

Next-Gen
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MORE THAN 1500CC CARS
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भारत सरकार
GOVERNMENT
OF BHARAT

Pak, Saudi Arabia ink strategic defence pact

PRINCE MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN Wednesday during the Pakistani leader's day-long visit to the Gulf Kingdom, according to a joint statement.

INDIA WEIGHS IMPLICATIONS

The deal comes days after an Israeli attack on the Hamas leadership in Qatar, a key US ally in the Gulf region. Commenting on the development, India Thursday said it will study the implications of the move for its national security as well as for regional and global stability.

The 'Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement' was signed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown

Prince Mohammed bin Salman Wednesday during the Pakistani leader's day-long visit to the Gulf Kingdom, according to a joint statement.

The agreement states that 'any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both', said the statement issued by both sides.

In New Delhi, Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs, said India will study the implications of the move for its national security as well as for regional and global stability.

Responding to a media que-

ry on the issue, Jaiswal said, "The government remains committed to protecting India's national interests and ensuring comprehensive national security in all domains."

The agreement came over four months after a four-day military conflict between India and Pakistan in May.

According to the Pakistan-Saudi joint statement, the pact builds on the historic partnership extending for nearly eight decades between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and is based on the bonds of brotherhood and Islamic solidarity, as well as shared strategic interests and close defence cooperation between the two countries.

NATURE'S FURY: Rescue operation in progress after a landslide triggered by heavy rains in Nandanagar area of Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, Thursday. At least two people were killed in four villages of the district in rain-related incidents (Report P9)

CEC protecting 'vote chors': Rahul

Election Commission says charges incorrect & baseless

PERSON. The BJP said Gandhi's repeated charges against constitutional institutions showed his and the Congress' lack of faith in Indian democracy.

Mounting another frontal attack against the EC, Gandhi said the poll panel must stop protecting 'vote chors' and provide within a week information sought by the Karnataka CID in an investigation into voter deletions.

"If not, it will be known for sure that it is complicit in the murder of the Constitution," Gandhi alleged at a press conference here. He also alleged that constitutional institutions are not doing their job properly and said the institutions within the country including the legal framework should step in.

Gandhi also made it clear that the revelations were not the 'hydrogen bomb' that he had promised and he will soon reveal those details. "I

am going to make a serious claim about Gyanesh Kumar. I am not saying this lightly, I am the Leader of the Opposition (in Lok Sabha). The CEC is protecting 'vote chors' and the people who have destroyed Indian democracy," Gandhi alleged. "I am just creating the foundation. This has been going on for 10-15 years. India's democracy has been hijacked. Democracy can only be saved by the people of India. Rahul Gandhi can show

the truth. The day the people realise that their democracy and Constitution have been stolen, the job will be done," he said.

He cited details of alleged attempts to delete 6,018 votes in Karnataka's Aland in the run up to 2023 Assembly polls. He also gave the example of Maharashtra's Rajura where he claimed 6,850 voters were added in a 'fraudulent' manner using automated software.

"Same system is doing this. It is doing it in Karnataka, Maharashtra, it has done it in Haryana, UP, Bihar and we have proof of it," he alleged. "Our demand is Gyanesh Kumar, do your job, you have taken an oath, you are India's CEC, you must give evidence to the Karnataka CID," Gandhi said, asking the EC to provide the details within a week.

About Aland, he said there were targeted deletions in

strong Congress booths. "The top 10 booths with maximum deletions were Congress strongholds. Congress won eight out of the 10 booths in 2018. This was not a coincidence, this was a planned operation," he alleged. Gandhi said the deletions were being done using software and not through individuals, as the process of filling the form was done within seconds and was done in the wee hours of the day.

Noting that there is an ongoing investigation in Karnataka, he said CID has sent 18 letters to EC and asked for some facts like the destination IP from where these applications were filled and OTP trails. "They are not giving it as it will lead us to where this operation is being conducted," Gandhi claimed, while accusing the CEC of protecting those who are indulging in such acts.

Cong submits no-confidence motion notice against govt

THE NAT'L PARTY SEEKS BJD'S HELP

He said that the party had earlier urged the principal Opposition party, BJD, to move a no-confidence motion against the BJP government. "As the BJD did not make any such move in this regard, we have submitted the notice for a no-confidence motion and request the regional party to support the Congress' move," Kadam said.

He also said, "We have

no hesitation to support the BJD if it separately brings a no-confidence motion against the BJP government."

Later, a delegation of Congress went to the chamber of the Leader of Opposition, Naveen Patnaik, on the Assembly premises, but could not meet the BJD chief as he was absent. However, Congress members discussed the matter with two BJD MLAs present there.

Senior BJD leader Pramila Mallik, however, said, "They (Congress) have not yet approached us. Let them do what they are doing, BJD will take its own decision."

In the 147-member House, BJP has 78 MLAs, BJD 50, Congress 14, one CPI(M) member and three Independents. One seat is vacant after the demise of BJD's Nuapada MLA.

42 industries owe ₹3,797cr water tax

BHUBANESWAR: As many as 42 industrial houses, including government ones, owe water cess amounting to Rs 3,797.14 crore to the state government till March this year, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi told the Assembly Thursday. In a written reply to a query by BJP MLA Tankadhar Tripathy, Majhi, who also holds the Water Resources portfolio, said industrial houses draw water from rivers like Mahanadi. The highest of Rs 244.10 crore water tax is pending against Bhusan Power & Steel Ltd in Sambalpur, while Ballarpur Industries Ltd is yet to pay Rs 195.83 crore. Among others, Adhunik Metaliks Ltd in Sundargarh has a due of Rs 186.65 crore, Majhi said.

Similipal black tiger graces Nat Geo magazine's cover

New Delhi, Sept 18: Indian photographer Prasenjeet Yadav's image of a black tiger from Odisha's Similipal National Park has featured on the cover of National Geographic magazine's upcoming October 2025 edition.

The striking photograph, captured after months of patient tracking in the dense forests, showcases one of the world's rarest big cats. Known as pseudo-melanistic tigers, these black tigers are found only in Similipal, where almost half of the reserve's 30 tigers possess rare genetic mutation.

"Being out in the forests of Similipal as a National Geographic explorer and photographer has been a true privilege. I saw firsthand the Odisha Forest department's dedicated, on-ground management and the commitment of its officers to safeguarding the future of these majestic tigers," Yadav said in a statement.

"Photographing T12 was intense and humbling, with days and months of patience distilled into a single moment. Now to see that story

National Geographic editor-in-chief Nathan Lump said the story illustrated the complex realities of conservation.

"The subject of this month's cover feature from photographer, writer, and National Geographic explorer Prasenjeet Yadav is a surprising corollary to that success story: the tale of a great male tiger with a rare genetic mutation, which has highlighted what happens when an animal population rebounds but remains sequestered in a reserve, without access to a diverse gene pool," Lump added.

Alok Jain of JioStar, which also oversees the National Geographic channel in India, called the image 'an elusive and almost mythical sight' that continues the magazine's tradition of groundbreaking storytelling.

The rare honour places Yadav among the select group of Indian photographers whose work has adorned the magazine's cover in its 135-year illustrious history, bringing global attention both to India's fragile ecosystems and to the people working to safeguard them.

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leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Ganesha says go ahead and indulge in your artistic self today. You can reorganise your home or work place. Expenses are on the cards. If you have been longing for that expensive dressing table or a study table, buy it. Indulgence is okay sometimes.

TAURUS
The day is likely to turn out to be a difficult one. But your maturity and experience in handling adverse situations will come to your aid. You will, as the day advances, be able to sort out the problems that have cropped up and end up on an optimistic note. If you are engaged in business you are likely to fare well and will have no difficulty in concluding the day profitably.

GEMINI
You are likely to work extra hard to assert your authority at the workplace. On the work front, your seniors and colleagues will appreciate your devotion and dedication to work. Monetary gains may be expected in the evening, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Ganesha warns you of minor ailments. Don't eat very cold items. You will help others in tackling their problems. Ganesha says that you must begin by yourself any auspicious task.

LEO
You will come into some money by accident today. There is a good chance of making a huge gain in the share market today. You will be filled with a lot of self-confidence. Nobody will be able to influence your opinion today. However, your strongly expressed views may end up hurting someone, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
What you wish to do today is to overhaul the looks of your living space. You might want to add some pieces of furniture or some items of decoration that define your personality. Ganesha advises you to be ready in the evening to be a great performer or probably to lend some valuable help.

LIBRA
Ganesha says you will think of restyling or renovating your home today. You shall be able to style your house with artifacts or beautiful paintings. You will invite your friends to your home in the evening and enjoy spending time with them. You may try your luck today in the share market and you can hope to make substantial gains.

SCORPIO
Relationships are the crux of life, and you put in all your efforts to maintain your personal relations, says Ganesha. Managing kids and their demands may be slightly challenging; but well, kids are after all kids. Haste makes waste; avoid taking hasty decisions or you may end up taking decisions that would benefit others more than you.

SAGITTARIUS
The positivity in you might well be clouded today. Quite probably, find yourself to be at your wits' end more often than not ere the day passes. Ganesha sees you sitting together with your better half and talking things out.

CAPRICORN
You don't trust anyone easily, and because of that you have never entered into a partnership so far, but it is a different day today. Ganesha foresees a partnership for you today. You will perform exceptionally well in your job, raise the bar and eventually will win praises from everyone at work. If you are a student, you will choose the path for the future today, feels Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
You are absolutely in no mood to work today! Instead, you want to indulge in leisure to recharge your batteries. If not invited to a gathering, you'll probably throw your own party. And you will go out of your way to woo and win hearts. It will work, says Ganesha.

PISCES
Dealings with foreign companies and organizations will translate into financial gains for you today. Today is a good day when it comes to realizing your financial goals. You will also be able to help others improve upon their footing in life. This will elevate your social status. Today is a day for receiving good-will and increasing the number of your well-wishers, says Ganesha.



ED REVEALS WHY HE WAS 'UNHAPPY' AT BEGINNING

Ed Sheeran revealed he was “intensely unhappy” during his career’s first decade. Despite global success with 15 UK number-one singles and eight chart-topping albums since his 2011 debut, the 34-year-old said relentless 16-hour days strained his sanity as he sacrificed friendships and family for work.

Ananya on friendship breakups

MUMBAI: Ananya Panday recently sparked curiosity on social media after sharing a cryptic post about friendship breakups. The actress posted a quote on her Instagram stories that read, “Friendship breakups can sometimes hurt more than romantic ones,” accompanied by an image of a broken heart-shaped pendant split into two halves — one inscribed with “BEST” and the other with “FRIENDS.” The story quickly gained attention, with a screenshot circulating on Reddit, where fans began speculating if the post hinted at tensions within her close circle of friends — Suhana Khan, Shanaya Kapoor, and Navya Naveli Nanda. Some users wondered if Ananya’s post was linked to Shanaya, recalling that she hadn’t shared anything during Shanaya’s much-talked-about

debut, fueling past rumours of a rift. Others speculated it could even be about Orry. While many fans engaged in guessing games, a few stepped in to remind others that celebrities, like everyone else, also experience friendship fallouts, urging people not to overanalyse her private life.

On the professional front, Ananya has wrapped up *Tu Meri Main Tera, Main Tera Tu Meri*, her second collaboration with Kartik Aaryan after *Pati Patni Aur Woh*. Directed by Sameer Vidhwans and backed by Dharma Entertainment, the film releases later this year. She will also appear in *Chand Mera Dil* and *Call Me Bae* season two.



MUMBAI: Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone is no more a part of the sequel of *Kalki 2898 AD*.

Thursday, the makers of the film took to their X, formerly Twitter, and shared a long note explaining the possible reasons behind her exit. They wrote, “This is to officially announce that @deepikapadukone will not be a part of the upcoming sequel of #Kalki2898AD. After careful consideration, We have decided to part ways. Despite the long journey of making the first film, we were unable to find a partnership. And a film like @Kalki2898AD deserves that commitment and much more. We wish her the best with her future works”.

The move has sparked a wave of speculations. IANS has learnt from its sources that the actress was under the impression that she was indispensable to the film as she had shot for a few sequences of the film during the making of *Kalki 2898 AD*.

A source close to the development told this news agency that the actress also demanded a raise in her remuneration thinking that the producers will cave in given she had already booked a seat for the sequel after shooting some sequences earlier.

However, the claims of her demanding vanity vans and other luxuries are still contested. After Deepika’s ousting from the film, the production is going to incur extra cost but it’s the price that the makers are willing to pay in the larger interest of the film.



Deepika dropped from Kalki sequel

Hollywood’s quiet rebel

Robert Redford, the golden-haired outsider who re-wrote American cinema, died August 18 at his Santa Fe ranch, aged 89. Born in Santa Monica and raised on the move, he surfed, sketched and acted his way to Broadway before exploding onto screens in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*.

Redford’s defining works

All the President’s Men (1976) – Redford is relentless reporter Bob Woodward, anchoring the ultimate political thriller on Watergate

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969) – Charm, comedy and gunfire: his easy-cool outlaw chemistry with Paul Newman became pop-culture legend

The Sting (1973) – Oscar-winning caper reuniting Redford and Newman; slick con-game plotting and star-wattage still set the genre gold standard

Ordinary People (1980) – His directing debut: a searing family drama that won four Oscars including Best Picture and Director

All Is Lost (2013) – Solo, wordless, 77-year-old Redford against the ocean; critics call it the finest, most fearless performance of his career

bergh. Quentin Tarantino, Ava DuVernay and thousands more. “Art doesn’t come from formulas,” he told fledgling directors; his patronage proved it.

Off-screen, Redford channeled star power into activism—founding the Redford Center for climate storytelling fighting for clean air, Native rights and campaign-finance reform. Awards piled up: the Academy’s honorary Oscar, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, France’s Légion d’honneur—yet he accepted them with the same modest shrug that once dismissed his own glamour.

He is survived by wife Sibylle Szaggars, four children and a cinematic landscape forever marked by his restless, principled curiosity. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Redford Center—keeping the rebel’s campfire burning for the next generation of storytellers.



