

DIWALI greetings to all our readers, advertisers and well-wishers



HOLIDAY NOTICE

The offices and press of **Orissa POST** will remain closed October 20 (Monday) on the occasion of Diwali. Hence, there will be no edition of the paper October 21 (Tuesday). However, web edition will be available to the readers.

— EDITOR

CM lays stones for 471 GP offices

Disburses first instalment of Antyodaya Gruha Yojana to 48,693 beneficiaries across state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: In a bid to further strengthen the administrative outreach and service delivery in rural areas, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi performed on virtual mode the groundbreaking ceremonies for 471 gram panchayat (GP) offices in 28 districts, except for Nuapada and Kalahandi, and distributed the first installment under Antyodaya Gruha Yojana across the state. The CM described these offices as “new temples of service”, which would function as one-stop service centres, ensuring respect, convenience, and timely solutions to citizens under one roof. “Service is our government’s core principle,” said Majhi, emphasising that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, GPs are being developed as centres for public welfare and service. “Each gram panchayat office will be built with ₹35 lakh, funded through a partnership between the Union and state governments. These offices will have dedicated rooms for sarpanchs, panchayat executive officers, junior engineers, gram rozgar sevaks, and accountant-cum-data entry operators, ensuring all services are available under one roof,” he said. During the programme



held at the Chief Minister’s Conference Hall in Lok Seva Bhawan, Majhi disbursed the first instalment of financial assistance to 48,693 beneficiaries under Antyodaya Gruha Yojana, providing secure and dignified housing for economically weaker and marginalised families not yet selected under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G). Under this state scheme, the government will provide ₹1.20 lakh financial assistance to beneficiaries for building pucca houses. “A total of ₹7,550 crore has been allocated for the financial years from 2024-25 to 2027-28 for construction of five lakh houses. Excluding Nuapada and Kalahandi, 48,693 beneficiaries across 28 districts have received ₹40,000 each as the first instalment, totalling ₹194.77 crore. Beneficiaries will receive ₹65,000 in the second installment and ₹15,000 in the third, making a total of ₹1.2 lakh per beneficiary,” Majhi said.



LET THERE BE LIGHT: Fireworks go off during a laser show at ‘Deepotsav 2025’ celebration on the eve of ‘Diwali’ at Ram Ki Paidi in Aayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, Sunday

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I couldn't go home. To avoid the rush, I waited for one of those 12,000 Diwali special trains – It never came

Anti-Trump protests sweep US cities

AGENCIES

Washington, Oct 19: Large crowds of protesters marched and rallied in cities across the US Saturday for “No Kings” demonstrations decrying what participants see as the government’s swift drift into authoritarianism under President Donald Trump. People carrying signs with slogans such as “Nothing is more patriotic than protesting” or “Resist Fascism” packed into New York City’s Times Square and rallied by the thousands in parks in Boston, Atlanta and Chicago. Demonstrators



marched through Washington and downtown Los Angeles and picketed outside capitols in several Republican-led states, a courthouse in Billings, Montana, and at hundreds of smaller public spaces. Trump’s Republican Party disparaged the demonstrations as “Hate America” rallies,

but in many places the events looked more like a street party. There were marching bands, a huge banner with the US Constitution’s “We The People” preamble that people could sign. It was the third mass mobilisation since Trump’s return to the White House. Trump, meanwhile, was spending the weekend at his Mar-a-Lago home in Florida. “They say they’re referring to me as a king. I’m not a king,” President Trump said in a Fox News interview that aired early Friday, before he departed for a \$1 million-per-plate MAGA Inc fundraiser at his club.

Train derails as rock rolls onto tracks

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: A goods train derailed Sunday after large boulders rolled onto the railway tracks between Tyada and Chimidipalli railway stations of Kothavalasa-Kirandul (KK) line in Andhra Pradesh, East Coast Railway (ECoR) officials said. The incident took place around 4am when the Visakhapatnam-bound goods train was coming from Bachel, they said. Visakhapatnam-Kirandul passenger train has been cancelled from both sides.

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FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You feel lost and thoroughly depressed today. This will make you turn towards spirituality, says Ganesha. You will devote more time to meditation and will pray a lot. Despite the adverse circumstances, Ganesha says you will make a good deal of material headway.

TAURUS
Religious sentiments will be ruling your thoughts today, says Ganesha. This is a great day for making a trip to a temple or a popular religious destination. You should take your parents and other family members along on this auspicious journey. Your parents are sure to pray shower their love and blessings upon you and pray for your well being.

GEMINI
You will be afforded full co-operation by your relatives and friends. You will also be able to provide a solution to their problems by utilising your practical thinking. You will be influenced by your emotions while choosing between multiple alternatives. You need to carefully weigh the pros and cons of any decision you make today, says Ganesha.

CANCER
A shopping spree with your darling is likely to be the highlight of the day, even though you will be paying for almost everything. Though you have decided to be this lavish out of sheer love, your sweetheart will more than return the favour with a sweaty thank you 'return gift' in the evening.

LEO
You will pay serious attention to your work. You will feel that you have no option but to work hard. You will not be in the mood for socialising. This is only a temporary phase, hence there is no need to worry. You will be back to your usual gregarious self in no time at all, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Ganesha advises you to quantify your worth in the spheres of emotions and sentiments. You will prepare yourself for everything, from games to peers to family. However, at the same time you will realise your shortcomings. Ganesha foretells that from today on the artist in you will begin to come to the fore.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that today you shall be very careful in money matters. It is nothing to do with miserliness at all. When buying things you will be careful while spending money and will stick to your budget. On the other hand when you are out with your loved ones you will not think about holding back and will spend lavishly.

SCORPIO
You wish to make an image makeover in your office. You are tough and determined, and your work knows no limit when it comes to achieving your targets. You will love to brainstorm and give innovative ideas to colleagues and bosses. However, don't give away your best of ideas to anyone, advises Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
Your far-sightedness and brilliance will not only impress your peers, but also help you to rope in big clients and huge projects. Cheers to that! Thanks to your systematic and disciplined approach, you are entitled to be the 'most desirable' employee of the company.

CAPRICORN
Whatever field you are in, your career matters will top your priority list. You will put your personal life on the back burner for a while. This change of places will surely bring you great rewards as your performance will drastically improve and everyone will appreciate your efforts.

AQUARIUS
It's a day you may want to spend with yourself. But it may still not bring the desired peace and tranquility. An unpleasant situation may force you to deal with reality, says Ganesha. You now realise how much strength you derive from your devotion to God.

PISCES
You will find favourable conditions at work as you co-ordinate with your colleagues and seniors to tackle tough problems. You will be able to get the desirable results for all the effort you put in, in the office, says Ganesha. Those engaging in business will be able to make some strong and useful contacts today which will be handy in the future.



LIMP BIZKIT BASSIST SAM RIVERS DIES

Sam Rivers, the bassist and founding member of American nu metal band *Limp Bizkit* passed away at the age of 48, the band members said. The band announced Rivers' demise with a post on Instagram Saturday, featuring the late musician performing on the stage.

TOM HOLLAND WON'T STAR AS JAMES BOND

Tom Holland will not be the next James Bond. The 29-year-old actor has been suggested as a possible replacement for Daniel Craig as 007 but his Marvel contract is said to forbid him from taking any parts that could overshadow his lead role in the *Spider-Man* movies.



DIANA'S BITTER PAST

MUMBAI: Diana Penty, one of Bollywood's most admired actresses, recently made headlines for her latest Amazon Original series *Do You Wanna Partner*, where she stars alongside Tamannaah Bhatia as a confident business-woman. However, behind her composed exterior lies a story many young women can relate to — one shaped by insecurities, harassment, and body shaming.

Before fame, Diana was a shy college student in Mumbai, commuting by local trains to St. Xavier's. In an old interview, she recalled facing daily cat-calling and harassment, saying, "Every girl in Bombay has gone through this. I was shy, under-confident, and scared. I didn't have

the courage to fight back." Diana also opened up about being body-shamed since childhood for being too skinny. "People would tell me, 'You don't eat'" and aunties would question my mother. It scars you as a child," she shared. Her mother even consulted a dietician, who suggested feeding her six bananas a day to help her gain weight. Reflecting on her journey, Diana said her insecurities about being "too tall and too thin" made her dress in loose clothes and avoid attention. "Now, I see it as an advantage," she added, showing how she turned past pain into strength and self-acceptance.

AGENCIES



MUMBAI: Anushka Shetty, one of the most admired actresses in the Telugu film industry, is known for her grace, simplicity, and commanding on-screen presence. While she often makes headlines for her personal life, Anushka once shared a delightful memory from her childhood — her first "I love you."

Taking fans back to her school days, the *Baahubali* actress recalled that she was in the sixth grade when a young classmate mustered the courage to confess his feelings. With all the innocence of a schoolboy crush, he told her, "I love you... I love you to death." Anushka admitted that, at the time, she didn't

Anushka on her first love

understand the meaning of those words and innocently replied, "Ok." She fondly described it as one of her sweetest and most innocent childhood memories.

On the professional front, Anushka was last seen in *Ghaati*, where she played an intense, action-packed role. Her performance received appreciation for its depth and power, though the film failed to connect strongly with audiences and underperformed at the box office. Following the film's release, the *Miss Shetty Mr Polishetty* star announced that she would be taking a short break from social media to unwind and focus on herself.

AGENCIES



MUMBAI: Samantha Ruth Prabhu's chartbuster *Oo Antava* from the 2021 film *Pushpa: The Rise*, starring Allu Arjun and Rashmika Mandanna, became a cultural phenomenon. Reflecting on the experience, Samantha revealed she took up the song as a personal challenge. "I did *Oo Antava* to see if I could. It was a challenge I gave myself," she said, adding that she never saw herself as "sexy" and believed no one would offer her a bold role. The song, composed by Devi Sri Prasad and written by Chandrabose, went viral across languages, with Samantha's hook steps alongside Allu Arjun becoming iconic.

When Samantha tested herself

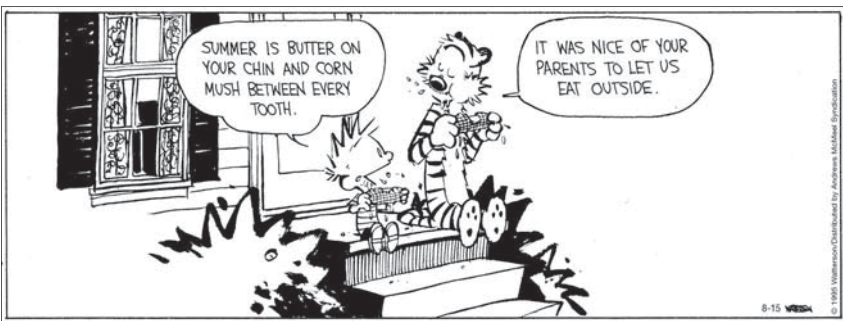
As the work front, Samantha is known for working in films such *Dookudu*, *Seethamma Vakitlo Sirimalle Chettu*, *intiki Daredi*, *Kaththi*, *Theri*, *Mersal* and *Rangasthalam*. She also gained appreciation for her performance in *Mahanati*, *Oh! Baby*, *Super Deluxe*, *Majili* and the thriller series *The Family Man*.

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

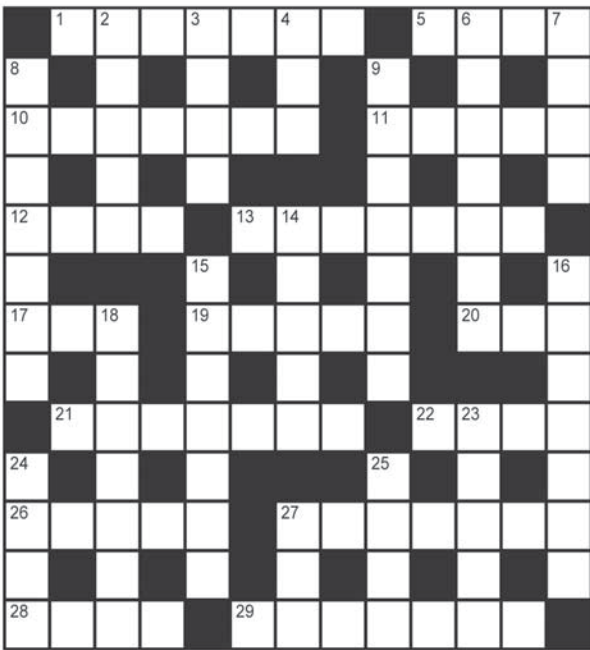


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



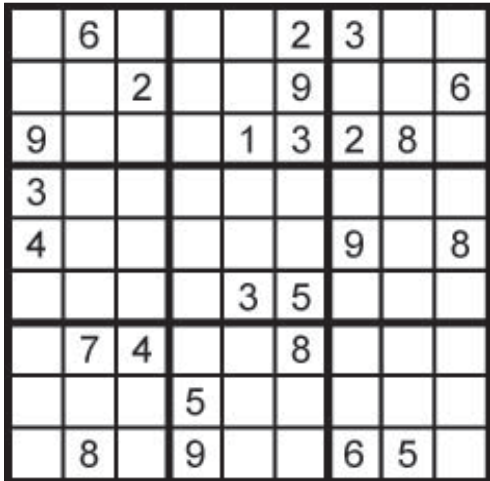
- Across**

 - 1 Red Italian table wine
 - 5 Kon-Tiki Museum site
 - 10 Join together
 - 11 Perfect
 - 12 Undertaking
 - 13 Pay close attention
 - 17 Wayside stop
 - 19 Stableboy
 - 20 Small pouch
- Down**

 - 2 Sharpens
 - 3 Mideast port
 - 4 Preschooler
- 21 Earthquake follower, at times
 - 22 Plummet
 - 26 They hold water
 - 27 Kind of history
 - 28 Roman wrap
 - 29 Leafy vegetables
- 6 Zigs and zags
 - 7 Birds of prey
 - 8 Terrier type
 - 9 Catch-22
 - 14 Witch's ride
 - 15 Suffer anguish
 - 16 Spotted wildcats
 - 18 Retirement fund (4,3)
 - 23 Proficient
 - 24 Money owed
 - 25 Sound rebound
 - 27 Egyptian cobra

SUDOKU

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

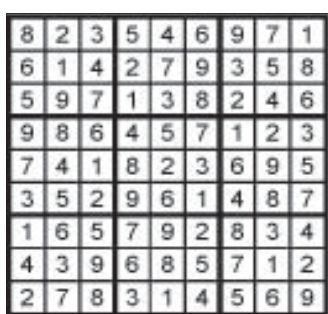


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Man kills youth for molesting daughter

POST NEWS NETWORK

Parjang, Oct 19: A man allegedly murdered a youth after he reportedly found him molesting his minor daughter near a nullah at Mundasahi Mohanpasi village under Parjang police limits in Dhenkanal district Saturday, police said.

The incident came to the fore after accused Rupa Pingua surrendered before Dadraghati outpost police, and narrated about the happenings Sunday. The victim was identified as Karunakar Behera, a resident of Colony No-1 under

the police outpost. Based on his statements, Dadraghati OIC Bikash Chandra Behera detained Rupa and launched an investigation. Later, police launched a search operation at Gambharia nullah and recovered the body.

