



Vaani's hope

After Diwali, actor Vaani Kapoor expresses concern over Delhi's worsening air, and hopes for cleaner celebrations next year

LEISURE | **P2**



Sarkozy in prison

Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy arrives at a prison to serve a 5-year sentence for a criminal conspiracy

INTERNATIONAL | **P10**



India-China EV clash

Alleging that India's PLI scheme violates global trade rules, China has filed a complaint at the WTO

BUSINESS | **P11**



Naqvi's stubbornness

Asia Cup trophy deadlock continues as ACC chief Mohsin Naqvi refuses to hand it to India despite BCCI, SL, Afghanistan push

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H-1B fee: US issues fresh guidelines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Oct 21: The USD 100,000 fee imposed by the Trump administration on new H-1B visa petitions will not apply to applicants seeking a “change of status” or “extension of stay”, according to fresh guidelines.

Issued by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Monday, the guidelines clarified the exemptions to President Donald Trump’s September 19 proclamation, ‘Restriction on entry of certain nonimmigrant workers,’ which will raise the fee for new H-1B visas to a steep USD 100,000 (approx INR 88 lakhs).

“The Proclamation does not apply to any previously issued and currently valid H-1B visas, or any petitions submitted prior to 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on September 21, 2025,” the USCIS said. It added that the proclamation also does not prevent any current H-1B holder from travelling in and out of the US.

The USCIS clarified that the fee does not apply to “change of status” cases where individuals switch categories without leaving the country, such as moving from F-1 student status to H-1B status.

“It says the fee only applies to cases filed for people outside the United States, so they can come in,” Dan Berger of Green & Spiegel told Forbes in an interview. “Employers were nervous about doing change of status because the \$100k might apply if they travel,” he added.

The proclamation does not apply to a petition filed at or after “12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on September 21, 2025, that is requesting an amendment, change of status, or extension of stay for an alien inside the US where the alien is granted such amendment, change, or extension.”

RAIN HIT: A worker makes her way through a flooded agricultural field after a nearby lake overflowed following rainfall, near Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka, Tuesday

Hazardous smog blankets twin cities

Following Diwali celebrations, the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Odisha's capital city Bhubaneswar soared to hazardous levels leaving behind even New Delhi, considered one of the most polluted cities in the world. While the national capital had an AQI of 612 Monday evening, Bhubaneswar clocked 657, a level considered by the World Health Organization dangerous to breath

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 21: The twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack woke up to a thick layer of smog following the Diwali celebrations as many people threw the guidelines issued by Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) to the wind.

OSPCB asked people to burst crackers between 7 pm and 9 pm.

According to reports, the Air Quality Index (AQI) of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack was 657 and 582 respectively Monday evening, which is considered as hazardous. The visibility in both cities was significantly reduced in many areas, according to residents as they faced inconvenience while commuting.

Krishnakanth Sahoo, a Bhubaneswar resident, said “Every morning I go for a walk to get some fresh air. However, today, I only saw fog and this is very concerning.”

Similarly, Subrat Ojha, a resident of Cuttack, narrating his woes, said, “The visibility was extremely

A smoke-engulfed stretch in Bhubaneswar Monday night

poor here (Cuttack) after the celebration. Bursting crackers is fine but the rising pollution level also needs to be taken care of.”

Diwali was celebrated with pomp and gaiety across the state. However, the time-limit set by OSPCB to burst crackers was ignored which resulted in the rise of air pollution. Reportedly, some

people also burst crackers, Tuesday, raising more concern for the environment.

Asked about the sudden surge in pollution level, Manish Kumar, environmental scientist at Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (IMMT) said “People went beyond

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Burst as many crackers as you want ... don't worry about pollution, it's a matter of religious freedom

Comic legend Asrani passes away at 85

MUMBAI: Actor Govardhan Asrani, popularly known as Asrani, known for his comic timings, died in Mumbai Monday after a prolonged illness. His last rites were performed at Santacruz Crematorium.

A versatile actor, who also had directorial stints, Asrani was admitted to Bharatiya Arogya Nidhi Hospital four days ago. He was originally a resident of Jaipur. His family, according to last wishes of the actor, shared the news only after his funeral was held at the Santacruz Crematorium. **P2**

Lokpal in soup over tender for 7 BMWs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 21: Anti-graft ombudsman Lokpal has floated a tender to procure seven luxurious BMW cars, collectively worth around ₹5 crore, drawing condemnation from opposition parties and anti-corruption activists who questioned the institution's priorities and performance record.

According to the tender and the manufacturer's website, the long-wheelbase sedan, with an on-road price of approximately ₹69.5 lakh per unit in Delhi, is described as the longest and most spacious car in the segment designed for

outstanding comfort in an extremely luxurious cabin.

“The Lokpal of India invites open tenders from reputed agencies for supply of seven BMW 3 series 330Li cars to the Lokpal of India,” read the tender floated October 16 which specifically mentioned procurement of the ‘M Sport’ model with “long wheelbase” and in white colour.

The procurement aims to provide a vehicle for each

of the institution's current members, including Chairman Justice A M Khanwilkar (retd) and six other members. The sanctioned strength of the Lokpal is eight.

The Lokpal's tender mandates that the selected vendor must conduct a comprehensive seven-day practical and theoretical training programme for the anti-graft ombudsman's drivers and designated staff for which the cost will be borne exclusively by the vendor.

Congress leaders and well-known activists have condemned the move, branding it as a display of extravagance that undermines the very mission of the institution.

Mosquitoes discovered in Iceland for 1st time

Reykjavík, Oct 21: In a shocking development, mosquitoes have been found in Nordic island nation Iceland for the first time as global heating makes the country more hospitable for insects.

The country was until this month one of the only places in the world that did not have a mosquito population. The other is Antarctica.

Scientists have predicted for some time that mosquitoes could establish themselves in Iceland as there are plentiful breeding habitats such as marshes and ponds. Many species will be unable to survive the harsh climate, however.

But Iceland is warming, at four times the rate of the rest of the northern hemisphere. Glaciers have been collaps-

ing and fish from warmer, southern climes such as mackerel have been found in the country's waters.

As the planet warms, more species of mosquito have been found across the globe. In the UK, eggs of the Egyptian mosquito (Aedes

aegypti) were found this year, and the Asian tiger mosquito (Aedes albopictus) has been discovered in Kent. These are invasive species that can spread tropical diseases such as dengue, chikungunya and Zika virus.

Matthias Alfreðsson, an

entomologist at the Natural Science Institute of Iceland, confirmed the findings there. He identified the insects himself after they were sent to him by a citizen scientist.

He said: “Three specimens of Culiseta annulata were found in Kíðafell, Kjós, two

females and one male. They were all collected from wine ropes during wine roping aimed at attracting moths.”

The species is cold-resistant and can survive Icelandic conditions by sheltering through winter in basements and barns.

Björn Hjaltason found the mosquitoes and posted about it on the Facebook group Insects in Iceland. “At dusk on October 16, I caught sight of a strange fly on a red wine ribbon,” Björn said, referring to the trap he uses to attract insects. “I immediately suspected what was going on and quickly collected the fly. It was a female.”

He caught two more and sent them to the science institute where they were identified.

Rehab centre inmate ‘strangled’; 4 detained

PNN & AGENCIES

Cuttack, Oct 21: A 37-year-old man was found dead under mysterious circumstances at a private de-addiction centre at Uttamapur under Sadar police limits here Tuesday morning.

The deceased was identified as Soumyaranjan Das, a resident of Jatni. An engineering graduate, he was working in Mumbai and had returned home due to depression following which was admitted to the centre about three months ago.

According to sources, Das was allegedly murdered by some inmates on Diwali

night after an altercation, which broke out between them as the former raised an alarm when they were trying to flee the rehab centre taking advantage of the festivities and lack of vigilance. Infuriated over foiled escape bid, they allegedly pinned him down and strangled him to death.

The centre staff found Das lying unconscious with a towel wrapped around his neck in the morning and rushed him to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Police have detained four inmates for questioning in connection with the incident and launched an

investigation to ascertain the circumstances leading to his death. Family have questioned the non-functional CCTVs at the centre.

Last month, a 28-year-old youth admitted at a de-addiction centre under Bharatpur police limits in Bhubaneswar died under mysterious circumstances.

The deceased, Surjyakanta Mohapatra of Singhanathpur village in Cuttack district, was undergoing treatment at the centre since August 29. Mohapatra's uncle, however, lodged a police complaint alleging he was murdered by the staff at the facility.

Back-to-back Lopar to bring heavy rains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 21: The state government Tuesday put all districts on alert and directed Collectors to remain fully prepared to handle any situation in the wake of a low-pressure area (Lopar) over the Bay of Bengal intensifying into a well-marked system and taking the shape of a depression in the next 24 hours.

In a letter to district Collectors, the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) said there should be foolproof preparations to tackle the ensuing calamity as forecast by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The government is on high alert, with back-to-back low-pressure systems

expected over the Bay of Bengal in October, traditionally a “cyclone month” for the state.

In the last four decades, most of the devastating cyclones have hit the Odisha coast in October, mostly after the withdrawal of the southwest monsoon from the state, an official at the revenue department claimed.

“We have asked all Collectors to stay alert in view of forecasts of heavy rain due to the low pressure systems over the bay,” Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari said. Pujari added that while the IMD has forecast rainfall, some international weather models predict a more severe situation, including the possibility of a cyclone.

DHARITRI YOUTH CONCLAVE 2025

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FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will be up and about today. Your actions will lead to progress, and progress to success. But later in the day, you may want to be alone. Honour your current mood – soften the lights and snuggle into your favourite corner. It's normal, says Ganesha, to talk to your dog about your problems.

TAURUS
It is a day of dreaming and doing, says Ganesha. Your ideas will click at work and help you shine through today. You will impress the boss with elegance and spend the evening with champagne and your love-struck beloved.

GEMINI
There are strong indications that today will be an action-packed day for you, says Ganesha. Though you will be burdened with a lot of responsibilities, you will be able to show your family members how much you care for them. New relationships will also develop in the evening.

CANCER
This is a favourable day for you. Ganesha sees the chance of a gain from womenfolk. Surprisingly, your work will be finished without any pre-planning. Ties with bosses and colleagues will be steady without any ups and downs. Some of your dreams may be realised.

LEO
Champagne, anyone? Well, Ganesha seems to favour a good celebration today as you give a major boost to your reputation in your chosen field. You will bring success and glory to all your associates. Do not be misled by the initial stress of your workplace, as it shall fade away with the passage of day. Let love and affection of your loved ones be the highlight of your day, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
You don't need to be one of the Mafia to realise the importance of family, says Ganesha. Your better half will try spicing up the relationship in the afternoon sometime. So keep fuelling the fires of love – a wildfire isn't always bad now, is it?

LIBRA
Ganesha says today you need to be careful about taking up any new ventures, agreements or deals in business today. You may have to bear the ire of higher ups in your office today but after the afternoon your work ability and skills will suitably impress them and remove any doubts that they had in you earlier. Since you will be spending more time at work today people in your family will get angry at feeling neglected

SCORPIO
You enjoy being a social butterfly today, says Ganesha. Evening will be spent wining and dining in the company of pleasant and like-minded people. During the day, you keep planning for the evening. And perhaps, that's the reason that you are not in the mood to work today.

SAGITTARIUS
Business tycoons, be ready to scale new heights today! Ganesha sees a fantastic day of massive business growth. In the afternoon, your professionalism will be held in high esteem by friends and foe alike. You may also take your first step in exploring new territories by launching new products in the market, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
You will be brimming over with power and energy, so much so that you may go head first into a new business venture, something that can match your ability and bring you the desired satisfaction. Pending work will be done away with, leaving you more time for recreation, says Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
Today is a day for creative expression! Sing away to glory, for you may discover you have a wonderful voice. Focus and precision are your best tools today, says Ganesha. But some event may cast a shadow over your clarity in the evening.

PISCES
You might as well drive into a brick wall and hope it is spongy, as expect to achieve a lot of success today. However, this does not mean that you ought to give up. Indeed, it is the Herculean efforts that you put in today that will bring you many laurels and much appreciation, as well as stupendous success in the near future, says Ganesha.



JOE SHUTS DOWN DRUG RUMOURS

Joe Jonas firmly denied rumours of drug use after a viral video showed him fidgeting with his nose during a performance. The *Only Human* singer clarified, "I've never touched cocaine in my life. But if I did, I think I'd be a little slicker about it than doing it onstage."

KIM'S NEW MASK SPARKS SPECULATION

Kim Kardashian's look at the fifth annual Academy Museum Gala in Los Angeles has gone viral on social media. Kim wore a nude-colored mask that covered her entire face and hair, prompting many on social media to wonder whether she is hiding another plastic surgery.



Vishal shares 'mantra' for success

Mumbai: Actor Vishal Jethwa, who successfully transitioned from the small screen to cinema, said the journey comes with its own set of challenges, but determination and a positive mindset make all the difference.

"When you come from TV to movies, you face difficulties," Vishal, who started his acting career in 2013 by landing the lead role of Akbar in the show *Bharat Ka Veer Putra – Maharana Pratap*, told this news agency.

"But still, I feel that if you have the will to do something good, then you do it. I did the same. I welcomed every opportunity with love and gave my best in everything. I think this has been my Guru mantra. Then things happen. Some things we don't do, God makes us do them," he said.

Now that he has a flourishing career in Hindi cinema, which demands extra hours of work, how does Vishal make time for his family?

"You are very close to your family. How do you manage? I am always connected on the phone. Even if I go out, I am always connected to my family on the phone. Otherwise, I don't even feel that I am away from my family because we are very close," he said.

ANS

Vaani's concern

Mumbai: A day after Diwali celebrations, actress Vaani Kapoor, who is currently in the national capital, has voiced concern over New Delhi's worsening air quality, and hopes next year, there's a way out dimming the air we breathe."

Vaani took to she woke up to in New Delhi. AQI touch-the world a way to air we Earlier in OTT on the in the fic- Pradesh, it ror, and



ANS

The quiet legend behind the laughter

New Delhi: He was more than just the comedian, a staple brought into the plot to invoke laughs. Govardhan Kumar Asrani was also the quiet character actor who was so much a part of the middle of the road movies that now epitomise a golden era in Hindi cinema.

Asrani, 84, died on Diwali afternoon and was cremated quietly Monday evening, without any fanfare.

He will always be remembered as the jailor from *Sholay* whose loud, exaggerated persona evoked laughter and whose dialogue "*Hum Angrezon ke zamane ke jailor hain*" is quoted almost as if on loop 50 years later.

Asrani acted in more than 300 films over six decades. It was a lifetime of making movies, many roles forgettable and many that will stay on.

The films from the 1970s, considered to be a decade of Hindi movies greats, included Asrani as a lost-in-his-own world musician in *Baawarchi*, the friend who has no comic lines but moves the humour plotline in the classic comedy *Chupke Chupke* and the heroine's brother in *Namak Haram*.

Asrani was an ac-

tor who adapted through the times. As the tone grew louder and more slapstick in the 1980s and 1990s, so did Asrani.

He was part of a remarkable comic tradition that included Mehmood, Johnny Walker and Keshto Mukherjee. He brought his own brand of everyman humour to the screen.

