



REVANTH URGES PUBLIC NOT TO TAKE LAW IN THEIR OWN HANDS

P4



KHARGE HOLDS CEC MEET

P8



PUTIN HOSTS SUMMIT

P9

SPINNING TRACK EXPECTED IN PUNE

P14



SENSEX 81,151.27

NIFTY 24,781.10

₹ vs \$ 84.07

GOLD 80,535.00

SILVER 1,01,000

BRENT CRUDE (IN \$) 74.37

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. Maximum and Minimum Temperature most likely to be around 31°C and 26°C respectively.

RAINFALL: 0.0 mm
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
Max. 94 % Min. 61%
TEMPERATURE
Max: 31.0°C (-1.4) Min: 25.8°C (+1.6)
SUN RISES 05:36 hrs
SUN SETS 17:10 hrs
MOON RISES 20:22 hrs
MOON SETS 09:37 hrs

New Moon on 01 November

THUMBNAILS



Director general of police, Gujarat, Police commissioner of Ahmedabad and police personnel pay tribute to the fallen heroes of the police services on the occasion of Police Commemoration Day, in Ahmedabad on Monday. **ANI**

Cab Sec reviews preparedness on Bay of Bengal cyclone: Cabinet Secretary Dr T V Somanathan on Monday chaired a meeting of the National Crisis Management Committee (NCCM) to review preparedness for the impending cyclone in Bay of Bengal, which is likely to cross Odisha and West Bengal coasts on 24th October night-25th October morning. The Director General, India Meteorological Department (IMD), briefed the Committee about the current status of the well-marked low-pressure area over east central Bay of Bengal. It is very likely to move west-northwestwards and intensify into a depression by 22nd October morning and into a cyclonic storm by 23rd October, 2024 over east central Bay of Bengal. Thereafter, it is very likely to move northwestwards and reach northwest Bay of Bengal off Odisha-West Bengal coasts by 24th October morning. **(PG 3)**

Jr doctors call off 16-day strike after meeting CM

Govt assured it would induct junior doctors at state & college level task forces for transparency



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 21 OCTOBER

Protesting junior doctors called off their 16-day fast-into-death on Monday evening following a nearly two-hour meeting with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at the state secretariat, Nabanna. The junior doctors have also decided to not press ahead with their health strike on Tuesday, which they had announced earlier. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had requested the doctors to call off their protest. Dr Debashish Halder announced that they have decided to call off their fast after requests from the parents of the Abhya to end their fast. Earlier, the state gov-

ernment assured it would induct junior doctors at state and college level task forces for better running and transparency in the state-run medical colleges across the state. The CM also said the state government will hold elections of the college unions by March 2025 and requested the junior doctors to withdraw their fast unto death. The doctors refused to take tea to express solidarity with their colleagues, who are observing fast at Esplanade. It was decided that the state chief secretary will inform the doctors about the formation and functioning of the task forces to the junior doctors by 3 pm on Tuesday. The state-level task forces will have 10 members which will

he headed by chief secretary Mr Pant. There will be five representatives from the state government and five from the junior doctors, namely, two junior doctors, two senior doctors and one female doctor. The task force will hold meeting once in a month to review the situation. Miss Banerjee said the task force will oversee the infrastructure development of the medical colleges and at the same time keep a tab on some doctors who are allegedly not attending their duties in the state-run hospitals in the districts and are attending private nursing homes and hospitals in the city. Miss Banerjee said she has a list of more than 300 junior doctors, who during the past two months



attended private nursing homes. "All infrastructure development cannot be completed within a single day and the state government is trying to complete them at the earliest," she said. Miss Banerjee said the state government is in favour of recruiting doctors at the earliest. But the matter is pending before Supreme Court and the state government has left no stone unturned to ensure that it is included in the list of hearing. She said that the medical examination should be absolutely transparent. "If the knowledge base of the doctors was not up-to-the-mark then they will not be able to treat the patients properly," she said, adding, she had agreed with Dr Kinjal Nanda that threat culture

should end immediately. Dr Debashish Halder, Dr Kinjal Nanda, Dr Priyabrata Singha, Dr Saptadipa Chakraborty spoke on behalf of the junior doctors along with some others. State home secretary, director general of police, principals of different medical colleges attended the meeting. The junior doctors said they want a transparent system to ensure that their junior work in a good environment. They maintained that the process of selection and not election has given birth to all corruption and muscle-flexing. Miss Banerjee said she had always felt for the junior doctors. "I have full faith in you and request you to join duties and I ensure that all the promises given by us will be kept," she maintained.

India, China reach agreement on LAC patrolling



ASHOK TUTEJA
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

In a significant development that could lead to an improvement in their ties after over four years of heightened tensions, India and China have reached an agreement on patrolling arrangements along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), leading to disengagement and a resolution of the eastern Ladakh military stand-off which began in April-May 2020. This announcement was made by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri this afternoon at a media briefing on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia from October 22-23 to attend the BRICS Summit. Chinese President Xi Jinping will also attend the summit and the breakthrough in talks on the military stand-off may now lead to a bilateral meeting between Mr Modi and the Chinese leader. "As you are aware of the events of 2020 in several years along the LAC, we have been in discussions with Chinese interlocutors, both at the diplomatic and the military levels. These discussions in the past had resulted in the resolution

of the stand-off at various locations. However, there were a few areas or locations where the stand-off had not been resolved," the foreign secretary said. "Now as a result of the discussions over the last several weeks, an agreement has been arrived at on patrolling arrangements along the LAC in the India-China border areas and this is leading to disengagement and eventually a resolution of issues that had arisen in these areas in 2020," he added. The patrolling arrangements agreement extends beyond the areas along the LAC where there has already been a disengagement of military personnel over the past few years, and include the so far unresolved areas of Demchok and Depsang, it is learnt. The Ladakh stand-off brought the relationship between the two neighbours to a new low. There have also been a few clashes between the troops on both sides, including the one at Galwan in June 2020, in which the Indian Army lost 20 soldiers, and China lost an unspecified number of troops.

Reconsider revision in prices of essential medicines, Bengal CM urges PM Modi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 21 OCTOBER

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, asking him to intervene and reconsider the decision on upward revision in the prices of some essential medicines used to deal with many widespread diseases. In her letter to PM Modi, she pointed out that this decision by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) to escalate the prices of some essential formulations used for the treatment of diseases like tuberculosis, asthma, thalassaemia, psychiatric conditions, eye problems and several other infections by nearly 50 pc,



would not only inflict serious hardship come upon common people but also cause an overwhelming strain on the budgets of states like West Bengal who provide drugs and treatment to patients free of cost. "I am sure you will agree that this unforeseen price increase poses a considerable challenge to the efforts of the states and the country as a whole to provide affordable healthcare. It disrupts the accessibility of indispensable treat-

ments, potentially hindering public health outcomes and increasing the burden on the healthcare systems," the letter read. The Chief Minister has also pointed out that for the common people, who are already reeling under the adverse effects of high prices of day-to-day consumables and associated requirements of life and livelihood, the increased prices of essential medicines would deliver a serious blow to them and hence, should be avoided at any cost. "I urge upon your kind office to issue directions to the concerned ministry to immediately reconsider the decision on the price escalation in the overall interest of the health

and well-being of the common people. The welfare of the citizens is of paramount importance and hence it is critical that all the stakeholders align the policies to reflect this commitment," the letter read. The NPPA announced on Monday that it had approved a 50 per cent increase in price for 11 scheduled formulations of eight drugs used in treating asthma, glaucoma, thalassaemia, tuberculosis, mental health disorders, etc., following applications from manufacturers, citing various reasons including the increased cost of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) or production, or change in exchange rate etc, causing unviability in sustainable production and marketing of drugs.

PM may seek discharge of Indian nationals working for Russian Army

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to again take up with Russian President Vladimir Putin the early discharge of nearly 20 Indian nationals who are yet to be discharged from the Russian Army when the two leaders hold bilateral talks on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit. At a media briefing here this afternoon ahead of the PM's visit to Russia, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said, "around 85 Indians have returned from Russia."

Ministry of Civil Aviation plans to put those who make hoax bomb threats on a no-fly list: Union Aviation Minister

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

The Centre is considering amending existing laws to deal with false bomb threats on aircraft and plans to put those who make such threats on a no-fly list, Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammoan Naidu said on Monday. In the past few days, Spice Jet and Air Asia flights received five bomb threats each, with multiple airlines receiving a total of 30 bomb threats in the last four days. "From the Ministry, we have thought of some legislative action if it is required. We have come to the conclusion that there are two



areas that we can explore - 1) Amendment in Aircraft Security Rules... one of the ideas that we want to propagate by changing these rules is that once we catch hold of the perpetrator who is behind this, we want to put

them in the no-flying list... 2) Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against Safety of Civil Aviation Act," the Civil Aviation Minister said while addressing a press conference here. On "UDAN Yojana",

Naidu said under the "UDAN Yojana" the government is planning to start 50 more airports or enhance the capacity of existing airports. "We are envisioning the UDAN scheme for 10 more years. We want to take it forward for 10 years because in the next 5 years, we are planning to start 50 more airports or enhance the capacity of existing airports. Upto 2047, we feel that we have the capacity to increase the airports to more than 200. We have 157 today and we can take it up to 350," he said. He added that the "UDAN Yojana" is a revolutionary initiative in civil aviation, inspired by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's vision to democratise air travel. "UDAN scheme has been a revolutionary scheme in civil aviation. It came out from the thought process of PM Narendra Modi who wanted to democratise air travel... The major beneficiary when we have utilised this UDAN scheme over the past 8 years has been remote areas of the country, especially the northeast areas or the hinterland areas where there was no connectivity at all. Now, they are properly connected through air travel, not just to other metropolitan cities of the country but also various other countries," he said.