A scientific team rushed to the crime scene for investigation, as Parjang IIC Dhiren Kumar Behera, Dadraghati OIC and ASI Ajay Samal intensified the probe. The body was sent to Parjang community health centre (CHC) for postmortem even as a murder case was registered in this connection. The in-

cident occurred when the deceased had gone near the nullah. Sources said Karunakar spotted Rupa's minor daughter there and tried to molest her when the latter screamed for help. Hearing the screams, the girl's father, along with some other villagers, rushed there to help her. Seeing Rupa fast approaching him, Karunakar jumped into the nullah and tried to save himself.

However, Rupa hurled a stone at Karunakar which struck his earlobe. Rupa also jumped into the nullah and allegedly crushed Karunakar in the muck.

SC: Non-implementation of 8.82L orders alarming

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 19: The Supreme Court has expressed serious concern over non-implementation of more than 8.82 lakh judgements passed by courts across the country in civil disputes, terming the situation as "highly disappointing" and "alarming".

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and Pankaj Mithal made the remarks while reviewing the compliance of its March 6 order that had directed all High Courts to instruct civil courts within their jurisdiction to decide "execution petitions" within six months.

"Execution petitions" are the pleas filed by decree holders, who have won the civil disputes, seeking enforcement of the verdicts.

The court had also made it clear that presiding officers would be



held liable for any delay in presiding with its directive.

"The statistics which we have received are highly disappointing. The figures of the pendency of the execution petitions across the country are alarming. As on date, 8,82,578 execution petitions are pending across the country," the bench said. The bench said in the last six months from March 6, a total of 3,38,685 such petitions have been decided and disposed of.

The bench, in its October 16 order, said, "As observed in our

main judgement, after the decree is passed, if it is going to take years and years to execute the decree, then it makes no sense and would be nothing short of travesty of justice."

The top court said it is once again requesting all the High Courts to evolve some procedure and guide their respective district judiciary for effective and expeditious disposal of the execution petitions which are pending as on date.

The apex court, however, observed that "unfortunately, the Karnataka High Court has failed to furnish us with the necessary data in this regard."

"Asking the apex court registry to once again give a reminder to the Karnataka High Court to provide the data regarding the disposal of the execution petitions

in the last six months and the pendency of it as on date.

"The Registrar General of the High Court of Karnataka owes an explanation why he has failed to provide us with the necessary information. Two weeks' time is granted to the registrar general of the high court to offer his explanation in this regard," it said.

Posting the matter for reporting further progress April 10 next year, the court said that it wanted complete figures from all the High Courts regarding the status of execution petitions the way they have forwarded.

"When this matter is notified once again April 10, 2026, we want all the HCs on their original side also to furnish the necessary information as regards the pending execution petitions as well as disposal of the same," it said.



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Napoleonic jewels stolen from Louvre

AGENCIES

Paris, Oct 19: Thieves broke into Paris' Louvre museum through a window Sunday, stealing "priceless" items of jewellery, including nine pieces from the jewellery collection of Napoleon and the Empress, before escaping on motor-bikes, the French government said.

"A robbery took place this morning at the opening of the Louvre Museum," Rachida Dati wrote on X. The Louvre said it would close "for exceptional reasons," offering no further details on the heist. No injuries were reported.

Dati said she was on site and that an investigation was underway.

French daily 'Le Parisien' reported that the criminals entered the world's most visited museum and former palace via the Seine-facing facade, where construction is underway.

They reportedly stole "nine pieces from the jewellery collection of Napoleon and the Empress," the newspaper said.



सत्यमेव जयते





**MESSAGE OF
HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF ODISHA
ON THE AUSPICIOUS OCCASION
OF "DIWALI - 2025"**

The festival of "DIWALI" is an intergral part and essence of our glorious cultural Asmita and spiritual tradition. It is a great occasion of reconnecting with our rich heritage and for building the path for the future.

On the auspicious occasion of "DIWALI", the Festival of Lights, I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to all the sisters and brothers of the State and wish everyone wellbeing, peace and prosperity.


(Hari Babu Kambhampati)

OIPR-15001/13/1234/2526

HAPPY Diwali

"Wishing you a bright and prosperous Diwali! May the glow of Diwali bring success to your business and fill your days with happiness and positivity!"



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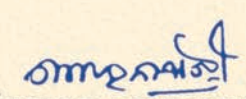


**ପବିତ୍ର ଦୀପାବଳି ଅବସରରେ
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା**

ଶୁଭ ଦୀପାବଳି

ଆଲୋକର ପର୍ବ ଦୀପାବଳି ଅବସରରେ ରାଜ୍ୟବାସୀ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଓ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ । ଆଲୋକର ଉପସ୍ଥିତି ଅନ୍ଧକାରକୁ ଅପସାରିତ କରିଥାଏ । ଜ୍ଞାନର ଆଲୋକ ମନୁଷ୍ୟକୁ ଅଜ୍ଞାନର ଅନ୍ଧକାର ଭିତରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରିଥାଏ । ଜ୍ଞାନାଲୋକ ହିଁ ସତ୍ୟ, ଧର୍ମ, ନ୍ୟାୟ ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧିର ପ୍ରତୀକ ।

ପବିତ୍ର ଦୀପାବଳି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ଜ୍ଞାନର ଆଲୋକ ଭରିଦେଇ ସୁଖ, ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ଆଣୁ, ଏହା ହିଁ ମା'ଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ।


(ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ନାୟକ)
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

OIPR-15001/13/1238/2526

Rain may dampen Diwali festivities



IMD has issued a yellow warning for several districts, cautioning residents about possible disruptions, while monitoring the formation of a low-pressure system around October 21

October is historically a month of intense cyclonic activity in the Bay of Bengal, prompting meteorologists to closely monitor the low-pressure system for any potential escalation into a depression

CM wishes a safe, eco-friendly Diwali

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday extended his warm greetings to the people of Odisha on the occasion of Diwali, urging them to celebrate the festival in an eco-friendly and safe manner. In a video message shared on the official X handle of the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Majhi said, "I extend my greetings and best wishes to the people of the state on the occasion of Diwali, the festival of lights and joy. The light of intelligence saves mankind from the darkness of ignorance. Diwali inspires us to embrace a bright and prosperous future, filled with new hopes, dreams, and aspirations." Appealing for an eco-friendly celebration, the CM added, "This year, let us celebrate a pollution-free and green Diwali by respecting nature and protecting the environment."



DETECTING SUSPECT: Police dog squad demonstrates during the concluding day of 70th State Police Duty Meet organised under the aegis of Odisha Police Crime Branch at Reserve Police Ground in Buxi Bazar, Cuttack Sunday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: The festive spirit in Odisha may face a setback, as rain clouds are expected to overshadow Diwali celebrations, following a similar disruption during Dussehra. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted rainfall in several parts of the state, particularly across coastal and southern districts, as a low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal (BoB) is likely to bring widespread showers.

Diwali was initially scheduled to be observed October 21, but according to the latest almanac calculations, the festival falls a day earlier, October 20. In response, the state government extended the holiday to two days, including Mon-

day. However, the forecast of a low-pressure system and expected rainfall now threatens to dampen the festive celebrations.

As per an IMD bulletin, "Under the influence of a cyclonic circulation over south Andaman Sea, a low pressure area is likely to form over southeast BoB around October 21. It is likely to move west-northwestwards and intensify further into a depression over central parts of south BoB and adjoining westcentral BoB during the subsequent 48 hours."

As residents prepare to light firecrackers Monday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow warning for several districts, including Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda,

Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Malkangiri, Rayagada, and Koraput.

According to the weatherman, thunderstorms with lightning, accompanied by gusty surface winds reaching speeds of 30 to 40 kmph, are likely at one or two places across the affected districts.

Addressing concerns about a possible cyclone, the IMD clarified that there is no forecast of a cyclone or super cyclone at present.

However, a low-pressure area is expected to form over the southeastern BoB around October 21, which could later intensify into a depression. It is noteworthy that October historically witnesses heightened cyclonic activity in the BoB, making the situation closely monitored by meteorologists.

Govt to ensure speedy justice for women: Min

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Oct 19: The state government has started discussions with High Court officials to set up fast-track courts across the state to speed up trials in cases related to crimes against women, thus ensuring speedy justice.

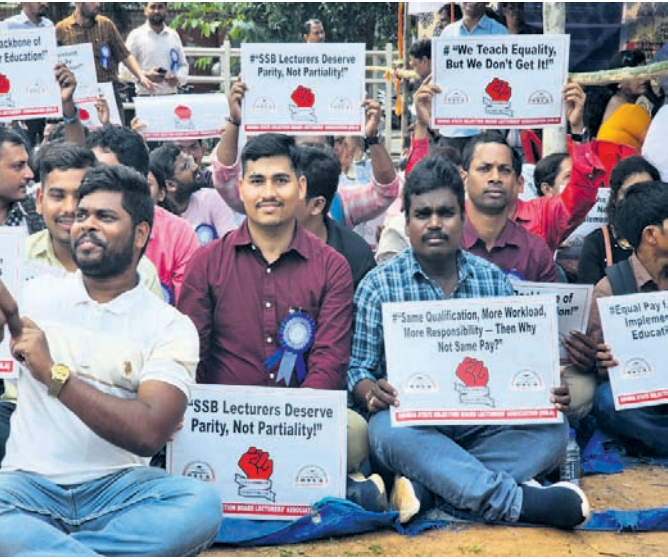
Speaking at the valedictory session of the Odisha Police Duty Meet in Cuttack Sunday, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan said the government is committed to strengthening the criminal justice system and ensuring speedy justice, particularly for women, children, and vulnerable sections of society.

Stating that the government is giving top priority to modernise the police department, the minister said the state has already appointed additional public prosecutors in all districts to ensure quicker disposal of cases.

The Police Duty Meet, which began October 16, saw participation from police personnel and sniffer dogs in a series of competitions showcasing policing skills.

Minister Harichandan said the role of police is critical in achieving the vision of a developed nation and a prosperous Odisha. DGP Yogesh Bahadur Khurania, who also addressed the gathering, said mindset change and knowledge enhancement are vital for improving professional standards in the force. "To upgrade skills, the Crime Branch will soon develop new training modules and conduct workshops across various ranges," he said.

SSB lecturers protest pay disparity in City



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: Thousands of State Selection Board (SSB) lecturers serving in aided colleges across the state held a peaceful protest at Lower PMG here Sunday, demanding parity in pay with government colleges.

Organised under the banner of the Odisha State Lecturers' Association (OSLA), over 1,000 lecturers from various aided colleges across the state participated in the agitation.

The lecturers alleged that despite possessing higher qualifications, their salaries were lower than those of school teachers and sought "equal pay for equal work" along with official government recognition on par with lecturers in government colleges.

Their primary demand is revision of grade pay from ₹4,600 to ₹6,000 with retrospective ef-

fect from 2016.

According to OSLA, this is not their first protest — the association has earlier held peaceful demonstrations for grade pay revision.

The association expressed hope that the BJP government, which had promised "equal pay for equal work" during the elections, would now fulfill that commitment.

"We were selected through a fair, transparent, and merit-based recruitment process conducted by the SSB," said OSLA representatives.

They added, "We serve as lecturers in various aided degree colleges across the state, performing the same duties and responsibilities as our counterparts in government colleges. Many of us hold PhD and MPHil degrees and have cleared NET and JRF examinations, yet we continue to be denied official

recognition and corresponding pay."

The lecturers pointed out that prior to 1989, the pay scale for college lecturers ranged between ₹700-1,600 and ₹1,350-2,975. In 1989, the scale was revised to ₹2,200-4,000, ensuring parity between aided and government college lecturers.

Subsequent revisions in 1996 and 2006 upgraded the pay scale to ₹15,600-39,100 with a grade pay of ₹5,400, which was later raised to ₹6,000.

However, the lecturers said that during the 2016 SSB recruitment, the newly appointed lecturers were given a lower grade pay of ₹4,600, a disparity that continues to this day.

OSLA described the issue as a governmental anomaly and an open violation of Rule 9, Chapter 3 of the Odisha Education (Recruitment and Conditions of Service of Teachers and Employees of Aided Educational Institutions) Rules, 1974, which guarantees equal pay for equal work.

The association's key demands inclusion of House Rent Allowance (HRA) and official government recognition, enhancement of retirement benefits and gratuity, amendment of Section 7C of the Odisha Education Act, 1974, independent leave entitlement for women lecturers, time-bound promotions, and recognition as Assistant Professors.

The protest was led and coordinated by OSLA vice-president Manas Ranjan Sahoo, general secretary Gaurav Sharma, joint secretary Tulasi Raut, treasurer Gayadhar Mallick, and joint treasurer Tathagata Raut.

Hunger strike against dumping yard Oct 29

Bhubaneswar: The 'Save Sainik School, Remove Dump Yard' outfit has announced an indefinite hunger strike in front of the Regional Office of the State Pollution Control Board October 29, demanding the immediate closure of the illegal Alia Gada dumping yard. The outfit claims that for over 20 years, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has been illegally dumping waste on more than 20 acres of land near the Sainik School, creating severe health and environmental hazards for nearby residents. Despite repeated complaints, the State Pollution Control Board issued a consent to operate (CTO) to BMC August 12, 2025, allowing operations of composting, recycling, and effluent treatment units without proper verification. Activists allege this was done in violation of environmental laws, given the site's proximity to schools, universities, and dense residential areas.

NUAPADA BYPOLL

Naveen may campaign for two days in Nov 1st week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nuapada, Oct 19: A day after the ruling BJP held a rally here, the opposition BJD organised a padayatra and public gathering Sunday to display its strength ahead of candidate Snehangini Chhuria filing her nomination for the upcoming bypoll in the Nuapada Assembly segment. Party sources said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is likely to hit the campaign trail November 6 and 7 to canvass support for Chhuria.

Though the Congress has accused the BJD of having a 'deal' with the BJP, the rally demonstrated a full-scale campaign by the regional party to retain its stronghold. Nuapada constituency had long been held by the BJD headed by Naveen

Patnaik since 2009, apart from a brief disruption in 2014 when the BJP's Basant Panda won.

The Nuapada bypoll was triggered by the death of four-time local MLA and ex-minister Rajendra Dholakia on September 8. His son's switch to the BJP prompted the BJD to nominate Chhuria, a former Baragarh legislator, to contest the seat. She will file her papers Monday.

Accompanied by hundreds of party workers and leaders, Chhuria held the rally from the Shiv temple of Nuapada. "What you see today is not BJD's show of strength. The party's real strength lies in people and its workers. Our workers wanted to hold a rally and we are here on the streets," Chhuria told reporters.

Kotpad weavers deserve global recognition: Experts

Master Weavers' Management Training Programme aims to strengthen Kotpad handloom legacy, enhance global recognition, and promote sustainable livelihoods

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Koraput, Oct 19: The rich legacy of Kotpad weavers, who have been hand-crafting exquisite textiles for generations, deserves global recognition through strategic branding and promotion, experts observed during the valedictory session of a two-day Master Weavers' Management Training Programme.

The event was jointly organised by the Central University of Odisha (CUO), Koraput, and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Sambalpur, at the CUO Sunabeda campus.

The initiative, backed by the Ministry of Education, was launched in line with directives given by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan during his visit to CUO in July, aimed at strengthening traditional weaving skills and promoting



sustainable livelihoods for master weavers.

