



IRA'S PERSPECTIVE

Ira Khan talks about her struggles with the privilege that comes with being a child of a famous celebrity

LEISURE P2



RBT IN GAJAPATI

A Royal Bengal Tiger (RBT) has been spotted in close vicinity of Gandahati waterfall under Rayagada block in Gajapati district

STATE P5



SINDHU PROGRESSES

PV Sindhu marches into the semifinals of Denmark Open Super 750 tournament with a comfortable victory

SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

Ganjam woman, son electrocuted

Khallikote: A mother-son duo died and an elderly person of the family was critically injured after being electrocuted at Srikrushna Saranpur village under Khallikote police station limits in Ganjam district, Friday afternoon. The deceased duo was identified as Jitu Pahan, 24, and his mother Nibasi Pahan, 42, and the critically injured person was identified as Bhagi Nahak, 68, the maternal grandfather of Jitu.

P5

Wet Dussehra likely

Bhubaneswar: With the formation of a low-pressure area in the Bay of Bengal Friday, Odisha's coastal districts are likely to witness a wet Dussehra as the IMD has predicted rains from October 23. The IMD has forecast rains in coastal districts from October 23 to 25. "A low-pressure area has formed over Bay of Bengal..." the IMD regional centre in Bhubaneswar said on X. The system is likely to intensify further into a depression around October 23, it said. Under its impact, some parts of coastal Odisha would experience rainfall activities from October 23 to 25.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



You imposed high taxes on people and used it to fund the project. It should be named after you

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VARIAION	
SENSEX	65397.62	↓	231.62
NIFTY	19542.70	↓	82.00
DOLLAR	83.12	↓	₹0.12
EURO	88.05	↑	₹0.15
GOLD	₹61,098	↑	₹780
SILVER	₹73,490	↑	₹1874

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP MAX	32.6°C	32.6°C	
TEMP MIN	23.2°C	23.4°C	
Humidity	76%	74%	Forecast
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	Light rainfall very likely



DANDIYA RAAS: Participants at Garba performance during Navratri festival in Jaipur, Rajasthan

PTI PHOTO

4% DA HIKE FOR STATE EMPLOYEES

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday announced a four per cent hike in Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) for state government employees and pensioners. With this raise, the rate of DA for Odisha government employees and DR for pensioners has now increased to 46 per cent from 42 per cent, an official said. The enhanced amount will be paid from July 1, 2023 retrospectively. The increased DA will benefit 4.5 lakh state government employees and 3.5 lakh pensioners in Odisha, the official added.

The state government's move came two days after the Centre increased the DA and DR by 4 percentage points to 46 per cent. The Union government's announcement is set to benefit 48.67 lakh central government employees and 67.95 lakh pensioners.

The release of the additional instalment of DA and DR for Central government will be applicable from July 01, 2023, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur told reporters after the meeting of the Union Cabinet. The increase is in accordance with the accepted formula, based on the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission, Thakur said.

Eradicate manual scavenging: SC

TOP COURT ORDERS COMPENSATION OF ₹30L TO FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO DIE WHILE CLEANING SEWERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: Observing that manual scavengers have lived in bondage, systematically trapped in inhuman conditions for a long time, the Supreme Court Friday asked the Centre and state governments to completely eradicate manual scavenging across the country.

Passing a slew of directions for the benefit of people involved in manual scavenging, the court asked the central and state governments to pay ₹30 lakh as compensation to the next of kin of those who die while cleaning sewers.

"Ours is a battle not for wealth or power. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for reclamation of human personality," Justice S Ravindra Bhat quoted B R Ambedkar as he along with Justice Arvind Kumar pronounced the verdict on a PIL against manual scavenging.

Enhancing the compensation in cases of sewer deaths and injuries, the top court said those who suffer permanent disabilities while cleaning sewers will be paid ₹20 lakh as minimum compensation, and for other in-



juries a compensation up to ₹10 lakh can be paid to the victims.

"The Union and the state governments must ensure that manual scavenging is completely eradicated," the bench said.

The bench issued 14 directions to the Union and state governments for effective implementation of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.

Justice Bhat, who read out the verdict, said the authorities needed to take measures for the rehabilitation of the victims and their families. The kith and kin of the victims be provided scholarships and imparted skill

FACT FILE

As many as 347 people died while cleaning sewers and septic tanks in India in the last five years with Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Delhi accounting for 40 per cent of these deaths, according to government data cited in the Lok Sabha in July 2022.

development training.

"If you have to be truly equal in all respects, the commitment that Constitution makers gave to all sections of society by entrenching emancipatory provisions such as Articles 15(2)..., each of us must live up to its promise. The Union and States

are duty bound to ensure that the practice of manual scavenging is completely eradicated," Justice Bhat said.

Article 15(2) of the Constitution says the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth.

Justice Bhat said a duty is cast on all to realise "true fraternity". "It is not without reason that our Constitution has placed great emphasis on the value of dignity and fraternity. But for these two, all other liberties are chimera. All of us today, who proudly bask in the achievements of our republic, have to awake and arise so that the darkness which has been the fate of generations of our people is dispelled..." he said.

Issuing a slew of directions, which were not read out, the bench said government agencies must coordinate to ensure that such incidents do not occur and high courts are not precluded from monitoring the cases related to sewer deaths.

The bench posted the PIL for further monitoring February 1, 2024.

Pvt bus strike on hold till October 31

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: Keeping in mind the sufferings of thousands of home-bound commuters during the Puja holidays and, following intense parleys with the government, the striking private bus operators in the state blinked Friday evening and put their agitation on hold till October 31.

The decision to this effect came following an emergency meeting between the agitating private bus owners' association and the state government.

General secretary of private bus owners' association, Devendra Sahu said, "In view of passengers' inconvenience and request made by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Transport Minister Tukuni Sahu we are postponing the strike till October 31." He said the private bus services have resumed with immediate effect following the announcement.

The private transporter's body said the state government has sought time to look into the grievance of the bus owners. The next round of meeting with the government has been scheduled

October 26. "We are waiting for the assurances in that meeting," Sahu said, warning that the association will proceed on 'indefinite' strike if its demands were not met.

Earlier during the day, passenger bus services across Odisha were hit as the apex private bus owners' association launched the 'indefinite' strike in protest against the state government's policy over plying Location Accessible Multimodal Initiative (LAccMI) buses on certain routes. Nearly 14,000 private buses remained off the streets as part of the agitation, which began at 6am, after talks between the association and government failed to resolve the issue.

Hundreds of passengers, travelling to their hometowns for the Durga Puja festivities from the state, were seen waiting in long queues at different bus stands and terminals since early morning.

Odisha's road communication is heavily dependent on private bus service, with around 14,000 private buses plying against only 2,000 government buses, Transport department sources said.

Naveen launches LAccMI in Gajapati

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday inaugurated Location Accessible Multimodal Initiative (LAccMI), the affordable transportation scheme, in Gajapati district.

Patnaik flagged off the service through video conferencing. "The LAccMI bus service connecting one village with another will strengthen social connect as well as the economy of the state," the CM said.

In the first phase, 36 LAccMI buses will ply connecting 126 gram panchayats and seven blocks in Gajapati with the district headquarters of Parlakhemundi. As many as 69 new bus stops have been built,

while 64 have been renovated, he said. October 12, Patnaik had launched the initiative in Malakangiri, where 36 buses started plying on different routes.

"More than 1,000 buses will run across the state under this scheme," he said.

After Malkangiri and Gajapati, four other tribal-dominated districts — Nabarangpur, Koraput, Rayagada and Kandhamal — will be covered by the service in the first phase.

"Communication is the cornerstone for development. LAccMI will connect everyone with development. Buses will come to the doorstep of every villager. LAccMI will bring happiness to every family of the state," the CM had earlier stated.

E-scooter injuries up over 70% among youth

THE MOST COMMON PRIMARY DIAGNOSIS WAS FRACTURE, AND THE MOST INJURED BODY PART WAS THE HEAD

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, Oct 20: As electric scooters become an increasingly popular mode of transportation, new research led by an Indian-origin scientist finds a 71 per cent increase in injuries reported in children and teens aged 18 and younger, with limited use of helmets resulting in the head as the most injured body part.

Over the two-year study period, US emergency departments reported 13,557 injuries related to e-scooters within the pediatric population. The number of injuries increased 71 per cent - from 5,012 in 2020 compared with 8,545 in 2021. The most common primary diagnosis was fracture, and the most injured body part was the head.

"As more and more children

and adolescents turn to using electric scooters, it is critical that physicians, policymakers, and researchers work together to develop safe riding practices and proper infrastructure such as the enforcement of helmet use during rides and the institution of more bike and scooter lanes," said Radhika Gupta, medical student at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

Among cases in which helmet use was reported, only 32 per cent reported wearing a helmet at the time of injury.

Among patients with head injuries, nearly 67 per cent were not wearing a helmet at the time of injury. Additionally, nearly 15 per cent of all cases mentioned motor vehicle involvement, and almost 10 per cent of cases men-



tioned hitting obstacles such as uneven ground or potholes. "As more and more children and adolescents turn to using electric scooters, it is critical that physicians, policymakers, and re-

searchers work together to develop safe riding practices and proper infrastructure such as the enforcement of helmet use during rides and the institution of more bike and scooter lanes,"

said Gupta. The research, presented at '2023 AAP National Conference and Exhibition', found that most injuries were among teenage boys.

"This research highlights the need for promoting helmet use among e-scooter riders, and educating motor vehicle drivers on how to maintain safe distances," said Todd Lawrence, senior author on the paper and a pediatric orthopedic surgeon at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Shared micromobility options are rapidly expanding as a cost-effective, eco-friendly mode of transportation. As many of these scooters are sized and powered for adults, the injury risk associated with use of e-scooters in the pediatric population has not been investigated in recent years since its rapid uptake, said the study.

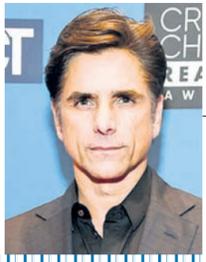
leisure

BRITNEY OPENS UP ON HER 2007 PUBLIC BREAKDOWN

Singer Britney Spears has shed light on the public breakdown she suffered in 2007. In her upcoming memoir *The Woman in Me*, she looks back on hitting a photographer's car with an umbrella after shaving her head and explains that grief and her custody battle were weighing heavily on her at the time, reports *People*.

JOHN STAMOS CREDITS FAMILY FOR HELPING HIM STAY SOBER

Singer-actor John Stamos, in his upcoming memoir *If You Would Have Told Me*, has credited his wife Caitlin McHugh Stamos and son Billy for keeping him sober during the most difficult period of his addiction to alcohol, reports *People*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will be torn between work and family as both try to grab your attention. You may reserve the evening for having fun. You crave to become famous and are likely to accomplish your ambition shortly. You have Ganesh's blessings to support you.

TAURUS
Ganesh sees you happily engaged in attending to day to day affairs. The day will turn out to be a hectic one. Do not expect too many time outs or even small breaks. Fortunately you will not be too uncomfortable with your tight schedule and will feel as fresh and easy at cease work as you had been at the beginning of the day.

GEMINI
An auspicious day awaits you. You will pay more attention to your family than to your career or at the work-front. This will mean the resolution of some long pending issues and projects at home. An enjoyable time with your family and children awaits you, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Ganesh says that this is good day to buy new house or car. It is likely that you shift to a new house shortly. So be prepared for a ceremony like housewarming. You will achieve tranquil mind through yoga and meditation.

LEO
You will have to bear more responsibilities in the office. You need to carefully weigh your alternatives before making a decision. On the personal front, you will need to watch against minor conflicts with your partner cropping up. You will be able to take part in entertaining and fun activities, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Today you will find yourself delving deep into your inner self. You will reap a lot of monetary rewards, and will be generous in spending it on your near and dear ones. Ganesh says that you may make up for the pressures at work by entertaining yourself with material pleasures.

LIBRA
If there's a knock on your door today, there's a very strong possibility it might be a marriage proposal. Don't get startled, and grab opportunities that come knocking (literally!). The stars send you a partner who shall be your match in every way. Have a long and happy married life, says Ganesh.

SCORPIO
You may deviate a little from mundane chores and take up creative activities like cooking and gardening. Today, according to Ganesh, you wish to do smart work and not just hard work. Family joys and pleasures will replace work satisfaction.

SAGITTARIUS
Today is a curiously interesting day for you. While you are always well-groomed, today, you may take that extra bit of care to look best and attract a lot of praise for that too, especially from those glam hounds around you. That immaculate charm you are carrying today will enhance your business fortunes.

CAPRICORN
If wasteful expenditure has left your bank balance a tad below what you had anticipated, you will have reasons to rejoice today, says Ganesh. Cash inflow – and a substantial amount of it – is likely and will make you feel nice about your finances. Work will go on as usual. The only change may be a discernible change in the work ambience; it may get a little more comfortable.

AQUARIUS
Do you wish to have a new car or any other property? Make the bookings today, as it is favourable day to make such purchases. You will prioritise your needs and consider available finances so that you can have your dream car or house.

PISCES
Sometimes you are so kind and charitable that you sacrifice your own well-being and happiness for the sake of others. This streak within you may emerge as you engage in a selfless deed.

'Hated myself for being a star kid'



Mumbai: Actor Aamir Khan's daughter Ira Khan, in a recent interview, spoke about her struggles with the privilege that comes with being a child of a famous Bollywood celebrity.

In an exclusive interview she spoke about her struggles dealing with the fact that she's a star kid. "I was like, 'what are you useless human being?' You don't have the right to be depressed, you have so much privilege." She further added that after hating herself for three years, she finally accepted herself the way she was. Hence, now when people hate her, it doesn't bother Ira.

Talking about protecting herself from the online hate, Khan said, "The privilege, it's obvious, it's there. I know it's there. I fully understand why people get irritated with me and put angry comments on my Instagram. I don't read, but I've been told there are lots of mean things in my Instagram comments."

Ira ends her statement, "The problem is that feelings are all subjective and they don't really care whether you have money or not, but I don't know what's going on in your life. So, you do you and I'll do me."

AGENCIES



My debut is worth the wait: Nupur

Mumbai: Actress Nupur Sanon, whose film debut has been the talk of the town for quite some time, is finally on the big screen with the Telugu film *Tiger Nageswara Rao*.

Talking about her debut, she said, "I am very happy. I wanted my debut to happen in one language. Now I am getting six times the love of the audience and in six different languages. I feel my debut has been worth the wait. Also, I am playing a very nice character in the film where I got to do commercial dance, fun, romantic scenes as well

as intense and challenging scenes. So I got the best of both to do in my first film."

Sharing about working with Ravi Teja, she said, "I got to learn a lot from him. As a newcomer, you want to have that great energy and it was amazing to work with him. He is such a secure actor and he helped me a lot in delivering my scenes. He loves to work with newcomers and he really puts his faith in newcomers. As a human, he is the most humble and honest man. He is a man of few words. It was an amazing experience to work with him." IANS



Suhana's expectations from The Archies

Mumbai: Actress Suhana Khan who will be making her debut with Zoya Akhtar's *The Archies* expressed her excitement to have made her acting debut.

"For me, more than anything it was about finding my feet as an actor. To be part of *The Archies*, which will be streaming on a global platform like Netflix, and to work under the tutelage of Zoya, I feel I perhaps had the best training and learning ground I could have asked for as a newcomer," she said.

"We did go through a lot of training. We had swimming, cycling, skating, and acting workshops just to get comfortable and get into the skin of our characters. By the time it came to shoot, we were extremely prepared," the actress added.

The Archies will debut on Netflix on December 7.

AGENCIES

Aashiqui 2 turning point of career: Aditya

Mumbai: Actor Aditya Roy Kapur rose to fame with his spectacular portrayal in *Aashiqui 2*. Recently, spoke at length about how the movie turned out to be the turning point in the professional sphere of his life.

Discussing how *Aashiqui 2* created an overnight stir and made him rise to fame right after its release, in an interview, the Action Replay actor said, "For me the film that kind of was a turning point was *Aashiqui (2)* when that film changed the way my career was going. That was the first time I played the leading man and that kind of changed stuff for me so once that film did well I felt lovely. Pat myself a little bit on the back."

Released back in 2013, the movie starred Aditya and Shraddha Kapoor in the lead roles. The story of the movie revolves around Aarohi Keshav Shirke, a young and naive girl, who yearns to become a singing sensation and how she meets Rahul Jaykar, a renowned singer, and romance blooms between the two. However, things take an ugly turn later and the movie depicts the tussle that the duo faces.