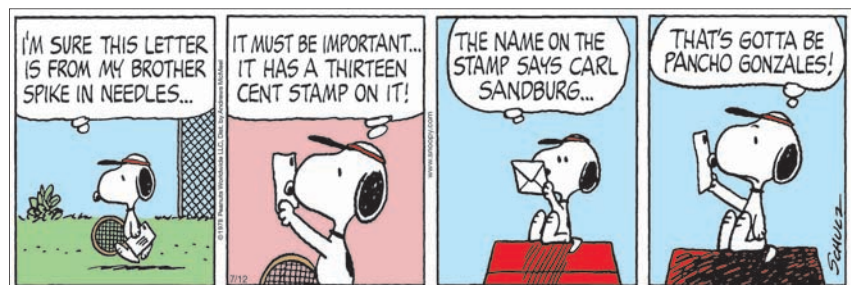
ROBERT REDFORD:1936-2025

NATYA LAHARI – DAY IV

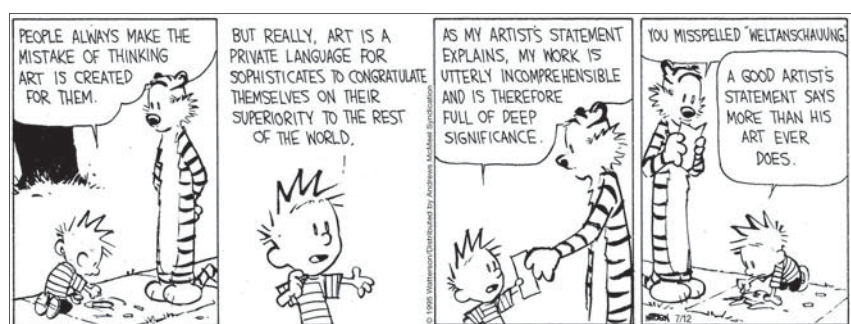


Members of Panchadhvani Natya Parishad from Bhubaneswar performed Odia play *Jatha Goutamasya Ahalya* at Bhanja Kala Mandap, Thursday. Written by Panchanana Dash and directed by Prakash Maharana, the play was staged on the four evening of the 5-day theatre festival organised by Bidyakanak Srujanusthan. Apart from playwright Dash, dramatists Lalatendu Rath, Ashis Bardhan and musician Pratap Chandra Rout, hosting organisation’s president Sudhkar Patri and secretary Shubhakanta Padhi were in attendance.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

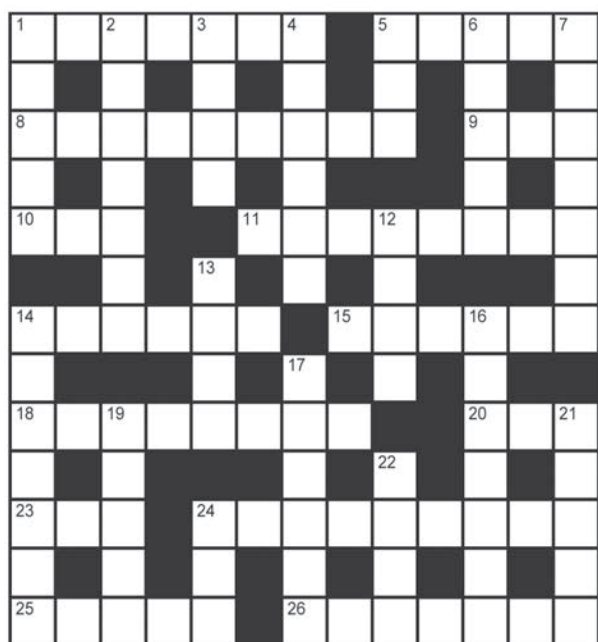


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- The start of a space trip
 - Inhumane
 - Butt in
 - Old French coin
 - Mattress problem
 - Glowed
 - Kind of justice
 - Lacking neatness
 - Dependable
 - Chest protector
 - Squid’s squirt
 - Words to a pest (4,1,4)
 - Rock bottom
 - Whinnied
 - Bowl over
 - Hotel department
 - Like some hands
 - Opinion
 - Ardour
 - Put out, as a book
 - Damaged
 - Requested
 - Sandwich starter
 - Dry riverbed
 - Road crew supply
- Down**
- Dens
 - Exhaustion
 - Paddles
 - Penny-pinching
 - Simple sack

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

C	U	R	A	C	A	O	S	N	O	O	P	
A	O	U	N	P	V	A						
C	L	E	O	P	A	T	R	A	E	E	L	
H			C	I	S	R	E					
E	L	M	A	L	M	A	M	A	T	E	R	
	A	K	E			U	M					
S	U	N	S	E	T		S	T	E	R	E	O
H	N			A	U	N						
A	L	E	X	A	N	D	E	R	S	A	P	
P	Q	N	A	E		A						
E	M	U	V	I	G	N	E	T	T	E	S	
U	I	I	I	I	N	O	S					
P	A	N	E	L		O	B	S	E	R	V	E

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

42 industries owe ₹3,797cr water tax to state govt: CM

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 18: As many as 42 industrial houses, including government ones, owe water cess amounting to ₹3,797.14 crore to the state government till March this year, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi told the Assembly Thursday.

In a written reply to a query by BJP MLA Tankadhar Tripathy, Majhi, who also holds the Water Resources portfolio, said industrial houses draw water from rivers like Mahanadi, Brahmani, Baitarani, Indravati, Kolab, Rushikulya and Subarnarekha.

Majhi said water tax of ₹1,509.28 crore is pending against the industries drawing water from Kolab, while those getting it



from the Mahanadi are yet to pay tax amounting to ₹962.78 crore.

“While water tax of ₹322.76 crore is pending against the firms drawing it from Brahmani, industrial houses drawing water from Nagavali are yet to clear ₹489.08 crore as tax,” as per the statement of the CM.

Moreover, water tax worth around ₹1.31 crore, ₹9.35 crore and ₹2.56 crore is pending against several industrial units getting water from Baitarani, Indravati and Rushikulya riv-

ers, respectively, Majhi said in the statement.

In his statement, Majhi informed the House that the highest of ₹244.10 crore water tax is pending against Bhusan Power and Steel Ltd in Sambalpur, while Ballarpur Industries Ltd is yet to pay ₹195.83 crore as water tax.

“Adhunik Metaliks Ltd in Sundargarh has a due of ₹186.65 crore, while Bhusan Steel & Strips Ltd in Dhenkanal is yet to pay water tax of ₹185.05 crore,” the CM’s statement said.

The other major defaulters are ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Ltd in Paradeep (Rs 108.98 crore), Viraj Steel & Energy Limited in Sambalpur (Rs 98.34 crore), Aarti Steel Ltd in Cuttack (Rs 58.36 crore), and Paradeep Phosphates Limited (Rs 45.51 crore), the statement said.

Cong seeks return of ‘stolen items’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Sept 18: Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Thursday urged Speaker Surama Padhy to ensure return of certain items allegedly stolen from them by anti-social elements during a dharna inside the House in March when Congress MLAs staged a dharna in the House, demanding formation of a House Committee to probe the alleged rising crimes against women in the state.

In his letter, CLP leader Rama Chandra Kadam said, “I’d like to draw your kind attention to the incident that happened on 26-03-2025 at around 2:30am inside the House and what action has been taken so far regarding entry of anti-social elements and theft of gold chain, watch, goggles, pant, shirt and other belongings of the members of our Congress Legislature Party.”

House adjourns after obituary reference

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 18: The first day of the Monsoon Session of the Assembly was adjourned after obituary reference was made to seven former members of the House and two personnel of the state police Thursday.

As soon as the House assembled at 11am, Speaker Surama Padhy allowed Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi to move the condolence motion over the demise of sitting member Rajendra Dholakia, ex-deputy Speaker Bibhuti Bhusan Singh Mardaraj, former MLAs Prasanna Kumar Pattnaik, Karendra Majhi, Niranjan Hermbam, Prafulla Kumar Bhanja and Mohammad Rafique and late constables Loknath Sabar and Laxman Majhi.

The Chief Minister paid rich tributes to the late members of the Assembly and police personnel. Majhi recalled working with Dholakia, Karendra Majhi



and highly praised the sacrifice made by the two constables who laid down their lives on duty.

BJD’s deputy leader in the House, Prasanna Acharya, Congress Legislature Party leader Rama Chandra Kadam and CPI(M)’s lone member Laxman Munda also conveyed their condolence to the departed leaders and police personnel.

The Speaker, on behalf of the House, also paid tributes to the departed souls and conveyed the House’s condolences to the families of the ex-members and late constables. She also referred to the contribution

of each former member in her condolence message.

“As Rajendra Dholakia, was the sitting member of the 17th Assembly, the House will remain adjourned for the day as per tradition,” the Speaker said. The MLAs also stood for a two-minute silence as a mark of respect to the departed members. The Speaker invited all the members of the Assembly to join the plantation programme held on the Assembly premises.

The Monsoon Session of the Assembly will continue till September 25 with one break September 21.

Four pacts inked for women empowerment



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 18: In a major boost to women empowerment, the state government Thursday signed four memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with national-level organisations to strengthen self-help groups (SHGs) under Mission Shakti programme.

Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, who attended the event as the chief guest, announced that financial assistance to the tune of ₹110.97 crore has been transferred to the accounts of 1,63,757 SHGs towards repayment of bank loans.

The agreements were signed with Food Industry Capacity and Skill Initiative (FICSI), Telecom Sector Skill Council (TSSC), Gem and Jewellery Skill Council of India (GJSCI), and National Commission for Women (NCW).

Highlighting the significance of the initiative, Parida said, “Mission Shakti, under the guidance of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, is working to create women-led enterprises at the grassroots level. By nurturing Odisha’s traditional tribal art and skills, we aim to increase the number of ‘Lakshpati Didis’ across the state.”

As part of the agreements, FICSI will train 10,000 SHGs in fruit pulp processing, spice processing, oil extraction, multi-skill techniques, and fruit and vegetable dehydration. TSSC will pilot a project in 30 gram panchayats of Cuttack district with an objective to train 60 women in mobile handset repairing.

GJSCI will provide training to 1,440 SHG members in silver filigree (tarakasi) craftsmanship, linking them to e-commerce platforms and markets. NCW will offer self-defense training to SHG women in the age group of 18 to 40 in five districts, aimed at enhancing confidence, safety awareness, and group solidarity.

Additionally, under its CSR initiative, Hindustan Coca-Cola everages Pvt Ltd (HCCB) provided a transparent-door refrigerator to Subhadra Shakti Café.

Stray dog census begins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Sept 18: Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Thursday began its street dog census across the City, an official said.

The counting of stray dogs will take place in every street and ward across the state capital everyday between 5am to 7am, the official mentioned.

Odisha charts action plan to address stray cattle menace

Reaffirming commitment to building safer, smarter, and more humane commuting ways, Odisha has taken a decisive step towards addressing the challenge of stray cattle on highways and roads. A high-level meeting chaired by Commerce and Transport department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee was convened here Thursday to chart out an integrated action plan, aimed at protecting both human lives and animal welfare, while enhancing road safety across the state. Stray cattle on roads have become a major safety concern, contributing significantly to accidents and fatalities. In Odisha alone, road crash data reveals the magnitude of the challenge: in 2022, 952 accidents and 521 deaths were reported; in 2023, 1,168 accidents and 643 deaths; and in 2024, 903 accidents and 437 deaths were attributed to animal-vehicle collisions. From the year August 2022 to August 2025, 331 animals were killed due to collision with vehicles. These figures underline the urgent need for coordinated action. The meeting focused on a mission-mode strategy linking identified NHAI stretches with nearby ULBs to ensure fencing, cattle-control, and sheltering through existing and new Goshalas.

Rana said the census will be conducted in all 67 wards of the City. “It is necessary to have a census of stray dogs here so that necessary steps can be taken to manage their population,” Rana said.

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Government of India

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Years of
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2024-2026

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upload your artworks on the theme of 'Viksit Bharat' with #SewaParv

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CBC 09101/13/0022/2526

Govt boosts medical edu with new appointments

Bhubaneswar, Sept 18: In a significant move to strengthen medical education and health-care services, the state government has appointed 91 assistant professors across 23 broad specialty disciplines and seven assistant professors in six super specialty disciplines in its government medical colleges. In addition, 38 professors and 27 associate professors have been promoted through departmental processes.

According to Health and Family Welfare department officials, the new appointments include 15 specialists and four super specialists at SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack; 19 specialists and three super specialists at MKCG Medical College and Hospital, Brahmapur; six specialists at Pandit Raghunath Murmu Medical College and Hospital, Baripada; one specialist at SLN Medical College and Hospital, Koraput; six specialists at Fakir Mohan Medical College and Hospital, Balasore; one specialist at Bhi-ma Bhoi Medical College and Hospital, Bolangir; two special-ists at Shri Jagannath Medical College and Hospital, Puri; and



six specialists at Government Medical College, Sundargarh. Additionally, the appointments include five specialists at Dharanidhar Medical College and Hospital, Keonjhar; seven specialists at Saheed Rendo Majhi Medical College and Hospi-tal, Bhawanipatna; two special-ists at Maharaja Jajati Keshari Medical College and Hospital, Jajpur; eight specialists at Pa-bitra Mohan Pradhan Medical College and Hospital, Talcher; five specialists at Government MCH, Phulbani; and eight spe-cialists at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research and Capital Hos-pital, Bhubaneswar.

In addition, 38 professors and 27 associate professors have been appointed in the state's medical colleges through de-partmental promotions.

Besides, medical education and clinical services at Acha-rya Harihar Post Graduate In-stitute of Cancer, Cuttack, have

been strengthened with the ap-pointment of 10 super-specialist assistant professors in Surgical Oncology, Gynaecological On-cology, Head & Neck Surgery, Medical Oncology, and Uro-On-cology. Furthermore, one pro-fessor and two associate profes-sors have been promoted at the institute through departmental processes.

Health and Family Welfare department officials said steps are underway to appoint more specialists and super-special-ists in the state's government medical colleges and hospitals. The batch-wise graduation of medicos from these campuses is expected to meet the growing demand for doctors and special-ists, ensuring quality universal healthcare across Odisha.

Medical education and train-ing in the state have been further strengthened with the posting of new assistant professors (spe-cialists and super-specialists) and the functionalisation of two new medical colleges in 2025: Government Medical College & Hospital, Phulbani and Pabitra Mohan Pradhan Medical College & Hospital, Talcher. With these additions, the total number of government medical colleges in Odisha has risen from 12 to 14.



UP IN ARMS: Teachers and employees of the Odisha State Non-Government Lecturers and Employees' Association (OSNLEA) stage a rally at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Thursday seeking implementation of grant-in-aid policy

Min admits fertiliser hoarding; Cong stir Sept 23

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Sept 18: Food Supplies and Consumer Wel-fare Minister KC Patra Thurs-day admitted to 'black mar-keting' of urea amid statewide farmer outrage over fertiliser scarcity. The Kisan Congress, farmers' wing of OPCC, has called an agitation September 23 to protest the crisis.

"The Congress' Kisan cell has called for a Bidhan Sabha Gher-ao Tuesday to protest govern-ment's inefficiency to contain

black marketing and hoarding of fertilisers by unscrupulous traders," a statement by the OPCC said.

"It is a fact that black mar-keting of fertilisers is going on in several places across the state. We are trying to control it and enforcement is strict at many places," Patra told reporters on the Assem-bly premises here.

Claiming that there is suf-ficient stock of fertilisers to meet the demands of farm-ers, the minister urged

farmers not to panic.

"The situation is under control and we will ensure that farmers get required fer-tilisers," the minister said, adding that reports of urea hoarding have also come to the government's notice.

The minister alleged that some people are indulged in hoarding of fertilisers to create an artificial scarcity.

Meanwhile, the Congress said party workers and mem-bers will protests in front of District Collectors' offices,

block, cooperative societies and agriculture offices.

According to the party, a procession of the Odisha Kisan Congress will start from Laksheswar Temple in Cuttack district and will reach the Congress Bhawan at Master Canteen via Rasul-garh and Vani Vihar on the national highway.

A large number of farmers' leaders and workers will gather outside the Assembly and hold a meeting there, PCC Kisan cell president Abhay Sahu said.

BDA conducts lottery for 112 shops at BSABT



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 18: The Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) Thursday conducted a lottery to allot shops to beneficiaries at Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bus Ter-minal (KSABT). The event took place at K7 Kalyan Mandap, Ka-linga Vihar in presence of BDA Secretary Manas Ranjan Padhi.