CUO vice-chancellor Narasingh Charan Panda graced the inaugural session as chief guest. Highlighting the importance of collaboration between CUO, IIM Sambalpur, and other central educational institutions, Panda said such partnerships could bridge the gap between academic knowledge and social impact. He stressed

the need to strengthen the supply chain, ensure fair pricing for weavers, expand access to global markets, and enhance their income through effective management practices. "Universities must go beyond academic boundaries and contribute to social upliftment," he added.

Speaking on the occasion, IIM Sambalpur director Mahadeo Jaiswal highlighted the

potential of a reverse business model to empower weavers. He emphasised the significance of digital platforms, including ONDC and other e-commerce websites, to reach global markets, and underscored the importance of skill development and management training in improving business efficiency and sustainability for weavers.

Gracing the occasion as guest of honour, CUO registrar Rakesh Kumar Lenka lauded the university's initiatives to empower local weavers as part of its social responsibility. He added that the training programme would help strengthen their entrepreneurial skills and enhance product positioning in wider markets.

Programme coordinator Prasant Kumar Behera appreciated the Kotpad weavers for preserving traditional and sustainable weaving techniques, noting their role in safeguard-

Backed by the Ministry of Education and guided by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's directives, the initiatives seeks to revive Kotpad's traditional weaving techniques

Organisers emphasise academic-social collaboration, stressing the use of digital platforms, skill development, effective management practices, and global market outreach

ing India's cultural heritage. Co-coordinator Sujit Kumar Pruseth described the event as a successful model of collaboration between academia and society.

A total of 21 master weavers, including five women, from various villages in the Kotpad block of Koraput district, actively participated in the training programme.

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	33.0°	31.2°	Fog/mist in the morning and partly cloudy sky later
Min Temp	25.0°	23.2°	
Humidity	83%	85%	
Rainfall	NIL	3.1mm	

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Cash worth ₹90L seized from trains; three detained



POST NEWS NETWORK

Muniguda, Oct 19: Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel seized ₹90 lakh in cash from two trains during a special operation between Kesinga and Titilagarh railway stations and detained three individuals, sources said Sunday. The suspects and the cash were handed over to the Income Tax department for investigation.

The operation targeted illegal transportation of goods and unaccounted cash. While inspecting Bhagat Ki Kothi Weekly Express (No. 18573) Thursday, RPF officers K Swayam Prakash, Hanuman Singh, and Shailendra Kumar, found Naresh Kumar Agrawal of Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi district carrying ₹20 lakh in cash.

Agrawal, who claimed the money was for his nephew's

wedding, provided only an Aadhaar card copy and mobile number, lacking valid documentation. He was detained and transferred to the Sambalpur Income Tax department.

RPF officers inspecting Dharti Aaba Superfast Express (No. 22838) Friday discovered Umesh Prasad of Gaya in Bihar and Prabhat Kumar Sahu of Khunti in Jharkhand, carrying cash worth ₹70 lakh.

The duo admitted to transporting the cash from Kesinga to Ranchi for their employer but failed to provide supporting documents, offering only Aadhaar copies, mobile numbers, and PAN details.

They were also handed over to the Sambalpur Income Tax department. RPF Sub-Inspector K Swayam Prakash said the investigation into the source of recovered cash continues.

Man held for issuing murder threats on Insta

Digapahandi: Police here have arrested a man from Bada Dumbula village in Ganjam district after he allegedly posted an Instagram video brandishing a sword and threatening to kill three people from his village. The accused identified as Sushant Goud, also known as Mahakud, was seen waving a sword and saying he would take off their heads in the video. He reportedly recorded the video himself and uploaded it on the social media platform, where it quickly went viral. After the clip drew widespread attention, it came to the notice of Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M. The SP directed Digapahandi IIC (in-charge)-cum-DSP Prashant Kumar Patra to investigate and take action. SI Raj Kishore Patra filed a complaint and a case (373/25) was registered at Digapahandi police station. Investigating officer ASI Manoj Singh seized the sword and the accused's mobile phone before his arrest and produced him in court. He was remanded to Digapahandi sub-jail custody after the magistrate rejected his bail plea.

IIMC Dhenkanal student represents India at MIPCOM in Cannes, France

Dhenkanal: Asmita Adhikari, a student of English Journalism at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), Dhenkanal, was selected as part of the official delegation of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to represent India at MIPCOM Waves Bazar in Cannes, France, held from October 13 to 16. According to official sources, Asmita participated in the event under the WAVES Bazar Global Outreach Programme. Her travel and hospitality expenses were fully sponsored by the Government of India. Speaking from Cannes, Asmita said, "It's really exciting being in France and meeting such talented and ambitious people. Talking to people from diverse backgrounds has been challenging, but also very enriching." Asmita said the experience helped her gain confidence and push herself to learn and perform better.

Adivasi Mahotsav 2025 concludes in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: The 12th edition of Adivasi Mahotsav (Parichaya: The National Tribal Carnival) organised at IDCO Exhibition Ground here concluded Sunday.

The event, which began October 11 and was organised by Saa Parichaya Foundation, saw a huge gathering of people and eminent figures from various walks of life including ministers, journalists and political figures.

Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Jual Oram, BJP leader Pabitra Mohan Dash, eminent journalist Satya Prakash Nayak, Mahanga MLA Sarada Prasad Pradhan and others attended the event.

Besides, **Dharitri** and **Orissa POST** Editor Tathagata Satpathy and Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy also graced the occasion.

During his address, Oram said, "The Scheduled Tribe (ST) bears a unique identity owing to its geographical isolation, socioeconomic status, distinct culture and various



Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Jual Oram addresses the concluding day ceremony of 'Adivasi Mahotsav' organised by Parichaya Foundation at Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar Sunday. Also seen on the dais are: **Dharitri** and **Orissa POST** Editor Tathagata Satpathy, the newspapers' Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy and other dignitaries

other factors. It doesn't include any caste, creed or religion." The Union minister also thanked the tribal people across the country who participated in the carnival.

Speaking on the occasion, **Dharitri** and **Orissa POST** Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy hailed the carnival stressing that it plays a crucial role in exercising cultural transmission. She also called for strong reforms to preserve tribal culture, customs and language.



12-yr-old girl raped

Daringbadi: Women took it upon themselves and lodged a complaint at Daringbadi police station in Kandhamal district after a 12-year old girl was raped by a married man, police said Sunday. The survivor, a Class VIII student, was staying with four younger siblings at a village under the police limits as their parents work as migrant labourers in another state. In the absence of her parents, the girl used to take care of her siblings. Sources said the accused informed the girl that her father had sent money to his account to buy her a pair of chappals and asked her to accompany him to Daringbadi. Believing his words, the girl went with the man. The accused picked her to a deserted forest on the way and raped her. While leaving, the accused even threatened to kill her if she disclosed the matter before others. Afraid, the girl managed to return home. However, after she fell sick and developed some complications, she narrated her ordeal before some village women. The women ganged up and lodged a complaint at the police station. Police registered a case and launched an investigation, Daringbadi IIC Kanak Majhi said.

Police offer rewards for info on Maoists

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kalyansinghpur/Rayagada, Oct 19: Posters announcing cash rewards for information leading to the arrest of Maoist leaders have appeared in various parts of the Niyamgiri hill region spanning Kalyansinghpur, Muniguda, and Chandrapur blocks of Rayagada district.

The posters, spotted Sunday near the panchayat office at Parshali village, as well as at the block and tehsil offices in Kalyansinghpur, call on the public to "catch Maoists and earn rewards". The posters

displayed names and photographs of several senior Maoist leaders, including Central Committee member Ganesh Uike, special zonal committee member Nikhil alias Shivaji, Sudarshan alias Bikash, Ankita alias Indu, Sukru alias Krishna, Nitu, military platoon commander Shila alias Nagamani, Anwesh alias Renu, divisional committee member Mamata alias Saite, and Nakul alias Chandra, along with the respective rewards ranging from ₹20 lakh up to ₹1 crore.

The posters also mention that anyone providing cred-

ible information about the Maoists to the mobile number 9437643839 will be rewarded, and their identity will be kept confidential.

For over a decade, Maoists have been active in the Niyamagiri hills spread across Muniguda, Bissamcuttack and Kalyansinghpur areas and carrying out several violent incidents. As the Chandrapur and Muniguda blocks border Kandhamal and Kalahandi districts, police have strengthened surveillance in these areas, deploying CRPF personnel to curb extremist activities.

Police sources said that following intensified anti-Maoist operations in neighbouring Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh—where several top Maoist cadres have been killed in encounters and many have surrendered—some extremists may have taken shelter in forested parts of Rayagada and adjoining districts.

Officials suspect that the posters were issued as part of the ongoing counter-insurgency campaign against the active Bansadhara-Ghumusar-Nagavali (Baghuna) Maoist division operating in southern Odisha.

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FOCUS ECONOMY

GUJARAT PARADOX



On one hand, the state showcases India's most successful economic management and industrial expansion; on the other, it reveals stubborn deficits in human well-being

na, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. The state's rapid industrialisation has not generated inclusive employment or social mobility at the scale required to lift all regions equally.

The labour market, though vibrant in manufacturing and ports, still lacks balance in quality jobs, social protection, and wage parity.

The word "convoluted" captures the Gujarat paradox. On one hand, the state showcases India's most successful economic management and industrial expansion; on the other, it reveals stubborn deficits in human well-being.

The NITI Aayog indices collectively paint a picture of dual realities. High economic growth has not automatically improved nutrition, housing, or social equality. The social sectors and welfare remain underfunded.

The so-called "Gujarat Model" has long been hailed as a template for other states. Yet, the model's focus on industrial output and ease of business has come at the cost of welfare investments and equitable distribution hurting human development.

NITI Aayog's SDG India Index further highlights Gujarat's uneven performance. While it scores high on "Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure," it lags on "Zero Hunger" and "Good Health and Well-being." These contrasts suggest that economic growth alone is insufficient without strong social policies to ensure that benefits reach all segments of the population.

The data expose a critical policy challenge. Gujarat must channel its fiscal surplus and industrial strength toward improving health, education, housing, and nutrition.

INFA

Gujarat supposedly the most prosperous state and a dynamic economic model for the country sprung a surprise with a fast reshuffle through resignations of 16 ministers and swift induction of 25, 12 first-time MLAs, days before Diwali.

It may be indicator of the developments below the surface. The quick fix solution is necessitated also by a Gujarati belief that the fortnight following the Diwali considered inauspicious. In a Congress-ruled system such reshuffles were not unknown. That's the BJP rarely do. Is it an indicator of a tempest?

The sudden resignation on October 16 of the entire Gujarat cabinet, except for Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, is stated to be a strategic move to address administrative inefficiencies, counter anti-incumbency sentiment, and strengthen its position before upcoming local elections.

No strange is the phenomenal rise of Harsha Sanghavi, a Jain, as deputy CM, to hold the home ministry, so far, a domain of the CM. He is the sixth deputy CM since the times of Chimanbhai Patel.

Gujarat's industrial strength, fiscal prudence, and infrastructure prowess routinely earn top ranks in national indices. Yet, beneath the veneer of prosperity, NITI Aayog's data and other official reports reveal a troubling paradox: Gujarat's economic progress has not translated into commensurate gains in human development. Recent data compiled by RBI reveals that MP and Gujarat have the lowest daily wages in India.

Talking about the positives, Gujarat boasts one of India's most diversified industrial bases, leading in chemicals, pet-

rochemicals, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and gems and jewellery. It contributes over one-third of India's chemical output and 62 per cent of petrochemical production, supported by major ports like Kandla, Mundra, and Dahej. With over 33 lakh MSMEs, the state sustains strong job creation and exports.

In 2023-24, Gujarat emerged as India's top destination for bank-funded projects, reflecting investor confidence and policy stability. Handling 40 per cent of India's cargo and 30 per cent of exports, Gujarat remains among NITI Aayog's top performers.

But NITI Aayog's National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and human development studies tell a different story. The same data that praise Gujarat's fiscal prudence also expose the fault lines of social inequality and poor human outcomes.

Despite its prosperity, Gujarat has one of the highest rates of malnutrition among major Indian states. The National MPI 2015-16 to 2019-21 found that 38 per cent of the popula-

tion is undernourished. In rural areas, nearly half of all residents face nutritional deprivation, pointing at weaknesses in food distribution, health access, and household income.

August 2025 reports indicate that 7,269 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) had shut down in Gujarat over the previous five years, resulting in over 33,000 job losses.

The report also noted that 23.3 per cent of the state's population lives in inadequate housing. In rural Gujarat, substandard housing conditions prevail in districts like Dahod, Narmada, and Chhota Udepur—regions that have not shared the same growth momentum as the industrial hubs of Ahmedabad, Surat, and Vadodara.

The contrast is striking: while cities such as Surat boast some of India's highest per capita incomes, Dahod remains among the most impoverished districts in the country.

While Gujarat's poverty intensity has declined over time, its headcount ratio remains higher than those of Telanga-



Shivaji Sarkar

MIGRATION FROM RURAL GUJARAT TO INDUSTRIAL ZONES AND OTHER STATES REMAINS HIGH, REFLECTING LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES IN THE HINTERLAND DESPITE OVERALL ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

AI is hollowing out higher education

Modern AI technologies severely impede humans' ability to learn and retain skills, while also making it nearly impossible for academics and other experts to cultivate and disseminate knowledge. Many scholars, including us, have highlighted the threat posed by techno-solutionism in education: Rather than expanding our intellectual horizons, these technologies undermine the very conditions that allow us to think for ourselves.

The corporations profiting from AI—including Microsoft, OpenAI, Nvidia, and ASML—have a vested interest in maintaining the current hype. Their oligopolistic control over both hardware and software depends on the exaggerated claim that cognitive labor can be fully outsourced to their models.

In reality, the apparent achievements of these systems rest on the wholesale theft of humans' intellectual labor. Most notably, large language models (LLMs) have been trained by scraping books and scholarly works without the authors' or publishers' consent, fragmenting and remixing them into patchwork plagiarism packaged as human-like responses.

According to the AI industry's narrative, all human creativity, innovation, and

knowledge are essentially automatable, rendering people obsolete. Even advocates of "human-centered AI" assume this to be true.

Yet studies in automation and cognitive science, together with the long history of AI boom-and-bust cycles, demonstrate that sweeping claims of near-total automation are exaggerated, self-defeating, and toxic. Automation—even when it works—must operate at a much lower level than these companies suggest to succeed without eroding the skills and agency of human operators.

Ultimately, the collective strategy of AI companies threatens to deskill precisely those people who are essential for society to function. What value, after all, is there in automating art, thinking, or reading—especially in educational and academic settings? None. On the contrary, automation of knowledge and culture by private companies is a worrying prospect—conjuring dystopian and outright fascist scenarios.

The deskilling, denigration, and displacement of teachers and scholars have historically been central to fascist takeovers, since educators serve as bulwarks against propaganda, anti-intellectualism, and illiteracy. Today, AI advocates do not merely assume automation is necessary; they

aggressively proselytize their faith, thereby paving the way for techno-fascism.