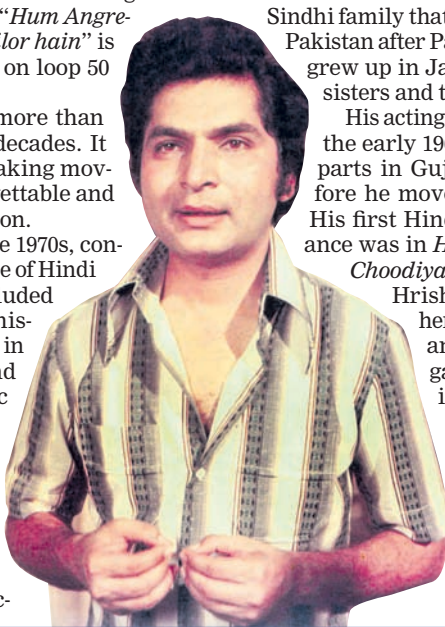
In the last phase of his acting career, Asrani's most significant collaborator was Priyadarshan who gave him roles in *Hera Pheri*, *Chup Chup Ke*, *Garam Masala* and *Bhool Bhulaiya*.

Born in 1941 into a middle-class Sindhi family that migrated from Pakistan after Partition, Asrani grew up in Jaipur with four sisters and three brothers.

His acting career began in the early 1960s, with small parts in Gujarati films before he moved to Mumbai. His first Hindi film appearance was in *Hare Kaanch Ki Choodiyaan*, but it was Hrishikesh Mukherjee's *Satyakam* and *Guddi* that gave him visibility.

Asrani was the rare actor who spoke his mind, be it politics or the industry itself.

PTI



Thamma: A massy, Maddock-style firecracker

Thamma is big-screen fun at its purest — a daring mix of folklore, family, fantasy, and fanfare of a full-blown franchise. With this new movie in the Maddock horror-verse, director Aditya Sarpotdar is taking Indian genre cinema to a whole new level. It's all sorts of strange, clever, and wildly creative — yet, very relatable.

The story revolves around the forest of myths where the past is still alive and the ancient guardians are awakening. Not Thamma by any means, but it still manages to conjure up a bizarre fantasy universe complete with its

own laws, curses, and consequences.

One of the main characters is journalist protagonist Khurana from a small town. His incidental supernatural experience leads to a series of events that is not in his capacity to grasp the enormity of it. In the first half, he is simply lovable and relatable but later on he

becomes quite intense. Mandanna delivers an emotional performance that is also very down-to-earth.

The continuing part is just an explosive work of art — it features fight, change of characters, and a breathtaking fight between Alok and Bhedi-



ya (Varun Dhawan). Special effects are of great quality and the confrontation between these two forces is signaling their underlying relationship which will definitely influence this cinematic universe storyline in the future.

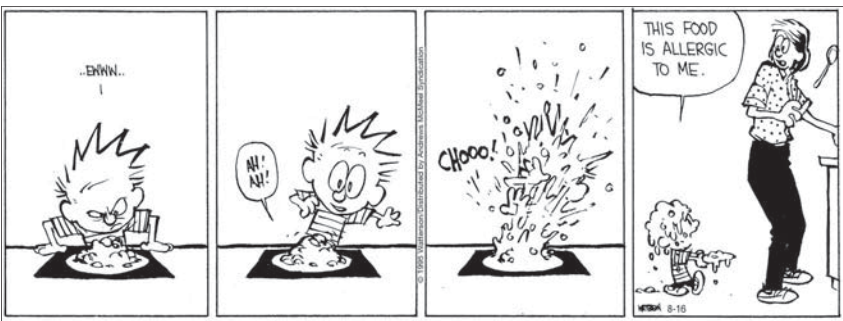
On the subject of universe-building, the movie is full of Easter eggs and a few character recalls, but one highlights: the comeback of Sar Kata, the frightening character from *Stree*, who ominously appears, signaling the massive danger that lies ahead for the Maddock horror-verse. The acting, in general, is great. Paresh Rawal offers a great comic relief performance as the sarcastic and sharp-witted father while Nawazuddin Siddiqui dominates the movie with his intense and dark presence.

ANS

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

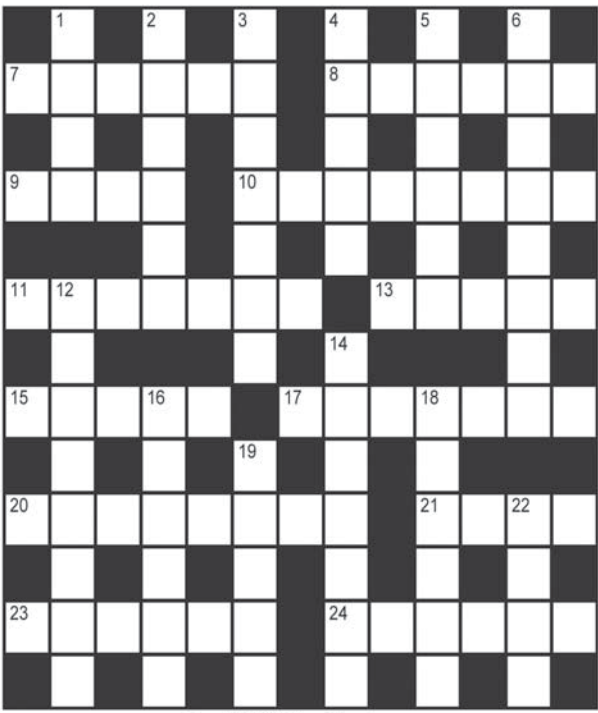


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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- Across**
7 Chest of drawers
8 Souped-up car (3,3)
9 Blackthorn fruit
10 Harbours
11 Grazing land
13 Jeans material
- Down**
1 Kittiwake
2 Echo
- Across**
15 Corpulent
17 Nudged
20 Kind of guitar
21 London district
23 Desk item
24 Kicks out
- Down**
3 Baby's room
4 Chintzy
5 Flunky
6 Land turtle
12 Small tuna
14 Ice mass
16 Court game
18 Pearl maker
19 Baby bird?
22 Despise

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

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

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

‘Godman’ held for sexually assaulting 7-year-old girl

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Oct 21: A self-styled godman was arrested in Cuttack district for allegedly sexually assaulting a seven-year-old girl, police said Monday.

The incident happened in Kendupatna area when the girl was going to a shop near her house to buy some essentials, they said.

The accused, a 50-year-old man, took her to a nearby mutt and sexually assaulted her.

A case was registered under various sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act at Nandankanan police station, police said. The accused was arrested immediately, they said.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I Himansu Ranjan Jena, S/o.- Ramesh Chandra Jena, resident of At/P.O.- Viruda, P.S.- Tigiria, Dist.- Cuttack, PIN- 754030 declare by this affidavit No.40, dated- 19.10.2025 that now onwards I shall be known as **Himanshu Ranjan Jena** for all future purpose.

LOST

By Affidavit No.- 4279/2025 Dated-14.10.2025 before The Notary, Bari and Bari-Ramachandrapur PS, I Ramesh Chandra Shyanti, S/o.- Sharat Chandra Shyanti, Vill: Ratnagiri, P.S.: Bari-Ramachandrapur, Dist.: Jajpur ROR (ORIGINAL) of Mouza: Aliabad having Khata No.-673 & 1st RSD (ORIGINAL) No.- 10801400111, Dtd.- 31.01.2014, 2nd RSD (ORIGINAL) No.- 10801801148, Dtd.- 16.11.2018, lost somewhere while travelling through my bike. If anyone find please Contact: 9777205170.

This is to inform the public that the original +3 Pass Certificate of Sri Sanjeeb Kumar Mohanty, Son of Bipini Bihari Mohanty, resident of Adharjodi, Kendrapara, Odisha-754211, has been lost/damaged beyond recovery due to termite infestation. The certificate was issued by Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agriculture, Technology and Science (Enrollment Number: G-1105300170, Batch: Autumn-2010, Exam. held in June 2013). Sri Sanjeeb Kumar Mohanty requests the concerned authority to issue a duplicate certificate for necessary purposes. If anyone finds any information regarding the lost certificate, please contact: Sri Sanjeeb Kumar Mohanty, Adharjodi, Kendrapara, Odisha-754211.

HC seeks report on Cuttack college student facilities

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 21: Taking note of the glaring lack of basic facilities for differently-abled girl students at Shailabala Women’s Autonomous College, Cuttack, the Orissa High Court has directed college authorities to submit a detailed report on the measures being taken to address the issue.

The college, currently enrolling over 2,000 students, was established through the vision of two of Odisha’s pioneering figures— Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das and his adopted daughter, Miss Shailabala Das.

Situated near the holy shrine of Goddess Katak Chandi, the majestic college building stands on mission road in Cuttack city. The plight of lack of basic facility for 35 differently-abled girl students in Shailabala Women’s Autonomous College, Cuttack is taken on record.

It is stated that the class rooms, library, hostel and other facilities are not conducive for the differently-abled. There is no wheelchair and even using

the washroom is an ordeal, the Court said in an order.

Differently-abled girl students often lack basic facilities like accessible ramps, elevators, and separate, safe washrooms.

Taking note of the situation, the Orissa High Court directed the Additional District Magistrate (ADM) of Cuttack, who serves as the nodal officer for the district administration, to visit the college after informing the Principal.

The ADM has been asked to assess the ground situation, take immediate corrective measures to address urgent issues, and submit before the Court a comprehensive action plan to resolve the matter on a permanent basis, the order stated.

The Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the Higher Education department and the Commissioner-cum- Secretary of the Social Security & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities department shall be intimated to remain present in the next sitting October 23 either virtually or in person, the order concluded.



HOMAGE TO ANCESTORS: A large number of devotees thronged near the Srimandir Monday to perform ‘Paya Shraddha’, a ritual honouring ancestors during Diwali

OP PHOTO

Thousands offer ‘Paya Shraddha’ near Srimandir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Puri, Oct 21: Thousands of devotees gathered near the Srimandir here Monday to perform ‘Paya Shraddha’, a ritual to honour ancestors on ‘Diwali’.

Rituals were held outside the Lion’s Gate of the 12th Century-shrine, with devotees lighting up ‘Kaunria Kathis’ (jute sticks).

RITUALS WERE HELD OUTSIDE THE LION’S GATE OF THE 12TH CENTURY-SHRINE, WITH DEVOTEES LIGHTING UP ‘KAUNRIA KATHIS’ (JUTE STICKS)

CHANTS OF “BADA BADUA HO, ANDHARA RE ASITHILA, ALUA RE JAO HO” — INVOKING FOREFATHERS TO RETURN ALONG THE LIGHTED PATH — ECHOED IN THE AIR

Chants of ‘bada badua ho, andhara re asithila, alua re jao ho’ that roughly translates to ‘Oh forefathers you came in darkness, go back along the lighted path’, were heard.

“Performing ‘Paya Shraddha’ ritual at Puri helps ancestors’ souls attain peace, absolving them of karmic sin,” said Surya Narayan Rath Sharma, a researcher of Jagannath culture.

Elaborate arrangements were made to ensure the safety of devotees and the smooth conduct of rituals, officials said.

Around 28 platoons of police were deployed across the Holy city, along with four Additional SPs, 15 DSPs and 14 inspectors, they said.

Traffic restrictions were imposed from 4am to 10pm, they added.

OES to honour achievers on 44th Foundation Day



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 21: The Orissa Environmental Society (OES) will celebrate its 44th foundation day October 25 and present prestigious awards to distinguished individuals from the state for their exceptional contributions to environmental protection and conservation, OES working president Jayakrushna Panigrahi said Tuesday.

The executive committee, in a meeting chaired by president Sundara Narayana Patro, decided to confer the Lifetime Contribution Award on former dean of

the College of Engineering and Technology (now OUTR), B Seetaram Patro, in recognition of his overall contributions.

Former IMD Bhubaneswar director and current SOA University director Sarat Chandra Sahu will receive the Excellence in Environment Award, while Regional Science Centre senior education officer and science writer Nikunja Bihari Sahu will be honoured with the Environment and Science Communication Award.

Similarly, Prameya editor Gopalkrishna Mohapatra will receive the Excellence in En-

vironmental Reporting Award, while Utkal Ranjan Mohanty, technical adviser of INSAF, Jagatsinghpur, will be honoured with the Nature Conservation Award.

Additionally, select individuals will be conferred with the titles of OES Fellow and OES Patron, while five senior life members will also be felicitated on the occasion. Former Odisha DGP and OPSC chairman Satyajit Mohanty will grace the event as chief guest, and UNDP Odisha head Abha Mishra will deliver the Prasanna Kumar Dash Memorial Lecture as the keynote speaker.

Govt sets up mechanism to monitor key projects

BHUBANESWAR: The Odisha government has established a dedicated mechanism for regular monitoring and review of major industrial and infrastructure projects across the state, official sources said Tuesday. All departments and District Collectors have been instructed to ensure consistent supervision and timely evaluation of ongoing projects. “They have also been directed to upload detailed data, including issues encountered and steps taken for resolution, and the latest implementation status, on the Project Monitoring Group (PMG) portal,” they said. At a high-level Third Task Force Committee meeting, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, who reviewed the progress of projects listed on the PMG portal, issued directives to expedite delayed construction works and strengthen the overall monitoring framework. To enhance project monitoring, it was decided that district-level review meetings will be held by the 7th of every month.

CM celebrates Diwali in native village



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Oct 21: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi arrived in Keonjhar district on a three-day visit and reached his native Raikala village under Sadar block Monday afternoon where he celebrated Diwali with relatives, friends and family. He received a grand welcome from both the villagers and local administration.

Majhi celebrated Diwali in Raikala by playing traditional drums (madala) and joining

villagers in dance and songs. He performed puja, lit clay lamps, and extended greetings expressing his happiness at being with his family and community. “The rich culture, traditions, and closeness of this land always inspire and strengthen me,” he said. Following local customs, he described the celebration as a unique experience, adding that Diwali is not only a festival of lights but also a symbol of Odisha’s rich culture, identity, and devotion to nature.

“On this auspicious day, I pray to Maa Kali and Maa Lakshmi that the light of happiness, peace, prosperity, and harmony fills the lives of the people of Odisha. I firmly believe that we must all work together and uphold our culture and traditions to build a new, developed, and prosperous Odisha,” he said.

Not possible to hold Rath Yatra on one date: ISKCON

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 21: The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) has told the Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee (SJTMC) chairperson that it would ‘not be possible’ for it to conduct the Rath Yatra on one specific date across the globe.

The SJTMC chairperson, Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb, the titular king of Puri, had earlier written to ISKCON in September to celebrate Shree Jagannath’s ‘Snana yatra’ and Rath Yatra across the globe only on specific ‘tithi’ prescribed by sacred scriptures and tradition.

ISKCON has agreed to celebrate ‘Snana yatra’ on the prescribed tithi (Jyestha purnima) in all its temples in India and abroad, but did not agree with the decision of SJTMC to celebrate Rath Yatra in countries outside India on the tithi prescribed by scriptures.

“ISKCON GBC chairman Go-

vardhan Das, in his letter dated October 19, has informed Deb that while ISKCON has agreed to celebrate Snana-yatra on the prescribed tithi (namely, Jyestha-poornima) in all its temples within India and abroad, it is unable to agree with the decision of SJTMC to celebrate Rath Yatra in countries outside India on the tithi prescribed by scriptures and tradition...,” an official release issued by the Gajapati’s office said.

ISKCON said, “As far as the dates of international Rath Yatras aligning to the Puri tithi are concerned, we are faced with a number of insurmountable challenges that make it impossible to follow a similar protocol.”

It said that in most countries outside India, the worship of Lord Jagannath is followed by a small minority of the population, and they are unable to obtain permission for the Rath Yatra freely.

“Most government authorities in the West will only allow

processions on weekends to avoid disruption to the commercial functioning of cities,” the letter said.

“Even in the event that such permissions were granted on the desired days, majority of volunteers who facilitate the Rath Yatra and participants would be unable to participate as they have professional commitments during the week,” the ISKCON said, adding that most of the temples in the western countries also do not have their own chariots, so the same chariot often travels from city to city in the region to facilitate the festival.