The lottery process was conducted for allotment of

112 shops on a monthly rental basis. The beneficiaries were shortlisted based on a detailed survey carried out by the Odi-sha State Road Transport Cor-poration (OSRTC), which pre-viously managed the old Baramunda bus terminal before the BSABT was built.

The process was conducted transparently, with beneficia-ries themselves drawing tokens from a glass box under the su-pervision of officials. To ensure complete fairness, the lottery was overseen by Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited General Manager Purandar Nanda as independent observer.

Several senior BDA officials were present, including addi-tional commissioners Snig-dharani Dhal (Administration), Bhabataran Sahu (Town Plan-ning), and Manoj Kumar Swain (Estate-II), along with joint commissioner (Enforcement) and BSABT special officer Ran-jan Kumar Jena and Manager Itikanta Mohapatra.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

Affidavit (for minor)
By virtue of an affidavit before the Executive Magistrate, Badasahi, Mayurbhanj. I Satyaranjan Kalia, At/Po-Singhtia, PS-Badasahi, Dist- Mayurbhanj, Pin- 757026, Odisha. Declare by this affidavit No. 293/07.08.2025. I have changed my daughter's name from Jasnarani Kalia to Jyotsnarani Kalia. Henceforth, She shall be known as Jyotsnarani Kalia for all future purposes. Satyaranjan Kalia

By affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Chandahandi I, Trilochan Bag, father of minor Mamata Bagh, permanently residing village/PO-Saradhapur, Block-Chandahandi, Dist.-Nabarangpur declare that I renounce my daughter's former name Mamata Bagh and assume her name as Mohini Bag. She shall henceforth be known as Mohini Bag for all purposes.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 18: Odi-sha will observe International Coastal Cleanup Day Sep-tember 20 with a large-scale cleanliness drive across 14 beaches, announced Forest, Environment and Climate Change department addition-al chief secretary Satyabrata Sahu. He made the announce-ment while presiding over a high-level preparatory meet-ing recently, outlining plans to mobilise volunteers, local authorities, and environmen-tal groups for the event.

The state-wide campaign will begin at Puri beach from 6:30am. The inaugural event will be graced by Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Union Environment Minister Bhupinder Yadav, Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, For-est, Environment and Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram



Singkhuntia and Puri MP Sam-bit Patra among others.

On the occasion, dignitar-ies, volunteers, and partici-pants will take the 'I Protect My Beach' pledge. A signature campaign, painting exhibition, and beach cleaning activities will also be organised. The col-lected waste will be segregated and handed over to the munic-ipality and plastic recyclers.

The programme will feature plastic recycling demonstra-tions by Odisha State Pollution

Control Board, turtle hatching showcases by the Wildlife Divi-sion, and exhibitions of knowl-edge products by the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM).

With its 500 km-long coast-line and iconic beaches like Puri, Konark, Gopalpur, Chan-dipur, and Talasari, Odisha considers the campaign not just a cleanup activity but a movement to safeguard the environment, marine life, and future generations.

DURGA PUJA

Bomikhal Pandal to dazzle with feathered splendour

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Sept 18: The Bomikhal Durga Puja Com-mittee, one of the city's most prominent organisers, is all set to enthrall devotees with a spectacular Peacock-themed pandal this year. Designed not just to showcase artistic bril-liance, the pandal also carries a strong message on wildlife con-servation and the need to pro-tect the environment, blending tradition with social awareness

Celebrating its 62nd year, the Bomikhal Durga Puja Committee is raising an im-pressive eco-friendly pandal, measuring 65 feet in height and 120 feet in width. The structure is being crafted with sustainable materials such as bamboo, thermocol, cloth, and decorative elements to highlight both artistry and environmental responsibility. Around 45 skilled artisans are working tirelessly on the project, which carries an es-timated budget of ₹16 lakh, committee treasurer Aditya Kumar Jena said.



To ensure smooth conduct of the festivities, the committee has made elaborate security and crowd management arrange-ments. As many as 45 security personnel and volunteers will be deployed across the venue to regulate the flow of visitors. In addition, the committee has worked in close coordination with local police to manage the anticipated traffic congestion, particularly around the nearby overbridge, said committee sec-retary Sailendra Kumar Jena.

Adding to the splendour of the celebration, the idol of Maa Durga will be showcased on magnificent silver tableaux and adorned with dazzling jewellery worth about ₹25 lakh, lending a regal charm to the pandal. The overarching peacock theme—symbolising grace, beauty,

and India's national bird—has been thoughtfully chosen to go beyond mere decoration, aiming to spark greater awareness about the urgent need to protect nature and conserve wildlife.

"Our aim is not just to hon-our devotion and uphold tradi-tion, but also to foster a sense of environmental responsibility among devotees," said Jena.

The Bomikhal Durga Puja Committee has long been cel-ebrated for its thematic bril-liance, having previously mes-merised visitors with pandals inspired by Mysore's iconic La-litha Mahal, grand French palac-es, and even an entire structure crafted from betel nuts.

These past creations have not only highlighted the exception-al skills of local artisans but al-so transformed the pandal into a must-visit destination during Durga Puja in the City.

With its seamless blend of artistic innovation, devotion, and meaningful social messag-ing, Bomikhal's Durga Puja continues to stand out as one of Bhubaneswar's premier fes-tive attractions.

DGP inaugurates gym, leads plantation drive



POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Sept 18: DGP Yogesh Bahadur Khurania inaugurated a gymnasium at the 6th India Reserve Battalion (IRB) campus here recently.

As part of the Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam programme, he planted a sapling and urged people to contribute to environmental protection by planting trees. He appealed to everyone to plant at least one sapling.

On the occasion, Odisha Po-lice planted over three lakh sap-lings across battalions, district headquarters, and police sta-tions statewide. The DGP also highlighted the importance of daily exercise for good health.

Among those present were ADG (SAP) Rajesh Kumar, ADG (Headquarters) Dayal Gangwar, ADG (Law & Order) Sanjay Singh, ADG (Provision-ing) Soumendra Priyadarshi, IG (Intelligence) Jayanarayan Pankaj, DIG Awinash Kumar, Khurda SP Vivekanand Shar-ma, and 6th Battalion Comman-dant Basant Kumar Nayak.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	88.14 ▲ 0.26	SENSEX	83013.96 ▲ 320.25	GOLD	₹108,975 ▼ ₹847
EURO	104.34 ▲ 0.21	NIFTY	25423.60 ▲ 93.35	SILVER	₹126,831 ▼ ₹153

WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	36.1°	35.2°	Light to moderate rain or thundershower very likely to occur
Min Temp	25.2°	24.6°	
Humidity	73%	80%	
Rainfall	NIL	NIL	

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-DayalAgency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-SaiAudio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Mining push driving jumbos into villages



POST NEWS NETWORK

Joda, Sept 18: The ever expanding mining operations in Keonjhar district have forced elephants out of their natural habitats into human habitations, leading to frequent conflicts with local communities.

Large-scale deforestation for mining has destroyed traditional elephant corridors, leaving the world's largest land mammal displaced and vulnerable. With forests shrinking, herds in search of shelter and food sources are straying into villages, leading to tension with people and resulting in loss of lives — both elephant and human.

According to the Forest department, about 55 elephants are now roaming the Barbil and Champua forest ranges. As the natural habitat of the animals and their movement corridors have been completely destroyed, the herds stray into nearby villages in search of food as night descends.

In the Balibandh forest section under Champua forest range and in Barbil forest range, 32 elephants have been sighted, while 14 were roaming in the Bamebari section. Another eight elephants have moved from Bhuyan Juang Pirha range

under the Bansapal block to Bamebari area. A lone elephant has been spotted in Belda area of the Joda forest range, forest officials said.

Forest department records show that thousands of hectares reserve forests, forests identified by the district level committee (DLC), and revenue forests have been diverted for mining. In Joda forest range alone, more than 2,000 hectares of forest land have been converted, while about 5,200 hectares in Barbil and Champua ranges are under mining activity.

Officials said mining companies purchase land through district land banks and pay the government the net present value of the trees cut, based on forest density. These legal clearances, including diversion plans approved by the state and Central governments, allow companies to convert forestland for non-forest use.

But conservationists warn that while the system legitimises mining, it leaves wildlife—particularly elephants—without safe habitats, intensifying man-animal conflicts across the district.

Mining companies are required to submit wildlife plans to the government before using

forest land. But experts say those plans often remain buried in files, leaving large animals like elephants without their natural habitats.

In place of destroyed forests, new plantations are often created with acacia saplings. Conservationists argue that such artificial forests cannot support wildlife the way natural forests do. While acacia plantations showcase official efficiency, they fail to restore habitats for wild animals.

According to Forest department sources, the state government has now directed that acacia and similar trees should not be planted. Instead, saplings of species useful to elephants — such as bamboo, kumbhi, ebony fruit, cotton tree and banyan — are being grown. More than 11,000 such saplings have already been planted this month in the Champua range, sources said.

Environmentalist Uday Shankar Acharya said the initiative is long overdue. He criticised mining companies for abandoning pits after extraction without reclamation, which prevents natural forest regeneration. In many cases, the Forest department creates plantations in vacant patches near villages rather than in mined areas.

Illegal and unregulated mining has further destroyed elephant corridors. In several places, slurry pipelines have blocked traditional migratory paths, leaving elephants unable to cross into other forests. Acharya warned that unless urgent steps are taken, elephants like many other rare species could face extinction.

Kin of accused's first wife level shocking allegations

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Sept 18: A day after missing traffic constable Subhamitra Sahoo was found murdered, allegedly by her husband Deepak Rout, new and troubling allegations have emerged against the accused.

According to claims made Thursday by Rozalin Rout, sister of Deepak's first wife Aparna Priyadarshini, this is not the first time Deepak has been involved in a suspicious death. Rozalin alleged that Deepak had earlier married Aparna, a revenue inspector in Kandarsingha under Parjang block, and murdered her March 17, 2022, staging the incident as a road accident to claim a ₹1 crore insurance payout.

Aparna's parental residence is at Tilapada village under Sadar police limits in Dhenkanal dis-



trict, while her two sisters live in Meena Bazar and Amalapada areas of Dhenkanal town.

Rozalin, speaking to reporters in Dhenkanal, said Aparna married Deepak April 25, 2018, after getting to know her through a matrimonial site. However, the marriage reportedly soured within months. Aparna had allegedly lodged online complaints with the police commissioner's office citing constant mental

harassment. Rozalin further claimed Deepak had taken loans in Aparna's name, and that Aparna suffered a miscarriage during their marriage. At the time of her death in 2022, Aparna was six months pregnant.

Deepak had informed the family that Aparna was injured in a road accident near Khuntuni in Cuttack district around 8pm March 17, 2022. He claimed she was taken to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, and later shifted to a private hospital, where she was declared dead.

Rozalin accused Deepak of manipulating the circumstances to make the death appear accidental, taking advantage of the family's limited financial means. She also alleged that Deepak encashed the life insurance policy following Aparna's death.

A formal complaint has

now been lodged with the Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Commissionerate Police, seeking a thorough investigation into Aparna's death.

The shocking allegations come amid ongoing investigations into the murder of traffic constable Subhamitra Sahoo, who had been missing since September 6. Deepak has been arrested for allegedly killing Subhamitra and burying her body in a forest in Bargarh district, which was recovered Wednesday.

Following these developments, suspicion has deepened that Deepak may also be responsible for Aparna's death. Aparna's family — including her father Biranchi Rout, mother Ahalya Raut, and sisters Rozalin and Rupali — have appealed for justice. Police have intensified the investigation into both cases.

POLITICKLE BY MANJUL



SOG commandant injured in gun battle with Maoists



PNN & AGENCIES

Berhampur, Sept 18: A commandant rank officer of Odisha's elite Special Operation Group (SOG) was injured in an exchange of fire between security personnel and Maoists in a forest in Kandhamal district Thursday, police said.

The gun battle took place at Indragarh jungle under Raikia police station area, bordering Ganjam district.

The injured commandant Prem Singh Majhi's fellow jawans initially rushed him to

Indragarh hospital, before police moved him to the sub-divisional hospital at Bhanjanagar. Due to the absence of a surgical specialist there, doctors were brought in from Berhampur and Aska before the injured jawan was transferred to MK-CG Medical College and Hospital here. His condition was stated to be stable.

Kandhamal Superintendent of Police Harisha BC said the SOG jawans launched a combing operation in the area after getting reliable information about the gathering of a group of around 15 Maoists in the forest. During the operation, there was an exchange of fire in which the SOG commandant suffered injuries, he said.

Sources indicated traces of blood at the site, suggesting that some Maoists may have also been injured. "Some of the Maoists might have been injured too, but it has not yet been confirmed," the SP said.

Search and combing operation was on in full swing in the area, and additional forces were deployed.

Minor girl abducted by bikers found dead



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhadrak, Sept 18: A search team Thursday recovered the decomposed body of a nine-year-old girl who was abducted by bike-borne miscreants five days ago at a village in Bhadrak district, police said.

The body was found near a canal at Adia village under Basudevpur Marine police station limits, around 400 metres from

the girl's home during a joint search operation by the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) and the Fire Services department.

According to police, the child was allegedly abducted around 7.30pm September 14, while walking near her home with her elder sister.

Two bike-borne unidentified men took away the girl, leaving her elder sibling in shock,

they said. She ran home and informed her mother, who is hearing impaired. Unable to react instantly, the mother panicked and fainted upon understanding the situation, prompting neighbours to alert authorities, police said.

The girl's father, Sadananand Mallik, a fisherman who was out at sea, reached home upon receiving the news.

"When I reached, I found my wife unconscious. A neighbour told me that my daughter had been abducted," he said.

Villagers launched an immediate search using flashlights and sticks, while local police were alerted.

Bhadrak Sadar SDPO Bichitranand Sethi formed four special teams to investigate the case. Bhadrak SP Manoj Kumar Rout said, "Preliminary investigations point to a possible murder, but this will be confirmed only after the post-mortem examination report is received."

The body has been sent to the Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack for further examination, he added.

Man remanded to jail for raping 13-year-old niece

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Sept 18: A 53-year-old man has been arrested for raping his 13-year-old niece under Nikirai police limits in Kendrapara district and remanded to judicial custody.

The accused, Abhimanyu Nayak (53), was booked under Sections 64(2), 65(1)(f), 351(2)(3), 296 of the BNS and Section 6 of the POCSO Act.

According to police, Nayak took advantage of the girl when she was alone at home.

Police said both the accused and the victim were sent for medical examination.

"Abhimanyu was produced before the Additional District & Sessions Judge-cum-Special Judge (POCSO), Kendrapara, who remanded him to jail custody," Investigating Officer Yudhistir Sahoo said Thursday.

Bargarh youth scales Mt Kilimanjaro

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Sept 18: Young mountaineer Ashirbad Mahapatra alias Anup from Kulita Tukura village of Attabira block in Bargarh district has brought pride to Odisha and India by successfully scaling Mount Kilimanjaro (5,895m), the highest peak in Africa. On reaching the summit, he unfurled the Tricolour along with the flag of Maa Samalei, the revered deity of western Odisha.

Ashirbad, the only Indian mountaineer in the expedition team, joined fellow climbers from the United Kingdom, the USA, Iran, Brazil, Germany, Australia, the Philippines, Canada, Argentina, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Japan, China, and the UAE during his African expedition that began August 2, 2025.