Academics exist, in part, to speak truth to power, which requires their independence from government and corporate influence. The United States today demonstrates the consequences of hollowing out academic freedom, critical thinking, and impartiality, as President Donald Trump's administration and Big Tech companies collaborate to undermine academic institutions' ability to sustain the kind of scientific work that exposes AI's false promises.

Worse still, the techno-fascist assault on universities increasingly comes from within. In recent years, the AI industry has captured university administrations, co-opted faculty unions, and even enlisted individual teachers and researchers to promote its tools to colleagues and students. Far from offering genuine solutions, these technologies exacerbate social injustices and corrode the ecosystem of human knowledge.

To sustain the latest iteration of the AI con, the industry relies on anthropomorphic sleight of hand—claiming that models "think," "reason," and "learn" to suggest cognitive abilities they demonstrably lack and may never develop. This rhetorical trick not only

exaggerates the products' capabilities but also dehumanizes people by falsely humanizing machines, which is why many educators and students have begun to reject AI.

In response, the AI industry has lobbied government agencies to mandate the use of its products, claiming that without them, students will be unprepared for the job market. What is actually needed is the opposite: scholars with expertise in AI-related fields must have the freedom to critique these technologies, while those in other fields must be able to teach without interference by companies seeking to cash in.

Industry agendas—whether the industry is tobacco, petroleum, pharmaceuticals, or tech—rarely align with human welfare or disinterested research, especially when left unchecked and unregulated. Instead, their interests are maximizing profit and market power. The AI industry is no different, and educators should repudiate its false promises.

This commentary is based on joint work with Marcela Suarez and Barbara Müller.

Olivia Guest is Assistant Professor of Computational Cognitive Science at Radboud University. Iris van Rooij is Professor of Computational Cognitive Science at Radboud University.

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Olivia Guest & Iris van Rooij

THE TERM "ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE," COINED IN 1955, HAS ALWAYS BEEN MORE A MARKETING PHRASE THAN A TAXONOMIC CLASSIFICATION

WISDOM CORNER

Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Love is the only reality and it is not a mere sentiment. It is the ultimate truth that lies at the heart of creation.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

A child's spirit is like a child, you can never catch it by running after it; you must stand still, and, for love, it will soon itself come back.

ARTHUR MILLER

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1822: The Congress of Verona, the last of the meetings held by the European powers in accordance with the terms of the Quadruple Alliance, opened in Verona, Italy.

1968: Former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy married Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis.

1973: During the ongoing Watergate investigation, U.S. President Richard Nixon ordered special prosecutor Archibald Cox fired, resulting in the resignations of Attorney General Elliot Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William D. Ruckelshaus, both of whom refused to carry out his request; the events became known as the "Saturday Night Massacre" of Justice Department officials.

1977: A plane carrying the Southern rock band Lynyrd Skynyrd, known for such songs as Free Bird and Sweet Home Alabama, crashed in Gillsburg, Mississippi, killing singer Ronnie Van Zant and guitarist Steve Gaines, among others.

LOL

YOU AREN'T THE WORST

Gerrad, a friend of mine, bought a computer, even though he had never even used a typewriter before. After investigating the computer, he decided to call the help line. A friendly voice explained step by step how his new machine worked. All went well until the voice told him to press the space bar. After studying the keyboard, Gerrad said; "I've got the latest model and it doesn't have a space bar." But after further explanation, he managed to find it. A week later, Gerrad again had problems and called the help line. An instructor was then sent



to his house for training. But after a few minutes, Gerrad's head was spinning. "You don't need to go any further," he sighed, "I don't understand a thing."

To cheer him up, the instructor said: "Hey, there are people who understand a lot less than you. Last week we had someone on the phone who didn't even know where the space bar was!"

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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Reform or restriction?

Sir, The recent CBT decisions on EPFO withdrawals, touted as "ease of living" reforms paradoxically tighten access to one's own savings. While merging 13 provisions into 3 categories brings clarity, the mandatory 25% minimum balance & extended waiting periods (12 months for full PF, 36 for pension) restrict financial autonomy. This is especially harsh in a volatile job market where immediate access can be crucial. Including employer contributions in withdrawals is welcome yet the delays may burden the unemployed. These reforms appear more fiscal control than welfare driven. True ease of living demands trust in workers financial judgment not gatekeeping their hard earned money. The government must balance regulation with empathy.

Vijaykumar HK, RAICHUR

Strategic recalibration

Sir, Apropos, "India, Pak in war of words", Orissa POST, October 19. The escalating war of words between India and Pakistan has once again stirred regional tension, hinting at deeper strategic undercurrents. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's strong assertion that "every inch of Pakistan's territory lies within the range of India's BrahMos missiles" drew a sharp reaction from Pakistan's Army Chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, who warned that Pakistan would deliver a "decisive response" to any provocation. The exchange, though rhetorical, reflects rising friction between the two nuclear-armed neighbours amid heightened border vigilance and shifting geopolitical alignments. Analysts view these statements not merely as verbal posturing but as signals of strategic recalibration on both sides. India's emphasis on military self-reliance and advanced deterrence capabilities through indigenous weapon systems like BrahMos has clearly unsettled Islamabad. Pakistan's counterstatement seeks to reassure its domestic audience and project parity. Yet, beneath these public exchanges may lie renewed military preparedness and policy assertiveness. The sharp rhetoric underscores that the uneasy peace across the Line of Control remains fragile, and the verbal sparring could be a precursor to more intense diplomatic or military maneuvering in the subcontinent.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE



Banke Bihari temple’s treasury room opens after 49 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mathura (UP), Oct 19: The 'Toshkhana' (treasury) of the Banke Bihari temple in Mathura, which had been locked since 1971, was opened Saturday on the orders of a high-powered committee constituted by the Supreme Court.

The 'Toshkhana' is the room located adjacent to the temple's sanctum sanctorum.

The Supreme Court, in its August 2025 order, had constituted a 12-member high-powered interim committee headed by retired Allahabad High Court judge Ashok Kumar to look after the day-to-day affairs of the temple.

"The room was opened under the supervision of a civil judge junior division with other members, including four Goswami members. There was some difficulty in opening the room. The process started at 1 pm and was finished at 5 pm, when the room was sealed again. Some brass utensils and wooden items were found, and no precious metal was found. Some boxes and wooden boxes were also found," ADM (Finance and Revenue) Dr Pankaj Kumar Verma said.

Most of the work is complete, the room may be opened on the next date decided by the civil judge junior division for completion of the remaining work,



the ADM said. The auditor's team has made an inventory of the items found in the room, he added. The Goswami community was opposing the move. A member of the high-powered committee, Shailendra Goswami, said the room shouldn't have been opened in the first place. "I have opposed the move

The Supreme Court, in its August 2025 order, had constituted a 12-member high-powered interim committee headed by retired Allahabad High Court judge Ashok Kumar to look after the day-to-day affairs of the temple

and even wrote letters," he said. "This is an interim committee, not a permanent one; the

Honourable Supreme Court constituted it to ensure facilitation of 'darshans' to devotees only. The committee should not interfere elsewhere. They are taking undue advantage and usurping authority. Why are they opening the room, and what do they want to prove?" Shailendra Goswami said.

Echoing their concern, Supreme Court lawyer and temple seawayat (servitor) Sumit Goswami said this interim committee was not given the powers to open the 'Toshkhana'; they were supposed to look after the devotees' concerns, and ensure the ease of 'darshan' of Shree Bankey Bihari Thakur.

Moreover, live streaming of

the process was not done, he claimed. However, Shailendra Goswami said that videography was done. One Goswami member of the high-powered committee, Srivardhan Goswami, was not present due to health reasons, he added.

Gyanendra Goswami, a functionary at the Banke Bihar temple, raised concerns about the opening of the room, and said the process should have been undertaken in a more transparent way. He also asked why the media was not allowed. The committee forgot the prime objective laid by the honourable apex court during its formation, that is to upgrade the facility for devotees, he said.

Yogi hits out at Oppn after opening Deepotsav

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ayodhya (UP), Oct 19: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Sunday hit out at the opposition parties over their stance on the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, and said now "lamps are being lit where bullets were once fired".

After inaugurating the ninth Deepotsav in Ayodhya Sunday, where he performed 'Rajy-abhishek' (coronation) of Ram and Sita, including 'pujan', 'vandana', and 'aarti', Adityanath also slammed the Opposition for "rejecting" the invitation for the consecration ceremony of Ram temple in January 2024.

"During the Ram Janmabhoomi movement in this very Ayodhya, Congress said Ram is a myth, while the Samajwadi Party fired bullets at Ram devotees," he alleged.

"Today, Uttar Pradesh does not have to face an identity crisis. We are now lighting lamps where bullets were once fired," Adityanath said.

The chief minister was referring to the police firing on 'Kar Sevaks' in Ayodhya during the Ram temple agitation in 1990, when the Samajwadi Party (SP) was in power with Mulayam Singh Yadav at the helm.

The firing became a hot political issue with the BJP accusing the SP government of appeasement politics – a charge that Adityanath reiterated subtly by recalling the incident.

Criticising the opposition for turning down the invitation for the consecration ceremony, the chief minister said, "These are the same people who prostrate at Babar's grave, but when



New world records with 26.17L diyas

Ayodhya(UP): Two new world records were set at this year's Deepotsav in Ayodhya: 26.17 lakh diyas lit at the same place as 2,128 people performed 'aarti' together for the grand celebrations in the temple town, the Uttar Pradesh government said. Representatives from the Guinness World Records made the announcement after verifying the count of the diyas using drones, a government statement said.

UP Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh and Principal Secretary Amrit Abhijat presented the Guinness certificate to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The first Guinness award was given for the largest display of oil lamps (26,17,215) achieved jointly by the UP Department of Tourism, the Ayodhya administration, and the Rammanohar Lohia Avadh University. Another award was given for the most number of people performing 'aarti' simultaneously. The tourism department, the district administration and the Saryu Aarti Samiti in Ayodhya jointly achieved this feat, the statement said.

they are invited to the Pran Pratistha ceremony of Ram Mandir, they reject it."

"These (opposition) are the same people who still try to create communal hatred by adopting the 'divide and rule' policy of the British," he said.

Highlighting the transformation of the city, he said Ayodhya now showcases an amazing

confluence of development and heritage.

On the scale of this year's Deepotsav festival, the chief minister said 1,51,00,000 'diyas' (earthen lamps) are being lit across Uttar Pradesh.

"When we first decided to hold the Deepotsav in Ayodhya Dham in 2017, the intention was to show the world how

lamps are lit.

"Today, lakhs of lamps are lit in Ayodhya, which has become a symbol of the resolve of every Indian. These are not just lamps, they also symbolise the victory of faith over 500 years of darkness," Adityanath said, according to a press statement.

"The lamp stands testimony to the insults that had to be faced and the battles our ancestors fought in these 500 years. "Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram was seated in a tent then, but now as the ninth edition of Deepotsav takes place, Shri Ram is seated in his magnificent temple. Every lamp reminds us that truth can be disturbed, not defeated," the chief minister said.

Adityanath also said that Deepotsav is proof that no politics can imprison faith.

Delhi: 70% of NIOS Class X students failed in last 4 yrs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Under the 'NIOS Project,' an average of 70 per cent of students who took the 10th grade examination have failed in the last four years — this was revealed by the Delhi's Directorate of Education (DoE) in response to a Right to Information (RTI) application filed by PTI.

The project was launched by the Delhi government to reduce the rate of students failing in the 9th and 10th grades and the number of students dropping out of school.

Under this project, students who fail in the 9th and 10th grades and those who are weak in academics are registered with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and separate classes are held for them.

According to information received from the DoE, in 2024, 7,794 students were registered for the 10th grade under the 'NIOS Project', of whom only 37 per cent, i.e., 2,842, passed the examination.

The Directorate informed that 8,563 children were registered in 2017, 18,344 in 2018, 18,624 in 2019, 15,061 in 2020, 11,322 in 2021, 10,598 in 2022 and 29,436 in 2023 under the project. As per the information received through RTI, only 3,748 students could pass the examination in 2017, 12,096 in 2018, 17,737 in 2019, 14,995 in 2020, 2,760 in 2021, 3,480 in 2022 and 7,658 in 2023. This shows that in the last four years, only 30% of NIOS students passed



The project was launched by the Delhi government to reduce the rate of students failing in the 9th and 10th grades and the number of students dropping out of school

Under this project, students who fail in the 9th and 10th grades and those who are weak in academics are registered with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and separate classes are held for them

the exam.

The principals of the respective schools are responsible for registering students under this scheme. For students registering under the NIOS Project, an examination fee of Rs 500 per subject has been set. If a subject includes practicals, such as painting, home science or computer science, an additional Rs 120 is required for each practical subject.

In addition, the registration fee for five subjects is Rs 500, with an additional Rs 200 per

subject, and a separate Rs 230 per subject is charged for Transfer of Credit (TOC).

A teacher from a government school in Delhi, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "There are two main reasons behind children's failure. The first is no coordination."

He explained that teachers associated with the project do not inform the parents of registered children whether their children are attending school or not. Another reason, he said, is that students involved in the project do not experience the same school environment as other children, as teachers do not hold classes for academically weaker students.

Besides this, a major factor is that the principals, to improve their school's 10th-grade results, enrol students in NIOS who are weak in their studies. This separates these children from other students, the teacher pointed out.

GRAP Stage 2 curbs kick in as Delhi’s air turns ‘very poor’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has invoked Stage II of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) across Delhi-NCR as the city's air quality slipped into the "very poor" category, with the AQI crossing 300 mark.

The move came after the Sub-Committee on GRAP Saturday reviewed the worsening pollution levels and forecasts by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), which warned of further deterioration in the coming days.

"The AQI of Delhi has shown an increasing trend since morning and has been recorded as 296 at 4 pm and 302 at 7 pm," the CAQM said, directing authorities to implement all Stage II measures with immediate effect, in addition to Stage I actions already in force since October 14. The Centre's air quality panel also asked all implementing agencies to

keep strict vigil, particularly on dust mitigation and to ensure compliance with targeted timelines laid down under the comprehensive policy to curb air pollution in NCR.

Under Stage II of GRAP, several curbs and intensified actions include daily mechanical or vacuum sweeping and water sprinkling on identified roads, preferably before peak traffic hours, to control dust. Construction and demolition sites face intensified inspections to ensure strict enforcement of dust control measures.

To promote cleaner mobility, the GRAP Stage II mandates augmentation of public transport services through additional CNG and electric buses and increased frequency of metro services, along with differential fare rates to encourage off-peak travel.

Resident welfare associations (RWAs) are required to provide electric heaters to staff such as guards, gardeners and sanitation workers to prevent open burning of biomass and solid waste during winters.



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta interacts with the children of the DMRC Children's Home for the 'Diwali' celebrations PTI PHOTO

Delhi residents cheer as sale of green firecrackers begins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Happiness and excitement returned to the national capital's markets Sunday as the sale of green firecrackers began ahead of Diwali, following the Supreme Court's nod to allow the use of certified eco-friendly crackers this year.

At Sadar Bazar, one of the city's busiest wholesale markets, long queues formed outside firecracker shops as families, many accompanied by their children, waited eagerly to make their festive purchases.