On the work front, Aditya has *Metro In Dino* in the pipeline. AGENCIES

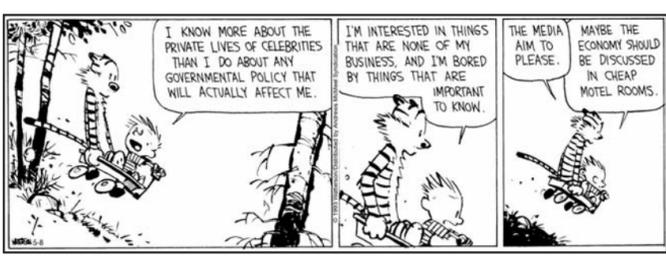


FUN post

PEANUTS



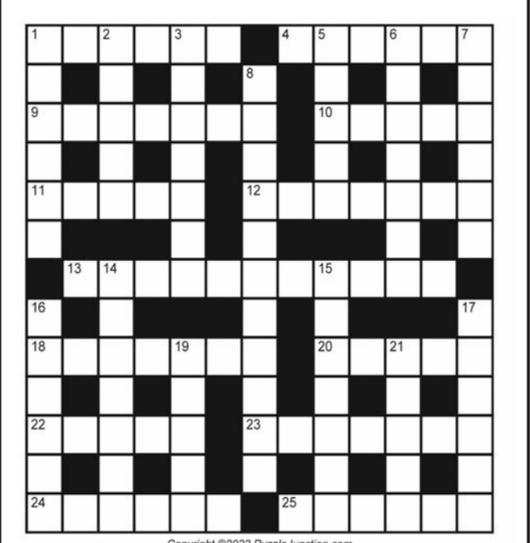
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



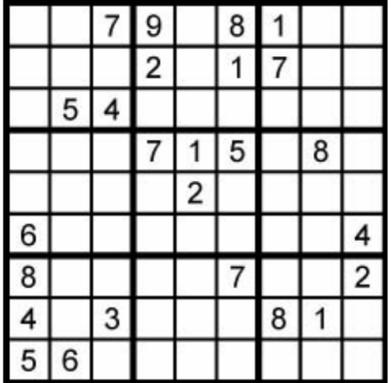
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Greek god of light
 - 4 Cuts up
 - 9 Child's malady, usually
 - 10 Lodging spot
 - 11 Medicine amounts
 - 12 Mexican dish
 - 13 Arabian Sea arm (7,4)
 - 18 Australian Desert
 - 20 France's longest river
 - 22 Coronet
 - 23 Fox hunter's cry (5-2)
 - 24 Beat
 - 25 Fanatic
 - 5 Loathe
 - 6 Sulphuric acid
 - 7 Sockeye
 - 8 Party poopers (3,8)
 - 14 Little sound
 - 15 Nazareth's locale
 - 16 Stone bonding material
 - 17 Insurrection
 - 19 Flooded
 - 21 Tennyson poem
- Down**
- 1 "To do" list
 - 2 Folklore cruel sorts
 - 3 Short-horned grasshoppers

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Members of Odisha Rajya Ujjwala Didi Sangh stage an agitation in front of Raj Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Friday, to press for fulfilment of their three-point charter of demands

downtown

SC for speedy trial, disposal of old cases

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 20: Observing that litigants may become disillusioned if the legal process moves at a snail's pace, the Supreme Court Friday issued directions, including a few to the High Courts, for ensuring speedy trial and disposal of old cases.

Referring to the countrywide data of the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) on pendency of cases, a bench comprising justices S Ravindra Bhat and Aravind Kumar said joint efforts by the bar and bench were needed to tackle the issue.

"Litigants may become disillusioned when the legal process moves at a snail's pace. We have expressed our anguish where some litigations have been pend-

KEY OBSERVATIONS

Litigants may become disillusioned when the legal process moves at a snail's pace

Cases pending for over five years needed to be monitored by the respective High Courts

Litigants should be circumspect about seeking frequent adjournments

ing for 50 years now as per the NJDG," the bench said and referred to some old cases which have not been decided for over 65 years in states like West Bengal, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. "Litigants will lose confidence in the judicial system when the delay continues," justice Aravind Kumar said.

The bench said litigants should

be circumspect about seeking frequent adjournments.

"...They should not take goodness of the presiding officers as their weakness," the judges said as they issued as many as 11 directions to deal with pendency of cases. The bench said cases pending for over five years needed to be monitored by the respective High Courts.

"Directions have been issued to the Chief Justices of High Courts to form committees in order to monitor the pendency of cases. The committees shall meet at least once in every two months and shall monitor old cases, especially those pending for over five years," the court said.

The Secretary General of the Supreme Court was directed to circulate the judgment to all High Courts.



NAVRATRI FERVOUR: A four-day-long 'Dandiya Carnival 2k23' being organised by Network Events and Promotions went off to a high-decibel start at Hotel Crystal Crown in Patia area of Bhubaneswar, Friday, with many guests of eminence like Editor of **Orissa POST** and **Dharitri** Tathagata Satpathy and the newspapers' Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy, actors Pupal Bhuyan & Bhoomika Dash and Masterchef Fame Smrutisree Singh among others attending the first day of the big event

ASIAN PARA GAMES IN HANGZHOU

CM announces ₹10L each for para-athletes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday announced a cash incentive of ₹10 lakh each for the seven para-athletes from Odisha who will be participating in the Hangzhou Asian Para Games beginning October 22.

The Asian Para Games will bring together elite para-athletes from across the continent, offering a platform to them to showcase their dedication and talent.

Amongst the athletes competing from Odisha will be reigning Paralympic gold medalist Pramod Bhagat. He will be defending his gold medal in the para badminton mixed single's event. In previous edition held in Jakarta, Bhagat had also secured a bronze medal in men's doubles.

Other para-athletes from Odisha are: Jayanti Behera (para-



athletics), Soundarya Kumar Pradhan (visually-impaired chess), Rakkhal Kumar Sethi, V Ramesh Rao, Prafulla Kumar Khandayatray and Pujaswini Nayak (wheelchair fencing).

Wishing the athletes all success, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said, "We are immensely proud of our para-athletes who have worked tirelessly to qualify for the prestigious Asian Para Games 2022 at Hangzhou, China. The para-athletes are a testimony to human spirit and determination. I wish them and the entire India contingent to bring laurels to the country."

Inventory during Ratha Jatra: Srimandir panel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: The Srimandir managing committee in Puri has decided that it would recommend the state government to open the 'Ratna Bhandar' or the treasury of the 12th-century shrine for inventory and repair work during next year's Ratha Jatra.

Dibyasingha Deb, the titular Gajapati Maharaja, who heads the Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee (SJTMC), told PTI that he met a delegation of BJP leaders led by its former president Samir Mohanty, who filed a PIL over the matter in the Orissa High Court, and discussed the matter. The managing committee meeting held August 4 decided that a recommendation will be sent to the state government for opening the outer and inner 'Ratna Bhandar' during next year's Ratha Jatra for repair work by ASI, and an inven-



RATNA BHANDAR OPENING

ventory of all valuables kept there, he told the BJP leaders. "This would be the appropriate time since during the Ratha Jatra, the Lords are away from temple, and, moreover, during the few months following Ratha Jatra, there are no major festivals and the number of devotees-visitors is also relatively less," he added. Deb also told the delegation that the superintending archaeologist of Archaeological Survey of India

Superintending archaeologist of ASI will soon carry out a laser scan of the walls of Ratna Bhandar, said Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb

(ASI), who is a member of the managing committee, will soon carry out a laser scan of the walls of Ratna Bhandar from the inner boundary of the temple to assess its condition.

Disposing of a PIL filed by Mohanty, the High Court September 29 said the ASI and the managing committee of the temple will collaborate for the conservation work of 'Ratna Bhandar'. The opposition parties in Odisha have been demanding an immediate inventory of the treasury as it has been shut for the last 45 years.

City AIIMS launches e-payment facility

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: In a first among all the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) across the country, the Bhubaneswar AIIMS Friday launched an e-payment facility for the public, an official said.

This facility will enable patients and their relatives to pay the fees online using UPI, wallets, credit and debit cards and net-banking using the AIIMS Bhubaneswar Swasthya app.

While launching the facility, AIIMS Bhubaneswar executive director Ashutosh Biswas said to make the institute paperless, the e-payment gateway is a step forward.

The online payment system will allow patients and their relatives from all over the country to securely pay the fees in a timely manner from the comfort of their homes or offices.

To make the e-payments, a person has to download the



'AIIMS Bhubaneswar Swasthya app' from Google Playstore. The person has to then login with the registered mobile number. The beneficiary will receive an OTP. After entering it, one has to select the billing process before making the digital payment. After completion of the process, a receipt will be displayed which can be downloaded for further use.

AIIMS Bhubaneswar has already implemented the e-Shushrut (HMIS), HRFSMS, e-office system to embrace the digital India Mission objectives.



PUJA SHOPPING: Huge rush at Unit 2 Market Building in Bhubaneswar, Friday, as people in large numbers stepped out for Puja shopping

3 get life term for 1996 triple murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: A local court here Friday awarded life imprisonment to three persons after convicting them for murder here in 1996.

Additional Sessions Judge (11), Bhubaneswar Satya Narayan Patra held Biswajit Das, Chitta Ranjan Padhi and Rudra Narayan Sahu guilty of hacking Sarada Prasad Rath and two others to death in Khandagiri area of the City July 11, 1996.

Besides awarding life term jail to the three, the court said, "Each of the convicts would also pay a penalty of ₹50,000. Failure to pay the penalty would



entail a six-month rigorous jail term for the three."

According to additional public prosecutor Salila Kumar Pradhan, Godabarish Rath of Rental Colony of the City approached the Khandagiri police

LAND FRAUD Firm's ₹2 crore property to be auctioned

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: A special court in Odisha has ordered public auction of properties of a real estate firm worth more than ₹2 crore in connection with a land fraud case.

The order was issued on the basis of submissions of the Economic Offence Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police.

A designated court under Odisha Protection of Interests of Depositors (OPID) Act, 2011, has confirmed the attachment of properties of the firm, Surya Nirman Resources Pvt Ltd, and directed the competent authority to sell it through public auction for equitable distribution of the proceeds among the depositors, the EOW said in a statement. The firm had allegedly collected more than ₹2 crore from people promising litigation-free plots/land at Chandaka

Surya Nirman Resources Pvt Ltd, and directed the competent authority to sell it through public auction for equitable distribution of the proceeds among the depositors, the EOW said in a statement. The firm had allegedly collected more than ₹2 crore from people promising litigation-free plots/land at Chandaka

However, the company neither provided plots/land to the investors nor returned the invested amount.

During investigation, the EOW unearthed properties worth ₹2 crore in the firm's name.

Accordingly, the EOW moved the competent authority for attachment of properties. October 17, the OPID court issued an order for public auction of the attached properties.

Weight gain during pregnancy raises stroke risk: Study

Pregnant women gaining more weight than that recommended are at a greater risk of death from heart disease or diabetes later in life, according to a study published in The Lancet journal.

The increased mortality risk was found for all weight groups studied, including those defined as underweight, normal or overweight prior to their pregnancies, the researchers said, having analysed more than 45,000 US women's data of 50 years, including their body mass index (BMI) and weight fluctuations during pregnancy.

No heightened risk was, however, found in women who were obese prior to pregnancy, the team of researchers, led by those from Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, said.

"We showed that gaining weight during pregnancy within

the current guidelines may protect against possible negative impacts much later in life, and this builds upon evidence of the short-term benefits for both maternal health and the health of the baby," said the study's lead author, Stefanie Hinkle, an assistant professor of Epidemiology and Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the university.

Hinkle was apparently referring to the guidelines regarding weight gain during pregnancy outlined by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the US, which recommend a weight gain of not more than 12.5-18 kg in "underweight" women and 5-10 kg in "obese" women.

The 'Underweight' and 'obese' classifications are according to BMI standards. The CDC recommendations differ if a woman is pregnant with twins.



These days, almost half of those who are pregnant gain more weight than recommended, the researchers said in the study.

They examined data from the Collaborative Perinatal Project, which catalogued data from a racially diverse cohort of people in the US who gave birth in the 1950s or 1960s, and linked

their records to mortality data that ran through 2016, approximately 50 years later.

The researchers analysed their BMI and weight gain data and compared them to modern recommendations. Those numbers were then linked first to deaths due to any cause, then to deaths caused by cardiovascu-

Increased mortality risk was found for all weight groups studied, including those defined as underweight, normal or overweight prior to their pregnancies

lar- or diabetes-related issues.

By 2016, approximately 39 per cent of the people in the cohort had died and the death rate varied in correlation with pre-pregnancy BMI - those with the lowest BMI died at a lower rate than those with the highest BMI, the researchers found.

They further found that for women "underweight" before pregnancy, the risk of death related to heart disease climbed by

84 per cent when they gained more than the recommended weight. Among those having a "normal" BMI, death due to any reason rose by nine per cent and heart disease-related death risk climbed by 20 per cent, when their weight gain was more than that recommended, the researchers said.

Those "overweight" had a 12 per cent higher risk of death and a 12 per cent increase in the risk of diabetes-related death, if they gained excess weight during pregnancy, they said.

However, the researchers found no correlation between high weight gain during pregnancy and subsequent deaths among those "obese" before pregnancy.

Hinkle said while their study wasn't designed to look into that specific point, it's possible this group's already-elevated death rate could have had a bearing on this finding.

Use irrigation to increase Rabi crop production: Min



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain inaugurated the state-level 'Conference for Rabi Campaign 2023-24' Friday here to review crop performance and facilitate technology adoption with participation of state and district level officials and experts from OUAT, ICAR and CGIAR. As per sources, an estimated 28.14 lakh hectares in the state will be covered under different crops during this Rabi season, which includes 14.34 lakh hectares of pulses, 3.73 lakh hectares of oilseeds, 5.39 lakh hectares vegetables, 1.13 lakh hectares condiments and 0.3 lakh hectares under sugarcane with the production target of 19.39 lakh MT for food grains, 7.53 lakh MT of pulses and 4.18 lakh

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MT for oilseeds. Addressing the conference, Swain said that Rabi Campaign is important for economy of the state. He urged everyone to act with urgency to increase production of Rabi crops by making rational use of the available irrigation facilities in the state. "Owing to the initiatives and schemes of the state govern-

ment, Odisha has become a surplus state in rice production. Crop diversification, integrated farming, rice fallow management, cultivation of cash crops such as pulses and oilseeds, vegetables are being encouraged to cope with climate change and to increase farmers' income," he said.

Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena, joining as the guest of honor, said that Odisha has now established identity as a major food grain exporting state. He emphasized on adopting climate-smart agriculture in view of climate change by diversifying crops with pulses, oilseeds and vegetables.

"For this year's Rabi programme the focus areas include: Enhancing irrigation usage, promotion of pulses and oilseeds crops through rice fallow management, implementation block specific agriculture action plan in delta command areas," said an official. Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment principal secretary Arabinda Kumar Padhi said that the state agricultural policy 'Samridhhi' has helped in the economic development of farmers and the use of scientific methods, remarkable success has been achieved in Odisha's agriculture sector.

Assured irrigation is one of the key factors contributing to higher productivity. Coordination with the Water Resources Department is to be ensured for timely and adequate release of water for irrigation.



SCIENTIFIC TEMPER: Students present their projects during an exhibition at Saraswata Bidya Mandir in Puri, Friday

OP PHOTO

Damaged roads bane of Puja revellers

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: As puja fervour grips the Odisha capital, the one thing that is a sore to the eyes is the damaged roads in many parts of the City that would give a bumpy ride to the revellers during Durga Puja.

Many roads of the Capital City have potholes, some resembling craters. Although some parts of the roads at a few locations have been repaired, poor quality of concrete used has patches coming off again. Bad, uneven, potholes filled roads are abundantly prevalent on Damana-Nandankanan and Acharya Vihar-Palasoni routes while the situation in Old Town and



Gajapati Nagar is no different.

The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), however, seems to be unaware of the road conditions and is playing a blame game to shed its responsibilities. When contacted, Mayor Sulochana Das initially tried to shift the responsibility of road repair to the Panchayati Raj department. She, however, assured that the BMC will certainly repair the damaged roads under the civic body's jurisdiction. Meanwhile, BMC

Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange also towed a similar line stating that he has no information regarding damaged roads. There can be no doubt that traffic movement will certainly increase during the Puja. And many are already feeling the pinch of bad roads. Muralidhar, an auto-rickshaw driver, lamented the bad road conditions in Bomikhal locality. "Despite a number of accidents, no attempt has been made to repair the road," he said. Significantly, BMC had conducted an action meeting over damaged roads, October 7. During the meeting, Kulange had stressed on makeover of 3,800 potholes in different parts of the City.

Civic body gears up clean & green Puja

Bhubaneswar: BMC Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange held a meeting Friday and stressed on keeping the space around Puja pandals clean. Keeping the ward core committee in charge of the activity, he stressed that the dumps surrounding the pandals must be managed thrice a day. For effective management, zonal deputy managers and ward officers have been entrusted with the responsibility of deploying required manpower at the Puja pandals in each ward. Besides, the civic body will spread awareness amongst street food vendors and eateries about unnecessary waste disposal.