Having trained at the Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering, Pahalgam (Kashmir), Ashirbad has also undergone advanced training in sky diving, paragliding, skiing, CPR, search and rescue, shooting,



and survival skills. He has earlier scaled peaks like Tatakoti (4,760m), Harmukh (5,300m), Trishul (7,120m), Neelkanth (6,596m), Sunset (4,745m), Gol Top (4,420m), and Sleeping Lady Mountain (2,240m).

Expressing gratitude, Ashirbad credited Bargarh MP Pradip Purohit for his encouragement and support. "Mountaineering was my childhood dream, and today I am living it," he said after his successful ascent.

Looking ahead, Ashirbad has set his sights on climbing Mount Elbrus (5,642m), the highest peak in Europe, located in Russia. His mission is to hoist the national flag there and further elevate India's name on the global stage.

He also expressed a desire to inspire and train India's youth in mountaineering so that the nation shines worldwide in adventure sports.

Congratulations and good wishes have been pouring in from individuals and institutions across the state and country.

CB reopens 2023 fake cert scam, nabs Kalahandi man

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Sept 18: The Crime Branch (CB) of Odisha Police has reopened an investigation into the 2023 fake certificate scam and arrested a man from Kalahandi district, officials said Thursday.

The accused, identified as Malaya Kumar Bhoi, 37, of Kundabandh village under Kesinga police limits in Kalahandi district, was taken into custody by a three-member CB team and produced in court. Police said Bhoi allegedly purchased a forged high school certificate from Bolangir, which falsely showed he had scored more than 90 per cent marks. He later used the document to apply for the post of Gramin Dak Sevak in the Bolangir postal division in 2023.

During certificate verification March 23, 2023, postal officials discovered the forgery. Then-postal superintendent Rajendra Kumar Pattanaik reported the matter to Town police station, leading to a case being registered under the direction of then Bolangir SP Nitin Kushalkar.

The CB resumed the probe after several months of dormancy. A team led by Additional SP Bikash Behura Wednesday visited the Bolangir district education office to verify records before conducting raids in Belpada and later in Kundabandh, where Bhoi was arrested.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
NANDANKANAN ZOOLOGICAL PARK
P.O.-BARANG, DIST.-KHURDA, PIN-754005
PHONE (M) 9437022023, Email: deputydirector.kanan@gmail.com

Notice No.19/ PMU/NKZP/2025-26, Dated 18.09.2025
SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sl.No.	Particulars	Details
1	Name of the Work	Selection of Agency for Operation and Maintenance of Battery-Operated Vehicles for visitors in Nandankanan Zoological Park for the year 2025-26
2	Period & Validity	90 days from the date of issue of orders
3	Date & time of availability of the bid document in the portal	From 19.09.2025 to 09.10.2025
4	Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal	09.10.2025 (17.00 HRS)
5	Date & Time of bid opening	At 11 A.M. on 10.10.2025
6	Name & Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Deputy Director, Nandankanan Zoological Park, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Others can see the details from Notice inviting Tenders, available in website <https://tendersodisha.gov.in/> / Corrigendum if any, shall only be published in the above website.

SD./- Deputy Director, Nandankanan Zoological Park

OIPR-08070/11/0107/2526

NANDANKANAN
Web:www.nandankanan.org

CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PETROCHEMICALS ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY (CIPET)
CENTRE FOR SKILLING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT (CSTS)
Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers (Govt of India)
Plot No. S-3/79, Sector-A, Zone-B, Mancheswar Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar, Odisha
Ph. No. 0674-2588392/ 2587874, E-mail: mcti@cipet.gov.in/cipetsat@gmail.com
Website: www.cipet.gov.in

ବେତ୍ତାବେତ୍ତା ଚାକର ପ୍ରାଣୀ/ପ୍ରାଣୀମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ବସନ୍ତ ବିକାଶ ଚାକର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ
ପୁଷ୍ୟପୋଷକତା: ରାଉରକେଲା ଶିଳ ଗ୍ରାଫ୍ (RSP), Rourkela

SAIL-RSP ପୁଷ୍ୟପୋଷକତାରେ ବିପେକ୍ଷ:ସି.ଏସ୍.ଟି.ଏସ୍. ଲୁବ୍‌ଲେଣ୍ଡରରେ ବେତ୍ତାବେତ୍ତା ଯୁବକ/ଯୁବତୀମାନଙ୍କୁ **NSQF** ନିୟମାବଳୀ ଅନୁସାରେ ନିୟୁତ ଚାକର ବସନ୍ତ ବିକାଶ ଚାକର ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ ପ୍ରଦାନିତ । ଏଥିରେ ରାଉରକେଲା ଚାକର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ପ୍ରାଣୀବଳୀ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ବାସକରୁଥିବା ନିମ୍ନ ଆଇନକାରୀ ବର୍ଗର ବେତ୍ତାବେତ୍ତା ଯୁବକ/ଯୁବତୀମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଆବେଦନ ପତ୍ର ଆହ୍ୱାନ କରାଯାଇଅଛି ।

କ୍ର.ନଂ	ପାଠ୍ୟକ୍ରମର ନାମ	ପ୍ରବେଶ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ	*ଶିକ୍ଷାଗତ ଯୋଗ୍ୟତା	ଅବଧି	ବୟସ ସୀମା
୧.	ମେସିନ୍ ଅପରେଟର - ପ୍ଲାସ୍ଟିକ ପ୍ରୋସେସିଙ୍ଗ (ଏମ୍ପ୍ଲ-ପିପି)	୨୨	ଏକାଦଶ ଓ ଉଚ୍ଚତ୍ତ୍ୱ	୪ ମାସ	୧୮-୩୨ ବର୍ଷ

■ ଚାକର ଅବଧି: ୪ (ଚାରି) ମାସ
■ ବେଶ ମୁକ୍ତ ଶିକ୍ଷା, ରହିବା ଏବଂ ଖାଦ୍ୟ: ରହିବା ଏବଂ ଖାଦ୍ୟ ସହିତ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିବାର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ପାଇଁ ଏମିତି ଶୁଣାଯାଇଅଛି ଯେ ଯୁବକ/ଯୁବତୀମାନଙ୍କୁ **(RSP), Rourkela** ବନ୍ଦ କରିବ ।
■ ଆବେଦନ କରିବାର ପଦ୍ଧତି: ଚାକର ପ୍ରାଣୀମାନଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାପନା ବିପେକ୍ଷ ଚାକର ଯୁବକ/ଯୁବତୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ ପ୍ରଦାନିତ, ଚାକର ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ, ଆଇନକାରୀ, ଆଇ ପ୍ରଶାସନ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାପନା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ ଯୋଗଦାନ କରିବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରାଯାଇଅଛି ।
ବି.ଡି. କୌଣସି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ନବୀକାର, ଯୋଗାଣିତ ବା ଏମିତି ବେତ୍ତାବେତ୍ତା ଯୁବକ/ଯୁବତୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାର ଅଧିକାର ନାହିଁ ।

*** ଅଧିକ ବିବରଣୀ ପାଇଁ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ: 9337143007**

FOCUS DECENTRALISED FINANCE

THE LURKING DANGER



The borderless nature of decentralised finance and the anonymity of participants make it challenging to recover funds stolen through cyberattacks

vulnerabilities in DeFi protocols, specifically about terrorist financing. A June 2025 report by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) indicates that jurisdictions continue to struggle with identifying entities in DeFi and applying the FATF Standards.

While some usefulness of the innovative and technological features of DeFi protocols is undeniable, the risks are obvious for a jurisdiction like India, which is under constant threat of terrorism. The inclusivity benefits of DeFi are no better than the ‘JAM’ trinity and the UPI, which have already brought financial services into the hands of the common man. Since banning DeFi does not seem to be an option, in collaboration with the stakeholders, technology driven risk-based mitigation measures commensurate with the evolving DeFi ecosystem could offer a workable solution. India’s last National Risk Assessment was carried out in 2022. While a sectoral assessment focused on DeFi, on the lines of other jurisdictions, could proffer actionable inputs for future strategy, its wider dissemination would sensitise the DeFi participants to the risks to national security.

In its 2023 Mutual Evaluation Report on India, FATF recommended that India should broaden access to its National Risk Assessment and consider releasing a public version. Considering that the cross-border risks from DeFi are real and affect every citizen, an updated assessment of the DeFi sector would help flesh out a strategy in collaboration with industry participants. It is time to prevent DeFi from becoming a weapon of mass destruction, as Warren Buffett famously said of the collateralised debt obligations.

GN Bajpai is a former Chairman of LIC & SEBI. Praveen Tiwari is a former financial advisor to CFATF, a regional body of FATF, and distinguished fellow, Pahle India Foundation. ©THE BILLION PRESS

There has been heightened concern in recent days on misuse of decentralised finance (DeFi) for illicit activities, notably by terrorist groups seeking to raise finances, build infrastructure or expand their networks. Some of the emerging developments bring chilling messages and are a wakeup call for preventing the misuse of DeFi for terror and broadly a wide range of illicit activities. These come even as we see path-breaking developments in fintech. DeFi is on a roll, providing momentum and revolutionising financial services globally.

According to ‘CoinLaw’, a website that reports on fintech, the number of active DeFi users globally reached 14.2 million wallets by mid-2025. The DeFi market is projected to grow annually at 43%, from \$30.07 billion in 2024 to \$178.63 billion by 2029. India ranked at number three in DeFi value in the 2024 Global Crypto Adoption Index provided by Chainalysis, a blockchain data platform.

DeFi platforms operate on blockchains and offer financial products and services enabling saving, investing, lending, remittance, insurance contracts etc., without the intermediation of traditional financial institutions like banking. The transactions take place through smart contracts, open protocols, and decentralised applications, allowing direct peer to peer transactions without intermediation. A digital wallet, when integrated with DeFi, serves as a gateway, bypassing the banking network.

Access to the DeFi service does not warrant the opening of an account or identity verification. A customer can register with a password and create several crypto wallets. Most wallets do not ask for an address, phone number or email verification and one can use different DeFi exchanges or DeFi lending and borrowing platforms. A 2023 working paper of the Bank for International Settlements notes that since DeFi aims at

disintermediation, and the users interact with smart contracts, rather than through an institution, the absence of traditional financial institutions or market supervisory authorities makes DeFi vulnerable to criminal activity and investor fraud.

The risks inherent in DeFi must be evaluated against the potential advantages of DeFi, which include financial inclusion, high liquidity, transparency, lower costs of transactions, inter-operability with other applications and no requirement for permission from a central authority. There are no free lunches. Vulnerability to criminal activities is striking.

The embedded risks of DeFi unfold when mechanics are decrypted. DeFi works through self-executing smart contracts, which are vulnerable to hacking by criminals and terrorists. DeFi is governed through decentralised autonomous organisations - the group of persons who participate in its governance and decision making by virtue of their ownership of project tokens. Such a governance structure leads to regulatory uncertainty and lack of accountability.

The borderless nature of DeFi and the anonymity of participants make it challenging to recover funds stolen through cyberattacks. The tracking of transactions from unverified DeFi wallets is difficult. Illicit

actors can mask their tracks by using different blockchains, crypto-mixers, anonymity-enhancing tools and by using different DeFi wallets each time. The recipient of funds does not know from whom he received the funds. It is also difficult to block user accounts that have received suspicious funds.

To understand the risks in DeFi arrangements and address the potential regulatory blind spots, several jurisdictions have made their risk assessments of DeFi public. In its assessment published in April 2023, the US Treasury held that a DeFi service is liable to comply with anti-money laundering and terror financing obligations as applicable to any financial institution, but acknowledged that a lack of understanding among DeFi participants could exacerbate this risk, especially in jurisdictions that do not or inadequately apply international standards to DeFi service providers.

A January 2025 joint report by the European Banking Authority and European Securities and Management Association points to significant risks of money laundering and terror financing in DeFi protocols, as the users can transact without being identified and verified. The recent National Risk Assessment of the UK (July 2025) also underlines the same factors and underscores the inherent



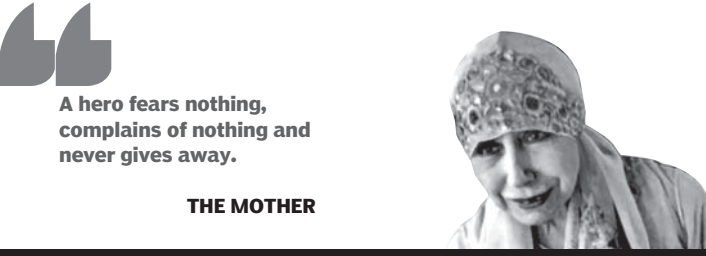
GN Bajpai & Praveen Tiwari

IT IS TIME TO PREVENT DECENTRALISED FINANCE FROM BECOMING A WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION, AS WARREN BUFFETT FAMOUSLY SAID OF THE COLLATERALISED DEBT OBLIGATIONS



Nirupama Rao

Although India has stood its ground in the face of the storm, the regional and Trump-induced volatility is making it harder to maintain the country’s treasured strategic autonomy



Neighbourhood Woes

Although instability is endemic to South and Southeast Asia, it is becoming increasingly dangerous both for India’s neighbours and India itself. This was reflected most recently in the violent unrest in Nepal. But that crisis is hardly an isolated case. In Bangladesh, directly to India’s east, the same tensions that led to the overthrow of the government in 2024 remain unresolved. And to the southeast, Thailand is reeling from the court-ordered removal of its prime minister and a series of recent border clashes with Cambodia.

According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project, Myanmar’s civil war has claimed at least 80,000 lives, both civilians and combatants, since 2021, following the military coup that ended Aung San Suu Kyi’s democratic government. To India’s west, a perpetually volatile Pakistan wrestles with the zombies of its history: Islamist extremist groups and poor economic and governmental performance.

To the south, Sri Lanka may have settled down following the ouster of its president three years ago, but its economy shows few signs of mounting a sustained recovery. And to the north, China’s quest for regional hegemony is another source of instability.

For India, these crises are not distant concerns. Refugee flows from Bangladesh are causing social unease and disruptions in India’s eastern states; the never-ending threat of cross-border terror from Pakistan nearly incited a war in Kashmir this summer; and now, Nepal’s volatile politics has given China another opportunity for meddling. Since this arc of fragility is too large to ignore, the question for India’s leadership is how to absorb and minimise the shockwaves, and how to steady the region.

One can start with Nepal, which has struggled to live by the ambitious constitution that was forged to end a long Maoist rebellion two decades ago. Nepalese state institutions remain fragile and contested, and hopes of stability have been repeatedly dashed by factionalism, corruption, and political leaders’ inability to consolidate a system that everyone can trust. The recent spasm of shockingly brutal violence is a symptom of these deeper fault lines.

India cannot be indifferent to such instability. Our long, open border with Nepal makes us vulnerable to refugee flows and cross-border crime, and our deep cultural, ethnic, religious, and economic ties mean that the government in Kathmandu will always look over its shoulder at the government in New Delhi. Moreover, China’s increasing influence in Nepal’s domestic politics has, as a matter of necessity, made the country a major strategic concern for India.

In Bangladesh, the interim government that has ruled since Sheikh Hasina’s ouster is failing in its efforts to restore law and order or safeguard human rights. The economy, a bright spot for decades, is under pressure from domestic political jitters and US President Donald Trump’s punishing tariffs. The febrile political environment has left the country’s minorities feeling increasingly insecure. The stakes for India are high, because its own efforts to manage the border, migration, and counterterrorism depend on the regime in Dhaka maintaining order.