The Statesman
স্টেটসম্যান

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 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: Five & Dime, Blossom Kachhar, The yellow turtle, Food Partner: Bhojan

Bomb threat: High alert at airport

On Sunday night, a call threatening a plane hijack and presence of a hydrogen bomb onboard was received

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 21 OCTOBER

Special alerts have been issued at Kolkata Airport since last night till today after Netaji Subhas Chandra International Airport (NSCI) authorities received a threat of a hydrogen bomb attack on Sunday night. Following a series of bomb scares and threats across the country, Kolkata is now on alert. Late on Sunday night, a call threatening a plane hijacking and the presence of a hydrogen bomb onboard was received on the landline number of Kolkata airport's e-port.

Immediately, a high-level meeting was called by the airport authority, CISF, and police at Kolkata international airport.

According to sources, at



10.55 pm last night, at the landline of Air India's security check e-portal at Kolkata airport a voice claimed, "A plane hijack is about to take place mid-air in a short while!"

The call was then disconnected. Exactly two minutes later, the phone rang again, and the voice said, "There is a hydrogen bomb, and a major disaster could happen at any moment!" Kolkata airport authorities were immediately notified, and a high

alert was issued.

A meeting was convened with senior officials from the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and the police, lasting nearly two hours.

Following the meeting, the airport authorities filed a formal complaint at the Netaji Subhas Chandra International Airport police station.

The police are investigating from where the call originated and why it was made, and an inquiry has been launched by the airport police.

On Monday, the civil aviation ministry held a press conference to discuss the steps that will be taken in response to the repeated bomb threats on flights.

Civil aviation minister Ram Mohan Naidu stated, "Our top priority is the safety of passengers and maintaining timely operations. We are

committed to ensuring that air travel remains uninterrupted. Along with the current security infrastructure, additional stringent security measures are being implemented."

A decision has been made to increase security checks at airports by and CCTV coverage will also be expanded. The ministry of home affairs is closely monitoring the situation and coordinating with the civil aviation ministry.

The government is also planning to amend laws to ensure stricter penalties for those spreading false bomb threats.

Discussions are underway with other ministries to introduce these legal changes. Spreading false bomb threats may result in a fine of up to Rs 10,000, jail time, and a lifetime ban from flying (No-Fly List).

The opinions of all airline operators are being sought on this matter. Central investigative agencies and police from multiple states are working together, and the civil aviation ministry has requested an expedited investigation. The ministry will provide further details after receiving the full investigation report. Until now, any incidents within airports or on flights were handled under the legal provisions of the civil aviation ministry.

There is now consideration of classifying threats made to flights on the ground or from outside the airport as cognizable offenses. Notably, over 100 fake bomb threats have been reported across the country in the past week, with eight flights being forced to change routes due to these threats.

Mayor holds review meeting to combat dengue

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 21 OCTOBER

In an effort to tackle the growing dengue threat, Siliguri Municipal Corporation (SMC) mayor Goutam Deb convened a review meeting today.

The meeting focused on addressing vulnerable areas, especially with the disease's heightened risk in the months of November and December. During the session, specific locations in ward 5 were identified where mosquito larvae are breeding, primarily due to the negligence of two central government organisations.

Mayor Deb announced that the SMC commissioner will reach out to the Central Warehousing Corporation and the customs department, urging them to take immediate action in cleaning the affected areas and eliminating mosquito breeding grounds. "Wards 5 and 27 have



been marked as vulnerable, and a dedicated team is already working to control the dengue situation there," said mayor Deb. He highlighted that while 2022 saw a surge in dengue cases, with 543 reported in 2023, the numbers for 2024 have significantly dropped. Only 78 cases have been reported between January and October, and the situation is under control.

However, the mayor stressed the importance of continued vigilance. "We reviewed the situation with health and administrative officials from Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts to prepare

for the months ahead, as November and December are critical periods for Dengue outbreaks," he said.

Deb also raised concerns about the peri-urban areas, including Matigara gram panchayat and four other panchayats in Dabgram and Fulbari, which are prone to dengue outbreaks.

The meeting was attended by the principal of North Bengal Medical College and Hospital, Dr Indrajit Saha, along with other health officials, including the chief medical officer of health. Mayor Deb further revealed plans by the Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad (SMP) to employ individuals under the 100-day job scheme to ensure cleanliness and curb dengue in vulnerable areas.

Additionally, 250 laborers have been engaged to clean the high drains within SMC jurisdiction to prevent further mosquito breeding.

Four arrested after 3 villagers injured during buffalo fight



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
PURULIA, 21 OCTOBER

Four persons were arrested after three spectators were injured while watching buffalo fighting in Rangunitan Village, under Joypur police station limits of Purulia district last night.

All these four arrested persons were organisers of the game and are residents of Rangunitan village. They are Nirmal Mahato, Shatrughan Paramanik, Sanatan Mahato and Vivekananda Mahato.

After the game was over, the owner of the winning

buffalo was running with the animal when it ran towards the spectators and injured three persons.

While two of them were released from the primary health centre after receiving first-aid, the injury of Gokul Mahato of Baliagara village was serious and was admitted to Deben Mahato Medical College Hospital in Purulia town. Joypur police has lodged a suo motu case under Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act, said Abhijit Banerjee, superintendent of police in Purulia.

He said that an FIR has been lodged against the

organisers and already four persons have been arrested in this connection under various sections.

After Mahalaya, in various parts of Purulia, buffalo fighting takes place, though it is banned. There had been incidents of injury and even death of spectators.

A pair of specially-trained buffaloes fight against each other. These buffaloes were kept confined inside a dark room for one to three months and their eyes were also covered. It is released into open sunlight on the day of the fight.

The male buffalo fight is fierce and often one of them dies. In Bengal, buffalo fights locally known as 'karar lorai' are very much popular in Purulia district.

Under the Cruelty to Animal Act, in fact, the games of wild animals in circuses are already banned in India and all circus companies in the country have dropped the popular stunts involving wild animals.

About 20,000 to 30,000 strong crowds gather to watch these intense buffaloes.

PAYING HOMAGE



Kolkata Police Commissioner, Manoj Kumar Verma pays tribute to police personnel, who lost their lives in the line of duty on the occasion of the Police Commemoration Day, at Police Memorial in Kolkata on Monday. ■ SNS

One killed, other injured in road mishap

The two brothers were riding a bicycle when the dumper coming from the opposite side lost control and crashed into them

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
ASANSOL, 21 OCTOBER

Dharam Ruidas (14) has been killed and his elder brother Bishnu Ruidas (18) suffered serious injuries after a dumper run over them at Bhatas Colliery near Gourangdih under Barabani Police Station area.

The two brothers were riding a bicycle when the dumper coming from the opposite side lost control and crashed into them.

Younger brother Dharam Ruidas was killed on the spot, his elder brother Bishnu Ruidas was taken to Asansol District Hospital with critical injuries. Both the teenagers were residents of Panuria in Gourandi.

The driver and the helper of the dumper fled after the accident. Barabani police have rushed to the spot and seized the dumper.

Locals agitated and blocked the road demanding deployment of traffic police on the stretch. The body of the younger brother has been sent to Asansol District Hospital for post-mortem. "We have started a case and seized the vehicle. Raids will be conducted to nab the driver and the helper," said DCP (West) of Asansol Durgapur Police Commissionerate.

Camel rescued from confinement at Baidyabati

The animal lovers are of the opinion that keeping a camel within the pandal premises for public view was against Prevention of Animal Cruelty Act, as per the court verdict

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HOOGHLY, 20 OCTOBER

A city based animal lover body of Kolkata, during the Durga Puja lodged an FIR against a puja committee in ward 22 of Baidyabati Municipality for keeping a camel to match their theme, Mohenjo Daro.

The animal lovers are of the opinion that keeping a camel within the pandal premises for public view was against Prevention of Animal Cruelty Act, as per the court verdict.

To rescue the camel, officials from animal resources and development department, police and veterinary doctor today reached the spot at Baidyabati where the puja committee till day had confined the camel.

The puja committee argued that they would appeal to the higher court hence they initially disagreed to hand over the camel.

The camel was rescued and sent to an animal shelter home at Bhangar.

Dinhata passengers write to DRM on rail services

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 21 OCTOBER

Three organisations from Dinhata jointly submitted a memorandum to the Alipurduar divisional railway manager via the Dinhata station master on Sunday, outlining various demands to improve amenities for daily passengers.

The primary demand was the conversion of the Bamanhat-Siliguri Intercity Express back into a passenger train.

They also called for the extension of the Sikkim Mahananda Express to Bamanhat, with stoppages at Cooch Behar and Dinhata, supported by the construction of pit and sick lines at Bamanhat.

Additional demands included extending the length of platform 2 at Bamanhat to make it fully usable, providing drinking water facilities, repairing the station's entrance road, and granting permission to build a road from the Bamanhat rail gate



to Patharshon.

Furthermore, they sought stoppages of trains like the Tejas Express and Hamsafar Express at Cooch Behar and urged the construction of an underpass or flyover at the Dinhata Sahebganj Road and Balrampur Road rail gates.

The event saw the participation of professor Raja Ghosh, convener of the Cooch Behar Dinhata Rail Passenger Association, Ajit Jain, members of the Bamanhat Rail Development Demand Committee, Shubhankar Bhaduri, Haripada Mandal, and Joy Gopal Bhowmik, secretary of the Dinhata Citizen Forum, along with other notable attendees.