Traders were seen attending to customers patiently while ensuring that every packet carried the NEERI stamp and scanner code, certifying them as "green crackers". "We are really thankful to the Supreme Court for allowing green firecrackers this



Diwali. It is such a special festival for us, and every year we miss celebrating it fully because of the ban. This new initiative is both environment-friendly and full of lights and colours that bring back the joy of Diwali in the right way," said Vishwanand Singh, a customer, adding that he bought only green-la

belled crackers this year. A shopkeeper at Sadar Bazar said traders had faced huge losses over the past few years due to the blanket ban on firecrackers.

"Now that the Supreme Court has given its nod, we are at least able to sell some crackers openly this year. The demand is high, but due to the short notice,

Traders were seen attending to customers patiently while ensuring that every packet carried the NEERI stamp and scanner code, certifying them as "green crackers"

the stock is limited. Whatever we could collect, we are offering to customers with the NEERI stamp and scanner confirming authenticity," he said.

Gurmeet Singh, who travelled from Durgapur to Sadar Bazar to buy crackers, said the move had brought festive cheer back to families.

"For the past four years, we couldn't celebrate properly -- not just Diwali, but any festival. Now that the ban has been lifted, you can imagine the happiness we and especially our children are feeling," he said.

On October 15, the Supreme Court permitted the sale and use of certified green firecrackers in Delhi and the NCR under regulated conditions, aiming to balance festive celebrations with environmental responsibility.

The district authorities, in collaboration with Delhi Police, have formed patrolling teams headed by area sub-divisional magistrates (SDMs) to ensure full compliance with the Supreme Court's guidelines regarding the sale and use of approved firecrackers, officials added.



of the day

quote

The residential facilities would also be upgraded in Bal Ashrams across the state, besides enhancing other facilities

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU | HIMACHAL PRADESH CM

We pledge that on Diwali 2027, the PDA government will purchase their diyas worth crores of rupees, which will generate enough income for them (the Prajapati community) to keep the Diwali light in their homes for several months

AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

In South 24 Parganas district, today I faced repeated attacks from illegal Bangladeshi Muslims. The obstruction, vandalism and chaos was orchestrated by none other than TMC Zila Parishad Member Rekha Gazi with the aid and support of SP Koteswara Rao

SUVENDU ADHIKARI | LEADER OF THE OPPN IN WB ASSEMBLY

SHORT TAKES

Man kills wife over ‘daily fights’; held

Etah(UP): A man allegedly killed his wife with a hammer Sunday following a domestic argument, police here said. The accused was identified as Premchandra Gupta, they said. According to police, an argument broke out between the couple. During this, Gupta attacked his wife, Gautami Devi, with a hammer and struck her on the head and neck. Circle Officer, Rajesh Singh, said, “The injured woman was taken out of the house and rushed to the medical college, where doctors declared her dead.” Gupta was taken into custody, and an FIR was registered against him. During interrogation, he confessed that his wife frequently quarrelled with him and that he acted out of rage due to “daily fights.”

Constable run over by truck

Panchkula: A Haryana Police constable was killed after being run over by a truck at a checkpoint here, an official said Sunday. The truck driver fled from the spot after breaking the police barricade, but was later nabbed, the official added. According to the police, constable Deepak was on duty at the checkpoint when the incident took place around 11 pm Saturday.

NCB busts illegal drug lab in Ratlam

Indore/New Delhi: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has arrested two persons, a BTech and another B Pharma graduate, after it busted an illegal narcotics manufacturing facility in Madhya Pradesh’s Ratlam district, the agency said Sunday. The clandestine unit was preparing Alprazolam, a sedative drug, in the powder form at the laboratory located in Sejawata village on the Mhow-Neemuch Road in Ratlam, about 290 kms from state capital Bhopal.

Banned cough syrup worth ₹3cr seized

Sonbhadra (UP): A joint team of police and excise department officials seized banned cough syrup worth ₹3 crore and arrested three accused in this connection here, an official said Sunday. Additional Superintendent of Police Anil Kumar said 1.19 lakh bottles of banned cough syrup worth about ₹3 crore, being transported from Ghaziabad to Jharkhand in two container trucks, were seized near Churk in Uttar Pradesh’s Sonbhadra district Saturday evening, and three accused were arrested.

Assam mourns Zubeen death; family, fans await answers

Garg’s wife Garima said the family, along with the people of the state, are waiting to know what happened in his final moments, and expressed faith in the legal system to unravel the truth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Oct 19: Even a month after Zubeen Garg’s death, people in Assam continue to mourn his loss and seek answers on the final moments of the singer.

Garg died while swimming in the sea in Singapore September 19. Garg’s wife Garima said the family, along with te people of the state, are waiting to know what happened in his final moments, and expressed faith in the legal system to unravel the truth. Thousands thronged Garg’s cremation site at Sonapur, on the outskirts of Guwahati, since early this morning, paying tributes to their beloved singer-composer.

Fans and friends of the singer-composer also visited his residence at Kahlipara area of the city and his studio in Zoo Road area to be with his family and join them in remembering him.

Memorial programmes were organised across the state, with people uniting in demanding expeditious investigation into the circumstances of death.

A 10-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) of state police’s CID is probing his death, with seven persons being arrested so far. Singapore Police is also conducting its investigation, with SIT officers from Assam set to visit the South-

Zubeen died while swimming in the sea in Singapore September 19

east Asian nation as part of its own probe.

Vedic rituals related to the occasion were organised by the family at his studio, with Garg’s father, wife, sister and others joining it.

Speaking to reporters outside the studio, Garima said, “The studio was dear to him. Since the initial rituals were performed at our residence and Jorhat, we decided to perform the Vedic rituals on completion of one month here.”

Asked for her comment on police probe into Garg’s death, she said, “We have faith in the investigation. Whom do we trust if not our own legal system? Zubeen was a straight-forward person and we want straight-forward investigation.”

“We are all waiting peacefully to know what happened. People of Assam are waiting to know what happened in his last moments,” Garima added.

Italian opera singer Gioconda Vessicelli, with whom Garg had collaborated for his yet-to-be released movie, also reached Guwahati to pay tributes to the cultural icon.

“Zubeen da used to say that she (Garima) is his tigress, who stood by him in good and

bad times. And he was right,” Vessicelli said, standing alongside Garima. She recalled her earlier visit to Guwahati to shoot with Garg, when she came into contact with his family.

“There is so much love in the family. I feel Zubeen da is here. I already feel the gods have done justice to Zubeen Garg,” Vessicelli added, referring to lakhs of people coming out to pay their last respects to the singer’s mortal remains and participating in his funeral procession.

Fans came in cars and buses to be at the final resting site of Garg, which has been drawing visitors for the last one month.

“We are a group of over 100 people and booked two buses. We wanted to be here with Zubeen da and pay our homage,” said a woman who had come from Boko in Kamrup district. Another group of women from West Karbi Anglong district arrived with a framed photograph of Garg as a mark of respect. People brought ‘gamosas’ (Assamese scarf) with lyrics of his songs written, his photographs and other items, besides lighting earthen lamps and incense sticks, in front of his cremation site.

Some leaders were saying that if two Thackerays come together, there’ll be fireworks. But Thane’s people will show them who’s the boss. Those who don’t stand by their principles will be rejected by the people

KNATH SHINDE | MAHA DY CM

ARMY ORGANISES ‘ZIRO HONOUR RUN’

Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lieutenant General (Retired) K T Parnaik Sunday flagged off the ‘Ziro Honour Run’, which was organised by the Army to pay tributes to the heroes of the 1962 India-China war



NMC okays 10,650 MBBS seats, 41 new colleges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: In a significant move aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s pledge on Independence Day 2024 to create 75,000 new medical seats over five years, the National Medical Commission (NMC) has approved 10,650 new MBBS seats for the academic year 2024-25.

This increase is part of a broader strategy to enhance the availability of medical education in India.

The addition of 41 new medical colleges has also brought the total number of medical institutions in the country to 816. According to NMC Chief Dr Abhijit Sheth, out of the 170 applications received for expanding undergraduate (UG) seats, comprising 41 from government colleges and 129 from private institutions, a total of 10,650 MBBS seats have been approved.

This will raise the overall MBBS seat count to 1,37,600 for the 2024-25 academic year, including seats in Institutes of National Importance (INI). For postgraduate (PG) courses, the NMC has received over 3,500 applications for new and renewed seats.

Dr Sheth stated that the commission expects an increase of around 5,000 PG seats, taking the total to 67,000 PG seats nationwide. The overall increase in both UG and PG seats this year will be approximately 15,000.

While the final approval process and counselling have experienced some delays, officials have assured that these procedures will be completed within the prescribed timelines.

A blueprint detailing the schedule for accreditation, examinations, and seat matrix approvals for the upcoming academic year will be published soon.



This increase is part of a broader strategy to enhance the availability of medical education in India.

The addition of 41 new medical colleges has also brought the total number of medical institutions in the country to 816

lished soon. Additionally, the portal for 2025-26 applications is set to open in early November.

Notably, Dr Sheth highlighted that this year marks the first time in recent history that all appeals against the Medical Assessment and Rating Board (MARB) decisions were resolved without any court interventions.

In an effort to enhance the quality of medical education, Dr Sheth also announced that the NMC is exploring the integration of clinical research into the mainstream medical curriculum.

Plans are underway for a collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to strengthen research infrastructure and promote clinical research in medical education.

The NMC’s efforts are seen as a step towards improving medical education capacity in the country, in line with the government’s vision of expanding healthcare infrastructure and addressing the growing demand for medical professionals.

Amit Shah approves ₹1,950 crore as flood relief to K’taka, Maha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Union Home Minister Amit Shah has approved advance release of ₹1,950.80 crore as second instalment of central share of State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to Karnataka and Maharashtra governments for 2025-26.

Out of the total amount, ₹384.40 crore has been approved for Karnataka and ₹1,566.40 crore for Maharashtra to help the two states provide immediate relief assistance to people affected by extremely heavy rainfall and floods during the southwest monsoon this year, an official statement said.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and guidance of the home minister, the central government is fully committed to provide all possible assistance to states affected by flood, landslides and cloudburst, the statement said.

This year, the Centre has already released ₹13,603.20 crore to 27 states under the SDRF and ₹2,189.28 crore under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to 15 states.

In addition, ₹4,571.30 crore has been released from the State Disaster Mitigation Fund (SDMF) to 21 states and ₹372.09 crore from National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) to nine states, the statement said.

The central government has also provided all logistic assistance, including deployment of requisite teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Army and Air Force and supported all flood, landslides, and cloudburst-affected states.

During this year’s monsoon, there was maximum deployment of 199 teams of the the NDRF in 30 states and UTs for rescue and relief operations.

KERALA HORROR

Bengal man held for murdering, burying his wife

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kottayam (Kerala), Oct 19: The police arrested a West Bengal native for allegedly murdering his wife and burying her body near an under-construction house at Ayarkunnam here, officials said Sunday.

The accused has been identified as Soni SK (31), a native of Dharapara in Murshidabad district of West Bengal. He was working as a construction labourer in Ayarkunnam and was taken into custody from a railway station in Ernakulam while allegedly attempting to flee to his hometown. Soni is accused of murdering his wife, Alpana Khathoon (28), also of Murshidabad, and burying her near an under-construction house at Ayarkunnam, where the couple worked.

Karnataka HC directs RSS to file fresh plea for route march



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Oct 19: The Karnataka High Court on Sunday asked the RSS representatives to file a fresh application seeking permission to hold its route march in Chittapur of Kalaburagi district November 2.

Justice MGS Kamal said this after the petitioner submitted to the court that it intends to hold the route march November 2, since the permission for Sunday (October 19) was declined by the authorities.

A special bench of the HC was constituted to hear the pe-

tition filed by Ashok Patil on behalf of RSS.

The judge, during the hearing, asked the petitioner whether it would be possible to hold the march on an alternative date or time, to which the petitioner’s counsel submitted that November 2 would be suitable.

“In view of the submissions, the petitioner shall furnish a fresh application with details of the route, place, and time, along with the responses to the queries raised earlier...the application shall be submitted to the Deputy Commissioner of Kalaburagi district with a copy to the Taluka Executive Magistrate and the police,” the court said.

It further asked the authorities to consider the application and submit the report to the court October 24.



Devotees take part in the annual Bindiga Deviramma hill trek in Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka

PTI PHOTO

Breaking the chain: Kerala’s fight to erase extreme poverty

A mass grassroots-level multidimensional initiative to root out extreme poverty, the Extreme Poverty Eradication Project seeks to ensure that no person remains “extremely poor” and is left behind in the state’s development trajectory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 19: Four years ago, at just 24, Remya P’s life seemed to be falling apart. She was a widow, a cancer patient, and a mother of two small children with no job and no safe place to call home.

Living in Chavara village in Kerala’s southern Kollam district, she faced daily struggles. Her fight was not just against the disease, but also against joblessness, the constant worry of how to pay for treatment and keep a roof over her family’s head.

Her fortunes changed when local panchayat authorities came to know about her plight. They identified her as a beneficiary of the state government’s Extreme Poverty Eradication Project (EPEP), a scheme designed to help those in the most

dire circumstances.

Today, she is a cancer survivor. She has a steady job working at a panchayat helpdesk and, crucially, her family now lives securely in a house provided by the government’s LIFE housing programme.

Spearheaded by the Local Self Government Department, the flagship programme envisions achieving the goal by addressing food, income, health, education and shelter as critical distress factors of vulnerable people.

After uplifting over 64,006 families living under extremely poor conditions in the state by ensuring them uninterrupted supply of food, healthcare, a source of livelihood and safe housing, Kerala is now all set to be declared as the first “extreme poverty-free state” in the country November 1, the state



formation day.

LSGD Minister M B Rajesh said it is a proud moment for the state as Kerala stands first in the country and second in the world after China in terms of successful eradication of extreme poverty.

The 64,006 families, comprising 1,03,099 individuals, identi-

fied as extremely poor through a statewide survey, have now been uplifted by addressing the parameters of food, health, education, livelihood income and housing, the minister explained.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who conceptualised the project, coordinated various

departments in this regard and reviewed its progress at each stage.

The integration of various social security schemes of the government and convergence of the activities of various departments at one point through the chief minister was the reason for the success of EPEP, Rajesh said.

The minister said the most marginalised and vulnerable sections of the society, including nomads, who did not even know about the existing government programmes or have no idea how to apply for them, have been identified and covered under the initiative.

A grassroots-level survey carried out to identify the beneficiaries showed that 35 per cent of such households faced income deprivation, 24 per cent experienced health-re-

lated issues, 21 per cent encountered food deprivation, and 15 per cent were deprived of shelter.

Das Raj, a 67-year-old native of Mamkukam village in Idukki, heaved a sigh of relief as he got a newly-built house recently.

The family shifted to the newly-built house, comprising two bedrooms, a hall, kitchen and bathroom.

During the initial phase of implementation of EPEP, the main focus was on addressing food and health deprivation, to provide a lifeline for survival and dignity, the minister said.

Uninterrupted distribution of both cooked food and food kits, access to medicines, door-step treatment, palliative care, and even organ transplantation were ensured to the needy among identified beneficiaries.