Training for MUKTA master trainers from 18 ULBs begins

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: MUKTA - an urban wage employment scheme is extensively being implemented in 115 urban local bodies (ULBs) of Odisha under the 5T guidelines. In order to streamline the implementation of MUKTA, the Housing & Urban Development Department has taken a decision for undertaking intensive capacity building programmes of 'Mission Shakti Groups' and 'Slum Dwellers' Associations' in partnership with knowledge partner 'Urban Management Centre', for smooth execution of the project. The training of the master trainers from Ganjam district covering 18 ULBs started Friday here. Sixty participants comprising members of MUKTA and DUDA experts are attending the programme.

rektor, municipal administration Sangramjit Nayak addressed the trainees and urged them to utilise the knowledge they acquire in the larger interest of the urban poor. The 'Mukhya Mantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan' (MUKTA) was launched by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, April 18, 2020. The aim of the project was to reduce economic vulnerabilities and enhance the resilience of the urban poor and migrant labourers during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic. During the last three years, around 52,500 projects with an investment of Rs 756 crore have been implemented. More than 62 lakh workdays have been generated directly benefiting around six lakh urban poor and migrant labourers, of which close to 40% are women.

Startup Yatra, Xpress ideas cross 3K mark

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: The total number of innovative ideas gathered from various schools and colleges across the state under Odisha Startup Yatra and Startup Xpress crossed the 3,000-mark with collection of 37 more ideas on the 28th day.

Going forward, several bootcamps are scheduled to be held at different institutions in coming days. It is poised to establish a groundbreaking precedent for engaging the student community in the state's development process, while also nurturing the seeds of entrepreneurship within them.

An impressive total of over 30,000 students from 206 colleges and 62 schools in Odisha have actively participated during the past 28 days. "As this remarkable initiative enters its final



An impressive total of 30,000 plus students from 206 colleges and 62 schools in Odisha have actively participated during the past 28 days

phase, we anticipate a surge in innovative ideas from our students. This impressive journey underscores the students' unwavering commitment to becoming the driving force behind their community's growth, with entrepreneurship as their undeniable passion," said an offi-

As Odisha aspires to foster and support 5,000 startups by 2025, the Startup Yatra and Startup Xpress play pivotal roles in bringing this vision to fruition

cial. As Odisha aspires to foster and support 5,000 startups by 2025, the Odisha Startup Yatra and Startup Xpress play pivotal roles in bringing this vision to fruition. They serve as launchpads for idea generation, particularly among school and college students, consistently setting

a high standard with their innovative and out-of-the-box concepts. Thursday, 3 bootcamps were conducted in two colleges of Subarnapur district and one school of Rourkela that received 37 ideas with participation from 327 students.

To sensitise school students and give them a broad idea of entrepreneurship, Xpress bootcamp was held at DAV Public School (Rourkela). While the two yatra bootcamps were held at Sonepur College and Model Degree College in Subarnapur district.

The excitement and enthusiasm from the student community was palpable with their passionate pitches.

The aim of Startup Odisha Yatra and Startup Xpress 2023 is to encourage grassroots innovators and promote entrepreneurship among them.

Scientist-stakeholder interface at ICAR-CIWA



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: ICAR-Central Institute for Women in Agriculture organised an interaction between scientists and stakeholders on 'gender mainstreaming through government schemes in agriculture and allied sectors' for empowerment of women engaged in farming.

ICAR-CIWA principal scientist Biswanath Sahoo welcomed the participants and defined the purpose of the interface. He emphasised that strategic approach is needed for proper implementation of government schemes as due to gender disparity women farmers often remain underprivileged in many areas.

Sahoo urged the officials to collect gender disaggregated data as it is important for closing the gender gap which will ultimately help the institution to facilitate socio-economic empowerment of women farmers.

ICAR-CIWA director Mridula Devi emphasized that spreading awareness through gender sensitization among officials of implementing agencies is required for bridging the gender gap and addressing the missing links. She also said that gender sensitive market corner can provide an enabling environment to the farmwomen for marketing their produce.

The interface meeting comprised of technical session, where in Sahoo through his presentation emphasized the need for proper analysis of government schemes through the gender lens and appropriate restructuring of the same ensuring gender inclusion.

Less than 5hrs of sleep raises depression risk

Consistently sleeping less than five hours a night might raise the risk of developing depressive symptoms, according to a new genetic study.

Both sleep duration and depression are partly inherited from one generation to the next, according to researchers.

The study led by UCL (University College London) researchers and published in the journal Translational Psychiatry, analysed data from people with an average age of 65 and found short sleep was associated with the onset of depressive symptoms. "Using genetic susceptibility to disease we determined that sleep likely precedes depressive symptoms, rather than the inverse," said lead author Odessa S Hamilton.

For the study, the researchers used genetic and health data from 7,146 people recruited by the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA), a nationally representative population study in



England.

They found that people with a stronger genetic predisposition to short sleep (less than five hours in a given night) were more likely to develop depressive symptoms over 4-12 years, but that people with a greater genetic predisposition to depression did not have an increased likelihood of short sleep.

Short and long sleep durations, along with depression,

are major contributors to public health burden that are highly heritable.

"Polygenic scores, indices of an individual's genetic propensity for a trait, are thought to be key in beginning to understand the nature of sleep duration and depressive symptoms," said senior author Dr Olesya Ajnakina.

The research team also looked at non-genetic associations be-

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tween depressive symptoms and sleep duration.

They found that people sleeping five hours or less were 2.5 times more likely to develop depressive symptoms, while people with depressive symptoms were a third more likely to suffer from short sleep.

They adjusted for a rich selection of factors that could affect the results such as education, wealth, smoking status, physical activity and limiting longstanding illness.

The researchers also found a link between sleeping long and developing depressive symptoms, with participants sleeping longer than nine hours being 1.5 times more likely to develop depressive symptoms than those who sleep an average of seven hours.

However, depressive symptoms were not associated with sleeping longer four to 12 years later, which corresponded to the genetic findings.

"Suboptimal sleep and depression increase with age, and with the worldwide phenomenon of population ageing there is a growing need to better understand the mechanism connecting depression and a lack of sleep," said professor Andrew Steptoe.

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Now, pulses start biting as prices soar

PEOPLE ARE REDUCING CONSUMPTION OF PULSES AND SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVES AS THEIR PRICES ALWAYS REMAIN HIGH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Oct 20: After tomatoes and onions, prices of various pulses are pinching the consumers now in the Silk City and elsewhere in the state.

Pulses like arhar, have started biting the common man, especially those belonging to the middle class, due to a steep hike in their prices. Traders said prices are on the rise as they have to buy the pulses from outside the state.

Observers said that the solution to skyrocketing prices of pulses lies with the consumers as adopting an alternative is the best way to control the price rise.

Arhar dal, which is sold in maximum quantity, currently sells at ₹160/kg in the retail market while its price at the wholesale market is anything between ₹115 to ₹155.

Ganjam is an agriculture oriented district where paddy is the primary agricultural produce. Farmers here do not give importance to cultivation of pulses due to lack of incentives and sponsorship by the state government. They rarely cultivate pulses like green gram

(moong), red lentil (masur dal) or horse gram (kolatha dal) after harvesting paddy from their farmlands.

Arhar is harvested when paddy crop ripens and becomes ready for harvest. However, the district lacks a favourable climate for its cultivation as arhar requires more water for irrigation. Hilly regions are best suited for arhar which is cultivated in the neighbouring Kandhamal and Koraput districts. However, that is not adequate to meet the requirement of these two districts.

Farmers also sow some arhar seeds on the guard walls of farmlands during paddy cultivation and harvest along with the paddy. However, they are not inclined to cultivate arhar on a large scale.

According to reports available from Bada Bazaar market in the Silk City, the principal commercial hub in south Odisha, traders are buying pulses like arhar and pigeon peas from Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Nagpur in Maharashtra and Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh as per the requirement of Ganjam district. As a result, their prices always remain high.



Marketing inspector Ranjan Kumar Sethi of Civil Supplies department said that the current requirement in Berhampur is 300 quintal per day but the current purchase from outside is around 175 to 200 quintal.

Arhar dal prices ranged from ₹80 to ₹100 five years back. This was noticed in the first quarter of 2017 till 2023. However, prices have suddenly started increasing from April, 2023.

While arhar was available at ₹60 per kg in the retail market during last eight months, currently it is being sold at ₹160 per kg in the retail market of Berhampur. However, the sale has dropped as consumers have reduced their consumption and opted for alternatives. Moreover, very few traders are buying

pulses from outside for which they hold the key to price control.

The price of arhar has increased from ₹115 to ₹155 in the wholesale market during last six months. Similarly, the price of moong dal has increased from ₹100 to ₹115, pigeon peas (buta dal) from ₹60 to ₹74, red lentil (masur dal) from ₹62 to ₹74 and black gram (biri dal) from ₹100 to ₹115 during the same period.

Odisha Traders Association (Berhampur branch) president CH Rabindranath said that the price rise along with the rise in demand but it will drop if the consumers opt for some alternative.

A homemaker Binati Sahu of Gosaninuagaon said the price rise has hit her family hard pushing her to adopt green gram

(moong dal) and red lentil (masur dal) in preparation of food.

Upendra Choudhury, a trader, said that pulses are not being purchased as per demand while big traders are hoarding pulses. The prices will decline if the government undertakes verification of sale and purchase stock in every shop and business establishment.

Another homemaker A Lata Rao of Haladiapadar said that her family's consumption of arhar dal has declined due to the price rise. She said the state government should intervene and control the prices.

The increase in price is not limited to Ganjam district alone. It has been concerning the whole state and left the state government worried. The Food Supply and Consumer Welfare department gets the daily report of pulses purchased from outside but has failed to control their prices.

Traders said that the government policy should be clear while the Horticulture department needs to encourage farmers to take up arhar cultivation in the district and other parts of the state to tide over the crisis. The government should also ensure proper marketing facilities and establish cold storages so that farmers get the right price and can store their crop for sale in future.

2 ELECTROCUTED, ANOTHER CRITICAL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khallikote, Oct 20: In a tragic incident, a mother-son duo died and an elderly person of the family was critically injured after being electrocuted at Srikrushna Saranpur village under Khallikote police station limits in Ganjam district, Friday afternoon.

The deceased duo was identified as Jitu Pahan, 24, and his mother Nibasi Pahan, 42, and the critically injured person was identified as Bhagi Nahak, 68, the maternal grandfather of Jitu.

Sources said the mother-son duo came in contact with a live electric wire while removing the unused left out iron rods from their newly constructed house under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY) allotted to Nibasi.

The maternal grandfather was injured while trying to save them. Locals rescued and rushed them to Khallikote Hospital, where the doctors pronounced Nibasi and her son Jitu dead, while Bhagi was forwarded to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur with serious burn injuries.

Informed, Khallikote police reached the hospital and seized the bodies after registering two cases of unnatural death. A pal of gloom prevailed at Srikrushna



Saranpur village after the tragic incident.

In another similar incident, two farmers of Subalaya village under Rambha police limits in Ganjam district were critically injured after they came in contact with a live wire while irrigating their farmland Thursday evening.

The injured farmers were identified as Lakshmi Charan Biswal, 70, and Rakesh Chandra Sahu, 45, of Subalaya village.

The injured duo was rushed to MKCG Medical College and Hospital but as their condition deteriorated they were shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack.

4K bottles of cough syrup seized; 6 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Oct 20: A team of Bolangir police successfully conducted a raid near Reliance petrol pump on Sambalpur road and arrested six persons after seizure of as many as 4,000 cough syrup bottles from their possession, Friday morning.

The police also seized a pick-up van, a car and a two-wheeler used in smuggling the contraband.

The accused were identified as Ranjan Swain and Ramakanta Swain and Padmanabha aka Pinku Pradhan, Parameswar Kharsel, Subasish Baghar aka Subha and Sibasish Abhijit Baghar.

A case (No-570/23) has been registered at Town police station in this regard.

Bolangir Superintendent of Police Khilari Rishikesh Dnyandeo briefed about the smuggling of cough syrup at a press conference at Town police station, Friday afternoon. Acting

on a tip-off about cough syrup being smuggled in a pick-up van Friday, a special team was formed and the team conducted the raid near Reliance petrol pump and stopped the pick-up van, a car and a bike in suspicion. During the search, 4,000 bottles of cough syrup were seized from the van, said Khilari.

These cough syrup bottles were to be smuggled to Bargarh and Sambalpur districts from Bolangir, he added. He also assured that crackdown on smuggling of cough syrup and other contrabands will continue in future.

Taking action against the cough syrup company, the bank accounts of the company will be seized, said SP Khilari. He also said various awareness campaigns will be conducted by the police department to create awareness among the youths including school and college students to prevent them from getting addicted to narcotic substances.



CAPTIVATING ACT: Artistes enact 'Bali Badha' scene on the fifth evening of Ramlleela being staged on the occasion of Sarbajanina Durgapuja at Sohela in Bargarh district, Friday

Avaada Group, Gopalpur Port ink agreement

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 20: Avaada Group Friday announced signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Gopalpur Port Ltd to set up a green ammonia storage facility. The company, however, did not disclose the capacity and the investment involved in the proposed project.

This strategic alliance aims to establish a cutting-edge storage facility dedicated to storing green ammonia at the Gopalpur Port, marking a pivotal moment in the journey towards greener future, Avaada Group said in a statement.

Last month, the group signed an MoU with Tata Steel Special Economic Zone Ltd to establish a green ammonia manufacturing facility within the Special Economic Zone.

Fishing jetty project in limbo

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, Oct 20: The construction of a proposed fishing jetty at Aryapalli under this block in Ganjam district has been stalled for a long time putting the local fishermen in a fix. In the absence of a fishing harbour, the district's fishermen are migrating to Kerala, Goa, Mumbai and Chennai in search of work.

The state government had carried out conversion of the allotted land, conducted surveys, finalised designs and model studies for the proposed project. However, due to lack of environmental clearance and administrative approval from the Centre and state government the project has been hanging fire from long. As a result, local fishermen have been facing hurdles and their livelihood is under risk.

The fishing jetty mouth near Aryapalli has been buried. This problem has been going on for



many years. There are frequent reports of boats breaking down putting the fishermen's lives at risk.

Earlier, a delegation of state BJP had been to New Delhi and met the Union Minister of Fisheries to draw their attention to the matter and handed over a memorandum. Chhatrapur MLA Subash Chandra Behera also raised questions on this issue in the

recently concluded legislative session.

In his answer, Ranendra Pratap Swain, Minister of Fisheries and Animal Resources Development department said that action will be taken for construction of the fishing jetty only after getting environmental clearance and administrative approval from the Centre and the state government.

GMU student found hanging after exam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Oct 20: A Plus III final year commerce student of Gangadhar Meher University (GMU) allegedly committed suicide at his room in Trust Fund Hostel of the university in Sambalpur.

The hostel boarder, identified as Ghanashyam Karuan from Narla in Kalahandi, was found hanging in his room Thursday.

It is suspected that Karuan ended his life after failing to do well in the exams.

Sources said he returned to his hostel room after appearing for the mid-semester examination. His roommate then left for his test and on returning, found the door locked from inside. When Ghanashyam did not open the door after repeated knocking, his roommate informed the hostel warden, who subsequently informed police.

The police have recovered a purported suicide note from his room in which Karuan reportedly blamed repeated poor performance in exams for his death.

"We reached the hostel after receiving information about the body. We will be able to say the exact cause of his death after investigating all the angles in the death," Town Police Station IIC Bulu Swain said. The police sent the body for autopsy and launched a probe in this connection.

2-year-old girl falls into water-filled vessel, dies

Sambalpur: A two-year-old girl died after accidentally falling into a water-filled vessel in Sambalpur district, a police officer said Friday. The incident took place at Dehurisahi village of Rairakhol town Thursday. The deceased was identified as Nibedita Beura, the younger daughter of one Bibekananda Beura of Rairakhol. While playing, the toddler accidentally fell into a vessel filled with water, which was kept in front of the house for their daily use. During that time, the other family members were busy with household chores, the police officer said.

Dussehra 'Maha Arati' at Lankeswari temple

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, Oct 20: Nature has been generous on Subarnapur district as it is gifted with scenic rivers, green forests and beautiful landscapes. In addition to the natural charm, the many temples situated in the district double up its beauty.

Many tourist attractions along with the district's rich heritage and famous handicrafts have given this land a unique identity. The presiding goddess of Subarnapur district is Maa Lankeswari whose shrine is situated on a mound of rocks in the middle of Mahanadi river. A 'Maha Arati' is performed here by Maa Lankeswari Development Committee on the occasion of Dussehra. This religious event



is held for 11 days from Mahalaya to Vijaya Dashami.

Thousands of people flock to this temple every evening during these 11 days to witness the 'Maha Arati'. Lankeswari shrine

at Sonepur town in Subarnapur district attracts crowds of tourists to this place round the year. The natural sound of the Mahanadi flowing along with cacophony of hundreds of colourful birds cre-

ates a musical atmosphere here at Maa Lankeswari temple premises. This place was famous as a 'Tantra Peeth' during the 7th-8th century AD.

However, with time Goddess

Lankeswari is being worshiped as the presiding deity by the Kaibarta community of Sonepur and people of Subarnapur district. Tourists from all over Odisha throng here for worship and to enjoy the scenic beauty of the place round the year excluding during the floods in monsoon season. The new temple was constructed by the Kaibarta people towards the end of the 20th century.