The ISKCON also said that due to the variation of climates, some cities of the world are in the middle of cold winters during the months in which the Yatra tithi falls.

“If Rath Yatras all over the world were somehow to be held on the same tithi, it would also deprive many devotees from attending the sacred festival in Sri Dham Jagannath Puri,”

the ISKCON said.

Meanwhile, the SJTMC chairperson Tuesday expressed concern over ISKCON holding Rath Yatra on different dates and again requested it to reconsider the decision.

Deb, in a letter to Das, said, “I sincerely urge you to reconsider your decision and advise ISKCON temples to celebrate Rath Yatra around the world only during the nine-day auspicious period commencing on Asadha Shukla-paksha Dvitiya Tithi in accordance with the sacred scriptures and ancient well-established tradition.”

He also said that even in other major world religions, holy festivals are celebrated according to lunar calendar/dates sanctioned by sacred scriptures and tradition, whether it be Christmas or Eid-al Fitr, Wesak (Buddha Day) or Paryushan Mahaparva (Jainism), Yom Kippur celebrated by Jews or Vaisakhi celebrated by the Sikh community.

WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	33.5°	31.2°	Partly cloudy sky with possibility of rain or thundershowers .
Min Temp	24.1°	21.6°	
Humidity	80%	94%	
Rainfall	TRACE	39.8mm	

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Behold Gen Z

A new wave of political movements without any so-called ideological underpinning except for deafeningly noisy demands for basic citizen’s needs and livelihoods is sweeping across the world from the Andes to the Himalayas. After Nepal, the Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Kenya, Peru and Morocco, it is the turn of the Gen Z of Madagascar to erupt in protest against corruption and nepotism by the ruling regime, forcing its President Andry Rajoelina to flee the country. The political contagion is spreading fast, engulfing one country after another from Asia to Africa. Gen Z, which is the first generation to have grown up in the age of the internet, is at the forefront of anti-government protests in several countries in the Global South. They appear to be part of a broad movement throwing conventional politics out of gear from Nepal in early September. The latest manifestation of this form of social unrest is in the African island country of Madagascar. These movements are driven by tech savvy youngsters who are rebelling against inequality, corruption at high offices, nepotism and criminal neglect of bread and butter issues of the common man.

Madagascar’s protest movement began on social media under the banner “Gen Z Madagascar.” This is an informal group composed mainly of young people and students who claim to be peaceful and civic-minded. Though young people represent the overwhelming majority of the country’s population, two-thirds were under 30 in 2023 – Gen Z has never before taken such an active part in the political protest movement there. This is unprecedented and marked by its spontaneous and decentralized nature. While past mobilisations were led or co-opted by political parties, unions or charismatic figures, this one stems from collective outrage, mainly in digital spaces and grows without a single leader. This is its speciality- giving it a new symbolic power because it does not aim to seize power, but is propelled by the demand for a livable future. The movement has overthrown two regimes – in Nepal and Madagascar. Perhaps it is no coincidence, but an inevitable consequence of eruption of the wrath of the youth that both the Prime Minister of Nepal KP Sharma Oli and Madagascar President Rajoelina have had to flee their respective countries to escape the fury of youth.

The most telling example cited by the protesters of Madagascar in their online pages is the image of the eldest member of the Rajoelina family, who graduated from a Swiss hotel school costing 150,000 per year, while two-thirds of Madagascar’s population live on less than two dollars a day. Wasteful public spending is a common theme motivating the young protesters in all the countries witnessing the novel phenomenon. In Madagascar, the costly Antananarivo cable car – one of the government’s key infrastructure projects deemed completely unsuited to the needs of the population - has triggered the movement of the youth.

In Morocco, protesters are focusing on the huge sums spent on renovating several football stadiums for the Africa Cup of Nations and the 2030 World Cup. The Gen Z of the country argues the huge funds could have gone to public services such as education and healthcare.

Gen Z may not yet have a formalised political agenda. But it has already changed political discourse. The central theme of the new political debate is no longer on the question of surviving in a failing system, but of radically transforming it. This does not appear to be a passing revolt, but a profound generational change. The young Gen Z protesters do not seem to care for any “ism” that falls into disuse after some time. They are bringing up issues of basic needs and services such as food, shelter, clothing, education and health services while fighting against corruption and systemic rot. Any attempt by established political parties to capture power by promising to cater to those needs only to amass wealth for themselves, their kith and kin and cronies is being resisted with force that sometimes turns brutal.

Politicians across the globe are put on notice now by Gen Z which has turned the world into a village with their digital reach. Perform or perish – a mantra of the exploitative corporate world - is emerging as a slogan for this brand of youth politics. The absence of a leader or political organization and a fixed agenda could be its main strength and not weakness.

WISDOM CORNER

Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it

CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

The best revenge is massive success

FRANK SINATRA

If we're growing, we're always going to be out of our comfort zone

JOHN C. MAXWELL

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

■ 1797:

André-Jacques Garnerin, an inspector in the French army who encouraged the use of balloons for military purposes, made a balloon ascent in order to give his first exhibition of parachuting, when he jumped from a height of about 3,200 feet.

■ 1879:

Thomas Edison successfully tests an incandescent light bulb. After about a year of research on creating a working incandescent lamp, Edison was finally able to run a lamp continuously for over 13 hours. The lamp used a carbon filament, for which he was granted a patent in 1880.

■ 1884:

International Meridian Conference Adopts Greenwich, England as initial longitudinal meridian. 26 countries participated in the conference which was held in Washington, D.C. In addition to making the meridian passing through the Observatory of Greenwich as the initial meridian for longitude or 0 degree longitude, the conference also defined a universal day which would “begin for all the world at the moment of mean midnight at the initial meridian, coinciding with the beginning of the civil day and date of that meridian; and is to be counted from zero up to twenty-four hours”.

■ 1962:

On this day in 1962, President John F. Kennedy alerted Americans to the Cuban missile crisis, declaring a naval blockade to prevent further missile shipments to the island country 90 miles (145 km) off the coast of the U.S.

■ 1964:

French philosopher and writer Jean-Paul Sartre was announced the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature; however, he became the first person to decline the award.

power post

FOCUS ENERGY

POWERING THE AI RACE

Two centuries ago, the steam engine converted heat into motion – and remade the global economy. Today, AI is transforming electricity into cognition, and whoever masters both will again rewrite the rules of progress

The next stage of the global AI race will be decided not by algorithms or chips, but by electricity – and that puts China at a distinct advantage. While Western tech giants are emphasising closed, capital-intensive models that demand enormous computing power, China is embracing open-source AI and massively expanding its renewable- and nuclear-energy capacity, thereby positioning itself to deploy powerful AI technologies at scale without breaking the bank.

These differences reflect a more fundamental split. Whereas the United States and its allies have treated AI as a proprietary technology, China has approached it as public infrastructure, building an open AI ecosystem that reflects the same philosophy it applied to manufacturing: broad adoption, fast iteration, and relentless cost reduction. Chinese open-source models like DeepSeek, Qwen, and Kimi are not just scientific achievements; they are strategic instruments designed for participation, and they are transforming the economics of AI.

DeepSeek’s latest version reportedly matches the capabilities of frontier systems, like those being developed by US companies, at a fraction of their compute cost. Qwen and Kimi’s API prices have fallen by orders of magnitude. In purely economic terms, the marginal cost of “thought” is collapsing. The inference costs of some Chinese models are a tenth or less of those incurred by OpenAI’s GPT-4.

The cheaper AI becomes, however, the more of it the world consumes, with each token saved inviting a thousand more to be generated. The same dynamic that once powered the coal age now drives the digital one. In China, this is by design: low inference costs, together with the open weights of Chinese models, are intended to invite experimentation across universities,

Jeffrey Wu

THE SAME DYNAMIC THAT ONCE POWERED THE COAL AGE NOW DRIVES THE DIGITAL ONE

startups, and local governments. But all that activity requires energy: the International Energy Agency expects global electricity consumption from data centers to double by 2030 (from 2024 levels), driven largely by AI workloads. Training GPT-4 alone likely consumed millions of kilowatt-hours – enough to power San Francisco for three days.

What once was a contest of algorithms is fast becoming a contest of kilowatts, and China is setting itself up to win. In 2024, the country added 356 gigawatts of renewable-energy capacity – more than the US, the European Union, and India combined – with 91 per cent of all new generation coming from solar, wind, and hydro. Battery storage tripled from 2021 levels, and an ultra-high-voltage grid now carries clean power thousands of miles, from deserts to data hubs.

China is also investing heavily in nuclear energy. According to the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, its nuclear research and development spending is roughly five times higher than that of the US. As its fourth-generation reactors and small modular designs advance from pilot to deployment, nuclear energy is quietly providing the base-load power that intermittent renewables cannot.

This combination of open AI

models, cheap renewables, and a stable supply of nuclear power forms what might be called an energy-compute flywheel: more clean power enables more compute, which in turn optimizes the grid. Already, machine-learning systems are predicting solar output, managing energy storage, and balancing load across China’s vast power network in real time. The result is a reorganisation of industry, as the traditional boundaries between energy, semiconductors, and software vanish. Data centers are the new power plants; GPUs are the new turbines. China is not merely electrifying its industry; it is electrifying its intelligence.

Beyond strengthening its own clean-energy grid, China is exporting the building blocks of the world’s new energy system. Its clean-tech exports – including solar panels, grid batteries, and electric vehicles – hit a record \$20 billion this past August, overtaking its consumer-electronics shipments from a decade earlier. Even if the West exports chips and software, it is China that is producing the electrons that make them useful.

Meanwhile, the West’s energy constraints – aging grids, slow permitting processes, and high prices – are creating digital bottlenecks. In the US and elsewhere, data-center expansion is increasingly limited by

access to a reliable supply of electricity. Some jurisdictions – such as Virginia and Dublin – face moratoria on new data centers.

Industrial revolutions have always favoured the societies that could convert energy into productivity most efficiently. In the 19th century, coal was the key to empire. In the 20th, oil was king. And in the 21st, it will be clean power paired with compute. Whoever commands the cheapest electrons will command the cheapest intelligence – and enjoy growing abundance on both fronts.

China is currently positioning itself to occupy this coveted position, thanks to a systemic alignment of investment and incentives that democracies would find difficult to replicate quickly. But it is not the only country that stands to gain from its success. For emerging economies that have long been priced out of high-performance computing, open-weight models and falling energy costs could make AI accessible and even essential, much like electricity or broadband.

But abundance does not guarantee stability. Without sufficient investment in clean-energy generation and storage, surging energy demand for AI could strain grids and undermine progress on decarbonisation. Like in the industrial age, efficiency could lead to excess, and progress could be accompanied by growing imbalances. Managing the tension between abundance and restraint will determine whether AI becomes a tool of empowerment or a new driver of inequality.

Two centuries ago, the steam engine converted heat into motion – and remade the global economy. Today, AI is transforming electricity into cognition, and whoever masters both will again rewrite the rules of progress.

The writer is Director at MindWorks Capital.
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IN JEST THIS

Better be in good shape for some jobs

Melvin Durai

WHETHER YOU LIVE IN AMERICA, INDIA OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY, BEING ‘ATHLETICALLY ALLERGIC’ WILL PROBABLY DISQUALIFY YOU FROM MOST JOBS IN THE MILITARY, POLICE FORCE OR BORDER PATROL

As you may have heard, US President Donald Trump wants to double the number of people working for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), hoping to deport millions of undocumented immigrants. But this plan is running into a snag: many of the job seekers interested in working for ICE and rounding up immigrants aren’t in good enough shape. They’ve been deemed “athletically allergic.”

Whether you live in America, India or any other country, being “athletically allergic” will probably disqualify you from most jobs in the military, police force or border patrol. The Indian Army, for example, requires young male recruits to run 1.6 km (or one mile) in under 5 minutes 45 seconds.

The fastest I’ve ever run a mile is 6 minutes and 40 seconds. I was in my twenties then and if I had applied to join the Indian Army, the recruitment officer would have

laughed in my face.

Officer: “Please keep training. Don’t give up.”

Me: “So you think I have a chance in the future?”

Officer: “Yes, there is a chance, during a time of war, that we might allow slow people to join.”

Running 1.6 km is not the only physical requirement for the Indian Army Agniveer physical test. Recruits must also be able to do a minimum of six pull-ups, jump across a nine-foot ditch and complete a zig-zag balance test. The ditch test itself would cause me to ditch my army aspirations.

The physical requirements for ICE do not seem quite as rigorous, yet they’re proving to be a stumbling block. More than a third of new recruits at ICE’s training academy in Georgia have failed the personal-fitness test, according to a report by Nick Miroff in The Atlantic magazine.

To pass the test, recruits must do 15 push-ups and 32

sit-ups, and run 1.5 miles in 14 minutes.

I can do the run in 14 minutes, but doing all those push-ups and sit-ups would probably give me a heart attack.

According to Miroff, an email from ICE headquarters to the agency’s top officials on 5 October complained that “a considerable amount of athletically allergic candidates” had been turning up to the training academy. These candidates had “misrepresented” their fitness level on application forms. You might say that they lied, but it’s easy to assume that you can do something – until you’re actually asked to do it. That’s not lying -- that’s believing too much in yourself.

Imagine that you’re a five-foot-six man who weighs 90kg. Applying for an ICE job, you respond “yes” when asked if you can do 15 push-ups and 32 sit-ups, and run 1.5 miles in 14 minutes. You don’t think of it as lying, because you tell yourself that you’ll go on a diet and be-

gin training tomorrow. Never mind that you haven’t done a single push-up or sit-up in your life. And the only time you’ve done any running is when the neighbor’s dog was loose.

The email from ICE headquarters told officials to give recruits preliminary fitness exams at agency offices, screening them to ensure that those who show up at the academy do not look like they just left China Buffet.

New hires are expected to wear sneakers (or trainers) on their first day, allowing them to do sit-ups and push-ups in the often-crowded offices. Timing them as they run 1.5 miles is more of a challenge, an ICE official told Miroff.

Those who pass the preliminary fitness test get to try the real test at the training academy. Those who fail may be offered an administrative position in an office, perhaps a position that involves administering a preliminary fitness exam to new hires.

Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Pending cases

Sir, There are about 18 lakh pending criminals cases in the High Courts (HCs). In January, the Supreme Court (SC) had permitted HCs to appoint ad hoc judges not exceeding 10 per cent of the respective HC’s sanctioned strength. It had also mandated that ad hoc judges could not be appointed if the particular HC was already working with 80 per cent of its strength. Recently, the top court relaxed the 80 per cent rule because none of the country’s 25 HCs have reportedly sent names for ad hoc judges. Retired judges would bring experience and talent. Moreover, Article 224A of the Constitution of India is unambiguous over the issue. The Centre and the SC should hasten the procedure for appointment of ad hoc judges keeping in mind the interests of harrowed litigants. .