At first glance, Thailand’s turmoil and the border clashes with Cambodia may seem less urgent. But India, under its Act East policy, has been pursuing deeper economic and strategic ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ ten member states and their 600 million-plus people. Any instability within that bloc will complicate this outreach. Moreover, Thailand has long served as a bridge between South and Southeast Asia. If its institutions falter, or if disputes with Cambodia escalate despite Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim’s best efforts to broker a resolution, India’s vision of a connected, secure Indo-Pacific corridor could become untenable.

To describe Pakistan as chronically troubled may sound dismissive, but it is an unfortunate truth. The country’s civilian authorities have been consistently undermined, as when Imran Khan’s elected government was ousted in 2022 at the military’s behest. Extremist groups thrive when politics becomes a blood sport, and Pakistan’s fragile economy only exacerbates this dynamic.

From India’s perspective, Pakistan’s troubles are more than a domestic issue, because they regularly threaten to spill across the Line of Control in Kashmir, fueling terrorism, destroying any prospect for regional peace, and even introducing the spectre of a nuclear catastrophe. This continuous instability chains India to the sub-continental chessboard, even when it wants to look outward. The Pakistan-China axis further complicates the status quo, which is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

All these stories point to a larger worrying trend: democracy in India’s neighbourhood is in retreat. Constitutions are being rewritten, and courts politicised. Sensing weakness, too many army generals see themselves as free to intervene, including by jailing or exiling political leaders.

For India – the world’s largest democracy – responding to this trend demands a more assertive regional strategy. Of course, for most of South Asia, barring Pakistan, India is the first responder when crises hit. But during periods when India’s neighbours do not think they need its help, they tend to shrug off its security concerns.

And as if India’s neighbourhood were not dangerous enough, the wider world adds its own layers of uncertainty. Trump’s policy toward the region has been arbitrary in the extreme, leading smaller states to hedge their bets. In Japan and South Korea, debates are underway about the wisdom of acquiring nuclear weapons, now that China is flexing its muscles and the US security umbrella has been called into question.

Although India has stood its ground in the face of the storm, the regional and Trump-induced volatility is making it harder to maintain the country’s treasured strategic autonomy. The task now is no longer to deepen ties with America, but to maintain the strategic, technological, and economic core of the partnership while building resistance against sudden shifts in US policy.

India is not seeking dominance in South Asia. Its goal is to build an inclusive, rules-based, and connected region – and thus transform a history of recurring crises into a future of enduring stability.

The writer is a former foreign secretary of India and former Indian ambassador to China and the United States. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow.

HELEN KELLER

Faith is a state of openness or trust.

ALAN WATTS

Be brave. Take risks. Nothing can substitute experience.

PAULO COELHO

SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS

Everybody likes a good war

The war in Gaza is reaching an alarming stage.

Israel’s Defence Minister, Israel Katz is saying, “Gaza is burning.” From credible international sources, it was evident that famine had struck Gaza, while there was heavy exodus of Palestinians from the war zone. Now, as Israel begins the ground attack, thousands of Palestinians have begun to flee. Israel Defence Force (IDF) vows to seize the city in the latest escalation. Yet, there is no sign of any truce. Worse, Qatar which was negotiating between Palestine and Israel was bombed on 9 September. The question staring the world leadership is quo vadis (where to go from here) in Palestine, in Ukraine, and anywhere else that is gripped in armed conflict. The focus here is on Gaza.

The EU has warned that the ground offensive by IDF will add to the toll of deaths and destruction and worsen the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza. EU countries are boycotting Israel in cultural programmes like Eurovision Song Contest. That is by far a mild pressure on Isra-

el. How to stop the war is the question that world leaders should address?

The IDF on 9 September struck a gated compound in Doha’s Legtaifiya district that was used by Hamas political leadership. This has baffled many Middle East observers as Qatar is an ally of the US. The attack killed a senior Hamas figure, Khalil Al-Hayya, and a Qatari security officer. As per the Israel media, the military assault involved 15 fighter jets dropping 10 bombs and killing six people. The strategy was to eliminate the Hamas leadership in Qatar.

The US has upbraided Israel for striking Qatar, a close ally. Qatar hosts the largest American military base in West Asia. Doha was the centre for mediation and negotiations for Israelis and Palestinians. Americans have assured Qatar that there will be no more such attacks.

Observers contend that a ceasefire which was almost on the cards would have threatened the survival of Netanyahu’s fragile government. Prolonging the war would save Netanyahu politically. The

Israeli version is that Qatar was hosting terrorists. The head of Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security says, “Qatar chose to host a terror group on its soil, and that had consequences.” Quite a few observers accuse Qatar of being both ‘arsonist’ and ‘fire-fighter’. It first props up a terrorist group, then becomes a negotiator and peacemaker. It has done so with Hamas as well as Taliban.

Qatar’s double standards can be explained in its desire to become a global power in mediation and negotiation like Austria and Norway. Article 7 of Qatar’s Constitution promulgates mediation as a key foreign policy priority based on the principle of encouraging peaceful resolution of international disputes. Qatar promotes mediation of both Track I and Track II peace-making and conflict resolution, involving both state and non-state actors. In this spirit, Qatar has hosted groups like Taliban, Hamas and opposition groups from Syria during the Syrian civil war.

Prime Minister Modi has condemned the violation of

Qatar’s sovereignty without naming Israel. Many observers suggest that India should be more active in restoring peace and stability in West Asia. Millions of Indians live in the energy-rich region. India also has substantial trade relations with the Arab world. Modi is also friendly with Netanyahu. At UNHRC, India, on 16 September, defended Qatar’s sovereignty. However, India’s response is standard diplomacy. But could India do more than issuing esoteric statements? The whole world is failing to stop the wars in Gaza and Ukraine.

Reflecting the complexity of any disaster and involvement of vested interests, there is a book by award-winning journalist P. Sainath, “Everybody Likes a Good Drought,” could it be that, “Everybody Likes a Good War.” To be sure, this is sadism and cynicism, but one cannot help such thoughts as one hopelessly watches the deaths and destructions in Gaza and Ukraine.

The writer is Professor of Practice, NIIS Group of Institutions. ©INFA

Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

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



Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

RS Narula, PATIALA



Delhi aims for canvas painting world record

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 18: The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) Friday will attempt a Guinness World Record by creating a 10-km-long live canvas painting at the lawns of Kartavya Path, with participation of over 40,000 artists, including several Padma awardees.

The event, 'Viksit Bharat ke Rang, Kala ke Sang', is being organised in collaboration with Triveni Kala Sangam and Delhi University as part of 'Seva Parv' to commemorate 75 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an official statement of NDMC said Thursday. NDMC Vice Chairperson Kuljeet Singh Chahal said the effort will surpass the record of 5,084 artists painting together in Panama in 2014.

"September 19 will be a historic day when all previous records of live painting will be broken. For the first time, Padma awardees, renowned artists, students, and rural artisans will come together on one canvas," he said. Among those participating are Jatin Das, Biman B Bas, Adwaita Gadanayak, Jai Prakash, Ram Kishan Chhipa, Shanti Devi, and Paresh Rathwa, along with thousands of young and emerging artists. According to NDMC, over 41,000 registrations have been received, including 22,750 college students, 7,800 school students, and 9,300 professional artists. Nearly 60 per cent of the participants will be women.

The painting, on the theme "Viksit Bharat", will start at 9 am and is billed as the world's largest live art event.

Rare & Ruthless

'Brain-eating amoeba' claiming lives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Sept 18: The mother of a nine-year-old girl who died after contracting the so-called "brain-eating amoeba" says she is still struggling to comprehend the loss.

"I cannot believe my daughter is gone," a sobbing mother said, adding that there was no clear information from health authorities on how the child became infected.

The girl, hailing from Kozhikode, is among those who have succumbed in recent months to Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis, a rare but almost always fatal brain infection caused by Naegleria fowleri.

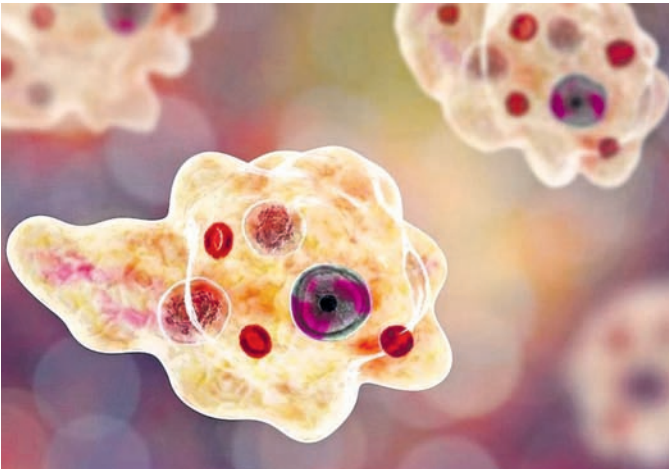
Kerala has been grappling with a rare but deadly disease that has claimed the lives of 19 people in recent months.

The culprit is a microscopic parasite known as Naegleria fowleri, more commonly called the "brain-eating amoeba", which causes a condition known as Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis, or PAM.

The infection is almost always fatal, killing more than 98 per cent of those who contract it. Over 70 cases have been reported in the state this year.

The amoeba is found in warm freshwater such as ponds, lakes, rivers and poorly maintained swimming pools.

According to health officials, it does not cause illness when swallowed, but when water enters the nose the parasite can migrate through the nasal passages into the brain, where



it causes devastating inflammation and destruction of tissue.

The disease progresses very quickly.

"What starts as a fever, headache, nausea and stiff neck soon leads to confusion, seizures and coma. Death usually occurs within one to two weeks," according to a health official.

Doctors say it is often mistaken for bacterial meningitis, and by the time the real cause is recognised it is too late to save the patient.

Kerala Health Minister Vee-na George told the State Assembly on Wednesday that amoebae exist in most water sources, though only some types are dangerous.

She pointed out that the first case of PAM in the state was reported in 2016, and since then the government has been working on guidelines to help doctors respond more quickly.

Until recently, the tests need-

ed to confirm the disease were only available at laboratories in Chandigarh and Puducherry, but now Kerala has established its own diagnostic facilities.

Health officials have directed hospitals to suspect PAM in any patient with sudden meningitis-like symptoms and a recent history of contact with freshwater.

Microbiologists are to be alerted immediately so that cerebrospinal fluid samples can be checked under the microscope or confirmed by PCR testing.

Health officials said that the treatment remains extremely difficult. There is no single drug that can cure PAM, and survivors worldwide are very few.

Patients who have made it through were treated with a combination of powerful medicines such as amphotericin B, miltefosine and rifampicin, together with therapies to reduce the dangerous brain swelling

that accompanies the disease.

In Kerala, doctors now form multi-disciplinary teams to handle confirmed cases, involving neurologists, paediatricians, infectious disease specialists and critical care experts.

Though extremely rare, the disease has sparked anxiety because of its high death rate.

Experts stress that prevention is the best defence.

People are advised not to swim or dive in stagnant or poorly maintained freshwater bodies during the hot season. If swimming is unavoidable, nose clips can reduce the risk of water entering the nostrils.

Children should not play with hoses or sprinklers in a way that forces water up the nose, and garden hoses should be flushed before use.

Daily cleaning of paddling pools, proper chlorination of swimming pools and using only boiled or filtered water for nasal rinsing are also recommended.

Scientists warn that climate change may increase the risk of PAM. The amoeba thrives in warm water and feeds on bacteria that flourish at higher temperatures. Hotter summers may both expand the parasite's range and drive more people to seek relief in lakes and rivers, raising the chances of exposure.

After the Nipah outbreak in Kozhikode in 2023, Kerala made it a policy to report and investigate every instance of brain fever, including rare infections like those caused by amoeba.

LIVING ON THE EDGE

Chooralmala's struggle after landslide in Kerala



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Wayanad (Kerala), Sept 18: Living on the edge of a government-declared "no-go zone", scarred by last year's devastating landslide that claimed 298 lives, several families in Chooralmala wake each morning unsure whether their homes will withstand the next spell of rain.

Although technically outside the danger zone, by only a few metres, the residents live within earshot of tragedy and are urging the government to relocate them before another disaster strikes.

A major landslide struck the Mundakkai and Chooralmala regions, 30 July 2024, almost completely decimating both areas. Entry into Mundakkai remains tightly controlled.

Former residents are permitted to return briefly to retrieve things from their now abandoned homes, while mediapersons must secure a pass and can enter only until 3 pm.

The devastated village is accessible only through a 190-foot Bailey bridge built by the Army after the landslide to move heavy machinery and ambulances.

As you walk through the village, an eerie silence hangs in the air, broken only by the occasional crunch of footsteps

on dried leaves and twigs. All around, haunting sites of half-collapsed houses and crushed vehicles, narrate the scale of destruction.

Amid the ruins, some homes still stand with locks on their main doors --sign of families who left in haste with the hope of returning one day.

Friends and family members of those who perished in the tragedy often visit the area to offer prayers or relive the memories of happier times.

Among them was K Hamsa, a 54-year-old tea estate worker from Chooralmala, who lost his sister, brother-in-law, and niece in the disaster.

Living on the boundary of the no-go zone, he said, there's an impending danger.

"We are living in constant fear of what if it (landslide) happens again? Will we survive? There is an impending danger, and this is why we want to move from here, but we are not eligible," he said.

His friend and neighbour, Sudheer M, 48, said due to the landslide, two schools in the area, along with some government offices, were wiped out. Now they have been relocated to Meppadi, which is 13 km away.

"We have to travel there every day to drop off and pick up our children. It's becoming very difficult," he said.

Kerala youths save girl from choking on chewing gum

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kannur (Kerala), Sept 18: A young girl in this district was saved from choking after a group of young men nearby stepped in to give her first aid.

The incident took place Tuesday evening in Pallikkara.

CCTV footage of the incident, which surfaced on social media Wednesday, showed the child putting chewing gum into her mouth while standing with her bicycle.

Moments later, she appeared distressed and pedalled towards a group of men who had stopped to buy vegetables.

One of them quickly realised she was choking and carried out

first aid. Visuals showed one of the youths lifting the girl, placing her across his arm and pressing on her back, while another, seated on a scooter nearby, assisted him. The gum was dislodged, and the child began to breathe again. The video of the rescue has been widely shared on social media.

Kerala General Education Minister, V Sivankutty, praised the young men, writing on Facebook: "In Pallikkara, Kannur, youngsters saved a child who was choking on chewing gum. Thank you."

Netizens hailed their quick response as life-saving. The girl later told a news channel that she would never chew chewing gum again.



"Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam", an emotional initiative



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 18: A female diplomat of Cameroon, who recently lost her mother, became emotional during "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" tree plantation programme organised by the Delhi government, with Chief Minister Rekha Gupta coming forward to con-

sole her, officials said.

In a video of the incident, Gupta could be seen hugging the diplomat and trying to console her. "Flooding memories of mother...as if time stops to embrace us," the chief minister said sharing the video on social media platform X.

The tree plantation drive "Ek

Ped Maa Ke Naam" was part of Delhi government's "Sewa Pakhwada" initiatives to celebrate the birth anniversary of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The diplomat broke down while planting a tree at the programme. The chief minister noticed her tears and immediately went over to comfort her, officials said.