Thousands of tourists who visit here not only enjoy the scenic beauty of the temple but also enjoy picnicking on the large rocky mounds inside the river. The charm of boating to the temple in country-made boats makes for a special experience for the tourists. Demands are being made to place the shrine on the state's tourism map.

Royal Bengal Tiger sighted



POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, Oct 20: A Royal Bengal Tiger has been spotted near Santoshpur village situated close to the Gandahati waterfall under Rayagada block in Gajapati district, Friday.

Notably, reports of the tiger dragging away a cow from a cattle-shed in the village had surfaced October 18. Subsequently, after complaints were lodged by the locals, the Forest department personnel set up trap cameras in Santoshpur and its ad-

joining areas in order to track the movement of the Royal Bengal Tiger. They also collected its footprint samples.

The presence of the tiger in the area came to the fore after the trap cameras captured its photograph Friday. Subsequently a high alert has been issued in the whole area. People in Santoshpur and its surrounding villages have been warned not to venture outside after 6pm in the evening. The Forest department also warned the villagers to keep their livestock at safe places.

The only work that spiritually purifies us is that which is done without personal motives.

SRI AUROBINDO



Strengthening IFS

After nearly two decades since the last major restructuring of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) cadre, the Modi sarkar has approved a proposal to increase the cadre's strength by 215 officers over the next five years. This significant decision stems from India's growing influence and a desire to play a more prominent international role. It comes close on the heels of the success of India's hosting of the G20 Summit apart from several India-led international initiatives.

Sources have informed DKB that the cadre review and restructuring must be seen in the context of India's rising influence and the government's plans to open nine new Indian missions in the coming years. Veteran observers say that the move is reminiscent of the Indian Revenue Service (IRS) cadre's expansion during the 1990s, coinciding with India's economic growth.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has disclosed that the average number of senior government functionaries' visits to countries with Indian missions has increased from around 9-10 per year to nearly 35-40 visits in 2023. This has necessitated the need for more specialised personnel both in New Delhi and at India's missions abroad.

This view was endorsed earlier by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, which also recommended expanding India's diplomatic corps to match its global aspirations, highlighting the understaffing of the IFS compared to other countries. The IFS currently constitutes only 22.5 per cent of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) workforce.

Interestingly, the move has provoked commentators to argue that all services need more officers, not just the IFS. Apparently, by some calculations, India's babu strength peaked in 1986, with 19,000 officers per million people. Since then, the ratio has fallen to around 2 per cent, well below the Asian average of 2.6 per cent. Some may recall Modi's call for Maximum Governance and Minimum Government. Clearly, that viewpoint is being jettisoned in the light of new realities.



BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

Transfers raise questions

The recent transfers of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India who were closely involved with key audit reports presented recently in the Parliament have raised concerns about the integrity of auditing processes. These reports unveiled corruption and irregularities in Central ministries and departments.

Of particular concern are the transfers of three Indian Audit and Accounts Service officers, two of whom were responsible for audits revealing corruption in the Dwarka Expressway project and Ayushman Bharat. Another officer, who initiated the Ayushman Bharat audit, was also relocated. In the case of Atoorva Sinha, principal director of audit for infrastructure, overseeing the CAG report on highway projects, his report exposed irregularities and massive cost overruns in the Dwarka Expressway project.

The timing and circumstances of these transfers, combined with the sensitivity of the reports involved, have raised questions about the auditing process. The public hasn't forgotten the tumultuous period during the UPA government when the CAG reports on the 2G scam and coal block allocation scam played a pivotal role in questioning the government's credibility.

The CAG Girish Chandra Murmu has argued that transfers and postings are administrative matters, but it is equally important to maintain public trust in the auditing process. Murmu, who assumed office in 2020, emphasises that reading ulterior motives into these transfers is presumptuous, but the concerns remain. And in the absence of a credible explanation, the public is likely to wonder: will anyone audit honestly?

RTI anniversary shadowed by challenges

Implemented 18 years ago, the Right to Information Act, once celebrated for empowering citizens to seek information from government bodies, now stands at a crossroads. Recent data sheds light on a concerning backlog of appeals and complaints under the RTI Act, creating a major roadblock to transparency and accountability. In June this year, a staggering 3.2 lakh appeals and complaints languished unresolved in 27 information commissions across the country.

One of the primary reasons for the backlogs is the failure of Central and state governments to take timely action to appoint information commissioners to the Central Information Commission (CIC) and state information commissions. A study also found that six commissions, including the CIC and state ICs of Manipur, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Bihar, and Punjab are currently without a chief. The CIC is reportedly working with only four commissioners, even though seven posts are vacant. In fact, Chief Information Commissioner YK Sinha's tenure ended earlier this month. During his tenure, Sinha managed to reduce the number of pending cases before the commission by more than 50 per cent. However, four commissions in Jharkhand, Telangana, Mizoram and Tripura are defunct as no new commissioners have been appointed after the incumbents demitted office.

Usually, the anniversaries of such historic legislation should be marked by progress and rejuvenation. But unless these serious challenges are addressed, the age of transparency and accountability may be ending in India.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipcherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

- You will either step forward into growth or you will step back into safety. **ABRAHAM MASLOW**
- All men's miseries derive from not being able to sit in a quiet room alone. **BLAISE PASCAL**
- If you have a dream, you've got to protect it. **CHRIS GARDNER**

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1520:** On this day, explorer Ferdinand Magellan and three Spanish ships entered the strait later named for him, sailing between the mainland tip of South America and the island of Tierra del Fuego toward the Pacific Ocean.
- 1943:** Provisional government of Free India declared by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Bose, an exiled Indian nationalist and a key figure in the Indian Independence Movement declared the creation of Azad Hind or Free India during a mass rally in Singapore. Netaji, as he was fondly called by his followers, was unanimously declared as the Head of State, Prime Minister, and Minister for War of the new government. The government-in-exile did not have any territory to govern until Japan gave them the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, occupied by the Japanese in 1942, to run. A few days later after declaring the existence of Azad Hind, the provisional government joined the Second World War by declaring war on the Allies.
- 1959:** The Guggenheim opens its doors. The Guggenheim Museum displays works from some of the world's most celebrated and sought-after contemporary artists. Situated in the Manhattan area of New York, the museum was first opened in 1939 as the Museum of Non-Objective Painting. It was then named the Guggenheim Museum in 1952, after the death of the founder of the foundation that runs it, Solomon R. Guggenheim. The current museum building was designed by American architect Frank Lloyd Wright and was opened to public on this day.



Dasarathi Mishra

THE HIGH COMPONENT OF SPECIFIED BANK NOTES IN THE 2016 SCENARIO CREATED IMMENSE DISRUPTION IN THE ECONOMY

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 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
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FOCUS PALESTINE

NEVER-ENDING PAIN

Israel's military response to the brutality of the Hamas attack on October 7, which has claimed the lives of nearly 3,000 people in Gaza and displaced hundreds of thousands, has evoked every Palestinian's worst nightmare.

In 1948, roughly 750,000 Palestinians - including my father, uncle, and grandmother - fled their homes to escape the violence that followed the declaration of Israel and the violence by the Jewish underground against many Palestinian villages and towns.

My uncle, who stayed behind in Jerusalem's Musrara neighbourhood until April 1948, assured my father and grandmother that the house would remain safe until they could go back once the fighting ended. He had locked it by turning the key twice, believing that they would return soon. They never did.

The trauma of that first Arab-Israeli War was so profound that Palestinians call it the Nakba ("catastrophe") and commemorate it every year on May 15. Earlier this month, when Danny Ayalon, Israel's former ambassador to the United Nations, told Al Jazeera's Marc Lamont Hill that there is "endless space" for Gaza civilians in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and that they "should all be moved there," many Palestinians interpreted this as a call for a second Nakba. That is why the Israeli order to evacuate 1.1 million people from northern Gaza has stoked fears of a repeat of 1948.

The Gaza Strip has long been a thorn in Israel's side. In 1992, then-Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin famously remarked, "I wish I could wake up one day and find that Gaza has sunk into the sea." A year later, Rabin and the late PLO chairman Yasser Arafat shook hands in the White House's Rose Garden after signing the Oslo Accords. Tragically, Rabin's assassination by a Jewish far-



Deliberately or not, the rhetoric of some Israeli officials calling for a reoccupation or depopulation of Gaza has revived Palestinians' painful memories of the Nakba

right extremist in 1995 robbed both Israel and the international community of an Israeli leader who recognised that the two-state solution represented the best hope for Israel's security and a homeland for the Palestinians.

Israel's warning to Palestinian civilians to evacuate northern Gaza has been strongly opposed by leaders worldwide, while US President Joe Biden has said that a full-scale Israeli occupation of Gaza would "be a big mistake." But Israel insists that civilians must move south to protect themselves when Israel inevitably launches a large-scale ground invasion in response to the mass murder of Israeli citizens by Hamas, which has controlled Gaza since 2006.

Displacing the Palestinian residents of northern Gaza, however, would be a flagrant violation of international law. Moreover, Israel's post-war plans for this area remain unclear. Does Israel intend to create a buffer zone that stretches deep into Gaza, or does it want to return settlers to Gaza? If the pri-

mary objective is to protect Israeli communities, then Israel can and should designate its own territory for such a buffer, rather than encroaching on the tiny and densely populated strip of land currently inhabited by more than two million Palestinians.

The atrocities committed by Hamas and others on October 7, which claimed the lives of more than 1,300 Israeli civilians, have significantly harmed the Palestinian cause and must be unequivocally condemned by anyone who supports the establishment of an independent Palestine. While Palestinians, like any group under occupation, have an internationally recognised right to resist their occupiers, Hamas' violent and brutal acts against Israeli civilians were undeniably war crimes, as have been some of the responses.

But, deliberately or not, the rhetoric of some Israeli officials calling for a reoccupation or depopulation of Gaza has revived Palestinians' painful memories of the Nakba. Palestinian refugees, especially

those in northern Gaza, have no desire to live in the Sinai Peninsula; they still yearn to return to their ancestral homes within the present-day borders of Israel. At the very least, they wish to live in Gaza with dignity, free from occupation, blockades, and travel restrictions.

When Rabin and Arafat shook hands in 1993, they raised hopes that peace between Israel and Palestine was feasible. But 30 years later, the vision of a two-state solution has been rendered all but impossible as dozens of illegal Israeli settlements have fragmented the West Bank, leaving the would-be Palestinian state looking like Swiss cheese.

To be sure, Israel pulled out of Gaza in 2005. But its unilateral withdrawal was essentially a strategic repositioning of troops. Instead of directly occupying Gaza, Israel has imposed a land, air, and water blockade on it since 2007. Sixteen years into this devastating siege, some Israelis advocate reoccupying part or all of the Gaza Strip. Such a move, however, would merely perpetuate the vicious cycle of violence and displacement.

Now more than ever, we need courageous leaders willing to recognise Palestinians' fundamental human rights. To achieve a sustainable peace, Israel must end the occupation and colonisation of the West Bank, lift the Gaza blockade, and engage in meaningful negotiations with the Palestinian Authority leadership in Ramallah. As Rabin understood, the only real solution is the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside a safe and secure Israel.

The writer, an award-winning Palestinian journalist, is a former professor of journalism at Princeton University.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Impact of currency withdrawal

In a significant development, ₹2000 denomination banknotes were withdrawn from circulation, as per RBI Press Release 19 May 2023. It may be recalled that the ₹2000 denomination banknote was introduced in November 2016, primarily to meet the currency requirement of the economy after the withdrawal of legal tender status of all ₹500 and ₹1000 banknotes in circulation. The objective of introducing ₹2000 banknotes was met once banknotes in other denominations became available in adequate quantities. Therefore, printing of ₹2000 banknotes was stopped by RBI in 2018-19.

In the present situation, RBI advised the banks to provide deposit and/or exchange facility for such banknotes until 30 September 2023 which was further extended to 7 October 2023. With effect from 8 October 2023, banks stopped accepting ₹2000 notes for deposit and exchange.

According to RBI, ₹2000 banknotes shall continue to be allowed to be presented at the 19 Regional Offices of RBI for credit to the bank accounts in India or exchange. RBI has set a maximum limit of ₹2,00,000 for exchange of ₹2,000 notes. Individuals/entities can exchange 10 such notes at a time. However, courts, law enforcement agen-

cies, government departments or any other public authority involved in investigation proceedings may deposit/exchange ₹2000 banknotes, as required, at the RBI Issue Offices without any limit.

RBI advised that banks holding Currency Chests (CCs) shall ensure that no withdrawal of ₹2000 denomination is allowed from the CCs. All ₹2000 banknotes held in the CCs shall be classified as unfit and must be dispatched to RBI offices. Individuals/entities from within the country can also send ₹2000 banknotes through India Post, addressed to any of the 19 RBI Issue Offices for credit to their bank accounts in India.

According to RBI, of the total value of ₹3.56 lakh crore of ₹2000 banknotes in circulation as on 19 May 2023, 96 per cent of such notes has been received back to the system as at the close of business on 30 September 2023. Importantly, ₹2000 banknotes shall continue to be legal tender.

The public faced a lot of challenges in the aftermath of demonetisation of high denomination notes in November 2016. Let us visit the past events of demonetisation: i) 12 January 1946 -- the High-Denomination Banknotes (Demonetisation) Ordinance, 1946, demonetised

₹5,000 notes, and ₹10,000 notes. The stated purpose was to curb black money; ii) 16 January 1978 -- the government of India promulgated the High-Denomination Bank Notes (Demonetisation) Ordinance, 1978, demonetising ₹1,000, ₹5,000, and ₹10,000 notes. The purpose was to curb "the illicit transfer of money for financing transactions which are harmful to the national economy."

On 8 November 2016, the government of India withdrew the legal tender character of banknotes of ₹500 and ₹1,000 denomination. The stated objective was to curtail the shadow economy, reduce the use of illicit and counterfeit cash to fund illegal activities and terrorism.

It may be seen that when ₹1,000 notes were demonetised in January 1978, the stock of such high-denomination notes (called registered notes) was only a meagre 1.37 per cent of the total notes in circulation. The impact on the general public was almost absent. The high component of Specified Bank Notes in the 2016 scenario (84.2 per cent) created immense disruption in the economy. RBI and the banking system could navigate well in such extreme situation with a good deal of coordination among the Central government, RBI,

banks with good public support.

According to an RBI staff study, excess deposit growth in the banking system during the demonetisation period (November 11, 2016 to December 30, 2016) worked out to 4.0-4.7 percentage points. There has been a significant increase in bank deposits due to demonetisation, which could be a favourable impact on financial savings and their channelisation to securities markets and for productive purposes.

There was a quantum jump in digital transactions post demonetisation. The debit card, mobile wallet transactions picked up substantially. Use of QR Code became ubiquitous and made the payment system quite efficient. In March 2023, RBI launched 'Har Payment Digital' to give further push to digital transactions. UPI has emerged as the most preferred payment mode in India pioneering Person to Person (P2P) as well as Person to Merchant (P2M) transactions accounting for 75 per cent of the total digital payments. The volume of UPI transactions has increased manifold from just 4.5 million in January 2017 to 10 billion in August 2023.

The writer is a former CGM, RBI. Views are personal.

Unbecoming for an MP

Sir, In a big twist in the alleged 'cash for query' scam, businessman Darshan Hiranandani has claimed that he used Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra's Parliament login ID to ask questions targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Adani Group. Hiranandani - in a signed affidavit - claimed that Moitra "made frequent demands" including "expensive luxury items and logistical help for her holidays." His affidavit also claimed that she had interactions with many Congress leaders, "including Rahul Gandhi, on matters relating to Adani companies." The businessman's confession is a major lead in the case that merits a thorough investigation. It's unbecoming for a member of the Parliament to misuse the country's highest forum meant for valuable debates and law-making process concerning the nation and the people for vested interests. This kind of mala fide actions among the parliamentarians dents the credibility of the Parliament and public lose faith in the legislature functioning. The concerned authorities should take the appropriate actions over the TMC MP.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Scathing indictment

Sir, The Allahabad High Court's acquittal of the two men accused in the killing of girls and women at Nithari village is yet another slap on the face of the CBI for its shoddy investigation into such a horrifying case that shook the soul of the entire nation which leaves one with many unanswered questions, primarily the integrity of the officers of the CBI to which this case was entrusted with hopes that they will enquire into the case with all honesty, bring in valid and credible evidence against the perpetrators of these heinous crimes and get them the maximum punishment. Alas! It was not to be and the investigating agency has belied the nation of the trust reposed in it! The scathing indictment of the CBI by the Allahabad High Court for their reckless and shoddy investigation leading to their failure to produce credible evidence against the accused in the Nithari killings has definitely smeared the face of the CBI with another indelible black mark.

Tharcus S. Fernando, CHENNAI

SP-Cong spat: Trouble mounts for INDIA bloc

EXPOSING A RIFT IN THE GROUPING, AKHILESH YADAV HINTED THAT THE CONGRESS COULD GET THE SAME TREATMENT FROM HIS PARTY IN UP AFTER IT DID NOT LEAVE ANY SEAT FOR THE SP IN MP



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Varanasi, Oct 20: After Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's outburst over Congress not sharing seats in Madhya Pradesh assembly polls, UPCC president Ajay Rai hit back Friday saying the SP cannot blame his party as it released its list of candidates before the Congress and was benefiting the BJP by contesting separately.