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Dismal show

Sir, India ranks near the bottom of the global list of systems that ensure a minimum income after retirement. India has been ranked D on the Global Pension Index-2025, which was created by US institutions Mercer and CFA Institute and includes countries such as the Philippines and Thailand. In contrast, the Netherlands, Iceland, Singapore, Denmark, and other countries have topped the list. The index was intended to assess the pension system’s adequacy, sustainability, and creditworthiness. India scored 43.8 out of a possible 100 points. According to reports, pension-related benefits are insufficient to meet individual demands in this country. The Indian system has likewise been deemed inadequate in terms of sustainability. Due to the population increase the current pension system will put further burden on the treasury in the future. In terms of credibility, the Indian system has fared slightly better. However, when compared to the greatest systems in the world for pension system operation, transparency, and regulation, India’s image suffers. According to the survey, the number of elderly individuals in India’s is increasing. The conditions in India are unacceptable in terms of providing significant financial aid to those folks. In today’s world, an adequate and convenient pension system is essential for the elderly to live a dignified life.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

Paddy harvest resumes in Meghalaya

In a display of solidarity, villagers from Lakaroi, predominantly Karbis, came forward Tuesday to assist the Pnar villagers of Lapangap in harvesting paddy, which had been stalled since violence erupted October 9

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lapangap, Oct 21: The stand-off over paddy harvesting at Lapangap village along the Assam-Meghalaya border in West Jaintia Hills district has been resolved, with farmers resuming work Tuesday under tight security, officials said.

The breakthrough was achieved under the joint initiative of Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), and traditional leaders, who intervened to defuse tensions between the two communities, they said.

In a display of solidarity, villagers from Lakaroi, predominantly Karbis, came forward Tuesday to assist the Pnar villagers of Lapangap in har-



vesting paddy, which had been stalled since violence erupted October 9.

Over 60 families have paddy fields between Lapangap and Tapat, the officials said.

“The situation has returned to normal. Harvesting will begin in the major portions from tomorrow under adequate security arrangements from both states,” a senior official

told PTI. Tensions escalated October 9 when residents of neighbouring Tapat village in Assam's Karbi Anglong district allegedly stopped Lapangap farmers from harvesting paddy in a disputed field located between the two villages.

Violence during the protest led to the death of one person from Tapat. A night curfew from 6 pm to 10 am, which was imposed in Lapangap village following the unrest October 9, is still in force, the official said.

Authorities said the halt in paddy harvest affected the livelihoods of farmers, and welcomed the cooperation shown by both communities.

According to senior Home Department officials, security personnel remain deployed in and around the agricultural fields in the area to prevent any untoward incident.

Kerala CM backs new market amid protests

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kozhikode (Kerala), Oct 21: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Tuesday said that the ‘new Palayam market’ at Kalluthan Kadavu here will take the commercial sector in Kozhikode to new heights, even as a large group of traders and labourers protested against it.

Vijayan made the statement after inaugurating the new market.

Ahead of the inauguration, hundreds of traders and labourers protested at the site of the ‘old Palayam market’ against it being shifted to the new location.

In his inaugural address, the CM questioned why such a good project was being rejected by a certain group of people.

Terming the new market as a “dream project”, Vijayan said it was spread over an area of three-and-a-half lakh square feet with ample facilities for vehicle parking and hundreds of shops.

He said that it was implemented as a PPP model at a cost of about Rs 100 crore.

His office also put up a post about it on social media platform ‘X’, saying, “a new chapter begins in Kozhikode’s commercial growth with the opening of the new Palayam market complex at Kalluthan Kadavu.”

“CM @pinarayivijayan inaugurated the Rs 100 crore project, developed under the PPP model with modern facilities and space for hundreds of shops.”

While the protestors claimed that the size of shops are small at the new complex and it is located away from bus transport facilities, CPI(M) affiliated traders organisations supported the shifting of the market to the new location.

The CPI(M) affiliated traders carried out a rally to the new location -- at Kalluthankadavu here -- which they termed as modern and spacious with a lot of facilities.

They have also claimed that the shifting to the new location would also help address the traffic congestion problems at the Palayam market, which is in the heart of Kozhikode city.

The Left-backed traders further said that there are over 300 shops available at the new location, while only half of those were there at Palayam.

Kerala orders unified shift system for private hospital employees



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 21: The Kerala government has issued an order to implement a unified shift system for all categories of employees, including nurses, in private hospitals in the state, irrespective of the number of beds.

The order, issued by the Department of Employment and Skills, is expected to be a solace to hundreds of workers in the private health sector.

The order, dated October 18, was issued amending a previous order allowing the implementation of the 3-shift system for employees of private hospi-

tals with more than 100 beds in the state.

A copy of the order was shared with the media Tuesday.

Based on the recommendation of the Veerakamar Committee and the recommendation and suggestions of the Private Hospital Industry Liaison Committee, an order was issued in 2021 making all categories of employees in private hospitals with more than 100 beds in the state entitled to a three-shift system (6/6/12 hours).

As per the order, they are also entitled to an overtime allowance for work exceeding eight hours per day, 48 hours per week, or 208 hours per month.

The order also emphasised providing restroom facilities at the hospital for employees who lack transport to reach home.

In response to opinions from sector representatives, the government has issued a fresh order expanding the scope of the rule. It now applies to “all categories of employees in private hospitals in the state,” rather than only to those in hospitals with more than 100 beds.



CPI leader Pannian Ravindran speaks during a meeting organised by members of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) pensioners organisation, amid their protest over delayed pension payments, in Thiruvananthapuram, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

NE witnesses loss of forest cover rapidly

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

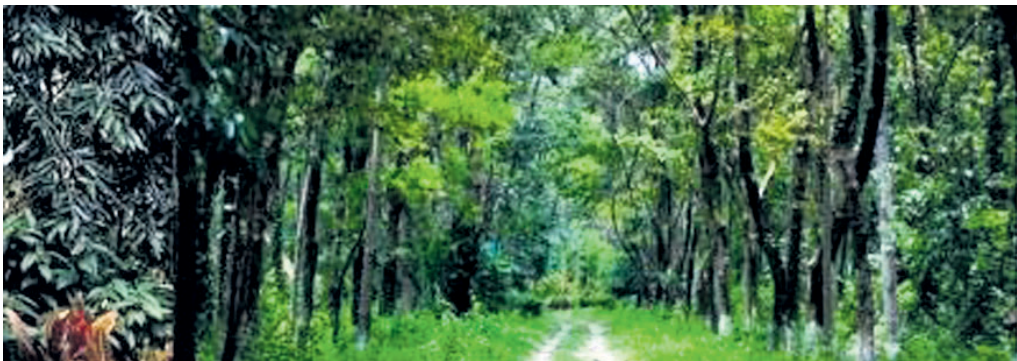
New Delhi, Oct 21: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has been urged to take a “holistic” approach to tackle the alarming loss of forest cover in the northeast region.

In a report filed before the green tribunal, Amicus Curiae Dhruv Tamta suggested the formation of a joint committee of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), the Survey of India, and state forest departments to address inter-state border encroachments.

Advocate Tamta added that “protecting and expanding our forests isn’t just a policy goal; it’s about securing our future”.

He called for using “satellites and AI to monitor forest health in real time” and empowering local communities through joint forest management (JFM) and eco-tourism initiatives.

The report proposed the development of a policy frame-



work that partners with local councils to effectively manage unclassified state forests (USF), ensuring that local insights drive decision-making.

In addition, the introduction of Ecological Impact Assessments (EIA) for large-scale monoculture plantations will help safeguard biodiversity and promote responsible land use.

Further, it suggested strong audit mechanisms for compensatory afforestation projects

focusing on “survival rates, native species, and ecological functionality” and promotion of agroforestry models that blend “smarter farming with healthier forests”.

The Amicus Curiae concluded that conservation must be “a community effort rooted in empowerment and technology”, aligning with India’s National Forest Policy target of achieving 33 per cent forest cover nationwide and 66 per cent in hilly regions.

The suo motu proceedings emanated from a news report titled “Assam’s forests shrink by 83.92 sq. km in just two years”, citing the 2023 India State of Forest Report (ISFR) report, which showed that the northeastern region collectively lost 327.30 sq. km of forest cover, with Assam contributing 83.92 sq. km of that loss.

In its affidavit, the Assam government acknowledged the ISFR finding but argued that the loss was overstated,

citing a decadal gain of 748.65 sq. km in forest cover since 2013. It attributed recent declines to jhum cultivation in unclassified state forests, where the Forest Department has “no administrative control”, as well as to inter-state encroachment from Mizoram.

The Assam government concluded that since over 10,000 hectares of forest area cleared of encroachment are yet to regenerate, the “actual forest loss is very minimal or non-existent”.

Similarly, Mizoram stated that between 2001 and 2023, its forest cover had increased from 17,494 sq. km (82.98 per cent of its geographical area) to 17,990.46 sq. km (85.34 per cent). It credited the increase to the Green Mizoram Programme, CAMPA, and the National Afforestation Programme, emphasising that forest areas lost due to development were being offset by compensatory afforestation.

KERALA RAINS

Red alert in five districts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 21: Heavy rains, triggered by the northeast monsoon, continued to batter the high ranges of Kerala Tuesday, flooding low-lying areas across the state.

Most districts experienced overcast skies and intermittent rainfall throughout the day. The high ranges of Thiruvananthapuram, Kannur, Kozhikode, and the hill district of Idukki received widespread downpours.

The Indian Meteorological Department issued an ‘orange alert’, forecasting very heavy rainfall in Idukki, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, and Malappuram for the day.

Authorities declared a holiday for educational institutions in Idukki, Palakkad, and Malappuram on Wednesday, ahead of a ‘red alert’ predicting “extremely heavy rainfall” in these districts.

The holiday applies to madrasahs, anganwadis, and tuition centres in Malappuram. In Palakkad, residential schools, colleges, and Navodaya institutions are exempted, officials said. In view of the ‘red alert’, all water-based recreational activities in Idukki, including boating, kayaking, and rafting, as well as tourism initiatives in disaster-prone areas, have been suspended. Trekking and other adventure activities in hilly regions prone to landslides or mudslides must also remain suspended until the alert is lifted, authorities added.

District collector Dinesan Cheruvattur further banned all quarrying and soil excavation activities, except those related to disaster management operations, a statement said.

Urkhul district awaits NSCN(IM) chief homecoming after 50 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ukhrul/Imphal, Oct 21: People of Somdal village in Manipur’s Ukhrul district are ready to welcome NSCN(IM) supremo Th Muivah as he is scheduled to visit his birthplace October 22 after a gap of 50 years, officials said Tuesday.

Locals have put up posters in the village to welcome the 91-year-old Naga leader, who left the place more than five decades ago to join the insurgency, they said.

The Naga leader, who is the principal negotiator in the Naga peace talks with the Centre, since the NSCN (IM) entered into a ceasefire in 1997, is like-

ly to stay in Somdal village for a week before departing for Dimapur, an official said.

His proposed visit comes at a time when Manipur is battered by ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups since May 2023. More than 260 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in the strife.

Authorities in the Tangkhul Naga-majority village, student bodies, civil society organisations, as well as the church, are making coordinated efforts to make Muivah’s visit a success, he said.

Several hoardings have been put up in the Ukhrul district headquarters and Tangkhul Naga-majority Somdal village



to welcome the Naga leader.

Tangkhul Naga is the largest Naga tribe in Manipur.

“Muivah is scheduled to arrive at Ukhrul district headquarters on Wednesday by a

Muivah will head to his native village by road, he said.

The Naga people are excited and looking forward to the historic homecoming of Muivah, according to a local official.

“Unlike in 2010 when Muivah’s planned visit to Ukhrul district was strongly objected to by the Manipur government and sections of communities, there is no objection this time. Various organisations from non-Naga communities have welcomed his proposed visit,” a Naga civil society leader said.

Local volunteers are also working in close coordination to ensure that no untoward incident occurs during Muivah’s proposed visit.

The Naga leader had attempted to visit his native village in 2010. However, the then Congress government in Manipur, headed by Okram Ibobi Singh, prevented him from entering the state, leading to protests by Nagas.

Police forces were deployed along the Manipur-Nagaland inter-state boundary to prevent Muivah from entering the state. Born in 1934, Muivah’s name is synonymous with the contemporary Naga political movement, and he is one of the most influential Naga leaders.

Several organisations from Kuki, Zomi and Meitei communities in Manipur have welcomed Muivah’s proposed visit.

of the day

quote

There is a need to adopt modern technology to deal with those involved in spreading a fabricated narrative. Through new innovations and by using smart technologies, we can make police more capable

MANOJ SINHA | J&K LT GOVERNOR

Encouraged to learn that Japanese universities are increasingly offering English-medium courses and that the education sector in Japan is opening up for greater global collaboration

PEMA KHANDU | ARUNACHAL CM

There are 7 wonders of the world and the 8th wonder is illegal infiltrators trying to sneak into Assam and capture our lands

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

SHORT TAKES

Speeding bus hits bike; 3 riders killed

Lakhimpur Kheri (UP): Three men died after their motorcycle was hit by a speeding bus near Mohammadpur Tajpur village in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri, police said Tuesday. The incident occurred Monday evening, they said. Shahjahanpur district residents Guddu (45), Sant Ram (50) and Harpal (30) from Lakhimpur Kheri were going somewhere on a motorcycle when a speeding bus hit the two-wheeler near Mohammadpur Tajpur, a village bordering Shahjahanpur district. The bus was on its way to Shahjahanpur from Mohammadi town.

School staff booked for beating student

Bangalore: Police said they have registered a case against a private school here after a class 5 student was allegedly beaten and confined in a room by school authorities. According to police, the incident took place at a school in Sunkadakatte, Magadi Road, October 14. The boy's mother alleged that principal Rakesh Kumar and teacher Chandrika assaulted her son with a PVC pipe and locked him in a room until late evening.

Farmer suicide: Cong, BJP stage agitation

Palakkad (Kerala): Congress and BJP workers Tuesday staged protests in front of the mini civil station at Agali here over the death of a farmer, who died by suicide on his agricultural land in north Kerala. The protesters alleged that procedural lapses and delays by revenue officials in providing the thandaper (land record number) for his farmland, despite repeated visits to the village office, forced Krishnaswamy, the farmer, to take the extreme step.

Bihar elections: Cash, liquor seized

New Delhi: Enforcement agencies have seized cash, drugs, liquor and precious metals worth over Rs 71 crore in Bihar since the announcement of the assembly polls, the Election Commission said Tuesday. Bihar has been a dry state since 2016, when alcohol was banned. The EC said that as on October 21 (today), over Rs 71.32 crore worth of cash, liquor, drugs, precious metals and other freebies have been seized through a coordinated approach involving multi-enforcement agencies across different states and Union territories.

Former Punjab DGP, wife booked over son's death; SIT formed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh/Patiala, Oct 21: Punjab's former director general of police Mohammad Mustafa and his wife Razia Sultana, a former state minister, have been booked in connection with the death of their 35-year-old son in Panchkula, the Haryana Police said Tuesday.

Asil Akhter, an advocate, was found dead at his residence in Haryana's Panchkula October 16. Also booked in the case are Akhter's wife and sister. The FIR was registered October 20 under Sections 103

(1) and 61 that deal with murder and criminal conspiracy charges, after a man named Shamshuddin filed a complaint and alleged foul play in the death, saying Akhter died under "suspicious circumstances", the police said. They have been booked based on the Shamshuddin's complaint which alleged that Akhter had recorded a video levelling serious allegations against his family, officials said, adding a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted to look into the case. Shamshuddin, a resident of Punjab's



Malerkotla, has told the police that he knows the family quite well, they said.

According to Panchkula DCP Srishti Gupta, October 16, Akhter, a resident of Sector 4, MDC, Panchkula, was found dead at his residence. The family intimidated the police and

BENGAL: AIR QUALITY 'POOR' IN KOLKATA AFTER KALI PUJA

The air quality in Kolkata remained 'poor' Tuesday due to the bursting of firecrackers on Kali Puja the previous night. Environmentalists alleged that particulate matters hung in the air after firecrackers were burst beyond the permissible hours of 8 pm to 10 pm till midnight across the metropolis, flouting guidelines issued by the West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) and police



Rajnath Singh warns of rising 'ideological wars'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 21: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Tuesday emphasised the shifting landscape of country's security challenges, noting that while the nation grapples with border instability, society faces a new surge in sophisticated crimes, terrorism and "ideological wars".