The Brah-Mos missile factory has been established in Lucknow, which will prove to be a milestone in the city's industrial development

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

Andhra Pradesh must be developed as a hub for Artificial Intelligence, the summit must prioritize knowledge sharing through plenary and breakout sessions. Discussions will cover semiconductors, health, innovation, R&D, space, drones, electronics, and MedTech

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | ANDHRA CHIEF MINISTER

Foreign firms are gradually being allowed to acquire Indian banks. These imprudent moves pose substantial risks

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY IN-CHARGE COMMUNICATIONS

POST OF THE DAY

The goal of language activism is to persuade the government to bring about policy changes that make a language a medium of knowledge and business. A language expert having a decent conversation doesn't change the flawed policies that act as a hindrance to achieving those goals.

@VarierAravind

SHORT TAKES

Suvendu alleges attack on car

Kolkata: West Bengal's Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari Sunday alleged that his car was attacked by members of the TMC in South 24 Parganas district, where he went to inaugurate Kali Puja pandals. Adhikari alleged that several attempts were made to stop his car, at least at seven locations, and an attack took place in front of the Lalpur Madrasa.

BJP show-causes Tripura MLA

Agartala: The ruling BJP in Tripura Sunday issued a show-cause notice to its MLA Tafazzal Hussain following his remarks against MP Biplab Kumar Deb and former Union minister Pratima Bhoumik. Speaking during a match of the MLA Cup at Boxanagar in Sepahijala district Saturday, Hussain accused Bhoumik and Deb of not providing funds for the construction of the football ground's gallery. "I had approached Pratima Bhoumik and Biplab Kumar Deb to fund the construction of the gallery, but they did not. When I requested Rajib Bhattacharjee for it, he readily agreed and sanctioned Rs 50 lakh as part of his MPLAD fund," he had said.

Massive fire guts 65 shops

Kanpur: A massive blaze ranned through a temporary firecracker market on the MG College ground in Fatehpur Sunday, gutting more than 65 shops and destroying dozens of two-wheelers, officials said. Firecrackers worth several crores of rupees were reduced to ashes, as several people sustained minor burn injuries in the fire, they said.

The festival symbolises the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil. Celebrated across the country with immense fervour, the auspicious occasion of Diwali gives the message of mutual affection and brotherhood. On this day, devotees worship Goddess Lakshmi, the deity of wealth and prosperity

DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT

ON DIWALI EVE, HARYANA HIKES SUGARCANE RATES

The Haryana government Sunday said it has announced a bonanza for sugarcane farmers on the eve of Diwali with a hike in rates for their crops up to Rs 415 per quintal



Ladakh leaders to hold talks with Centre Oct 22

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Leh, Oct 19: Ladakh representatives have accepted the invitation from the Ministry of Home Affairs for a meeting with its sub-committee in Delhi October 22, Leh Apex Body co-chairman Chering Dorje Lakruk said Sunday.

This has ended the months-long deadlock over talks with the Centre. Three representatives, each of Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), along with Ladakh MP Mohd Haneefa Jan and their lawyer, will take part in the talks with a focus on their primary demand of statehood and safeguards for the Union Territory under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, Lakruk told reporters here.

On September 29, the LAB announced that it would stay away from talks with the high-powered committee of the MHA, scheduled for October 6, following the killing of four protesters and injuries to many during widespread violence in Leh September 24.

After nearly four months of delay, the Centre September 20 extended an invitation to the LAB and KDA, which have been spearheading the agitation in support of their demands and holding talks with the Centre. The last round of talks between the two sides was held in May.

"We were informed by the Home Ministry that a meeting of the sub-committee is scheduled for October 22, and both LAB and KDA are invited to it. We welcome the decision of the government of India to invite us and look forward to the positive outcome of the dialogue," Lakruk said. Widespread violent protests occurred in Leh on September 24 during a shutdown called by LAB to advance



THREE REPRESENTATIVES, EACH OF LEH APEX BODY (LAB) AND KARGIL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE (KDA), ALONG WITH LADAKH MP MOHD HANEefa JAN AND THEIR LAWYER, WILL TAKE PART IN THE TALKS WITH A FOCUS ON THEIR PRIMARY DEMAND OF STATEHOOD AND SAFEGUARDS FOR THE UNION TERRITORY UNDER THE SIXTH SCHEDULE OF THE CONSTITUTION

ON SEPTEMBER 29, THE LAB ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD STAY AWAY FROM TALKS WITH THE HIGH-POWERED COMMITTEE OF THE MHA, SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 6, FOLLOWING THE KILLING OF FOUR PROTESTERS AND INJURIES TO MANY DURING WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE IN LEH SEPTEMBER 24

talks with the Centre on their two main demands.

Four people were killed and scores of others were injured in the clashes between protesters and security personnel, while over 70 people were taken into custody for their alleged involvement in rioting. Activist Sonam Wangchuk, the main face of the agitation, was also detained under the stringent NSA, which empowers the Centre and states to detain individuals to prevent them from acting in a manner "prejudicial to the defence of India".

Bihar polls: INDIA bloc seems more unsettled than ever

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Oct 19: Chinks in the INDIA bloc's armour became all too obvious Sunday in poll-bound Bihar, where disgruntled aspirants in the RJD and the Congress, the two largest constituents, had a field day charging the leadership with having put tickets up for sale.

With less than 24 hours left for the filing of nomination papers for the second and final phase to be over, the multi-party coalition was still unable to declare things like a chief ministerial candidate and the formula of seat-sharing among six alliance partners.

RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, however, continued to disburse party symbols at will, which did not go down well with the party's media cell president Rituu Jaiswal, who announced that

she would be filing her nomination papers as an Independent from Parihar seat, against the official candidate Smita Purve.

In an emotional Facebook post, Jaiswal, who had contested the seat five years ago and was the RJD candidate from Sheohar in Lok Sabha polls last year, losing on both occasions with slender margins, alleged that Purve's father-in-law Ram Chandra Purve, a former state unit chief of the party, had been behind her defeat in the 2020 assembly elections.

Prasad's residence in Patna, a government bungalow allotted to his wife Rabri Devi in her capacity as a former chief minister, kept teeming with aspirants and hordes of their supporters, and while those who were lucky erupted in cheers and those whose claims were overlooked chose to vent spleen.



Soldiers patrol a snow-covered mountain at a forward post along the Line of Control (LoC), ahead of Diwali festival, in Kupwara district of north Kashmir

PTI PHOTO

Chandrayaan-2 records 1st proof of Sun's impact on Moon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Oct 19: The Chandrayaan-2 mission, launched in 2019, has made the first-ever observation of the effects of the Sun's Coronal Mass Ejection (CME) on the Moon using its onboard scientific instruments, ISRO said Saturday.

This observation would help understand the lunar exosphere, very thin atmosphere of the Moon, and the impact of space weather on its surface, the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency said.

Launched July 22, 2019, from Sriharikota using the GSLV-MkIII-M1 rocket, Chandrayaan-2 carried eight experiment payloads. On August 20, 2019, Chandrayaan-2 was successfully inserted into the elliptical orbit around the Moon.

Although communication with the Vikram lander was



lost during its September 7 landing attempt, the Orbiter remains fully operational and continues to function in a 100 km x 100 km orbit around the Moon.

According to an ISRO release, one of the payloads (onboard Chandrayan-2), Chandra's Atmospheric Compositional Explorer 2 (CHACE 2)

has recorded the effects of the Coronal Mass ejections from the Sun on the lunar exosphere.

The primary objective of the CHACE-2 payload is to study the composition and distribution of the lunar neutral exosphere and its variability.

Coronal Mass Ejections occur when the Sun ejects significant quantities of its building

material, comprising mostly Helium and Hydrogen ions.

These effects are significant on the Moon, as Moon is an airless body that too deprived of any global magnetic field, the presence of which would have shielded the solar effects on its surface.

"Observations from CHACE-2 showed an increase in the total pressure of the dayside lunar exosphere (very thin atmosphere) when the Coronal Mass Ejection (of the Sun) impacted the Moon. The total number density (number of neutral atoms or molecules present in an environment per unit volume) derived from these observations showed an increase by more than an order of magnitude," the release said.

ISRO further said the rare opportunity to directly observe the effects of a Coronal Mass Ejection (CME) impacting the

Maha Oppn claims 1cr voters bogus, declares joint rally November 1



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 19: Opposition parties Sunday claimed that electoral rolls in Maharashtra contain around "one crore bogus voters" and announced to organise a joint rally in Mumbai November 1 to urge Election Commission to remove the dubious entries.

The BJP reacted by accusing the opposition parties of trying to set a fake narrative ahead of the upcoming elections to local bodies.

Addressing booth-level agents of MNS, the party head Raj Thackeray claimed that 96 lakh fake voters have been added to the voter's lists ahead of the upcoming local body polls. He dared the Election Commission to conduct elections until the voters list is cleaned.

After Thackeray addressed booth-level workers of MNS, Sanjay Raut of Shiv Sena (UBT), Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leader Bala Nandgaonkar, NCP (SP) leader Jayant Patil and the Congress' Sachin Sawant addressed a press conference.

Earlier in the day, Thackeray said holding elections by rigging the voters' lists will amount to the biggest insult to electors. He urged his party workers to verify the voters' list

to find out fake voters.

Various Opposition parties, including the Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress, NCP (SP) and MNS, recently met the State Election Commissioner and Chief Electoral Officer, while claiming that there are duplicate names in the electoral rolls across different addresses and assembly segments. The Opposition has called for rectifying the electoral rolls and removing anomalies ahead of the rural and urban body elections, which are to be completed by January 31, 2026.

The Maharashtra State Election Commission on Saturday said that no political party can tamper with the electoral rolls and those corrections and updates on the voter lists are being managed securely.

"An attempt is being made to finish regional parties. I have learnt that 96 lakh fake voters have been enrolled in the voters' lists in Maharashtra for the upcoming polls. They had also done this during the state polls as well," the MNS chief said.

He claimed that 8 to 10 lakh fake voters have been added in Mumbai and 8 to 8.5 lakh electors in Thane, Pune, and Nashik. Thackeray stated that the ruling parties feel hurt when the Opposition hits out at the Election Commission.

VHP demands Delhi be renamed 'Indraprastha'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) Sunday demanded that Delhi be renamed 'Indraprastha' to connect the national capital with its ancient history and culture.

In a letter to Delhi Culture Minister Kapil Mishra, the Delhi unit of the VHP has also demanded renaming Indira Gandhi International Airport as Indraprastha International Airport, Delhi Railway Station as Indraprastha Railway Station and Shahjahanabad Development Board as Indraprastha Development Board.

"The name of Delhi should be changed back to Indraprastha so that the name of the capital can be associated with its ancient history and culture," VHP Delhi prant secretary Surendra Kumar Gupta said in the letter.

"Names aren't mere changes; they mirror a nation's consciousness. When we say Delhi, we only see a period of 2,000 years. But when we say Indraprastha, we connect with a glorious history spanning 5,000 years," he said.

The VHP functionary demanded that Delhi's heritage walk should include forts, temples, and monuments of Hindu kings to ensure a "balanced presentation" of the city's overall history.

"Wherever there are memorials to Muslim invaders, Hindu heroes, sages, and sites from the Pandava period should also be introduced and memorials should be built near them," he said.

A "grand memorial" in the name of King Hemchandra Vikramaditya and a King Hemchandra Vikramaditya Military School should be established in Delhi, Gupta said.

The history of Hemchandra Vikramaditya and Indraprastha during the Pandava period should be included in Delhi's education curriculum, he added.

of the day

quote

Both parties should also unite the vast majority of people in Taiwan to deepen exchanges and cooperation, boost common development, and advance national reunification

XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

The President is putting his ego over responsibility with this disregard for public safety. Firing live rounds over a busy highway isn't just wrong -- it's dangerous

GAVIN NEWSOM | GOVERNOR, US

If someone only hires Indians, sends remittance checks back to India, campaigns in Indian elections, lobby's to fly Indian flags over American government buildings, and has no family willing to serve in our military, then their loyalty is to India and they need to be deported

CHANDLER LANGEVIN | PALM BAY COUNCIL MEMBER, US

SHORT TAKES

China launches Pak's remote sensing satellite

Beijing: China Sunday launched a Pakistani remote sensing satellite along with two of its own onboard a single rocket, further deepening space cooperation between the two all-weather allies. A Lijian-1 Y8 carrier rocket carrying three satellites -- Pakistan remote-sensing satellite (PRSS-2), AIRSAT 03 and 04 satellites -- was launched from a commercial aerospace innovation pilot zone in northwest China, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The satellites were successfully placed in the planned orbit, it said. This is the third Pakistani satellite launched by China this year.

Germany to recall ambassador to Georgia

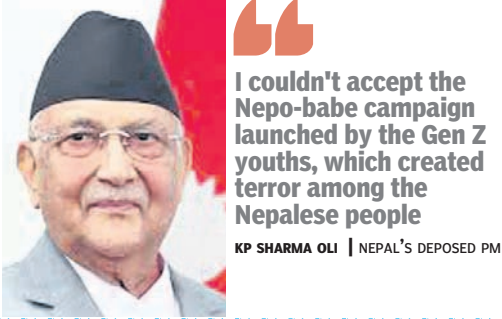
Frankfurt: Germany said Sunday that it would recall its ambassador to Georgia ahead of a meeting of European Union officials on Monday as relations between the bloc and the South Caucasus country fray. "For many months, the Georgian leadership has been agitating against" the EU, Germany and personally against the German ambassador, Ernst Peter Fischer, Germany's foreign ministry said in a post on X. The recall is "for consultations on how to proceed," the German ministry said.

China accuses US of cyber breaches

Beijing: China has accused the US of stealing secrets and infiltrating the country's national time centre, warning that serious breaches could have disrupted communication networks, financial systems, the power supply and the international standard time. The US National Security Agency has been carrying out a cyber attack operation on the National Time Service Center over an extended period of time, China's State Security Ministry said. The ministry said it found evidence tracing stolen data and credentials as far back as 2022, which were used to spy on the staff's mobile devices and network systems at the centre.

North Korean soldier defects to South Korea

Seoul: A North Korean soldier defected to South Korea across the rivals' heavily fortified border Sunday, South Korea's military said. The military took custody of the soldier who crossed the central portion of the land border, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.



I couldn't accept the Nepo-babe campaign launched by the Gen Z youths, which created terror among the Nepalese people

KP SHARMA OLI | NEPAL'S DEPOSED PM

VENEZUELA'S FIRST SAINT

Pope Leo XIV canonised Venezuela's beloved "doctor of the poor" Sunday before an estimated 55,000 people, offering the Caribbean nation its first saint and a reason to celebrate amid its years long economic crisis and new tensions with the United States. Jose Gregorio Hernandez, revered by millions for his dedication to poor people, was declared a saint at a Mass in St Peter's Square



Ceasefire crumbles in Gaza

New violence erupts in Gaza as truce falters, Hamas and Israel trade accusations



REUTERS

Jerusalem, Oct 19: The Israeli military launched an attack on Gaza Sunday, Israeli media and residents reported, dimming hopes that a US-mediated ceasefire would lead to lasting peace in the enclave as Israel traded blame with Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Israel's attacks Sunday were the most serious test of an already fragile ceasefire, which took effect October 11.

Palestinians in Gaza told Reuters they heard explosions and gunfire in Rafah in the south of the strip and witnesses separately reported heavy gunfire from Israeli tanks in the eastern town of Abassan near Khan Younis, also in southern Gaza.

