Potentials & Challenges,' inspired students to explore the possibilities and implications of emerging quantum technologies.

A total of 30 district-level winners, all students from classes VIII to Class X, participated in the state-level event. representing various districts. Each participant presented their views supported by visuals, demonstrating a deep understanding of the topic.

The event was graced by RSC Bhubaneswar project coordinator Kapil Jain and TE & SCERT assistant director Pra-

CLASSIFIED

By virtue of an affidavit

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W/o- Pawan Kumar

Agrawal, R/o-Khariar,

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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, proprietor 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 discussed joining the party with senior leader Tara Prasad Ba-

"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, implying 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 membership, 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 of 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 after byelection is over. However. he ignored our instruction and arrived the Congress Bhawan, saying it is an ideal day according to his horoscope predictions to join the party.

Dhal was recently accused of immoral behaviour and assault by several people, including actresses.

35 honoured with Odisha Seva Ratna Samman 2025



Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The Odisha Seva Ratna Samman 2025 award ceremony, organised by the Bright Odisha Foundation, honoured distinguished individuals for their outstand ing contributions across various 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 celebrated 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, actresses Bhoomika Dash and Varsha Priyadarshini, actor Subasish Sharma, psychiatrist Amrit Pattojoshi, advocate Dharanidhar Navak, educationist and Akash Institute director Ajay Bahadur Singh, fashion designer Sabyasachi 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

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The office of the Engineer-in-Chief (Electricity)-cum-PCEI (O), functioning as the State Designated Agency (SDA) under the department of Energy, organised the first stakeholder consultation 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 sectors in reviewing the draft code and its associated rules. in order to gather feedback for customising the code according 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 department, Office of Director of Environment, GRIHA, IGBC, ISHRAE, VSSUT, and OUTR participated in the delibera-

The proposed OECSBC is an upgraded version of the Odisha Energy Conservation Building Code (OECBC) 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 parameters 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-specific 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 commemorate two decades since the enactment of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, the depart ment of Public Administration at Utkal University (UU) organ ised a special observance of RT 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 Mitali Chinara graced the occasion as chief guest.

Speaking on the occasion, Chinara expressed concern over the implementation of RTI in the country and the way cit izens 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 information, demanding account ability from public authorities and enforcing transparency in administration.

RASHTRIYA MAHILA KISAN DIWAS

Honouring women farmers' role in nation building

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: To honour the invaluable contributions of women farmers to Indian agriculture and rural development, the ICAR-Central Institute for Women in Agriculture (ICAR-CIWA), in collaboration with the Extension Division of the department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, celebrated 'Rashtriya Mahila Kisan Diwas' with great enthusiasm here Wednesday.

The programme was graced by Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who virtually addressed the gathering. In his message, the Minister highlighted the pivotal role of women farmers in sustaining the nation's food and nutritional 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-inclusive growth in the farm sector.

ICAR-CIWA director Mridula Devi extended a warm welcome to all dignitaries and partici-



pants and highlighted the institute'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 celebration serves as a platform to recognise the hard work, innovation, and resilience of women farmers who are driving transformation in rural livelihoods and shaping the future of Indian agriculture

Addressing the event, ICAR, New Delhi Deputy Director General (Agricultural Extension) Rajbir Singh appreciated

the immense contributions of women in agriculture and allied sectors and emphasised the importance of science-based empowerment, promotion of women-friendly tools, and strengthening institutional support systems for women farmers to enhance productive ity and income.

The event was also attended by ICAR, New Delhi former 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

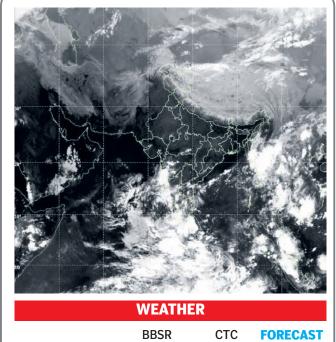
to agriculture and allied fields. A 'Scientist-Farmer Interaction Session' was organised on themes such as Scientific Crop Production and Animal Husbandry Practices, Principles and Practices of Natural Farming, GST Reduction Benefits to Farmers, and Government Schemes for Farmer Welfare.

An exhibition titled 'She Shakti in Krishi' was also organised, featuring gender-responsive technologies, innovative 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 innovative technologies developed by ICAR-CIWA to promote livelihood enhancement, productivity, and

sustainable agricultural practices The celebration saw the enthusiastic participation of over 250 women farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, members of Farm er Producer Organisations (FPOs) and self-help groups (SHGs), as well as public representatives, students, and institute staff, making the event a resounding success.

MARKET WATCH CURRENCY BOURSES 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 SILVER ₹162,049 **↑** ₹2,545 NIFTY **25323.55** • 178.05



Max Temp 33.4° 34.4° Partly cloudy sky with Haze. 22.6° 21.6° Min Temp 77% 83% Humidity Nil Rainfall

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

Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816 Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point-9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Ganja worth ₹35L, US-made pistol seized; 5 arrested



Koraput, Oct 15: A huge cache of cannabis along with a US-made pistol was seized by police in Koraput district and five suspected drug peddlers were taken into custody under relevant sections of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, police said Wednesday.

The police squad led by SI Surendra Kumar Sethi intercepted an SUV travelling from Dokanput area towards Pottangi near a check post in Padua police station area and arrested the drug traffickers as they were trying to flee while brandishing a pistol.

The arrested accused have been identified as Lal Bahadur Darjee of Kusumput, Trinath Khara (30), Suresh Bisoi alias Butia (22), Sanjaya Khara (19), and Jogesh Khara (20), all from Machhkund area. Police have registered a case (114/2025) under the NDPS and Arms Acts. Around 350 kg of high-grade cannabis valued at ₹35 lakh, an SUV, two pistols, magazines,

mobile phones, Aadhaar and

PAN cards, driving licenses

and cash were seized from

their possession. Notably, one

of the pistols is made in USA. Displaying exceptional courage and tactical skill, the police team successfully apprehended all five individuals and secured the weapon without any casualty, police said in a statement.

Gang leader Darjee has a history of more than 20 serious criminal cases registered against him, including those under the POCSO Act, NDPS Act (drug trafficking), extortion, and organised crime.

He was an absconder in multiple cases and had non-bailable warrants issued against him by the court, police said.

Koraput SP Rohit Verma stated that the police will intensify their operations and send a special team to Bihar to track backward linkages in the interstate ganja trafficking

"Our focus remains on dismantling the entire supply

NSA invoked against history-sheeter

voked against a notorious history-sheeter identified as Hrudananda Nayak alias Prince (35), a resident of Umri in Jeypore Sadar police station area with a formidable history of crimes including 17 cases of serious offences such as extortion, dacoity, NDPS Act violations. He has been taken into custody after completing all necessary legal and procedural compliances, police added. Police said Nayak had been a constant threat to public safety across Jeypore, Boriguma, and Nabarangpur areas. To effectively curb his persistent and organised criminal activities and maintain public order, the National Security Act has been invoked against him, DIG (south-western range) Kanwar Vishal Singh told reporters.

chain -- both backward and forward linkages," he said.

Meanwhile, the newly launched anti-extortion helpline in Jeypore, supervised by SDPO Parth Kashyap continues to receive overwhelming public response.

