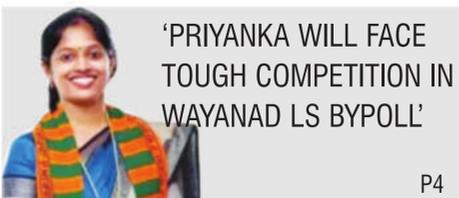




## ISSUES BEFORE JAPAN

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## 'PRIYANKA WILL FACE TOUGH COMPETITION IN WAYANAD LS BY POLL'

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## A LESSON IN DIPLOMACY

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## NZ SECURE FIRST WIN IN INDIA AFTER 36 YEARS

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### WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky. Light to moderate rain / thundershower very likely to occur. Maximum and minimum temperatures likely to be around 32 °C and 24 °C respectively.

**RAINFALL:** NIL  
**RELATIVE HUMIDITY**  
Max. 81 % Min. 67 %  
**TEMPERATURE**  
Max. 32.6 °C Min. 24.3 °C  
SUN RISES 05:35 hrs SUN SETS 17:06 hrs  
MOON RISES 20:21 hrs MOON SETS 09:37 hrs

New Moon on 1 November

### THUMBNAILS



A woman performs rituals on the occasion of Karva Chauth in Bikaner on Sunday. ■ ANI

**Terrorist killed by security forces in J&K's Uri:** One terrorist was killed on Sunday in the joint operation launched by the security forces along the line of control (LoC) in J&K's Uri sector. The Army's Srinagar-headquartered Chinara Corps said that the joint team neutralised one heavily armed militant and recovered an AK rifle, two AK magazines, 57 AK rounds, two pistols, three pistol magazines and other war-like stores from the site.

# Junior doctors to meet Mamata today

### Medics say no compromise on demand for removing health secy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 20 OCTOBER

A delegation of junior doctors will attend the meeting called by the Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at Nabanna Sabhaghar tomorrow afternoon.

The junior doctors arrived at the decision following a marathon meeting held this afternoon. However, they will not withdraw their fast-unto-death programme.

Miss Banerjee had requested them to withdraw the movement before coming for the meeting. Also, the junior doctors have said they will be no compromise on their demand to remove the state health secretary, NS Nigam.

Miss Banerjee, during a telephonic conversation with the junior doctors on Saturday, made it clear that it would not be possible for the state government to remove the health secretary.

The state Chief Secretary Mr Manoj Pant and Home secretary Nandini Chakravarti had visited the site where the



doctors are on fast unto death on Saturday and requested them to withdraw the fast. There, the chief minister had a conversation with the agitating doctors over the phone and requested them to end the fast and come for a meeting at Nabanna Sabhaghar on Monday.

The junior doctors said they would submit specific allegation against the Health secretary. "It is not our juvenile adamancy to demand for the removal of the health secretary. We have specific allegation against him and will submit documents relating to the allegations tomorrow," a leader of the agitating doctors said.

The state government has already removed the Commissioner of Police Vineet Goyal and some senior officials of the state health department, which had been demanded by the junior doctors.

The junior doctors said their fast-unto-death would continue as they want a corruption-free, transparent health administration. They also demanded that elections to the college unions in all the medical colleges be held immediately.

had been hurt by some of the statements of Miss Mamata Banerjee and hoped that tomorrow's meeting will be held keeping in mind the humanitarian approach.

Meanwhile, Trinamul Congress leader Kunal Ghosh has demanded an inquiry into an allegation that the junior doctors in their account has collected Rs 1.70 crore.

An NGO has been formed and an account has been opened in the names of Aniket Mahato, Rajdeep Sau and Arnab Mukhopadhyay, he alleged. The account has been opened with HDFC Bank bearing account number XXXXXXXXXX3251.

The address given while opening the account is Room number 32, KB Hostel, RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, even though to open an account, banks want the permanent address of the account holders that is mentioned in the Aadhar or PAN data. Mr Ghosh demanded an inquiry to find out when the account was opened, how it had been opened and who have contributed money.

# Doctor among six people killed in J&K terror attack, five injured

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 20 OCTOBER

Six people, including a doctor, were killed and five others injured in a terrorist attack on Sunday evening in Gaganger near Sonmarg in Ganderbal district of Kashmir.

The victims include migrant labourers and locals. Terror outfit TRF has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Reports said that terrorists barged into a labour camp at a tunnel construction site and started firing indiscriminately with automatic weapons. About two to three terrorists were involved in the attack.

This is the second terrorist attack on migrant labourers in the past three days in the valley. A bullet-riddled body of a non-local labourer identified

**The terrorists, two to three in number, barged into a labour camp at a tunnel construction site and started firing indiscriminately with automatic weapons.**

as Ashok Chauhan was found in the Waduna area of Zainapora, Shopian on Friday.

Security forces have been rushed to the area where one terrorist is reported to be trapped. Further details are awaited.

Condemning the attack, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said: "I assure the people that those behind this despicable act will not go unpunished. We have given full freedom to J&K Police, Army

and security forces. Our brave personnel are on the ground & they will ensure terrorists pay a very heavy price for their action. My heartfelt condolences to bereaved families. Praying for speedy recovery of the injured. The entire nation stands in solidarity with the families in this hour of grief".

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah wrote on X: "Very sad news of a dastardly & cowardly attack on non-local labourers at Gaganger in Sonamarg region. These people were working on a key infrastructure project in the area. 2 have been killed & 2-3 more have been injured in this militant attack. I strongly condemn this attack on unarmed innocent people & send my condolences to their loved ones."

# BJP releases first list for Maha elections; Fadnavis to contest from Nagpur South West

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday released its first list of 99 candidates for the Maharashtra assembly elections, scheduled to be held on 20 November.

As per the list, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis will contest from Nagpur South West, while state BJP president Chandrashekhar



Krishnarao Bawankule will contest from the Kamthi seat. Other key candidates include Minister Girish Mahajan who will contest from Jamner, Sudhir Mungantiwar from Ballarpur, Sreejaya Ashok Chavan from Bhokar, Ashish Shelar from Vandrev West, Mangal Prabhat Lodha from Malabar Hill, Rahul Narvekar from Colaba, and Chhatrapati Shivendra Raje Bhosale from Satara.

The list also features Suresh Damu Bhole from Jalgaon City, Atul Save from Aurangabad East, Sanjay Mukund Kalkar from Thane, and Vinod Shelar from Malad West, among others.

The announcement two days after a meeting held at Union Home Minister Amit Shah's residence to discuss the National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) strategy for the Maharashtra polls. Maharashtra has 288

Assembly seats, and the BJP is part of the ruling Mahayuti alliance alongside the Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde faction) and Ajit Pawar-led NCP.

As election day nears, both the Mahayuti alliance and the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) - comprising the Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (Sharad Pawar faction), and Congress - have intensified their preparations, including seat-sharing discussions.

Earlier, Deputy CM Fadnavis confirmed that seat-sharing talks within the Mahayuti alliance are nearing completion. "We cleared the problematic seats by having a positive discussion. We will clear the few remaining seats in the next two days, we have decided that the cleared seats should be announced by that party at their convenience," he said.

# Opposition creating hurdles in the way of development: PM Modi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
VARANASI, 20 OCTOBER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi fiercely targeted the Opposition parties including the Samajwadi Party and Congress charging them with not allowing development of the country to move forward.

He said even today, they (the Opposition) are working to create hurdles in the way of development works.

The PM said this after the inauguration and laying of the foundation stone for various projects worth Rs 6,700 crore from his parliamentary constituency Varanasi.

Mr Modi said today is a very auspicious day for Kashi as it is going to witness a new story of development. He said various projects worth Rs 6,700 crore include many development works related to airports, education, health, sports, and tourism.

Mr Modi said all the Opposition parties, including the



SP and Congress, were practicing nepotism. "Only the BJP fulfilled the dream of Ram temple in Ayodhya. Women were talked about reservation in legislation and the Lok Sabha, which we fulfilled. The BJP government gave respect to Muslim women. They were tortured for many years in the name of triple talaq and were living a dark life. The BJP government has given women the courage to walk with their heads held high," the PM said.

Prime Minister Modi said that in the future, one lakh youth would be made a part of politics. He called upon the youth to come forward

for this and become a part of the country's progress.

During his address, Mr Modi said languages are also being developed in the country. Pali language is being developed. I thank the people of Kashi along with all the citizens of the country for all these development schemes.

He said last year, improvements were made in a dozen airports of the country. A grand international airport in Ayodhya is welcoming Ram devotees.

There was a time when the roads of UP were known for their dilapidation. Roads in UP are being constructed after 2014 and now the roads are shining.

Works being done regarding the development and heritage of Kashi city. From the streets to the beautiful ghats here, people are enthralled, he said.

He said as soon as the new government was formed, development works started once again.

# Blast near CRPF school in Delhi, terror angle not confirmed yet

SNS & AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

A massive explosion took place near a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) school in Prashant Vihar in Delhi's Rohini on Sunday, triggering panic among area residents who mistook it as a terror strike.

No one was injured in the blast that took place around 7.45 a.m. There is no confirmation yet if it was an act of terror but there were indications of possible use of a crude bomb.

A high-security alert has been sounded in the Capital, police said.

Sources said a powder-like white residue collected from the blast site was sent for forensic tests.

However, investigators refused to confirm or deny whether the powder was similar to ammonium nitrate - an ingredient used in the



manufacture of commercial explosives.

The explosion probably took place in material stored or concealed inside the school along its boundary wall or in a sewer line passing close to the wall, sources said.

Soon after the blast, Special CP, Special Cell, R. P. Upadhyay reached the spot to lead the investigation by bomb disposal and dog squads. Delhi Police have registered an FIR under the Explosives Act.

Investigators from the NIA, the CRPF, and the NSG also joined the investigation during the day.

# Over half of healthcare workers feel their workplace 'unsafe': Survey

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

A recent survey has shown that over half of the healthcare workers who participated feel that their workplace is unsafe, particularly in state and central government medical colleges.

The survey was led by healthcare experts from the Vardhman Mahavir Medical College (VMMC), Safdarjung Hospital and AIIMS, New Delhi.

The "Workplace Safety and Security in Indian Healthcare Settings: A Cross-Sectional Survey" has been published in a recent issue of the journal *Epidemiology International*.

It highlighted significant gaps in the security infrastructure within Indian healthcare settings, and underscored the urgent need for improving the prevailing safety and security measures



in healthcare settings.

The survey found that more than half (58.2 per cent) of healthcare workers feel unsafe at the workplace and 78.4 per cent reported having been threatened on duty.

Nearly half of the healthcare workers do not have a dedicated duty room while working for long hours or

at night.

Dr Jugal Kishore, the corresponding author of the study, said the existing duty rooms are grossly inadequate in terms of providing the basic amenities and services such as regular cleaning, pest control, ventilation, room space, and air conditioning.

Over 70 per cent felt secu-

**Nearly half of the healthcare workers do not have a dedicated duty room while working for long hours or at night.**

riety personnel were ineffective, and 62 per cent reported the emergency alarm system to be inadequate. Nearly half reported severe gaps in access control, surveillance, and security in high-risk areas like ICUs and psychiatric wards.

The survey said over 90 per cent of institutions lack proper screening for weapons or dangerous objects, and nearly three-fourths reported the absence of secure hospital boundaries.

These findings paint a dire picture of insufficient security in critical healthcare settings, putting both workers

and patients at risk, Dr Kishore said.

Over 63 per cent of respondents in state government medical colleges were unhappy with the number of security personnel, with a four-times higher likelihood of dissatisfaction compared to private colleges.

Nearly 70 per cent criticised poor emergency alarms, access control, and security in high-risk areas, where dissatisfaction was more than 3.5 times higher.

An alarming 81.3 per cent of healthcare workers reported witnessing violence, yet nearly half (44.1 per cent) felt these incidents were handled poorly.

Further, 80 per cent of respondents didn't know who to contact in case of an emergency, and over 70 per cent lacked a clear, confidential process for reporting security concerns.

**The Statesman**  
दैनिक स्टेट्सम्यान

The Statesman is looking for the most beautiful and best-dressed women in Indian and Western attire. And you could be the lucky one to win the coveted prize!

**Best Face Best Dress**

The Statesman is organising a competition and those who wish to participate, can send in their picture in Indian or Indo-western dress.

You can post your pics between 9th October and 2nd November, 2024 at [puja@thestatesmangroup.com](mailto:puja@thestatesmangroup.com) along with your name, address, phone number and email. The minimum age for participation is 18 years.

The lucky ones will get attractive prizes and their photos and names will be published in the newspaper.\*

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
9830874087/8420298752

\*Terms & Conditions apply

Gift Partner: Blossom Kachhar aroma magic, The yellow turtle, Five & Dials, Food Partner: Bhojan

# PM lays foundation for ₹1,550 cr Bagdogra airport revamp

It will feature 10 parking bays for A321 aircraft, two link taxiways, and multi-level parking facilities

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE SILIGURI, 20 OCTOBER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually laid the foundation stone for the Bagdogra Airport New Terminal and Redevelopment Project from Kashi today.

Although PM Modi did not specifically mention Bagdogra Airport or North Bengal in his address, Civil Aviation Minister K. R. Naidu highlighted that a total of 1,550 crore would be allocated for the project.

West Bengal Governor Dr. C. V. Ananda Bose attended the event virtually, watching the entire ceremony, which was broadcast from Varanasi. Union Minister Shantanu Thakur was present at the local event.

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) organised the foundation stone-laying ceremony, inviting Siliguri Mayor



Goutam Deb and other local representatives.

In his speech, Mr. Deb acknowledged the state government's contribution in handing over nearly 100 acres of land for the airport's development. Darjeeling MP Raju Bista also expressed gratitude to the state government for providing the necessary land to the AAI.

Mr. Thakur emphasised



it is my duty to fulfill the developmental aspirations of the people of this region."

According to official sources, the first phase of the project will include a new terminal spanning 70,390 square metres, with plans to add an additional 50,000 square metres in future phases.

The terminal will accommodate 3,000 peak-hour passengers, with an annual capacity of over 10 million.

It will feature 10 parking bays for A321 aircraft, two link taxiways, and multi-level parking facilities.

Passenger traffic at Bagdogra has surged in the last decade, growing from around 3,000 passengers and 20 daily flights to approximately 10,000 passengers and nearly 60 flights per day.

However, airport facilities have remained largely unchanged during this period.

## IN SUPPORT



Sangrami Joitha Mancha members on a symbolic fast (anoshan) supporting the protesting junior doctors at Shahid Minar on Sunday.

## Son identifies second body found in Kumari river, first remains unidentified

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE PURULIA, 20 OCTOBER

The second body found floating in the Kumari River and stuck in a sandbank in Purulia, of an elderly woman, has finally been identified.

The son of Umarani Dey (74) of Poddar Para under Man Bazaar Police Station, Purnendu Dey, said that his mother had been missing since the Durga Pujas.

"My mother was going to her relatives' house, but we couldn't find her filed a missing person report. The body was swollen and decomposed, making it very difficult to recognize as the face was also decomposed. We could only identify her by the clothes and spectacles she was wearing," said Purnendu Dey. However, he is unable to understand why his mother went to the river and drowned.

Abhijit Banerjee, SP of Purulia, said that the body of the elderly woman has been handed over to her family after a post-mortem at Deben Mahato Medical College Hospital.

The first body recovered by police from the Kumar River bank in Bara Bazar Police Station area is yet to be identified, he added.

The recovery of two women's bodies from the banks of the Kumar River in Bara Bazar and Man Bazaar Police Station areas within 48 hours has shaken the Purulia district.

With the identification of the second body, police have now breathed a sigh of relief.

The first unidentified body was of a 25-year-old woman wearing jeans and a kurti. Her face appears to have been smashed to hide her identity.

## Panagarh Stn getting revamp under Indian Railways' Amrit Bharat station scheme

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE ASANSOL, 20 OCTOBER

The railway station in the town of Panagarh under Asansol Division of Eastern Railway is undergoing significant redevelopment under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, focusing on upgrading passenger facilities and services.

"The modernisation project is nearing completion, with the majority of work already finished and the remaining tasks being completed swiftly. This redevelopment will greatly enhance the overall passenger experience, offering modern infrastructure, improved accessibility, and upgraded services, making Panagarh Station a more efficient and passenger-friendly travel hub," according to Chetna Nand Singh, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of Asansol.

Panagarh is situated on the Bardhaman-Asansol section, a critical part of the Howrah-Gaya-Delhi line,



Howrah-Allahabad-Mumbai line, and Howrah-Delhi main line of Indian Railways.

With its proximity to the Asansol-Durgapur industrial belt, Panagarh has become a hub for investments, housing major industries including an industrial park of West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC).

Moreover, the Defense Ministry plans to establish Panagarh, HQ of the Indian Army's Mountain Strike Corps, as the biggest military hub in eastern India over the next few years due to its strategic location. Any infrastructure development in the railways here will be a significant boost to the Army in the eastern

and north-eastern parts of the country.

Key redevelopment works at Panagarh Station include the construction of a new station building, which will feature modern amenities and improved services for passengers. Two lifts are being installed to enhance accessibility, particularly for the elderly and differently-abled. The existing facade and elevation will also be upgraded, with modern lighting installations to ensure a vibrant and well-illuminated station. Interior improvements such as revamped waiting halls, ticket counters, and the provision of high-quality durable furniture will enhance passenger comfort.

## 37 days after lynching, victim's family yet to get autopsy report

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE BANKURA, 20 OCTOBER

The family of a lynched youth has not received the victim's post-mortem report, even though 37 days have passed. Additionally, some Civic Police Volunteers have allegedly been intimidating the family members, prompting the MLA from the ISF to visit the victim's house in Bankura this morning.

Naushad Siddiqui, the MLA, also accused the police of negligence and indifference, claiming that they helped all five accused get released from jail custody in 23 days and that the victim's family has not been provided the post-mortem report by the district police. He said this "would compel us to intervene and seek an explanation from the district police."

Nasrul Midya, a middle-aged motor garage mechanic from Jolhori village within the



Bankura PS limits, was beaten to death in neighboring Bolara village after his speeding motorcycle hit a local fuchka vendor, Sanik Gorai, killing him, on the evening of 14 September. The agitated crowd claimed that Nasrul was driving his motorbike recklessly while intoxicated. An angry mob then thrashed him to death on the spot, leading to a tense brawl between the neighboring localities. The police soon intervened and set up a temporary camp for seven days. Thirteen days after the incident, the police arrested five

youths for their "direct" involvement in the lynching, but they were released on bail after 23 days. Naushad Siddiqui arrived in Jolhori today and after meeting the bereaved family, alleged that "the police have assigned some Civic Police Volunteers to intimidate the family." Arup Chakraborty, MP, Bankura, said: "It's genuinely a right of the victim's family to get the post-mortem report." However, he added, "It's confusing what prompted Naushad Siddiqui to make this a political issue after over a month of the incident."

## HERITAGE OF KOLKATA



Kolkata Metro Railway organises a Walkathon from Park Street to Esplanade with two tableaux of 'old non ac metro coach' and 'new ac metro coach' depicting the rich heritage and cultural history of Kolkata and Metro's contribution to its socio-economy, on the occasion of 40th anniversary of Kolkata metro train services.