TMC leader Debangshu's 'Maoist' comment on junior doctors creates controversy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
ASANSOL, 21 OCTOBER

Trinamul Congress spokesperson Debangshu Bhattacharya has sparked a huge controversy, barely 24 hours before the meeting of junior doctors with CM Mamata Banerjee by equating them with Maoists in Katwa of East Burdwan district.

On Sunday evening, Debangshu was present during the Bijoya Sammilani programme of TMC Ausgram 2 block president Abdul Lalan in East Burdwan district.

Addressing the gathering, the Tamuk Lok Sabha candidate in 2024 LS election earlier this year, Debangshu alleged that the junior doctors are claiming that they will stop treatment if their all demands are not met.

"Stopping treatment to patients means killing them, so where is the basic difference of these junior doctors with the Maoists, who also kill innocent common people," he is supposed to have



said.

At that time MP Asit Mal, MLA Abhedananda Thandar, sabhadhipati Shyama Prasanna Lohar were present on the podium.

Dr Subarna Goswami, deputy CMOH (II) of East Burdwan has stated that already he has moved court against a previous statement and claim of Debangshu Bhattacharya.

"It is very unfortunate that these leaders are giving very bad statements against the agitating junior doctors," he added.

The junior doctors are fasting and many of them have fallen sick. Chief minister Mamata Banerjee has sent the chief secretary, Manoj Pant and home secretary Nandini Chakraborty and

urged them to withdraw the fast and even spoke to them urging them to meet her at Nabanna today evening.

However, a senior TMC leader of East Burdwan has claimed that it is not the official statement of the party and instead is slip of tongue of the leader. So far, all senior TMC leaders of East Burdwan district has remained tightlipped on the issue.

On Monday, Debangshu wrote on his X handle that he stands by what he said a day before on the junior doctors.

He reiterated that the call by the junior doctors to strike work is akin to killing people.

He also explained one of the junior doctor's comment that 'if the CM today is meeting with Maoists'.

He wrote that many national and international leaders have sat for discussions with separatists for peace at different times.

Debangshu Bhattacharya lost in the Lok Sabha polls this year.

ER sets up AC, non-AC retiring rooms, dormitory rooms at stns



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 21 OCTOBER

The Eastern Railway has set up 83 air-conditioned deluxe, air conditioned and non-AC type retiring rooms and 28 dormitory rooms across various stations.

The retiring rooms and dormitories are available at the various key stations in Eastern Railway like Sealdah, Kolkata, Murshidabad, Krishnanagar, Berhampore Court, Dakshineswar, Howrah, Belur, Tarakeswar, Bardhaman, Bolpur, Rampurhat, Nabadwip Dham, Asansol, Durgapur, Jasidih, Madhupur, Siuri, Simultala, Chittaranjan, Baidyanath Dham, Deoghar, Malda, Bhagalpur, Jamalpur, New Farakka, Sahibganj, Sultanganj, and Barharwa.

According to the ER, the rooms can be booked for a minimum of three hours and a maximum of 48 hours while the hourly booking is also available at a few stations.

Passengers can make one booking at the source station and one booking at the destination per PNR. Advance bookings can also be made according to the Advance Reservation Periods of PRS tickets.

For one passenger, one single bed room or one double bed room or one bed in dormitory can be allotted.

For two passengers, one double bed room or two beds in dormitory can be allotted.

As informed by the ER, passengers can book retiring rooms/dormitory rooms through the IRCTC website or app.

BSF observes Police Commemoration Day at North Bengal Frontier

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 21 OCTOBER:

The Border Security Force (BSF) today commemorated Police Commemoration Day at its North Bengal Frontier campus in Kadamtala, Siliguri, paying tribute to the brave personnel who have laid down their lives in the line of duty.

In a solemn ceremony, the North Bengal Frontier of the BSF honoured 214 police and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the nation over the past year.

The event was marked by the presence of senior officials, with Inspector General Soorya Kant Sharma of the BSF North Bengal Frontier leading the tributes at the Kadamtala campus.

As a mark of respect, a two-minute silence was observed to honour the memory of the fallen heroes. Every year, October 21 is dedicated to remembering the sacrifices of police and CAPF personnel across India.

The commemoration began in 1959 after a group of CRPF personnel were ambushed by Chinese forces at the Hot Springs in Ladakh,



marking this day as a reminder of their valour and dedication. Inspector General Sharma,

addressing the BSF personnel, expressed deep respect for the brave "Sentinels of the Border" who continue to protect the nation's borders, often at great personal cost.

"Our soldiers stand watch over the country's frontiers, leaving behind their families and loved ones, always prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for the motherland. Their dedication and sacrifice will forever be remembered and honoured," he said.

This year alone, 19 BSF personnel, including one officer, two subordinate officers, and 16 soldiers, lost their lives while performing their

duties across various regions of the country.

Their sacrifice, Sharma emphasised, is a testament to the unwavering commitment of the force to safeguarding the nation.

The event not only highlighted the personal costs of national security but also served as a reminder of the ongoing challenges faced by the forces as they protect India's borders.

The BSF remains vigilant and ready to respond to any threats, with the memory of their fallen comrades serving as a source of strength and inspiration.

THUMBNAILS



WAP-5 Aerodynamic Electric (Converted) Locomotive Flagged off in CLW. SNS

ER to run 40 Chhath and Diwali special trains: Aiming to meet the growing demand for travel during the Diwali and Chhath festivals, the Eastern Railway has decided to run 40 special trains in various directions across the country. The special trains are to depart from key stations including Howrah, Sealdah, Kolkata Terminal, Asansol, Bhagalpur and Malda Town, and will serve major destinations such as Khatipura, Udhna, Vadodara, Digha, Puri, Jaynagar, Patna, New Jalpaiguri, Lucknow, Haridwar, Gorakhpur, Secunderabad, Pune, New Delhi, Raxaul and Anand Vihar stations. Some of the special trains that would be run during the period include 03417/03418 Malda Town - Udhna- Malda Town Special, 03007/03008 Howrah - Khatipura - Howrah Special, 03509/03510 Asansol - Khatipura - Asansol Special, 03131/03132 Sealdah - Gorakhpur - Sealdah Special, 03043/03044 Howrah - Raxaul - Howrah Special, 03045/03046 Howrah - Raxaul - Howrah Special, 03109/03110 Sealdah - Vadodara - Sealdah Special, 03109/03110 Sealdah - Vadodara - Sealdah Special and so on.

Trolley inspection: Mr P. Uday Kumar Reddy, general manager of Kolkata Metro Railway for the first time conducted a trolley inspection from Dum Dum Cantonment to Jai Hind (Airport) stretch of Yellow Line today. He also inspected the stretch between Noapara to Dum Dum Cantonment stretch of Yellow Line and conducted an extensive inspection of this stretch with senior officials taking a note of the progress work of Jessore Road Metro station, especially outside portion of this station.

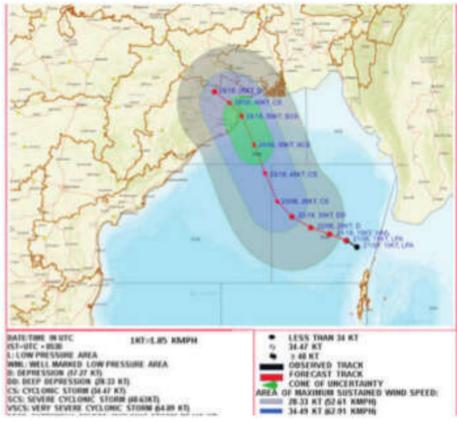
New Food & Travel Series: A spice major beloved announced its association with the popular regional OTT platform. The brand hosted Bhojonbilashi Food Carnival on 19-20 October in presence of popular Tollywood celebrities and popular singer Ankita Bhat-tacharya at the launch event of its 5-episode series 'Sunrise Bhojonbilashi'.

Marginalised women honoured: Members of Durbur, an organisation of the sex workers were honoured by minister Pradip Majumdar that was arranged by 'Durgapur Club Samonnoy', a parent social outfit aiming to honour the women, who lend soil for making Durga idols. The DCS, besides honouring them, also offered cheques for financial support. Mr Majumdar said, "It's really so pleasant to see the women from the neglected quarters being honoured in public."

BJP leader pays visit to TMC MLA's house: Shyamal Roy, an estranged BJP leader of Burdwan town paid a surprise visit to the house of TMC MLA on Monday morning and gave an open 'certificate' to the MLA. The move has given way to speculations that he may shift the ruling party. Roy, the former district president of BJP's youth morcha was a close associate of former MP Surinder Singh Ahluwalia. "Burdwan hasn't seen such a vibrant MLA like Khokon Das in previous seven terms and this man has a mission to secure an all-round development of Burdwan," Roy said.

Cyclone Dana: Heavy to very heavy rain on 24-25 Oct

Storm is anticipated to make landfall between Puri and Sagar islands



KMC takes guard: The Kolkata Municipal Corporation has decided to cancel the leaves of the drainage department employees during the upcoming cyclone. The civic body has planned to deploy additional manpower to keep the pumping stations operational round-the-clock. As informed by sources, the drainage department is also to deploy additional manpower at penstock gates. Apart from this, senior officials of the department are also to monitor the situation through the civic body control room during the cyclone period.