Exposing a rift in the INDIA grouping, Yadav had Thursday hinted that the Congress could get the same treatment from his party in Uttar Pradesh after it did not leave any seat for the SP in Madhya Pradesh.

The Samajwadi Party (SP) announced its third list of two candidates Thursday night. With this, it has announced 33 candidates for the November 17 polls to the 230-member assembly in the BJP-governed state. The Congress has announced its candidates for 229 seats.

According to insiders from both parties, the Congress had apparently agreed to leave six seats for SP in MP but the seat-sharing arrangement did not materialise.

Raising what he termed as the basic questions under the 'gathbandhan dharma,' Rai in a statement said the people of Uttar Pradesh

want to know that "when our party was talking to SP about seats (in MP), why did Samajwadi Party release the list of its candidates before Congress released the list of candidates?"

Yadav reiterated in Shahjahanpur during the day that based on its performance in Madhya Pradesh, Congress had agreed to give six seats but not even the sitting SP MLA was given a ticket.

In the statement, Rai asked, "Akhilesh Yadav is himself saying that he wanted six seats, then what is the point of fielding candidates on 30 seats, who will benefit from it?"

"On one hand Akhilesh Yadav talks about saving the Constitution, fighting for the weaker sections, Dalits and backward classes, and on the other hand, he is contesting elections in MP separately, what is his real compulsion? Tell this to the public. Do not blame the Congress. Who will benefit from fighting separately, everyone knows that BJP will benefit from it," Rai said.

While referring to Yadav terming him a "chirkut" (worthless), Rai said, "Does the use of abusive language for the UPCC president suit the former chief minister?"

Senior Congress leader Acharya Pramod wrote on X, "We always address him as honourable president, but he is calling our state president 'chirkut', this is a sheer insult to the party leadership. How long will this alliance continue like this?"

Talking to media persons after addressing a party workers' training programme in Shahjahanpur, the SP president said the INDIA alliance should have made it clear in the first place that there would be no tie-up at the state level as in Madhya Pradesh.

Thursday, Akhilesh Yadav had also said the Congress leadership should not allow its 'small leaders' to comment on his party and alleged that Congress leaders were in cahoots with the BJP.

The INDIA grouping came into being primarily to put up a united front against the Bharatiya Janata Party in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan took a dig at the INDIA bloc after its constituents fielded candidates against each other in assembly polls, saying the opposition grouping is driven by the motto of 'friendship in Delhi and wrestling in states.'

Waste-to-wonder park in Lucknow soon

INDO-ASIAN NEW SERVICE

Lucknow, Oct 20: Lucknow will get its first waste-to-wonder park called 'UP Darshan Park' housing small replicas of 16 famous monuments of the state on Diwali.

AK Singh, chief engineer of Lucknow Development Authority (LDA), which has been tasked with construction of the project on seven acres of land in Gomti Nagar, said, "Artists are working on a war-footing to complete the park by November 10."

The park will have replicas that span from the Taj Mahal to the Ram temple. The 16 other larger-than-life scrap installations, include the Mahaparinirvana site of Gautam Buddha in Kushinagar and the Vindhayavasinini temple, among others.

Models of monuments to come up at the park include Bara Imambara, Lucknow Vidhan Sabha, Jhansi Fort, Banke Bihari and Vrindavan temples of Mathura, Devipatan Mandir of Balrampur, Taj Mahal, Kashi Vishwanath Temple of Varanasi and Dudhwa National Park.

According to the Lucknow Development Authority (LDA), this park promises to be a delightful experience, not only for the city's res-



idents but also for tourists.

It offers a glimpse into the renowned landmarks of Uttar Pradesh, as well as various statues in the form of installations.

"All these statues and installations are made from scrap materials," said LDA official Bhupen Pratap Singh.

He also informed that the park is being set up in hybrid mode, with the LDA partnering Zep Tech Systems Pvt Ltd for the construction.

He also said that 60,000 ornamental trees have been planted on the premises spanning over 10 to 12 acres of land. The park is expected to cost around ₹6 crore and is being modelled on the lines of such parks

in Delhi and Indore.

The replicas are being made from iron scraps and other waste materials.

Experts who supervised construction of the parks in the two cities are part of the project in Lucknow as well. Waste materials being used in the models include scraps of four-wheeled, rolling shutters, rusted almirah, tyre rims, bicycles frames and household iron waste, among others.

Besides, an open-air theatre, food court and other facilities will also be constructed in the park. Chemical treatments on the models will make them last for several decades.

Kerala hamlet starts wooing global firms

THE SIGNIFICANT ATTRACTION OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVE WAS THAT EMPLOYEES COULD WORK FOR THE US COMPANIES SITTING IN A KERALA VILLAGE



Official sources said the mini IT park was set up at the ASAP Skill Park with the support of the state Startup Mission. The significant attraction of the initiative was that employees could work for the US company sitting in a Kerala village, they said.

The job aspirants had to move to metro cities before they could get such opportunities with global companies, they said.

The Kulakkada model is the first such initiative in this regard, they said. Those who successfully com-

pleted the Enrolled Agent Course of ASAP have got a job at the global company, sources added.

Balagopal said GR8 Affinity is one of the leading global companies in the accounting sector, and the initiative would provide great employment opportunities for rural youth in the state. As many as 18 Commerce graduates and post graduates received jobs in the initial phase, the minister said in a Facebook post.

"They are now doing US taxation jobs through the global company by sitting at Kulakkada," he said, adding that more such companies will come into the rural area. Balagopal said the Left government, in its last budget, had announced the setting up of mini IT parks in small villages and towns.

"It is a matter of great pride that the youngsters of our state have started working with an annual salary of 5.5 lakh rupees living in a tiny hamlet named Kulakkada in Kottarakkara," he further said in the FB post.

Initiatives are on to create similar ecosystems to provide job opportunities for more people, he said.

Breakthrough for NIA in Kerala RSS leader's murder

THE AGENCY HAD FILED A CHARGE SHEET AGAINST 59 ACCUSED IN THE CASE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 20: In a major breakthrough in the murder case of RSS leader Srinivasan in Palakkad, Kerala in April 2022, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Friday said that it has arrested absconding accused Shihab aka Babu, a key member of the Popular Front of India (PFI), who was an integral part of the terror ecosystem and responsible for orchestrating the murder.

An NIA spokesperson here said that the agency arrested Shihab, who had been on the run since the commission of the crime.

The official said that the anti-terror probe agency's dedicated absconder tracking team successfully traced him to his residence in Kerala's Malappuram district and subsequently de-



tained him.

The official said: "Our probe revealed that Shihab was an integral part of the terror ecosystem being operated by the PFI, which was responsible for orchestrating the murder of Srinivasan."

The official said that it is believed that Shihab, acting in line with a conspiracy hatched by the PFI leaders, harbored Muhammed Hakeem, who at the behest of PFI leadership was responsible for the destruction

Yechury ridicules JD(S) chief's claim on tie-up with BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Oct 20: CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury Friday ridiculed JD(S) supremo HD Deve Gowda's claim that Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan supported his party's alliance with the BJP in Karnataka. Gowda's statement has sparked political controversy in the southern state.

Addressing the media here on the sidelines of a party event in solidarity with Palestine under the slogan, "Stop Israel's War of Extermination on Palestine," Yechury said he was not surprised that JD(S) had joined hands with BJP as it was 'part of its culture'. He said the state unit of JD(S) had announced their opposition to the BJP, and that's why they are continuing with the Left Democratic Front in Kerala.

"The charge that Pinarayi Vijayan agrees with that statement is ridiculous. There is no question of agreement. They (state unit of JD(S)) got separated from BJP, that's why they are here with LDF," Yechury said.

Gowda had said Thursday in Bangalore that Vijayan had granted full approval for the JD(S) alliance with the BJP in Karnataka to protect the party's interests.

of crucial evidence in the case.

The agency had filed a charge sheet March 17 this year against a total of 59 accused in the case. Subsequently, on May 16 this year, the NIA's absconder tracking team achieved a significant milestone by tracking down and apprehending Saheer KV, who had been absconding for long.

The official said that so far, a total of 69 individuals have been identified as being involved in the conspiracy.

Pandher walks out of jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida, Oct 20: Moninder Singh Pandher, who was arrested in the sensational 2006 Nithari serial killings case, walked out of Luksar jail in Greater Noida Friday, four days after the Allahabad High Court acquitted him.

The 65-year-old was dressed in a white Pathani suit paired with a waistcoat and sports shoes as he walked out of the high-security prison around 1:40 pm. Pandher, who had a mask on, was received by a couple of advocates. He got into a car and drove off without speaking to anyone.

The High Court Monday acquitted him and his domestic help Surendra Koli in the case after noting that the prosecution had failed to prove guilt 'beyond reasonable doubt' and that the investigation was botched up. The two were charged with rape and murder and sentenced to death by a lower court in the killings in Nithari, Noida, that horrified the nation with the details of sexual assault, brutal murder and hints of possible cannibalism.

NITHARI CASE

<p>EAST COAST RAILWAY</p> <p>Tender Notice No. ST-OT-CIRCULATING-CTC-346, Dt.: 13.10.2023</p> <p>NAME OF WORK: IMPROVEMENT OF EAST SIDE CIRCULATING AREA AND STATION BUILDING WITH MODERN FACILITIES AT CUTTACK STATION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.</p> <p>Tender Value ₹ 20,71,187.80, EMD: ₹ 41,400/-</p> <p>Bidding Start Date & Time: 23.10.2023</p> <p>Tender Closing Date & Time: At 1100 Hrs. of 06.11.2023</p> <p>No manual offers sent by Post/ Courier/ Fax or in person accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.</p> <p>Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website: http://www.ireps.gov.in</p> <p>Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigendum issued for this tender.</p> <p>Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer, Khurda Road</p>	<p>EAST COAST RAILWAY</p> <p>E-AUCTION OF PARKING STANDS</p> <p>Station & Location: (1) Khurda Road-2 Wheeler (Opp. Kalyan Mandap), (2) Puri-2 Wheeler (in Circulating Area), (3) Nirakarpur-Mix-2 Wheeler-cum-4 Wheeler (near Circulating Area).</p> <p>Auction Start Date & Time: 30.10.2023 at 1100 hrs. (for Sl. No. 1 & 2) and 31.10.2023 at 1100 hrs. (for Sl. No. 3).</p> <p>Auction End Date & Time: 30.10.2023 at 1130 hrs. (for sl. no. 1), at 1140 hrs. (for sl. no. 2), and 31.10.2023 at 1130 hrs. (for sl. no. 3).</p> <p>E-AUCTION OF PAY & USE TOILET</p> <p>Station & Location: Jajpur Keonjhar Road-Pre-Fabricated (in Circulating Area).</p> <p>Auction Start Date & Time: 31.10.2023 at 1200 hrs.</p> <p>Auction End Date & Time: 31.10.2023 at 1230 hrs.</p> <p>Note: Prospective bidders are advised to visit the https://www.ireps.gov.in and check the upcoming e-auctions leasing tab to get all required information regarding this e-auction.</p> <p>Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/ Khurda Road</p>
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GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, KHARIAR (R&B) DIVISION, KHARIAR

No. B-1131 E-mail: aeroads.khr@rediffmail.com

Invitation for Bids Date: 19.10.2023

Bid Identification No. S.E. (RNB) KHARIAR-18/2023-24

1	The Executive Engineer, Khariar (R&B) Division, Khariar on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage rate bids in Single Cover system in ONLINE MODE only.
2	Nature of work : Road Works.
3	No. of work : 06 Nos. Works.
4	Tender Paper Cost : As specified in the notice for the respective work, to be remit online only.
5	Class of Contractor : As specified in the notice for the respective Work.
6	Availability of Bid Documents in the website : 10.00 hours of 27.10.2023 to 17.00 Hours of 06.11.2023
7	Date of opening of Bid : Dt.07.11.2023 at 11.30 hours
8	EMD/Bid Security : As specified in the notice to be remitted online only
9	The Bidders shall have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in . Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Executive Engineer, Khariar (R&B) Division, Khariar OIPR-34062/11/0032/2324

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, ATHMALLIK FOREST DIVISION.

AT/PO: ATHMALLIK, DIST- ANGUL- 759125

E-mail: dfoathmallik@gmail.com Mob.: +91 9437004236

No: 6349 /Date: 19.10.2023

CANCELLATION OF BID

No. MM-235- The Bid for the Works Advertised vide No. ADVT 08125IPR, Bhubaneswar on Dt.07.10.2023 i.e., "Construction of Ministerial Staff Quarter in Forest Colony, Athmallik under Athmallik Range of Athmallik Forest Division" (Tender Notice No. 6005/1F/2023 Dt.07.10.2023 is hereby cancelled due to bring out some changes in the Estimate and Site.

In view of the above, I would request you kindly make necessary arrangements for wide publicity and publication of "Cancellation of Bid" in the leading Odia and English daily newspaper at the earliest. The copy of the advertisement may be provided to this office for record and reference. The price of the quotation/tender is more than 10 Lakhs.

It is hereby mentioned that the office of the undersigned cannot bear the cost of advertisement and the same may kindly be borne at your end for the interest of public service.

Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer, Athmallik Division

OIPR-08125/11/0009/2324

Government of Odisha "e" procurement Notice

E-Mail ID - rwd.padampur@yahoo.co.in; Ph.No. 9437255440

Bid Identification No: Online- 09-OF 2023-24

No.O-1340

1.	Name of the Work	: Building works (As per Annexure-'A')
2.	Amount put to Bid Excluding GST	: As per Annexure-'A'
3.	Class of contractor	: "D" & "C"
4.	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From Dt. 06.11.2023 at 10.00 A.M.
5.	Last date & Time for receipt of bids in the portal	: Dt. 16.11.2023 up to 05:00 P.M.
6.	Last date of seeking clarification	: Dt. 15.11.2023 up to 5.00 P.M
7.	Date & Time of bid opening	: Dt. 17.11.2023 at 11.00 A.M.
8.	Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer, R.W.Division, Padampur, At/PO- Padampur, Dist-Bargarh, Pin- 768036

(1) Other details can be seen from DTCN available in website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

(2) Corrigendum if any shall only be published in the above website.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Padampur OIPR-25069/11/0021/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. B-1122

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER PARALAKHEMUNDI (R&B) DIVISION, PARALAKHEMUNDI

Tel.Ph.No.: 06815-222542, E-mail I.D.: erbpalara@yahoo.com

e-Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No.S.E., PKD. R&B DIVN. - 24/2023-24

No.4049 Date: 17.10.2023

INVITATION FOR BIDS

1.	The Superintending Engineer, Paralakhemundi (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha Invites Percentage rate bid in Single cover system to be received in ONLINE MODE only for the construction of works as detailed in the table below:
2.	Nature of works : Building works
3.	No. of works : 04 [Four] nos. of works
4.	Estimated cost (Approximately) : (SI No. 01 to 04): Rs.9.14 Lakhs to Rs.17.07 Lakhs
5.	Bid cost : (SI No. 01 & 03): Rs.6000/- and (02 & 04): Rs. 4000/-
6.	Class of contractor : (SI. No. 01 to 02): "D" Class/ "C" class and (03 & 04): Valid H.T./M.V. license
7.	Availability of Bid Documents in the website : 10.00 Hrs of Dt.26.10.2023 To 17.00 Hrs. of Dt.05.11.2023
8.	Date of opening of the Bid : 12.00Hrs. of Dt.06.11.2023
9.	The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website http://tendersorissa.gov.in . Any Addendum/Corrigendum/ Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Paralakhemundi (R&B) Division OIPR-34065/11/0017/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. B-1133

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, GANJAM [R&B] DIVISION NO.II, BERHAMPUR

Phone/Fax: 0680-2233996, E-mail: sernb2.ganjam@gmail.com

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) [e-Procurement]

TENDER CALL NOTICE

Bid Identification No. SC (R&B)-GM-II-36/2023-24, No.9438, Dated 18.10.2023

1)	The Superintending Engineer, Ganjam [R&B] Division No.II, Berhampur on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in single cover system to be received in ONLINE MODE only for the work as detailed below:
2)	Nature of Work : Electrical work
3)	No. of work : 01 No.
4)	Tender Cost : Rs. 6,000/-
5)	Class of Contractor : MV/HT/Supplier Licensed/Authorized Dealer
6)	Availability of bid documents in the website : From 31.10.2023 10.00 AM to 10.11.2023 4.00 P.M.
7)	Date of opening of Bid : 13.11.2023 at 11.30 A.M.
8)	The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website https://tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Ganjam (R&B) Division No.II OIPR-34080/11/0027/2324



Members of the emergency services evacuate local residents from a flooded area in Brechin, Scotland



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with the crew of the Regional Rapid train 'Namo Bharat' connecting Sahibabad and Duhai Depot stations on the Delhi-Meerut RRTS Corridor after flagging it off, in Sahibabad



Mahouts with their elephants before the beginning of the ride for tourists at Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, in Morigaon district of Assam



President Droupadi Murmu during a visit to the Mahabodhi temple in Bodhi Gaya



People participate in the 'Run Against Pollution' organised by Environment department in New Delhi



Congress MP Shashi Tharoor takes a selfie during the Student Enrichment Programme in Ernakulam, Kerala



Farm workers pluck marigold flowers in Karad, Maharashtra

national



The BJP-led Centre is misusing probe agencies to target opposition leaders even after the enforcement of the model code of conduct
ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

NEW ROLE

Justice Siddharth Mridul was Friday sworn in as the Chief Justice of Manipur High Court during a ceremony held at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal. Manipur Governor Anusuiya UIkey administered the oath of office to Justice Mridul



of the day quote

First, Biden promotes fake news of babies being slaughtered & then retracts. Now, says brutal inhuman bombing of hospital is done by "other side" when media reports otherwise. US Imperialism patronises Israeli savagery

SITARAM YECHURY | COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST) GENERAL SECRETARY

The indiscriminate bombing on the hospital in Gaza and residential areas resulting in the loss of hundreds of lives of innocent men, women and children is both unjustifiable and a grave humanitarian tragedy for which the perpetrators must be held accountable

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

As far as tickets are concerned, whatever incidents happened last year, some were accused of indiscipline in the party, whether action was taken against them or not, but I welcomed with an open heart all those who are winnable. What could be a greater example of mutual love than this?