## Kin of woman who died of cobra bite agitate alleging wrong treatment

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE ASANSOL, 20 OCTOBER

The family members and relatives of an elderly woman who died after a cobra snake bite agitated at Kelejora Primary Health Centre in Barabani Police Station limits of West Burdwan district, alleging that she died due to wrong treatment.

The family members of the 70-year-old woman, Moyna Majhi, said that she was bitten by a cobra while resting on the verandah of her house after lunch in Poonchra village.

Her family members rushed her to the nearby Kelejora Primary Health Centre, where the doctors said she needed to be admitted but referred her to Asansol District Hospital when her condition worsened.

She passed away on the way to Asansol District Hospital. Before her death, she was vomiting in the ambulance as the neurotoxic venom spread rapidly in her body.

The family alleged that despite their repeated requests for treatment as a snake bite victim, the doctors did not pay attention and treated her like other patients.

Her family members returned to Kelejora Primary Hospital and said that if the elderly woman had been administered the anti-snake venom serum in time, her life could have been saved.

They began agitating against the doctors and other health staff. Upon receiving information, Barabani Police rushed to the Primary Health Centre and pacified the mob after a long discussion with the attending doctors and relatives of the victim.

## First successful kidney transplant in Bengal outside Kolkata

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE ASANSOL, 20 OCTOBER

Dr Satyajit Bose, Chairman of The Mission Hospital in Kolkata, stated that the patient, Partha Chatterjee, is now safe and recovering rapidly

Doctors at a private super-specialty hospital in Bidhan Nagar, Durgapur, have successfully performed a kidney transplant for the first time in West Bengal outside Kolkata.

While kidney transplants are common in metropolitan cities across India, such facilities are still rare in upcountry areas. Dr Satyajit Bose, Chairman of The Mission Hospital in Kolkata, stated that the patient, Partha Chatterjee, is now safe and recovering rapidly.

"This is a groundbreaking achievement for The Mission

## Har Ghar mission to be completed in rural areas of WBurdwan by March 2025, says DM

DEBAJYOTI CHAKRABORTY DURGAPUR, 20 OCTOBER

The District Magistrate (DM) of West Burdwan District, S. Ponnambalam, has stated that by March of next year, every household in panchayat areas will be provided with a drinking water connection under the Har Ghar Jal (HGJ) Mission.

He has said that so far, in the eight panchayat samity areas, one hundred per cent tap water connections have been provided in 87 villages of 62 gram panchayat areas in West Burdwan District.

To date, tap water connections have reached 2,53,795 households in rural areas of West Burdwan dis-

trict. Speaking to The Statesman, S. Ponnambalam informed that the district has completed about 67 per cent of its target and said he hopes that the remaining work will be completed by March 2025.

"We will hold a review meeting of the project in November. Pipeline laying and digging work are currently underway, and the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) has been entrusted with the pipeline laying job," the DM added.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had in the 2019 Union budget announced the Har Ghar Jal Programme, which aimed to provide safe drinking water



through pipelines in each household in rural areas.

The target was to achieve 100 per cent tap water connection in rural India by 2024, although it is facing delays.

In 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) published data indicating that about 1,25,995 people died in India in that year due to diarrhoea after consuming infected drinking water. Fol-

lowing this, the Union Government took steps to provide filtered and safe drinking water to village areas of the country under the Har Ghar Jal Scheme.

However, due to digging and laying of pipelines, the condition of the roads in rural areas has worsened.

The DM said that the PHED has been pressured to repair the roads after completing the pipeline laying work. Out of the eight panchayat samity areas, Kanksha block has topped so far with over 94.93 per cent job completion, providing 47,673 new connections out of a total of 50,219 households.

Kanksha block is followed by Barabani Block with 87.52

per cent, Raniganj block with 76.74 per cent, Salanpur block with 65.94 per cent, Faridpur-Durgapur block with 63.59 per cent, Pandaveswar block with 52.76 per cent, Andal block with 52.32 per cent, and Jamuria with 39.46 per cent.

However, while house connections have been provided in the eight panchayat samity areas, water supply remains irregular in many villages.

Jal Jeevan Mission - Har Ghar Jal is a flagship program of the Narendra Modi government aimed at providing every rural household with a tap water connection by 2024 throughout the country.

THUMBNAILS



A supporter blows a conch at the 'Chitkar Samabesh' march called by junior doctors sitting on a hunger strike demanding justice for the RG Kar Hospital rape-murder case, in Kolkata on Sunday. ■ MOUL MONDAL

**Farmer electrocuted at Arambagh:** A farmer, Kinkar Das (35), a resident of Dhibayera village, Arambagh, was electrocuted after he stepped on a live electric wire while spraying pesticides on his agricultural land. Locals expressed their frustration over the poor maintenance of electrical wires, claiming that the careless attitude of the electricity department cost the farmer's life. ■ SNS

# Trinamul announces candidates for bypolls

The polls will be held in Sitai, Madarihath, Taldangra, Medinipur, Haora and Naihati

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 20 OCTOBER

The Trinamul Congress today announced the names of its candidates who will contest in the ensuing by-elections to six Assembly seats.

The names of the candidates were announced after getting approval from the party's chairperson. Miss Mamata Banerjee.

The by-election will be held on 13 November. The last date for filing the nomination is 25 October and the nomination papers will be scrutinized on 28 October.

The last date of withdrawal of the candidature is 30 October.

Already 100 companies of central forces have arrived in the city and they would be despatched to the respective places of deployment.

The by-elections became necessary after the MLAs rep-



resenting the constituencies became MPs in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

The by-elections will be held in Sitai, Madarihath, Taldangra, Medinipur, Haora and Naihati.

Except for Madarihath, from where Manoj Tigga of BJP was elected in the Assembly election, in 2021, the other seats had been won by Trinamul candidates.

Mr Tigga is now a BJP MP. Mrs Sangita Roy is contesting on Trinamul Congress ticket

in the Sitai by-election. Mr Jay Prakash Toppo is the Trinamul candidate from Madarihath.

Falguni Singhbabu is the Trinamul candidate from Taldangra. The seat was previously held by Mr Arup Chakraborty, who resigned from the seat to contest the Lok Sabha elections. Mr Chakraborty is now the MP from Bankura.

Similarly, after actor-turned politician June Malliah, Trinamul Congress MLA from Medinipur contested and won in the Lok Sabha elections, her Assembly seat fell vacant. Mr Sujoy Hazra is the Trinamul Congress candidate from Medinipur Assembly seat.

Sheikh Rabiul Islam will be contesting from Haora in the by-election. The seat fell vacant after Sheikh Nurul Islam resigned and contested from the Basirhat seat in 2024 Lok Sabha election.

Islam won the Lok Sabha election, but died recently

after a prolonged illness. As such, Basirhat Lok Sabha is also vacant. The bypoll in the Basirhat Lok Sabha seat will be held later.

Mr Sanat Dey will be contesting from Naihati on a Trinamul ticket. The seat fell vacant after the MLA Partha Bhowmick resigned and contested in Barrackpore Lok Sabha seat. Mr Bhowmick is now the MP from Barrackpore.

Trinamul Congress is confident of winning all the seats. Political observers said the agitation of the junior doctors demanding justice following the death and murder of a post graduate doctor in RG Kar Medical College and hospital on 9 August will have no impact on the by-election.

Trinamul Congress is holding Bijaya Sammilani across the districts to strengthen contact with people. Senior party leaders will go to the constituencies to campaign for the candidates.

# Coastal police urge fishermen's return as cyclone threat looms

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 20 OCTOBER

The state administrative headquarters, Nabanna, has issued an alert to coastal police stations and various district police stations, advising them to ensure that fishermen return from the sea in advance.

Although the monsoon season has withdrawn, severe weather conditions are once again looming over the skies of Bengal. There is a forecast of rough seas next week, with heavy rainfall expected in coastal districts on Wednesday. A warning has been issued for fishermen for the next five days.

From Tuesday, the weather is expected to change as a cyclonic circulation in the east-central Bay of Bengal may develop into a depression by tomorrow. As a result, heavy rain may occur in Kolkata and surrounding districts. The sea is likely to become turbulent on Wednesday, with strong winds expected in coastal areas.

The administration is on alert, and special warnings

**There is a forecast of rough seas next week, with heavy rainfall expected in coastal districts on Wednesday.**

have been issued for the Sundarbans coast.

Police stations in Fraserganj, Namkhana, Sagar, and Gobardhanpur in the Sundarbans police district have begun alerting fishermen through loudspeakers.

All fishermen have been instructed to return to shore by tomorrow evening. The administration has also imposed a ban on fishing in the sea for three consecutive days starting from Tuesday.

According to IMD sources, heavy rainfall is expected in scattered areas between 23 and 29 October, with the possibility of a cyclone forming in the Bay of Bengal. The region may face a natural disaster as early as next week. Speculation has already begun regarding the weather during Diwali.

The state government has

started taking preemptive measures to tackle the situation. State chief secretary Manoj Panth has issued a message on the matter and has spoken with district magistrates. District administrations have been advised by Nabanna to start taking necessary precautions immediately. Coastal districts in West Bengal are being asked to prepare in advance.

Chief secretary Manoj Panth has held meetings with district magistrates, and instructions have been given to ensure that there are no issues with the coastal embankments. The condition of these embankments should be assessed in advance.

Relief materials must be stocked ahead of time for relief camps, and flood centers have been instructed to be prepared. Fishermen have been urged to act on weather department warnings and advised not to venture into the Bay of Bengal for fishing. Messages have been sent to those fishing in the deep sea, instructing them to return.

# State women's panel probes mystery death of teenage girl



BISWABRATA GOSWAMI  
KRISHNAGAR, 20 OCTOBER

Amid the confusion surrounding the death of an 18-year-old girl under mysterious circumstances, a member of the West Bengal Commission for Women visited the victim's family and crime scene today.

Mrs. Debjani Chakraborty, a member of the State Women's Commission, took the lead in the inquiry, speaking with the girl's family and local residents as part of her investigation.

Mrs. Chakraborty visited the victim's parents at their home and also spoke with the girl's grandfather, with whom she often stayed. Her next stop was the site at Ramkrishnapara where the girl's body was found. She interacted with neighbours in the vicinity to gather further information. Earlier in the day, she met with Inspector-in-Charge Amalendu Biswas at the Kotwali police station.

Accompanied by Deputy Superintendent of Police Shilpi Paul and other police officers, Mrs. Chakraborty refrained from making any concrete conclusions about

the case, saying, "It is impossible to say anything about the incident because the investigation is ongoing. I have collected information after interacting with police officials, family members, and the victim's parents. I will submit these details along with my observations to the commission."

Meanwhile, the post-mortem report was submitted to the investigating police officers. The report did not clarify whether the girl's death was a suicide or homicide, but it confirmed that the burns were antemortem, meaning they occurred before death. Various samples, including viscera, blood, nail clippings, scalp hair, and multiple swabs, have been preserved for chemical analysis. Additional samples from the uterus, fallopian tubes, and burnt skin have been sent for histopathological examination.

Dr. Soumyajyoti Bandyopadhyay, who prepared the post-mortem report, stated that the cause of death was the result of burn injuries, but further analysis is required to determine more specific details.

# Sealdah Division prioritising need-based infrastructure devp at Amrit Bharat stations

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 20 OCTOBER

With 18 stations set for a revamp under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, the Sealdah Division is prioritizing need-based infrastructure development at the identified stations in addition to facelift works.

In the Sealdah Division, suburban stations like Bangaon, Barasat, Dum Dum, Gede, Kalyani, Madhyamgram, Naihati, Sonarpur, and others have been identified for redevelopment under the Amrit Bharat Scheme.

A master plan for the 18 stations that are to be modernised has also been prepared by the divisional authorities.

During the redevelopment works, particular emphasis is being placed on decongesting platform areas to facilitate free boarding and deboarding of passengers.

Another crucial infrastructure improvement involves creating separate entry and exit gates to provide easy movement of visitors in the circulating areas.

According to the divisional authorities, of the 18 selected stations, work is said to have

reached an advanced stage at key stations like Naihati, Kalyani, and Kalyani Ghosh Para.

Naihati station, a connecting junction between Sealdah and Howrah Divisions, is a crucial junction and has been identified for redevelopment under the Amrit Bharat Scheme.

As informed by the divisional authorities during a recent press tour to the three stations, along with a complete facelift, the station will include a circulating area with granite-surfaced platforms for a clean and comfortable environment.

The platform shed will also be replaced with biodegradable bamboo mat sheets.

According to the divisional railway manager of Sealdah, Deepak Nigam, the platform height will be raised, and old chequered tiles will be dismantled and replaced with anti-skid Kota stone.

At Kalyani and Kalyani Ghoshpara Stations (KLYG), a similar station-specific and need-based redevelopment is being carried out, including the construction of a cafeteria in the circulating area of the station.

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# Jagan accuses Naidu of diluting Disha programme

The YSRCP leader claimed that the Disha programme came to the rescue of 31,607 women and girls and more than 1.5 crore downloaded it and wondered why it was diluted

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 20 OCTOBER

YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy today accused the NDA government in Andhra Pradesh of deliberately diluting the Disha programme launched during his tenure after a minor girl was set ablaze in Kadapa district by an already married man. Mr Reddy called the incident a failure of the state government and police system.

The former chief minister today took to the social media platform 'X' and wrote a lengthy post criticising the NDA government in the state over the

law and order situation in the state.

"The incident of pouring petrol on a college student in Badvel and setting her on fire is extremely heinous and evil. My deepest condolences to her family. This is the result of the failure of the state government and police systems."

He alleged that chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu has been cancelling the programmes and schemes introduced by the previous government.

"Isn't this a proof of the deliberate watering down of the revolutionary Disha programme brought on by the YSRCP government to ensure



the safety of girls and women?" wrote Mr Reddy.

The Disha app is an emergency app meant to be used by women and young girls. If the users press the SOS button or wave the phone in

and then murdered in the outskirts of Hyderabad. The YSRCP leader claimed that the Disha programme came to the rescue of 31,607 women and girls and more than 1.5 crore downloaded it and wondered why it was diluted. He also claimed that 13 POSCO courts, 12 women's courts and forensic labs were specially set up to strengthen the Disha programme.

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The YSRCP leader claimed that the Disha programme came to the rescue of 31,607 women and girls and more than 1.5 crore downloaded it and wondered why it was diluted. He also claimed that 13 POSCO courts, 12 women's courts and forensic labs were specially set up to strengthen the Disha programme.

The horrific incident took place in Gopavaram mandal in Kadapa district. According to the police, the accused Vignesh was allegedly in a relationship with the victim and planned to eliminate her.

# Priyanka will face tough competition in Wayanad Lok Sabha bypoll: Haridas

AGENCIES  
KOZHIKODE, 20 OCTOBER

The BJP's candidate from Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency, Navya Haridas on Sunday said that her opponent from Congress Priyanka Gandhi would be facing tough competition in the ensuing bypolls in which both of them are pitted against each other.

Meanwhile the LDF has put up Sathyan Mokeri as their candidate for the November 13 elections.

"My opponent is Priyanka Gandhi and all I can say is Congress will be facing tough competition in Wayanad. Rahul Gandhi has given up his seat in Wayanad to retain his seat in Raebareilly. When the people of Wayanad faced the landslides, they did not have a representative to raise their issues in the Parliament," Navya Hari Prasad told ANI.



"The case is going to be similar if Priyanka Gandhi is going to be elected to the Wayanad Lok Sabha. In the last five years, Rahul Gandhi hardly visited the constituency and he has desperately failed to address the issues faced by the people here. This will be my first Lok Sabha elections," Haridas, an office-bearer of BJP Mahil Morcha in Kerala said. BJP on Saturday declared the two-time councillor in the Kozhikode Corporation as its candidate from Wayanad.

The seat was vacated by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi after he was also elected to Lok Sabha from Raebareilly in Uttar Pradesh in the general elections held earlier this year.

Priyanka Gandhi will file her nomination papers on October 23, Congress sources said. Priyanka and Rahul will hold a roadshow ahead of the nomination filing, they added. This will be debut election for Priyanka Gandhi. Congress party approved Priyanka Gandhi's candidature on October 15, after the bypoll schedule was announced by the Election Commission of India.

Wayanad will go to the polls on November 13 along with voting for bye-elections in 47 assembly seats across 15 states. The first phase of assembly polls in Jharkhand will also be held on 13 November.

# Gangster Aman Sahu eyes Jharkhand assembly seat amid legal battle and criminal charges

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
RAIPUR, 20 OCTOBER

Aman Sahu, the notorious gangster who is currently incarcerated in Raipur Central Jail, has declared his intention to contest the upcoming Jharkhand Assembly elections from the Barka Gaon constituency. This announcement, made through his lawyer Hemant Kumar during a court appearance on Saturday, adds a controversial twist to the state's political landscape.

Sahu, linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, remains in judicial custody until October 28, as per the latest court order. His lawyer stated, "Aman Sahu wants to contest the elections. To file his nomination, he must be



taken to Jharkhand, and we have requested the court's permission. Time is of the essence as the nomination deadline approaches." The defence team emphasised the urgency, presenting documents for verification. "We must obtain permission from the Jharkhand High Court to ensure his transfer for nomination filing," Kumar added. However, with ongoing cases against Sahu in Jharkhand,

his election bid hinges on securing legal clearance.

Sahu's criminal history paints a troubling picture. Hailing from the village of Matbe in Ranchi, he faces approximately 125 criminal charges across multiple police stations. Initially arrested in 2019, Sahu fled custody within months and was re-arrested in July 2022. Allegations suggest he continues to orchestrate his criminal empire from behind bars, with social media posts showing him posing with sophisticated weapons, raising concerns over prison security. The gangster's transfer to Raipur was a significant police operation, involving 40 officers who successfully brought him from Jharkhand on October 14 under a pro-

duction warrant. He is the prime suspect in a shooting incident targeting businessman Prahlad Rai Agrawal's car in July, with investigators linking the attack to his gang. The shooting, which occurred outside PRA Construction's office in Raipur's Telibandha area, also dragged Lawrence Bishnoi's name into the case. Despite multiple attempts, Raipur Police only succeeded on their fifth attempt to secure Sahu's transfer. Authorities describe his gang as heavily armed, with influence extending across Jharkhand's coal districts, including Dhanbad, Ranchi, and Bokaro. Sahu's gang is notorious for extorting coal mining companies, traders, and businessmen in the transport sector.

# Congress government in Karnataka won't last till 2028, says former Karnataka CM HD Kumaraswamy

AGENCIES  
MANDYA, 20 OCTOBER

Launching a sharp attack on the Siddaramaiah-led Karnataka government, Union Minister and former Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy on Sunday said that the Congress in the state will not last until 2028. He added that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) does not intend to topple the state government, but rather that their own MLAs and the people are destabilising its foundation.

"The Congress government in the state will not last until 2028. The people of the state and the MLAs will be the ones to bring it down. There is growing dis-



satisfaction among Congress MLAs. It is not true that we are trying to topple their government; their MLAs and the people are undermining the foundation of this government. Due to the lack of funds, MLAs are unable to visit villages and meet the people," Kumaraswamy said. Expressing confidence in becoming chief minister again before 2028, he added, "I am confident the people will

give me another opportunity, and I will become CM again. That opportunity will come before 2028. If the people want it, why shouldn't I become CM? My 14-month administration was conducted under someone else's influence. Even though the government was under another party's control, people have not forgotten the pro-people programmes we implemented. Karnataka is a prosperous state. If I am given the opportunity, I will do excellent work. Today, money is being looted, and government assets are being seized. If this is stopped, we can implement programmes where people earn at least Rs 10,000 instead of just receiving Rs 2,000 from the government."