"Areas that were once known as the red corridor have now transformed into growth corridors," the defence minister said, highlighting the significant progress made against the Naxal problem, long a major internal security challenge, and credited the concerted and organised efforts of the police, CRPF, BSF and local administration in preventing the problem from escalating.

Police Commemoration Day is observed annually to honour the memory of 10 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel who were killed in an ambush by Chinese troops in Ladakh's Hot Spring area on this day in 1959.

Addressing an event at the National Police Memorial, Singh asserted that despite functioning on different platforms, the military and police share the singular mission of national protection.

The Defence Minister cautioned that while there is instability on the borders, new types of crimes, terrorism and ideological wars are emerging within society, as he detailed the complex nature of modern internal threats.

Exuding confidence, the Minister asserted that the Naxal menace is "on the verge of becoming history," echoing the commitment of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who has declared that the threat will end by March 2026.

"Several top Naxalites have



been eliminated this year... Areas that were once Naxalite hubs are now becoming educational hubs. Areas that were once known as the red corridor have now transformed into growth corridors," Singh said and acknowledged the significant contribution of security forces to this success.

A joint parade of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Delhi Police was held on the occasion.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, chief ministers and governors paid tributes to the police personnel for their role in thwarting internal security challenges and assured support to their families.

In a post on X, PM Modi said, "On Police Commemoration Day, we salute the courage of our police personnel and

recall the supreme sacrifice by them in the line of duty. Their steadfast dedication keeps our nation and people safe." Home Minister Shah conveyed his "warm greetings", recognising the police as first responders who have "scripted glory by thwarting crimes and threats to internal security, and by protecting citizens' rights with exemplary courage and commitment".

New Delhi, Oct 21: Delhi recorded its worst post-Diwali air quality in the last four years Tuesday, with pollution levels spiking sharply the previous night as PM 2.5 concentrations peaked at 675, while the BJP government attributed it to stubble burning in the AAP-ruled Punjab rather than firecrackers.

Delhi found itself enveloped in a thick grey haze and its air quality entered the "red zone" a day after Diwali, which saw cracker-bursting well beyond the two-hour limit (8 pm to 10 pm) set by the Supreme Court.

The city's 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) on Diwali (Monday), reported at 4 pm, was in the "very poor" category at 345, compared to 330 in 2024, 218 in 2023, 312 in 2022 and 382 in 2021, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Hourly readings showed sustained high pollution throughout the night and into Tuesday morning, with the AQI at 344 at 10 pm, rising slightly to 349 at midnight and remaining above 350 from 7 am to 12 noon Tuesday, reflecting the worst PM2.5 levels in the last four years.

The PM2.5 levels peaked at 675 micrograms per cubic metre late Monday night. The concentration of PM2.5 -- fine particles that easily penetrate the respiratory system and pose serious health risks, especially for chil-



Police personnel take part in a parade to pay homage to the police personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty on the Police Commemoration Day in Srinagar

Over 350 get burn wounds

New Delhi: More than 250 people reported burn wounds in Delhi, and over 100 in Jaipur, while properties worth crores were gutted in Shimla Diwali night. A building near Gate 31 of the Rashtrapati Bhavan caught fire Tuesday afternoon, prompting authorities to rush five fire tenders. Seven people were rescued after a fire broke out in a four-storey residential building in west Delhi's Mohan Garden area on Diwali night, while a massive blaze hit two adjacent buildings in Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar in the early hours of Tuesday.

dren, the elderly and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions -- also exceeded the safe limits. However, Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said despite the lifting of the ban on green firecrackers this year, Delhi's AQI rose only marginally, from 345 before Diwali to 356 the next morning, an increase of "just 11 points".

Sirsa said every religion has the right to celebrate its festivals, indicating that bursting

crackers is an indispensable way of celebrating Diwali.

On its part, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) slammed the BJP government in the capital, alleging that it has failed to conduct artificial rain and take measures to ensure the implementation of the apex court's order to allow the bursting of firecrackers. Police have registered more than 100 cases across Delhi over alleged violations of the court's guidelines on burst-

law and said the truth will prevail. The Mustafa family said that Akhter was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Panchkula as he had become "psychotic" and was not in sound mental health. In a statement, Mustafa said, "...It is the duty of police to register an FIR upon receiving a written complaint. The Panchkula police have only fulfilled that duty, and I welcome it. FIR registration does not mean anyone is guilty,? it only marks the beginning of the investigation. The truth will come out soon and everything will become crystal clear."

Delhi records worst air quality since 2021

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



ing firecrackers and over 50 cases on charges of illegal sale during Diwali celebrations, officials said. The top court had allowed the bursting of green firecrackers between 8 pm and 10 pm on the festival day, but the celebrations continued well past the allotted time.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, however, said the "radiance and brilliance" of Diwali this year were "unique" and asserted that her government is serious about tackling pollution and taking effective measures to curb it. She thanked the Supreme Court for allowing the "limited use" of green firecrackers, balancing tradition with environmental concerns.

Delhi Home Minister Ashish Sood said those who burst firecrackers beyond 10 pm on Diwali behaved "irresponsibly".

The minister, however, emphasised that bursting firecrackers was not the sole reason behind the spike in pollution levels in the capital.

Addressing a press conference here, Sirsa blamed the AAP government in Punjab for the toxic haze over Delhi, alleging that the state forced farmers to burn a record amount of paddy stubble on Diwali night. He accused the AAP of indulging in politics over "religion". Firecracker sales saw a sharp rise this Diwali, with traders reporting brisk business and the overall sales estimated at around Rs 500 crore.

TN: Weather system intensifies; red alert issued in 8 districts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Oct 21: As the Northeast monsoon intensified across Tamil Nadu, the regional weather office Tuesday issued heavy rainfall alert to a number of districts, while Chief Minister MK Stalin reviewed the situation with officials and directed that precautionary measures be put in place in view of the downpour. He also directed deputing IAS officers as Monitoring Officers to districts that have been issued heavy rain alerts. B Amudha, Director of Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) Chennai said a low pressure area that formed over the Bay of Bengal intensified into a well marked low pressure area and is located approximately 400 km from Chennai.

This could intensify into a potential cyclone, added RMC Director while briefing the media Tuesday. "By noon tomorrow, there is a possibility that the system will strengthen into a Depression. This is expected to occur off the coasts of north Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and south Andhra Pradesh," said Amudha. Depression is the stage following a low-pressure system.

According to her, while intensification up to the deep depression stage is forecast, the possibility of it developing into a cyclone or storm can only be stated with some certainty after it has become a depression.

"Right now, the system that was a Deep Low-Pressure Area over the southeast Arabian Sea October 20, is persisting with the same intensity," she added. According to Amudha, a red alert was issued for 8 districts and an orange alert for Chennai for Tuesday.

BIHAR POLLS

Jobs, better education top students' expectations

They also expressed frustration over irregular government job postings, often marred by paper leaks and delayed exam schedules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Oct 21: College students in poll-bound Bihar, many of whom are first-time voters, rue the lack of job opportunities that has been forcing several of their seniors to leave the state in search of work, and want a government that can strengthen the education system and generate employment.

As the state goes to assembly polls in two phases November 6 and 11, around 14 lakh youth are expected to vote for the first time, according to the data released by the Election Commission. Voters in the age group 18-29, totalling 1.63 crore, reportedly constitute an estimated 22-25 per cent of the state's electorate.

"Our hopes from the present government have faded completely," said Abhinav Kumar

Shukla, a postgraduate student in the Hindi Department of Patna University, while he was busy solving practice sets for his STET exams in a corridor that connects the English Department with its French-style administrative block.

Shukla, who hails from Bhabhua town in Kaimur district, believes that there is a need for "widespread employment generation within the state". Santosh Kumar, a visually challenged student of Patna College who hails from Jamui district, said, "Patna University's present must match its past. Its alumni are par excellence but its present state is below par." A constituent of Patna University, Patna College, once called "Oxford of the East", now appears to be sparsely occupied, with untrimmed grasses



on the ground and near-empty corridors. Patna University had been a hotbed of political activism, producing renowned intellectuals, thinkers and litterateurs, among others. It has produced political leaders from Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar to J P Nadda. The political sharpness still runs in the

veins of the students studying in the university. On the question of central university status for Patna University, Santosh said, "The condition of central universities is no better, but we will definitely root for that status for our university." Ravindra Kumar Singh, who hails from Kaimur district, is

a student of Shakuntala Mira National Rehabilitation University (SMNRU) in Lucknow, but currently stays in a hostel dedicated to visually impaired students in Patna University. He said, "Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, is not being implemented on the ground in Bihar. I will vote for a party that will prioritise education. The likelihood of better implementation of the Act under its rule will be more."

Ravindra highlighted the lack of audio labs and other facilities important for specially-abled students in Bihar's universities. Prashant Kishor's claim that "Bihar's youth won't have to go outside the state for work" if his party is voted to power seems to have struck a chord with some students.

of the day

quote

The cold morning of 1959 is still deeply etched in our hearts. In the Hot Springs area of Ladakh, 10 of our brave police personnel sacrificed their lives while protecting the country



MOHAN YADAV | MP CHIEF MINISTER

On Police Commemoration Day, we bow in gratitude to the brave officers who laid down their lives in the line of duty. Their sacrifice continues to inspire us to uphold courage and integrity



DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA CM

You should ask them (the opposition parties) who is Narakasur and who are Gods. The opposition is under a wrong impression that they are Gods and we are Narkasurs. People know BJP's contribution for Goa and they will ultimately decide (who are Narkasurs)



PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

POST OF THE DAY

People talking about AI bubble= 100
People investing in AI= 10
People shorting the AI bubble= 0

In this day and age: everyone has opinions. But, very few back it up with their money. Most importantly: negative people rarely put money behind their opinions. And, do actionable things.

@Akshat_World

SHORT TAKES

- Dalit man forced to drink urine; 3 held

Bhind: A 25-year-old Dalit man was allegedly assaulted and forced to drink urine twice in Bhind district of Madhya Pradesh, leading to the arrest of three individuals, police said Tuesday. Prima facie, the main accused targeted the man after he quit working as his driver, an official said, adding that further investigation is underway. According to the complainant, three persons abducted him from Gwalior Monday and brought him to Bhind in a vehicle, where he was beaten and forced to drink urine, said Additional Superintendent of Police Sanjeev Pathak.
- President in Kerala for four-day visit

Thiruvananthapuram: President Droupadi Murmu arrived in Thiruvananthapuram Tuesday for a four-day official visit to the southern state. She was welcomed at the international airport by Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, other people's representatives, and senior officials, officials said. Elaborate security arrangements have been made in the state capital ahead of the President's arrival.
- Girl raped in Delhi; neighbour detained

New Delhi: A 43-year-old man was arrested Monday for allegedly raping an 11-year-old girl at her residence in east Delhi's Patparganj area, police said. The accused, identified as Md Ishtkhar, is the victim's neighbour, they said. The girl's mother contacted the police through a PCR call, reporting that her daughter was sexually assaulted by their neighbour while she was alone at home, a senior police officer said.



Warm congratulations, Mr Rodrigo Paz Pereira, on your election as the President of Bolivia

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

BAKSA JAIL VIOLENCE: ASSAM GOVT EXTENDS FINANCIAL AID

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Tuesday extended financial assistance to families of two persons injured in police firing in Baksa, when five accused in singer Zubeen Garg's death case were being taken to a jail in that district



Possible attack averted as Punjab Police nabs two terror operatives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Oct 21: The Punjab Police Tuesday said it has nabbed two terror operatives and seized a rocket-propelled grenade along with the launcher, which was intended for a "targeted" attack.

"In an intelligence-based operation, Amritsar Rural Police, in close coordination with central agencies, apprehends two terror operatives Mehakdeep Singh @ Mehak and Aditya @ Adhi from #Amritsar and recovers one Rocket Propelled Grenade (#RPG)," Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said in a post on X.

"Preliminary investigation reveals that the accused were in contact with #Pakistan's ISI operative who had sent the weapon, and with Harpreet Singh @ Vicky, currently lodged in #Ferozepur Jail," he said.

The DGP further said the RPG was intended for a "targeted terror attack".

Meanwhile, a police statement said Mehakdeep Singh

alias Mehak is a resident of Wadali in Amritsar and Aditya alias Adhi is a resident of Bhaga Chhina village in Amritsar. Police have also impounded a motorcycle that they were riding.

The statement quoted the DGP as saying that a preliminary probe has revealed that the accused were in contact with an operative of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), who had sent the consignment from across the border via drone. The DGP said further investigations are underway to establish forward and backward linkages in the case to unearth the entire network.

Sharing operational details, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Amritsar Rural, Maninder Singh, said acting on intelligence inputs about the retrieval of an RPG-22 Net-to anti-tank rocket launcher by Mehakdeep and Aditya on the directions of Harpreet alias Vicky, police teams arrested both the suspects when they were on their way to deliver the consignment.

'BJP forced 3 candidates to withdraw from Bihar polls'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Oct 21: Poll strategist-turned-politician Prashant Kishor Tuesday alleged that three candidates of his Jan Suraa Party were forced to withdraw from the Bihar elections under "pressure" from the BJP.

Addressing a press conference, Kishor alleged that the ruling NDA was so scared of losing the elections that it was threatening Opposition candidates to withdraw from the race.

"Democracy is being murdered. There has been no such precedent in the country," he alleged, urging the Election Commission to ensure the security of the candidates.

The candidates who were forced to withdraw were fielded in the Danapur, Brahampur, and Gopalganj seats, he said.

Kishor said Jan Suraa's Brahampur candidate Satyaprakash Tiwari, who runs a clinic in Patna, was actively campaigning till Sunday, but surprisingly withdrew his nomination Monday morning.

Showing a photo of Tiwari with Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who is the BJP election-in-charge for Bihar, he claimed that it was taken a day before the deadline for withdrawal of nomination papers.

"Pradhan went to Tiwari's home to put pressure on him to withdraw... and the very



next day he withdrew his candidature," he alleged. Kishor claimed the BJP is trying to ensure the victory of the NDA candidate, LJP (RV)'s Hulas Pandey in Brahampur, who is a local strongman.

"The BJP is afraid of candidates who are doctors, educators, activists and social workers, filed by Jan Suraa Party," he claimed.

Kishor said his party had fielded Shashi Shekhar Sinha in the Gopalganj seat.

"The candidate told me that BJP leaders were putting pressure on him. A BJP MLC, along with his supporters, met our candidate and ensured that the Jan Suraa nominee withdrew his nominations... and he did it," he claimed.

Kishor said Jan Suraa had fielded Akhilesh Shah alias Murmur Shah in Danapur.

"RJD's Ritlal Yadav is seeking re-election in the seat. BJP leaders spread a rumour that Shah was missing on the day of filing of his nomination papers, and Yadav was involved in his disappearance," he alleged.

Showing a photo of the Jan Suraa candidate with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Pradhan, he alleged, "He was forced to withdraw from the race and not allowed to file his nomination papers. He was under political and economic pressure from the BJP's leadership"

Kishor claimed the BJP spread a rumour that the RJD candidate abducted the Jan Suraa nominee, while in fact, he was with the central ministers. He said the Election Commission must intervene to prevent such incidents, otherwise, the trust of the people in it will weaken. "If you are not able to protect the candidates, how will you protect voters?" he said, targeting the EC.

"The BJP is trying to replicate the Surat model, in which their candidate got elected unopposed, as all other nominees were coerced to pull out. The BJP does not realise that voters had punished it across the country, and it won just 240 seats, though it had bragged that the tally would be 400-plus in last year's Lok Sabha polls," he added. Kishor's party had announced candidates for all 243 Assembly seats in Bihar.