Cannabis, a banned substance under NDPS Act, is churned out from the hemp plants. Odisha is one of the leading cannabis producing states in India while eight districts- Rayagada, Malkangiri, Koraput, Boudh, Kandhamal, Gajapati, Ganjam and Nabarangpur- are widely regarded as the epicentre of cannabis cultivation.

The contraband smuggled from Koraput and Malkangiri makes its way to southern and northern parts of the country by well-oiled rackets of middlemen.

The contraband is smuggled to various destinations either by road or rail, confided officials.

Major fire guts supermarket, goods worth crores

Balasore, Oct 15: A major fire broke out in a prominent multi-purpose supermarket, Banaja, near Cinema Square in Balasore town Wednesday morning, reducing property worth several crores of rupees

However, no casualty was reported in the fire.

The four-storey known across north Odisha, stocked a wide range of products, including trolley bags, vanity bags, cosmetics, artifi-



cial jewellery, and men's ac-

Residents noticed smoke billowing from the building and alerted the fire department.

Firefighters faced a tough battle as ten fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the blaze, first spotted around 3am, a fire brigade official said.

"It took nearly eight hours to bring the situation under control. Fire brigade personnel had difficulties reaching the building through the narrow approach road," another official said.

An electric short-circuit was suspected to have triggered the

fire, but the exact cause is yet to be ascertained, he added.

By the time the fire was controlled, most of the store's inventory had been destroyed

The intensity of the fire forced the closure of the road between Cinema Square and FM College, while power supply to the area was cut off as a

precautionary measure.

Authorities described the incident as one of the most se vere fire accidents in Balasore in recent times. Town police reached the spot and launched an investigation.

Similipal Tiger Reserve to reopen from Oct 18

PNN & AGENCIES

Baripada, Oct 15: Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj district will reopen for tourists from October 18, an official said here Wednesday.

The tiger reserve was closed for tourists from June 30 due to the monsoon, the STR official said.

According to the notification issued by STR Field Director Prakash Chand Gogineni, a maximum of 60 vehicles will be allowed inside the national park daily.

Maximum 35 vehicles will be allowed from Jashipur check gate, while 25 vehicles will enter the STR through Pithabata check gate in Baripada.

Tourists can visit the national park from the entry point in Jashipur from 5am to 9am and the Pithabata entry point in Baripada division from 8am to 9am. The tourists have to leave STR through the exit gates by 6pm on the same day.

Besides, the tourists can also tour the national park through open jeep safari. Morning time wildlife safari will start from 5.30am and continue for five hours, and evening time wildlife safari will start at 2pm and end in four hours.

NIT Rourkela uses medicinal plants extracts to fight antibiotic resistance

New Delhi/Rourkela, Oct 15: Researchers at the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela, have been able to produce a potent antibacterial agent using extracts from medicinal plants that are environmentally safe and effective, according to officials.

The research addresses the problem of antimicrobial resistance. The overuse of traditional antibiotics has resulted in the rise of superbugs that have become resistant to these treatments. All around the world, scientists are seeking alternative methods to fight these superbugs, they said.

The research, co-authored by Professor Suman Jha, Associate Professor, Department of Life Science, along with his research scholars Kumari Subham, Sonali Jena, and Monal isha Ojha, has been published in the prestigious 'Surfaces and Interphases' journal.

According to Jha, one promising class of materials that has been studied is zinc oxide nanoparticles, materials so tiny that tens of thousands of them



could fit across the width of a human hair.

"These tiny particles damage the bacterial cells and disrupt their normal functions. Electrically charged zinc ions damage the cell membrane by producing reactive molecules that stress and kill the bacteria, as well as by blocking the cell's vital processes. Conventional synthesis of these nanoparticles involves the use of harsh chemicals that can be toxic to humans or the environment," she said.

"To address this, we have used an eco-friendly approach to producing the zinc oxide nanoparticles. Instead of using harsh chemicals, the researchers used extracts from leaves and petals of marigold, mango and eucalyptus to reduce zinc salts into zinc oxide nanocrystals with adsorbed phytocompounds from the extracts," Jha added.

Apart from aiding in the syn-

extracts serve three other purposes -- stabilising the nanopar ticles through the formation of a herbal shield or phyto-corona and controlling the release of the zinc ions and ensuring steady antibacterial action.

The green-synthesised zinc oxide nanoparticles with phy to-corona, as a sustainable and effective antimicrobial platform, offer a promising solution to combat antimicrobial resistance while leveraging the medicinal properties of surface-adsorbed plant-derived phytocompounds. This work is a step toward developing a new generation of green nanomate rials that can support sustainable healthcare systems. "Our vision is to develop

scalable, affordable and envi ronmentally safe antimicrobial materials that can be integrated into healthcare, sanitation and food preservation applications By harnessing India's rich bio diversity and indigenous plant resources, we aim to create self-reliant innovations that contribute meaningfully to global health and sustainabil ity goals," Jha said.

Block agriculture officer hangs self

Basudevpur: The body of a 37-yearold woman, serving as the block agriculture officer in Basudevpur block of Bhadrak district, was found hanging at her rented house Wednesday after Niharika Dalai of Bankasahi in Bhadrak in Balinagar village for the past few months. She had not reported to work for last two days. Sources said she dropped off her 8-year-old daughte at a private school along Block Road after classes Wednesday. Some staff members from the block agriculture office went to her residence to check locked from inside and alerted locals. they informed Basudevpur police. IIC Lopamudra Nayak reached the spot and launched a preliminary invesblock agriculture office, where Nayak husband, Satya Sambit Padhy, works for a private company in Bhubaneswar His family home is in Choudwar of Cuttack district. Police said preliminary findings point to suicide. Around 4pm, Niharika's husband and father, Aniruddha Dalai, arrived at Basudevpur. The body was taken down in their presence and sent to the Basudevpur hospital for post-mortem. Nayak said a detailed investigation will be conducted if the family submits a written complaint.

Fisheries officer held for bribery

Berhampur: Vigilance sleuths Wednesday nabbed an assistant fishery officer (AFO) in Ganjam district for accepting a bribe of ₹8,000 to release a subsidy amount to a beneficiary of a scheme. The accused, identified as Suresh Kumar Behera, was posted at Polsara. He allegedly accepted the bribe amount through the digital mode, Vigilance sources said. The mobile phones of the accused and the complainant have been seized by the Vigilance team. Simultaneous searches were underway at two locations linked to Behera. A case under the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018, was registered and further investigation

Transgender priest, partner found hanging

Jevpore: Two bodies were found hanging on the premises of the Kanaka Durga Temple in Gopabandhu Nagar under this police limits in Koraput district. Wednesday morning, police said. The deceased were identified as temple priest Raiu Machha, a member of the transgender community, and local mason Samara Jani, According to preliminary investigation, the two reportedly shared a romantic relation ship, Jeypore Town police said. Machha had been serving as a priest at the temple, while Jani worked as a masor in the area. Locals discovered the bodies hanging from a red saree and immediately alerted police. A police team reached the spot, recovered the bodies, and sent them to the district headquarters hospital in Jeypore for post-mortem examination.