SACHIN PILOT | CONGRESS LEADER

Mahua's counsel withdraws from case

Moitra, one of the most vocal members of the Lok Sabha and a strong critic of the Modi government, is in the eye of a raging political firestorm over allegations by Dubey that she took bribes from businessman Darshan Hiranandani to ask questions targeting industrialist Gautam Adani and his group

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: The Delhi High Court Friday said it was "appalled" to know that TMC MP Mahua Moitra's counsel contacted and tried to mediate between her and the advocate against whom she has sought restraint orders to prevent him from circulating any defamatory content against her. "I am really appalled. You are a person who is expected to maintain the highest professional standard. If you have been in contact with defendant no. 2 (advocate Jai Anant Dehadrai)..." Justice Sachin Datta told senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, who was representing Moitra in the suit she has filed for permanent injunction and damages against BJP MP Nishikant Dubey, Dehadrai and a battery of media organisations.

The public expression of displeasure by the judge prompted Sankaranarayanan to withdraw himself from the case. Moitra, one of the most vocal members of the Lok Sabha and a strong critic of the Modi government, is in the eye of a raging political firestorm over allegations by Dubey that she took bribes from businessman Darshan Hiranandani to ask questions targeting industrialist Gautam Adani and his group.



The court was informed by Dehadrai, who appeared in person, that he was contacted by Sankaranarayanan over the phone on Thursday for withdrawing his complaint to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against the Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader over the alleged bribe she accepted from Hiranandani. Moitra has filed a plea seeking to restrain Nishikant Dubey, Dehadrai, several social media platforms and media houses from posting or circulating any alleged fake and defamatory content against her. During the brief hearing, Dehadrai said, "There is something very disturbing. There is a very serious conflict of interest. He (Sankaranarayanan) had a 30-

minute call with me. He asked me to withdraw the CBI complaint in exchange for the dog (which Dehadrai was alleged to have stolen from Moitra). He can't appear in the matter, I have the recording."

Responding to the claim, Sankaranarayanan said Dehadrai has instructed him in the past in some cases and that's why he approached him. He also said he told his client, Moitra, that Dehadrai was a member of the Bar and he had earlier assisted him in a case so let him speak to the latter to which she agreed.

The judge said, "You tried to play the role of a mediator. Are you then eligible to still appear in this matter? It is something that you need to answer yourself. It is your call". At the outset, the counsel representing Dubey said late last night the businessman has issued a statement saying gifts changed hands.

Darshan Hiranandani, the CEO of real estate-to-energy group Hiranandani, had Thursday said the TMC leader targeted Gautam Adani to "malign" Prime Minister Narendra Modi whose impeccable reputation gave opposition no opportunity to attack him.

In a signed affidavit sent to Parliament's Ethics Committee, Hiranandani admitted at using Moitra's parliamentary login to ask questions targeting Adani. He also claimed she frequently demanded "expensive luxury items, providing support on renovation of her officially allotted bungalow in Delhi, travel expenses, holidays, etc, apart from providing secretarial and logistical help for her travels within India and to different parts of the world."

Maha Speaker to club all disqualification pleas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 20: Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar Friday decided to club the cross-petitions filed by the rival Shiv Sena factions seeking disqualification of each other's MLAs after a split in the party last year, and hear them together, an opposition legislator said after attending a hearing on the matter.

He gave time till October 25 to the ruling Shiv Sena headed by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and the rival faction led by former CM Uddhav Thackeray to submit their written replies to the petitions submitted by them to the speaker's office, said the legislator.

Sunil Prabhu, an MLA of the opposition Shiv Sena (UBT), said the speaker has decided to club all disqualification petitions and hear them together.

The next hearing will take place on October 26, he said. The Uddhav Thackeray-led faction had earlier demanded that all the cross-petitions be heard together so that the proceedings are concluded expeditiously.

This demand was, however, opposed by the Shinde-led Shiv Sena, which insisted on independent hearings of the pleas. The speaker's decision comes days after the Supreme Court granted him a final opportunity to give it a realistic timeframe for deciding the petitions. On Tuesday last, the apex court said the disqualification petitions have to be adjudicated expeditiously.

No court relief for Sanjay Singh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: The Delhi High Court Friday refused to interfere with the "malicious" arrest of AAP leader Sanjay Singh by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case related to the now-scrapped excise policy of the city government, saying it cannot impute political motive to a "premier" investigating agency in the absence of material on record. It also said Singh's was not a "prima facie case of no evidence at all".

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma dismissed the AAP parliamentarian's petition challenging his arrest as well as remand in ED custody, and said the reputation of a premier investigating agency has a direct relation to the reputation of the country being a fair entity.

"This court will not insinuate at this stage or impute any political motive to the investigating agency in absence of any material on record and does not consider it a prima facie case of no evidence at all," the judge said while pronouncing the verdict. "At a premature stage when investigation is at a nascent stage, this court does not find any ground to interfere at all with order of remand or arrest. Dismissed," ordered the judge.

The court stated that deciding whether a case is politically motivated essentially involves deciding whether an investigating agency was under the control of a political party, and



SINGH, WHO WAS ARRESTED BY THE ED OCTOBER 4, HAD MOVED THE HIGH COURT LAST WEEK CHALLENGING HIS ARREST AND REMAND IN THE MONEY LAUNDERING CASE RELATED TO ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES IN THE DELHI EXCISE POLICY FOR 2021-22

JUSTICE SWARANA KANTA SHARMA DISMISSED THE AAP PARLIAMENTARIAN'S PETITION CHALLENGING HIS ARREST AS WELL AS REMAND IN ED CUSTODY, AND SAID THE REPUTATION OF A PREMIER INVESTIGATING AGENCY HAS A DIRECT RELATION TO THE REPUTATION OF THE COUNTRY BEING A FAIR ENTITY

it cannot decide the same without any material on record. "This court cannot and will not either be a part of this discussion or adjudication unless the matter in issue along with material is paced before it for adjudication. The court of this country have been best left untouched by such influence and are bound to the oath of being fair and equal without any bias," it said. A detailed copy of the order is awaited.

SHORT TAKES

Mega military wargame in Feb

New Delhi: India will showcase its increasing maritime prowess at a nine-day mega naval exercise it will host in February that is set to see participation of over 50 countries against the backdrop of increasingly fractious global geopolitical environment and China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific. Navies from the US, Japan, Australia, France, Bangladesh, South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia are set to be among the participating nations in the 'Milan' exercise to be conducted off Visakhapatnam from February 19 to 27 next year, officials said Friday.

Cyclone will not affect Gujarat

Ahmedabad: A cyclonic storm taking form in the southwest Arabian Sea will not have any impact on Gujarat, an official of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said here Friday. A low-pressure area over the southeast and southwest Arabian Sea has developed into a depression and is expected to intensify into a cyclonic storm by October 21 morning, the IMD had said in a statement earlier. According to the formula followed for naming cyclones in the Indian Ocean Region, it will be called 'Tef'. It is predicted to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm Sunday, according to IMD.

Court extends judicial custody

New Delhi: A Delhi court Friday extended by five days the judicial custody of NewsClick founder Prabir Purkayastha and human resources department head Amit Chakravarty, arrested in a case lodged under anti-terror law UAPA over allegations that the news portal received money to spread pro-China propaganda.

Balaji's judicial custody extended

Chennai: A sessions court here Friday extended Minister V Senthil Balaji's remand till November 6, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case. Principal Sessions Judge S Alli, before whom Senthil Balaji was produced by the prosecution through video-conferencing from the Puzhal Central Prison, extended his judicial custody till November 6.



Women sort groundnuts at Anaj Mandi in Bikaner

PTI PHOTO

FINANCIAL CYBER SCAM CBI takes over probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: The CBI has taken over the probe into an alleged scam involving a suspected Chinese national in which Indian citizens were targeted in the name of investments, loans and job opportunities, and their deposits siphoned off through more than 137 shell companies. The role of a Bengaluru-based

payout merchant, who was central to the scam and linked with the suspected Chinese national, is under the scanner, the agency said.

"This merchant, central to the fraudulent operation, controlled around 16 distinct bank accounts, where a huge sum of Rs 357 crore (approx) was funnelled. The funds were then dispersed across various accounts deliberately to obscure

the (money) trail," the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said in a statement.

Under Operation Chakra-2 that targets cyber criminals, the central probe agency had recently conducted searches at Bengaluru, Cochin and Gurugram, and these yielded substantial evidence, shedding light on the alleged activities of the shell companies' directors.

Man held for aiding Pak spy on Indian defence officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Oct 20: The Gujarat police's Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) Friday arrested a man, a native of Pakistan who was granted Indian citizenship in 2005, for allegedly helping Pakistani authorities spy on Indian defence personnel by sending them a tracking malware through WhatsApp, an official said.

Based on the inputs shared by the Military Intelligence about an Indian WhatsApp number being operated from Pakistan to spy on defence personnel, the ATS nabbed one Labhshankar Maheshwari, 53, from Tarapur town in Anand district and brought him here, the official said.

The accused has been booked under Indian Penal Code (IPC) section 123 (concealing with intent to facilitate a design to wage war against the government) and 121-A (conspiracy to wage war against the government) and under relevant sections of the Information Technology Act, he said.

The investigation has revealed that Maheshwari, a native of Pakistan who was granted Indian citizenship in 2005, had agreed to be part of the conspiracy to ex-



pedite the visa process for him, his wife and two other family members wanting to visit the neighbouring country to meet relatives, ATS Superintendent of Police Om Prakash Jat said. "The Indian Military Intelligence recently learnt that either the Pakistan Army or Pakistan's intelligence agency had somehow acquired an Indian SIM card, which was being used for spying on Indian defence personnel by sending them malware through WhatsApp. Based on the information, we apprehended Maheshwari from Tarapur in Anand, where he runs a grocery shop," he said.

Last year, when Maheshwari and his wife had applied for visitor visas for Pakistan, his rel-

ative Kishor Ramwani, who is based in the neighbouring country, had asked him to contact a person with links to the Pakistan embassy, the official said.

After the unidentified person's intervention, Maheshwari and his wife received the visa. After returning to India, he again contacted the person to expedite the visa process for his sister and niece, he said. "In return, the person with contacts in the Pakistan embassy (high commission) asked Maheshwari to start WhatsApp on his mobile phone using a SIM card, which he received from one Saqlain Thaim, a resident of Jamnagar. Maheshwari then shared the OTP to activate WhatsApp with that man," Jat said.

Gaganyaan: ISRO gears up for test vehicle launch

ISRO AIMS TO SEND HUMANS INTO SPACE ON A LOW EARTH ORBIT OF 400 KM FOR A THREE-DAY MISSION AND BRING THEM SAFELY BACK TO EARTH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh), Oct 20: The launch of a single-stage liquid propulsion rocket Saturday will signal ISRO's journey towards its ambitious human space flight programme, Gaganyaan, when the first crew module test to ensure the safety of astronauts will be conducted by the space agency here.

ISRO aims to send humans into space on a Low Earth Orbit of 400 km for a three-day mission and bring them safely back to earth. Unlike other missions undertaken by the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency, ISRO would attempt a successful launch of its Test Vehicle (TV-D1), a single-stage liquid propulsion rocket,

scheduled to lift off from the first launch pad at this spaceport at 8 am on October 21 (Saturday).

The Test Vehicle mission with this crew module is a significant milestone for the overall Gaganyaan programme as a nearly complete system is integrated for a flight test. Meanwhile, sources on Friday said scientists at Satish Dhawan Space Centre here, are gearing up for a countdown ahead of the lift-off, which is expected to take place later on Friday night or early Saturday.

The success of this test flight would set the stage for the remaining qualification tests and unmanned missions, leading to the first Gaganyaan programme with Indian astronauts, which is



expected to take shape in 2025.

The crew module is the payload in the rocket and it is a habitable space with an Earth-like environment in space for the crew. It consists of a pressurised metallic 'inner structure' and an un-



pressurised 'external structure' with 'thermal protection systems'.

The Crew Module houses the crew interfaces, life support system, avionics and deceleration systems and is also designed for re-entry to ensure the safety of the crew dur-

ing the descent till touchdown.

Ahead of the launch on October 21, the Crew Module underwent various tests at ISRO centres before it was integrated into the launch complex in Sriharikota, located about 135 km east of Chennai. The entire test flight sequence on Saturday is expected to be brief as the Test Vehicle Abort Mission (TV-D1) will launch the Crew Escape Systems and Crew Module at an altitude of 17 km which are expected to make a safe touchdown in the sea, about 10 km from the eastern coast of Sriharikota.

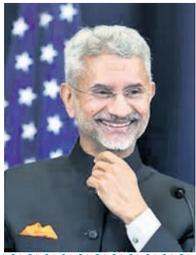
They would be later retrieved by the Navy from the Bay of Bengal. The TV-D1 vehicle uses a modified VIKAS engine with a Crew Module and Crew Escape

System mounted at its fore end.

The vehicle is 34.9 metres tall and has a lift-off weight of 44 tonnes. The structure of the TV-D1 flight is a single-walled unpressurised aluminium structure with a simulated thermal protection system. The Test Vehicle D1 mission aims for an in-flight abort demonstration of Crew Escape System with the newly developed Test Vehicle followed by Crew Module separation and safe recovery.

Some of the mission objectives include flight demonstration and evaluation of test vehicles, Crew Escape Systems, Crew Module characteristics, and deceleration systems demonstration at higher altitude and its recovery.