Andaman Sea, a low-pressure area formed over the east central Bay of Bengal and adjoining north Andaman Sea in the early morning around 5.30 am today. According to India Meteorological Department today's low pressure system is forecast to intensify into a depression by the next morning and into a cyclonic storm by 23 October over east central Bay of Bengal. The system is to reach northwest Bay of Bengal, off Odisha-West Bengal coasts by 24 October morning and cross north Odisha and West Bengal coasts between Puri

and Sagar island on the intervening night of 24 October and 25 October as cyclone Dana at a wind speed of 100-110 kmph, gusting to 120 kmph. According to the IMD DG Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, the brewing system is expected to be a very severe cyclonic storm. Cyclone Dana is tipped to bring heavy to very heavy rainfall on Thursday and Friday to Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly, North 24-Parganas and Jhargram and other districts of Gangetic West Bengal on 24 and 25 October.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 21 OCTOBER

City is expected to get drenched under an impending cyclone in the Andaman Sea. The city is tipped to get 'heavy to very heavy rainfall' on 24-25 October under the

influence of a cyclonic storm, which is anticipated to make landfall between Puri and Sagar islands on the intervening night of 24 and 25 October. As informed by the weather office today, under the influence of yesterday's cyclonic circulation over north

Left, Cong likely to contest bypolls separately

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 21 OCTOBER

Left and Congress are likely to contest the by-elections, which will be held in six Assembly seats separately. The by-elections are just around the corner, both BJP and Trinamul Congress have already announced their candidates, while the Left-Congress alliance is in doubt. Sources said that so far, no discussions have taken place between the Left and Congress regarding the by-election.

In fact, during the Left's meeting, the topic of an alliance with Congress was not even raised, a Left Front source said. Political circles are abuzz with the possibility of the alliance between Congress and the Left breaking down and both parties are likely to contest the by-elections separately. The by-elections for six Assembly seats are scheduled for 13 November, with the last date for filing nominations

being 25 October. According to sources, as of last night, neither the Left nor Congress held any discussions with each other regarding the alliance for the by-elections. On Sunday, both parties held separate meetings. According to sources, Congress has not engaged in any discussions regarding the alliance. In the Left Front meeting, it has been tentatively decided that the Forward Bloc will contest in Sitai, the RSP in Madarihata, CPI in Midnapur, and ISF will be given the Haroa seat. Notably, although there was no alliance between the Left and ISF for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, they will contest together in these by-elections. The CPM will contest the Taldangra seat, while discussions are ongoing between CPM and CPI (ML) Liberation regarding the Naihati seat. If CPI (ML) Liberation does not contest, CPM will. The Left is expected to

announce its list of candidates on Monday. Left leader Sujan Chakraborty said, "Our position has always been clear. We pursue a policy of uniting everyone against the BJP and Trinamul. This doesn't change from day to day. However, the new Congress president has expressed his own views, and we have seen in the media that he has discussed this matter in Delhi as well. We haven't announced our list of candidates yet. Let's see what happens." From Congress's side, two or three names have been shortlisted for each seat and sent to the AICC. According to sources, during the Sunday evening meeting Congress leaders from the concerned areas advocated for a 'go-alone' strategy. This resolution has been sent to Delhi by the Pradesh Congress Committee. Congress may announce its candidates on Tuesday, said sources.

PROTEST CONTINUES



Doctors and health workers protest against corruption and threat syndicate, in front of West Bengal Medical Council in Kolkata on Monday. SNS

Subrata Gupta appointed food processing ministry secretary

SUBHENDU MAITI
KOLKATA, 21 OCTOBER

Dr Subrata Gupta, additional chief secretary (ACS) of both science and technology and biotechnology and north Bengal development departments under the government of West Bengal has been appointed as the secretary to the ministry of food processing industries under the central government. The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), under the ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions, department of personnel and training headed by the Prime Minister has appointed Dr Gupta, an IAS officer of 1990 (West Bengal cadre) batch, as the secretary to the ministry of food processing industries. He will take charge after the retirement of the present secretary Ananta Praveen on 30 November.

The ACC has issued an order on 19 October. He will probably be the first Bengali IAS officer of West Bengal cadre to head a ministry as its secretary after Sanjay Mitra, who was the Union defense secretary about eight years ago. Mr Mitra was the former chief secretary of Bengal before he joined the ministry. Dr Gupta, an alumnus of the IIT-Kharagpur, who had also his MBA degree from London, was posted at departments like state horticulture and food processing for more than three years since 2020 and science and technology and biotechnology. A section of bureaucrats, who are in the principal secretary rank and junior to the ACS post have been given more than one and even two important portfolios in different departments by the state government allegedly without considering experience and good track

records in bureaucracy. Dr Gupta has a good track record in terms of brilliant academic and professional performance. Some retired and serving IAS officers felt that he could have done better for the development of the state if he was given important portfolios when the state government is facing strong criticism from the Opposition. He had headed the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC) as its managing director for four years since 2011 when the Left Front government had acquired land in Singur for the controversial small car project, and Kolkata Metro Railway Corporation Ltd (KMRCL) that had started construction work for the country's first under-water Metro project from Howrah Maidan, when he was the MD of the KMRCL during 2012-13.

Harassment on local train: Woman threatened, companion beaten at Sealdah stn

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 21 OCTOBER

Three youths were arrested allegedly after forcefully capturing a woman's photographs on a running train. Police said the woman attempted to stop them from taking her picture, which led to her male companion being physically assaulted. The Railway Police (GRP) arrested the three youths from Sealdah station in connection with the incident. However, the woman claimed at the police station that the accused persons threatened to harm her. She also alleged that the GRP officers mistreated her. The complainant said, "I boarded the train from Dhakuria. A few youths boarded from Park Circus and started taking my pictures. When I protested, they responded, saying they could do whatever they wanted. Unable to control my anger, I slapped one of

my daughter. The officer first threatened to arrest me. This raises the question of whether women are truly safe in this state." Regarding the matter, Sealdah GRP IC Basudev Malik said, "We have received the complaint. We have arrested three people and started an investigation." Everyday thousands of women travel by local trains. However, allegations of harassment have surfaced regarding incidents on these local trains leading to questions of women passenger's safety. "First, the young woman was threatened and harassed inside the train, and later, her companion was mercilessly beaten and left on the platform at Sealdah, one of the busiest stations. We are concerned that GRP police tried to threaten the woman complainant," said Kirity Roy, an Indian civil rights activist. He said, "Even in front of the duty GRP officer, the accused were threatening

them. They then surrounded my friend and started beating him. This happened in front of passengers on the moving train." The GRP officers arrested the three accused youths when the train arrived at platform 21 of Sealdah station. The complainant's father also alleged that when they went to file the complaint, they were threatened with arrest.

CBI summons top officials of two urban civic bodies in Bengal

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 21 OCTOBER

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday summoned top officials of two municipalities from two districts of West Bengal for interrogation. The CBI is probing the multi-crore cash-for-municipalities job case in the state. Sources said the chief executives of Halisahar Municipality in North 24 Parganas district and Ranaghat Municipality in Nadia district were issued notices by the CBI on Monday and both have been asked to be present at the central agency's Nizam Palace office in central Kolkata this week. Sources said that the CBI officials have tracked specific evidence regarding several irregular recruitments made in both these municipalities against hefty cash payments. These illegal recruitments were mainly made for the post of drivers, helpers, health workers and cleaning assistants. Besides Halisahar and Ranaghat, the other municipalities that are under the scanner of the CBI officials are Panihati, South Dum Dum and North Dum Dum in North 24 Parganas district and Diamond Harbour in South 24 Parganas district among others. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials, who are conducting parallel investigations in both the school and municipalities job case, got wind of recruitment irregularities in the different urban civic bodies while conducting raid and search operations at Sil's residence in March 2023.

SINDEX-24: IAF & RSAF hold joint exercise in Bengal

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 21 OCTOBER

The latest edition of SINDEX, a bilateral exercise between the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) and Indian Air Force (IAF), got underway at Air Force Station Kalaikunda in West Bengal on Monday. "This is the 12th edition of the Joint Military Training (JMT) between the two forces. The RSAF is participating with its largest contingent till date," a senior Ministry of Defence (MoD) official said. The JMT will comprise two phases. For the first three-



odd weeks, the IAF and RSAF will practice separately. The bilateral phase of the Exercise will start from November 13 and continue till November 21. While the RSAF has sent F-16 and F-15 squadrons, accompanied by G-550 Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) and C-130 transport aircraft, the IAF is participating in the JMT with Rafales, Mirage 2000 ITIs, Su-30 MKIs, Tejas, Mig-29s and Jaguars, it was

confirmed by the MoD. AFS Kalaikunda offers a great opportunity for forces like the RSAF to practice. The air base, with the latest facilities, offers an air-to-air firing range over the Bay of Bengal apart from a designated air-to-ground one at Dudhkundi, barely a few km away. The skies above Kalaikunda are also generally free of commercial air traffic, allowing combat aircraft a free run during practice sessions and exercises. Even then, a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) has been issued to ensure that commercial pilots stay away. "It is expected that the

bilateral phase will generate intense collaboration between the two forces, as they engage in advanced air combat simulations, joint mission planning and debriefing sessions. The bilateral phase aims to enhance interoperability, sharpen combat readiness and promote exchange of knowledge between the two Air Forces," the MoD official added. He said that during the bilateral phase, Red and Blue Teams are formed. "Each team comprises aircraft and personnel from both the Air Forces. While the Red Teams are the 'attackers' and assigned

certain targets, the Blue Teams play the role of 'defenders'," he said. He added that while the aircraft do not carry live munitions, 'kills' are simulated and recorded. "In 2022, during a similar Exercise, an RSAF F-16 had buzzed Kolkata. It may have been a member of a Red Team that managed to escape the 'defenders' and reach its target," the official said. He added that the RSAF has returned to India soon after its participation in Ex Tarang Shakti is an indication of the strong military ties between the two nations.

Revanth urges public not to take law in their own hands

He described the recent vandalism in Muthyalamma Temple at Secunderabad as alarming

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 21 OCTOBER

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy Monday urged the people not to take law into their own hands as he directed the police to take stern action against individuals involved in activities that might lead to disruption of peace and harmony and incite communal tension in the state.