POST NEWS NETWORK According to Narla police

Bhawanipatna, Oct 15: In a bizarre turn of events, a man allegedly tried to extort ₹35 lakh from his father by posing as a Maoist. The incident took place in Rupraroad under the Narla police limits of Kalahan-

station Inspector-In-Charge and investigating officer Bijay Majhi, the accused, identified as Ankush Agrawal, 24, of Rupraroad, had written a letter in the name of Maoists and placed it inside his father's car October 5. In the letter, he demanded ₹35 lakh threatening to kill the family if the amount

The family, terrified upon finding the letter, informed police after some days. The victim, Dinesh Agrawal, a prominent contractor in Kalahandi district, lodged a formal complaint at Narla police station.

Following investigation, po-

lice discovered that Ankush himself had written the letter to extort money from his father. He was arrested and produced before the M Rampur court.

The case has sparked widespread discussion in the area, with locals expressing shock over the son's alleged betrayal.



RAILWAY EMPLOYEES (LEVEL-6) IN KHURDA ROAD DIVISION, **EAST COST RAILWAY** The detailed Notification No. DRM(P)/KUR/Staff/Reengagement/Loco Pilot/2025, Date: 09.10.2025 is available on East

Coast Railway's website on the following Path www.ecor.indianrailways.gov.in→About us→Division→Khurda Road Division→Recruitment. Sr. Divisional Personnel Officer, Khurda Road

2 Ganjam women entrepreneurs represent India in IDRW - 2025

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, Oct 15: International Day of Rural Women was celebrated globally October 15 under the theme "The Rise of Rural Women -Building Resilient Futures". A virtual conference was organised by the Government of Bangladesh with seven Asian countries taking part in the event. Amongst them were two women entrepreneurs from Chhatrapur sub-division in Ganjam representing India

on the global stage. S Jyoti Reddy, a resident of Sriramchandrapur under Chhatrapur block, is into poultry farming, Kewda flower farming and organic farming. Beginning with an investment of just over ₹2 lakh of loan amount, Jyoti is now yielding a turnover of more than ₹5 lakhs per annum. She is successfully running her business and dreams to achieve

The other businesswoman R Sangita Dalai from Narendrapur panchayat has a similar success story about her entrepreneurship. Sangita started her business with just ₹40,000 investments through loan. She now yields a turnover of more than ₹2 lakhs through cattle farming.

Both the women proudly represented India and were well supported by the district admin, zonal, district and block coordinators. With the United Nations urging women to rise above in the conquest for equality, poverty, exclusion and hunger, these women have set the right example to inspire their rural counterparts highlighting their success stories. According to the United Nations, rural women around the world constitute about 40-50 per cent of agricultural workforce.

684 gamblers held, ₹28 lakh seized in month-long drive

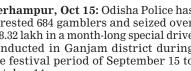
Man poses as Maoist to extort ₹35 lakh from father; arrested

Berhampur, Oct 15: Odisha Police has arrested 684 gamblers and seized over ₹28.32 lakh in a month-long special drive conducted in Ganjam district during the festival period of September 15 to October 14.

Besides the cash, police have also seized 230 mobile phones and 35 motorcycles from the gambling dens during the

booked under the Orissa Prevention of Gambling Act, he said.

The police have registered a total of season till Diwali.



period, a police officer said. All the accused persons have been

113 cases during the period, with the highest number of 21 gambling cases being registered by Bhanjanagar police. which arrested 138 gamblers and seized around ₹4.80 lakh, he added. Locals indulge in gambling during the festive

The crackdown would continue for a few more days, Ganjam Superintendent of Police Subhendu Patra said, adding that law and order problem arises in several places due to organised gambling in

Illegal crusher unit sealed in Koraput

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sunabeda/Semiliguda, Oct 15: Authorities sealed an unauthorized stone crusher unit at Beheraguda under Semiliguda tehsil in Koraput district Wednesday during a joint raid by the officials of state pollution control board (SPCB), the district mining department and the Revenue department.

The unit, operated under the name LG Construction, was closed after officials found it was running without mandatory clearance from the SPCB as required under the Central Pollution Control Board's 2023 guidelines, SPCB regional officer Dipesh Biswal said.

He said all crusher units must obtain SPCB approval and comply



with the rules, but this operator

had ignored repeated notices. A

district task force had been formed

months ago and served notice to the

owner, but no reply was received.

Earlier, in a joint raid February

20, authorities had seized 2,150

minerals from the same unit and imposed a penalty of ₹7,05,230. The fine remains unpaid, mining officer Krushnachandra Khuntia said. The operator also failed to follow basic norms such as Consent to Establish (CTE) and Consent to Operate (CTO), he added. Khuntia said crusher units vio-

cubic meters of illegally extracted

lating guidelines will face further heat from the authorities.

Officials present during Wednesday's operation included the Semiliguda tehsildar, Semiliguda police inspector Purnima Tirkey, Tata Power officials and personnel from other line departments. The team disconnected the power supply and sealed the machinery after tagging the equipment.



cbc 21354/12/0004/2526

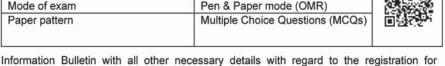






National Testing Agency is going to conduct AISSEE-2026 on behalf of Sainik Schools Society (Under Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India) for admission to Class 6 and Class 9 in Sainik School/ New Sainik Schools across the country, for the Academic Year 2026-27.

Submission of online Application Form	10.10.2025 to 30.10.2025	TEL ON PROPERTY.
Date of exam	In the month of January, 2026	
Mode of exam	Pen & Paper mode (OMR)	
Paper pattern	Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)	



www.nta.ac.in & https://exams.nta.nic.in/sainik-school-society/ Interested candidates are advised to apply on or before the last date and regularly visit above

examination are available on the Official Website(s) of the National Testing Agency on

Official websites for latest updates

In case any candidate faces difficulty in applying for AISSEE 2026, she/he may contact on 011 - 40759000 / 011 - 69227700 or e-mail at aissee@nta.ac.in





(Director)

ous Organization under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Gol ANNOUNCEMENT FOR INVITING ONLINE APPLICATION FOR SCHEME FOR RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS IN HIGH CLASSES IN TARGETED AREAS SHRESHTA (NETS) -2026

National Testing Agency is going to conduct SHRESHTA (NETS)-2026 on behalf of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for admission to Class 9 and 11 for Scheduled Caste (SC) students for the Academic Year 2026-27. The Shreshta is a Scheme which provides for high quality education for meritorious Scheduled Castes (SCs) students only.

Submission of online Application Form	10.10.2025 to 30.10.2025
Date of exam	In the month of December, 2025
Mode of exam	Pen & Paper mode (OMR)
Paper pattern	Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

Information Bulletin with all other necessary details with regard to the registration for examination are available on the Official Website(s) of the National Testing Agency on www.nta.ac.in & https://exams.nta.nic.in/shreshta/

Interested candidates are advised to apply on or before the last date and regularly visit above Official websites for latest updates.

In case any candidate faces difficulty in applying for SHRESHTA-2026, she/he may contact on 011 - 40759000 / 011 - 69227700 or e-mail at shreshta@nta.ac.in

Sd/cbc 21354/12/0003/2526

(Director)





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





Eswar Prasad &

ADVANCED

Caroline Smiltneks

RISING DEBT

ECONOMIES ARE

GRAPPLING WITH

BURDENS, AGING

POPULATIONS,

AND POLITICAL

EMERGING-

ECONOMIES.