Earlier, Kumaraswamy accused the Karnataka government of spreading misinformation about Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT) and Kudremukh Iron and Steel Company (KIOCL), leading to the loss of 300-400 KIOCL workers' jobs due to state negligence.

He stated that the government's obstinacy has forced 300-400 KIOCL workers onto the streets. While the government claims to create jobs for locals, it simultaneously shows neglect. The Chief Minister should convene a meeting to address these problems. Kumaraswamy added that if there are issues, he will take responsibility and write to CM Siddaramaiah regarding the matter.

# 'False information': Former TN CM Panneerselvam on speculation of his son joining actor Vijay's party

AGENCIES  
CHENNAI, 20 OCTOBER

Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister O Panneerselvam dismissed claims on Sunday that his son and former MP P Ravindranath is joining Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK), the party of actor-turned-politician Vijay.

"Former MP P Ravindranath is going to join actor Vijay's party is false information," Panneerselvam told ANI. Earlier, on August 22, when TVK chief Vijay unveiled the party's flag, Ravindranath had congratulated him on beginning his political journey. "Heartfelt congratulations to the leading actor of Tamil film industry, President of Tamil Nadu Victory Associ-

ation and beloved brother Mr. Vijay for launching his party's flag in his political journey and I convey my heartiest wishes for the success of his political journey and the success of the work of the people," read Ravindranath's post from that day.

This led to speculation that the former MP might be joining TVK. In a press statement released in Tamil, the star actor said, "It is a great blessing if every day brings a new direction and a new force in history. August 22, 2024, is the day that God and nature have given us as such a blessing. It is the day when the flag, the main symbol of our Tamil Nadu Victory Club, will be introduced." "Working for the welfare of Tamil Nadu, we will introduce our heroic



flag, the victory flag, which will become the symbol of our state, tomorrow at our

headquarters. We will also release the association flag song. I am pleased to

announce that we are hoisting the club flag," the release added.

# 'It will never happen': Union Minister L Murugan on DMK attempts to portray BJP as anti-Tamil

AGENCIES  
CHENNAI, 20 OCTOBER

Union Minister L Murugan on Sunday accused the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam of portraying the BJP as a party that is against Tamils and seeking to impose Hindi in Tamil Nadu.

"DMK is trying to show the BJP is against Tamils but it'll never happen; the BJP has grown well in Tamil Nadu. No one is trying to impose Hindi. If people want to learn the language, they can," Murugan told ANI.

The Union Minister's reaction came amid the Hindi-Tamil row between Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and Tamil Nadu Governor Ravi.

Murugan further said that Governor Ravi cannot be blamed for the distorted ren-

dition of the State anthem without the reference to the glory of "Dravida" land at a DD Chennai function.

"Yes, students have made mistakes while signing (State anthem). Mistakes do happen; it's normal. But how can the governor be responsible for it when he has just participated as a chief guest in the function?" he said. He alleged that Stalin was deliberately targeting Governor Ravi with political motives. On Friday, Stalin blamed the Governor for the distorted rendition, alleging that it was the latter's "deliberate disrespect" to Tamil Nadu and its people. Stalin also wondered if Ravi was the "Governor" or an "Aryan".

Following these remarks, the Governor accused the chief minister of making racist remarks against him.

Reacting to Governor's allegation, Stalin said that Tamil language is the race and lifeblood of Dravidians.

Meanwhile, DMK spokesperson Saravanan Annadurai alleged on Saturday that the Governor is 'anti-theft' to Dravidian ideology. Speaking to ANI DMK spokesperson Saravanan Annadurai said, "...We have also had issues with the way the Doordarshan is conducting Hindi month in Tamil Nadu, that too when no other language is celebrated like Hindi. Even the allies of the BJP in Tamil Nadu had opposed it. In that event, the Governor sings the anthem by leaving out the word 'Dravida'. We have seen how the Governor is antithetical to Dravidian ideology...What is his agenda?"

**Akasa and Vistara Air receive security threats on multiple flights:** Officials confirmed that both airlines responded swiftly to ensure the safety and security of passengers and crew. According to a Vistara spokesperson, the flights that received threats included Flight UK25 (Delhi to Frankfurt), Flight UK106 (Singapore to Mumbai), Flight UK146 (Bali to Delhi), Flight UK116 (Singapore to Delhi), Flight UK110 (Singapore to Pune), and Flight UK107 (Mumbai to Singapore). "We confirm receiving security threats on social media for six Vistara flights operating on October 20, 2024," the spokesperson said. He further noted that after receiving the threats, all relevant authorities were immediately notified, and security procedures, as directed by them, were carried out. "In line with the protocols, all relevant authorities were immediately notified, and security procedures, as directed by them, are being carried out. As always, the safety and security of our customers, crew, and aircraft remain our top priority," the Vistara Spokesperson added. Meanwhile, the Akasa Air flights that received security alerts included OP 1102 flying from Ahmedabad to Mumbai, OP 1378 flying from Delhi to Goa, OP 1385 flying from Mumbai to Bagdogra, OP 1406 flying from Delhi to Hyderabad, OP 1519 flying from Kochi to Mumbai, and OP 1526 flying from Lucknow to Mumbai. In a statement, an Akasa Air spokesperson confirmed that the emergency response team was activated immediately upon receiving the alerts. AGENCIES

# CPM leader VS Achuthanandan turns 101

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 20 OCTOBER

Legendary Communist leader and former Kerala chief minister VS Achuthanandan, who is often hailed as the "Fidel Castro of Kerala", turned 101 on Sunday.

Having completed a century of life, this birthday is especially significant for the veteran leader, who is fondly

known as VS among his legion of supporters. Currently, leading a retired life at his home here, Achuthanandan's birthday passed without much celebration this year also. However, party workers and admirers ensured the day did not go unnoticed, commemorating the occasion with the distribution of laddus.

Velikkakathu Shankaran Achuthanandan fondly

referred to as Comrade VS, has been an extremely popular leader who always enthralled and inspired the masses, and was inspired in turn while interacting with them. He had played a crucial role in raising the Communist Party in Kerala right from the grassroots level.

The life of VS is also a part of the social and political history of Kerala. VS, the only living Keralite among the 32 leaders who walked out of the CPI national council in 1964 to form the CPI-M was active in politics until five years ago, when ill health forced his retirement.

Born on October 20, 1923, at Punnappra in Kerala's Alappuzha district, VS's journey through the political landscape is a testament to his enduring legacy and tireless efforts to bring about positive change in Kerala society. He lost his mother at the age of 4 and subsequently lost his father at age 11. He was forced to quit his studies after finishing 7th standard in school. He started working by helping his elder brother in a village tailoring shop to meet daily expenses. When



VS was 17 years old, he joined the Communist Party. He became a delegate at the Communist Party Congress in 1943. He took part in the historical Punnappra - Vayalar uprising in 1946 after which he was taken into custody where he was brutally harassed. Once seen as the most rigid Communist leader, VS undoubtedly played a significant role in building

the Left movement in Kerala. His political and legal fights against R Balakrishna Pillai, P K Kunhalikutty, and Vellappally Natesan are a testament to his willingness to go to any extent for his political convictions. A seven-time legislator and the 11th chief minister of Kerala, VS served as Leader of the Opposition in the state assembly for three terms.

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# Allahabad HC restricts UP govt on encroachment in Bahraich

Accused given 15 days to respond to demolition notices issued by state government

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
LUCKNOW, 20 OCTOBER

The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court on Sunday restricted the Uttar Pradesh government from taking any action against encroachment in Maharajganj town of Bahraich following violence there last Sunday.

The court has set 23 October as the next date of hearing and issued a restriction until then.

The division bench of Justice A.R. Masoodi and Justice Subhash Vidyarthi, while giving the verdict on the PIL of Association for Protection of Civil Rights in an extraordinary Sunday sitting, granted the affected persons 15 days (from today) to respond to the demolition notices issued by the UP government.

Notices were pasted on around 23 houses on Friday, giving everyone three days to remove the encroachment.

On Sunday, the entire day was spent in fear of bulldozer action in Maharajganj town



of Mahsi tehsil. People remained scared throughout the day, although no action was taken by the administration.

On Saturday people themselves were seen demolishing their shops and houses, and this trend continued on Sunday too.

Maharajganj town remained peaceful after the incident of stone pelting and Ram Gopal Mishra's murder during Durga idol immersion on 13 October.

Mishra (22) died of gunshot injuries after an inter-faith dispute over loud music being played outside a place of

worship in Maharajganj on 13 October. The incident triggered communal violence, leading to arson and vandalism in the area and internet suspension for four days.

In the wake of that incident, demolition notices were pasted on the houses of 23 people, including the main accused

Abdul Hameed, which caused panic in the town.

However, some circumstances have changed in the last two days, and people's shops have started opening.

Still, many shops in the main market of Maharajganj town remained closed on Sunday. The same was the condition of the market situated in the streets inside the town. Meanwhile, a petition has been filed in the Supreme Court to stop the proposed bulldozer action after the Bahraich violence.

Through the petition, a demand has been made to cancel the notices given by the Uttar Pradesh government and to stop the bulldozer action. The petition has been filed on behalf of three named accused or family members of Bahraich violence. It has been claimed in the petition that the properties on which bulldozer action has been talked about are 10 to 70 years old and the owners of the properties are daily wage labourers and farmers by profession.

# Another accused arrested in Baba Siddiqui murder case

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, 20 OCTOBER

Mumbai Crime Branch has arrested another person in connection with the NCP leader Baba Siddiqui's murder case. So far, 10 people have been arrested in the case, said Mumbai Police said on Sunday.

The accused has been identified as Bhagwant Singh. He was arrested from Belapur in Navi Mumbai.

According to police, Bhagwant is accused of aiding the shooters by providing them shelter and weapons. Bhagwant is also alleged to have transported weapons from Rajasthan to Mumbai.

Baba Siddiqui was shot outside his office in Nirmal Nagar. He sustained two gunshot wounds to the chest and was taken to Mumbai's Lilavati Hospital for emergency treatment, where he succumbed to his injuries on October 12.

On October 19, Mumbai Police suspended police security guard Shyam Sonawane, who was present with the former Maharashtra minister during the time of the inci-

dent. According to the Mumbai police, constable Shyam Sonawane, deployed for Baba Siddiqui's security, "did not take any action" on his part against the accused who fired at Siddiqui at that time.

In another development, a photograph of NCP leader Baba Siddiqui's son Zeshan Siddique was found in the phone of one of the arrested accused, Mumbai Police said.

As per the police, this picture was shared with the accused by their handler through Snapchat.

"Investigation revealed that the shooters and conspirators used Snapchat to share information with messages being deleted after instructions were given," Mumbai Police said.

Arrested accused Ram Kanojia revealed during interrogation that he was the first person, who was given the contract to kill the NCP leader and he had initially demanded one crore rupees, the Mumbai Crime Branch stated.

According to his statement, fugitive accused Shubham Lonkar had first given the contract to kill Baba Siddiqui

to Ram Kanojia. Kanojia had demanded a fee of one crore rupees for carrying out the murder.

"During interrogation by the Mumbai Crime Branch, Ram Kanojia disclosed that Shubham Lonkar initially offered the contract to him and Nitin Sapre to kill Baba Siddiqui. Kanojia, who hails from Maharashtra, knew the consequences of killing Baba Siddiqui, which is why he was hesitant to take the contract. This led him to demand one crore rupees for the job. Subsequently, Shubham Lonkar chose not to hire Ram Kanojia and instead selected shooters from Uttar Pradesh," the crime branch said.

"Kanojia further revealed that Shubham Lonkar was aware that the people from Uttar Pradesh might not be fully aware of Baba Siddiqui's stature or reputation in Maharashtra. Therefore, they would agree to carry out the murder for a lower price. When Ram Kanojia and Nitin Sapre backed out, Shubham hired Dharma Raj Kashyap, Gurnail Singh, and Shivkumar Gautam from Uttar Pradesh for the task," the statement added.

# RJD not getting appropriate representation in seat-sharing for Jharkhand assembly polls, said RJD State President

AGENCIES  
RANCHI, 20 OCTOBER

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) State President Sanjay Singh Yadav (photo) on Sunday expressed dissatisfaction with the seat-sharing arrangement for the upcoming Jharkhand assembly elections, stating that the party was not receiving adequate representation.

"We are not getting appropriate representation in the seat-sharing. Alliance partners should make statements collectively. We have already demanded 22 seats... We will speak further later," Yadav told a news agency.

RJD leader and Jharkhand Minister Satyanand Bhokta said the party is demanding the seats they won in the previous election.

"Disagreements occur within families too. This is a



large alliance, and some issues are inevitable. We are part of this coalition and will win the elections. We are asking for the seats we won last time... RJD will win all the seats it contests... 50% of the issues have been resolved," Bhokta told ANI.

Meanwhile, RJD leader

Mrityunjay Tiwari reiterated that RJD is a strong political force in Jharkhand and that the INDIA alliance would contest the elections unitedly.

"RJD is a strong political party in Jharkhand... The INDIA alliance will fight the Jharkhand Assembly elections

as one, and RJD will receive its rightful respect," Tiwari told ANI.

The Rashtriya Janata Dal is contesting the assembly elections in alliance with the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and the Congress.

On Saturday, the BJP announced its first list of 66 candidates for the Jharkhand elections.

The BJP will contest the upcoming assembly elections in alliance with the All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU), Janata Dal (United) (JD-U), and the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP). The BJP will field candidates in 68 seats, AJSU in 10 seats, JD-U in two seats, and LJP in one seat.

Notably, elections for all 81 seats in the Jharkhand assembly will be held in two phases, on November 13 and November 20.

# Every leader of Mahayuti fighting amongst themselves, public with MVA: Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Priyanka Chaturvedi



AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, 20 OCTOBER

As the assembly election dates draw near, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi exuded confidence that the public is with the opposition alliance, Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) and claimed infighting in the ruling Mahayuti alliance.

Speaking to ANI, Priyanka Chaturvedi said, "Every leader of the Mahayuti is fighting amongst themselves. This party has come based on an opportunistic alliance to grab power. The people of Maharashtra will vote them out. The public is with the Maha Vikas Aghadi and we will declare the name of candidates before the Mahayuti

Alliance." "The seat-sharing talks for the Maharashtra Assembly elections are in their final stages," she added.

Earlier, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut accused the BJP of tampering with the voters' list in Maharashtra with the help of the Election Commission. He said that the Opposition would raise this issue on international platforms.

"They (BJP) are trying to mess up the voter list with the help of the Election Commission. The BJP is contesting nearly 150 assembly seats and they are finding those people who have voted for the Maha Vikas Aghadi and replacing their names with bogus voters," Raut said while speaking to reporters on Sunday. "We will raise this issue

on international platforms and tell people what is happening in the country," he added.

Raut alleged that Union Home Minister Amit Shah is trying his best to impose President's rule in Maharashtra even after the elections. "But we will not let this happen. Uddhav Thackeray has called a special meeting today at 12:30 pm and we will take an important decision," he said earlier on Sunday.

He alleged that there are discrepancies in the voters' lists in Maharashtra and Jharkhand.

"There are discrepancies in the voter list in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. They tried in Haryana as well. We defeated them in Lok Sabha and they are losing in Vidhan Sabha elections as well," Raut said.

# 12 killed in tempo-bus collision in Rajasthan: PM announces ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh for kin of dead

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
DHOLPUR, 20 OCTOBER

As many as 12 people, including eight children and three women, were killed and two others injured in a collision between a sleeper coach bus and a tempo near Badi in this district of Rajasthan.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed shock over the accident and also announced Rs 2 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased.

The Prime Minister announced an ex-gratia of

Rs two lakh from PMNRF for the next of kin of each deceased in the mishap. The injured would be given Rs 50,000, according to a X post of the PMO.

Expressing grief over casualties in the mishap, PM Modi said, "The accident in Dholpur, Rajasthan is heartbreaking. My condolences to the bereaved families of those who lost their lives including innocent children. May God give them strength to bear this pain. Along with this, I wish for the speedy recovery of all the injured. Under the super-

vision of the state government, the local administration is engaged in all possible help to the victims."

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma also expressed his grief over the lives lost in the accident.

According to police and hospital sources, the victims, mostly the members of related families, were returning back home in Badi town after attending a pre-wedding ceremony in Sarmathura region around 2330 hrs Saturday night when the tempo they were travelling in collided with the bus.

# President Murmu returns after three-nation Africa tour

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

President Droupadi Murmu returned here early this morning at the end of her three-nation tour of Algeria, Mauritania, and Malawi. The week-long tour focused on strengthening diplomatic relations and expanding cooperation between India and these African nations. The final stop of the tour was Malawi, where President Murmu departed from Kamuzu International Airport in Lilongwe after a ceremonial farewell. In Malawi, she held talks with President Lazarus



Chakwera on Friday, culminating in the signing of several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) covering areas such as arts and culture, youth affairs, sports, and pharmaceutical cooperation. The visit came more than a year after the African Union was made a permanent member of G20 during India's Presidency.

# President Murmu to confer 5th National Water Awards 2023 on 22 October

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

President Droupadi Murmu will confer the 5th National Water Awards 2023 on October 22 at Vigyan Bhawan here, said the Union Ministry for Jal Shakti on Sunday.

The Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation (DoWR, RD & GR), under the Ministry of Jal Shakti announced 38 winners, including joint winners, for the 5th National Water Awards, 2023, in nine categories viz Best State, Best District, Best

Village Panchayat, Best Urban Local Body, Best School or College, Best Industry, Best Water User Association, Best Institution (other than school or college), and Best Civil Society on 14 October, it said.

The Ministry said under the Best State category, the first prize has been conferred upon Odisha, with Uttar Pradesh securing the second position, and Gujarat and Puducherry jointly securing the third position. Each award winner will be presented with a citation and a trophy as well as cash prizes in certain categories. Under the guidance

of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Ministry said it has been undertaking a comprehensive campaign to spread awareness about water management and water conservation on a national level. "From this standpoint and to create awareness among the people about the importance of water and to help motivate people to adopt the best water usage practices, the 1st National Water Awards was launched in 2018 by the DoWR, RD & GR. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th National Water Awards were given for the years 2019, 2020 and 2022.

# Maharashtra Police nabs 'Crime Patrol' actress for kidnapping lover's nephew

AGENCIES  
WALIV, 20 OCTOBER

Actress Shabreen has been arrested for kidnapping a three-and-a-half-year-old boy in Palghar district, the Waliv police confirmed on Sunday.

Shabreen was romantically involved with the boy's uncle, Brijesh Singh. However, due to differences in their communities, Brijesh's family opposed their marriage.

Senior officer Jayaraj Ranawane, confirming the arrest, said, "Shabreen was so infatuated with Brijesh that she lost awareness of her actions, despite her roles in crime serials like 'Crime Patrol' and films based on real events."

The police are also investigating Brijesh's involvement in the kidnapping, as he was seen with an unidentified female accomplice.