The Chief Minister described the recent vandalism in Muthyalamma Temple at Secunderabad as alarming but said people should repose faith in police to take action against the culprits. Reddy also announced the setting up of Young India Police school, modelled on the National Defence Academy for the children of uniformed forces in the state while partici-



pating in the Police Flag Day Parade held at Goshamahal.

Iterating that a state must maintain law and order in order to progress and attract investment, Reddy appealed to the people to exercise restraint and cooperate with the government.

He said, "Some individuals driven by emotions and unrest, are creating dis-

own hands and punish the criminals.

The police are fully prepared to deal with perpetrators and punish offenders. There should be no doubt about this."

The offender who committed the act of desecration at Muthyalamma Temple was handed over to the police by the local public. But on Saturday, several right-wing organisations tried to foment trouble and attacked the police with slippers before the latter resorted to a lathi charge. Around 15 police personnel were injured during the protests.

After the BJP leaders criticised the lathi charge the Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad released several videos showing the provocation from the crowd which threw footwear at the police. The BRS has also criticised

the Chief Minister who also handles the Home department for failing to maintain law and order.

In the last couple of weeks several similar incidents of vandalism in temples have happened in Telangana.

Reddy directed the police to take a tough stand against those taking law into their own hands.

He warned "If anyone tries to take law into his own hands or tries to punish those who did wrong, there will not be much difference between those who committed the crime and those seeking to take law in their own hands."

He also warned about the worsening traffic situation in Hyderabad.

The Chief Minister advised police chiefs to use artificial intelligence in traffic management and resolve the problem.

Why not aim for 16 kids? Delimitation forces rethink on small families: Stalin

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, 21 OCTOBER

Joining the chorus for large families with more kids in the wake of the impending delimitation, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Monday asked why newlyweds should not aim for having 16 children.

His advocacy for parents to have more children comes close on the heels of his Andhra Pradesh counterpart N Chandrababu Naidu making a similar plea. Both have expressed serious apprehensions about the number of Lok Sabha seats being reduced in the delimitation exercise owing to their successful population control measures.

With the decennial census expected to commence and the delimitation succeeding it, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh too had raised the issue saying the southern states should not be penalised for their creditable performance in family planning. Pioneers in containing population, Kerala in 1991, Tamil Nadu in 1994, Andhra Pradesh in 2001,



and Karnataka in 2005 have reached replacement level of fertility, he had pointed out.

Stalin made the observation on the need for larger families after solemnising the marriages of 31 couples, organised by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Department held at the famed Marundheeswarar temple premises in Thiruvanniyur in the city. It is an ancient Saivite shrine patronised by the imperial Cholas and sung by two of the pre-eminent Saivite quartet - Appar and Thirugnana Sambandar.

"Earlier in the past, the usual way to bless couples was by wishing them to be endowed with 16 and lead a life of grandeur. But the real meaning of being endowed with 16 is not having 16 children

but, as Tamil scholar KAP Viswanatham listed out, 16 types of wealth, which included house, cattle, land, house, wife, education, integrity, and fame besides kids. But now there is a need for a rethink to give up the small family norm and aim for 16 children. We are faced with a situation where the number of seats for Tamil Nadu in parliament might come down. Hence, the question as to why we should not go for 16 children," Stalin said and urged the couples to christen their children with 'beautiful Tamil names'.

While Chandrababu Naidu recently announced that his government was considering incentives to the families having more children and wanted the southern states to follow suit, Stalin did not elaborate on his big family vision. But ever since the new Parliament complex, with a total seating capacity of 1,272 (LS- 888 and RS - 384) was inaugurated, there has been an araguing debate on the strength of the southern states getting reduced when the delimitation is taken up.

They love me a lot: Shivakumar's jibe at CBI approaching SC in DA case

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, 21 OCTOBER

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Monday quipped the Central Bureau of Investigation "loves him a lot" as the agency approached the Supreme Court challenging the withdrawal of permission to probe the disproportionate assets case.

"They (the CBI) are in love with me and not leaving me," he told media persons here.

"As per the law of the country, the CBI's petition has been dismissed by the Karnataka High Court. Now, they have approached the Supreme Court," he said. Asked whether the move is political, Shivakumar retorted: "What else could be possible?" "It is political. Can they take action



against the BJP leaders even as the cases are pending against them? For the CBI, it is the only dismissed case in the entire country to be taken up for investigation against a politician. One can understand how seriously they are doing it," he maintained. Shivakumar said that he has respect and trust in the judiciary and that justice will be done in his case. "Let's see how things

unfold," he added. He said that as per the law, state governments have the power to withdraw permission for cases from other agencies. The same state government had handed over the case to the CBI and later had withdrawn the permission, he said, adding that the case is now being probed by the Karnataka Lokayukta and they are carrying out the investigation.

"The investigation is the same, whether it is carried out by either by the Lokayukta or by the CBI," he stated.

It is the prerogative of the state government to hand over the case and it has taken a decision, he stated.

BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal had filed an appeal petition before the Supreme Court questioning the decision of the High Court to quash his and the CBI's petitions. They had questioned the decision of the Congress government to withdraw the consent to the CBI in the disproportionate assets case. Following the petition, the Supreme Court had sought an opinion from the CBI. The CBI later also filed an appeal petition along with the petition of the BJP MLA.

Priyanka to file nomination on Wednesday; will take part in mega roadshow in Kalpetta

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 21 OCTOBER

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, general secretary of the Congress Party, who is making her electoral debut in the Wayanad Lok Sabha by-election, is set to submit her nomination papers on October 23.

Priyanka will file her nomination papers before the District Collector at the Wayanad Collectorate following a mega roadshow in Kalpetta along with prominent Congress leaders. She will be joined by several senior Congress leaders, including the party's Parliamentary

Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, party President Mallikarjun Kharge, and Rahul Gandhi when the Congress candidate files her nomination papers on Wednesday.



AP Anil Kumar, MLA, convener of the UDF Wayanad Parliamentary election committee, said Priyanka, Sonia, Kharge, and Rahul Gandhi would kick off the day's activities with a roadshow at 11

am before proceeding to officially file her nomination at noon.

Congress workers in Wayanad are enthused by the prospects of having all these leaders for the campaign. According to the local UDF leadership, Priyanka will stay in Wayanad for 10 days after submitting her nomination papers.

Earlier, it was announced that Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi would reach the constituency along with Priyanka. Now, it is informed that Mallikarjun Kharge will also reach Wayanad when Priyanka files her nomination papers for her electoral debut from the Wayanad polls. The new report also says the Chief Ministers of three Congress-ruled states will also participate

in the roadshow.

It has been reported that Priyanka Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, and Rahul Gandhi will reach Wayanad on Tuesday evening.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Rahul won Wayanad by a margin of 4,31,770 votes. This, however, declined to 3.64 lakh in the 2024 polls.

Meanwhile, the election campaign for Priyanka has already started in the assembly segments. Leader of the Opposition V D Satheesan and KPCC chief K Sudhakaran are also active with UDF conventions in the constituency. The Wayanad by-election was necessitated after Rahul resigned from the seat in favour of Rae Bareilly after the April general election win in both constituencies.

Sex scandal: K'taka HC rejects Prajwal Revanna's bail in 3 cases

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, 21 OCTOBER

The Karnataka High Court on Monday rejected three bail petitions filed by prime accused Prajwal Revanna, a former MP and grandson of former PM H.D. Deve Gowda, in the sensational sex video scam.

A single-judge bench of Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the order, denying the bail in connection with two rape cases and a case of recording of video of a victim of sexual harassment.

The court is yet to give its order on another rape case. Prajwal Revanna is facing four cases in connection with the sex video scam.

Senior counsel Prabhuling Navadgi appeared for Prajwal Revanna and senior counsel Prof. Ravi Varma Kumar



argued for the prosecution and submitted before the court not to grant bail in the case.

One of the victims from Hassan had filed a rape case against Prajwal Revanna in Bengaluru Cyber police station. The court had rejected the bail in the matter.

Another case is related to the sexual assault of a maid at the farmhouse in Hole-narasipura. The disturbing video of the incident has

gone viral on social media during the Lok Sabha election. The alleged videos of the aged maid pleading to spare her as she is an elderly lady, who served food to his father and other elders of the family as she was sexually assaulted had stirred outrage. The victim was kidnapped after the video surfaced on social media and the police had arrested Prajwal Revanna's father, JD-SMLA H.D. Revanna. Presently, he is out on conditional bail.

The police had also issued an arrest warrant against Prajwal's mother Bhavani Revanna in the case. However, she managed to obtain bail. The bail order was challenged by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in the Supreme Court and the apex court had upheld the bail order by the Karnataka High Court.

Kerala ADM suicide: Court adjourns hearing on CPI(M) leader's bail plea

AGENCIES
KANNUR, 21 OCTOBER

The hearing on the anticipatory bail plea of CPI(M) leader P.P. Divya whose curt remarks led to the suicide of Kannur Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Naveen Babu, was on Monday deferred till Thursday by a local court.

Divya has been missing from the public glare since last week after the ADM's death.

A week after Babu was found hanging in his official residence, Divya who held the post of the Kannur district panchayat president quit due to the tremendous pressure from several quarters.

Kannur has been witnessing protests by the Congress and the BJP every day.

Divya attended Babu's send-off reception held here on October 14 evening even



though she was not invited to the function.

At the function, Divya alleged that a person's application for a petrol pump station was delayed and she knew how Babu gave the sanction later, which she would reveal in two days.

Babu, who has been widely appreciated for his clean official life and was to retire in seven months, felt deeply

humiliated by her remarks and took an extreme step.