BEING HELPED

ARE SHOWING

SOMEWHAT BY A

WEAKER DOLLAR,

SIGNS OF STRAIN

MARKET

DESPITE

GRIDLOCK, WHILE

Test Of Resilience

lthough 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

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 hase 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 is Professor of Economics at Cornell University. Caroline Smiltneks is an undergraduate at Cornell University.

WISDOM CORNER

Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change.

Whoever is happy will make others happy too. ANNE FRANK

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



A DROP OF WATER

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-



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

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 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

Nikhilan and

WEIGHT

IF OUR BODY

DECREASES

BY 2% DUE

TO LACK OF

WATER, OUR

MENTAL

ACTIVITY

DECREASES

DIGITAL ECONOMY

UPI ecosystem – present perfect



Dasarathi Mishra

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

TO THE EDITOR

are most welcome to contribute letters

requested to send their contact

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

suggestions, preferably by email, to:

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Readers of Orissa Post

(100 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

numbers and full postal

columns (between 600-1000

nified Payments Interface – popularly known - 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 pay ment system. Ranging from small market places, to malls, airports, railway stations, citizens are adept to do the retail payment through UPL 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 development 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-PavNow 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. Presently, 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.

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



TWO STATES





NO SERVICES, NO TAX

CIVIC FAILURE SPARKS TAXPAYER UPRISING

Citizens' forum urges Siddaramaiah to stop property tax collection over poor civic work

ly started filling potholes and

white-topping works in Var-

thur-Balagere-Panathur. Such

half-measures will only lead to

rapid deterioration of the new

roads, wasting public funds and

taxpayer contributions.

Panathur Main Road

repair work, done

recently, is already

seeing water accu-

mulation because

of bad sloping," the

The letter request-

ed the CM to order a

scientific audit of the on-

going drainage and road works

in the affected areas, ensure

completion and interconnection

letter stated.



Bangalore, Oct 15: A citizens' forum has urged Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to intervene and direct the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) not to collect property tax from residents, complaining that "unscientific and incomplete" civic works in their locality have led to flooding and poor road conditions.

In a letter dated October 13 addressed to the Chief Minister, the residents of the Varthur-Balagere-Panathur area, under the banner of the "Individual Tax Pavers Forum". which represents income tax pavers and advocates for their rights, alleged that they have been suffering due to "half-measured, unscientific, and poorly coordinated" road white-topping and stormwater drainage works carried out by municipal authorities in their areas.

It said flooding continues to occur repeatedly in the locality, including during the recent spell of rain October 10 and 11, which it described as one of the worst, mainly due to the absence of a properly connected stormwater drainage network to carry rainwater into water bodies such as Varthur Lake.

Despite the Chief Minister's visit to the locality September the Forum claimed that officials of the municipal bodies have "ignored planning and resorted to shortcuts.

"Instead of first completing the drainage network, which is the foundation for road staof the stormwater drainage network before proceeding with further road works, and establish accountability among municipal officials and contractors to prevent recurrence of such "costly

It also urged Siddaramaiah to ensure that good quality roads and footpaths are built for the safety of pedestrians.

"Namma Bengaluru is globally recognized as India's IT hub, and such civic negligence erodes the pride and credibility of Brand Bengaluru," the Forum said, adding that the city's reputation as the "Garden City" and "Silicon Valley" of India was being replaced by

tags such as "Pothole City" and "No Footpath City.'

"If the GBA con-AND "SILICON VALLEY" OF INDIA IS BEING REPLACED tinues to ignore taxpayers' requests for basic public infrastructure, we request you to order the

GBA not to collect property tax from us. Give us good public infrastructure and collect tax," the Forum said.

Kiran doubles down on civic plea, **Shivakumar says criticism hurts state**

REPUTATION AS

THE "GARDEN CITY

BY TAGS SUCH AS

POTHOLE CITY" AND

"NO FOOTPATH

Aday after her post on Ban-galore's civic issues sparked debate within the Karnataka government, Biocon chief Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw Wednesday reiterated her stand, saying all she sought was basic civic work, garbage clearance and road resurfacing, which should be carried out by the city's gov-



is garbage clearance and road resurfacing which ought to be done by the GBA. Government ministers need to hold them responsible and accountable for shod-dy and slow work," she said in a post on X. Mazumdar-Shaw added that both the government and citizens must be on the same page and that the current government has the opportunity to "fix decades of deteriorating infrastructure and garbage management." In response, DK Shivakumar said tweets criticizing the government are "hurting the state and country," highlighting Bangalore's contribution to Karnataka's economy over the past 25 years. He defended the creation of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) and the five corporations, citing better tax management and IT sector oversight. Shivakumar also said the government is introducing a CSR policy requiring transparency on funds received and spent. He added, "We are a progressive and positive government This is not China, India is a democratic setup. There are limits to everything. If you forget the root, you will not get the fruit. The root is Bengaluru, Karnataka, and the people of Karnataka." State Ministers Priyank Kharge and MB Patil also acknowledged the problems and said fixing them would require time. They called for "collective effort" to improve the city.



Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) personnel participate in a mock drill during the 20th Jharkhand State Police Duty Meet 2025, in Ranchi, Jharkhand

Cash, liquor smuggling faces border block

Jharkhand operationalises 43 border checkpoints to curb illegal movement of cash, liquor to Bihar

BIHAR POLLS AHEAD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Oct 15: As neighbouring Bihar gears up for assembly elections, Jharkhand has made operational 43 checkpoints, including nine new, in its 10 border-sharing districts to curb the illegal movement of cash, liquor, narcotics and other contraband items.

The move comes in response to a formal request from Bihar, which is preparing for two-phase elections scheduled next month.

Acting on a request from Bihar to set up checkpoints at strategic locations in bordering districts, altogether 43 checkpoints have become operational in 10 districts that share borders with the neighbouring state. Jharkhand Police spokesperson and Inspector General Operations (IG Operations) Michael Raj told PTI.

The checkpoints are operational round the clock.

"We have established nine new checkpoints in addition to the existing 34. Currently, there are 43 active checkpoints

bordering Bihar," Raj said.

The districts are Garhwa, Palamu, Chatra, Hazaribagh, Koderma, Giridih, Deoghar, Dumka, Godda, and Sahibganj. According to the police, heightened vigilance will be maintained until the second

scheduled for November 11, "All checkpoints are being jointly manned by security personnel, magistrates, and videography teams to ensure

phase of elections in Bihar.

transparency and law enforce ment," the official added. These measures have already

Koderma Superintendent of Police Anudeep Singh said that acting on a tip-off about a consignment of liquor being transported to Bihar, a special team under the local police station in-charge was deployed at a check-post.

During the inspection, authorities found the car's trunk loaded with a substantial amount of Indian-made foreign liquor. The driver, a resident of Namkum in Ranchi, was arrested.

In Hazaribag district, cash of Rs 16.5 lakh was seized last week at Chordaha check-post in Chauparan police station area from a car which was intercept ed for checking.

"A Delhi resident, who failed to produce any valid documents or satisfactory explanation for possession of such a large amount of cash was arrested and later sent to judicial custo dy after verification by magistrate Kedar Saw," Chauparan police station officer-in-charge Saroj Singh Chaudhary said.