Shabreen and Brijesh had been in a relationship for several years, but due to caste and religious differences, Brijesh's family did not approve of their union. Despite Shabreen's attempts to win them over, the family remained opposed, leading her to take drastic measures, which resulted in her arrest.

According to the Waliv police, Brijesh's nephew, Prince, had been attending classes regularly. On Saturday, around 11 AM, Shabreen arrived at the school and later returned to pick him up. As Prince recognised her, he willingly went with her when she claimed she was taking him for medication.

When Prince did not return home by the afternoon, his family enquired at the school and learned that he had left with a woman who claimed she was taking him to the doctor.

# So damn pleased with myself, says Omar after completing half marathon

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 20 OCTOBER

After completing his half marathon that was organised by the tourism department in Srinagar on Sunday, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said he was thrilled with himself, and encouraged people to "start running for a drug free J&K".

"I'm so damn pleased with myself today. I completed the Kashmir Half Marathon - 21 KM at an average pace of 5 min 54 sec per KM. I've never run more than 13 KM in my life & that too only ever once. Today I just kept going, propelled by the enthusiasm of other amateur runners like myself. No proper training, no running plan, no nutrition. Picked up a banana & a couple of khajoor along the way. The best part was running past my home with family & others out to cheer me on."

Omar Abdullah expressed hope that the Kashmir Marathon would become an annual event and earn recognition comparable to presti-

gious marathons around the world.

He wrote on X, "You don't need drugs to feel good or beat stress. A good run, whether a kilometre or a marathon, is enough to clear the cobwebs & achieve a natural feeling of euphoria & enthusiasm. Try it, you won't regret it. Let's start running for a drug free J&K".

The Chief Minister made these remarks after completing his 21-kilometre half marathon, which he had flagged off earlier in the morning from Polo View, Srinagar.

"I hope that the Kashmir Marathon will be organised every year and gain recognition, like the well-known marathons around the world," said Omar. "In his address, the Chief Minister extended his congratulations to all the participants who completed their races, adding that he himself hadn't expected to finish the half marathon.

"I extend my congratulations to all the runners who completed their race. I didn't expect that I would be able to



finish my half marathon. Never in my life had I run more than 12 or 13 kilometres, but running alongside other participants encouraged me to complete it," he shared.

The Chief Minister also expressed his gratitude to the organizers, stakeholders, and the people of Srinagar for their support. "I thank the administration

for their excellent management of the event. I am also grateful to the people of Srinagar, whose presence and encouragement motivated the runners."

Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah flagged off the Kashmir Marathon, the first international athletic event of its kind to be held in the valley.

He was accompanied by Bollywood actor Suniel Shetty, who participated in the flag-off ceremony alongside approximately 2,000 athletes from across India and abroad.

Minister for Youth Services & Sports, Satish Sharma; Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani; Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo; Commissioner Secretary Tourism, Yasha Mudgal; Secretary Youth Services & Sports, Sarmad Hafeez; and Director Tourism Kashmir, Raja Yaqoob, were also present at the ceremony.

The marathon featured top long-distance runners from India, including Asian gold medalists, as well as elite athletes from Europe and Africa.

The event included two race categories: a 42-kilometre full marathon and a 21-kilometre half marathon.

The event was organised by the Department of Tourism and the marathon aimed to showcase the improving situation in the valley and promote Kashmir as a prime destination for international

events. Bollywood actor Suniel Shetty also shared his enthusiasm for the event, saying, "This is going to be one of the most participated marathons in the world. Where else can you get to run 42 kilometers in paradise!"

**TENDER**

**GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL**

**ABBREVIATED NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER**

NO. WBW/EE/TID/e-NIT-05/2024-25  
Tender Id: 2024\_IWD\_761711\_1 to 2024\_IWD\_761711\_3

The Executive Engineer, Teesta Irrigation Division invites e-tender for 3 nos work under AE - MR 2024-25 at Teesta Pally, Assam More, Jalpaiguri (SL 1 & 2) and Teesta Pally, Maynaguri, Jalpaiguri (SL 3) from eligible and resourceful contractors having sufficient, necessary credential and financial capability for execution of works of similar nature. Bid Submission Start Date is on 21st October 2024 from 11:30 A.M. and Bid Submission End Date is on 12th November 2024 upto 5:30 P.M. Amount put to tenders are Rs.16.09 lakh, Rs.14.17 and Rs.4.97 lakh respectively. For further details regarding "Scope of work" & "Opening of tenders" Please visit <https://wbenders.gov.in> (direct site), Sd/- Executive Engineer, Teesta Irrigation Division, Postal Address:- Assam More, Jalpaiguri, Pin- 735102 Ph. - 03561-255722, E-Mail: id-esttdm@gmail.com

# The Statesman

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## Sponge Parks

Chennai, a city frequently besieged by floods, has seen its civic bodies ramp up efforts to address the dual challenges of flooding and environmental degradation. Recent initiatives by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) aim to not only mitigate flood risks but also bolster the city's green cover. At the heart of this strategy is the creation of "sponge parks," which, along with an extensive tree plantation drive, promise a more sustainable urban future. Flooding has been a recurring problem in Chennai due to unplanned urban development, clogged waterways, and inadequate drainage systems. The devastating floods triggered by Cyclone Michaung in 2023, which claimed several lives, were a stark reminder of the city's vulnerability to extreme weather events. With the looming threat of climate change, Chennai's need for innovative flood management solutions has never been more urgent. Sponge parks offer a creative and practical approach to urban flood prevention. By transforming open spaces into water-retention zones, these parks absorb excess rainwater, prevent surface runoff, and help recharge groundwater levels. The concept is simple yet effective - pond-like structures are built in low-lying areas, directing flood water into these retention ponds instead of allowing it to overwhelm city streets. These parks are not only designed to mitigate flooding but also to enhance water management in a city where groundwater depletion is a growing concern.

In addition to flood control, these parks serve a broader environmental purpose. Chennai, the hottest megacity in India, has been grappling with a shortage of green spaces. The GCC's commitment to planting 2.5 lakh trees and developing sponge parks provides a much-needed boost to the city's green cover, which currently lags behind international standards. More greenery means better air quality, reduced urban heat, and a healthier living environment for residents. The sponge parks initiative also aligns with the Tamil Nadu government's broader objective of increasing the state's green cover to 33 per cent by 2030. By working with agencies like the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, the GCC is turning otherwise unused or under-utilised urban spaces into productive green zones. This strategy not only addresses immediate concerns like flood prevention but also contributes to the long-term goal of creating a more climate-resilient city. However, while the sponge parks initiative is laudable, it must be seen as part of a larger, more integrated approach to urban planning. Addressing Chennai's flood problems requires a multi-pronged strategy that includes restoring natural drainage systems, improving infrastructure, and enforcing zoning regulations. While the efforts to expand green cover are commendable, they need to be sustained and scaled up to have a meaningful impact. Chennai's sponge parks initiative reflects a forward-thinking approach to urban challenges, combining flood mitigation with environmental enhancement. If executed well, it could serve as a model for other cities grappling with similar issues. Yet, this initiative must be supported by broader, systemic changes in urban planning and infrastructure development.

## Austerity Dilemma

The French government's 2025 budget proposal, which aims to implement 60 billion euros in spending cuts and tax hikes, has sparked widespread debate across the political spectrum. The government's defence of this fiscal tightening as essential to managing a growing debt burden underscores the challenges France faces in balancing economic recovery with financial stability. However, the criticism from both the far right and far left reveals deeper concerns about fairness, equity, and the potential long-term impacts of such austerity measures. At the heart of this debate is the question of whether the proposed budget adjustments will disproportionately affect certain segments of the population. The government, led by Prime Minister Michel Barnier, has tried to reassure the public that the middle class will be largely shielded from the worst of the cuts and tax increases. Yet, the details show that while much of the burden will fall on the wealthy and big corporations, reduced payroll tax breaks for low-income workers and cuts in education spending raise questions about whether the most vulnerable will indeed be spared. Critics from the far right have argued that this budget reflects fiscal injustice. They point to reductions in tax breaks for low-income workers and cuts to the education sector, arguing that these policies will exacerbate inequality rather than resolve it. The reduction in the number of teachers, justified by the government due to declining student numbers, is seen as a short-sighted move that may harm future generations by weakening the country's educational foundations.

On the other side of the political spectrum, far-left voices have been even more vocal in their opposition, labelling the budget as austerity-driven and fundamentally unfair. They warn that such measures will hinder economic growth and deepen poverty at a time when many are still recovering from the economic fallout of the pandemic. Their criticism echoes concerns seen across Europe when austerity measures are implemented: the fear that cutting public spending to balance budgets can have the unintended consequence of stalling recovery and worsening social conditions. The political and economic uncertainty surrounding this budget is compounded by France's precarious position in the European Union. As one of the largest economies in the EU, France's fiscal health has broader implications for the stability of the eurozone. With the public sector deficit targeted to drop to 5 per cent of GDP, some analysts are sceptical about whether this target can be met, particularly if growth falls short of government expectations. Should the deficit remain higher than anticipated, France risks further deterioration in its credit ratings, which could lead to higher borrowing costs and a more constrained fiscal future. While the need to address rising debt is clear, the method by which it is achieved will have significant repercussions. The key to navigating this situation lies in ensuring that the sacrifices demanded are equitably distributed and that the long-term social and economic impacts are carefully weighed.

# Issues before Japan

**How are the people going to evaluate the policy lines of both the ruling LDP and the leading opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan as they assess the faces of new leaders aiming for the helm? Therefore, the parties in the fray owe it to the voting public to indicate specific plans of action on their campaign platforms. The primary goal is to regain the trust of the people that has been dented by the slush fund scandal.**



Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) entrusted the task of leading the party to its former secretary-general Shigeru Ishiba by electing him as its president on 27 September.

This was the veteran politician's fifth attempt. Ishiba's immediate priority was to regain public trust which was lost due to a slush fund scandal.

This was the reason behind Fumio Kishida's decision to withdraw from the race as his public approval rating had substantially plummeted. Ishiba's first task to tackle the challenge right away was to call for snap elections on 27 October. The election outcome shall test Ishiba's ability to build a strong political base.

The snap poll shall be the first nationwide vote since the slush funds scandal was uncovered within the LDP and it will be an early test of Ishiba's leadership, who is already grappling with a fragile party support base and public scepticism.

After announcing the date for the snap poll, Ishiba launched the party's campaign in Iwaki, Fukushima Prefecture, one of the areas hit hardest by the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011, and its aftermath.

Offering apologies for the slush funds scandal, Ishiba remarked that "without the reconstruction of Fukushima, there can be no recovery for the Tohoku region; without the recovery of Tohoku, there can be no revival of Japan."

The big question that arises is will the LDP-Komeito coalition come victorious in the snap polls or will the opposition parties secure a majority and form the government? This election offers the voters an opportunity for the first time in three years to make a choice.

The other big question is,

how are the people going to evaluate the policy lines of both the ruling LDP and the leading opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan as they assess the faces of new leaders aiming for the helm.

Therefore, the parties in the fray owe it to the voting public to indicate specific plans of action on their campaign platforms. The primary goal is to regain the trust of the people that has been dented by the slush fund scandal.

The other issues that would come to the voters' minds are how the political parties keep on the table their plans to deal with the shrinking population due to the ageing of society and chronically low birth-rate, and address global affairs that have become increasingly unstable.

On top of all these, plans for political reforms to eliminate such scandals in the future would be critical for voters' choice in exercising their franchise.

Such self-purification would mean that proceeds from fund-raising parties will never go unreported in the future. For that to happen appropriate laws need to be passed with stringent consequences if they are violated.

The existing laws prohibiting political donations if unreported have seen blatant violations by the lawmakers themselves. Not reporting such political donations is seen as a serious offense, making lawmakers liable to be prosecuted for tax evasion, depending on how the unreported funds were used.

Ever here, the ruling LDP was lax in dealing with offenders as the treatment meted out to offenders was quite mild. By allowing some offending lawmakers to contest the elections on 27 October, the LDP is being seen as letting the offenders use the election for self-purification. If such offending leaders win in the election, their past offence would most likely be forgotten and they may even be rewarded with plum posts. Even here, coalition politics play some role. For example, the LDP's coalition partner, the Komeito, which puts realisation of clean politics at the top of its election platform, compromised its principles by endorsing two former LDP Diet members whom the LDP itself refused to endorse for their involvement in the slush fund scandal.

It was a kind of quid pro quo as the Komeito wanted to secure the LDP's support for its own candidates. Against this background, any overhaul plans for political fund reform in the next government is difficult to expect.

Even Ishiba admits that opposition parties put pressure not to tap into its policy activity expenses for the 27 October election. The irony is that uses of those funds do not have to be reported.

They are considered the "hotbed of slush funds." But so long as the use of those funds is not disclosed, there is no way of verifying if they will indeed be used this time. So overhauling the system with political reforms can remain as a will-o-the-wisp in the murkiness of Japanese politics as

most political parties have their own interests to protect.

Besides this, the Japanese voters shall have other issues on their plate to measure the credentials of the candidates seeking election.

Here the past experiences of the Kishida era need not be the barometer by which the Ishiba's case can be evaluated as the issues are different now from those Kishida put on the table while seeking votes.

In his time, Kishida had prioritised national security and nuclear generation/energy as major election planks.

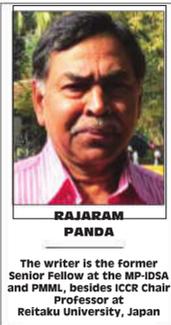
In the upcoming election, the electorate is less likely to evaluate the performance of the three-year Kishida administration as the issues during the post-Kishida period are very different, but they could be used to measure the credentials of candidates contesting the election.

Though the security issue still continues to bother Japan, the post-Covid-19 scenario raises serious socio-economic issues, and these demand attention.

In the financial sector, things are not encouraging either. Prices of essential commodities and necessities have risen. The value of the yen has substantially depreciated.

The bank of Japan ended its 110-year ultra-easy monetary policy in March and proceeded with an additional interest rate hike in July. Moreover, Japan faces a serious demographic challenge as fewer babies are being born and the number of elderly is increasing.

This situation has put question marks on the sustainability of the social security system and fiscal management. These are serious realities that political parties need to reflect upon and prioritise in their election promises.



RAJARAM PANDA

The writer is the former Senior Fellow at the MP-IDSA and PMML, besides ICCR Chair Professor at Reitaku University, Japan

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Assam question

SIR, This refers to Nava Thakuria's North East page article entitled "Assam: Eyeing 1951 as base year to detect illegal migrants" published on 7 October.

On perusal of the article I feel that there is need for a constructive approach to citizenship like the "basic structure doctrine" the Supreme Court laid down in Kesavananda Bharati's case limiting the power of the Parliament to amend the constitution; because the foundational principles of the freedom struggle, the decision to divide India on the basis of religion, the continuing "pogrom" against Hindus in Pakistan and now in Bangladesh need a legal and policy framework for citizen-



ship - a subject in the Union list of the constitution.

It may be recalled that the Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 1950 for ensuring safety and security of Hindus and Buddhists in East Pakistan failed miserably due to deliberate inaction on the part of Pakistan. The mass migration of Hindus seeking refuge began while illegal migration of Muslims to Assam continued unabated.

To stop this influx the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act 1950 was enacted by the Centre which provided protection from action under this Act to all those who entered Assam from areas which formed Pakistan for civil disturbances or fear of such disturbances.

This "protection" and the grant of citizenship that followed was embedded in the 1955 Citizenship Act and the amendments made therein in 1919 are therefore inviolable.

It is time to appreciate that the Partition scheme was actually a three-state and not a two-state solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem as commonly perceived because East Pakistan, an administrative absurdity was destined to be a separate state.

This situation warrants a vigi-

lant Centre for ensuring that states do not deviate from their "historic" duties of protection of refugees on grounds of expediency or local political issues. This applies especially to Assam as it contains vast areas "transferred" from Bengal in 1874 such as Barak valley and Lower Assam districts of Dhubri when the Chief Commissioner's province of Assam was carved out of the Bengal Presidency.

Yours, etc., Rangan Dutta, Noida, 12 October.

## MOTIVATIONAL

SIR, This is to compliment Atanu Biswas for the well-written article, "What people saw in a reverse coloniser" (Perspective, 18 October) where he has examined the factors that contributed to Ratan Tata's uniqueness and rarity as an industrialist.

From education to healthcare, his initiatives have left an enduring impression on Indian society by touching the lives of millions with his kindness and compassion.

Ratan Tata's contributions to the generation of wealth and employment for the country are inestimable. His vision, integrity and social commitment distinguished him as a true leader.

He successfully carried forward the legacy that he had inherited and accorded it an impressive global presence. What is more, his

## PREPOSTEROUS

SIR, This refers to the report, "India rejects Canada PM's claims on Nijjar assassination" (16 October). On Monday, PM Justin Trudeau had reiterated unsubstantiated allegations about India's involvement in the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil. Delhi is rightly indignant.

In fact, going back to the Air India Kanishka bombing in 1985, Ottawa has done little to appreciate the gravity of the threat to India posed by terrorists operating from its soil. India has stood its ground, and continues to deny Canada's allegations.

New Delhi's challenge, however, both with Canada and because of its growing role in world affairs, runs deeper. The contrast in Delhi's responses to similar accusations by the US is a case in point. Behind-the-scenes diplomacy has been marred by Canada's accusations.

Yours, etc., S S Paul, Nadia, 16 October.

philanthropic activities and principles motivated many young professionals, students and women to empower themselves.

Yours, etc., Narayan Chandra Ghosh, Madanpur, 19 October.

## JUSTICE DELAYED

SIR, This refers to your report "Junior doctors continue hunger strike, announce protest march", published today.

It is very unfortunate that one after another junior doctors are falling ill and being admitted to hospital due to their prolonged hunger strike to ensure their 10-point charter of demands is conceded by the state administration.

Junior doctors' demands are legitimate. If the state administration gives serious consideration to these demands overall improvement of the health system will be achieved and as a consequence, the common people will get benefits.

In fact, justice is getting delayed. The recent march to the CBI office by a group of women demanding speedy investigation proved that the agency is not doing its job properly.

While the state administration has failed to tackle the situation, people are expecting intervention from the Chief Minister.

Yours, etc., Debaprasad Bhattacharya, Kolkata, 18 October.

A MEMBER OF THE ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK

## ASIAN VOICES

### Find the truth

Myung Tae-kyun, a shadowy figure at the center of suspicions that first lady Kim Keon Hee may have intervened in the ruling party's nomination races, disclosed on Tuesday a screen capture of text messages he and Kim exchanged in 2021. "You will see the correct answer tomorrow when (he) meets Lee Jun-seok," Myung texted. Lee was leader of the party at that time.

"You're working so hard! Please forgive my childish oppa," Kim replied. "Oppa" is a Korean word for a girl or woman's elder brother, and is also used by a girl or woman to refer to her older boyfriend or husband.

"Ignorant people always behave like that. I apologize," she continued, "I rely entirely on you. Sometimes I couldn't understand my oppa. He knows little. Anyhow, your knowledge and opinions are the most excellent. You are the only one who can solve (problems)."

The presidential office said the oppa she mentioned was not President Yoon Suk Yeol but her elder brother and that the disclosed texts were just a private conversation before Yoon joined the party on July 31, 2021.