Following this tragic incident, the person who applied for the petrol pump station was identified as T.P. Prasanth, who works as an electrician in the state-run Medical College at Kannur and was a colleague and friend of Divya's husband.

Eyebrows were raised on how an electrician could

afford to open a petrol pump station and more importantly, a person working in a government organisation cannot engage in a private business.

Trouble broke out when the probing media came out with a glaring omission on the part of Prasanth as it surfaced that in the lease rental agreement, the signatory is shown as Prasanth, while in the complaint letter to the Chief Minister which stated that Babu had taken a bribe of Rs 98,500 from him, it's written as T.V. Prasanth and the signatures in the two documents were also different.

State Health Minister Veena George who hails from the same district as that of Babu, on Monday gave a clean chit to him and said he is personally known to her and had worked together and was an officer with

impeccable integrity.

"Prasanth is not a permanent employee and he will no longer be in service," said George.

Meanwhile, at the controversial function where Divya used curt remarks against the ADM, Kannur District Collector Arun K. Vijayan, who had presided over, invited ire from several quarters after it surfaced that he had invited Divya. He, however, has denied such a thing.

According to reports, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan summoned him to know what happened and he was in tears explaining his innocence.

The ruling CPI(M) has been caught in a bind with three by-elections scheduled for November 13 as both the Congress and the BJP have taken this as a big campaign issue.

Classified

CHANGE OF NAME

I, TITAS Ghosh, W/o. Mr. Vishwajit Mitra, R/o. Pratham Tower 2, Flat 14B, 26, B.T. Road, Kamarhati, Dist.: North 24 Pgs., Pin-700058, Titas Ghosh and Titas Ghosh (Mitra) both are same and one identical person vide affidavit Sl. No. 13, dated: 18 Oct., 2024, before Judicial Magistrate 1st Class Barrackpore Court.

TENDER

TENDER No. WBTBCL-202410-0021 - West Bengal Text Book Corporation Ltd. invites sealed offer for engagement of experienced event management vendors for organising State Level Kala Utsav, 2024. For details / amendment please see website: www.wbtextbookcorporation.org.in & www.wbtenders.gov.in

LOST & FOUND

TENDER No. WBTBCL-202410-0020 - West Bengal Text Book Corporation Ltd. invites sealed offer for various gift items & food arrangement for organising State Level Kala Utsav, 2024. For details / amendment please see website: www.wbtextbookcorporation.org.in & www.wbtenders.gov.in

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Drugs worth ₹250 crore seized in Gujarat, three held:
Drugs worth Rs 250 crore were seized from the Avsar Enterprise located in Ankleshwar GIDC area in Gujarat's Bharuch district, officials said. The raid conducted jointly by the Surat and Bharuch Police uncovered 141 grams of MD drugs valued at Rs 14.10 lakh, while an additional 427 kilograms of suspected drugs have been sent for testing at the FSL.

Karnataka's economy outpaces national growth despite global headwinds: CM Siddaramaiah

(MoSPI).
The state achieved this feat despite severe challenges, including the worst drought in a decade and a slowdown in global IT markets, the report said.
"Initially, the National Statistical Estimate (NSE) had projected a modest 4 per cent GDP growth for Karnataka, but this was revised to 13.1 per cent by the end of the fiscal year, indicating early underestimation of the state's economic performance. The state's agriculture sector faced negative growth due to drought conditions, while Karnataka's dependence on the IT and hardware sectors -- accounting for 28 per cent of its Gross State Value Added (GSVA) -- made it vulnerable to global economic downturns," the statement reads.

'Launch operations to neutralise terrorists'

Under SRE, Rs 6 Lakh is to be given to the next of kin of each killed civilian

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 21 OCTOBER

In a bid to bring to avenge the killing of seven workers and injury to five others of a tunnel building company at Ganderbal, LG, Manoj Sinha on Monday directed for a coordinated anti-terror operation and asked the Army, J&K Police and security forces to exact a price that will be remembered by the terrorists and their associates for time to come.

He posted on X: "The brutal and savage attack against construction workers will be avenged. I've asked the J&K Police, security forces to exact a price that will be remembered by the terrorists and their associates for time to come".

He directed the UT's Home Secretary Chandraker Bharti to immediately provide financial assistance to the families of civilian victims of Gagangir terrorist attack. He has also asked the APCO Infratech company to release the compensation without any delay. The officials of APCO Infratech, which had engaged these workers for



building a strategic tunnel, briefed Mr Sinha on assistance being provided to the kin and family members.

Under SRE, Rs.6 Lakh is to be given to the next of kin of each killed civilian and Rs.15 Lakh as an immediate measure to be provided by APCO Infratech. An ex-gratia of Rs.2 Lakh is to be provided to all the injured.

Additionally, APCO Infratech will also provide financial assistance to the families of civilians on roll under Corporate Personal Accident

Policy and 5 years of their gross CTC as compensation from insurance. All PRW labour and third-party employees are covered under workman compensation policy and accordingly financial assistance to be provided.

The LG said, the Government and APCO Infratech company will ensure every possible financial assistance to the next of kin and other necessary support as required. "Though it is an irreparable loss and cannot be compensated monetarily, we are tak-

ing concrete measures for the families of the martyr civilians so that they live a life of dignity," he added.

The LG also visited SKIMS Hospital in Srinagar to inquire about the health of civilians, who were injured in Gagangir terror attack. A team of senior doctors briefed him on the health condition of the injured and medical procedures being followed. The Lt Governor has also directed the officials to provide all the support to the affected families.

Country will always be indebted to police personnel for their supreme sacrifices: Shah

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

Home Minister Amit Shah Monday hailed the country's security forces and said during the past decade, Left Wing Extremism, unrest in Kashmir and the North-East has come to an end due to their dedication.

Shah paid homage to the martyrs at the National Police Memorial in New Delhi on Police Commemoration Day.

Addressing on the occasion, he said there was disruption of peace in Jammu & Kashmir, Left-wing extremism affected areas and the Northeast for decades but in the past decade, the government has succeeded in establishing peace due to the dedication and efficiency of the security forces, however, he stressed that the fight is not over yet.

According to the Union Home Minister, emerging threats like drones, narcotics trade, cybercrime, attempts to spread unrest through Artificial Intelligence (AI), conspiracies to incite religious sentiments, infiltration, smuggling of illegal weapons, and acts of terror are the challenges faced by the country, however, he assured that "no matter how big the threats and challenges are, they cannot stand in the face of the unwavering resolve



of the soldiers'.

He further said that the Jawans of the police forces safeguard the country's borders from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Kutch to Kibithu.

Shah said that the personnel of the police forces were always guarding countrymen and the borders, whether it is day or night, during festivals or disasters, extreme heat, rain, or cold waves.

The HM hailed that police force, saying that there has been a tradition amongst them of making the supreme sacrifice for the security of the country.

Shah said that "The central structure at the National Police Memorial symbolises the unwavering commitment of our soldiers towards duty, their profound patriotism,

and their willingness to make the supreme sacrifice."

He mentioned that on this very day in 1959, 10 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel bravely faced the Chinese army and sacrificed their lives, and after becoming Prime Minister, Narendra Modi decided to build a police memorial in the heart of Delhi to honour the sacrifice of these soldiers.

He added that 36,468 police personnel have laid down their lives for the safety and security of the country, and also mentioned that in the last one year, 216 police personnel sacrificed their lives in the line of duty, and the country would forever be indebted to these brave soldiers.

Shah added that the country also has a proud history where brave soldiers, from the icy and treacherous peaks of the Himalayas to the harsh deserts of Kutch and Barmer, and the vast oceans, safeguard the nation fearlessly, ensuring its security.

Home Minister said that the sacrifice of the jawans who laid down their lives for the country will not go in vain, and pointed out that due to their sacrifices, the security of the country will be ensured and by 2047, India will emerge as a developed nation.

INDIA bloc formed just to capture power & loot the public

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

Playing the opposition, Jharkhand's BJP spokesperson Pratul Shah Deo on Monday said that discord in the INDIA bloc is bound to happen, as the alliance was formed to capture power and loot public's money.

Addressing a press conference in Ranchi, Jharkhand, Shah Deo said, "If an alliance is formed without any policy or principle, just to capture power, to loot the public's money, then such situations (discord in INDIA alliance) happen again and again. Here (in INDIA alliance), there is no discussion on what they will do for the public, what will be the common minimum programme, and how to bring good schemes, for the benefit of the person standing at the last rung of the society."

He said in the INDIA alliance, the discussion is on who will capture how many seats and their deadlock is still going on regarding that.

"You can see the difference between NDA and INDIA. We not only stitched the alliance but also announced candidates for 77 seats till now."

UP CM announces 70 per cent hike in police uniform allowance, ₹10 crore boost in next fiscal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, 21 OCTOBER

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday announced 70 per cent increase in police uniform allowance, 25 per cent hike in accommodation allowance for constables residing in barracks, Rs 10 crore boost in the next financial year's budget to enhance training, diet, and other facilities for police officers participating in national and international sports competitions.

He was speaking on the occasion of Police Smriti Diwas.

The state government will incur an expenditure of Rs 115 crore for these initiatives. Adityanath also announced a Rs 1,380 crore corpus fund for the upkeep of multi-storey police housing and administrative buildings.

Additionally, approval was granted to levy a proposed fee for expenses incurred by the police force during international events, which will

be managed by the Director General of Police and governed under the proposed corpus fund rules.

The chief minister said financial assistance amounting to Rs 36.2 crore has been provided to the families of 115 martyred police personnel from Uttar Pradesh serving in the Central Paramilitary Forces and Indian Police Services.