In cases involving substan tial unaccounted amounts, the matter will be referred to the Income Tax Department for further investigation.

There is proper coordination between the administrations of the 10 districts in Jharkhand and the eight bordering dis tricts in Bihar, ensuring joint monitoring and enforcing the model code of conduct, a senior official said.

"These steps are part of a comprehensive security plan to ensure free, fair, and peaceful elections in the region," he said.

The 243-member Bihar assembly will go to the polls in two phases November 6 and 11, and the counting will take place November 14.

Karnataka mulls army-style canteens for govt employees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Oct 15: Karnataka Large and Medium Industries Minister MB Patil Wednesday said the government is considering a proposal to establish supermarkets for its employees through the state-owned Mysore Sales International Limited (MSIL), modelled on police and army canteens.

The initiative aims to make essential daily-use items available to state government employees at discounted prices,

In this regard, the minister held a preliminary round of discussions with Industries Department Principal Secretary S Selvakumar, MSIL Managing Director Manoja Kumara, and other senior officials, his office said in a statement.

Karnataka has around six lakh government employees, and the proposed plan seeks to benefit their families. Patil

Discussions would be held with the finance department to explore the possibility of subsi-



dies or tax exemptions for the initiative, he said

MSIL has been directed to submit a detailed feasibility report within a month on establishing such supermarkets.

Initially, four to five outlets are planned in Bengaluru, with a view to later expanding the facility to district headquarters across the state, he said.

However, the decision will be finalised after receiving the feasibility report.

The initiative is expected to expand the operational scope of the state-owned MSIL and provide an additional revenue source, while also benefiting lakhs of government employees and their families, the

Maoist grip crumbles in Jharkhand

Ranchi, Oct 15: As many as 266 Maoists have been arrested, 32 killed, and 30 have surrendered before security forces across Jharkhand this year till September end, a senior police officer said. Two regional committee members, one zonal commander, two sub-zonal commanders and nine area commanders belonging to CPI(Maoist) and its splinter groups were among those arrested, he said.

'A total of 32 Naxalites were killed in encounters with security forces since January 1. Vivek alias Prayag Manihi and Anuj alias Sahdev Soren were among the prominent red rebels who were killed in encounters. Both were central committee members of CPI(Maoist) and were carrying Rs 1 crore bounty each," IG (Operations) and Jharkhand Police spokesperson Michael Raj S told reporters.

He said a total of 30 Naxalites surrendered before the security forces during the period.

Zonal commander Ravindra Yadav and sub-zonal command-



and sub-zonal commander of Jharkhand Jan Mukti Parishad (JJMP), Lavlesh Ganihu alias Lokesh Ganjhu, were among those who surrendered.

Police also seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition during the period from January 1 to September 30.

"As many as 157 firearms, including 58 weapons looted from the police, 11,950 cartridges, 18,884 detonators, 394.5 kg of explosives and 228 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were seized and 37 Maoist bunkers were also destroyed in the last nine months," the police

A levy amount of Rs 39.53 lakh was also confiscated during the period.

The police department also

claimed to have launched a major crackdown against cybercriminals this year.

A total of 128 FIRs have been filed against cybercriminals. and 105 individuals have been arrested for such crimes in Au gust and September.

Furthermore, operations have resulted in the seizure of 128 mobile phones, 166 SIM cards, 60 ATM cards, 15 passbooks, two laptops, 11 cheque books and Rs 2.81 lakh in

Man-animal conflict decimates J'khand's jumbos' population

FROM SANCTUARY TO GRAVEYARD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Oct 15: Jharkhand's wild elephant population has recorded a drastic decline to 217, far below the 2017 figure of 678, according to the country's first-ever DNA-based census of the species.

Wildlife experts have termed it alarming and blamed rising man-elephant conflicts, encroachment of elephant movement corridors and habitat loss for the decline.

The All-India Synchronous Elephant Estimation (SAIEE) 2025 has put Jharkhand's elephant population between 149 and 286, with an average of 217.

"Jharkhand is no longer a safe abode for elephants. We have destroyed their natural habitats through mining, road construction and other activities. Their corridors for movement have either been encroached upon or destroyed.

With rampant destruction of forests, elephants are also facing shortage of food, particularly bamboo. They have no option but to move out of the state. former State Wildlife Board

Jharkhand forests constitute 31.51 per cent of its total geographic area (25,118 sq km) and is a mineral and forest-rich state, bordered by West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattis garh, and Bihar.

member DS Srivastava said.

Palamau Tiger Reserve and Kolhan division of Jharkhand, which has three districts - Se raikela-Kharswan, East and West Singhbhum — have been the major habitats for the jumbo population, a forest official said.

Amidst habitat loss, elephants have been migrating into new areas such as Hazaribagh and Ranchi, posing challenges for conflict mitigation, the report added.

Free bus ride scheme for women bags world record

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Oct 15: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah Tuesday said that his government's 'Shakti' scheme, facilitating free bus rides for all women domiciled in the state. has been certified by the 'London Book of World Records' for the highest number of free bus rides availed by women.

He also said the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has been registered in the 'London Book



of World Records' for the most award-winning road transport corporation in the world. "Karnataka enters the global

stage with two historic world records certified by the London Book of World Records," Sidda-

ramaiah posted on X. He said, "Shakti Scheme: Largest number of free bus rides availed by women -- 564.10 crore journeys -- empowering everyday mobility. KSRTC: most award-winning road transport corporation in the world -- 464 national & international honours since 1997."

"Our governance vision is rooted in social justice, women's empowerment, and worldclass public service," he further said, adding that these recognitions are a reflection of what inclusive and compassionate policymaking can achieve.

Deputy CM D K Shivakumar, in an X post, termed the achievement "global recognition for Karnataka's people-first governance!'

The 'Shakti' scheme, which provides free bus travel for all women domiciled in the state, is among the five guarantee schemes implemented by the Congress government on coming to power in the state in 2023.



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national



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

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



will stop if people follow his 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 exer

the entire railway ecosystem together on one platform ASHWINI VAISHNAW | RAILWAY MINISTER Dr Kalam ji's vision continues to

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SHORT **TAKES**

with integrity

cise to bring Indian and global

equipment manufacturers and

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 (Outernorth) Hareshwar Swami said.

Cross-border arms, drug racket busted

Chandigarh: The Puniab 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 sonhisticated 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 Parambil sustained injuries, police said Wednesday. The arrests followed earlymorning 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

3 suspected Bangladeshi

for the violence.

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 Padmabill area, close to the India-Bangladesh border, around 11.30 am.



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

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.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Oct 15: Haryana

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

IPS officer cremated in C'garh cremation included a few poli ticians 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 Medi cal Education and Research (PGIMER) earlier, the body was taken to Amneet Kumar's

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.

residence here.

The impasse over the autopsy of Puran Kumar, who alleged ly 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.

SC allows limited green Tejashwi, Dy CM crackers in Delhi-NCR file nominations

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 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

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.

a 21-page order, said.

"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



clear that use of green to 10:00 PM on 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 ted 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.

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on the Diwali

day," it said.

The sale of

green crackers

shall be permit-

and

before

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.

BIHAR POLLS

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 Raghopur, 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 iunior 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 Suraaj **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.