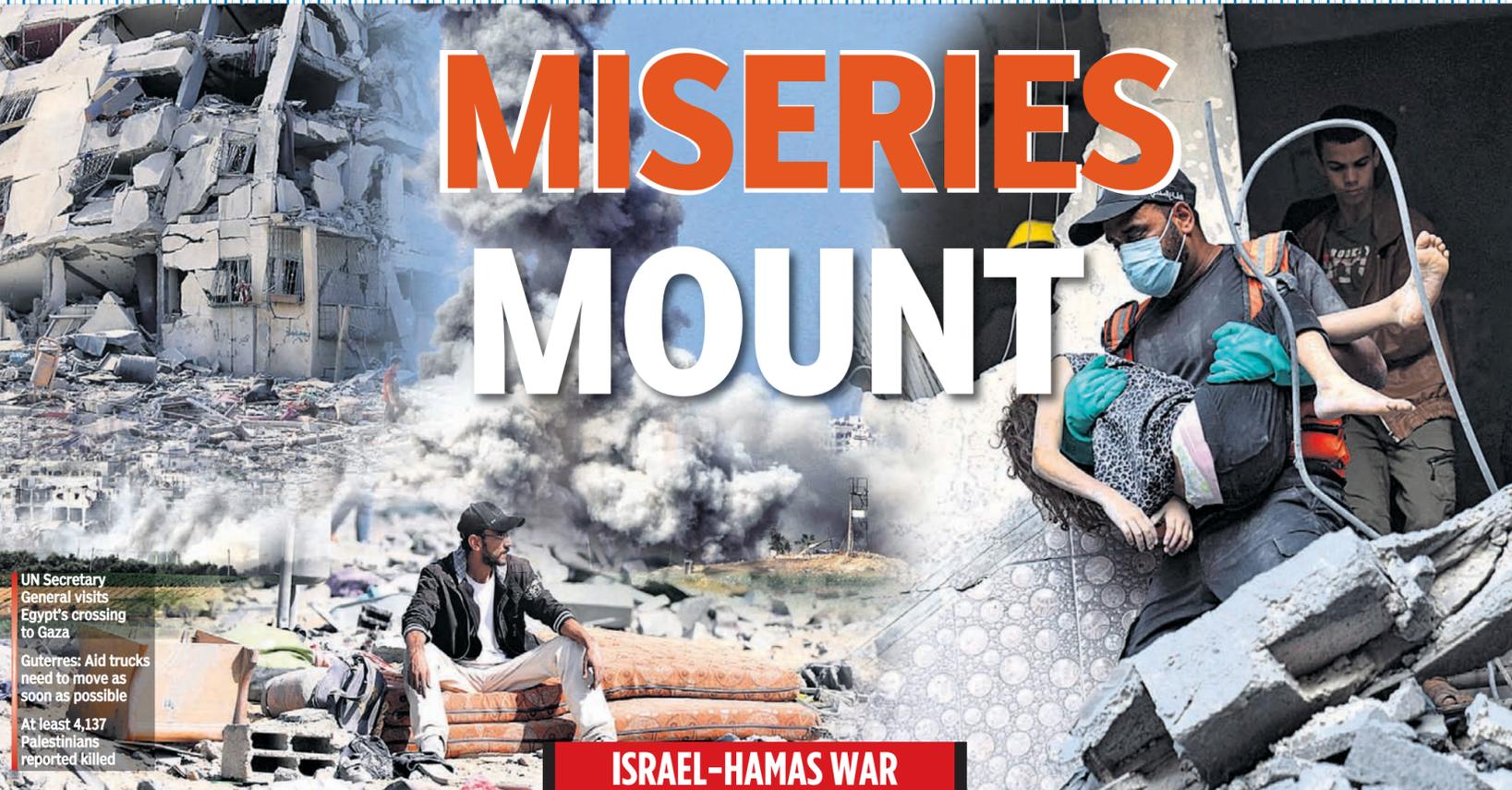
international



Nice to meet Trade & Industry Minister Gan Kim Yong today (Friday) morning. Our discussions centered around new domains of cooperation with long-term implications

ITALY PM SEPARATES FROM PARTNER

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said Friday she had separated from her partner Andrea Giambro, who has drawn criticism in recent weeks for sexist comments. Meloni told reporters last month she should not be judged over Giambro's remarks and in future would not answer questions about his behaviour



MISERIES MOUNT

UN Secretary General visits Egypt's crossing to Gaza
Guterres: Aid trucks need to move as soon as possible
At least 4,137 Palestinians reported killed

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

Israel bombarded the Gaza Strip early Friday, hitting areas where Palestinians had been told to seek safety, and it began evacuating a sizable Israeli town near the border with Lebanon, the latest sign of a potential ground invasion of Gaza that could trigger regional turmoil.

The hospital, Gaza's second largest, already was overflowing with patients and people seeking shelter. The Israeli military said it had struck more than 100 targets across Gaza linked to the territory's Hamas rulers, including a tunnel and arms depots.

UN officials said that with the bombings across all of Gaza, some Palestinians who had fled the north appeared to be going back. "The strikes, coupled with extremely difficult living conditions in the south, appear to have pushed some to return to the north, despite the continuing heavy bombing there," Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for the UN human

rights office, said. Gaza's overwhelmed hospitals are rationing their dwindling medical supplies and fuel for generators.

desperately needed aid delivery from Egypt. Doctors in darkened wards across Gaza performed surgeries by the light of mobile phones and used vinegar to treat infected wounds. The deal to get aid into Gaza through the territory's only entry point not controlled by Israel, remained fragile.

ment filling in large craters. Israel has evacuated its own communities near Gaza and Lebanon, putting residents up in hotels elsewhere in the country. The Defence Ministry announced evacuation plans Friday for Kiryat Shmona, a town of more than 20,000 residents near the Lebanese border. Three Israelis including a 5-year-old girl were wounded in a rocket attack there Thursday, according to Israeli health services.

Biden seeks \$100bn aid from Congress

The White House Friday asked Congress for nearly \$106 billion to fund ambitious plans for Ukraine, Israel and U.S. border security, but offered no strategy for securing the money from a broken Congress. US President Joe Biden's request for the funding comes days after he visited Israel and pledged solidarity as the country bombards Gaza following an attack by Hamas militants that killed 1,400 people in southern Israel.

Israeli airstrikes are hitting southern Gaza, an area swelled by civilians who fled there from the north on Israeli instructions. Meanwhile, Israel began evacuating a sizable town near the Lebanese border in the latest sign of a potential ground invasion of Gaza that could trigger regional turmoil

China, Russia plan to work together

Beijing: China and Russia share the same position on the Palestinian issue and plan to try to work together to cool the situation and help establish a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians, a top Chinese envoy said Friday. Zhai Jun, China's special envoy to the Middle East, spoke after a meeting Thursday in Qatar with Mikhail Bogdanov, the Russian president's special representative for the Middle East and Africa.



Protesters in several countries demonstrate

Baghdad: Protesters gathered at Iraq's border crossing with Jordan Friday to show solidarity with Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and call for an end to Israel's blockade, while in Indonesia's capital, demonstrators marched from several mosques to the heavily guarded US Embassy in Jakarta to denounce American support for Israel and demand an end to Israeli airstrikes.



Sunak's Tories suffer huge losses in two by-elections

London, Oct 20: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's governing Conservative Party suffered huge losses in two by-elections Friday, losing to the Opposition Labour Party, which overturned a sizeable Tory majority in the seats of Mid Bedfordshire and Tamworth in England.



While Sunak is touring the Middle East for crisis talks over the Israel-Gaza conflict, Labour leader Keir Starmer declared that his party was "redrawing the political map."

CANADA WITHDRAWS 41 DIPLOMATS FROM INDIA

Toronto, Oct 20: Canada has withdrawn 41 diplomats and their family members from India after it threatened to strip them of their diplomatic immunity by Friday, Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly has said, amid a diplomatic row over the killing of a Sikh separatist.



Tensions flared between India & Canada following Trudeau's explosive allegations of the 'potential' involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar. India had designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020

stripped arbitrarily, leaving them vulnerable to reprisal or arrest. "This means 41 Canadian diplomats and their 42 dependents were in danger of having immunity stripped on an arbitrary date, and this would put their personal safety at risk," she said at a news conference in Ottawa.

SNIPPETS

Republican opposition to Jim Jordan grows

Washington: Republican opposition to hardline conservative Republican Jim Jordan's bid to become speaker of the US House of Representatives was growing in a third vote on this candidacy, as lawmakers struggle to fill the vacant speaker's chair.

Stampede in Kenya leaves 6 dead, 100 injured

Nairobi: A stampede in Kenya during celebrations to mark an annual public holiday killed at least six people Friday and injured 100 others, authorities said. The stampede happened when thousands of people struggled to get inside Kericho stadium in western Kenya at dawn, police said.

Sharif to arrive in Lahore today, police on alert

Lahore: Pakistan's security agencies have warned the Punjab government of a potential threat to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's life upon his arrival here Saturday to address a major rally, four years after he went to the UK on "medical grounds".

business

of the day quote

A group of top minds in semiconductor around the world and country have sat together to design the Bharat Semiconductor Research Centre. I'm hopeful that in the year 2024, we should have the beginning of this institution taking shape

The swappable battery technology represents a paradigm shift, offering unparalleled efficiency and environmental advantages. It perfectly aligns with our vision of rapid, clean, and accessible electric transportation

Local suppliers now have two routes to procure laptops for the Indian market - they can buy laptops from firms located in SEZs or opt for direct imports

Q2 RESULTS

JSW Steel shines

New Delhi: JSW Steel Friday reported returning to black as it posted a consolidated net profit of ₹2,773 crore for the July-September quarter on the back of higher income. The steelmaker had suffered a loss of ₹915 crore in the second quarter of the last financial year. The total income increased to ₹44,821 crore in the second quarter of the current fiscal as against ₹41,966 crore a year ago, JSW Steel said in a regulatory filing.

HZL profit drops

New Delhi: Vedanta group firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) Friday reported a 35.4 per cent drop in consolidated profit to ₹1,729 crore for the September quarter due to lower income. The company had posted a consolidated profit of ₹2,680 crore in the year-ago period, HZL said in a filing to the BSE. Consolidated income during the second quarter of the current fiscal declined to ₹7,014 crore, over ₹8,703 crore in the year-ago period.

Patym loss narrows

Mumbai: Fintech company One97 Communications, which operates under the Paytm brand, Friday reported the narrowing of consolidated loss to ₹291.7 crore in the second quarter ended September 30, 2023. The company had posted a loss of ₹571.5 crore in the same period a year ago. The consolidated revenue from operations of the company increased by about 32 per cent to ₹2,518.6 crore during the reported quarter from ₹1,914 crore in the July-September 2022 quarter.



“We are conscious of matters related to macroeconomic stability of the country and responsibility with which we deal with our fiscal and also the fiscal management and so for every decisions that we take today, we are conscious of what burden is going to leave for the next generations

NIRMALA SITHARMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

X TO LAUNCH PREMIUM SUBSCRIPTIONS

Elon Musk said Friday social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, will soon launch two new tiers of premium subscriptions. “One is lower cost with all features, but no reduction in ads, and the other is more expensive, but has no ads,” Musk said on a post on X



Adani refinances cement biz debt



The borrowing of \$3.5bn loan is among the top 10 biggest loans in Asia this year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: Adani Cement Friday said it has refinanced \$3.5 billion loan it had taken for acquisition of ACC and Ambuja Cement, in sign of growing confidence of international institutions in the conglomerate.

As many as 10 international banks refinanced the facility, the firm said in a statement. “The re-financing program of \$3.5 billion has been concluded with a clutch of international banks with debt maturity of up to 3 years, testifies the strong support and access to capital, supplementing the solid capital prudency adopted at all portfolio companies,” it said. “This showcases Adani’s robust access to the global financial market and strong liquidity position. This achievement reflects our commitment to financial stability and growth.”

Adani Cement had in September last year acquired Ambuja and ACC for \$6.6 billion deal, making it the second largest cement maker in the country. “The \$3.5 billion facility marks the continued execution of the capital management plan outlined in September 2022 that will see step wise planned deleveraging of Adani Cement, with cement vertical net debt to

The refinance will lead to cost saving of \$300 million for the conglomerate

EBITDA now under 2x,” it said. Currently, Ambuja Cement and ACC have a combined installed production capacity of 67 million tonne per annum which will go to 100 million tonne by 2025 with the announced acquisition of Sanghi Cement. ACC & Ambuja are among the strongest brands in India with immense depth of manufacturing and supply chain infrastructure.

“These along with benefit from synergies with the integrated Adani infrastructure platform, especially in the areas of raw material, renewable power and logistics, where Adani Portfolio companies have vast experience and deep expertise has resulted in to improvement in the EBITDA per tonne from Rs 340 per tonne in quarter ended September 2022 (immediately after the acquisition) to Rs 1,253 a tonne in the quarter ending Jun-23 which represents embedded deleveraging through elevated coverage positioning,” it said.

The transaction was financed by facilities aggregating to have \$3.5 billion from 10 international banks. DBS Bank, First Abu Dhabi Bank, Mizuho Bank and MUFG Bank acted as mandated lead arranger and bookrunners and underwriter to the transaction.

In addition, Barclays Bank PLC, BNP Paribas, Deutsche Bank AG, ING Bank, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation and Standard Chartered Bank acted as Mandated Lead Arrangers and bookrunners for the transaction.

Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, Latham and Watkins acted as Borrower’s counsel for the financing with Allen & Overy LLP, Talwar Thakore and Associates acting as legal counsels to the lenders.

DISCOUNT BINGE

Russia leads oil imports in H1

INDIA, THE WORLD’S THIRD LARGEST OIL IMPORTER AND CONSUMER, HAS EMERGED AS THE TOP BUYER OF RUSSIAN SEABORNE OIL AFTER WESTERN SANCTIONS

REUTERS

New Delhi, Oct 20: The share of Russian oil in India’s overall imports rose to about two-fifths in the first half of fiscal 2023/24, consolidating Moscow’s position as the top supplier as refiners curbed purchase from the Middle East, industry data showed.

India, the world’s third largest oil importer and consumer, has emerged as the top buyer of the discounted Russian seaborne oil after Western nations stopped buying from Moscow following its invasion of Ukraine.

Middle Eastern supplies are also likely to tighten further following Saudi Arabia’s decision to extend its voluntary output cuts through the end of this year, prompting India to consider other options.

India imported on average



- Russian oil imports more than double YoY
- Imports from Iraq fell by 12%, Saudi by 23%
- OPEC’s share plunges to lowest in 22 years

1.76 million barrels per day (bpd) of Russian oil from April to September, or the first half of fiscal 2023/2024, more than double the about 780,000 bpd in the same year-ago period, tanker data from industry sources showed.

Last month, India’s imports from Russia, which had slipped in July and August, recovered to 1.54 million bpd, up 11.8% from August and 71.7% from a year

ago, the data showed.

Russia was the top oil supplier to India in April to September, followed by Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

India’s imports from Iraq and Saudi Arabia fell by 12% and about 23% to 928,000 bpd and 607,500 bpd, respectively, during the April-September period, the data showed.

Imports from the Middle East in April-September declined by

about 28% to 1.97 million bpd, dragging down the region’s share in India’s overall oil imports to 44% from 60% during the same year-ago period.

The share of oil from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which include Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia, nearly doubled to 43% mainly due to higher purchases from Moscow, the data showed.

Lower purchases from the Middle East dragged down the share of OPEC in India’s overall imports to the lowest in 22 years.

The share of members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), mainly from the Middle East and Africa, fell to 46% in April to September compared with about 63% a year ago, a Reuters analysis of the data that dates back to 2001/02 showed.

NEGATIVE GLOBAL CUES, CRUDE SPIKE

Over 1% weekly loss for indices

Sensex, Nifty decline for 3rd straight session

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Oct 20: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty fell for the third day running Friday due to weak trends in global markets and soaring crude oil prices.

Foreign fund outflows also weighed on investor sentiments amid strengthening US bond yields which are nearing 5 per cent for the first time since 2007.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 231.62 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at 65,397.62. During the day, it plunged 320.63 points or 0.48 per cent to 65,308.61. Falling for a third straight day, the Nifty declined 82.05 points or 0.42 per cent to 19,542.65.

In three sessions to Friday, Sensex dropped 1,030 points while Nifty tanked 268 points due to selling pressure.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark plunged 885.12 points



or 1.33 per cent and the Nifty declined 208.4 points or 1.05 per cent. Among the Sensex firms, ITC, Tata Steel, Hindustan Unilever, State Bank of India, JSW Steel and Power Grid were the major laggards. Kotak Mahindra Bank, IndusInd Bank, Tata Consultancy Services and NTPC were the major gainers.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the negative territory. European markets were trading lower. The US markets ended lower Thursday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 1.14 per cent to

\$93.40 a barrel.

“Rising rates are intuitively not positive for equity markets. With US government bonds giving 5% dollar returns, the ask rate for equities goes up significantly if one were to adjust for risk premium and currency hedging,” Alok Agarwal, Portfolio Manager at Alchemy Capital Management said.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury touched 4.99 per cent, up from 4.91 per cent late Wednesday, before paring its gain to 4.98 per cent. Early Friday, the 10-year Treasury yield was 4.94 per cent.

Inflow into Gold ETFs plunges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: The quantum of inflow into gold exchange-traded funds dropped to ₹175 crore in September after hitting a 17-month high in the preceding month, owing to profit booking.

Apart from the inflows, the asset base of Gold Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) also decreased in the period under review, as per the data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi).

According to the data, gold-linked ETFs saw an inflow of ₹175.3 crore last month as compared to ₹1,028 crore in August. The inflow stood at ₹456 crore in July.

Prior to that, Gold ETFs saw an inflow to the tune of ₹298 crore during the April-June period after three quarters of con-



secutive outflow.

The category saw a withdrawal of ₹1,243 crore in the March quarter, ₹320 crore in the December quarter, and ₹165 crore in the September quarter.

In August this year, Gold ETFs recorded the highest monthly inflow into Gold ETFs since April 2022, when the category attracted ₹1,100 crore amid the Russia-Ukraine war.

Gold, with its superlative performance over the last few years, has attracted significant investor

interest, and the consistent surge in its folio numbers is a testimony to the same.

Investor accounts in gold ETFs climbed by nearly 11,000 folios to 48.06 lakh in September from 47.95 lakh in the preceding month. This shows that investors have become more inclined to ward gold-related funds. However, the assets under management of Gold ETFs declined to around ₹23,800 crore in the month under review from ₹24,318 crore in August.

Gold ETFs, which track the domestic physical gold price, are passive investment instruments that are based on gold prices and invest in gold bullion. In short, Gold ETFs are units representing physical gold, which may be in paper or dematerialised form.

SBI inaugurates digital LED wall

BHUBANESWAR: To make the City more beautiful and to keep the people informed about the people oriented schemes of state, central government and the products of SBI, a dedicated digital LED wall has been installed in the campus of Bhubaneswar Main Branch in Unit-I. It was inaugurated by CGM of SBI Chander Shekhar Sharma in presence of General Manager (NW-I) Ponnambalam Muguran, General Manager (NW-II) Uttam Kumar Hazra Chowdhury, DGM(B&O) Sanjay Kumar Jha and CDO Manoj Kumar Singh. The inauguration ceremony was witnessed by senior officials of LHO and Zonal Office and general public. During inaugural speech, CGM reiterated that SBI is focused on the beautification of smart city and this digital wall is a small step towards that. This wall will be very informative for the people of Odisha as it will display all sponsored schemes of State and Central Government and recent products of SBI. Going forward, more digital walls will be installed in Bhubaneswar and other important cities and towns as well, advised the Chief General Manager.