He further stated that Rs 3.5 crore was allocated for the welfare and comfort of police personnel posted in various districts, and Rs 4 crore was earmarked for general welfare initiatives. Additionally, Rs 30.56 lakh was used to settle 2,66 medical reimbursement claims for active and retired police personnel and their dependents.

CM Yogi also highlighted that Rs 12.6 crore was approved for 312 medical reimbursement cases exceeding Rs 5 lakh, Rs 5.05 crore as advance loans for the treatment of serious illnesses affecting 135

police personnel and their families, and Rs 9.08 crore to support the dependents of 306 deceased police officers under the Jeevan Bima Yojana.

Furthermore, Rs 31.16 lakh was spent on cashless treatments for police personnel and their dependents, while Rs 53.3 lakh in scholarships was awarded to 205 meritorious students of police families through the Education Fund. CM Yogi Adityanath said that on Republic Day and Independence Day, the President conferred four Police Medals for Distinguished Services and 110 Police Medals for Long Commendable Services on various officers and employees.

Additionally, 1,013 police personnel received the 'Ati Utkrishi Sewa Padak,' while 729 were awarded the 'Utkrishi Sewa Padak' by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Furthermore, three gazetted officers and employees were honored with the Mukhyamantri Utkrishi Sewa Padak.

ECI appoints Ajay Singh as new Jharkhand DGP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday appointed Ajay Kumar Singh as the new Director General of Police (DGP) of Jharkhand.

His appointment came in the wake of removal of Anurag Gupta from the post following the ECI's order to the Jharkhand government, ahead of the Assembly polls. The order was issued by the poll panel after it took into account "a history of" complaints and action taken by it against Gupta during the previous elections.

"ECI on Monday appointed senior most India Police Service (IPS) officer Ajay Kumar Singh as the new DGP of Jharkhand," sources said, adding that Singh's name was chosen as the DGP from the panel of three IPS officers sent by the state government. He is a 1989 batch IPS officer.



Notably, Jharkhand Assembly polls would see a direct contest between the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-Congress led alliance and the BJP.

Elections for 81 Assembly seats in the state will be held in two phases. The polling for the first phase (in 43 Assembly constituencies) would take place on 13th November and second phase (in 38 seats) on 20th November. The counting of votes would take place along with Maharashtra on 23rd November.

Akhilesh Yadav predicts landslide victory for Tej Pratap Yadav in Karhal bypoll

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MAINPURI, 21 OCTOBER

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav, who was present during the nomination filing of his cousin Tej Pratap Yadav for Karhal assembly bypoll on Monday, expressed confidence that Tej Pratap would win by a significant margin.

"The people of Mainpuri have always supported the SP and Netaji (Late Mulayam Singh Yadav). The people of Karhal have consistently chosen the Samajwadi Party. This time, there will be even more support in the elections than before, leading to a historic result," he stated while speaking to the media.



Criticizing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the SP President remarked that the BJP is afraid of the PDA alliance in the by-elections.

"Now, the BJP has even forgotten to mention the PDA," he said, adding that the BJP has stalled the development initiated during the SP's tenure. "After losing the Lok Sabha elections, the BJP was distressed,

believing itself to be above all institutions. Now, it is engaging in land grabs," he added.

He further accused the BJP of deliberately inciting riots in Bahraich.

"The reason is clear: the elections are approaching, and they seek to gain a communal advantage. The BJP orchestrated this conspiracy for political gain. Adequate administration and police arrangements were not made during the festival in Bahraich, leading to the violence," he claimed. Akhilesh Yadav also said that the BJP can arrest whom ever it wants, even journalists. In response to a question, he affirmed that the BJP cannot misuse official machinery in front of the people of Karhal.

Ganderbal terror killing of 7 workers aimed to derail strategic tunnel work?

SP SHARMA
JAMMU, 21 OCTOBER

The terrorist attack at a workers camp at Ganderbal in Kashmir, which left seven men of the workforce dead on Sunday evening, is being seen as also an attempt of Pakistan-backed terrorists to derail construction of the militarily strategic Z-Morh tunnel that is being constructed to provide all-weather road connectivity in Ladakh to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China and Line of Control (LOC) with Pakistan occupied J&K.

Doctor Shahnawaz and the tunnel designer Shashi Abrol, who were among those killed, belonged to the Budgam district of Kashmir and the Jammu city, respectively. It was not a targeted attack at workers belonging

to a particular community, but terrorists after entering the sprawling complex indiscriminately fired from their automatic weapons killing the workforce belonging to Kashmir, Jammu, Punjab, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. The five injured persons also belong to different regions.

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and the ministry of road transport and highways have undertaken the job to build tunnels below the high passes to provide all-weather road connectivity to Ladakh from Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh due to the bad experience during the Kargil war between India and Pakistan in the winters of 1999 when the roads to Ladakh were blocked with snow and the airway was the only means to fly troops, arms and ammunition to



the frontier region.

Named after the Z-shaped road stretch at an altitude of 8500 feet, the 6.5 kms long tunnel is being constructed to bypass the heavy amount of snow and avalanches during the winters. Nitin Gadkari, road transport and highways minister, had recently visited the spot to examine the pace of work on the tunnel. Significance of the tunnel is that it will also link with the road to the under-construction strategic Zojila tunnel that

will provide speedy connectivity towards Drass in Kargil that was the action spot during the 1999 war.

It is learnt that the intelligence agencies had inputs that the terrorists might try to attack the developmental works going on in Jammu and Kashmir. It is pertinent to mention here that in many recent attacks, terrorists were found having Chinese grenades and pistols. Preliminary reports said that after entering the complex, a group of at least three terrorists sprayed bullets at the workforce. They also set fire to the vehicles parked in the area to block mobility of the injured people. The workers camp was attacked first followed by the officers area and then the main office complex. The terrorists escaped after attacking the

workers.

A 4-member team of National Investigation Agency (NIA) led by an SP has reached the spot and have lifted bullet shells and other material for further examination. A pall of gloom prevailed at the tunnel designer Shashi Abrol's house in Jammu where a large number of relatives and friends gathered to console the family. His wife, who had observed the Karvachaut fast for the long life of her husband, was inconsolable after she received the news of her husband's killing. Their minor daughter was also constantly weeping. Similar was the scene at the residence of Doctor Shahnawaz at whose Budgam residence hundreds of people gathered to offer condolences to the family.

Cgarh Governor calls for public support & respect for police on commemoration day

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
RAIPUR, 21 OCTOBER

Chhattisgarh Governor Ramen Deka and Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai attended the Police Commemoration Day Parade at the Fourth Battalion Chhattisgarh Armed Force camp in Mana Raipur.

Paying tribute to fallen soldiers, they laid wreaths at the Shaheed Smarak and expressed condolences to the families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The families were presented

with shawls, shripal, and mementos as tokens of respect and support.

In his address, Governor Deka highlighted the crucial role of police personnel, urging the public to treat them with respect and kindness. He said, "The police carry immense responsibility, and it is essential for the public to adopt a humane attitude toward them. By showing respect, we not only support their duties but also contribute to their well-being."

The Governor acknowledged the dedication of police forces in maintaining law and order, especially in Naxal-affected regions, commending their bravery and commitment. Deka emphasised the need for coordination between police and local communities to tackle Naxalite activities effectively. He noted that the efforts of the police and armed forces have led to increased security and trust in affected areas, paving the way for the complete eradication of the

Naxal problem. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai also addressed the gathering, saluting the dedication of police and security forces. He remarked, "Police Commemoration Day reminds us of the valor and sacrifice of our police personnel who ensure law and order across the nation, facilitating development even in the most remote areas." Sai highlighted the government's support under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, noting that efforts

to eliminate Naxalism are gaining momentum.



to eliminate Naxalism are gaining momentum.



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Language Conflict

The escalating language militancy in Karnataka, particularly within Bengaluru, is a revealing reflection of broader societal tensions that extend beyond mere linguistic preferences. This conflict, underscored by recent altercations between locals and migrants over language use, highlights a fundamental struggle for cultural identity in an urban landscape. Bengaluru, known as the IT capital of India, is a melting pot of cultures and languages, with approximately 40 per cent of its population comprising migrants. As such, the city embodies the challenges of modern India, where regional identities often clash with the realities of globalisation. In this context, Kannada, the state's official language, is perceived by some as under threat from the growing influence of Hindi and English.

The rise of language militancy reflects not just a desire to protect Kannada but also a deeper anxiety about cultural erosion and the dilution of local identity in the face of overwhelming external pressures. Instances of hostility toward non-Kannadigas, such as altercations involving auto drivers and customers, serve as a microcosm of this struggle. While these incidents are often framed as issues of language, they also expose underlying social and economic frictions. Many locals feel that their cultural heritage is being undermined by a perceived influx of outsiders who may not respect or prioritise the local language. This resentment is compounded by the notion that Kannada has failed to secure its place as a dominant language in public life, as it competes with the more widely spoken Hindi and English.

Critically, the state government's pro-Kannada policies under Chief Minister Siddaramaiah have reignited this debate, as he openly opposes the imposition of Hindi. This political backing has emboldened pro-Kannada groups, intensifying the push for greater recognition and use of the language in all spheres of life. Yet, this approach risks alienating non-Kannadigas, who may feel unwelcome in a city they have come to call home. The challenge lies in fostering a multilingual environment where diverse languages can coexist, reflecting the rich tapestry of India's cultural heritage. Efforts to promote Kannada learning among non-Kannadigas are commendable but insufficient without a robust infrastructure to support these initiatives. While there is an understandable call for locals to protect their language and culture, it is equally vital to encourage inclusivity and dialogue among diverse communities. Creating spaces for cultural exchange can transform animosity into understanding, benefiting all residents. As Karnataka approaches its Rajyotsava celebrations, a moment traditionally steeped in pride for the local culture, it is essential to approach the language issue with a mindset geared towards unity rather than division. The future of Karnataka lies not in the assertion of linguistic dominance but in embracing the plurality that defines its identity. Only through mutual respect and collaboration can the state harness its diversity as a strength, fostering an environment where all languages and cultures can thrive.