India upgrades technical mission in Kabul to embassy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 21: India Tuesday announced upgrading its technical mission in Kabul to the status of an embassy as part of broader efforts to deepen its bilateral engagement with Kabul.

The announcement came over a week-and-a-half after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said during his meeting with Afghan counterpart Amir Khan Muttaqi that India will upgrade its diplomatic presence in Kabul.

India had withdrawn its officials from its embassy in Kabul after the Taliban seized power in August 2021. In June 2022, India re-established its diplomatic presence in the Afghan capital by deploying a "technical team".

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the Indian embassy in Kabul will further augment India's contribution to Afghanistan's comprehensive development, humanitarian assistance, and capacity-building initiatives.

"In keeping with the decision announced during the recent visit of the Afghan foreign minister to India, the government is restoring the status of the technical mission of India in Kabul to that of the Embassy of India in Afghanistan with immediate effect," it said.

"The Embassy of India in Kabul will further augment India's contribution to Afghanistan's comprehensive development, humanitarian assistance, and capacity-building initiatives, in keeping with the priorities and aspirations of Afghan society," it said in a statement.

SABARIMALA GOLD LOSS

Kerala High Court expands SIT probe

The SIT, constituted by the court earlier this month, is probing the alleged pilferage of gold from the gold-clad dwarapalakas (guardian deity idols) and the side frames of the sreekovil (sanctum sanctorum)



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Oct 21: The Kerala High Court expanded the scope of the SIT probe into the loss of gold from the Sabarimala temple, directing investigators to examine a possible wider conspiracy and the role of Travancore Devaswom Board officials.

The order, issued by a Bench of Justices Raja Vijayaraghavan V and K V Jayakumar, came after the Special Investigation Team submitted its first report in a sealed cover Tuesday during in-camera proceedings held in the absence of lawyers. The SIT, constituted by the court earlier this month, is probing the alleged pilferage of gold from the gold-clad dwarapalakas (guardian deity idols) and the side frames of the sreekovil (sanctum sanctorum).

The court noted that "serious irregularities" had been found in the handling of the dwarapalakas idols and their gold plating.

The judges observed that the

court had undertaken the monitoring of the case "not to direct or dictate the mode or manner of investigation, but to ensure that it proceeds in a proper, effective, and lawful course."

The objective, they said, was to "sustain and reinforce public confidence in the impartiality and integrity of the inquiry."

According to the SIT report, two cases—crime nos 3700 and 3701 of 2025—have been registered for offences including criminal breach of trust and forgery under Sections 403, 406, 409, 466 and 467 of the Indian Penal Code.

The first case concerns the alleged irregular entrustment of the gold-clad dwarapalakas and peedam to Bengaluru-based sponsor Unnikrishnan Potty in July 2019.

The second case relates to the retention of 409 grams of gold extracted from the side frames, which Potty reportedly kept with the knowledge of Devaswom officials.

The court noted an email from Potty to the TDB seeking permission to use part of the gold "for the marriage of a girl known to him." The bench said such conduct showed "willful silence and concealment" on the part of responsible officials.

Four killed in Navi Mumbai building fire

MUMBAI: Four persons were killed and 10 others injured after a fire broke out in a multi-storey residential building in neighbouring Navi Mumbai shortly after midnight Tuesday, police said. Among those who died in the tragedy in the wee hours of Diwali were a six-year-old girl and an 84-year-old bed-ridden woman, officials said. A short circuit was suspected to be the cause but an investigation was underway, they said. The fire started at around 12.30 am on the 10th floor of Raheja Residency, MGM Complex in sector 14 of Vashi area. Flames soon spread to the 11th and 12th floors, said a fire brigade official. As many as 40 fire brigade personnel with eight fire tenders and police rushed to the spot and the blaze was put out by 4 am, he said. Among the deceased were Vedika Sunder Balkrishnan (6) and her parents Sundar Balakrishnan (44) and mother Puja Rajan (39) who lived in flat 1205. Kamala Hiralal Jain (84), another deceased, lived on the 11th floor. She was bed-ridden and could not move after the fire broke out, the official said.

Train parting, hot axles risk; investigation needed: Rlys

ACCORDING TO THE MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE CIRCULATED AMONG SENIOR OFFICIALS RECENTLY BY THE RAILWAY BOARD, A HOT AXLE IN ROLLING STOCK CAN CAUSE BLOCKAGE OF RAILWAY LINES, DETACHMENT OF COACHES AND OTHER ISSUES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 21: Rising cases of train parting and overheating of axle bearing leading to wheel jamming and derailments have serious safety implications and require detailed investigation as well as corrective measures, railway mechanical engineers have said.

Principal chief mechanical engineers (PCMEs) expressed concern over the issues while discussing operational safety in a conference held recently in Puri, Odisha.

According to the minutes of the conference circulated among senior officials recently by the Railway Board, a hot axle in rolling stock can cause blockage of railway lines, detachment of coaches and other issues.

The document said that these issues need to be investigated in details along with corrective



actions such as improvement in design and maintenance aspects on priority.

"Hot axles and train partings should be addressed through a detailed review of both global practices and case-specific data, enabling identification of root causes and adoption of best practices," it said.

It added that the Indian Railways is experiencing an average three hot axle cases per day

and train partings are also on the higher side.

"Objective and time bound action should be taken to eliminate team failures. Conditional monitoring of rolling stock using the latest technologies such as AI and related tools was emphasized. It was also decided that Hot Axle Box Detectors will be procured centrally, with Northern Railway designated as the nodal agency for this pro-

curement," the document said.

The Indian Railways has installed Hot Box Detectors (HBDs) at various trackside locations across the rail network. When trains cross over the device, it can detect overheated wheel bearings and alert the train crew in real time.

"Each HBD unit should be capable of communicating with one another to ensure proper detection of faulty bearings well in advance, thereby preventing the occurrence of hot axle cases. RDSO (Research Designs & Standards Organisation) will develop the required protocol to enable this," it added.

Mechanical experts were concerned about unusual hot axle cases at the Dedicated Freight Corridor as, according to them, up to July 2025, 49 per cent of hot axle cases are reported over DFC which is not commensurate to traffic.

"Overall, 55 per cent of

failures are reported by DFC alone. Failure reporting on DFC should be critically reviewed and a meeting should be planned with the officials of DFCCIL to sort out the reporting in online ICMS (Integrated Coaching Management System) unusual cases," the minutes of the meeting said.

"There have been cases of train parting in freight as well as coaching stock. This has operational and safety implications. Action to be taken for bringing it down to zero," the document said.

When approached for response on the rise of hot axle as well as train parting cases, Sudhanshu Mani, leader of Vande Bharat project, outlined three important issues.

According to Mani, a major contract awarded to Wabtec, a global rolling stock manufacturing company, for the said purpose was cancelled by the Railways.

international

of the day quote

We share President Trump's positive outlook if it leads to the end of the war

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT

China has made clear more than once its position on the so-called bilateral security partnership between the US, the UK and Australia designed to advance cooperation on nuclear submarines and other cutting-edge military technologies

GUO JIAKUN | CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON

The challenges ahead are immense, but the World Bank stands ready to work alongside the Syrian people and the international community to support recovery and reconstruction

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE CARRET | WORLD BANK MIDDLE EAST DIRECTOR

SHORT TAKES

Vance in Israel to shore up ceasefire

Tel Aviv: US Vice President JD Vance arrived in Israel Tuesday to shore up the fragile US-brokered ceasefire in Gaza that has teetered over the past few days following a burst of deadly violence and questions over how to move forward with the plan for cementing a long-term peace. Also Tuesday, Israel said it has identified the body of a hostage that was released by Palestinian militants overnight, while the chief Hamas negotiator said the group remains determined to implement the ceasefire agreement to end the two-year war. Vance, whose visit comes after the arrival of two top White House envoys, is expected to be in the region until Thursday. Accompanied by his wife Usha Vance, the vice president will meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He is to hold a news conference Tuesday evening in Jerusalem and is also expected to meet with families of hostages whose bodies are still being held in Gaza and the living hostages released by the militants last week.

Af-Pak border crossing reopens

Karachi: The Chaman border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan has partially reopened following a ceasefire between the two countries, after days of violent clashes along the border left several people dead on both sides. Several Afghan families started crossing the southwestern border in Balochistan province on Monday, while multiple Afghan-bound containers were also moved. The Chaman border was sealed when the Pakistan and Afghanistan conflict started, leaving nearly 400 containers carrying goods from the Karachi port stranded at the border. A similar situation was witnessed at the Spin Boldak border crossing in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province where containers coming into Pakistan were stranded. The Chaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Nafees Jan Achakzai said since a ceasefire agreement was finalised between both countries in Doha, the border had been partially reopened since Monday evening. "During this some 400 containers coming from Karachi have slowly started crossing into Afghanistan while some 550 families of around 3,400 individuals have also crossed over," he said.

Ukraine braces for winter of power cuts

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shostka, Oct 21: As the lights went out in her hometown, 40-year-old Zinaida Kot could not help but think about her next dialysis treatment for kidney disease. Without electricity, the machine that keeps her alive stops working.

Kot is among millions of Ukrainians who are bracing for another winter of power cuts and possibly blackouts as Russia renewed its campaign of attacks on the country's energy grid.

In some regions — mostly those closer to the front line in the east — the season of buzzing generators has started, as well as long hours of darkness with no power or water.

The attacks have grown more effective as Russia launches hundreds of drones, some equipped with cameras that improve targeting, overwhelming air defences — especially in regions where protection is weaker.

The consequences are already reshaping daily life — especially for those whose survival depends on electricity. For Zinaida Kot, who has been on dialysis for seven years, this is far worse than mere discomfort.

In early October, a Russian strike left the small northern town of Shostka — with a pre-war population of nearly 72,000 — without electricity, water, or gas. The town lies just 50 kilometres (31 miles) from the front line in northern Sumy region. Gas service was later restored, and electricity returned for only a few hours each day.

"The situation is challenging," said Mykola Noha, the



mayor of Shostka. Electricity and water are now supplied on a schedule, available for a few hours each day. "And it really worries the residents as we can't predict power cuts. We fix something, and it gets destroyed again. This is our situation."

Shostka hums with the low growl of generators on rain-dark asphalt, blanketed in yellow leaves. They power cafes, shops, residential buildings, and hospitals. Across town, so-called "invincibility points" offer residents a place to charge devices, warm up, and even rest on cots provided.

At the local hospital, where all stoves are electric, staff built a simple wood-burning oven during the early days of Russia's invasion in 2022, when the town came close to occupation. And now it helps to feed at least 180 patients, said Svitlana Zakotei, 57, a nurse who oversees the patients' meals.

The hospital has spent three weeks running on generators — a costly lifeline that burns

half a ton of fuel a day, about 250,000 hryvnias (USD 5,973) a week, said the hospital's chief, Oleh Shtohryn. That's nearly as much as its usual monthly electricity bill.

Power is rationed. In the dialysis ward, lights stay dim so electricity can feed the machines that keep patients alive. One of the eight units burned out because of the blackout — a costly loss the hospital could not afford to replace soon. Still, 23 patients come daily for hours-long treatment.

The crisis in Shostka reflects Russia's shifting strategy. In 2022-2023, Moscow launched waves of missiles and drones across the country to destabilise Ukraine's national grid. This year, it is striking region by region.

The recent pattern shows heavier attacks on the Chernihiv, Sumy, and Poltava regions, while Kharkiv, Odesa, Mykolaiv, and Dnipro face less frequent but still regular strikes.

Front-line regions within about 120 kilometres of com-

bat are the most vulnerable, he said.

And for Ukrainian energy crews, that means fixing the same lines and stations again and again — from transmission towers to thermal plants — while enduring outages at home.

At a switchyard in the Chernihiv region, all seems calm — a woman tends her cabbage patch nearby — but residents are used to the explosions which intensify each year as winter nears.

The switchyard looks like a museum of nearly four years of strikes. Along the main road lined with towering pylons, a crater in the asphalt marks one of the first attacks in 2022.

The latest strike, on Oct. 4, was far more precise and devastating. In the roof of the transformer building, there's one neat hole near the centre, and another in the wall — scars left by Shahed drones.

Sandbags around the building absorbed some shock waves but couldn't stop a direct hit. Inside, the station is cold and dark but still operating at half capacity. Thousands of homes across Chernihiv remain without steady power.

Kharchenko noted that last year Russia lacked the capacity to launch 500 or 600 drones at once, and the smaller attacks it could mount were largely ineffective.

But this year, even when several air-defence points and mobile units surround a facility, the Russians simply overwhelm them — sending about six drones at each defensive position and another 10 directly at the target.

I think we're going to end up having a fantastic deal with China. It's going to be a great trade deal. It's going to be fantastic for both countries, and it's going to be fantastic for the entire world

DONALD TRUMP | US PRESIDENT



22,000 AFGHAN NATIONALS DEPORTED FROM PAK

Pakistan's Punjab government this month deported around 22,000 Afghan nationals residing in the province illegally besides closing down the last Afghan refugee camp, a Punjab police spokesperson said Tuesday.



Sanae Takaichi becomes Japan's first female PM

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, Oct 21: Japan's parliament elected ultraconservative Sanae Takaichi as the country's first female prime minister Tuesday, a day after her struggling party struck a coalition deal with a new partner expected to pull her governing bloc further to the right.

Takaichi replaces Shigeru Ishiba, ending a three-month political vacuum and wrangling since the Liberal Democratic Party's disastrous election loss in July.

Ishiba, who lasted only one year as prime minister, resigned with his Cabinet earlier in the day, paving the way for his successor.

Takaichi won 237 votes — four more than a majority — compared to 149 won by Yoshikoko Noda, head of the largest opposition party, the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, in the lower house, which elects the prime minister. As the results were announced, Takaichi stood up and bowed deeply.

The LDP's alliance with the Osaka-based rightwing Japan Innovation Party, or Ishin no Kai, ensured her premiership because the opposition is not united. Takaichi's untested alliance is still short of a majority in both houses of parliament and will need to court other opposition groups to pass any legislation — a risk that could make her government unstable



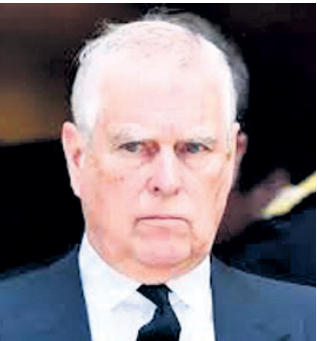
and short-lived. "Political stability is essential right now," Takaichi said at Monday's signing ceremony with the JIP leader and Osaka Gov. Hirofumi Yoshimura. "Without stability, we cannot push measures for a strong economy or diplomacy."

The two parties signed a coalition agreement on policies underscoring Takaichi's hawkish and nationalistic views.

Their last-minute deal came after the Liberal Democrats lost its longtime partner, the Buddhist-backed Komeito, which has a more dovish and centrist stance. The breakup threatened a change of power for the LDP, which has governed Japan almost uninterrupted for decades.

Later in the day, Takaichi, 64, will present a Cabinet with a number of allies of LDP's most powerful kingmaker, Taro Aso, and others who backed her in the party leadership vote.

Pressure on UK royals, govt to strip Prince Andrew of his titles



ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Oct 21: He won't call himself a duke anymore, but that is not enough for many of Prince Andrew's critics.

Buckingham Palace and the British government were under pressure on Monday to formally strip Prince Andrew of his princely title and sumptuous home after new revelations about his relationship with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

After discussions with his elder brother King Charles III, Andrew agreed on Friday to stop using titles including Duke of York. It was the latest effort

to insulate the monarchy from years of tawdry headlines about Andrew's suspicious business deals, inappropriate behaviour and controversial friendships.