Soon afterward, Myung said that Kim's elder brother is not the type of person to talk to about political issues. This argument differs from the presidential office's explanation, though it is not clear that it's an obvious refutation. In view of the context, however, few would believe the presidential office's explanation. If it's true that the oppa is Kim's elder brother, it's hard to understand why Myung met with him or what Lee Jun-seok has to do with him. Either way, it's hard to avoid

## The Korea Herald

controversy. Suspicions will be raised that the brother of a presidential candidate's wife may have been interfering in state affairs after the presidential election. In either case, the presidential office's explanation that the first couple's relations with Myung were fleeting is unconvincing. Myung argued in a radio interview on Monday that he spoke with the Yoon couple on the phone every day for about six months from June 2021 to give them advice, and that he met them numerous times, including at Yoon's home. At that time, the party's presidential nomination race was underway. The presidential office said in a statement that Yoon met him just twice and that he did not communicate with Myung afterward. The office said the first meeting came when Lee, the then-party leader, visited Yoon's house with Myung, and the second one was when Kim Chong-in, former interim party leader, did so. But Lee and Kim Chong-in denied bringing Myung to Yoon's home. The presidential statement raises further suspicions.

Myung also argued in the radio interview that after the presidential election, the first lady asked him to come to the office of the presidential transition team to interview people. The presidential office denied this, but suspicions remain as the disclosed texts give the impression that Kim trusted Myung.

An online news outlet has released a shocking audio recording of a conversation between Myung and a former subordinate. He instructed the person to manipulate an opinion poll to favor Yoon during the party's presidential nomination race. Myung said, "Make Yoon lead Hong Joon-pyo by 2 to 3 percent by raising the response coefficients of young respondents." The subordinate replied, "Understood." If true, this is a grave and politically explosive issue.

# A lesson in diplomacy

SANTHOSH MATTHEW

The ongoing diplomatic crisis between India and Canada has captured the attention of not only politicians but also enthusiasts of international relations and diplomacy. What began as a specific controversy over the assassination of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar has now become a textbook case in how diplomatic terms and actions can shape global narratives. This episode has brought several important concepts to the forefront, offering an opportunity for informal education for anyone interested in diplomacy.

At the heart of this conflict are some key diplomatic terms that are now part of popular discourse. One of these is "person of interest," a term frequently used in both law enforcement and international relations. This term refers to someone who is not officially charged with a crime but is of significant interest to authorities due to ongoing investigations. In this case, Nijjar was considered a person of interest by both Indian and Canadian agencies for his involvement in Khalistani separatist activities, which India considers a major national security threat.

This brings us to the diplomatic fallout that followed Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's public accusation that the Indian government was involved in Nijjar's killing. This accusation led to the declaration of several Indian diplomats in Canada as "persona non grata." In diplomacy, when a diplomat is declared persona non grata, they are no longer welcome in the host country and must leave immediately. It's one of the harshest diplomatic actions a country can take against foreign representatives, and it signaled a sharp escalation in tensions between the two nations.

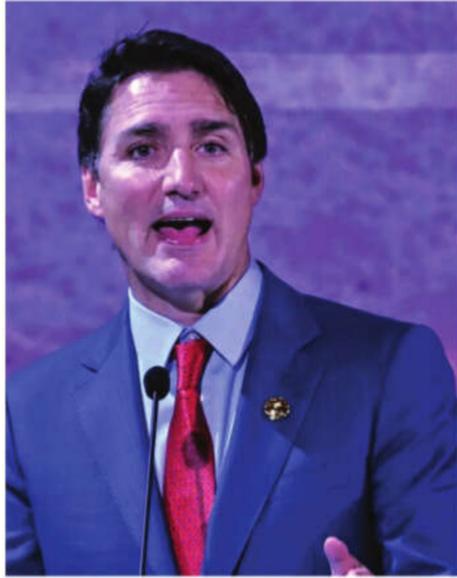
India quickly retaliated, expelling Canadian diplomats and creating a tit-for-tat scenario that has left both countries in a state of diplomatic freeze. This use of "persona non grata" not only impacts communication between governments but also symbolizes a complete breakdown of

trust, at least for the time being. These diplomatic expulsions effectively cut off direct channels of negotiation and push both countries towards more severe measures like trade slowdowns or restrictions on visas.

The Indo-Canadian row also highlights the role of intelligence-sharing networks, particularly the Five Eyes alliance. The Five Eyes is a group of five countries - Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand - that share intelligence on security matters. It's believed that Trudeau's accusations against India were based on information shared within this alliance. The role of Five Eyes in this case is critical because it demonstrates how intelligence from one country can impact diplomatic relations on a global scale.

However, the controversy also underscores the complications of diaspora politics. Canada has the largest Sikh population outside of India, with over 770,000 Sikhs living there, representing 2 per cent of Canada's population. Sikh politicians and voters form an influential voting bloc, especially in regions like British Columbia. Some argue that Trudeau's handling of the Khalistani issue is politically motivated, as his government has been under pressure from within this influential community. It's a delicate balancing act between maintaining strong relations with India and addressing domestic political concerns. Trudeau's alliance with Jagmeet Singh, leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP) and a prominent Sikh politician, added another layer of complexity to the situation.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) also plays a crucial role in this case, as they are responsible for investigating Nijjar's murder. While the RCMP has not disclosed any specifics, their silence on the matter has led to further speculation about foreign involvement. The fact that Trudeau went public with the allegations before the RCMP concluded its investigation has raised eyebrows, with some critics suggesting that the prime minister may have acted too hastily.



As this situation unfolds, it serves as an informal educational opportunity for those fascinated by diplomacy and international relations. The terms "person of interest," "persona non grata," the role of Five Eyes, the impact of diaspora politics, and the involvement of agencies like the RCMP are all essential components of understanding how modern diplomacy works. This case is a prime example of how these terms are not just theoretical but have real-world implications that can affect global relations, economies, and even the lives of everyday citizens.

In the larger picture, this incident has pushed both nations to reconsider their diplomatic strategies. Trade, student visas, and investment are all hanging in the balance, threatening to undo years of growing partnership between India and Canada. Indian students, who make up a significant portion of Canada's international student population, are now facing delays in visa processing.

Moreover, Canada is one of India's top 20 investors, and the current chill threatens to slow down this economic collaboration.

The political and diplomatic fallout has also emphasized the need for countries to tread carefully when accusing foreign powers without conclusive evidence. As India has repeatedly stated, Canada has yet to provide any substantial proof linking Indian agencies to the assassination. The opaque nature of intelligence-sharing and the secretive operations of alliances like Five Eyes make this even more complex. The lack of transparency in intelligence dealings can often lead to more questions than answers, further complicating already fragile diplomatic relationships.

Ultimately, this entire episode is a reminder of the famous quote by Sun Tzu: "Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer." Diplomacy is not just about managing relations with allies but also

about carefully navigating conflicts with adversaries. India and Canada, two countries with deep-rooted connections and a history of collaboration, now find themselves in a precarious situation. Whether this diplomatic row will lead to a permanent fracture or a new chapter in their relationship remains to be seen, but one thing is clear: diplomacy is as much about managing perceptions as it is about managing facts.

For those who follow international relations, the Indo-Canadian diplomatic row offers a rich study in how diplomatic terms, intelligence, politics, and law enforcement intersect to create a complex, global narrative. It's a case study that underscores how even small incidents can have far-reaching consequences in a world where diplomacy, security, and politics are intricately linked.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Centre For South Asian Studies, Pondicherry Central University.)

## OCCASIONAL NOTE

In an article published in *Headway*, the journal of the League of Nations Union, Professor Gilbert Murray says that no organ of the League arouses such instinctive repulsion in the Anglo-Saxon mind as the Committee of Intellectual Co-operation. The very title sounds insincere and pretentious to northern ears. The French call their streets after savants and writers, and "are quite capable of naming one from the date of Pasteur's birth or the first performance of Hernani." The English stick to George, Trafalgar, Waterloo and Portland. If they could once by an effort of the imagination get their minds into a state which would let them regard Sir James Frazer as no less great than Mr. Mallaby Deeley, or Mr. A. E. Housman than Lord Derby, they would be able to appreciate the hopes that certain nations have of the labours of the Committee. The French have even offered it a permanent home, but some of the members of the League are inclined to regard this as a danger; it might give a French flavour to science and learning. And Professor Einstein's theories are widely regarded as a German attack upon the stability of the universe; curved space is something that no self-respecting nation can tolerate. Germany is not yet a member of the League, but Einstein sits on this Committee with Bergson and Mme Curie.

## NEWS ITEMS

### TOO GOOD TO DIE

#### MURDERER A BASEBALL STAR

THREE hardened criminals in San Quentin Convict Prison, California, have offered to go to the gallows in place of Clearence "Tuffy" Reid, aged nineteen, a convict murderer awaiting death, because he is the "star" pitcher of the prison baseball team.

An American despatch states that Reid has twice within ten days, thanks to an eleventh-hour stay of execution, pitched the prison team to sensational victory, once against a strong baseball nine from the Bank of California. The following formal written offer has been handed to the governor of the prison: —

"Reid is the best pitcher San Quentin ever had. We cannot afford to have him hanged. The prison wants winning baseball team and is willing to pay to get it. So if you could fix it up with the Governor (of the State) to have somebody else take Reid's place, any one of three men is willing to go to the gallows in his stead."

### CEYLON COUNCIL

#### NON-OFFICIAL ELECTED AS VICE-PRESIDENT

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

AN important step was taken in Ceylon's constitutional development yesterday, when Mr. James Peiris, leader of the non-official elected members in the Ceylon Legislative Council and a prominent Sinhalese, was unanimously elected first Vice-President of Council. He will preside over the Council when the Governor is not present, the arrangement being that the latter will only preside on infrequent occasions. The Vice-President will participate in the debate but will not be called upon to decide the admissibility of questions, such decisions being still left to the Government.

### MADRAS COUNCIL

#### RELIEF FOR FLOODED DISTRICTS

IN the Madras Council to-day a resolution urging the allotment of funds for relieving the various flood-affected districts, and advising the local Government to make further application to the Government of India for financial assistance in respect of the expenditure involved, either in the shape of a special grant out of the famine fund, or in the shape of remission of the provincial contribution to the extent of Rs. 1,00,00,000 was passed.

A Government order relating to damage from the recent floods says that they do not consider it either feasible or desirable to remove the silt from lands to the extent of about 10,000 acres in the Trichinopoly and Tanjore Districts. They consider that the initiative in this matter should be left to the ryots.

The Co-operative Department will assist in every possible way, and an officer will be placed on special duty for this purpose. A rough survey of the lands will be necessary to ascertain approximately the depth of the sand on each holding, and the Government are prepared to have this survey carried out for the societies.

The members of the Advisory Committee to the Ministry of Local Self-Government met last Tuesday evening, and discussed questions of rural water supply, and adopted a scheme to design wells for union villages, for which it is agreed to request the Government to allot Rs. 7,50,000.

## IT CAME TO MIND | MANISH NANDY

### Dad

Today is Father's Day. For no reason, I woke up early. As a summer dawn seeped slyly through the blinds into my study, I put out a hand to turn on the lamp on my desk and then withdrew it. It seemed sacrilegious to contend with the first tentative rays. Instead of turning on the computer, I sat inertly in my chair.

Yes, it is Father's Day. I owe Dad at least a quiet couple of moments.

He would have been embarrassed to hear it said I owed him anything. He wanted little from me and was deeply embarrassed any time I gave him a gift. He was modest to a fault. He saw remarkable merit in his ample collection of friends and told us often of their accomplishments. Occasionally I would dispute him and say that his accomplishments were no less remarkable. His uncles had essentially dispossessed him of all family assets after his father's death and he had worked his way up from pauperhood to sustain his mother and sisters.

He had had no training or guidance worth the name and learned everything on the job. Yet he made a success of it; in fact, became well-loved for his amenability and friendliness. But those are things for others to speak about. For me, he was gentle and accessible. He let me be what I wanted to be. In fact, he encouraged me — and his other two sons — to follow our interests, often very different from his, and pursue them wherever they led.

We became, unpredictably, rather different people from him and from each other. We pursued our interests ferociously, in directions neither he nor we could have anticipated. He let that be, with benign acceptance and supportive grace. When one decided not to be a doctor though being in a medical school, he was concerned but understood. When another decided to abandon college, he was upset but continued to support his intent to be a poet, then a journalist.

My executive role did not quite excite him but he reveled in my success and was curiously elated when I started writing. It amazes me how much he let us be whatever we wanted to be and found a way to support our silliest effort. I have since learned how rare that kind of self-restraint is: it can't be easy for a father to let his son pivot in a new direction even when his wisdom is less than evident. It must be a special kind of love that lets one's object of love take bizarre or risky turns without raising a ruckus.

Looking back, I marvel at how graciously he graduated from a father to a friend as he aged and we matured. He lived a short distance from my home and he would often combine his evening walk with a short visit to my house. On one occasion, I was with three close friends and I insisted that he stay a while with us, though he offered to come another time. All of us chatted affably for over an hour and, when he left, my friends

asked me who the amiable elder visitor was. It was then I realized that I had overlooked mentioning to them that he was my father and they had inferred that I had an unusually congenial and fraternal relationship with an older friend.

This was the curious part that mystifies me. Our father let us, almost encouraged us, to develop in a way very different from him, and yet, by some mysterious alchemy, he created a strangely powerful bond with us. Now that I have become a father, I feel I have failed to develop the amazing degree of intimacy with my daughters that my father developed with me. There was virtually nothing I could not share and discuss with him, for fear of incurring his opprobrium. I felt certain that he would look charitably at whatever of my conduct he disapproved and would understand and endorse what he felt met his standards. He was a friend who was also my loving father.

We differed on a thousand things, including on the touchy subjects of religion and politics. When he had a foretaste of my skepticism, he arranged for me to have a long chat with his friend, an eminent theologian. When talking of the Second World War, he spoke of the nobility of Allied aspirations, while I mentioned Dresden and the horrendous misuse of troops from colonial territories. But we ended up understanding each other better and agreeing on what might be the primary values.



Illustration by Debabrata Chakrabarty

When I entered the university, I met a lot of friends who had famous or distinguished parents. They were notable scholars, brilliant politicians, well-known judges and even celebrated thespians. My father was very far from a celebrity. Yet, having later met several of my friends' fathers, I realized that few of my friends had the kind of close and indulgent link I had with my father.

When he had legal problems, he consulted a distinguished lawyer, but I was his principal counselor whose advice he invariably took in making his final decision. When I encountered problems in

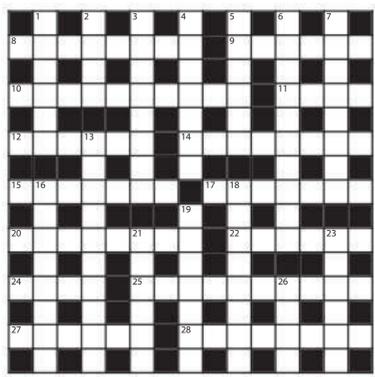
my work, I unhesitatingly explored them with him, sought his opinion and ended up taking his counsel.

Today I don't have work problems but long for his counsel in other things. He would sit quietly, sip his tea gently and say, almost hesitantly, in a soft voice, "This is how I see it." I miss that voice and its therapeutic reassurance. Perhaps my problems will never cease and my longing for his presence in my life will never, never end.

(The writer is a US-based international development advisor and had worked with the World Bank. He can be reached at mnandy@gmail.com)

## CROSSWORD

NO-292936



### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

### ACROSS

- 8 Scottish city will, it's reported, provide an agreement that cannot be revoked (4,4)
- 9 Cries 'I've made a mistake' (6)
- 10 Veg sent back by European port is passed out (6,4)
- 11 Gloom emerges as last of dark spirit is knocked back (4)
- 12 Window of gold by the sea in Cannes? (6)

- 14 Russian holy man heading for Romania, like the Russian president (8)
- 15 One doesn't believe in roast chicken? (7)
- 17 Polish drinking half of beer in booze joint (7)
- 20 At the speed of sound, two seconds of manliness (8)
- 22 Young at heart learn about fairytale (6)
- 24 OK, I need help with love (2-2)

- 25 Pub brewed, I suspect, something spiky and difficult to get through (6,4)
- 27 Unconventional iron telephone kept inside (6)
- 28 With last bit of peroxide, denture could be sterilised (8)

### DOWN

- 1 In favour of self-sacrifice (6)
- 2 According to Paul Simon you can call ... for dinner? (4)

- 3 Edge clear with this type of fuel? (4-4)
- 4 Like Pavlov's dogs in servitude (7)
- 5 Pieces of publicity covering battle honours (6)
- 6 Element of upholstery upset mother of French-polisher? (4,6)
- 7 Evaluate one with extremely plump rear (8)
- 13 TT Champion crashes a moment before victory (5,5)

- 16 Locks up unusually sour delights (8)
- 18 My set-up, practical for lots of people where I live (8)
- 19 Inferior bird captured by chance (3-4)
- 21 Appalling abuses beneath the waves (6)
- 23 A sin that's allowed (6)
- 26 Little bit of dope which you can smoke to get high (4)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)



# Modi inaugurates R J Sankara Eye Hospital in Varanasi

PM remarked that the new hospital will wipe out darkness and lead people towards light

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
VARANASI, 20 OCTOBER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated R J Sankara Eye Hospital in his parliamentary constituency and claimed that the hospital would wipe out the darkness and lead many people towards light. He also took a walk through of the exhibition organised for the occasion.

The hospital offers consultation and treatment facilities for various eye conditions.

Addressing a gathering after the inauguration of the hospital, the prime minister said visiting Kashi during this auspicious period is an opportunity to experience virtue.

He noted the gracious presence of the people of Kashi, saints, and philanthropists and mentioned performing darshan and receiving prasadam and blessings with

Param Pujya Shankaracharya ji. Congratulating the people of Kashi and Uttaranchal, he emphasised that they have been blessed with another modern hospital today in the land of Lord Shankar.

Giving an analogy of a quote mentioned in the ancient scriptures of India, the prime minister remarked that R J Sankara Eye hospital would wipe out the darkness and lead many people towards light. He said having just visited the eye hospital, he felt it was an amalgamation of spirituality and modernity and the hospital would serve both the old and young in giving eyesight.

The prime minister added that the poor would be getting free treatment at the hospital in large numbers. He noted that the eye hospital would also create new job avenues for many youths as well as job and internship opportunities for medical students



along with jobs for the support staff as well.

The prime minister recalled his association with Sankara Eye Foundation during his chief ministership in Gujarat and recalled inaugurating Sankara Eye Hospital in the presence of Sri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswathi's guru. He said it is a matter of great contentment to receive the

blessings of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peethadipathi, Jagadguru Shankaracharya Saraswati Swamigal and mentioned accomplishing several tasks under the guidance of Param Pujya Jagadguru Sri Jayendra Saraswati.

The prime minister called it a matter of personal satisfaction being associated with

three different traditions of gurus. He thanked Sri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswathi for blessing the occasion and welcomed him as the people's representative of Varanasi.