Softbank divests stake in Zomato

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: Japanese conglomerate Softbank Friday divested a 1.09 per cent stake in on-line food delivery platform Zomato for Rs 1,040 crore through an open market transaction.

Softbank through its affiliate SVF Growth (Singapore) Pte Ltd offloaded shares of Zomato on the National Stock Exchange (NSE). Bandhan Mutual Fund (MF), Motilal Oswal MF, Axis MF, Max Life Insurance Company, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Fidelity Investments, Goldman Sachs (Singapore), Societe Generale, and Morgan Stanley Asia Singapore, among others were the buyers of shares of Zomato.

According to the block deal data available with the NSE, SVF Growth (Singapore) sold 9,35,69,368 shares, amounting to a 1.09 per cent stake in Zomato.

The shares were disposed of at an average price of Rs 111.20 apiece, taking the transaction value to Rs 1,040.49 crore.

After the transaction, Softbank’s shareholding in Zomato declined to 1.08 per cent from 2.17 per cent stake.

Shares of Zomato rose 1.84 per cent to close at Rs 113.70 apiece on the NSE Friday.

In August, Softbank pared a 1.16 per cent stake in Zomato for Rs 947 crore through an open market transaction.

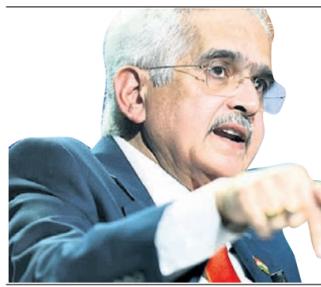
‘Only time will tell how long interest rate will remain high’

THE LENDING RATES ARE RULING HIGH AFTER THE CENTRAL BANK CUMULATIVELY HIKE KEY POLICY RATE (REPO) BY 250 BASIS POINTS SINCE MAY 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: Interest rate is likely to remain high for the moment, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said, stressing the central bank will remain extra vigilant and keep “Arjun’s eye” to ensure a sustained decline in inflation.

The lending rates are ruling high after the RBI cumulatively



“Monetary policy has to remain extra alert and ready to act, if the situation warrants. The hard earned macroeconomic stability has to be preserved

SHAKTIKANTA DAS | GOVERNOR, RBI

hiked the key policy rate (repo) by 250 basis points since May 2022 in a bid to tame inflation which touched a high of 7.44 per cent this July.

The consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation is now declining and fell to 5 per cent in September. The government has mandated the central bank to ensure inflation remains

at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on the either side.

“Interest rate will remain high. How long they will remain high, I think only time and the way the world is evolving will tell,” the governor said in response to a query at Kautilya Economic Conclave 2023.

On the sidelines of the Conclave, Das said the RBI re-

mains very focused on the inflation dynamics.

“We are extra vigilant and we stand ready to take whatever action that needs to be taken. We need to see sustained decline in inflation...Our objective is to reach 4 per cent,” he said.

“Real GDP growth for 2023-24 is projected at 6.5 per cent and India is poised to become the new growth engine of the world,” he added.

THE OIL PROBLEM

On elevated crude oil prices in the international market, he said, “what matters is the pump prices in India”.

The pump prices of petrol and diesel are important as far as inflation in India is concerned, Das added.

Responding to queries on impact of crisis in Middle East, the governor said that in the

₹2K NOTES WORTH ₹10K-CRORE LEFT

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das Friday said ₹2,000 denomination notes are coming back and only ₹10,000 crore worth of such notes are still with people. He exuded confidence that these notes will also be returned or deposited back. “₹2,000 notes are coming back and only ₹10,000 crore is left in the system. The expectation is that the amount will also come back,” he said on the sidelines of the event here.

last fortnight, US bond yields have risen, which has wider implications for other economies. Crude oil prices have also gone up. “Some of these uncertainties were there, but they have become more pronounced in some sense. What is different in the context of India, we are impacted by whatever is happening all over, no doubt on that.”

“Our macroeconomic fundamentals continue to be sound. Eventually, in these uncertain times, what matters is how strong is your macroeconomic fundamentals, how strong is your fi-

nanacial sector. I think on both these parameters India is well placed,” Das said.

He also said the dollar index has become strong and bond yields in the US have reached all-time highs.

“But if you look at the volatility of the Indian rupee, from January 1 till now, the rupee depreciation is 0.6 per cent whereas on the other side, the appreciation of the US dollar for the same period has been 3 per cent. So rupee is stable. We are there in the forex market to prevent excessive volatility,” the governor added.

TROIKA MAGIC LIFTS AUSTRALIA

Survival at stake for England



David Warner & Mitchell Marsh (inset)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Oct 20: David Warner and Mitchell Marsh symbolised Australia's insatiability with the bat and Adam Zampa's relentlessness with the ball as the five-time champions registered a revitalising 62-run win over Pakistan in the World Cup match here, Friday.

Brutal hundreds by Warner (163, 124b, 14x4, 9x6) and Marsh (121, 108b, 10x4, 9x6) led Australia to an imposing 367/9. Pakistan batters fought valiantly but could only manage 305 as leg-spinner Zampa (4/53) inflicted blows at vital junctions.

Australia needed to profusely thank both Warner, who hammered his 21st ODI hundred, and Marsh, his second ton, for keeping their World Cup campaign on track with a blistering assault. The Aussie openers amassed 259 runs in just 203 balls.

Australia needed a dominant show to spruce up their confidence after three middling efforts that fetched two defeats and a win in this tournament, and they did it with a bang.

The only spanner in their easy rollicking was left-arm pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi, whose

five-wicket haul (5/54) was just a sad reminder as to what other Pakistan bowlers could have done with a bit of thinking.

Warner, who was dropped twice on 10 and 105, and Marsh were at their marauding best against a Pakistan attack that lacked direction on a smooth M Chinnaswamy Stadium pitch here with a quick outfield adding value to their shots.



ADAM ZAMPA

All this could have been a tad different for Pakistan had Usama Mir, who replaced Shadab Khan, held on to a simple skier from Warner off Afridi, whose clever variations were a treat to watch, inside the ring.

Australia notched up their 100 in the 13th over, 200th in the 30th over and 300 in the 41st over as their run machine marched forward inexorably.

Warner brought up his hundred, fourth consecutive against Pakistan in ODIs, with a single off Mir, and the signature jump-and-punch celebration followed to the joy of a near full house of crowd.

Birth day boy Marsh followed his senior partner soon in reaching the three-figure mark with a boundary off Mir, and he celebrated the landmark with a mighty roar.

Marsh departed soon when his flick off Afridi was snaffled by Mir at short fine leg, a rare occasion for a Pakistan fielder to hold on to a catch on a day when they dropped three catches along with numerous other fumbles on the field.

Post Marsh's dismissal, Pakistan did manage to pluck some quick wickets - in fact 8 of them for 108 runs to restrict

It was the fourth instance of both openers scoring centuries in a World Cup game and the first for Australia

The stand of 259 between Warner and Marsh is the second-highest opening partnership, after 282 between Sri Lanka's Tillakaratne Dilshan and Upul Tharanga in 2011, in the competition's history, and the best for Australia

It was Warner's fourth consecutive ODI ton against Pakistan and the joint most by any player against a side in the format, equalling Virat Kohli (4 vs WI)

It was also Warner's 5th hundred in the World Cup, equalling the most by an Australian, alongside Ricky Ponting

Marsh became the sixth player to smash an ODI century on his birthday, besides being the first Aussie to do so. He is also the second birthday boy to strike a World Cup ton after Ross Taylor

With Warner and Marsh's 200-plus partnership in the game, Australia have tied India for most such stands in the World Cup history (five occasions each)

Australia under 400 which once seemed a genuine possibility.

In response, openers Imam-ul-Haq made his first fifty (70, 71b, 10x4) of this tournament, while Abdullah Shafique (64, 61b, 7x4, 2x6) continued his fine touch. Together, they milked 134 effortless runs.

However, Marcus Stoinis (2/40) got rid of both Imam and Shafique in rather quick succession and leg-spinner Zampa snaffled the prized wicket of Babar as Pakistan seemed to have hit the slide button.

But, Mohammad Rizwan (46, 40b, 5x4) and Saud Shakeel (30) added 56 runs off 48 balls to keep Pakistan steady. However, Zampa got the wickets of Rizwan and Iftikhar Ahmed (26) after Cummins got rid of Shakeel. Those dismissals also ended any hopes Pakistan entertained to enact a miracle.

BRIEF SCORES: Australia 367/9 (David Warner 163, Mitchell Marsh 121; Shaheen Shah Afridi 5/54) beat Pakistan 305 (Imam-ul-Haq 70, Abdullah Shafique 64; Adam Zampa 4/53) by 62 runs.

Mumbai, Oct 20: England would hope to have their star all-rounder Ben Stokes back for their World Cup clash against South Africa here Saturday as both teams seek a course correction after shock defeats in their previous outings.

Having recorded the highest total of this competition (428/5) previously, South Africa crumbled against the Netherlands in a rain-truncated game in Dharamsala for their first loss in the competition. Similarly, England too caved in to pressure when Afghanistan brought out their best with the ball in Delhi.

England may have a 4-3 record over South Africa in 50-over World Cup history but it is the Proteas who have had a better run in this edition.

South Africa sizzled at the start of the tournament beating Australia and Sri Lanka by more than 100 runs but their second consecutive defeat in ICC events to the Netherlands showed the Proteas' vulnerability under pressure.

A defeat to the Dutch notwithstanding, South Africa will have enough confidence in their ranks to outgun England, who are struggling almost in all departments and are yet to put a collective effort on the field.

England have been largely rusty and inconsistent despite having a



dangerous squad on paper. They are likely to have the services of their 'spiritual leader' Ben Stokes for the game at Wankhede. Stokes missed the first three games due to a hip injury.

Jos Buttler's men took a battering at the hands of New Zealand in the tournament-opener and despite bossing over a feeble Bangladesh, they were bludgeoned by Afghanistan in the World Cup's first upset.

Buttler has not made a mark on the tournament in conditions he has extensive knowledge of. If Buttler is a concern in the middle order, Liam Livingstone's outings give England more headache in the lower order.

Joe Root and Dawid Malan have been England's best batters with the former getting two fifties and the latter a century, but they would know more is needed from their batters collectively against a high quality South African bowling attack.

Reece Topley will be crucial for

England with the ball as neither Mark Wood's express pace nor Adil Rashid's spin has helped their cause much.

Consistency is never a trait associated with Temba Bavuma the batter but the diminutive player has led his side admirably over the last year.

With back to back hundreds, Quinton de Kock has made it clear that he wants to leave an indelible mark in his last World Cup. Aiden Markram and Rassie van der Dussen are also in-form and can do both - consolidate or accelerate - depending on the situation.

South African bowlers have been collective in their efforts. Kagiso Rabada's brilliance and Marco Jansen's variation can pose problems for the batters but more will be needed from Lungi Ngidi. They will look to avoid bowling too many slower balls against the England lower-order after the ploy misfired badly against the Dutch.

Winless SL face unpredictable Dutch

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Oct 20: Having caused a major upset, the Netherlands will have a spring in their stride when they take on a struggling Sri Lanka in the World Cup here Saturday.

The Netherlands, who stunned South Africa in Dharamsala for their first World Cup win against a Test playing nation, will be eyeing an improved show from their top order as they look for back-to-back victories.

A morale-boosting win over South Africa will provide an extra dose of confidence to the trio ahead of the Sri Lanka clash. The performance against the



Proteas showed that the Netherlands mean business, having set an ambitious target of reaching the semifinals in their first World Cup appearance in 12 years.

Sri Lanka, on the other hand, have plenty to worry about

on the bowling front. They have not been able to produce a collective performance thus far. The Lions have been decent with their batting, having posted 300-plus total in their opening two contests. However, it is Sri Lanka's bowling that have let them down in the absence of a few injured players.

The Lucknow wicket has so far seen the team batting first having the advantage, as the ball has been moving under the lights. As for their head to head encounters so far, Sri Lanka and the Netherlands have met on five occasions, with the former winning on all instances.

Rahul hopes India batters keep delivering centuries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Oct 20: With Virat Kohli joining Rohit Sharma among India's century makers in the World Cup, wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul hopes the others too will chip in with triple-figure knocks to help the team maintain its unbeaten run in the league stage.

"Virat, the less you say the better about it. He has been notching up those numbers for years now - that is what he did again. There was an opportunity at the end, (and) he finished the game for us," Rahul told the media here after India's seven-wicket win over Bangladesh.

"Getting a hundred is always very special, I am really happy for him. Ro (Rohit Sharma) has got a hundred now, Virat has got a hundred (too). Hopefully, as the World Cup goes (on), a few more of us can get these hundreds and keep winning the matches," Rahul expressed.

India have won each of their four games so far - against Australia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh - while chasing but Rahul says it will not make a lot of difference if they have to bat first and set a target.

"Not thinking so much, (we) just want to take one game at a time. Whatever we do, whether

we bowl first or bat first, it is important that we do it well and we are not thinking too much about it," he said.

SHANTO'S DENIAL

Bangladesh stand-in captain Najmul Hossain Shanto has rubbished the suggestion that spinner Nasum Ahmed "intentionally" bowled a wide ball to deny Virat Kohli a century towards the end of India's chase in their World Cup clash.

Kohli was batting on 97 with nine overs left and India needing another two runs to achieve the target of 257, when Ahmed sent a delivery down the leg side, which surprisingly was also not adjudged a wide by the on-field umpire Richard Kettleborough.

A couple of deliveries later, in the 42nd over, Kohli deposited the ball over deep midwicket to finish the game with a six, reaching 103 not out and completing India's comfortable win.

Shanto defended Ahmed after Bangladesh's third defeat on the bounce saying they wanted to play a "proper game". "No, no. There was no such plan. It was a normal plan. No bowler had the intention to bowl a wide ball. We tried to play a proper game. It was not intentional," Shanto told the media here Thursday.



Rohit Sharma gleefully greets Virat Kohli and KL Rahul after their win over Bangladesh, Thursday

Hardik ruled out of NZ game



Rohit Sharma gleefully greets Virat Kohli and KL Rahul after their win over Bangladesh, Thursday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: India all-rounder Hardik Pandya was Friday ruled out of the World Cup clash against New Zealand due to an ankle injury he suffered while bowling against Bangladesh.

Hardik underwent scans following the injury in Pune Thursday and is heading to the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore for his recovery. India will play New Zealand in Dharamsala October 22.

"Team India vice-captain Hardik Pandya sustained an injury to his left ankle while fielding off his own bowling during India's match against Bangladesh

at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, Pune," said the BCCI in a statement.

"The all-rounder was taken for scans and is advised rest. He will be under the constant supervision of the BCCI Medical Team. He will not be taking the flight to Dharamsala with the team on 20th October and will now join the team directly in Lucknow where India play England," the board added.

In all likelihood, KL Rahul will be Rohit Sharma's deputy for the New Zealand game. Rahul captained the side in the bilateral series against Australia in Rohit Sharma and Pandya's absence. India have a long gap between

the Dharamsala and Lucknow game, which is scheduled for October 29. The Indian will players get a short break after the New Zealand game and are expected to reassemble in Lucknow October 26.

Hardik lends a critical balance to the side and it remains to be seen, what combination the team goes with in his absence. In Hardik's presence, India have the cushion of six bowling options and his finishing skills come in handy at number six.

Keeping the batting strength intact will be key and hence one among Suryakumar Yadav or Ishan Kishan is likely to figure in the playing XI.

SINDHU MARCHES INTO DENMARK OPEN SEMIFINALS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Odense (Denmark), Oct 20: Star Indian shuttler PV Sindhu showed glimpses of her old self, dishing out a compact game to storm into the semifinals of Denmark Open Super 750 tournament with a comfortable win over World No.19 Supanida Katethong here Friday.

The two-time Olympic medalist, who has endured a winless phase this season, displayed her immaculate retrieving skills and



exemplary net play to outshine Katethong 21-19, 21-12 in 47 minutes and make it to a second semifinal in two weeks. She had reached the semifinals at Arctic Open Super 500 last week in Finland.

Sindhu will face either Spain's three-time World Champion Carolina Marin or Tokyo Olympics silver medalist Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei next.

It hasn't been exactly smooth sailing for Sindhu in this tournament as she took three games to get rid of her opponents -

World No.28 Kristy Gilmour and World No.7 Gregoria Mariska Tunjung in the first two rounds.

Coming into this match, the Indian enjoyed a 3-2 record against the Thai but the twin losses at India Open 2022 and 2023 editions would still hurt Sindhu.

But Friday, the 28-year-old somewhat erased those memories as she matched her technically sound opponent in every department and managed to limit her errors to come up trumps.