But he still technically holds the title of duke, bestowed by his late mother, Queen Elizabeth II. And as the son of a monarch, he remains a prince.

Andrew's statement relinquishing some of his royal titles came after emails emerged showing he had remained in contact with Epstein longer than he previously admitted, and days before publication of a posthumous memoir by Epstein accuser Virginia Roberts Giuffre, who alleged she had sex with Andrew when she was 17.

Giuffre's brother, Sky Roberts, urged the king to go further and "remove the title of prince, too."

"He shouldn't be able to call himself one," Roberts told The Times of London newspaper.

Andrew, 65, has long denied Giuffre's claims, but stepped down from royal duties after a disastrous November 2019 BBC interview in which he attempted to rebut her allegations.

Sarkozy begins 5-yr prison term



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Oct 21: Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy arrived at a prison in Paris Tuesday to begin serving a 5-year sentence for a criminal conspiracy to finance his 2007 election campaign with funds from Libya. Sarkozy contests both the conviction and a judge's unusual decision to incarcerate him pending appeal. His journey from the presidential Elysee Palace to the notorious La Sante prison in Paris has captivated France. Minutes before entering pris-

on, Sarkozy and his wife walked slowly to join his children and grandchildren outside his home. He waved at a crowd of supporters gathered in the high-end Paris neighbourhood where he lives, then got into his car.

Hundreds of supporters applauded and chanted "Nicolas, Nicolas" and sang the French anthem. Two French flags were hung on a nearby fence, with the inscriptions: "Courage Nicolas, return soon" and "true France with Nicolas."

Sarkozy's sons and daughter — Jean, Pierre, Louis and Giulia — and his grandchildren showed up at the gathering.

Parisian resident Michelle Perie, 67, said she came in support "because there is anger, injustice." "He's not like any other defendants, he's someone who holds state secrets, he's someone who has always done his job with his head held high. We don't understand," she said.

Sarkozy's lawyers said the former president will be held in solitary confinement, where he will be kept away from all other prisoners for security reasons.

Trump-Putin summit shelved



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Oct 21: Plans are on hold for President Donald Trump to sit down with Russian leader Vladimir Putin to talk about resolving the war in Ukraine, according to a US official.

The meeting had been announced last week. It was supposed to take place in Budapest, although a date had not been set.

The decision was made following a call between US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

The official requested anonymity because they weren't authorised to speak publicly.

The back-and-forth over Trump's plans are the latest bout of whiplash caused by his stutter-step efforts to resolve a conflict that has persisted for nearly four years.

From Monalisa to Eugenie's crown: A history of art heists

AGENCIES

Bathurst, Oct 21: The world's largest art museum, the Louvre has approximately half a million objects in its collection, with about 30,000 on display, and sees on average 8 million visitors per year. That's big on any scale, with a lot of people and objects to keep watch over. And Sundays are particularly busy.

In a cleverly conceived operation, four men wearing fluorescent vests pulled up at the Louvre in a flat-decked truck at 9.30 Sunday morning. Quickly setting to work, they raised an extendable ladder to the second storey. Climbing it, they cut through a window, entered the Galerie d'Apollon and, brandishing power tools, helped themselves to nine exquisite objects.

The objects taken were France's royal jewels, formerly belonging to the Empress Eugénie, Napoleon III's wife and

arts patron.

This is where it gets tricky for the thieves: what can you do with these priceless objects? They can't wear them — too big and glitzy to go unnoticed — and they can't sell them legitimately, as images are all over the internet. The best-case scenario, from the thieves' perspective, is to break them down, melt the precious metals and sell the gems separately.

Empress Eugenie's crown, which the perpetrators took and subsequently dropped as they fled the scene on motor scooters, contains eight gold eagles, 1,354 brilliant-cut diamonds, 1,136 rose-cut diamonds and 56 emeralds. In short, this amounts to a sizeable stash of individual gems to try and sell.

For the Louvre, any heist is a major blow. It calls into question their security, both electronic and human. Five security staff were nearby who acted to protect visitors and the alarms did ring, but the entire

heist was completed within seven minutes.

In 2019, an 18-karat gold toilet titled America (2016), from the artist Maurizio Cattelan, was stolen from Blenheim Palace, England. It was taken in five and a half minutes. It weighed 98 kilograms and was fully functioning. In other words, the two men who took it (and were later caught and served prison sentences for their crimes) worked quickly and efficiently.

At the time of the theft, as gold bullion it was estimated to be valued at AUD 6 million.

Van Gogh's painting The Parsonage Garden at Neunen in Spring (1884) was stolen from the Singer Laren Museum, in the Netherlands, during their 2020 COVID closure. It was recovered in late 2023 after an investigation by Dutch art detective Arthur Brand.

The 2017 theft of two Gottfried Lindauer paintings from Auckland's International Art Centre took just a few min-



utes to complete. The thieves ram-raided the front window of the auction house where the paintings, valued at NZD 1 million, were displayed. The portraits were recovered five years later through an intermediary, with only minor damage.

The National Gallery of Victoria's Picasso painting Weeping Woman (1937) was famously taken by the Austra-

lian Cultural Terrorists in 1986 — but only noticed as missing two days later. Recovered just over two weeks later, the painting was left for the gallery staff to collect in a locker at Spencer Street railway station. The motivation behind the theft was to highlight the lack of financial support given to Victorian artists, but the true identity of the thieves remains a mystery.

In 1986, 26 paintings of religious subjects were stolen from the gallery at the Benedictine Monastery at New Norcia, Western Australia.

The thieves were poor planners: they hadn't factored in that three men and the stash of paintings couldn't fit into a Ford Falcon. The paintings were cut from their frames, ostensibly butchered. One was completely destroyed. The thieves were caught and charged. Recovery of objects from heists is low. It's impossible to put a number on but some say art recoveries globally are possibly as low as 10 per cent.

Paintings are more difficult to sell on — you can't change their physical appearance to the point of not being recognised.

However, with objects such as the gold toilet or jewels, the precious materials and gems can be repurposed. Time will tell if the Napoleonic jewels will be recovered.

of the day

quote

Extending the 5 per cent GST slab to apparel priced up to Rs 2,500 boosts price competitive-ness across the fast-fashion or value and mid-premium segments, whose customers are price-sensitive. With the timing of the GST rate cut coinciding with the festive season, demand should increase as middle-class spending picks up

ANU SETHI | SENIOR DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

The sustained momentum we've witnessed throughout the festive period reflects the growing confidence and optimism of Indian shoppers, supported by a stable and progressive economic environment

PRATIK SHETTY | VICE PRESIDENT MARKETING, FLIPKART

Companies are prioritising steady, manageable hiring to ensure freshers are deployed productively rather than remaining on the bench. Moving away from the traditional 'hire-and-train' model, many organisations are adopting a 'train-then-hire' approach

SANKET CHENGAPPA | DIRECTOR, ADECCO INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Record sales during Diwali

New Delhi: India's Diwali sales touched a record Rs 6.05 lakh crore, comprising Rs 5.40 lakh crore in goods and Rs 65,000 crore in services buoyed by the recent GST reform and strong consumer sentiment, traders' lobby CAIT said Tuesday. The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) based its findings on a nation-wide survey across 60 major distribution centres including state capitals and Tier 2 & 3 cities conducted by its research wing. Last year, the Diwali sales stood at Rs 4.25 lakh crore, according to CAIT. Sector wise percentage of sales of prominent festive items included Grocery & FMCG 12 per cent, Gold & Jewellery 10 per cent, Electronics & Electricals items 8 per cent, Consumer Durables 7 per cent, Ready-made Garments 7 per cent.

Jio-BP post profit petrol, diesel sales

New Delhi: Jio-BP, the fuel retailing joint venture of Reliance Industries and super major BP, clocked a 34 per cent rise in petrol and diesel sales in the September quarter as the joint venture aggressively expands its retail network. Jio-BP clocked 1.8 million sales of petrol and diesel in July-September, 34 per cent more than a year ago, according to an investor presentation made by the company after the second quarter earnings announcement. Also, helping the firm were good margins.

Rupee rises 9 paise

Mumbai: The rupee rose 9 paise to close at 87.93 against the US dollar Monday, supported by foreign fund inflows and lower crude oil prices. Positive sentiments in the domestic equity markets lent further support to the local unit, according to forex traders. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 87.94 against the US dollar and traded in the range of 87.74-87.94 during the day before settling at 87.93, higher by 9 paise against its previous close. Friday, the rupee closed at 88.02 against the US dollar. India's forex reserves have dropped by \$ 2.176 billion to \$697.784 billion during the week ended October 10, the RBI data released.



In the last few months itself, investors from all over the world have announced plans to invest over Rs 50,000 crore in India's finance and banking sector

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

RBI SOLD \$7.7 BN IN AUGUST TO CHECK RUPEE VOLATILITY

The Reserve Bank sold \$7.7 billion in August to check exchange rate volatility as well as to arrest the decline in value of the rupee against the American currency. The central bank's net sale of US dollars was at \$7.69 billion in August, nearly three times higher than in the preceding month, according to the data on sale/purchase of US dollars published in the RBI's latest bulletin. The data also showed that the Reserve Bank did not purchase US dollars in July and August



MAHURAT TRADING

Sensex, Nifty end with modest gains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 21: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty ended marginally higher in the special one-hour Muhurat trading session Tuesday, marking the beginning of the new Samvat Year 2082 on a positive note amid firm global cues.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rose 62.97 points or 0.07 per cent to close at 84,426.34. During the symbolic session, the benchmark hit a high of 84,665.44 and a low of 84,286.40.

The broader NSE Nifty went up by 25.45 points, or 0.10 per cent, to close at 25,868.60. As many as 25 Nifty stocks ended lower while 24 shares closed with gains and one remains unchanged. Stock exchanges BSE and NSE conducted a special Muhurat trading session from 1345 hrs to 1445 hrs Tuesday to mark the beginning of the new Samvat Year 2082, and the opening of new accounting books for traders and investors.

In the last Samvat 2081 which ended Monday the BSE Sensex jumped 4,974.31 points or 6.26 per cent and the Nifty climbed 1,637.8 points or 6.76 per cent.

Muhurat trading is a one-hour symbolic trading session conducted by stock exchanges on the occasion of Diwali, marking the start of the new Samvat year and new books of accounts by traders.

Among major Sensex gainers Bajaj Finserv rose the most by 1.42 per cent, Axis Bank gained 0.80 per cent, Infosys by 0.72 per cent, Mahindra & Mahindra by 0.60 per cent, Tata Motors by 0.55 per cent, Bajaj Finance by 0.53 per cent and Tata Steel by 0.52 per cent.

Kotak Mahindra Bank, ICICI Bank, HCL Technologies, Bharati Airtel, Maruti Suzuki India, Trent Ltd and Tata Consultancy Services were the losers.

China questions India's PLI, EV policy sops at WTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 21: China has alleged that certain conditions in India's Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes for advanced chemistry cell battery, automobiles and the policy to promote the manufacturing of electric vehicles violate global trade rules, and has filed a complaint against these measures at the WTO.

According to a communication of the Geneva-based WTO, China has sought consultations with India on these measures under WTO's dispute settlement mechanism.

Beijing has stated that measures adopted by India are contingent upon the use of domestic over imported goods and discriminate against goods of Chinese origin.

These measures appear to be inconsistent with India's obligations under the SCM (Subsidies and Countervailing Measures) Agreement, the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) 1994 and the TRIMs (Trade-Related Investment Measures) Agreement.

"...as a consequence of the foregoing, the measures at issue appear to nullify or impair benefits accruing to China, directly or indirectly, under the cited agreements," the WTO's communication dated October 20 has said. China looks forward to receiving India's reply and to agreeing on a mutually convenient date for the consultations, it added.

This request concerns certain measures maintained by India that affect trade in the automotive and renewable energy technology sectors. Spe-



cifically, it relates to certain requirements that condition eligibility for, and the disbursement of, incentives under these programmes, it said.

In its complaint, China has mentioned three programmes - Production Linked Incentive, National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Storage; Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Automobile and Auto Component Industry; and Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India.

Both India and China are members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). If a member country believes that a support measure under a policy or scheme of another member nation is harming its exports of certain goods, it can file a complaint under the dispute settlement mechanism of the WTO.

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

If the consultations requested with India do not result in a satisfactory solution, the EU can

request that the WTO set up a panel in the case to rule on the issue raised.

China is the second-largest trading partner of India.

In the last fiscal, India's exports to China contracted 14.5 per cent to \$14.25 billion against \$16.66 billion in 2023-24. The imports, however, rose by 11.52 per cent in 2024-25 to \$113.45 billion against \$101.73 billion in 2023-24.

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

China's complaint about India's reported EV subsidies comes as Beijing seeks to boost exports of its electric vehicles to India. Considering the size and scope of India's auto market, Chinese EV automakers see it as a major source to expand sales.

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

Vedanta launches pisciculture to boost farmers' income

Lanjigarh : Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest aluminium producer has launched a pisciculture initiative under its flagship watershed and livelihood programme, Project Sangam, at Lanjigarh in Kalahandi district. The initiative aims to create sustainable income opportunities for farmers and self-help group (SHG) members through scientific fish farming. Implemented in collaboration with the Fisheries and Animal Husbandry Department of Kalahandi, the project covers 32 water structures across five acres in 13 villages, directly benefiting 44 farmers and SHG members. It includes training, technical support, and access to resources, with an expected annual yield of 20 tonnes of fish, contributing to both local consumption and market supply. "At Vedanta Lanjigarh, we are committed to driving holistic community development through sustainable livelihood opportunities that align with environmental and social goals," said Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, CEO Vedanta Alumina Business. "The pisciculture initiative under Project Sangam supports income diversification for farmers while strengthening the rural economy and aligning with the state's development vision." The initiative also complements Odisha's 'One District, One Product' (ODOP) programme by promoting fishery as a key livelihood source in Kalahandi. By leveraging existing water bodies and adopting modern fish farming practices, farmers are expected to build resilience against seasonal income fluctuations.



Mumbai, Oct 21: Gold and silver prices fell Tuesday as investors booked profits after both metals hit record highs in the previous session, even as festive jewellery sales during Dhanteras jumped 35 to 40 per cent across India.

Silver Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs), which had delivered stellar one-year returns of around 65 to 70 per cent, also saw a sharp correction as global prices cooled following improved physical supply and easing safe-haven demand.

Silver had turned hot earlier this month when global spot prices surged past \$40 an ounce amid concerns of a physical shortage. The rally extended further, crossing \$50 in mid-October.

However, by the end of last week, prices began to retreat as easing trade tensions reduced safe-haven demand. October 17, silver prices in the US fell by over 6 per cent, and the correction soon spilled over into Indian markets.



According to the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA), silver prices in India fell 7 per cent October 20, slipping from Rs 1,71,275 per kg to Rs 1,60,100 per kg. The decline directly impacted silver ETFs, which mirror domestic silver prices.

Data from Ace MF shows that silver ETFs logged steep single-day losses, with most funds dropping up to 7 per cent October 20.

Analysts noted that the ETFs are now trading at or below fair value, a sign that investor demand has started to cool after months of heavy inflows.

Meanwhile, in the international market, gold prices also softened after touching record highs Monday. Spot gold was down 0.3 per cent at \$4,340.29 per

India diversifies export mkt to counter US tariff

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 21: India has succeeded in diversifying its export market with overseas shipments recording a year-on-year growth in over 20 countries across Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America which has helped to offset the adverse impact of the US tariff turmoil.