PM Modi said a lot of work has been done in the healthcare sector in the last decade in his constituency. There was a modern health facility even for the treatment of cancer patients in Varanasi. He highlighted that the patients were getting good medical treatment in Varanasi itself today and no longer need to visit to Delhi or Mumbai as they used to earlier. Thousands of people from Bihar, Jharkhand and other places are coming to Varanasi for treatment. He remarked that the erstwhile "Mokshadayini" (Salvation giver) Varanasi was transitioning to a "Navjeevadayini" (New Life giver) Varanasi as well with new energy and resources.

# Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurates Rewa airport

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHOPAL, 20 OCTOBER



Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the new airport terminal at Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, on Sunday. The event was attended in person by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav, Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla, and other prominent leaders.

Rewa Airport, the sixth in Madhya Pradesh, features a new terminal built at a cost of Rs 91 crore, covering an area of 102 hectares. The facility currently accommodates aircraft with up to 72 seats and has an annual passenger handling capacity of around 2.5 lakh.

Expressing gratitude to the Prime Minister, Chief Minister Dr Yadav described the airport as a major gift to the state. He highlighted that the airport would benefit over 65 lakh residents of the Vindhya region and neighboring areas and noted that its construction anticipates regional needs for

the next 50 years.

Dr Yadav also engaged with investors and industrialists at Rewa, announcing that the state's fifth regional industry conclave will take place there on October 23.

He expressed optimism that the conclave would significantly influence industrial development in the Vindhya region and across the state, focusing on strengthening industry, trade, tourism, and agriculture sectors. He noted that the event would create new opportunities for industrial progress and employment, contributing to the overall economic growth of Madhya Pradesh.

The Chief Minister informed attendees that a Business Promotion Center would be set up at the Rewa Industry Conclave, featuring products, services, and policies from over 16 major government and private departments. The center aims to facilitate dialogue between investors and entrepreneurs, streamlining business processes and promoting a robust industrial environment.

State government officials indicated that the MP Industrial Development Corporation would play a key role in supporting investors by simplifying processes under the 'Ease of Doing Business' initiative. The MP State Electronics Development Corporation will present investment opportunities in the IT and ESDM sectors.

The MSME Department will offer information on schemes supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises, enhancing their contribution to the state's industrial landscape.

# UP govt to deploy snipers, NSG commandos for enhanced security of Maha Kumbh devotees and guests

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
LUCKNOW, 20 OCTOBER

The Uttar Pradesh government is implementing comprehensive safety measures to ensure robust security for devotees and guests at Maha Kumbh 2025.

The state government plans to deploy snipers, NSG commandos, commando squads, ATS, STF, BDDS teams, and trained sniffer dogs to provide foolproof security arrangements.

Devotees from across the globe will converge in Prayagraj to take a holy dip during the Maha Kumbh, which begins with the Makar Sankranti festival in January. Alongside the devotees, numerous dignitaries and diplomats are expected to attend the grand event.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has instructed officials to make robust security arrangements and ensure water, land, and air safety

throughout the event.

Maha Kumbh Mela SSP Rajesh Dwivedi emphasised here on Sunday the significance of the Maha Kumbh as the world's largest gathering of faith, attracting 40 crore devotees and special guests.

He stated: "Given this situation, the security infrastructure is being fortified, with special forces stationed throughout Prayagraj, the fairgrounds, key sites, temples, and the Sangam. Diplomats from various countries will participate, prompting the implementation of anti-drone systems and bullet-proof outposts at entry and exit points, parking areas, major temples, and other strategic locations."

He added, "Two contingents of NSG commandos and 26 Anti-Sabotage (AS) inspection teams will be deployed to secure the city thoroughly."

The SSP also confirmed



the presence of four ATS teams, and six Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad

(BDDS) units within the fairgrounds.

SSP Rajesh Dwivedi announced the deployment of 20 snipers, 3 sniffer dogs, and 4 swan teams to ensure the safety of special guests. Additionally, 30 spotters will be stationed throughout the city to closely monitor any suspicious or antisocial activities. A team of 9 commando squads will also be assigned to oversee every area meticulously.

He added, "During the Maha Kumbh, devotees will immerse themselves in the Sangam, where two contingents from the Uttarakhand PAC will be stationed. This contingent is well-versed in underwater operations and possesses significant expertise, making them ideal for deployment near the Sangam. The team will comprise one DSP, 4 inspectors, 20 sub-inspectors, 35 head constables, and 65 constables."

# Bihar: Mahagathbandhan alliance announces candidates for upcoming bypolls



AGENCIES  
BIHAR, 20 OCTOBER

The Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) in Bihar on Sunday announced its candidates for the upcoming by-elections in four assembly seats on October 20.

Roshan Kumar Majhi has been nominated from Imamganj, Vishwanath Kumar Singh has been fielded from Belaganj, Ajit Kumar Singh

from Ramgarh and Raju Yadav from Tarari.

The bypolls are spread over 15 states - Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

The announcement was made during a press conference held at the RJD state

office, attended by RJD State President Jagdanand Singh, Congress State President Dr. Akhilesh Singh, and leaders from the Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP).

Earlier on October 15, Election Commission announced bypolls to 48 assembly constituencies including nine seats in Uttar Pradesh and the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat in Kerala.

While polling will be held on 47 assembly seats and Wayanad Lok Sabha seat on November 13, it will be held on one assembly constituency in Uttarakhand and Nanded constituency in Maharashtra on November 20.

The largest number of bypolls will be held in Uttar Pradesh and seats going to the polls are Meerapur, Kundi, Ghaziabad, Khair, Karhal, Pulpur, Katehari, Majhawan, and Sishamau.

The assembly elections in Bihar are likely to be held in October-November 2025.

# Dharmendra Pradhan on visit to Singapore, Australia to enhance cooperation in education

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan arrived in Singapore today as part of his two-nation tour of Singapore and Australia to enhance bilateral cooperation with these countries in the education sector.

On his arrival in Singapore, the minister interacted with the Indian community and held a community lunch with them.

"Interacted with the Indian community in Singapore over lunch. Overwhelmed by their love, warmth, affection and blessings. It is an honour for me to be among them. True ambassadors of brand Bharat,



our diaspora is a vital pillar of India India-Singapore partnership. The way our Indian diaspora have preserved India's culture and amalgamated it with Singapore's multiethnic culture is worth admiring. Their contribution to Singapore's progress is

also noteworthy," he wrote on X later.

Tomorrow, Mr Pradhan will meet Prime Minister of Singapore Lawrence Wong and other leaders. He will visit the National University of Singapore ranked No.1 in Asia.

He will also visit a local secondary school to discuss the scope of syllabus integration, keeping AI in focus. Mr Pradhan will meet academicians, eminent representatives from alumni of IITs and IIMs and engage in discussions related to the education ecosystem of both countries.

He will leave Singapore for Australia for a 3-day visit from 23 October. There he will meet his Australian counterpart Jason Clare. He will also deliver the Plenary address at the Australian International Education Conference besides visiting the South Melbourne Primary School which is known for integrated approaches to learning.

# State-of-the-art sleeping pods for devotees at Maha Kumbh 2025

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
PRAYAGRAJ, 20 OCTOBER

The Uttar Pradesh government is taking significant steps to ensure a comfortable experience for devotees attending the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh 2025. In addition to the expansive tent city being set up for visitors, the government is planning to introduce state-of-the-art sleeping pods for the first time.

The state Tourism Department has already prepared a detailed roadmap for this initiative. If everything proceeds as planned, devotees will have access to these innovative sleeping pods, offering a modern and convenient accommodation option during the grand religious gathering.

Following the success of



the sleeping pod facilities at Prayagraj Junction Railway Station, devotees and tourists visiting the Kumbh area will soon be able to enjoy these modern amenities as well.

Aparajita Singh, Regional Tourism Officer of Prayagraj, shared on Sunday that a tra-

ditional tent city is being set up at the Parade Ground, while two luxury tent cities are being built on a public-private partnership (PPP) model in Arail and Jhansi.

The response from tourists and devotees has been positive, with 1,600 out of 2,000

tents already booked in Arail.

Plans for the second tent city in Jhansi include the setup of 400 sleeping pods. The tender process is currently underway, and construction will be finalized once all safety standards are met.

These sleeping pods are capsule-shaped chambers equipped with modern amenities designed to meet the needs of travelers. Each air-conditioned pod will provide a comfortable sleeping space, charging ports, and access to drinking water.

Additional services like cloakrooms, reception booths, washrooms, and pantries will also be available. Both online and offline booking options are expected to be offered for the pods, ensuring convenience for all visitors.

# Odisha braces for cyclonic fury as IMD issues pre-cyclone watch alert

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 20 OCTOBER

Odisha, which has a history of cyclonic strikes in October-November, braces for yet another cyclonic circulation even as the state government on Sunday issued directions to the district officials in vulnerable pockets to stay in preparedness to successfully tackle exigencies of the situation.

A cyclonic disturbance likely to develop over the Bay of Bengal may affect the Odisha coast on 23-25 October, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) in the latest weather update said on Sunday.

The coastal state faces severe cyclonic storms in October and November, sometimes even till December 15. This two-and-a-half-month is considered the "yclone season" in the state.

The cyclone warning during October last week is a grim reminder of the catastrophic Nature's fury that scripted the cataclysmic aftermaths of 29-30 October 1999 super-cyclone

The super cyclone had impounded the coast with a wind velocity of 270 kilometer per hour to 300 kmph, killing more than 10,000 people mostly in the seaside villages of Jagatsinghpur district. There was a gross absence of an early warning system then. The post-disaster rescue operation mechanism had been found wanting then, resulting in the loss of precious human lives.

"Yesterday's upper air cyclonic circulation over central Andaman Sea lay over North Andaman Sea in the early morning (0530 hours IST) and persisted over the same region in the forenoon (0830 hrs IST) of today, the



20th October 2024. Under its influence, a Low-Pressure Area is very likely to form over the East Central Bay of Bengal and adjoining north Andaman Sea during next 24 hours", IMD bulletin stat-

ed. It is very likely to move west-northwestwards and intensify into a depression by the 22 October morning and into a cyclonic storm by the 23rd of October 2024 over

the East-central Bay of Bengal. Thereafter, it is very likely to move north-westwards and reach the northwest Bay of Bengal off the Odisha-West Bengal coasts by the 24th of October morning, said IMD.

The cyclonic intensity will continuously increase and the maximum intensity forecast today will be about 100-120 km wind speed per hour over the North Bay of Bengal on 24 October. Under its influence, sea conditions are presently rough and it will become rough to very rough over central Bay of Bengal from 21 to 24 October. On 23 and 24, there will be high sea conditions. Over the North Bay of Bengal, it will become rough to very rough on the 23rd and very rough to high sea conditions on the 24th and 25th of October, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said on Sunday.

# Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma launches Mission Basundhara 3.0 in Guwahati

AGENCIES  
GUWAHATI, 20 OCTOBER

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma launched Mission Basundhara 3.0 on Sunday at Srimanta Sankardeva Kalashetra in Guwahati.

He addressed criticism from opposition parties, including Congress and AIUDF, stating that Mission Basundhara is intended to grant land rights to the indigenous people of the state.

"The opposition political parties, Congress and AIUDF, criticised us, but we informed them that Mission Basundhara is an initiative to provide land rights to the indigenous people of the state," said the Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister's Office (CMO) of Assam posted on X: "The State Government, led by HCM Dr



@himantabiswa, is committed to simplifying administrative processes for citizens. The Revenue Department's launch of Digidoc, a digital directory for non-registrable and optionally registrable documents, will streamline services, reduce processing time, and enhance public convenience. This initiative highlights the government's dedication to improving accessibility and efficiency."

Mission Basundhara 1.0 was originally launched on October 2, 2021, followed by

Mission Basundhara 2.0 in November 2022.

On Friday, the Assam CM also launched Chief Minister's Atmanirbhar Asom Abhijan (CMAAA) 2.0 at a function held at Lok Sewa Bhawan in Guwahati.

According to a release, under CMAAA 1.0, the state government's flagship entrepreneurial support initiative, Rs 510 crores were distributed to 25,238 budding entrepreneurs across the state. CMAAA 2.0 is an extension of this mission, designed to further boost entrepreneurship in Assam, with 75,000 beneficiaries to be selected.

CM Sarma emphasised the state government's commitment to fostering a new era of entrepreneurship in Assam, where empowered youth will be encouraged to launch their ventures.

US investigating leak of classified documents on Israel's attack plans

The documents are attributed to the U.S. Geospatial Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency

ASSOCIATED PRESS WASHINGTON, 20 OCTOBER

The United States is investigating an unauthorized release of classified documents that assess Israel's plans to attack Iran, three U.S. officials told The Associated Press.

The information appeared entirely gathered through the use of satellite image analysis.

The investigation is also examining how the documents were obtained — including whether it was an intentional leak by a member of the U.S. intelligence community or obtained by another method, like a hack.

The U.S. has urged Israel to take advantage of its elimination of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar and press for a ceasefire in Gaza, and has likewise



urgently cautioned Israel not to further expand military operations in the north in Lebanon and risk a wider regional war.

In a statement, the Pentagon said it was aware of the reports of the documents but did not have further comment.

the leak of the two documents. The documents first appeared online Friday via a channel on Telegram, claiming they had been leaked by someone in the U.S. intelligence community, then later the

G7 defence ministers express concerns over escalation in Middle East



AGENCIES ROME, 20 OCTOBER

Defence ministers of the Group of Seven (G7) countries have expressed concerns over the escalating tensions in the Middle East.

In a joint statement issued on Saturday at their first summit of this year in the southern Italian city of Naples, the ministers said they were worried about "escalation" in the Middle East after Israeli attacks on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in Lebanon, Xinhua news agency reported.

about all the threats to the security of UNIFIL," the statement said. "The protection of peacekeepers incumbent upon all parties to a conflict."

The ministers of G7, which groups the UK, Italy, Canada, Japan, France, Germany, and the US, said they firmly support UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces to ensure the stability and security of Lebanon.

They all back a "significant and sustained increase" in humanitarian aid to Gaza, as well as a sustainable pathway to a two-state solution.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte and the European Union (EU)'s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell are invited to the meeting on Saturday.

Kyiv launches more than 100 drones over Russia as a missile strike on Ukraine injures 17

AGENCIES KYIV, 20 OCTOBER

Russian air defenses shot down more than 100 Ukrainian drones Sunday over Russia's western regions, Moscow officials said, while 17 people were injured in the Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih in a ballistic missile attack.

Social media footage appeared to show air defenses at work over the city of Dzerzhinsk in the Nizhny Novgorod region, close to a factory producing explosives.

Local Gov. Gleb Nikitin wrote on social media Sunday that four fire fighters had been injured repelling a drone attack over Dzerzhinsk's industrial zone, but did not give further details.

Such large-scale aerial attacks are still relatively rare over Russia 2 1/2 years after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.



A similar attack at the end of September saw Russia's Ministry of Defense report the destruction of 125 drones across seven regions.

they were knocked out by electronic defenses.

In a statement on social media, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Russia had launched some 800 guided aerial bombs and more than 500 attack drones over Ukraine in the past week alone.

"Every day, Russia strikes our cities and communities. It is deliberate terror from the enemy against our people," he said, renewing calls for continued air support from the country's allies.

"United in defense, the world can stand against this targeted terror."

Video published by Ukraine allegedly shows North Korean soldiers in Russia

AGENCIES KYIV, 20 OCTOBER

A video purporting to show dozens of North Korean recruits lining up to collect Russian military fatigues has been released by Ukrainian officials, who say it shows the introduction of troops sent by Pyongyang into the conflict.

The video, published by Ukraine's Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security, which operates under the Culture and Information Ministry, allegedly shows North Korean soldiers standing in line to pick up bags, clothes and other apparel



from Russian servicemen. The Associated Press couldn't verify the video independently.

"We received this video from our own sources. We cannot provide additional verification from the sources who provided it to us due to security concerns," said Ihor

Solovey, the head of the center.

"The video clearly shows North Korean citizens being given Russian uniforms under the direction of the Russian military," he said. "For Ukraine, this video is important because it is the first video evidence that shows North Korea participating in the war on the side of Russia. Now not only with weapons and shells but also with personnel."

The center claims the footage was shot by a Russian soldier in recent days. It didn't say how the footage was obtained. The location is unknown.

Moldovans cast votes to choose president and decide on EU path as Russian interference claims spike

AGENCIES CHISINAU, 20 OCTOBER

Moldovans have started casting ballots in two key votes Sunday that could determine whether the European Union candidate country, which neighbors Ukraine, remains on a pro-western path amid ongoing allegations that Russia has tried to undermine the electoral process.



enshrine in the country's constitution its path toward the 27-nation EU.

Polls by WatchDog, a Chisinau-based think-tank show a clear majority of more than 50% support the EU path. The referendum needs a one-third turnout

to be valid. Polling stations opened at 7 a.m. (0400GMT) and are expected to close at 9 p.m. (1800GMT). By 1 p.m., more than 730,000 voters — about 25% of eligible voters — had cast ballots, according to the Central Electoral Commission. A delegation of electoral observers from more than a dozen countries is helping to monitor the two polls.

If Sandu fails to win an outright majority on Sunday, a runoff will be held on Nov. 3 which could pit her against Alexandr Stoiianoglo, a Russia-friendly former prosecutor general who is polling at around 10%.

UN takes Pakistan to cleaners on human rights violations, religious intolerance and media curbs

AGENCIES ISLAMABAD, 20 OCTOBER

A detailed report by the United Nations Human Rights Committee has raised serious concerns over the spread of religious intolerance, blasphemy, forced kidnappings and conversion of Hindu and Christian minority girls, curbs on media and freedom of expression in Pakistan.

It also questioned Islamabad's ongoing curbs, outages and surveillance by government institutions and authorities on social media, internet, social media apps,

internet surveillance to tactically devise and manage the general elections in the country.

The concerns were raised during the second day of the review of human rights conditions in Pakistan by the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) committee.

During the review, serious questions were raised by the UN on the situation of freedom of expression, media freedom, religious intolerance and freedom of expression in Pakistan.

"According to information



received, the legislative framework at the federal and provincial levels imposes unnecessary barriers to exercise this right. We have seen

in many areas the NGOs have their finances and plans inspected and all this is being used to interfere in the work of some NGOs. There are many reports that national as well as international NGOs are subjected to constant investigation and harassment on the part of security operators and government officers," stated the UN Committee.

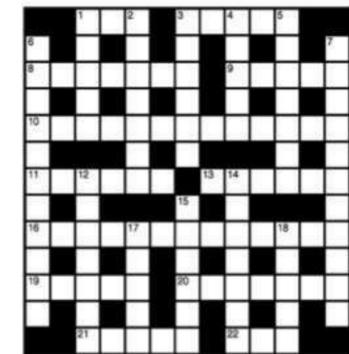
"University students have to sign a sworn declaration where they reject any political activity on the basis of prerequisite for admission to a university. Similarly, Pashtun and Baloch students are

subjected to arbitrary disciplinary hearings and suspensions given their political activity," added the UN Committee on Human Rights chair.

The UN Committee also reiterated its serious concerns over the issue of forced conversions and kidnapping by miscreants in Pakistan targeting Hindu and Christian girls. The committee expressed its astonishment over the fast-increasing numbers of cases of Hindu and Christian girls being abducted and later on forced to convert to Islam by abductors or their relatives.