Karur stampede rocks TN Assembly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Oct 15: The September 27 Karur stampede, which claimed 41 lives at actor-politician Vijay's TVK rally, rocked the Tamil Nadu Assembly Wednesday with the main Opposition AIADMK members staging a walkout.

Taking exception, Chief Min ister M K Stain said the AIAD MK's stance on Karur stampede indicated that the party was desperate to rope in the Tami laga Vettri Kazhagam into their combine. "People will give a fitting reply to whichever alliance you form for the Assembly election (next year)," he said.

CM also accused that the commotion in the house was planned by AIADMK.

Giving a detailed explanation on the steps the state government took in rescuing and extending medical assistance to the stampede victims, the Chief Minister said "Vijay (TVK founder) came seven hours late for the meeting. The organisers did not make any arrangements to provide water, food, or other basic amenities for the waiting crowd nor did they heed to the police request to have his (Vi jay's) address advanced to en able the people to disperse," the

Chief Minister said. Speaking on the tragic incident Leader of the Opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami said the deaths would not have occurred had the police provided sufficient protection at the venue."Why was the TVK granted permission at a place where the police had earlier denied?" he asked. To this, the Chief Minister replied, "You seem to be desperately searching for a new ally. I had already appealed to everyone not to politicise the stampede."

Palaniswami made a remark which Speaker M Appavu ex-

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

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. 'Vvommitra' 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, IS-RO 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 AX-OM, a high-priority astronomical observatory mission.

said the Bharatiya Antriksh Station (BAS) is expected to come up by 2035, and initial modules in space are expected as early as 2027

e 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.

national



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



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

uma Bharti | Senior bjp Leader

A day of immense joy and pride for India. Heartiest congratulations

to every citizen of

India on the Com-

monwealth 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 admissions at that time

BHUPENDRA PATEL | GUJARAT CM





Meteorological Organisation has just revealed that the atmospheric carbon dioxide levels reached

The World

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 Raiasthan 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-

Drug addict attempts suicide on hospital roof

AC, they said.

New Delhi: Upset over a family dispute, a 25-year-old drug addict climbed onto the 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.

139 Maoists surrender in 2 days

The development, highlighted by the surrender of a top Maoist strategist with a ₹6 crore bounty and 60 cadres in Gadchiroli district, was hailed by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis as "the beginning of the end of the Naxal movement" in the region

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gadchiroli/Sukma/Kanker. Oct 15: The decades-long fight against Left Wing Extremism (LWE) reached a critical turning point this week as 139 Naxalite cadres laid down their arms across Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh in a massive twoday wave of surrenders.

The development, highlighted by the surrender of a top Maoist strategist with a Rs 6 crore bounty and 60 cadres in Gadchiroli district, was hailed by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis as "the beginning of the end of the Naxal movement" in the region.

The saga began Tuesday in Gadchiroli district with the surrender of Mallojula Venugopal Rao alias Bhupathi, a senior Naxalite leader and influential strategist for the outlawed CPI (Maoist). Bhupathi, who supervised platoon operations along the state border, formally surrendered with 60 cadres, bringing with them a significant cache of 54 weapons, including seven AK-47S and nine INSAS rifles. Addressing the gathering,

Fadnavis called the surrender a "big thing in the history of the country," stating it was the start of the end for Naxalism in Maharashtra. He also expressed confidence that the entire "red corridor" in Chhattisgarh and Telangana would soon be Naxal-free. Despite the major success, the Maharashtra Chief Minister cautioned security forces to remain "very alert for



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

regional leaders like Rajman Mandavi and Raju Salam of the influential Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee, surrendered before the Border Se curity Force (BSF), turning in weapons that included seven AK-47 rifles and an INSAS Light Machine Gun (LMG).

Separately, 27 cadres surrendered in Sukma before senior police and CRPF officials. Sixteen of these cadres carried a collective reward of Rs 50 lakh, including high-profile member Oyam Lakhmu (PLGA Battalion No. 1) with a Rs 10 lakh bounty. The cadres across both states cited disillusionment with the "hollow" Maoist ideology, atrocities against innocent tribals, and the state government's new surrender and development schemes as their motivation for returning to the mainstream. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai stated that Naxalism was "collapsing on every front and is going through its final stage.'

The Union Home Ministry hailed the surrenders as a "gi ant stride" toward the Modi government's vision of a "Naxal-free Bharat" and said the number of districts most affected by LWE has been dramatically reduced from six to just three -- Bijapur, Sukma, and Narayanpur, all located in Chhattisgarh. The broader category of LWE-affected districts has also been cut from 18 to 11. These 11 districts now include seven in Chhattisgarh, along with one each in Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh Maharashtra, and Odisha.

DURGAPUR GANGRAPE

WB Governor files report to Prez, MHA



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.

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

In the report, Bose has given

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 re-

quired 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

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

Women's Commission.

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 f 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.

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.



A rose-ringed parakeet nibbles on a flower, in Nadia, West Bengal

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 teargas 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 offi-

Despite the requests of the policemen to the protesters to move back, they kept pressing forward, following which the law enforcers resorted to lathicharge 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

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"

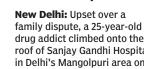
"We all want justice for Zubeen Garg, but there is a certain procedure to be followed," he said. Singh said that additional forces have been de-

ployed 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 or streets will also be prohibited.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home and Political Depart ment) 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.



roof of Sanjay Gandhi Hospital in Delhi's Mangolpuri area on

international



We live in a fractured world with a widening gap between democracies and autocracies

URSULA VON DER LEYEN **EUROPEAN COMMISSION PRESIDENT**

INDIA ELECTED TO UNHRC FOR SEVENTH TIME

India has been elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for the 2026-28 term, marking the country's seventh stint on the Geneva-based rights body. Announcing the results of the election held Tuesday, the UNHRC in a social media post said India's three-year term will begin January 1, 2026





CO₂ and other greenhouse bo-charging our climate and lead-

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 lav down their arms KEIR STARMER | PRIME MINISTER, UK



command -and-control economy. They are neither going to command (nor) control us. We are



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 Washingtonbased 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 year, 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

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, Mu-

jahid 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 Pakistan 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

agree on 48-hour ceasefire after clashes

Each says truce reached at the request of the other

Taliban orders forces to

Truce follows airstrike and

More than 15 Afghans killed, 100 injured, says Taliban

ground fighting

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

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 (FC-DO) said the coordinated ac tion 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 de termination to cut off Putin's revenue streams - targeting Russian companies and their global enablers," the FCDO

"Four oil terminals in China, 44 tankers in the 'shadow fleet' transporting Russian oil. and Navara 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, Navara 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 deep ly committed to supporting the nation's energy security and fostering economic growth,' Nayara Energy said in a media statement at the time.

Coup leader claims Presidency

crisis on Indian

Ocean island

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 Army the weekend, has colonel led condemned the push to topple takeover and elected president

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

former French colony. "We took responsi-Rajoelina has fled Madagascar, bility yesterday."

believed to be in Dubai Two sources close to him earlier told Youth protests precipitated 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.

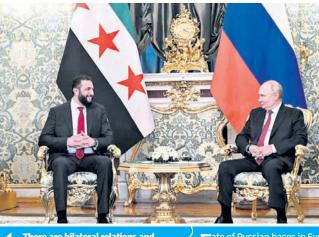
Randrianirina was a commander in the elite CAPSAT army unit that played a key role in the 2009 coup that brought Rajoelina to power but broke ranks with him last week, urging soldiers not to fire on protesters.