The chief minister embraced the diplomat, who told her that she lost her mother 15 days ago. She also said that the gesture of planting a tree in the memory of her mother "deeply moved" her, they said.

The chief minister stayed with her for quite some time, trying to ease her grief, they added.

Seventy-five diplomats from 70 countries participated in the tree plantation drive at Central Ridge. The event was also attended by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav and Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa.

MORE CELEBRATION THAN ELECTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 18: It was more of a festival than an election on Delhi University's North Campus on Thursday as students poured out in large numbers, campaigning vehicles crawled past polling booths and the beat of drums competed with the chatter of voters for the DU Students' Union (DUSU) polls.

Outside colleges, groups of supporters handed out vada pav coupons and discount slips at traffic junctions and e-rickshaw stands. For many students, these little handouts became as much a part of the day as casting their vote.

Voting for the DUSU elections began Thursday morning amid tight security. Students started casting their votes in two shifts -- from 8.30 am to 1 pm for the day classes and from 3 pm to 7.30 pm for the evening classes.

"I got a coupon and kept it as a memory. Everyone around me was rushing to grab one," said Karan, a Kirori Mal College student. Convoys of Scorpios, Thars and motorbikes cruised the streets, with young campaigners leaning out of windows and tossing bundles of pamphlets into the crowd. The roads became the main battleground after the

DUSU ELECTION SAGA



court restricted poster pasting to the designated 'Walls of Democracy'. By polling day, even those walls were stripped bare.

The biggest spectacle came when fake Rs 500 notes marked 'Children Bank of India' were showered on bystanders. For a brief moment, students believed they had struck gold.

"We thought we had become

rich, then saw every note carrying the designated 'Walls of Democracy' number," laughed Sanya, a Daulat Ram College student, holding one up as a souvenir.

Adding to the noise were dholwalas stationed outside the college gates. "Every year we play here for someone or the other. Most of the time, we don't even know who we are playing for. The energy is high

and we usually make Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 in a day, plus tips," said Rakesh, a drummer outside Hindu College, before striking his instrument again. The paper trail left behind by the day also became an opportunity. E-rickshaw drivers and ragpickers collected discarded pamphlets in sacks to sell as scrap.

"Last year, I earned Rs 2,000. This time it may be closer to Rs

800 because the number of pamphlets is less," said Shyam, who operates near Kirori Mal College. Children too joined the rush for the fake notes, clutching them tightly even after realising they were worthless. "I thought it was real, but it was not. Still, I will keep it in my bag," said Rahul Singh, a boy who had gathered a handful.

Security personnel stood guard outside booths throughout the day to keep the atmosphere in check.

"We are staying vigilant so that no issues arise. The idea is to keep the process smooth," said an officer near Kirori Mal College. With classes suspended, students arrived in groups, some with parents and others with friends. They lingered around booths, compared coupons and soaked in the carnival-like mood.

"We made a whole day out of it. Even if you don't care who wins, you don't want to miss this," said Ritika, a third-year student.

By evening, the streets of North Campus were carpeted with trampled pamphlets, fluttering coupons and fake cash slips, remnants of another Delhi University election day.

Around 2.8 lakh students are eligible to vote in the elections, the results for which will be declared September 19.

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, KHARIAR ROAD
At/Po-Khariar Road, Dist. Nuapada (Odisha), Pin-766104
Email:nackhrd@rediffmail.com
Executive Officer-9937130262
No.2556 Corrigendum-01 Date:16.9.25
No.C-1114: The Tender ID No.(2540/KHRD/2025-26) (2025_ORULB_118101_1 Publish in 16.09.2025 the work name is "CONSTRUCTION OF SWIMMING POOL AT WARD NO. 03 HIGH SCHOOL PADA, KHARIAR ROAD" Read as Class of Contractor "B" instead of "B & A".
The Tender ID No.2540/KHRD/2025-26][2025_ORULB_118101_2 Publish in 16.09.2025 the work name is "[CONSTRUCTION OF TURF CRICKET GROUND AT HIGH SCHOOL PADA, WARD NO- 03. KHARIAR ROAD Read as Class of Contractor "B & A" instead of "B".
Sd./- Executive Officer
Khariar Road NAC
OIPR-13136/11/0054/2526


OFFICE OF THE CDM & PHO & DISTRICT MISSION DIRECTOR, BHADRAK DISTRICT HEALTH MISSION
(Department of Health & FW, Govt.of Orissa)
Advt.No.22/2025 Date:18.09.2025
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR OUTSOURCING OF MECHANIZED LAUNDRY SERVICES
No.E-392: Sealed proposals as per the Prescribed RFP document are invited from Company (Companies Act 2013) / Partnership Firm (Indian Partnership Act 1932/Limited Liability Partnership Firm 2008)/ Society (Society Registration Act 1860)/ a Trust (Indian Trust Act 1882 & its amendment thereon) for outsourcing of Mechanized Laundry services in Govt. health institutions of Bhadrak. The eligibility criteria, terms of reference and the formats for submission of Bid are set forth in the RFP document which can be downloaded from the website www.bhadrak.odisha.gov.in. Interested bidders fulfilling the eligibility criteria may submit their proposal(s) (with EMD and documents as per RFP). The bidders have to submit their proposal(s) to the office of the CDM & PHO, Bhadrak. The details of proposal(s) complete in all respect superscribing "Tender for outsourcing of mechanised laundry services in Govt. health institutions of Bhadrak" & the advertisement reference no. on the envelope and should reach to the office of the CDM & PHO, Bhadrak on or before 09.10.25 (till 5.00 PM) by Speed Post, Registered Posts or Courier Only. The technical bids shall be opened at the office of the CDM & PHO, Bhadrak on 14.10.25 at 11.00 A.M. The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all the proposals without assigning any reason thereof.
OIPR-10123/11/0026/2526 Sd./- CDM & PHO, Bhadrak

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA COMMERCE & TRANSPORT (TRANSPORT) DEPARTMENT
Request For Proposal (RFP)
(Ref.No.11536 dated 17th September, 2025)
"Providing Facility Management Services at Jeypore and Utkela Airports for a period of Three Years"
No.JJ-51: The Director of Aviation, Directorate of Aviation, Government of Odisha invites proposals from eligible service providers for performing the Facility Management Services at Jeypore and Utkela Airports in the State, for three years extendable by another one year based on satisfactory performance. Eligible and interested agencies may download the Request for Proposal (RFP) document which contains the details of the requirement from the following websites of Government of Odisha and submit their offer.
https://tendersodisha.gov.in
https://ct.odisha.gov.in/tenders
The responses are to be submitted online and queries, if any may be referred in writing to the Director of Aviation, Directorate of Aviation, Government of Odisha, BPI Airport, Bhubaneswar at the E-mail: orissa_aviation@yahoo.co.in, transcivilaviation@gmail.com
Proposals complete in all respect should reach the undersigned latest by 03.00 PM on 16.10.2025 ("Bid Due Date" or "BDD"). Bids received after the BDD shall be summarily rejected. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all the proposals without assigning any reason thereof.
Sd./- Special Secretary to Govt. & Director of Aviation
Commerce & Transport (Transport) Department
OIPR-38001/11/0044/2526 Government of Odisha

of the day

quote

We are there to solve the problem. I've asked the IT minister... in every part of the country this problem persists; only Bangalore is making noise



D K SHIVAKUMAR | K'TAKA DY CM

The aim must be to make life easier for common citizens and ensure balanced development. Policies should focus on neglected sectors that have the potential to push Maharashtra ahead of other states



DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA CM

Railway projects costing ₹45,000 crore are currently underway in Chhattisgarh, with ₹7000 crore being earmarked in the 2025-26 state budget for rail expanding and modernizing rail services



VISHNU DEO SAI | CHHATTISGARH CM

SHORT TAKES

Police vehicle rams into tea stall; 1 killed

New Delhi: A 55-year-old physically challenged tea seller was killed after a police patrolling van rammed into his roadside stall in central Delhi's Mandir Marg area Thursday morning, police said. Locals claimed that the police personnel appeared to be intoxicated, and there were alcohol bottles in their car. However, police said the medical reports confirmed no traces of alcohol.

Pondy: Protesting Oppn MLAs evicted

Pondicherry: The one-day session of the Pondicherry Assembly was adjourned sine die Thursday after lasting for just 45 minutes, and witnessed eviction of Opposition legislators who protested against the short duration of the House. Proceedings began with Speaker R Selvam making obituary references for prominent figures, including Pope Francis, former Kerala Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan, former Jharkhand Chief Minister Shibu Soren, and former AIADMK legislator of Pondicherry K Sivalokanathan.

Man killed after falling from flyover

New Delhi: A 49-year-old man died after he allegedly fell from a flyover and was run over by a vehicle in east Delhi's Pandav Nagar area Thursday, police said. The incident occurred around midnight near the Manglam Cut flyover on National Highway-24, they said, adding that a PCR call regarding the accident was received at 12:03 am.

ED searches in bank 'fraud', 'benami' probe

Chennai: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Thursday conducted searches in Chennai and Hyderabad as part of a money laundering probe into an alleged ₹200 crore bank fraud and benami assets probe against Sasikala, a close aide of late Tamil Nadu CM J Jayalalithaa, and some others, officials said.

Lawyer threatened at gunpoint in Kolkata

Kolkata: A lawyer was allegedly threatened at gunpoint outside his residence by a group of men in south Kolkata's Netaji Nagar area, following which the police arrested the main accused after a clash between both sides, an officer said Thursday. The alleged incident happened late Wednesday.



On one hand we say everything is fine, that the situation is very good and a new Jammu-Kashmir has been established, but we do not trust our own people. What would have happened if Mufti or Lone had gone there? It would not have created a storm, they would have gone there to offer condolences, pray, share a few words with Bhat's family and return

OMAR ABDULLAH | J&K CM

AI EXPRESS FLIGHT MAKES EMERGENCY LANDING

An Air India Express flight from Visakhapatnam to Hyderabad with 103 passengers made an emergency landing Thursday, following an engine problem after a suspected bird hit mid-air, said an official



US pulls Chabahar waiver, puts India's link to Central Asia at risk



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 18: The decision of the US government to revoke the 2018 sanctions waiver with regard to strategic Iranian port of Chabahar will have implications for India, which is engaged in the development of a terminal at the port.

The US Department of State in a statement said that in consistent with President Trump's maximum pressure policy to isolate the Iranian regime, it has revoked the sanctions exception issued in 2018 under the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (IFCA) for Afghanistan reconstruction assistance and economic development, effective September 29, 2025.

"Once the revocation is effective, persons who operate the Chabahar Port or engage in other activities described in IFCA may expose themselves to sanctions under IFCA," the statement said.

India will be impacted by this decision, as it is involved in development of a terminal at the Chabahar port on the Gulf of Oman. On May 13, 2024, In-

dia signed a 10-year contract to operate the port that will help it expand trade with Central Asia.

This was the first time India will take over the management of an overseas port New Delhi had proposed to develop Chabahar port way back in 2003 -to provide Indian goods a gateway to reach landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asia using a road and rail project called International North-South Trans-

port Corridor, bypassing Pakistan. US sanctions on Iran over its suspected nuclear programme had slowed the development of the port.

The long-term agreement was signed by Indian Ports Global Limited (IPGL) and the Port & Maritime Organisation of Iran.

It replaces an initial 2016 pact, which covered India's operations at Shahid Beheshti terminal in Chabahar port and had been renewed on an annual basis.

In 2023, Chabahar port was used by India to send 20,000 tonnes of wheat aid to Afghanistan. In 2021, the same was used to supply environmentally friendly pesticides to Iran.

India will be impacted by this decision, as it is involved in development of a terminal at the Chabahar port on the Gulf of Oman

On May 13, 2024, India signed a 10-year contract to operate the port that will help it expand trade with Central Asia

Corruption case: Anil Ambani, Rana Kapoor chargesheeted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 18: The CBI filed a chargesheet Thursday against Anil Ambani and others over alleged fraudulent transactions between the industrialist's group companies, FL and RHFL, Yes Bank and firms of the bank's former CEO Rana Kapoor's family, causing a loss of ₹2,796 crore to the bank, officials said.

In its chargesheet filed before a special court in Mumbai, the federal agency has said Ambani is the chairman of the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani (ADA) Group and director of Reliance Capital Limited, the holding company of FL and RHFL.

No comments from the ADA group were immediately available.

Besides Ambani, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has chargesheeted Rana Kapoor, Bindu Kapoor, Radha Kapoor, Roshni Kapoor, FL, RHFL (now Authum Investment and Infrastructure Limited), RAB Enterprises Private Limited, Imagine Estate Private Limited, Bliss House Private Limited, Imagine Habitat Private Limited, Imagine Residence Private Limited and Morgan Credits Private Limited under sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act and Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The CBI registered two cases in 2022 against Kapoor, the then managing director and CEO of the Yes Bank, Reliance Commercial Finance Limited (RCFL) and Reliance Home Finance Limited (RHFL) on a complaint from the bank's chief vigilance officer.

"Yes Bank invested around ₹2,045 crore in non-convertible debentures and commercial debts of FL and ₹2,965 crore in non-convertible debentures and commercial papers of RHFL in the year 2017 on the approval of Rana Kapoor despite



The CBI findings have shown that funds, invested in FL and RHFL by the Yes Bank, were subsequently siphoned through multiple layers, demonstrating a systematic diversion of public money

CARE Ratings placing ADA Group financial companies 'under watch' in view of deteriorating financial standing and adverse market assessment," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

The CBI findings have shown that funds, invested in FL and RHFL by the Yes Bank, were subsequently siphoned through multiple layers, demonstrating a systematic diversion of public money, the statement said.

"Investigation revealed a conspiracy between Rana Kapoor and Anil Ambani where in Rana Kapoor abused his

Nitish springs surprise, drives to Patna hotel to meet Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Sept 18: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Thursday sprung a surprise when he drove down to a Patna hotel to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who is in the state for fine-tuning the BJP's strategy for the upcoming assembly polls.

Photographs of the JD(U) supreme offering a bouquet of flowers to Shah, a former BJP president, were shared by the two leaders on their respective X handles. Sources in both parties refused to say anything on record, though, speaking on condition of anonymity, they said it was "a courtesy call". They, however, noted with satisfaction that the gesture from 75-year-old Kumar would

put paid to speculations, in a section of the media, over his "refusal" to meet Union minister and BJP chief Jagat Prakash Nadda, who was in the city last week. Elections are likely to be announced in the state in a few weeks from now, and Kumar, the longest-serving CM of the state, is aiming at a fifth consecutive term in office.

Meanwhile, shortly after the tete-a-tete with the alliance partner, Shah left for Dehri-on-Sone to hold talks with party workers and leaders of 10 districts of the Magadh-Shahabad region, where the performance of the NDA was below par in the 2020 assembly polls and Lok Sabha elections last year.



A man collects dead fish that died due to lack of oxygen and pollution, at Pishach Mukti Kund, in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

Tropical rainforests may warm the planet: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 18: Important for fighting climate change, tropical rainforests could instead be contributing to the planet's warming by releasing vast amounts of carbon dioxide, potentially accelerating a feedback loop, according to a new study.

Considered critical in the world's fight against climate change, tropical rainforests are equipped with natural systems to absorb excess carbon and cool the planet.