This is reflected in the 9 per cent increase in India's merchandise exports during the July-September quarter of the current financial year.

India's exports performance remains resilient despite the recent 50 per cent US tariff hike, with merchandise exports rising 6.7 per cent year-on-year in September, led by robust growth in high-value commodities such as electronics, engineering goods and marine products.

The 24 countries which recorded a rise in Indian exports include Germany, Belgium, Italy, Poland, South Korea, the UAE, Oman, Iraq, Egypt, Russia, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Thailand, Vietnam and Sri Lanka.

Exports to these countries recorded positive growth in April-September 2025-26 with the turnover touching \$129.3 billion, which constitutes a 59 per cent share in India's total exports, according to figures compiled by the Com-



GST reforms may trigger surge in paper imports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 21: Indian paper industry has raised concern over the potential surge in paper imports following the recent GST reforms, warning that the move could erode domestic competitiveness and undermine the government's flagship 'Make in India' initiative.

Indian Paper Manufacturers Association (IPMA) President Pawan Agarwal, in a statement, said that with the recent GST changes, India risks becoming a further dumping ground for cheaper paper from abroad.

"While domestic manufacturers are being burdened with higher input costs, imported paper used for exercise books and notebooks will now enter the country completely tax-free. This will distort market dynamics and deal a blow to Indian producers," Agarwal said.

Paper imports into India have already doubled in the last four years, growing at a CAGR of over 17 per cent in volume terms , one of the steepest among major commodities, according to the IPMA.

Indian economy remains resilient amid global headwinds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 21: The Indian economy has so far exhibited resilience, driven by a focus on strong and durable macro-economic fundamentals amidst broader global uncertainty and weak external demand, a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bulletin said Monday.

Global uncertainty has edged up, said an article on 'State of the Economy' published in the RBI's October Bulletin.

In the US, both trade and economic policy uncertainty increased in September. Global growth, however, has broadly held up. Investor sentiments dampened in October, on renewed US-China trade tensions and prolonged US government

shutdown, after a phase of buoyancy.

The Indian economy displayed resilience amidst broader global uncertainty and weak external demand. High-frequency indicators point to a revival in urban demand and robust rural demand.

"While the Indian economy is not immune to global headwinds, it has so far exhibited resilience, driven by a focus on strong and durable macroeconomic fundamentals, including low inflation, robust balance sheets of banks and corporates, adequate foreign exchange reserves and a credible monetary and fiscal framework," the article said.

The RBI said the views expressed in the bulletin article



are of the authors and do not represent the views of the Reserve Bank of India.

Headline consumer price index (CPI) inflation moderated sharply in September, marking

its lowest reading since June 2017, as per the bulletin.

The article also noted that high-frequency food price data for October so far (up to 17th) point towards a pick-up in cere-

al prices. Among pulses, prices moderated for gram dal, tur/arhar dal and moong dal.

Within edible oils, prices firmed up for mustard oil, sunflower oil and palm oil while groundnut oil prices eased. Key vegetable (tomato, onion, and potato) prices softened, with the decline being most pronounced for tomatoes.

"As noted in the Monetary Policy Committee resolution of October 1, 2025, the growth outlook remains resilient, supported by domestic drivers, despite uncertainties on the external front," it added.

The RBI's article further said domestic structural reforms are helping to somewhat offset the drag on growth from the weakening external

demand conditions.

The current macroeconomic conditions and the outlook, as noted by the MPC, has opened up policy space for further supporting growth.

On the domestic currency, it said the rupee depreciated against the US dollar in September amidst elevated trade tensions, heightened global uncertainties, and persistent foreign portfolio investment outflows.

The depreciation in the real effective exchange rate was mainly driven by the depreciation in the nominal effective exchange rate.

Net foreign portfolio investment flows continued to remain negative for the third consecutive month in September driven by equity outflows.

BCCI VS NAQVI

Asia Cup trophy row gets uglier

BCCI gets SL, Afghan support on Asia Cup trophy fiasco but Naqvi refuses to budge



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 21: The deadlock over the Asia Cup trophy, which is yet to reach champions India, continues to be unresolved as the Asian Cricket Council’s Pakistani head Mohsin Naqvi has refused to part with it despite a fresh missive from the BCCI, backed by boards of Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.



A top ACC source told PTI that Naqvi has insisted that a BCCI representative collect the trophy from him at the body’s headquarters in Dubai but the Indian board has rejected that stance. The BCCI has reiterated that it will raise this matter in an ICC meeting next month.

“The BCCI secretary (Devajit Saikia), BCCI’s ACC representative Rajeev Shukla and representatives of other member

boards including Sri Lanka Cricket and Afghanistan had written to the ACC president last week over handing the trophy to India,” the ACC source said.

“But his response was that someone from BCCI should come to Dubai and take the trophy from him. So, that matter has still not moved. BCCI has made its stance clear that it won’t be receiving the trophy

from him. So, the matter will most likely be decided in the ICC meeting,” he added.

The ICC is headed by former BCCI secretary Jay Shah.

The trophy has been at the ACC headquarters after the Indian team refused to accept it from Naqvi at the presentation ceremony, prompting him to walk away with it in an unprecedented turn of events September 28.

Naqvi is also the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board and his country’s interior minister with a will-documented anti-India stance.

The Indians had refused to shake hands with their Pakistani counterparts during the entire Asia Cup as a mark of respect for the victims of Pahalgam terror attack.

On his social media account, which is withheld in India, he posted videos and memes mocking India’s military action after the Pahalgam attack, throughout the Asia Cup.

The two teams played each other on every Sunday of the three-week tournament.

After the presentation fiasco, the two countries clashed at an ACC meeting as well where BCCI officials chided Naqvi for not handing over the trophy.

Sources have said that Naqvi, before leaving for Pakistan, instructed the ACC staff to not hand over or move the trophy without his instructions.

SHORT TAKES

Pant back as India A captain

New Delhi: India wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant was Tuesday appointed captain of the national A side for a red-ball series against South Africa A after fully recovering from a foot fracture sustained during the tour of England. Pant had injured his foot while batting in the fourth Test at Manchester in July and subsequently was not part of the Asia Cup squad and more recently the two-Test home series against the West Indies. He was struck on his right toe by a Chris Woakes delivery but came out to bat heroically, scoring a half century albeit in a lost cause. The selectors have named him in the India A squad for both the games, to be held in Bengaluru from October 30.

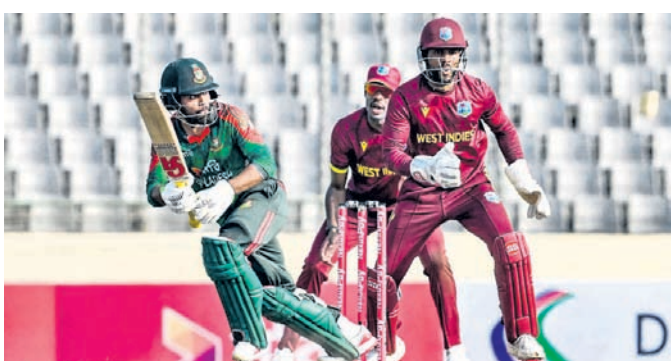
Afridi named new Pak ODI captain

Karachi: Senior pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi will replace Muhammad Rizwan as the new ODI captain of Pakistan starting next month, the country’s cricket board has announced amid speculation that the sudden change of guard was pushed by white-ball head coach Mike Hesson. The Pakistan Cricket Board announced that Shaheen will lead Pakistan in the three-match ODI series against South Africa in Faisalabad from November 4-8. The decision, the board said, was taken at a meeting in Islamabad attended by the national selectors, advisory board members, and Hesson. While the PCB has not cited any official reason for the switch, insiders believe Hesson’s recommendation served as a “springboard” to make the change.

Lakshya bows out of French Open

Paris: India’s Lakshya Sen bowed out of the French Open Super 750 badminton tournament after suffering a straight game defeat to Ireland’s Nhat Nguyen in the men’s singles opening round here Tuesday. Lakshya, who had reached the finals of Hong Kong Open, looked off-colour from the start to eventually go down 7-21 16-21 to the world number 29 Nhat. Last week, the 24-year-old from Almorá had defeated Nhat in a three-game opener at Denmark Open but he was erratic in Paris, repeatedly hitting wide and into the net while struggling to find rhythm against his opponent’s steep smashes. The Indian’s deep tosses often missed the lines, and his attacking play lacked precision as he trailed 2-7 early in the opening game.

FIRST TIME IN ODI HISTORY WI bowl 50 overs of spin vs Bangladesh



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Dhaka, Oct 21: For the first time in the history of One-Day Internationals (ODI), a full member nation has bowled all 50 overs of spin in an innings as the West Indies deployed five spinners against the Bangladesh batters in the first innings at the Shere Bangla National Stadium here Tuesday.

The surface resembled the one from the first game, featuring many cracks and a very dry texture. Most batters managed to get starts, but once again, Rishad Hossain’s knock was the decisive factor.

The West Indies bowlers kept picking wickets at regular intervals as the hosts were 163/7 at the end of 46 overs. However, Rishad’s knock turned the tables over. The spin-bowling all-rounder delivered the crucial boost, adding 50 runs to the scoreboard in the last four overs.

The West Indies couldn’t chase 208 in the first match, and the visitors will need to figure out how to handle Rishad again, especially with the ball.

Akeal Hosein, Roston

Chase, Khary Pierre, Gudakesh Motie, and Alick Athanaze bowled their quota of 10 overs as the West Indies scripted history, becoming the first full-member nation to deploy only spinners throughout a 50-over innings.

Though Soumya Sarkar was the top scorer for Bangladesh, it took him 89 deliveries to score 45 runs. Rishad, meanwhile, notched up a quick-fire 39 off 14 deliveries, and his knock was studded with three maximums and as many fours.

Motie was the pick of the bowlers for the Windies with three scalps, while Athanaze and Hosein ended with two wickets apiece.

Regarding Bangladesh, every batter except Rishad struggled to score, as none of them managed a strike rate over 100. They eventually scored 213 runs for the loss of seven wickets, setting a challenging target for the visitors on what looked like a difficult pitch to bat on.

Bangladesh won the first ODI by 74 runs, bowling out the West Indies for 133 after restricting the hosts to 207 in the first innings.

10-yr-old prodigy Atiqa pulls off stunning 25-place climb

From 33rd to 8th, Atiqa delivers overtaking masterclass for top-10 finish in IAME karting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Oct 21: Indian racing sensation Atiqa Mir staged a remarkable recovery drive after a sudden technical issue pushed her to back of the grid, climbing as many as 25 spots to finish a creditable eighth in round three of the IAME Kart-

ing Championship here.

The 10-year-old, who is the first Indian to be backed by Formula 1, passed a melee of karts from 33rd on the grid for a top-10 finish. Atiqa’s determined effort came after her memorable win in the RMC Championship last week.

Starting the final second on the grid, the Akcel GP driver was the favourite to win again but disaster struck when her kart did not start on the formation lap due to a technical issue.

Atiqa was forced to start the race from the pit lane but that did not deter her steely spirit as she put up an overtaking



That felt like a win... I could have finished even higher but for a few unruly drivers. I was gutted obviously when my kart didn't start on the grid but I used that energy to move forward

ATIQA MIR

exhibition.

“That felt like a win... I could have finished even higher but for a few unruly drivers. I was gutted obviously when my kart didn’t start on the grid but I used that energy to move for-

GOLDEN MOMENT FOR INDIAN TABLE TENNIS

Syndrela-Divyanshi rise to World No 1



In another first for the Indian table tennis, six Indian girls have broken into the top 100 of the world doubles rankings, underlining the country’s steady rise in youth development

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 21: Syndrela Das and Divyanshi Bhowmick have achieved a historic milestone by climbing to the No. 1 spot in the latest ITTF Under-19 Girls’ Doubles World Rankings, released Tuesday.

The Indian duo topped the global standings with 3910 points, ahead of Chinese Taipei’s Wu Jia-En and Wu Ying-Syuan (3195) and France’s Leana Hochart and Nina Guo Zheng (3170).

In another first for the Indi-

an table tennis, six Indian girls have broken into the top 100 of



the world doubles rankings, underlining the country’s steady rise in youth development.

Syndrela and Divyanshi’s ascent to the top is the result of a string of strong performances at both domestic and international events. The pair has captured gold medals at the WTT Youth Contender in Goa and WTT Youth Star Contender in Tunis, in addition to semifinal finishes at the WTT Youth Contender in Berlin and Lima.

Among other Indians, Taneesha Kotecha and Sayali Wani are placed 13th with 1575 points, after impressive runs at the Asian Youth Championships and WTT Youth Contender Doha.

Suhana Saini and Shriya Anand occupy the 22nd position with 875 points, following their silver medal at the South Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships. Another newly-formed pairing, Suhana Saini and Taneesha Kotecha, is ranked 31st with 620 points after the pair’s runners-up finish at the WTT Youth Contender Jaipur.

Al Lis Gan and Stuti Kashyap are ranked 34th with 565 points, having delivered strong performances in Southeast Asian competitions, and Kheith Cruz and Vaishnavi Jaiswal share the 36th spot with the same tally after consistent results in the re-youth circuit.

AIFF announces \$25,000 for U17 women’s team

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 21: AIFF Tuesday announced a reward of \$25,000 for the India U17 women’s team for its maiden entry into the AFC U17 Asian Cup recently.

India had defeated Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan by identical 2-1 margins last week in Bishkek to top Group G with six points and qualify for the prestigious AFC tournament in China next year, their first-ever continental qualification in this age group.

“The All India Football Federation (AIFF) is pleased to announce a reward of \$25,000 for the India U17 women’s national team after its extraordinary performance that saw it secure qualification for the AFC U17 Women’s Asian Cup for the first time,” said the country’s football governing body in a release.

India had last participated in the U17 Women’s Asian Cup in 2005, but no qualifiers were held for the tournament.

AIFF said great effort was put in by the federation to ensure success of the U17 side.

“The results come after careful planning from the federation that helped the India U17 women put in commanding performances in the two matches. The Young Tigresses had, last season, played as the Indian Arrows Women Juniors, gaining valuable experience in the IWL 2 playing against senior opponents,” the release stated.

It said the federation was trying to strengthen the sport at the grassroots level and have a more robust youth structure in women’s football.



turn to action after more than seven months.

Having retired from the game’s other formats, the former captains returned to national duty for the first time since winning the Champions Trophy March 9.

Following that triumph, they had announced retirements from Tests while sticking to the ODI format, after also quitting T20Is post India’s World Cup win last year.

“When Rohit or (Shubman) Gill got out the other day (in Perth), and then Kohli came on, just the cheer when he was walking on – you’d feel pretty bad as the batter walking off. It’s just an amazing experience,” Short added.

Both Rohit and Kohli looked rusty in their comeback game and were dismissed for 8 and 0 respectively, as Australia’s stand-in skipper Mitchell Marsh led from the front with an unbeaten 46 to secure a seven-wicket win in the rain-hit

Perth ODI.

India trail the series 0-1, making Thursday’s match in Adelaide a must-win to stay alive as the game will possibly be the duo’s final outing Down Under.

“But it’s going to be a cool way for him to go out, especially with so many fans here in Australia,” Short said, as he hoped to make the most of sharing the field with the Indian greats.

“It’s pretty cool to share the field with such a legend of the sport,” he said. “I’ll definitely get the chance to have a chat to him at some stage throughout the series.”

For players like Short, this white-ball series holds significance ahead of the 2027 World Cup in South Africa.

Having made his debut against India in Mohali, the right-hander has battled injuries and fluctuating roles -- from No.8 on debut to No.3 in the current series -- and is still searching for form.