LEISURE

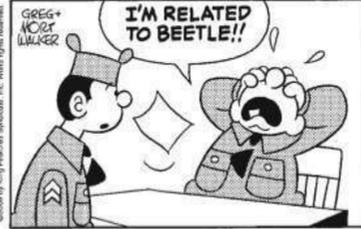
10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS 1 Tavern (3) 3 Ship's floors (5) 8 Go on too long (7) 9 Spin (5) 10 Confidence (4-9) 11 Edict (6) 13 Fobles (6) 16 Calculation aid (5,8) 19 Leg bone (5) 20 Write music (7) 21 Tending to flow (5) 22 Golf peg (3)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD ACROSS 10 Aspect, 13 Foster, 15 Boarding, 19 Fern, 20 Scavenge, 21 Rely, 22 Fly.

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovalski



NEED TO KNOW

Ambulance FD Block Association (Amb) 9830-452536, 9830181286 Happy Calculators 24400160 City Point Nurses Centre 2567-4113, 9831142623 People's Relief Committee 2280-4943/9444

SCRABBLE BRAND G R A M S. Includes a grid and word lists.

Life Care 2284-6940 Peoples Blood Bank 2455-5164/5557 RK Mission Seva Pratishthan 2475-3636/39

SUDOKU Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green. Includes a 9x9 grid and difficulty level.

# PMI data, Q2 results and FII data key factors for next week

The Indian stock market extended its losing streak for the third consecutive week last week

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

The outlook for the market for next week will be guided by the major domestic and global economic data such as India Nikkei S&P Global manufacturing and services PMI data, India RBI MPC meeting minutes, US initial jobless claims, FII activities and quarterly results, according to the experts.

Between October 21 and 25, the results for the September quarter of the financial year 2024-25 will be released by companies like Bajaj Housing Finance, UltraTech Cement, Adani Energy Solutions, Adani Green Energy, Bajaj Finance, Godrej Property, TVS Motors and JSW Steel.

The Indian stock market extended its losing streak for the third consecutive week



with nifty 50 toppling to its weakest level since August before settling the week at 24,854, down nearly 0.50 per cent or 110 points from the previous week, while Sensex declined around 0.20 per cent

or 156 points to end the week at 81,224.

The weakness in Indian indices was triggered by disappointing quarterly earnings by major companies and underwhelming India's infla-

tion figures which again fuelled the expectation of delay in early rate cut by RBI (Reserve Bank of India).

The consumer price inflation in India rose to 5.49 per cent in September from 3.65 per cent in the previous month, well above market estimates of 5 per cent. It was the highest inflation rate since the start of the year, overshooting the RBI's target of 4 per cent after dropping below the threshold in the first two months of the September quarter.

However, a significant fall in crude oil prices helped the market to recover from lower levels.

On the domestic front, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) continued to offload shares, selling Rs 21,823 crore in the cash segment, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) kept their

buying momentum with purchases totalling Rs 16,384 crore in the same segment.

Palka Arora Chopra, Director of Master Capital Services said, "Nifty 50 ended its three-week losing streak by closing in the green. The key resistance now stands at 25,000, and a breakout above this could lead to a move toward 25,300. On the downside, support is at 24,500, and a breach below this may see the index drop to 24,200."

Pravesh Gour, Senior Technical Analyst at Swastika Investmart said, "Bank Nifty, on the other hand, is showing relative strength, with resistance at 52,400 and 53,000. The immediate demand zone lies between 51,700 and 51,500. It needs to cross the 20-DMA of 52,300 to confirm a bullish reversal. Above 20-DMA, the next target will be the 53,300 level."

# Four of top 10 most-valued firms add over ₹ 81,000 crore

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

Last week, four of the top 10 most-valued firms together added Rs 81,151.31 crore in market valuation. ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank emerged as the biggest gainers.

Reliance Industries continued to remain the most-valued domestic firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, State Bank of India, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, and LIC.

ICICI Bank added Rs 28,495.14 crore, taking its market valuation to Rs 8,90,191.38 crore while the valuation of HDFC Bank jumped Rs 23,579.11 crore to Rs 12,82,848.30 crore.

State Bank of India's market valuation climbed Rs 17,804.61 crore to Rs 7,31,773.56 crore while TCS valuation went lower by Rs 8,760.12 crore to Rs 5,91,418.91 crore.

Bharti Airtel went up by Rs 11,272.45 crore to Rs



9,71,707.61 crore. The valuation of Reliance Industries declined Rs 16,645.39 crore to Rs 18,38,721.14 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Infosys slumped Rs 23,314.31 crore to Rs 7,80,126.10 crore while TCS diminished by Rs 10,402.01 crore to Rs 14,91,321.40 crore.

The mcap of ITC dipped Rs 2,251.37 crore to Rs 6,08,682.29 crore and that of

Hindustan Unilever tumbled Rs 15,248.85 crore to Rs 6,38,066.75 crore.

On Friday, benchmark indices rebounded after three days of decline after buying in banks, financial services and metal stocks.

The BSE Sensex closed 218.14 points higher to 81,224.75 on October 18 while NSE Nifty rose 104.20 points to 24,854.05.

# India's automobile exports rise 14 pc in April-September FY24

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

Automobile exports from India in the first six months of the current fiscal year rose by 14% year-on-year, according to SIAM data.

The growth was driven by an increase in shipments of passenger vehicles and two-wheelers.

Overall exports in the April-September period stood at 2,528,248 units, up 14% as compared to 2,211,457 units in the same period last year, SIAM data revealed.

In FY24, automobile exports had declined by 5.5% due to the monetary crisis in various overseas markets. Overall exports stood at 4,500,492 units in the last fiscal year, compared with 4,761,299 units in FY23.

Total passenger vehicle shipments rose by 12% year-on-year to 376,679 units in the first half of the current fiscal year, compared to 336,754 units in the corresponding period of the previous year.



According to SIAM data, two-wheeler exports rose by 16% year-on-year to 1,959,145 units in the April-September period of the current fiscal year, compared to 1,685,907 units in the same period last year.

Scooter shipments increased by 19% to 314,533 units, while motorcycle exports rose by 16% to 1,641,804 units during the period under review.

The data also highlighted that commercial vehicle exports rose by 12% year-on-year to 35,731 units in the first six months of the

fiscal year. However, three-wheeler shipments declined by 1% during the period to 153,199 units, compared to 155,154 units in the April-September period of the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Maruti Suzuki led the segment with shipments of 147,063 units, an increase of 12% over the 131,546 units in the same period last year.

Hyundai Motor India exported 84,900 units, a decline of 1%, compared to 86,105 units in the April-September period of the previous fiscal year.

# EPFO adds 9.3 lakh new members during August 2024 amid job growth

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) added around 9.30 lakh new members in August 2024, representing a 0.48% increase in new members compared to August 2023.

According to the provisional payroll data released by the organisation, the EPFO enrolled 18.53 lakh net members in August 2024, reflecting a 9.07% year-on-year growth compared to August 2023.

This signifies increased employment opportunities and heightened awareness of employee benefits, bolstered by EPFO's effective outreach initiatives.

A noticeable aspect of the data is the dominance of the 18-25 age group, constituting a significant 59.26% of the total new members added in August 2024.

The net payroll data for the age group 18-25 for August 2024 is 8.06 lakhs.

This is in consonance



with the earlier trend which indicates that most individuals joining the organised workforce are youth, primarily first-time job seekers, the EPFO said.

The payroll data highlights that approximately 13.54 lakh members exited and subsequently rejoined the EPFO. This figure depicts year-over-year growth of 14.03% compared to August 2023.

These members switched

their jobs and rejoined the establishments covered under the ambit of the EPFO and opted to transfer their accumulations instead of applying for final settlement, thus safeguarding long-term financial well-being and extending their social security protection, as per the shared data.

Gender-wise analysis of payroll data unveils that out of the new members added during the month, around 2.53 lakhs are new female

members. This figure exhibits year-over-year growth of 3.75% compared to August 2023.

Also, the net female member addition during the month stood at around 3.79 lakh. It reflects a year-over-year growth of 10.41% compared to August 2023. The surge in female member additions is indicative of a broader shift towards a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

State-wise analysis of payroll data indicates that net member addition in the top five states/UTs accounts for around 59.17% of the total, with around 10.97 lakh net members added during the month.

Maharashtra leads all states by adding 20.59% of net members during the month. The states/UTs of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Delhi, Gujarat, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh each contributed more than 5% of the total net members during the month.

# HDFC Bank to sell up to ₹10,000 cr shares via OFS in HDB Financial's upcoming IPO

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, 20 OCTOBER

Leading private lender HDFC Bank on Saturday announced to sell equity shares worth Rs 10,000 crore via an offer for sale (OFS) in the upcoming initial public offering (IPO) of its subsidiary HDB Financial Services Ltd.

The size of the IPO of HDB Financial Services Ltd (HDBFS) will be Rs 12,500 crore, including a fresh issue of Rs 2,500 crore, the bank said in a regulatory filing.

"The Board of Directors of the bank approved the offer for sale (OFS) of such number of equity shares of face value of Rs 10 each of HDBFS aggregating up to Rs 10,000 crore held by the Bank in the proposed IPO, subject to applicable law, market conditions, receipt of necessary approvals/regulatory clearances and other considerations," said HDFC Bank.

# Upcoming IPOs: 9 new public issues including Waaree Energies

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

The Indian equity market witnessed a sharp fall in recent weeks but the IPO market sees strong buzz due to new listings and public issues.

In the next week (October 21 to 25), nine Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) worth Rs 10,985 crore will open for retail investors.

During this period, there will be a listing of three public issues including Hyundai Motor.

Waaree Energies IPO will be the first IPO to open for subscription next week on October 21, with a price band of Rs 1,427-1,503 per share. The Rs 4,321 crore public

issue, which includes a fresh issue of Rs 3,600 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of 48 lakh shares worth Rs 721.44 crore, will close on October 23.

Promoters Waaree Sustainable Finance and Chandrak Investment will participate in the OFS. Before the IPO, the company raised Rs 1,277 crore from anchor investors on October 18.

It is a solar photovoltaic module manufacturing company. Its main competitors include listed companies such as Premier Energies and Websol Energy.

Deepak Builders and Engineers India IPO subscription will open for retail investors between October 21 and October 23.

# Vedanta Group promises investment of ₹1 lakh crore in Raj

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAIPUR, 20 OCTOBER

The Vedanta Group – one of the world's foremost natural resources conglomerates – will invest more than Rs one lakh crore in Rajasthan.

This assurance was reaffirmed by the Group Chairman Anil Agarwal at a meeting on breakfast with Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma at the former's residence in London on Saturday. Sharma called on Agarwal to invite him to the 'Rising Rajasthan Global Investor Summit' scheduled to be held in Jaipur on December 9, 10, and 11.

The chief minister, who, along with a high-powered delegation, was on a week-long tour of Germany and the UK to woo investors

ahead of the global meet, yesterday visited the Ambedkar House in London to pay tributes to Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar.

The delegation also visited the British Museum to explore collaboration in art museums and galleries.

Sharma also organised a Rising Rajasthan Tourism Meet in London and sought investment in the state's heritage, and wildlife tourism, and exhorted British filmmakers to shoot in Rajasthan. "The vibrant tourism industry in India is expected to reach the size of Euro 31 billion by the year 2029 and Rajasthan will be making a substantial contribution. A new Rajasthan Tourism Policy is also going to be launched by the government soon which will overhaul



the sector and make it more attractive for the investors," he assured filmmakers.

Highlighting the salience of the tourism sector for Rajasthan and the increasing popularity of the state as a

prime tourism destination, Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari said, "Rajasthan attracted 180 million domestic and 1.7 million international visitors in 2023 alone making the sector contribute

a sizeable 12 per cent to the State's GDP. Our vision is to create a symbiotic relationship with British investors in the sector that will not only boost the tourism industry but also foster cultural ties between our two great nations."

The delegation also held deliberations with the officials of Manchester University and Aurora Energy to explore the prospects for viable collaboration in the field of science, engineering, humanities, and social sciences which the university is known for. A MoU in this regard will soon be submitted by the university to the state government.

A fruitful discussion was held with Europe's largest power analytics provider Aurora Energy, during which the company showed interest

in setting up a base in the state of Rajasthan to provide analytical support to the state government and the private companies.

With this, the delegation's London investor outreach, which included one-on-one meetings with business groups, an investor roadshow, a tourism roadshow, and a non-resident Rajasthan (NRR) Diaspora event, has come to an end.

The members of the delegation later flew back home post-midnight.

Chief Minister Sharma and his delegation reached New Delhi early this morning before leaving for Jaipur. They arrived at the Sanganeer Airport here this afternoon to a rousing welcome and at the ruling BJP state headquarters here.

# Shift from agri to manufacturing must for India's growth: Amitabh Kant

AGENCIES  
KASAUJI, 20 OCTOBER

India's G20 Sherpa and former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant contends that in order for India to grow at high rates of nine to ten per cent and become a developed economy by 2047, the country's GDP has to grow by nine times and per capita income by eight times, with manufacturing and urbanisation playing a key role in the process.

He also hailed India's chairmanship of the G20 and batted for lateral entry into the government service.

"Our manufacturing has to grow by 16 times. It has to fire on all cylinders. We have to become a manufacturing nation," Kant told at the Kasauli Literary Festival.

He also stressed that the country must urbanise in a

scientific, sustainable manner, enhance agriculture productivity, and remain a services nation.

"For all this to happen, you have to provide well-paid jobs to the people and every transition that takes place to manufacturing means that people must move from agriculture to manufacturing and towards urbanisation. The dependence of population in India on agriculture is 46.5 per cent," Kant added.

He pointed out that agriculture gives us 16.5 per cent of the GDP, adding that nowhere in the world does this happen.

"Therefore, you need to take the population away from agriculture and put them into manufacturing on better-paid quality jobs. There also needs to be stress on disinvestment, cutting red



tape, and ease of doing business which has been this government's agenda," he emphasised.

About the time when India held the presidency of G20 from December 1, 2022, to November 30, 2023, Kant recollects that the country was able to bring consensus on all key issues confronting the world.

Some of the key issues

were a specific action plan for sustainable development goals which had been impacted due to Covid, the issue of strong, sustainable, balanced growth in the global economy, the issue of Green Development Pact, technological transformation and the use of digital public infrastructure and more importantly, the issue of women-led development.

"These were all critical issues. But to my mind, our biggest achievement during G20 was the fact that it spoke the voice of the Global South, and under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi, was able to make the African Union an integral member of G20. So, in a way, we succeeded in making it from G20 to G21 which has made G20 a far more inclusive body in the world. Now, it covers almost

90 per cent of the global population and covers a very vast, almost 80 per cent of the global GDP. So, this has been India's biggest achievement," Kant said.

Stressing that it was the Prime Minister's wish to hold G20 meetings in most states and UTs, and not just at one or two places, the former bureaucrat said: "We took it to every nook and corner of the country. And every state was an active participant. This required clockwork precision. It was a very federal G20. Every state brought their one district and a product forward."

Adding that the country has succeeded hugely when it comes to ease of doing business, Kant claims what India has achieved in last eight years what it could not achieve in the last 60 years.

# Mandaviya to launch on Monday 'eShram-One Stop Solution' for unorganised workers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

In keeping with the vision of the recent Budget announcement on developing eShram as a One-Stop-Solution for unorganised labour to have access to various social sector schemes, Union Minister of labour & Employment Manu Singh Mandaviya will launch the 'eShram-One Stop Solution' on Monday.

The eShram-One Stop Solution will act as a mediator to ensure that unorganised workers have easy access to a variety of government schemes/programs. This initiative will help unorganised workers become aware of the schemes designed for them.

The eShram-One Stop



Solution aims to integrate information of beneficiaries of all social security and welfare schemes meant for unorganised workers in an effective manner through a single platform.

eShram as a One-Stop-Solution will help to facilitate identification and imple-

mentation of the Social Security & Welfare Schemes for the unorganised worker and to help saturation of the schemes in the fast and effective manner. Consequently, 12 schemes of different Central Ministries / Departments have already been integrated/ mapped with the eShram.

Since the launch of e-Shram on August 26, 2021, it has achieved significant milestones with over 30 crore unorganised workers enrolled and it has demonstrated its widespread appeal among unorganised labour. This achievement underscores the social impact of the initiative and the government's commitment to supporting the nation's unorganised workers, an official release said on Sunday.

# Asomiya: Eventful journey for the classical recognition

NAVA THAKURIA

After an eventful journey covering more than thousand years, Asomiya (Assamese) duly receives the status of a classical language. The Union cabinet on 3 October 2024 approved conferring the classical language status to five languages, namely Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Bengali (Bangla), and Assamese. The classical languages serve as custodians of Bharat's profound and ancient cultural heritage, embodying the essence of each community's historical and cultural milestone. Assamese, which is spoken by over 20 million people on Earth, gets an entry to the prestigious category of Tamil (notified in 2004), Sanskrit (2005), Telugu (2008), Kannada (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014) languages.

The central government decided to create a new category of languages as classical in October 2004 and declared Tamil as a classical language. Some important criteria for the same were also formulated, including the high antiquity of its early text/recorded history over a thousand years, a body of ancient literature/texts that is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers, the literary tradition as original and not borrowed from another speech community, etc. It was followed by the constitution of a Linguistic Experts Committee under Sahitya Akademi to examine the proposal for a particular language for the said status.

As a linguistically diverse nation, India nurtures more than 121 languages and thousands of sub-languages or dialects. Now conferring the classical status to a widely used language should help encourage academic research, acknowledgement of linguistic heritages, and preservation with documenting and digitising ancient texts. The government usually supports announcing national and international awards, establishing chairs in reputed universities, and various other initiatives to promote the classical languages. The recent declaration is expected to benefit the states of Maharashtra, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and

Assam. Nevertheless, Pali is widely spoken in Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka.

Asomiya is primarily rooted in Sanskrit (even though maintaining some distinct features) and can be traced since the days of the 7th century in the written structure. But the language may have survived in the oral form since the 4th century. Assamese scripts are very similar to Bengali and Maithili. A number of linguists argue that pre-modern Assamese scripts are found in Charyapadas (ancient Buddhist tantric text). Various scholars also believe that Assamese was enhanced by both Magadhi-Prakrit and Kamrupi-Prakrit groups. The language is also understood in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and some parts of Bangladesh and Bhutan.

Great Assamese poet Kaviraj Madhav Kandali translated the Valmiki Ramayana (in Sanskrit) into graceful Assamese verses in the 14th century. Saptakanda Ramayana is known as one of the earliest translations into a modern regional language (only preceded by Tamil and Telugu translations). The flawless poet projected the epic characters, namely Ram, Sita, and Lakshman, with others in a non-heroic way. As the Adikanda and Uttarakanda of Kandali's literary work were lost, those were inserted respectively by great Vaishnavite saint Madhavdev and his saint-poet Guru Sankardev, the greatest son of the soil in far eastern Bharat, during the 16th century. Earlier, Hem Saraswati created Prahlad Charita, an Assamese poem with a lot of Sanskrit words in the 13th century.

The ancient Sanskrit literature mentions Pragjyotishpur during the Mahabharat days (which represented the larger Brahmaputra valley, parts of other north-eastern states, and north Bengal). Later it came to exist as the great Kamrup kingdom.

State chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has already expressed his gratitude to the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the historic decision to accord Assamese the classical status. The saffron leader opined that this recognition will help the Assamese language that carries the ancient wisdom of numerous saints, philosophers, thinkers, and writers to be better preserved. Promoting the language that lasted over a thousand years with independent traditions will now be more



dom, which is indicated in rock inscriptions created during the 4th century by emperor Samudra Gupta, recognised as one of the greatest rulers of Bharat. The name of the land (mostly the eastern part) as Asom was possibly initiated by the Ahom dynasty rulers, who entered this part of India in 1228 and assimilated with the local culture. Ahom kings ruled Assam for nearly six hundred years until the Burmese invasion in 1826. After independence, Assam became a constituent state in 1950, and its capital was shifted to Dispur in Guwahati from Shillong (the present-day Meghalaya capital) in 1974. Following the language movement in 1959-60, Assamese was adopted as the official language, while Bengali enjoyed similar status in Barak

accommodating, he added. With an aim to celebrate the historic achievement, Assam will observe Bhasa Gaurab Saptah from 3-9 November, where the universities, schools, and civil society organisations will host events to honour the contributions of Assamese writers and scholars, whose works shaped the language since the 4th century AD. The celebration will also give an opportunity to the people to express their heartfelt gratitude to PM Modi for the gesture towards the cultural and language heritage of Assam. Meanwhile, a forum of nationalist citizens extended heartfelt thanks to the government for paving the way to recognise Assamese as a classical language of India. Patriotic People's Front Assam

(PPFA), in a media statement, appreciated everyone who contributed for the momentum to achieve the honour. Now the forum insists on developing Asomiya as an internet-savvy language so that any user can cross-check the spelling and construction of sentences while using various digital media platforms. Moreover, many Assamese words are still printed differently in a number of well-known dictionaries. Some words recorded in the school books of yesteryear are now assumed to be wrong. The forum insisted on resolving these issues passionately with a scientific approach. Moreover, the eastern Assamese dialect (primarily spoken in upper Assam) was considered the standard (written) form of Asomiya for official

uses in government communication, educational purposes, and mainstream media outlets. The western Assamese dialect (spoken in lower Assam) was not considered for the recognition, seemingly to distinguish the difference with the working Bengali language. The forum argues that all those words (precisely from the Kamrupi language) that survived orally for centuries among native speakers in western Assam should also be incorporated. It may emerge as an intriguing debate where every Assamese would endorse a pragmatic way while defining Asomiya as a vibrant, inclusive, and evolving language.

The writer is a Guwahati-based special representative of The Statesman

# Safeguarding Assam's winged winter guests: A call to protect migratory birds and their habitats

ABHIJIT DEB

As the crisp air of winter descends on Assam, the region once again prepares to welcome a colourful array of migratory birds from distant lands. These winged travellers, arriving from as far away as Siberia, Mongolia, and Central Asia, will soon flock to Assam's wetlands, forests, and riverine habitats, adding to the state's already rich biodiversity. The annual arrival of migratory birds not only paints a vibrant picture of nature but also boosts the state's ecotourism, attracting bird-watchers, researchers, and nature lovers from across the country and beyond.

Recognising the ecological and cultural significance of these avian visitors, Aaranyak, a leading research-based biodiversity conservation organisation, has called upon the people of Assam to step up efforts to ensure the safety and protection of these migratory species. Through a series of birdwatching events and bird counts, starting in November 2024, Aaranyak aims to foster

a deeper connection between the people of Assam and these invaluable contributors to the state's biodiversity.

The state of Assam, with its unique geographic position and varied habitats, plays host to over 900 bird species out of the 1,377 recorded in India. The state's location along two major migratory flyways—the Central Asian and East Asian-Australasian—makes it a vital stopover for numerous migratory species. According to Udayan Borthakur, Senior Scientist at Aaranyak, "Assam is a haven for birds because of its diverse habitats and altitudinal ranges, which support a wide variety of breeding and migratory birds. The state is privileged to witness the annual arrival of these incredible travellers, who enrich our ecosystems and contribute to global biodiversity."

Among the notable species that make Assam their temporary winter home are the bar-headed goose, the northern pintail, and the ruddy shelduck. These migratory birds bring with them the beauty of distant lands and play a crucial role in supporting Assam's ecosystems by promoting pollination, seed dispersal,

and pest control. Beyond their ecological contributions, they offer a significant opportunity for Assam to develop its ecotourism sector, which could be a boon for local communities and nature conservation initiatives alike.

According to Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Secretary General and CEO of Aaranyak, the organisation is eager to work closely with bird enthusiasts and nature lovers to ensure the safety of these migratory birds.

"Migratory birds are our valued guests, and we all have a responsibility to safeguard them during their stay in Assam. We encourage the public to remain sensitive to the protection of natural areas frequented by these birds," Dr Talukdar said.

Aaranyak's commitment to bird conservation is grounded in scientific research and citizen science. The organisation has conducted ecological studies on several globally threatened bird species, such as the white-winged wood duck, Bengal florican, and greater adjutant stork. In addition, Aaranyak has been a pioneer in genetic research on the critically endangered white-

bellied heron, a species that has become a focal point of global conservation efforts.

As part of its ongoing initiatives, Aaranyak has facilitated the development of bird checklists for several of Assam's Important Bird Areas (IBAs), further contributing to the knowledge and conservation of bird species in the region. These checklists, compiled by biologists, volunteers, and members of the organisation, are critical for tracking the population dynamics of migratory birds and understanding the health of ecosystems that host them.

Karishma Sharma Chamlagani, a researcher with Aaranyak, emphasises the vital role birds play in maintaining ecosystem health. "Birds are essential agents of critical ecosystem services such as pollination, seed dispersal, pest control, and nutrient cycling. Migratory birds amplify these benefits by connecting ecosystems across continents," she explained. Their migratory routes, which span thousands of miles, are a testament to nature's complex interconnections. In Assam's biodiverse landscapes, these birds are not only integral to maintaining

ecological balance but also support human livelihoods through agriculture and ecotourism.

Moreover, migratory birds play a key role in global biodiversity by transporting genetic material between regions, enriching ecosystems far from their breeding grounds. However, despite their critical ecological functions, migratory birds face numerous threats, including habitat loss, pollution, climate change, and illegal poaching. As Chamlagani points out, "Protecting migratory birds is not only essential for biodiversity but also for the ecosystem services they provide, which directly benefit human communities."

Aaranyak's birdwatching events and bird counts aim to raise awareness about the importance of conserving migratory birds and their habitats. These initiatives encourage local communities and visitors to observe these species in their natural environments, fostering a culture of coexistence. The organisation hopes that by engaging people in birdwatching and conservation efforts, Assam can strengthen its position as a key player in biodiversity conservation

while boosting its ecotourism potential.

As winter approaches and Assam's wetlands and forests come alive with the sights and sounds of migratory birds, it is a reminder of the delicate balance between nature and human activity.

In the words of Udayan Borthakur, "Birds are nature's ambassadors, reminding us of the need to protect our natural world. In Assam, we have the privilege of hosting some of the world's most extraordinary migratory birds. Let us all come together to ensure they continue to find a safe haven in our state."

As Assam prepares for the arrival of its winged winter guests, Aaranyak's call for action is timely and crucial. The state's unique position along major migratory routes gives it both the privilege and the responsibility to protect these species. By fostering community involvement, conducting scientific research, and promoting ecotourism, Assam can ensure that these migratory birds continue to thrive, enriching the state's biodiversity and bringing people closer to nature.





### 'CHELSEA FEELS LIKE HOME TO ME'

Cole Palmer recently signed a contract extension with Chelsea that has tied the Englishman to the West London club until 2033. The 22-year-old claims he could stay at his current 'home' till the end of his career. "Absolutely. Chelsea feels like home to me, and I'm excited about what we can achieve together. I'm fully committed to the club and its future. Absolutely. Chelsea feels like home to me, and I'm excited about what we can achieve together. I'm fully committed to the club and its future," said Palmer.

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### THUMBNAILS

**Jamshedpur FC aim to extend dominance, Hyderabad FC hunt first win in ISL 2024-25:** Curtains will be drawn on the fifth matchweek of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 campaign with a clash between the in-form Jamshedpur FC and the highly motivated Hyderabad FC at the JRD Tata Sports Complex on Monday. Both teams have plenty to fight for, with Jamshedpur FC looking to continue their strong start and Hyderabad FC hoping to turn around their season. Jamshedpur FC have been lethal in front of goal, scoring in each of their last seven ISL matches. Their current form sees them sitting on nine points after four games, their best-ever start to a season.

**Hockey India names 22-member squad for PFC India vs Germany Bilateral Series:** Hockey India (HI) on Sunday announced the 22-member Indian Men's Hockey team for the upcoming bilateral series against reigning World Champions Germany in New Delhi. The Indian team heads into the two-match series, scheduled for the 23rd and 24th of October at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, following a successful campaign at the Asian Champions Trophy in Hulunbuir, China, where they defended their title, becoming the only Asian team to win the prestigious event five times since its inception in 2011.

## NZ secure first win in India after 36 years, beat hosts by 8 wickets

With this victory at Bengaluru on Sunday, New Zealand lead the three-match series 1-0

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, 20 OCTOBER

A fine bowling performance from Matt Henry and William O'Rourke, coupled with brilliant batting from Rachin Ravindra, helped New Zealand secure an eight-wicket victory over a resilient Indian side in the first Test at Bengaluru on Sunday.

This is the Kiwis' first win in India in over 36 years, since 1988. With this victory, they lead the three-match series 1-0. Chasing 107 runs, New Zealand had a shaky start as Jasprit Bumrah dismissed skipper Tom Latham for a duck on the second ball of the innings. The Kiwis were 0/1 in 1 over.

Will Young and Devon Conway began to build a partnership for New Zealand. However, Bumrah struck again, trapping Conway leg-before-wicket for 17, leaving New Zealand at 35/2 in 12.3 overs. New Zealand reached the 50-run mark in 13.4 overs. Young was joined by Rachin Ravindra, and together they took New Zealand to the 100-run mark in 26.3 overs.

New Zealand reached the target, finishing at 110/2 in 27.4 overs, with Young unbeaten on 48 (76 balls, seven fours, and one six) and Ravindra on 39\* (46 balls, six fours).



Bumrah (2/29) was the only wicket-taker for India. Earlier, India had taken a 106-run lead in the second innings, scoring 462/10 in response to New Zealand's total of 402/10 in the first innings. Openers Yashasvi Jaiswal (35 from 52 balls, with six fours) and skipper Rohit Sharma (52 from 63 balls, with eight fours and a six) gave India a solid start with a 72-run opening stand.

Sarfaraz Khan then took charge, first forming a 136-run partnership with Virat Kohli (70 from 102 balls, with eight fours and a six) and later a 177-run stand with Rishabh Pant (99 from 105 balls, with nine fours and five sixes) to put India in the lead. However, the introduction of the new ball saw India

lose seven wickets for just 54 runs, with the middle order failing to contribute significantly.

William O'Rourke (3/92) and Matt Henry (3/102) took full advantage of the new ball, dismantling the Indian batting line-up just when a massive lead seemed likely. Spinner Ajaz Patel took two wickets, while Glenn Phillips and Tim Southee chipped in with one each.

In their first innings, New Zealand posted 402 in response to India's 356. A magnificent century from Rachin Ravindra (134 from 157 balls, with 13 fours and four sixes) and a quickfire 65 from Southee (73 balls, eight fours, and four sixes) helped lift New Zealand from 233/7 to 402, thanks to a 137-

run stand for the eighth wicket.

Devon Conway (91 from 105 balls, with 11 fours and three sixes) also made a valuable contribution at the top. Ravindra Jadeja (3/72) and Kuldeep Yadav (3/99) bowled well for India, while Mohammed Siraj picked up two wickets, and Ravichandran Ashwin and Bumrah took one each.

Earlier, after electing to bat, India had a nightmare start under overcast, pace-friendly conditions. Henry (5/15) and O'Rourke (4/22) ran through the Indian batting order, bundling them out for just 46 runs in 31.2 overs. Only Jaiswal (13) and Pant (20) managed to reach double figures. Brief scores: India: 46 and

### ICC World Test C'ship: India remain on top; NZ reach 4th

AGENCIES  
DUBAI, 20 OCTOBER

New Zealand's impressive triumph over India in the first Test in Bengaluru has had significant ramifications on the race to qualify for next year's ICC World Test Championship (WTC) 2023-25 final.

The Black Caps chased down their victory target of 107 with relative ease on Sunday, with the win propelling them from sixth to fourth in the updated standings, with a win-loss percentage of 44.44%, according to the ICC. While India remain at the top of the standings, the loss has somewhat weakened their hold on a place in next year's final, as their percentage drops to 68.06% ahead of two more Tests against New Zealand and a five-match series with Australia at the end of the year.

462 (Sarfaraz Khan 150, Rishabh Pant 99, William O'Rourke 3/92) lost to New Zealand: 402 and 110/2 (Will Young 48\*, Rachin Ravindra 39\*, Jasprit Bumrah 2/29).

## India stuns Great Britain with 6-4 win in Sultan of Johor Cup



AGENCIES  
JOHOR BAHRU, 20 OCTOBER

The Indian Junior Men's Hockey Team continued their winning streak as they registered a stunning 6-4 win against Great Britain (GB) in a high-scoring game at the Sultan of Johor Cup on Sunday.

Goals by Mohd Konain Dad (7'), Dilraj Singh (17', 50'), Sharda Nand Tiwari (20', 50') and Manmeet Singh (26') ensured India's consecutive wins while Rory Penrose's (2', 15'), Michael Royden (46', 59') put their name on the scoreboard for Great Britain, as per the press release by Hockey India.

High on confidence from their opening match win against Japan on Saturday, the young Indian side entertained the Sunday audience with the large presence of Indian hockey fans.

Though they suffered an early setback when a defensive error cost them dearly in the 2nd minute of the game with Rory Penrose scoring from Britain's first Penalty Corner, India bounced back in the 7th minute with a goal by Mohd Konain Dad. It was a well-earned Penalty Corner that saw India equalise.

GB, however, regained the lead in the 15th minute when Rory scored his second goal through a Penalty Corner but it was India who dominated the second quarter with their forward line working magic, as they scored three back-to-back goals. First, it was mercurial striker Dilraj who scored in the 17th minute to equalise the score to 2-2. He followed this up with a perfect injection to help Sharda Nand Tiwari score from a PC in the 20th minute, helping India take an important 3-2 lead.

## PKL 11: Puneri Paltan not under pressure for Patna clash, says Aslam Inamdar

AGENCIES  
HYDERABAD, 20 OCTOBER

Defending champions Puneri Paltan began their campaign in Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) Season 11 with a resounding win against the Haryana Steelers. Reflecting on what was a clinical showing by the team, coach BC Ramesh spoke at length about how happy he was to see his side's performance on the mat.

"The whole team played really well and worked well as a team, the raiders and defenders combined brilliantly together, which was great to

see from the team's point of view.

It was very important for us to win our opening game of PKL Season 11, and we are delighted to have started off well," BC Ramesh was quoted in a release from PKL as saying.

"Our squad is a very talented one, and the players also executed the plans very well, everyone delivered on their individual responsibilities properly, which is the most important thing. Every player contributed in their department and worked well in sync as a unit," he added.

Echoing the coach's thoughts was captain Aslam Inamdar, who said, that individual milestones are not important.

"As Puneri Paltan came into our first game and PKL Season 11 with a positive intent and we never look at the Super 10s or High 5s because for us it is the contribution to the team. And whatever small mistakes and errors we made we will work on it as the season goes on," he said.

Looking ahead to the next game against the Patna Pirates, the Puneri Paltan captain

Aslam Inamdar said, "The sport of Kabaddi is one that progresses very fast and things change every day. And yes, the Patna Pirates have won the title thrice, but we also won the PKL last year, and our team is also quite strong and well-settled. We will work out our plans properly, and just like the first game, the Puneri Paltan will aim to play a complete team game when we face the Patna Pirates. We are not taking any unnecessary pressure, but we will fight right through the game and we will try to win the game for sure."

## Delhi Half Marathon: Cheptegei, Eyayu bag titles; Barwal and Lili shine in Indian Elite categories

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, 20 OCTOBER

Olympian Joshua Cheptegei lived up to his billing to take home the men's crown while Alemaddis Eyayu pushed pre-race favourite Cynthia Limo behind for a surprise win in the women's race in the Delhi Half Marathon, a World Athletics Gold Label Road Race, at the Indian capital on Sunday.

Kenya's Alex Matata (27) led a major part of the race with his teammate Nicholas Kipkorir, who ran his maiden half marathon internationally. Kipkorir was a bronze medalist in the 5 km World Championships last year.

Matata was unbeaten in all three races he took part in in Europe earlier this year, with two sub-60 minutes clocking in two of them. That made the race exciting, and everyone was looking for a fast finish timing from the men's winner. Matata keeps the lead until the runners turn toward the finish line in the Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium, where the race commenced less than an hour earlier to decide the 2024 title.

Cheptegei, running seconds behind the Kenyan, realised the now-or-never situation and came from behind to snatch



the lead from Matata to win in 59 minutes 46 seconds. Matata (59:53) and Kipkorir (59:59) complete the podium with the Ugandan.

Incidentally, the Delhi Half Marathon was one of the fastest races in the world and usually saw incredible timings by the participants. Ethiopian Deriba Merga was the first to post a sub-60-minute winning time in 2008 when all the podium finishers dipped under 1 hour. This action was repeated several times in some of the subsequent editions at Delhi, wherein 2014 witnessed a record number of nine runners finishing within 60 minutes.

Former world champion

Muktar Edris from Ethiopia, another pre-race favourite, finished fifth (60:52), while Tanzania's Alphonse Simbu (60:40) got fourth place. Cheptegei, with multiple world titles on his cap, said, "This win in Delhi was special to me because it is my first-ever victory in a Half Marathon. India has been important for my career, and this country now means a lot to me. I felt good throughout the race despite the slow start. My first aim was to catch up with Nicholas (Kipkorir) and then Alex (Matata) in the final few kilometres of the race. I am delighted with my performance and hope to continue in the same manner in the future races". Alemaddis

Eyayu extended the Ethiopian winning streak in Delhi. Kenya's Cynthia Limo, the pre-race favourite, led the field right from the beginning while Scotland's Commonwealth Champion Eilish McColgan trailed behind all the time. McColgan had the fastest and only sub-66 minute timing among the elite women who took the starting lineup today. However, two Ethiopians, Eyayu and Tiruye Mesfin, stuck with Limo for the entire part.

Sawan Barwal will go home with the gold medal this time around after finishing on the podium of the Delhi Half Marathon for a second straight edition. With a timing of 1:02:46, Barwal finished ahead of Puneet Yadav, bettering his personal best in the process.

Eyayu and Limo passed the 10K mark together and remained the sole leaders in the women's race. In the Indian Elite Women's category, Lili Das was miles ahead of her competitors, securing the gold with a timing of 1:18:12. Coming in second was last year's winner Kavita Yadav, who clocked 1:19:44 as she finished in the top 3 for a second straight edition of the Delhi Half Marathon. In third place was 2022 Asian Games bronze medallist Priti Lamba, who crossed the finish line at the 1:20:21 mark.

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