However, a continued warming of the planet is causing soils of these forests to release enormous amounts of carbon dioxide, essentially flipping the script, researchers including those from the US' Chapman University said.

The study, published in the journal Nature Communications, looked at the rates of



soil respiration in a Puerto Rican rainforest in response to a global warming of 4 degrees Celsius.

Findings show "soil respiration rates were 42-204 per cent higher in (experimentally) warmed (plots) relative to ambient plots, representing some of the highest soil respiration rates reported for any terrestrial ecosystem".

"This research shows that as the planet warms, tropical soils may begin to amplify that warming," author Christine Sierra O'Connell, Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences, said.

The study's results position belowground ecosystems as critical players in the global climate crisis, the researchers said.

The findings are also signif-

icant because soils store more carbon than the atmosphere and land plants combined, and soils releasing this carbon could amplify warming globally, they added.

"We are witnessing a troubling shift. The very systems we rely on to stabilise the climate may now be pushing us in the opposite direction," O'Connell said.

"If these patterns persist

across time and regions, we may be drastically underestimating the extent to which tropical forests will lose carbon and accelerate climate change," the author added.

Tropical regions of the world are projected to experience the worst effects of climate change, should current trends in emissions and warming continue.

The researchers said that rainforests acting as carbon sinks which absorb more carbon dioxide than they release, could accelerate global warming far faster than previously predicted.

This can affect everything from sea-level rise and extreme weather to food security and public health, the team said.

Understanding the feedback loop is essential if we are to prevent the worst impacts of a rapidly changing climate, they added.

Stepmother can't be given family pension under IAF rules: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 18: The Centre Thursday informed the Supreme Court that pension was "not a bounty" and a stepmother couldn't be considered for family pension under the Indian Air Force (IAF) rules being distinct from the natural mother in both legal and relational terms.

Before a bench of Justices Surya Kant, Ujjal Bhuyan and N Kotiswar Singh, the Centre referred to various decisions of the top court relating to maintenance and other welfare benefits which held the term "mother" refers to the natural or biological mother alone and not to a stepmother.

"It is a settled principle of law that, although pension is not a bounty and is claimable as a matter of right, such a right is neither absolute nor unconditional. A person seeking pensionary benefits must establish a clear entitlement under the applicable statutory provisions or regulations," the Centre said.

The Centre's stand came in plea challenging an Armed Forces Tribunal order denying special family pension to one Jayashree Y Jogi.

Jogi raised the deceased, who served as an airman, since he was six after his biological mother passed away and the father remarried.

She challenged the AFT's December 10, 2021 order on the ground that she was a "step-mother", therefore, not eligible for the benefit of "special family pension:", admissible to the biological mother.

Jogi's plea filed through advocate Siddharth Sangal said her deceased son was an active airman and was dining at the Air Force Mess when he died under mysterious circumstances April 28, 2008.

The air force claimed he died by suicide. The bench posted the matter for November 20.

Kangana faces protest in Manali

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, Sept 18: Slogans of 'Go back Kangana, you are late' rent the air Thursday when the Bollywood actor and BJP MP from Mandi visited a rain-affected area in Himachal Pradesh's Manali.

Videos of locals expressing their resentment against Kangana Ranaut's visit to Patlikuhah area of Manali in Himachal's Kullu district went viral on the internet. In the video, local people holding black flags and shouting slogans are seen near the carcade of the actor-politician.

Heated arguments were also witnessed when BJP leaders and others accompanying Kangana tried to pacify the residents, and police had to intervene to restore peace.

Heavy rains triggered landslides and flash floods at several places in Kullu and Manali August 25 and August 26, with strong currents of the Beas River washing away a multi-storey hotel and four shops.

Stretches of Chandigarh-Manali National Highway and Manali-Leh Highway were washed away due to the rising water level of Beas River. Right Bank Road of Manali connecting Kullu city, bus stand and Bindu Dhank also suffered extensive damage.

A house was damaged in Ramshele area in Kullu, water entered houses in the 14 Mile area near Manali and a fish farm was damaged in Patlikuhah as rivers and drains were in spate.

Earlier in the day, Kangana visited the disaster-affected areas of Solang and Palchan in Manali subdivision, interacted with the affected people and took stock of the situation.

She was briefed about the infrastructural and other losses by BJP leader and former MLA from Manali, Govind Singh Thakur, and the residents. Singh said that families of 15-16 endangered houses have been shifted to safer places.

of the day

quote

The window for finding a diplomatic solution on Iran's nuclear issue is closing really fast

KAJA KALLAS | TOP DIPLOMAT, EU

The bond of kinship and identity between America and the United Kingdom is priceless and eternal. It's irreplaceable and unbreakable

DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, US

A lot of people don't realise that we trade more with Mexico than we do with the entire European Union, all of the Europe, including the UK. It's a pretty big deal for us

PETER BOEHM | SENATOR, CANADA

SHORT TAKES

India extends Maldives' \$50mn bond deadline

Male: New Delhi has rolled over, for one more year, \$50 million Maldives' government bonds as "an emergency financial assistance," the Indian High Commission said here Thursday. The deadline for the repayment of a \$50 million Treasury Bill (T-bill) was extended once again "on the request of the Maldives government." "Since March 2019, the Government of India has been facilitating subscription of several such Treasury Bills by the State Bank of India (SBI) and rolling them over, annually, interest-free to the Government of Maldives," the Indian High Commission said in a statement. "On the request of the Government of Maldives, the State Bank of India (SBI) has subscribed, for one more year, a \$50 million Government Treasury Bill issued by the Ministry of Finance of Maldives," the statement said. The deadline for repayment was Thursday.

Bangladesh EC bars Hasina from voting

Dhaka: Bangladesh's Election Commission (EC) Wednesday said it has "locked" the national identity cards of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, effectively barring her from voting in the general elections scheduled for February next year. "Anyone whose national identity (NID) card has been locked cannot vote from abroad," EC Secretary Akhtar Ahmed told reporters at his office in Nirbachon Bhavan here. "Her (Hasina's) NID is locked," he added. Though Ahmed did not mention any other name, UNB news agency and the Dhaka Tribune newspaper, quoting unnamed EC officials, reported that NIDs of Hasina's younger sister Sheikh Rehana, son Sajeeb Wazed Joy and daughter Saima Wazed Putul have also been "locked" or "blocked".

Pak, China seek UN terror tag for BLA

United Nations: Pakistan and China have submitted a joint bid at the UN Security Council to designate the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and its suicide wing - Majeed Brigade - as a terrorist entity under the Council's 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee. Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmed said Wednesday that terrorist entities, including ISIL-K, Al-Qaeda, Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, East Turkistan Islamic Movement, the BLA and its Majeed Brigade, operate from Afghan sanctuaries, with more than 60 terror camps serving as hubs for enabling cross-border attacks.

Indian citizen first to be deported from UK



The man to be deported Thursday is among the first batch of migrants detained by the UK Border Force under the new treaty, which came into force in August as a pilot scheme to run until June 2026

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Sept 18: An Indian national who reportedly arrived in the UK illegally on a small boat across the English Channel became the first to be deported to France under a new treaty Thursday. The unnamed man who is said to have arrived in early August has been flown out to Paris on a commercial flight from Heathrow Airport under the so-called "one-in, one-out" deal struck recently as part of a UK-France returns treaty. UK Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood dubbed it an "important first step" in the government's attempt to clamp down on soaring illegal migration perpetuated by people smugglers across the Channel. "I will continue to challenge any last-minute, vexatious attempts to frustrate a removal in the courts. The UK will always play its part in helping those genuinely fleeing persecution, but this must be done through safe, legal, and managed routes – not dangerous crossings," she said. Home Office sources confirmed that the deported man was an Indian national, who is expected to be offered a paid-for voluntary return to his home country once back in France. He would not be able to apply for asylum and could go on to face enforced deportation if he did not take up the voluntary scheme. The development came after official Home Office figures released in August claimed that Indian nationals in detention as part of the UK's wider crackdown on illegal immigration had almost doubled in the past year, up 108 per cent. According to the data, 2,715 Indians were logged as being in detention under the UK's immigration law breach. The man to be deported Thursday is among the first batch of migrants detained by the UK Border Force under the new treaty, which came into force in August as a pilot scheme to run until June 2026. While further returns or deportations are planned on flights in the coming days, the first arrivals from France

through the new asylum route under the reciprocal scheme are expected in the UK in the coming days, the Home Office said. It said the new scheme enables the UK authorities to detain and remove people who enter illegally via small boats, blocking their access to the country's asylum system in an effort to reduce the burden on hotel accommodation. In return, the UK will accept an equal number of migrants through a newly established safe and legal route, subject to what the Home Office termed as "rigorous documentation, eligibility, and security checks". "The Home Secretary has made clear that the Home Office will robustly defend legal challenges to removal. Today we will lodge an appeal to the Court of Appeal to limit the time the person has to provide evidence for reconsideration," the Home Office said. It claims over 35,000 individuals with no legal right to remain in the UK have been returned in the past year, with returns of foreign criminals and asylum-related returns rising by 14 per cent and 28 per cent respectively.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN

■ Indian nationals in detention has almost doubled in the past year, up 108 per cent

■ 2,715 Indians were logged as being in detention under UK's immigration law breach

■ More than 35,000 illegally living individuals have been returned in the past year

This is an important first step to securing our borders. It sends a message to people crossing in small boats: if you enter the UK illegally, we will seek to remove you

SHABANA MAHMOOD | HOME SECRETARY, UK

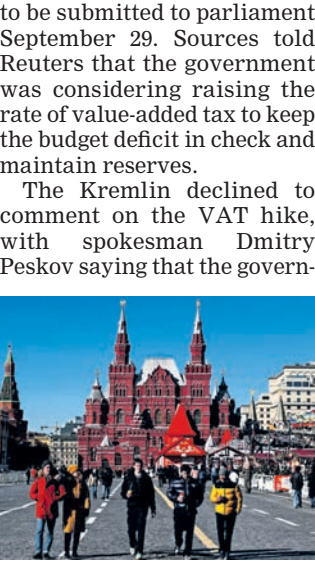


A protester holding a CGT labour union flag stands amid tear gas during clashes with French police at a demonstration in Nantes as part of a day of nationwide strikes and protests against the government and cuts in the next budget, with supporters of the "Bloquons Tout" (Let's Block Everything) movement, France, Thursday

Russia unveils 'muscular' budget changes to counter sanctions

REUTERS

Moscow, Sept 18: The Russian Finance Ministry announced a new measure Thursday that it said was aimed at shielding the state budget from oil price fluctuations and Western sanctions targeting Russian energy exports. Under the new initiative, set to be implemented next year, the government will lower the cut-off price for oil above which oil revenues go into the fiscal reserve fund to try to ensure that the fund is sufficiently replenished. "To make our finances more resilient, we are proposing a reduction in dependence on various constraints, whether price-related or volume-related, in the budget's reliance on oil and gas revenues," Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said at a public forum. The measure comes as Russia's state oil and gas sales in September are set to fall by around 23% from a year earlier on lower prices and a stronger rouble, according to Reuters' calculations. The draft budget is expected to be submitted to parliament September 29. Sources told Reuters that the government was considering raising the rate of value-added tax to keep the budget deficit in check and maintain reserves. The Kremlin declined to comment on the VAT hike, with spokesman Dmitry Peskov saying that the government was handling the draft. Key budget figures are traditionally agreed with President Vladimir Putin before the budget is made public. Putin, who met key cabinet members this week to discuss the budget, expressed displeasure at the slow pace of economic growth, which is expected to slow to about 1% from 4.3% last year.



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BORDER DISPUTE

Thai police fire tear gas at Cambodian protesters

REUTERS

Bangkok, Sept 18: Thai police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at Cambodian civilians in a disputed border area Wednesday, authorities in both countries said, the most significant escalation since they declared a ceasefire to end a deadly five-day conflict in July. At least 23 Cambodians were injured in the incident, according to Cambodian authorities, while Thailand's military said an unspecified number of Thai officials had also sustained injuries. The clash took place at a disputed frontier settlement, which Thailand says is part of its Ban Nong Ya Kaew village in Sa Kaew province, but Cambodia says is part of Prey Chan village in Banteay Meanchey province. Thai authorities erected barbed wire fences in the area last month and for weeks there have been protests by civilians from both sides of the border. Thailand and Cambodia have for more than a century contested sovereignty at various

Gaza hit by telecoms blackout as tanks advance

REUTERS

Cairo, Sept 18: Israeli tanks were seen in two Gaza City areas that are gateways to the city centre, residents said on Thursday, while internet and phone lines were cut off across the Gaza Strip, a sign that ground operations were likely to escalate imminently. Israeli forces control Gaza City's eastern suburbs and in recent days have been pounding the Sheikh Radwan and Tel Al-Hawa areas, from where they would be positioned to advance on central and western areas where most of the population is sheltering. "The disconnection of internet and phone services is a bad omen. It has always been a bad signal something very brutal is going to happen," said Ismail, who only gave one name. He was using an e-SIM to connect his phone, a dangerous method as it requires seeking higher ground to receive a signal. "The situation around me is very desperate. People in tents and in houses are very worried for their lives. Many



can't afford to leave, but many do not want to," he said, speaking from a coastal area in the west of the city. At least 14 Palestinians were killed by Israeli strikes or gunfire across the Gaza Strip Thursday, including nine in Gaza City, local health authorities said. The Palestinian Telecommunications Company said in a statement that its services had been cut off "due to the ongoing

Internet, phone lines cut off across Gaza Strip

■ Previous blackouts have preceded intense Israeli assaults

■ Tanks seen in two Gaza City areas on way to city centre

■ Hundreds of thousands of civilians sheltering in city

aggression and the targeting of the main network routes". In its latest statement to media, the Israeli military said troops were expanding their operations in Gaza City, dismantling what it called "terror infrastructure" and "eliminating terrorists". The statement did not mention the telecoms blackout or give any details of tank movements. It also said the military was continuing to operate in Khan Younis and Rafah in the south. The total Palestinian death toll from the two-year war between Israel and Hamas surpassed 65,000 Wednesday, according to the Gaza health authorities. Palestinian officials and rescue workers say the true figure is likely higher as many remains are trapped under the rubble of destroyed buildings.



ous undemarcated points along their 817 km (508 miles) land border, which was first mapped by France in 1907 when Cambodia was its colony. Tensions over disputed areas spiraled into a border conflict in July, when the fiercest fighting between the neighbours in decades killed at least 48 people and temporarily displaced hundreds of thousands. The fighting ended after both countries agreed a ceasefire brokered in Malaysia July 28, and the border has largely remained calm since.

'Jimmy Kimmel Live' off air after remarks about Kirk

REUTERS

Los Angeles, Sept 18: Walt Disney-owned ABC said Wednesday it was pulling "Jimmy Kimmel Live" off the air, after comments by the late-night show's host about the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk prompted a threat by the head of the top US communications regulator against Disney. President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly pressured broadcasters to stop airing content he has found objectionable, celebrated the news in a social media post. A number of Democratic lawmakers assailed the decision, saying free speech was under attack. The suspension of Kimmel's show marked the latest action taken against media figures, academic workers, teachers and corporate employees over their remarks about Kirk following his assassination. Republican leaders and conservative commentators have warned Americans to mourn Kirk respectfully or suffer consequences, and some people have been fired or suspended after discussing the killing online. Kimmel, who has frequently targeted Trump on his late-night comedy show, drew fire for remarks he made about the killing in his monologue Monday. "We hit some new lows over the weekend, with the MAGA gang desperately trying to characterize this kid who murdered Charlie Kirk as anything other than one of them, and doing everything they can to score political points from it," Kimmel said.