Moscow, Oct 15: Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa told Russian 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 Qae da 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.



PUTIN, SHARAA HOLD TALKS

shared interests that bind us with Russia, and we respect all agreements nade with it. We are working on redefining HMED AL-SHARAA SYRIAN PRESIDENT

haraa will ask Putin to hand over former presider Assad, Syrian sources say

two leaders had discussed this

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

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

the talks that the fate of Rus sia's two main bases in Syria - the Hmeimim air base in Syria's Latakia province, and its naval facility at Tartous on the coast - would be discussed.

Russia has a military presence at Qamishli airport - in the northeast near the borders of Turkey and Iraq - as well. Syrian officials are seeking

guarantees that Russia will not help rearm remnants of Assad's forces, a Syrian source said before the talks. Sharaa is hoping that Russia might also help rebuild the Syrian army, the same source said.

SENSITIVE VISIT

Sharaa's visit was sensitive. Russia used its military muscle to back Assad for years against Syrian rebels who came to power in December last year led by Sharaa. Moscow then granted asylum to Assad and his family when they fled the country.

The Assads now live discreet ly in Moscow, according to Russian media. Two Syrian sources told Reuters that Sharaa would use the talks to formally re quest that Moscow hand over Assad to face trial over alleged crimes against Syrians.

Aid trucks roll into Gaza as dispute over hostage bodies paused while a second official said that

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, 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 yet to be resolved.

local clans.

Longer-term elements of the ceasefire plan, including how

Twenty-one bodies of hostag-

The deal also requires Israel to return the bodies of 360 Pal■ Rafah border crossing

■ Aid trucks start entering

■ Israel identifying

■ Hamas continues crackdown

estinians. The first group of 45 was handed over Tuesday and

clave and health authorities overwhelmed

"Our situation is utterly trag ic. We went back to our homes in the al-Tuffah neighbourhood and found there are no homes at all. There is no shelter. Nothing," said Moemen Hassanein in Gaza City, with tents and shanties behind him.

VIOLENCE IN GAZA

Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas condemned the public executions after a video, authenticated by Reuters, showed masked gunmen shooting dead seven bound, kneeling men in a Ga-

Israeli forces inside Gaza have pulled back to what the truce deal calls a yellow line just outside the main cities Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said it would immediately enforce any violation of the line.

to upset the ceasefire deal along the bodies were being identiwith other major issues that are fied, said Palestinian health authorities. Later phases of the truce call AID ENTRY AND BORDER CROSSING for Hamas to disarm and cede za street. power, which it has so far re-The war has caused a hufused to do. It has launched a Gaza will be governed, the es remain in Gaza, though some manitarian catastrophe in Gasecurity crackdown, parading make-up of an international may be hard to find or recover za, with nearly all inhabitants its power in Gaza through pubforce to take over there and driven from their homes, a because of destruction during lic executions and clashes with moves towards the creation of the conflict. An international global hunger monitor saying a Palestinian state have vet to task force is meant to find them. famine was present in the en-

business



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

The scarcest resource today

HYUNDAI TO INVEST ₹45K-CR IN INDIA

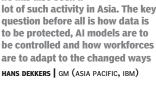
South Korean auto major Hyundai Motor Co President & CEO Jose Munoz Wednesday said the company's Indian arm will invest ₹45,000 crore by FY30, aiming to make India its second-largest region globally. Addressing investors here in his first visit to the country, Munoz said Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) 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



is happening globally, but com fragmented



Every govcompany needs to respond whenever there is



Given the population and the expected motorisation in India, there are projections that small cars



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 es 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

Zepto wins startup race

the overseas markets.

New Delhi: Ouick 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 adiacent services with FirstClub (ranked 13) and Snabbit (ranked 14) offering instant grocery and home assistance

Airtel, IBM JV

solutions.

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.

India open to raise energy purchases from USA: Comm Secy

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 import-

ant 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 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 Ambassa-

dor-designate to India Sergio Gor held talks with the Commerce Secretary on India-US

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 large est 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 pe cent of India's total goods ex ports, 6.22 per cent in imports and 10.73 per cent in the country's total merchandise trade.

Indian passport



New Delhi, Oct 15: The Indian passport has slipped several spots in the latest Henley Passport Index, landing at 85th place.

India now shares its rank with Mauritania, and holders of an Indian passport can travel visa-free to 57 countries.

According to the index released by London-based consultancy Henley & Partners, three Asian nations top the 2025 global passport rankings. Singapore leads the list with visa-free access to 193 destinations, followed by South Korea with 190 and Japan with 189.

China has seen a major leap in global mobility over the past decade, climbing from 94th in 2015 to 64th in 2025. Its citizens can now travel visa-free to 37 more destinations than they could ten years ago.

Beijing added 30 more visa-free destinations, in a year alone, expanding access through fresh agreements with countries across Europe, South America, and the Gulf region.

Recent developments, including granting visa free access to

Russia, show Beijing's ongoing strategy of increased openness. China's moves, alongside new agreements with the Gulf states, South America, and several European countries, are bolstering the Asia-Pacific region's dominance in travel freedom, the Henley report said.

South Korea and Japan secured the No. 2 and No. 3 spots with visa-free access to 190 and 189 destinations, respectively.

European nations shared ranks at No. 4 and No. 5, alongside notable entries from New Zealand, Australia, and Canada. The United Arab Emirates

(UAE) has seen a significant rise, moving from No. 10 to No. 8 this year, granting its citizens visa-free access to 184 destinations as of October 2025. The United States has dropped to No. 12, tying with

Malaysia, and now offers visa-free access to 180 destinations. The US held the top position in 2014. The United Kingdom has also seen a decline, dropping to

its lowest-ever position at No. 8, down two places from last year, despite having topped the index in 2015.

dips to 85th globally China challenges India's EV subsidies

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 The Chinese Commerce Min-

istry 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.

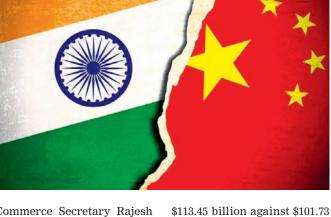
These measures unfairly benefit India's domestic industries and undermine China's legitimate interests, the ministry's statement claimed.

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. An official said that China

has also filed similar applica-

tions against Turkiye, Canada and the EU. 'They have sought consultations with India," the official said.

Seeking consultation is the first step of the dispute settlement process as per WTO rules.

If the consultations requested with India do not result in a satisfactory solution, the EU can request that the WTO set up a panel in the case to rule on the issue raised. China is the second-largest

trading partner of India.

In the last fiscal, India's exports to China contracted 14.5 per cent to \$14.25 billion against \$16.66 billion in 2023-24. The imports, however, rose

by 11.52 per cent in 2024-25 to

However, Tata Motors, Info-

sys, Tech Mahindra and Axis

Bank were among the laggards.

rea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225

index, Shanghai's SSE Compos-

ite index and Hong Kong's Hang

US markets ended on a mixed

'The national market inched

In Asian markets, South Ko-

billion in 2023-24. India's trade deficit with Chi-

na 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 vear 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.