Witnesses in Khan Younis heard a wave of airstrikes launched into Rafah early Sunday afternoon.

An Israeli government spokesperson, when asked for confirmation of the attacks, deferred to the military. The military had no immediate comment.

Local health authorities in

Gaza said Sunday two Palestinians were killed in an Israeli airstrike in the eastern Jabalia area of northern Gaza.

The Times of Israel reported that the military was conducting airstrikes in the Rafah area after militants attacked forces there, though it did not cite a source for the information.

An Israeli military official said Sunday that Hamas had carried out multiple attacks against Israeli forces inside Gaza, including a rocket-propelled grenade attack and a sniper attack against Israeli soldiers.

"Both of the incidents happened in an Israeli-controlled

■Gazans report explosions, gunfire, airstrikes and tank shelling

■Rafah border crossing remains closed amid ongoing ceasefire violations

■Dispute over return of hostages' bodies continues between Israel and Hamas

area...This is a bold violation of the ceasefire," the official said.

Senior Hamas official Izzat Al Risheq said Sunday that the Palestinian militant group remained committed to the ceasefire, which he accused Israel of repeatedly violating.

The government media office in Gaza said Saturday that Israel had committed 47 violations after the ceasefire deal, leaving 38 dead and 143 wounded.

"These violations have ranged from direct shooting at civilians, to deliberate shelling and targeting operations, as well as the arrest of several civilians," the media office statement said.

RAFAH CROSSING TO REMAIN CLOSED

The Israeli government and Hamas have been accusing

each other of violations of the ceasefire for days, with Israel saying the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt will remain closed until further notice.

Rafah has largely been shut since May 2024. The ceasefire deal also includes the ramping up of aid to Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of people were determined in August to be affected by famine, according to the IPC global hunger monitor.

Israel and Hamas have been engaged in a dispute over the return of the bodies of deceased hostages. Israel demanded that Hamas fulfill its obligations in turning over the remaining bodies of all 28 hostages.

HUMANITARIAN AID HALTED

The fragile ceasefire in Gaza faced its first major test as an Israeli security official said the transfer of aid into the territory is halted "until further notice".

The official spoke on condition of anonymity pending a formal announcement on the halt in aid, which is occurring a little over a week since the start of the US-proposed ceasefire aimed at ending two years of war.

Hamas planning attack on Palestinians, warns US

The US State Department said Saturday that it has "credible reports" that Hamas could violate the ceasefire with an attack on Palestinian civilians in Gaza. If the attack takes place, it "would constitute a direct and grave violation" of the agreement forged by President Donald Trump to end the two-year war between Israel and Hamas, the statement said. "Should Hamas proceed with this attack, measures will be taken to protect the people of Gaza and preserve the integrity of the ceasefire," the State Department said. Trump previously warned on social media that "if Hamas continues to kill people in Gaza, which was not the Deal, we will have no choice but to go in and kill them." The US president later clarified he won't send US troops into Gaza after launching the threat against Hamas. "It's not going to be us," he told reporters. "We won't have to. There are people very close, very nearby that will go in and they'll do the trick very easily, but under our auspices." Trump's hostile rhetoric represented a shift after initially expressing nonchalance about Hamas killings, saying they had taken out "a couple of gangs that were very bad."

Japan's LDP, Ishin agree to form coalition government

Deal paves way for Japan's first female PM, Sanae Takaichi



REUTERS

Tokyo, Oct 19: Japan's Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan Innovation Party have broadly agreed to form a coalition government, setting the stage for the country's first female prime minister, Kyodo news agency reported Sunday.

Sanae Takaichi, leader of the conservative LDP, and Hirofumi Yoshimura, head of the smaller right-leaning group known as Ishin, are set to sign an agreement sealing their alli-

ance Monday, Kyodo said.

Calls to the LDP and Ishin headquarters to seek comment went unanswered outside business hours.

Ishin's co-head, Fumitake Fujita, raised expectations for a deal Friday, saying the two parties had made "big progress" in coalition talks.

Ishin lawmakers will vote for Takaichi in an election to choose the prime minister in parliament on Tuesday, but the party does not plan to send ministers to Takaichi's cabinet, at least initially, Kyodo said.

That would fall short of the full-fledged alliance the LDP maintained with the Komeito party until the junior partner quit the coalition this month, raising concern over the stability of the forthcoming government.

Ishin's Fujita told reporters Sunday evening negotiations were in the final stages and his fellow lawmakers entrusted Yoshimura and himself to make a final decision on the matter for the party.



A man dressed as a zombie attends the annual Zombie Walk in Mexico City

PTI PHOTO

Pak, Afghan to form peace mechanism



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Oct 19: Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire and setting up of "mechanisms" to ensure lasting peace after days of violent clashes along the border that left several soldiers, civilians, and terrorists dead on both sides, officials said Sunday.

The breakthrough came following negotiations between Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and Afghanistan's acting Defence Minister Mullah Yaqoob in Doha, facilitated by Qatar and Turkiye, according to a statement issued by Qatar's Foreign Ministry.

"During the negotiation, both sides agreed to an immediate ceasefire and establishment of mechanisms to consolidate lasting peace and stability between the two countries," the statement read.

The two neighbours also agreed to hold "follow-up meetings" in the coming days to ensure the "implementation" and "sustainability" of the truce "in a reliable and sustainable manner" to achieve security and stability in both countries, it said.

The development comes amid heightened tensions along the Pak-Afghan border, triggered by cross-border clashes after alleged Pakistani airstrikes

near Kabul last week.

The Doha talks began Saturday with Pakistan urging the Afghan Taliban authorities to take "verifiable action" against the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which Islamabad accuses of launching cross-border terrorist attacks from Afghan soil.

The Foreign Office in a statement Saturday said Pakistan had stressed the need for the Afghan authorities to honour their "commitments to the international community" and to address Islamabad's "legitimate security concerns" by taking verifiable action against terrorist entities.

"Pakistan appreciates the mediation efforts of Qatar and hopes these discussions contribute to peace and stability in the region," it said.

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have remained strained since 2023, with Islamabad repeatedly raising concerns over the use of Afghan soil by militants carrying out cross-border attacks.

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

Trump slashes US aid to Colombia

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Palm Beach, Oct 19: President Donald Trump said Sunday he would slash US funding to Colombia because the country's leader "does nothing to stop" drug production, in what is the latest sign of friction between Washington and one of its closest allies in Latin America.

In a social media post, Trump referred to Colombian President Gustavo Petro as "an illegal drug dealer" who is "low rated and very unpopular." He warned that Petro "better close up" drug operations "or the United States will close them up for him, and it won't be done nicely."

Trump, while at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, wrote on his Truth Social platform that Petro is "strongly encouraging the massive production of drugs, in big and small fields" across Colombia, which the Republican president spelled as Columbia. "Petro does nothing to stop it, despite large scale payments and subsidies from the USA that are nothing more than a long term rip off of America," Trump said.

Madagascar's Gen Z demand a voice in shaping what comes next

REUTERS

Antananarivo, Oct 19: When an elite army colonel joined Madagascar's Gen Z protests earlier this month, forcing the president to flee the country, youth-movement leader Olivia Rafetison was happy to have the protection of men with guns, after weeks of state repression.

"He said: 'we're for the people, we'll help you, we are by your side'. Malagasy were coming together for the same cause," she said, describing the protests against electricity and water shortages that morphed into an uprising against President Andry Rajoelina.

Days later, Colonel Michael Randrianirina said the army was in charge.

"It went from 'protecting



the people' to taking power," Rafetison, 28, told Reuters in downtown Antananarivo. "I'm not saying I'm against it ... But I am a little conflicted."

Randrianirina was sworn in as president on Friday, just three days after taking control of the island nation in the wake of the demonstrations that

forced out his predecessor.

He has said the military will rule alongside a civilian government for up to two years before organising new elections.

Rafetison, leader of Movement Gen Z Collective, a coalition of several of the protest groups, is not the only participant in the uprising to feel ambivalent about a man in uniform filling the power vacuum left by Rajoelina's hasty exit. Many wonder if their concerns will be heeded or, as in the past, ignored.

On the night of the coup, Randrianirina received Rafetison and other prominent Gen Z figures. "He said 'we're listening to you,'" she said, but the soldiers were all tired and soon ended

the conversation, suggesting they talk more at a later date.

"I hope they follow up," she said. "Because this isn't the end of the struggle: we're really fighting for system change, not to swap one president for another."

Madagascar's young population, averaging just 19, faces a litany of problems that are largely the result of mismanagement by a succession of older men. Even Rajoelina, at 34 the world's youngest president when he came to power in a 2009 coup, disappointed the youth by failing to create prosperity or deliver basic services by the time he was ousted in his 50s.

Since independence from France in 1960 until 2020, GDP

per capita nearly halved, World Bank data shows, making it one of few nations that became worse off in that time.

In that time, Madagascar experienced several periods of military-led or military-dominated government, often with disastrous results for the economy.

Today, Antananarivo's winding, cobbled streets are strewn with beggars and hawkers eking out a living selling whatever they can.

"Everyone is taking advantage of the system, they don't care. Even if the population dies of hunger, it's nothing (to them)," Alicia Andriana, from the Association of Dynamic Malagasy Students (Asse-du-Mada), said in a downtown nightclub that doubles up as a meeting centre for Gen Z movements by day.

SHORT TAKES

Meesho IPO

New Delhi: Softbank backed e-commerce firm Meesho has filed updated draft IPO papers, which comprises raising of ₹4,250 crore through the issuance of fresh equity as well as secondary sale of share by some of the existing investors, according to the document filed with market regulator SEBI. The proposed initial public offering (IPO) comprises a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to ₹4,250 crore and an offer for sale of up to 175,696,602 equity shares by certain existing shareholders. The offer for sale includes sale of equity shares by some of Meesho's early investors, including Elevation, Peak XV, Venture Highway and Y Combinator, among others.

Festive binge

New Delhi: As India revels in the spirit of the festive season, food delivery platforms Swiggy and magicpin have reported a massive surge in orders, highlighting how culinary cravings are now central to the country's celebrations. Magicpin reported a 2.5x spike in bulk and party food delivery orders after Navratri. The momentum continued into the second week of October, with a 30 per cent jump in food delivery orders October 10 compared to regular days.

Glenmark, Dr Reddy's recall products in US

New Delhi: Drugmakers Glenmark and Dr Reddy's Laboratories are recalling products in the US due to manufacturing issues, according to the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA). As per its latest Enforcement Report, the US health regulator noted that a US-based unit of Glenmark Pharmaceuticals is recalling 26,928 packs of oral contraceptive medication in the US. Mahwah, New Jersey-based Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Inc, USA is recalling the affected lot of Violele, Desogestrel and Ethinyl Estradiol (USP, 0.15 mg/ 0.02 mg) and Ethinyl Estradiol tablets due to "failed impurities/degradation specifications."

AUTO EXPORTS RISE IN SECOND QUARTER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Automobile exports from India rose 26 per cent year-on-year in September quarter driven by highest-ever shipments of passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and three-wheelers during the period, as per the latest data released by industry body SIAM (Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers or Service Integration and Management). Passenger vehicle exports grew 23 per cent to 2,41,554 units in September quarter as against 1,96,196 units in the same period of last fiscal. Passenger car exports grew 20.5 per cent to 1,25,513 units in the second quarter as against 1,04,196 units in the September quarter of last fiscal. Similarly, utility vehicle

shipments rose 26 per cent annually to 1,13,374 units in the July-September period. Van exports also grew 39 per cent year on year to 2,667 units in the year-ago period. Maruti Suzuki India led the space with shipments of 2,05,763 units followed by Hyundai Motor India with 99,540 units in the period under review. Two-wheeler exports saw an increase of 25 per cent to 12,95,468 units in July-September period as against 10,35,997 units in the year-ago period. Scooter shipments rose 12 per cent to 1,77,957 units while motorcycles witnessed a growth of 27 per cent to 11,08,109 units in September quarter. Moped exports surged to 9,402 units in the second quarter as compared with 2,028 units in the same period last year.

Mcap of seven most valued firms surges

New Delhi: The combined market valuation of seven of the top-10 most valued firms surged by ₹2,16,544.29 crore last week, with Reliance Industries and Bharti Airtel stealing the limelight, in tandem with an optimistic trend in equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,451.37 points or 1.75 per cent. From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance and Hindustan Unilever were the gainers, while Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) faced erosion from their valuation. The market valuation of Reliance Industries jumped ₹47,363.65 crore to ₹19,17,483.71 crore, the most among the top-10 firms. Bharti Airtel added ₹41,254.73 crore taking its valuation to ₹11,47,235.08 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of ICICI Bank surged by ₹40,123.88 crore to ₹10,26,491.35 crore and that of HDFC Bank rallied ₹33,185.59 crore to ₹15,40,210.78 crore. The valuation of Bajaj Finance climbed ₹28,903.45 crore to ₹6,65,899.19 crore. The mcap of Hindustan Unilever edged higher by ₹17,774.65 crore to ₹6,12,009.78 crore and that of State Bank of India went up by ₹7,938.34 crore to ₹8,20,924.98 crore. However, the valuation of Infosys dropped by ₹30,306.35 crore to ₹5,98,773.87 crore. The mcap of TCS declined by ₹23,807.01 crore to ₹10,71,894.61 crore and that of LIC dipped by ₹7,684.87 crore to ₹5,60,173.42 crore.



GST 2.0 came in at the fag end of the (second) quarter, so that will play out in subsequent quarters. We are positive on that development, that should aid demand for two-wheeler farms and small cars and their types primarily in smaller towns and rural, and in urban to a lesser extent

ARNAB BANERJEE | MD, CEAT

GOVT EXTENDS GSTR-3B RETURN DEADLINE

The government Sunday extended the due date for filing the monthly GSTR-3B tax payment form by 5 days till October 25. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), in a notification, said the GSTR-3B filers for September and the July-September quarter can pay taxes by October 25. GSTR-3B is a monthly and quarterly summary return that registered taxpayers file in a staggered manner between the 20th, 22nd and 24th of every month for different categories of taxpayers. The extension was on expected lines, with October 20 being the Diwali festival



Exports record growth in Apr-Sept

During April-September this year, exports increased by 3.02 per cent to \$220.12 billion, and imports rose 4.53 per cent to \$375.11 billion, leaving a trade deficit of \$154.99 billion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Belgium, Italy and Tanzania. "24 countries with a total export of \$129.3 billion recorded positive growth in export in April-September 2025-26 as against the same period last fiscal, amounting to a share of 59 per cent of India's exports," an official said. During April-September this year, exports increased by 3.02 per cent to \$220.12 bil-

lion, and imports rose 4.53 per cent to \$375.11 billion, leaving a trade deficit of \$154.99 billion. However, according to the Commerce Ministry data, India's exports to 16 countries have registered negative growth during the first six months of the current fiscal. These nations account for about 27 per cent (\$60.3 bil-

lion) of the country's exports. An exporter said the sweeping 50 per cent tariff by the US on Indian goods is hurting exports to America, but the exporting community is pushing exports to other geographies, including Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. "The trend will continue in the coming months as well," the exporter said. India's merchandise exports to the US declined by 11.93 per cent to \$5.46 billion in September due to the high tariffs imposed by Washington, according to the data. During the April-September period of this fiscal, the country's exports to the US increased by 13.37 per cent to \$45.82 billion, while imports rose 9 per cent to \$25.6 billion, the data showed. The US has imposed a sweeping 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods entering American markets from August 27. The two countries are negotiating a bilateral trade agreement to boost two-way commerce. The US was the largest trading partner of India in 2024-25.