Kirk, a 31-year-old activist and Trump-world celebrity known for his right-wing views and pugnacious debating style, was shot in the neck while speaking at a Utah university a week ago. A 22-year-old suspect has been charged with his murder, and his precise motive remains unclear. Kimmel's comments led to a response from Federal Communications Commission Chair Brendan Carr, who urged local broadcasters to stop airing "Jimmy Kimmel Live" on ABC. Carr suggested the commission could open an investigation and that broadcasters could potentially be fined or lose their licenses if there was a pattern of distorted comment. "This is a very, very serious issue right now for Disney. We can do this the easy way or the hard way," Carr said in a podcast interview with conservative commentator Benny Johnson that aired Wednesday. "Disney needs to see some change here, but the individual licensed stations that are taking their content, it's time for them to step up and say this, you know, garbage to the extent that that's what comes down the pipe in the future isn't something that we think serves the needs of our local communities."



Trump administration steps up pressure on critics

Democrats complain free speech is under attack

Kirk assassination continues to reverberate across US

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of the day

quote

I encourage global investors and stakeholders to explore the opportunities that India and Maharashtra present. Together, let us build a future of shared prosperity and sustainable growth

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

Digitisation is extremely important for Indian aerospace industry to be able to scale up and position itself as a global manufacturing hub

BANMALI AGRAWALA | CHAIRMAN, TATA ADVANCED SYSTEMS

Going forward, there is a need to accelerate asset monetization in various sectors such as roads, railways, ports, airports, energy, petroleum and gas and logistics

TUHIN KANTA PANDEY | CHIEF, SEBI

SHORT TAKES

Maruti reduces vehicle prices

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India Thursday announced a reduction in prices of its entire model range by up to ₹1,29,600 from September 22 to pass on the GST rate cut benefit to customers. The prices of entry-level model S Presso will go down by up to ₹1,29,600; Alto K10 by up to ₹1,07,600; Celerio by up to ₹94,100; Wagon-R by up to ₹79,600 and Ignis by up to ₹71,300, the auto major said. Price of premium hatchback Swift is reduced by up to ₹84,600; Baleno by up to ₹86,100; Tour S by up ₹67,200; Dzire by up to ₹87,700; Fronx by up to ₹1,12,600; Brezza by up to ₹1,12,700; Grand Vitara by up to ₹1.07 lakh; Jimny by up to ₹51,900; Ertiga by up to ₹46,400 and Xl6 by up to up to ₹52,000, it added. Similarly, prices of Invicto will reduce by up to ₹61,700; Eeco by up to ₹68,000 and Super Carry LCV by up to ₹52,100, the company said.

NaBFID launches partial credit facility

Mumbai: The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) Thursday launched the partial credit enhancement (PCE) for help in project finance. The PCE, which was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the FY26 Budget presented in February, is aimed at strengthening the infrastructure bond market and improving access to long-term capital for infrastructure projects, NaBFID's Managing Director and Chief Executive Rajkiran Rai said. The PCE instrument launched by the premier infrastructure finance entity can help give higher comfort to an investor for subscribing to a bond.

Eternal's mcap surges

New Delhi: The market valuation of Eternal Ltd, which owns the Zomato and Blinkit brands, surged to ₹3.26 lakh crore Thursday following a rally in its stock price, with the company racing ahead of firms like Hindustan Aeronautics, Titan, Avenue Supermarts and Adani Ports in the market capitalisation chart. Shares of Eternal climbed 2.96 per cent to settle at ₹337.90 apiece on the BSE. During the day, the stock jumped 3.18 per cent to ₹338.65 -- its 52-week high level. The stock has been rallying for the past four trading days, climbing 5.11 per cent. At the close of trade, the company commanded a market valuation of Rs 3,26,085.35 crore.



Coal continues to remain the backbone of India's energy ecosystem, meeting the needs of industries, households, and infrastructure, and driving the vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat

HARISH DUHAN | CMD, SECL

TCS TO TRANSFORM Vi BIZ

India's largest IT services company Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has been selected by Vodafone Idea to transform its business support system through an AI-driven and future-ready platform, according to a release Thursday. The five-year engagement will help the telecom service provider unlock new capabilities in customer experience by deploying a platform focused on intelligence, automation, personalisation and accelerated launch of new products and services



Centre revamps annual return form GSTR-9



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 18: The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has notified changes to the annual goods and service tax (GST) return form GSTR-9, making the reporting of Input Tax Credit (ITC) more comprehensive.

CBIC, September 17 notified changes to the Central GST (CGST) rules, which will come into effect on September 22 and apply to annual returns filed for the 2024-25 fiscal.

GST registered Taxpayers with aggregate turnover above ₹2 crore are required to file GSTR-9.

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said "Revised structure of form makes it far more detailed, with new tables covering reversals under Rules 37, 37A, 38, 42 and 43, re-claims in subsequent years,

transitional credits, import-related ITC, and auto-populated mismatches."

Professionals and Corporates will need to wait for the revised forms and utilities from GSTN before implementing these changes in practice.

"Going forward, this measure underscores a more data-driven and preventive compliance regime, which may reduce litigation but requires disciplined documentation at the entity level," Mohan added.

Following the change, taxpayers and professionals have to undertake deeper reconciliations of GSTR-3B, GSTR-2B, and financial accounts.

"By embedding these disclosures upfront, the system aims to save taxpayers from flimsy or avoidable notices, as departmental officers will have a ready-made audit trail in the annual filing," Mohan noted.

Gold dips; Fed in focus

The US Federal Reserve Wednesday lowered its benchmark interest rate by 25 basis points to a range of 4.00-4.25 percent, its first cut since December 2024

REUTERS



FED DELIVERED ITS FIRST RATE CUT SINCE DECEMBER

SPOT GOLD HITS RECORD PEAK OF \$3,707.40 WEDNESDAY

PRICE PULL BACK FROM RECORD IS CORRECTIVE IN NATURE, ANALYST SAYS

US WEEKLY JOBLESS CLAIMS FALL

about the rate cut being a risk-management measure, and that uncertainty prompted profit-taking," said Peter Grant, vice president and senior metals strategist at Zaner Metals.

"But, I do think (gold's) long-term bullish trend still remains and the setback from yesterday's all time high is corrective in nature... Every time gold make a new high, it

just lends additional credence to the to the \$4,000 objective."

Zero-yield gold, which tends to perform well in low-interest rate environments and during periods of uncertainty, has gained nearly 39 per cent this year.

Analysts at SP Angel in a note reiterated that the current primary driver behind gold is the diversification of dollar reserves by BRIC central banks, most notably China.

"This trend is expected to continue, supporting gold prices whilst a lower dollar is also expected to provide a sustained tailwind," the note added. Elsewhere, data showed the number of Americans filing new applications for unemployment benefits fell last week. Among other metals, spot silver fell 0.3 per cent at \$41.51 per ounce, platinum gained 0.9per cent to \$1,376, and palladium was down 1.1 per cent at \$1,141.82.

Vedanta's Project Vidya transforms lives in Kuraloi

Bhubaneswar: Vedanta Aluminium, has reinforced its commitment to advancing quality education through Project Vidya by deploying 10 additional teachers across 10 government schools in the Kuraloi region of Jharsuguda district. The event was graced by Sanatna Naik, Sarpanch of Kuraloi, along with AJKA representatives, community leaders, headmasters of beneficiary schools and members. Rajiv Kumar, CEO, Vedanta Aluminium, said, "Education is the cornerstone of social progress, and we are committed to support it in every way possible. Through Project Vidya, we are enhancing teaching capacity in rural schools of Odisha to ensure that students gain access to quality learning opportunities. We endeavour to nurture young minds and help shape a brighter future for the communities around our operations." Sanatna Naik, Sarpanch, Kuraloi, said, "Project Vidya is a welcome step for our schools. With additional teachers being placed, students will receive more focused guidance, helping them build a stronger foundation in key subjects and gain greater confidence in learning. This initiative by Vedanta addresses critical community needs and will go a long way in improving education in our region."

CARE Bhubaneswar introduces Nano Scope System

Bhubaneswar: CARE Hospitals, Bhubaneswar has set a new benchmark in advanced orthopaedic care with the introduction of East India's first dedicated Nano Scope System for Small Joint Repair. This breakthrough was achieved under the leadership of Sandeep Singh, HOD, Orthopaedics & Chief Consultant, Robotic Surgery & Sports Injury, a pioneer in advanced orthopaedic surgeries. Sandeep Singh said, "Nano Vision is a game-changer. We are not just performing surgeries. We are performing miracles with precision. Synergy Vision allows us to operate with a level of accuracy and control that brings global gold standards to Indian soil." KislayAnand, Zonal Chief Operating Officer, CARE Hospitals, said, "This milestone reaffirms our commitment to bringing world-class healthcare innovations closer to the people of Eastern India. With the Nano Scope System, patients in this region no longer need to travel to metro cities for advanced orthopedic procedures."



CIL announces partnership with Apollo Hospitals

Coal India Limited (CIL) has announced its collaboration with Apollo Hospitals to extend advanced healthcare facilities to serving and retired employees across 43 hospitals of the group nationwide.The partnership reflects CIL's commitment to building a healthier and stronger workforce by ensuring access to world-class medical care, preventive health services, and wellness programs. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in Chennai in the presence of Vinay Ranjan, Director (HR), Coal India, and Prathap C Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals. Senior officials from both organisations were present on the occasion.

TPCODL bags 15 awards at 7th Chapter Convention



Bhubaneswar: TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), a joint venture of Tata Power and Government of Odisha has won 15 awards at the 7th Chapter Convention on Quality Concepts 2025 organized by QCFI Bhubaneswar Chapter. Out of 15 projects from Quality Circle & Kaizen, 14 teams secured 'Gold' and 1 team earned 'Silver'. TPCODL competed with 210+ teams from leading organisations like NTPC, Odisha Mining Corporation, Jindal Stainless, NALCO, BALCO, Tata Power, Vedanta and more. This achievement reflects TPCODL's unwavering commitment to quality, innovation and continuous improvement. The Gold-winning teams have now qualified for the National Convention on Quality Concepts in December.

SEBI gives clean chit to Adani

New Delhi: The Security Exchange Board of India (Sebi)Thursday cleared billionaire Gautam Adani and his group of stock manipulation allegations made by US short-seller Hindenburg Research, saying it found no evidence that the conglomerate used related parties to route funds into its listed companies. The board said the allegations of insider trading, market manipulation, and violations of public shareholding norms were found to be unsubstantiated after a detailed investigation.Hindenburg, which has since shut down, in January 2023 published a damning report against the Adani Group, alleging Adicorp Enterprises Pvt Ltd, Milestone Tradelinks Pvt Ltd, and Rehvar Infrastructure Pvt Ltd were used as a conduit to route funds from various Adani Group companies to fund publicly listed Adani Power Ltd and Adani Enterprises Ltd.

BIITM organises industry visit

Bhubaneswar: IMBA students of Biju Patnaik Institute of Information Technology Management Studies (BIITM), accompanied by Annjaan Daash and Bijukta Moharana faculty members, embarked on an insightful industry visit to Shou-keen Industries, a multiple award-winning mattress manufacturer, September 18. The tour provided an in-depth look into advanced mattress manufacturing processes, quality control protocols, and sustainable practices that define one of India's premier sleep-product innovators.



FinMin urges employees to opt UPS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 18: The Finance Ministry Thursday asked government employees to opt for shifting to the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) well before the September 30 deadline to ensure the timely processing of their requests.

From April 1, 2025, the government has introduced UPS as an option under the National Pension System (NPS) for central government employees. UPS will provide assured payouts to the employees.

In a statement, the Ministry said the last date for eligible employees and past retirees under NPS to opt for UPS is September 30, 2025.

"All eligible employees are urged to exercise their option well before the deadline to

avoid any last-minute difficulties and to ensure timely processing of their requests. Employees who choose to remain in NPS cannot opt for UPS after this date," the ministry said.

Around 31,555 central government employees had opted for the UPS till July 20, and the last date to enrol under the scheme is September 30.

Also, the Finance Ministry, on August 25, introduced a one-time one-way switch facility from the newly introduced UPS to the NPS.

The Finance Ministry said it has been decided that a one-time, one-way switch facility from UPS to NPS will be made available to all Central Government employees who have opted for UPS.

"This switch facility may be exercised by UPS optees any

time not later than one year prior to the date of superannuation or three months prior to the deemed date of retirement in case of voluntary retirement, as applicable," it added.

The government has extended the benefit of 'Retirement gratuity and Death gratuity under UPS.

Further, the government employees who opt for UPS under NPS will also be eligible for the option to avail benefits under the CCS (Pension) Rules, 2021, or the CCS (Extraordinary Pension) Rules, 2023, in the event of death of the government servant during service or his discharge on the ground of invalidation or disablement.

The government has also extended tax benefits to UPS as are available to NPS under the Income Tax Act, 1961.

Climate-driven health risks may cost \$1.5tn to global economy

The study encourages companies to act now to protect workforce health, build operational resilience and safeguard productivity before the costs of climate adaptation become unmanageable.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 18: Climate-related health risks can cost the global economy at least \$1.5 trillion (over ₹131 lakh crore) in lost productivity in the next 25 years due to rising illness and labour shortages across key sectors, a new study showed Thursday.

The World Economic Forum report, developed in collaboration with Boston Consulting Group, assessed climate-driven health impacts in four of the most affected economic

sectors: food and agriculture; the built environment; health and healthcare; and insurance.

The \$1.5 trillion estimate reflects losses in only the first three sectors, under a mid-range scenario, suggesting the burden on the global economy could be far higher, it said.

The study encourages companies to act now to protect workforce health, build operational resilience and safeguard productivity before the costs of climate adaptation become unmanageable.

The findings highlighted that



adapting to extreme heat, infectious diseases and other health risks accelerating due to climate change is now a strategic business imperative.

"We are entering an era in which protecting worker health is proving essential to business continuity and long-term resili-

ence," said Eric White, Head of Climate Resilience, World Economic Forum.

"Every year we delay embedding resilience into business decisions, the risks to human health and productivity climb and the costs of adaptation rise," White added.

Alongside shared disruptions, the analysis also outlined sector-specific vulnerabilities. In food and agriculture, climate health impacts could lead to \$740 billion in lost output, triggering serious consequences for global food security, according to the WEF, a Geneva-based international organisation for public-private partnership.

In the built environment sector, climate health impacts are projected to result in productivity losses of \$570 billion.

The health and healthcare sector stands to lose \$200 billion in productivity due to workforce climate health issues, while rising climate-driven disease rates among the wider

population could compound demand pressures. The insurance industry, meanwhile, is projected to experience a sharp rise in climate health claims.

"As temperatures rise, millions of jobs become more dangerous or disappear entirely; pushing families deeper into poverty and changing where and how people can live and thrive," said Naveen Rao, Vice-President for Health, Rockefeller Foundation, which supported this research.

However, the report also indicated that companies investing early in climate health adaptation can benefit beyond risk mitigation, unlocking new opportunities for innovation and growth while meeting emerging market needs.