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 vehi-

cle 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 Manufac turers (SIAM) said. Total three-wheeler despatch

es 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-wheel ers have already posted their highest-ever sales of Septem

ber," 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 in dustry 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.

₹ recovers 73 paise from all-time low

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 15: The rupee bounced back sharply by 73 paise to close at 88.08 against the US dollar Wednesday, posting its biggest intraday gain in nearly four months, due to likely intervention by the RBI and a surge in domestic equities. Forex traders said domestic

markets surged nearly 0.70 per cent on optimism over trade talks between India and the US, which reflected in the USD/INR pair. Moreover, a weak US Dollar

and an overnight decline in crude oil prices also supported At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 88.74 against the greenback,

and fell below the 88-mark during the session, touching a high of 87.93 per dollar. The domestic unit finally settled at 88.08 against the greenback, registering a rise of 73 paise over its previous close. Tuesday, the rupee depreci-

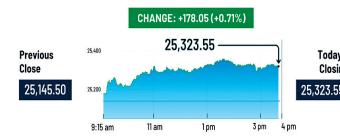
US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.22 per cent lower at 98.82.

ated by 13 paise to close at an all-time low of 88.81 against the

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.19 per cent lower at \$62.27 per barrel in futures trade.

Sensex jumps 575 points; Nifty ends above 25,300

OCTOBER 15, 2025



BAJAJ FINANCE	+4.07%	TOP GAINERS
NESTLE INDIA	+3.98 %	
BAJAJ FINSERV	+3.14 %	
TRENT	+2.64%	
ASIAN PAINTS	+2.54%	

Sensex spurted 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.



-1.04 % INFOSYS BAJAJ AUTO -0.96 % TOP TATA MOTORS -0.90 % LOSERS TECH MAHINDRA -0.89 %

TATA CONSUM

per cent to settle at 82,605.43.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed

178.05 points or 0.71 per cent to

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

25,323.55.

the winners

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA jumped 575.45 points or 0.70

Mumbai, Oct 15: Benchmark

The 30-share BSE Sensex

Markets in Europe were trading in the positive territory. note on Tuesday.

-0.60 %

higher after two days of selling; a dovish comment by the Fed chair on rates and considering an end to its quantitative tightening sparked the global market sentiment," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. Global oil benchmark Brent

crude dipped 0.18 per cent to \$62.28 a barrel. Foreign Institutional In-

vestors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹1,508.53 crore on Tuesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth ₹3,661.13 crore, according to exchange data.

Tuesday, the Sensex declined 297.07 points or 0.36 per cent to settle at 82,029.98. The Nifty dipped by 81.85 points or 0.32 per cent to 25,145.50.

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 (SEA) 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



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.

THURSDAY | OCTOBER 16, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

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

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

Getting the Games' hosting rights would also be a significant milestone in India's quest to become an

Olympic host in 2036, also proposed to be conducted in Ahmedabad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: Ahmedabad was Wednesday recommended as the proposed host of the 2030 Commonwealth Games by Commonwealth Sport's Executive Board, paving the way for the big event's return to India after two decades and bolstering its ambition to be an Olympic host in 2036.

A final decision, which now seems a mere formality, will be taken November 26 at the body's General Assembly in Glasgow after the recommendation is sent to the full membership of Commonwealth Sport. India had hosted the Games for the first time back in 2010 in New Delhi.

India was facing competition from Nigerian city of Abuja in the 2030 bid but Commonwealth Sport has decided to "develop a strategy for supporting and accelerating" the African nation's hosting ambitions for future Games, including consideration for 2034.

"The Executive Board of Commonwealth Sport has today confirmed that it will recommend Amdavad, India, as the proposed host city for the 2030 Centenary Commonwealth Games," stated a press release from Commonwealth Sport.

"Amdavad (also known as Ahmedabad, in the Indian state of Gujarat), will now be put forward to the full Commonwealth Sport membership, with the final decision taking place at the



A huge moment for Indian sports!...This decision reflects India's growing dominance in global sport, made possible by the vision ary leadership of PM Shri @ narendramodi ji, whose commitment has put India firmly on the world sporting map MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | SPORTS MINISTER

Commonwealth Sport General Assembly in Glasgow on 26 November," it added.

India set to host 2030 CWG;

Ahmedabad named host city

The recommendation follows a process overseen by the Commonwealth Sport's Evaluation Committee. It assessed candidate cities for "technical delivery, athlete experience, infrastructure, governance, and alignment with Commonwealth Sport values.'

"...both Amdavad, India, and Abuja, Nigeria, submitted compelling proposals that reflect the ambition and potential of the Commonwealth Sport Movement." Indian Olympic Association

President PT Usha, who is also the head of the Commonwealth Games Association (India), said it would be an "extraordinary honour" for India to host the Centenary Commonwealth Games.

"The Games would not only showcase India's world-class sporting and event capabilities, but also play a meaningful role in our national journey towards Viksit Bharat 2047.

'We see the 2030 Games as a powerful opportunity to inspire our youth, strengthen international partnerships and contribute to a shared future across the Commonwealth, she stated.

Ahmedabad had recently hosted the Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships and the city's sporting infra structure is also being upgraded to successfully conduct big-ticket multi-sport competitions.

The Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Sports Enclave is one of the prime venues that is cur rently under construction and apart from the Narendra Mod Cricket Stadium, it is designed to house an aquatics centre and a football stadium along with two arenas for indoor sports.

The 2026 CWG, which will be held in Glasgow, has been massively scaled down to prevent the budget from overshooting. The city, which intends to con duct the entire event within an eight-mile (approx 12km) radius, has kept the budget at a modest 114 million pounds (over Rs 1300 crore).

As a result, some major disciplines like wrestling, shooting badminton and hockey have been left out of the 10-sport roster. India had spent close to Rs 70.000 crore to host the 2010 edition of the Games, far exceeding the initial estimate of Rs 1600 crore. Athletes from 72 countries participate in the Commonwealth Games.

SHORT **TAKES**

Women in Blue fined

Visakhapatnam: India were Wednes day 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 wickets with Australia pullaing off a nam. 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 Subhranshu 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 49run partnership, However, a flurry of wickets saw the team slump to 49/4

The Odisha innings was then steadied by captain Subhranshu 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

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

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 ex-

cellence," he said. "For the first

time. Odisha hosted this pres-

tigious championship, adding

another milestone to its sport-

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)

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 b

Yiu Kwan Go 13-11, 11-6, 12-10)

ing journey."

through sportsmanship.

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

uncertain

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

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 Namibia. Kohli, who was part of India's World Cup-winning 2011 squad, is a year younger.

The future is also uncertain for all-rounder Rayindra Jadeia. who turns 37 in December.

Jadeja was part of the recent Champions Trophy-winning squad but has been dropped from the 50-overs squad for Australia. Jadeja still hopes to play the next World Cup and defused any drama that usual ly trails big-name omissions, saying his axing has been ex plained to him.

Team India heads Down Under



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-



■ World Combined Champion to be crowned across three

■Total Chess World Championship Tour to feature

■ FIDE President Dvorkovich supports Norway Chess initiative

ly skilled athlete who adapts to multiple time controls," Norway

This seems like a wellthought-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 "Freestyle 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.

GREATS OF THE GAME

Ronaldo makes WC qualifiers history

Inarguably 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



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

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