Gold likely to consolidate as Fed meeting looms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Gold prices are expected to witness some consolidation and mild correction next week as the recent record-breaking rally looks overstretched and physical demand eases after the festive rush, analysts said. After hitting fresh highs in global and domestic markets, bullion may trade in a narrow range, with investors eyeing the US funding bill, key global data releases, and remarks from Federal Reserve officials ahead of the October 28-29 policy meeting, they added. "Gold prices are likely to see some corrections/ consolidation as ongoing fundamentals are already priced in and physical demand wanes post mid-week," Pranav Mer, Vice President, EBG - Commodity & Currency Research, JM Financial Services Ltd, said. He added that traders will monitor key global indicators, including Chinese data, UK inflation, provisional data on PMI from across regions, US consumer confidence and the Fed's commentary ahead of the October 28-29 meeting. Mer

added that gold ended last week on a positive note, supported by festive demand in India and strong ETF buying. "However, sharp corrective move was seen on Friday, amid profit-booking as the rally looks overstretched now," he said. Last week, gold futures rose by ₹5,644, or 4.65 per cent on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). Prathamesh Mallya, DVP - Research, Non-Agri Commodities and Currencies, Angel One, said the shine in gold prices just does not stop as the momentum has been on the rising side throughout 2025, supported by policy uncertainty, US tariffs, and a slowdown in the American economy. On the MCX, gold futures for December delivery hit a record of ₹1,32,294 per 10 grams on Friday before closing at ₹1,27,008, ending a five-day record streak. Echoing similar views, Karthick Jongadla, investment manager on smallcase and Founder at Quantace Research, said, the rally was underpinned by a softer dollar, and easing bond yields, while lingering US-China trade noise and a US data/shutdown fog kept the safe-haven bid supported.

FPIs pump ₹6,480cr into Indian equities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: After withdrawing money on a net basis for the past three months, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have turned buyers with a ₹6,480 crore investment in October so far, driven by strong macroeconomic factors. The development comes after persistent outflows in recent times, with FPIs pulling out ₹23,885 crore in September, ₹34,990 crore in August, and ₹17,700 crore in July, data from depositors showed. The renewed inflow in October marks a significant shift in sentiment and reflects fresh confidence among global investors towards Indian markets. Several key drivers underpin this reversal. According

to Himanshu Srivastava, Principal, Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, India's macro backdrop remains relatively strong among emerging markets, with stable growth, manageable inflation, and resilient domestic demand helping the country stand out. He further noted that global liquidity conditions are gradually easing, with expectations of rate cuts or at least a pause in the US. As risk appetite returns, funds are flowing back into higher-return emerging markets. Echoing a similar view, Geojit Investments Chief Investment Strategist VK Vijayakumar said the principal reason for this shift in FPIs' strategy is the reduced valuation differential between India and other markets.

॥ Omm Ganga ॥

In Loving Memory of

✓Gautam Patnaik

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Tanvi marks new dawn

The 16-year-old's dream run ends with silver at World Junior Championship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Oct 19: Indian shuttler Tanvi Sharma's bid to script history by winning a gold medal at the BWF World Junior Championships ended in heartbreak as she lost in straight games to Thailand's Anyapat Phichitpreechusak in the women's singles final here Sunday.

The 16-year-old, who followed in the footsteps of former world No 1 Saina Nehwal and Aparna Popat to become only the third Indian female shuttler to reach the final of the tournament, lost 7-15 to the second-seeded Thai.

"I was not comable. From the of the match, I a lot of mistakes. In second game, I manage to play strokes but once again I ended up making mistakes after 8-5. After that, my coach told me to keep playing and I did that. But she was reading my strokes very well," said Tanvi after the match.

It was a tight affair right from the start as both players moved neck and neck from 2-2 to 4-4, riding on each other's

unforced errors.

The Thai's deceptive returns caught Tanvi at the front court as Phichitpreechusak opened up a 10-5 lead, with the Indian finding the net twice.

Two smashes from the Thai and a wide shot from Tanvi put Phichitpreechusak two points away from taking the opening game, which she eventually sealed when another backhand from the Indian buried into the net.

After the change of ends, Tanvi surged to a 6-1 lead with some precise deep returns. But errors crept in again. Two net mistakes allowed the



I was very, very happy with the silver medal but a little disappointed that I didn't get the gold

TANVI SHARMA

Thai to narrow the gap to 5-7.

Phichitpreechusak went wide next, giving Tanvi a slender 8-5 lead at the interval. However, the Thai made Tanvi lunge forward repeatedly, forcing more errors to move to 7-8 before levelling the score when Tanvi sprayed one long.

Another smash into the net gave Thailand player 9-8 advantage. A down-the-line smash followed by another beautifully constructed point saw the Thai inch ahead 11-8.

Now dictating the rallies with confidence, Phichitpreechusak extended her lead to 12-8 with a net cord.

Tanvi man- aged to halt the run with a neat net dribble, but the Thai continued to produce sharp cross-court winners that left the Indian searching for answers.

At 9-13, Tanvi responded with her own deft touch to stay in contention. She won a disputed point after a long rally before sending one wide to hand the Thai three championship points.

HISTORIC MILESTONE

•Tanvi's medal is India's first at the World Junior Championships in 17 years

•Saina (gold in 2008 and silver in 2006) and Aparna (silver in 1996) are the only other Indian women to have won medals

RAIN PLAYS SPOILSPORT

Australia spoil RoKo's comeback

India suffer first ODI defeat of 2025 as Australia take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Perth, Oct 19: The grand comeback party of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma endured a quick 22-ball ending, and their lowkey outing reflected in India's seven-wicket defeat against Australia in the rain-affected first ODI here Sunday.

Asked to bat first, India laboured to a sub-par 136 for 9, after the match was revised to 26 overs for a side courtesy several rain interruptions, leaving the hosts to chase a DLS target of 131, which they duly reached in 21.1 overs.

Travis Head fell to Arshdeep Singh early, slashing the left-arm pacer to Harshit Rana at deep third man, and Matthew Short too walked back without any significant contribution.

But skipper and local man Mitchell Marsh (46 not out, 52 balls) used his brute power to keep Australia ahead of the curve with a crucial 55-run partnership with Josh Philippe (37, 29b). The Indian pacers — Arshdeep, Mohammad Siraj and Harshit Rana — could not replicate the control of their Australian counterparts, offering plenty of freebies to the hosts' batters.

Marsh fed on them with glee, crunching a six each of all three. An inside-out smash off Siraj over covers was the highlight. Philippe gave his captain ample support with a busy knock, and his dismissal was a minor irritant in Australia's march, which culminated in them taking 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

MEN IN BLUE DISAPPOINT

Earlier, India were robbed of the momentum by the constant weather interventions and relentless Australian new ball bowlers, except when KL Rahul



(38, 30 balls) was in the middle.

But before the skies opened up on several occasions, Australian bowlers used the extra bounce on the Optus Stadium pitch to get rid of two old foes. Rohit (8), who was also playing his 500th match for India, walked in alongside new captain Shubman Gill to loud cheers from the Perth crowd, but his stay was snapped after just 14 balls.

Rohit played a sumptuous straight drive off Mitchell Starc, which offered a heady time ride back to the glory days.

Kohli walked in amid even louder cheer, but the familiar ODI greatness was nowhere to be seen. In a pre-match chat, Kohli had detailed how Australia had often brought the best out of him as a batter.

But on this instance, Starc elicited the worst out of Kohli

BRIEF SCORES

India: 136 for 9 in 26 overs (KL Rahul 38, Axar Patel 31; Matthew Kunhemann 2/26 and Josh Hazlewood 2/20, Mitchell Owen 2/20) lost to **Australia:** 131 for 3 in 21.1 overs (Mitchell Marsh 46 not out, Josh Philippe 37)

— first through a habitual prod outside the off-stump. It eventually consumed Kohli. A drive on the up off the left-arm pacer

took the edge of his bat and Cooper Connolly at backward point snaffled a wonderful catch to curtail Kohli's agonising eight-ball innings.

It was Kohli's first duck in Australia. Now, the veterans need something substantial in the subsequent ODIs at Adelaide and Sydney to convince the powers that be of their fire for a longer journey.

Unlike his senior colleagues, skipper Gill looked assured but a rather casual attempt to flick Nathan Ellis resulted in a down the leg side catch to wicketkeeper Philippe.

Vice-captain Shreyas Iyer perished in the same way. Hazlewood strangled him for space with a bouncer on ribcage that Iyer gloved to Philippe as India slid to 45 for four in the 14th over.

Finally, India found their wheels moving through a 39-run fifth-wicket alliance between Axar Patel (31) and Rahul before the former fell to spinner Matthew Kuhnemann.

Rahul was quite impressive in his knock, dealing with the bounce effectively while getting on top of the ball nicely. The straight drive and pull off Ellis off successive balls for fours were from the top draw.

ASIAN ROWING C'SHIPS

Olympian Panwar leads India's 10-medal show



The haul marks one of their strongest performances in recent years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Olympian Balraj Panwar spearheaded India's impressive show at the 2025 Asian Rowing Championships in Hai Phong, Vietnam, as the country bagged 10 medals including three gold and five silver, marking one of their strongest performances in recent years.

Paris Olympian Panwar produced a commanding show to win the gold in the men's single scull (M1X) event.

India's other gold medals came through the lightweight men's double scull (LM2X) pair of Lakshay and Ajay Tyagi, who combined superb rhythm and endurance to dominate their final, and in the men's quadruple scull (M4X), where the quartet of Kulwinder Singh, Navdeep Singh, Satnam Singh and Jakar Khan rowed with perfect coordination to clinch the top spot.

Another highlight of the campaign was Gurbani Kaur and Diljot Kaur ending a 15-year medal drought for Indian women at the Asian Championships by finishing second in the lightweight women's pair (LW2-) event.

Their silver-winning effort, marked by technical

precision and sheer grit, was hailed as a breakthrough moment for women's rowing in India and an inspiration for the next generation. India also pocketed silver medals in the men's eight (M8+), where Nitin Deol, Parvinder Singh, Lakhveer Singh, Ravi, Gurpratap Singh, Bheem Singh, Jaswinder Singh, Kulbir and Kiran Singh Maiom powered through a strong field to finish second.

In the men's double scull (M2X), Jaspinder Singh and Salman Khan produced a determined effort to secure silver, while the lightweight men's quadruple scull (LM4X) crew of Rohit, Ujjwal Kumar Singh, Lakshay and Ajay Tyagi added another silver to the tally.

The lightweight men's four (LM4-) team of Sannee Kumar, Iqbal Singh, Babu Lal Yadav and Yogesh Kumar also finished second after a closely fought final.

The bronze medals came in the lightweight men's pair (LM2-), where Nitin Deol and Parvinder Singh displayed great composure to claim third place, and in the women's eight (W8+), where the crew of Gurbani Kaur, Diljot Kaur, Suman Devi, Alenna Anto, Kiran, Poonam and Haobijam Tendenthri Devi combined effectively to secure a podium finish, rounding off a remarkable campaign.

India had fielded a 37-member contingent (25 men and 12 women) across 15 events.

WOMEN IN BLUE MESS UP CHASE

Eves suffer 4-run defeat to England in Women's World Cup; third loss on the trot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, Oct 19: India squandered a position of control to make a mess of their chase as they suffered a four-run defeat against England, their third on the trot, in the Women's World Cup here Sunday.

Chasing 289 to win, India were cruising to victory but lost crucial wickets despite fifties by senior players Smriti Mandhana (88), Harmanpreet Kaur (70) and Deepti Sharma (50).

From needing 55 runs from 53 balls, India found themselves needing 14 of the last over with the England holding their nerves as Sneha Rana and Amanjot Kaur failed to take the hosts across



the line.

This was after seasoned off-spinner Deepti (4/51) produced a standout spell, helping restrict England to 288 for 8 which was built on the back of Heather Knight's (109) splendid century. Mandhana first put up a crucial 125-run stand with

skipper Kaur before joining forces with Deepti with a 67-run partnership.

Together, Mandhana and Kaur batted smartly, rotating strike, building pressure on England's bowlers, and rescuing India from an uncomfortable position. At the halfway stage

Messi bags MLS Golden Boot

The legend becomes Miami's first-ever Golden Boot winner and the first Argentine to claim the award since Valentin "Taty" Castellanos did so with New York City FC in 2021

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Nashville, Oct 19: Inter Miami CF superstar Lionel Messi has won the 2025 MLS Golden Boot, netting 29 goals to become the league's leading scorer in his second full season with the Herons.

Messi contributed 19 assists as he outperformed LAFC's Denis Bouanga (24 goals) and Nashville SC's Sam Surridge (24 goals).

The Argentine great tallied three goals and provided an assist during Saturday's 5-2 Decision Day victory in Nashville, reaching 48 goal contributions (29 goals, 19 assists) this season — just short of Carlos Vela's MLS record 49 for LAFC in 2019.

Now, Messi appears set to become the league's first-ever player to win consecutive MVP awards, following a historic 2024 campaign that saw Miami claim that year's Supporters' Shield in re-



cord-breaking fashion.

Messi and Miami are the Eastern Conference No 3 seed in the MLS Cup Playoffs, where they'll face No 6 Nashville in a Round One Best-of-3 Series. This year's MLS Cup champion will be crowned December 6.

Messi, the most decorated footballer of all time, now adds the MLS Golden Boot to his unparalleled CV. He is the latest in an exclusive list of players to secure the honour since the league's inaugural season in 1996.

From 1996 to 2004, the MLS Golden Boot was awarded based on a points system that gave two points for a goal and one for an assist, before switching to solely counting goals.

Earlier this week, Messi became the player with the most assists in men's international football after setting up two goals in Argentina's 6-0 thrashing of Puerto Rico in an international friendly at Chase Stadium. His pair of assists took his international tally to 60, surpassing Neymar and Landon Donovan, who each have 58. With this achievement, Messi is now just three assists short of 400 across his professional career.

JAPAN OPEN

Leylah lifts fifth career title

With the win, Fernandez climbed five spots to No 22 in the WTA Live Rankings and reclaimed the Canadian No 1 ranking from Victoria Mboko



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Osaka, Oct 19: Leylah Fernandez won her first Japan Open title Sunday. The No 4 seed defeated 18-year-old qualifier Tereza Valentova, who

was making her WTA final debut, 6-0, 5-7, 6-3 in 2 hours and 11 minutes.

The victory marked Fernandez's fifth career title and her second of 2025. All five of her career titles have been won on hard courts.

Her run in Osaka, which included five consecutive wins, was only the second time since her victory in Washington, DC, in July that she won back-to-back matches.

Meanwhile, Taylor Townsend and Kristina Mladenovic won the women's doubles trophy Saturday, beating Stom Hunter and Desirae Krawczyk for their first title as a team.

For Townsend, a two-time Grand Slam champion and current world No 2, it is her 11th career WTA doubles title and her fourth of the season.