Transparent PDS

In the realm of public welfare, transparency serves as the bedrock of accountability, especially within the framework of India's Public Distribution System (PDS). As a vital lifeline for millions, the PDS is tasked with ensuring food security for the underprivileged. However, to fulfil this mission effectively, it must evolve through the integration of transparent practices and digital solutions that empower citizens and mitigate corruption. Historically, the PDS has grappled with inefficiencies, leakages, and allegations of malpractice. This reality highlights the urgent need for a robust digital infrastructure that not only streamlines operations but also guarantees transparency at every level. When citizens are well-informed about their rights and entitlements, they are better positioned to engage with the system and hold authorities accountable. The digitisation of the PDS, while essential, should focus on a user-centric design that accords priority to accessibility and information granularity. The information made available should not be limited to basic ration card details; it must encompass critical data such as the number of beneficiaries, monthly allocations, and real-time stock positions at fair price shops. By providing comprehensive and easily navigable information, the PDS can enhance trust and allow citizens to effectively monitor the allocation of resources. Moreover, public access to PDS data should include mechanisms for grievance redressal. Individuals must have the ability to raise complaints and receive timely responses. This two-way interaction fosters a sense of agency among citizens, transforming them from passive recipients of aid into active participants in governance. When the rights holders are informed, they can pursue remedies for any discrepancies in their entitlements, ultimately strengthening the entire system.

International best practices suggest that successful welfare systems incorporate feedback loops that allow for continuous improvement. Therefore, data generated through the PDS can be analysed to identify patterns, gaps, and areas needing attention. This analytical approach can inform policymakers and help refine the programme, ensuring that it meets the evolving needs of the population. Furthermore, the principle of transparency extends beyond merely making data available; it involves ensuring that information is accurate, up-to-date, and easily understandable. States must commit to regular updates and maintenance of digital portals to avoid outdated information that could mislead beneficiaries. In a country as diverse and vast as India, where regional disparities exist, the PDS should also leverage local languages and culturally relevant content to enhance understanding among different demographics. Tailoring information in a way that resonates with the community will foster greater engagement and compliance. Transforming the PDS into a transparent, efficient, and accountable system is imperative for safeguarding food security in India. By prioritising accessibility, integrating user feedback, and ensuring accuracy, the PDS can empower citizens to claim their rights and effectively engage with the system. This transformation is not merely a technical upgrade; it is a commitment to the principles of democracy, ensuring that all citizens have a voice in shaping their welfare.

RTI decay

Across India, more than 4 lakh RTI cases are pending, with several Information Commissions reporting waits of over a year. In Maharashtra, with the highest backlog, citizens may wait over two years for a response. These backlogs point to deeper systemic issues, particularly the inconsistent implementation of the Act across states. Odisha, Bihar, and Gujarat have high pendency rates, while states like Tripura and Jharkhand have yet to appoint Information Commissioners. This uneven enforcement not only hinders access to information but also violates the fundamental right guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.



Nineteen years ago, on 12 October 2005, India took a bold step toward enhancing transparency and accountability with the enactment of the Right to Information (RTI) Act. Widely regarded as one of the most progressive transparency laws globally, the RTI Act empowered citizens to access information from public authorities, allowing them to hold the government accountable.

This landmark legislation promised to bridge the gap between the governing and the governed by facilitating access to vital information. However, as we approach two decades of its implementation, the state of the RTI Act is in disrepair, threatening not only the Act itself but also the democratic principles it upholds.

A recent report by Satark Nagrik Sangathan (SNS), which monitors transparency and accountability in governance, paints a grim picture of the RTI's current status. From 1 July 2023, to 30 June 2024, seven of India's 29 Information Commissions - the bodies responsible for implementing the RTI Act - were defunct for varying periods.

As of now, four continue to remain non-functional. The absence of functional commissions means large swathes of the population are unable to exercise their right to information.

This is further exacerbated by the fact that five Information Commissions are currently operating without a Chief Information Commissioner (CIC), which is critical for the resolution of cases and the overall efficiency of these bodies. This institutional breakdown has led to a significant backlog of pending cases, which fundamentally undermines the purpose of the RTI Act.

Across India, more than 4 lakh RTI cases are pending, with several Information Commissions reporting waits of over a year. In Maharashtra, with the highest backlog, citizens may wait over two years for a response.

Such delays undermine the purpose of the RTI Act; when information is delayed, it is effectively denied, leaving citizens powerless to hold the government accountable. These backlogs point to deeper systemic issues, particularly the inconsistent implementation of the Act across states.

Odisha, Bihar, and Gujarat

have high pendency rates, while states like Tripura and Jharkhand have yet to appoint Information Commissioners.

This uneven enforcement not only hinders access to information but also violates the fundamental right guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, threatening the integrity of government transparency.

Another worrying development is the opacity within the institutions that are supposed to enforce transparency. According to reports, one-third of the Information Commissions have not uploaded their latest annual reports on their websites, a basic requirement under the RTI Act. These reports provide crucial information on the functioning of the commissions, including the number of cases handled and the challenges they face. By not releasing this information, the commissions themselves are perpetuating a culture of unaccountability.

The systemic weakening of the RTI framework has been further compounded by legislative and administrative actions that have eroded the independence of the Information Commissions.

The 2019 amendments to the RTI Act are particularly notable in this regard. These amendments gave the central government the power to determine the tenure and salaries of Information Commissioners, which were previously fixed by law.

This change has made the commissions more susceptible to political interference, weakening their ability to hold public authorities accountable. A system that was once hailed for empowering citizens has become increasingly vulnerable to political control, eroding the very autonomy that made it effective.

In addition to these systemic issues, the increasing violence and intimidation faced by RTI activists adds another layer of concern. Since the enactment of the RTI Act, over 100 activists have been killed, with many others facing threats, physical attacks, and intimidation for exposing corruption and government

malpractices. These activists, often operating alone and without institutional support, have risked their lives to uphold the values of transparency and accountability.

The absence of robust protection mechanisms for whistleblowers has only worsened the situation, enabling vested interests to silence those who dare to question them.

Despite these challenges, the RTI Act remains a crucial tool for ensuring accountability in India. It has exposed numerous instances of corruption and mismanagement over the years. For example, RTI applications were instrumental in uncovering the misallocation of funds during the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Delhi, leading to several investigations and the eventual arrest of officials.

Similarly, RTI queries have exposed irregularities in welfare programmes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and the Public Distribution System (PDS), forcing authorities to address these issues. These examples illustrate the power of the RTI in enabling citizens to challenge entrenched power structures and demand better governance.

However, for the RTI Act to continue serving its purpose, urgent reforms are needed to restore its efficacy. One of the most pressing issues is the need to fill the vacancies in the Information Commission.

Without strong leadership, the commissions cannot function effectively, and the backlog of cases will only continue to grow. The Central and state governments must ensure that qualified, independent individuals are chosen to fill these roles, free from political influence.

Furthermore, a national audit of the Information Commissions should be conducted to assess their performance and identify the root causes of delays.

Many commissions have cited a lack of resources, including insufficient funding and staffing, as a major obstacle to

their functioning. The government must allocate adequate financial and human resources to these bodies to ensure their smooth operation.

Another critical reform is the reversal of the 2019 amendments that diluted the autonomy of the Information Commissions.

The tenure and salaries of Information Commissioners should once again be fixed by law, ensuring that they can operate independently of political influence. Restoring the commissions' independence is crucial for maintaining the credibility of the RTI process and ensuring that public authorities are held accountable.

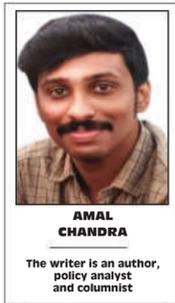
Additionally, proactive disclosure of information by government departments must be strengthened. Section 4 of the RTI Act mandates that public authorities disclose information on their own, without citizens having to file RTI applications.

However, compliance with this provision has been woefully inadequate. Government agencies should be required to regularly update their websites with critical information on budgets, tenders, and decision-making processes, thereby reducing the burden on the RTI system and enhancing transparency.

Finally, robust protection mechanisms for RTI activists must be implemented. The government should establish a comprehensive whistleblower protection framework to ensure the safety and dignity of those who expose corruption and malpractices through RTI applications.

The RTI Act was a watershed moment in India's democratic journey, offering citizens the power to seek information and hold their government accountable. As we mark 19 years since its enactment, however, the system is at a critical juncture. The growing backlog of cases, the failure to appoint key officials, and the attacks on activists point to a deep governance crisis.

Protecting and strengthening the RTI system is not just a legal necessity but a democratic imperative. The right to information is the cornerstone of meaningful governance, and urgent action is needed to protect it, ensuring that transparency and accountability remain central to India's democratic institutions.



AMAL CHANDRA
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Welcome verdict

SIR, This refers to yesterday's report titled 'SC upholds Section 6A of the Citizenship Act'. Section 6A of the Citizenship Act 1955 grants citizenship to immigrants from Bangladesh, the erstwhile East Pakistan, who entered Assam between 1 January 1966 and 24 March 1971.

The Supreme Court has found that the yardstick of migration is reasonable because the Pakistani Army launched Operation Search Light to curb the Bangladesh nationalist movement on 25 March 1971. This is quite justifiable.

The apex court has also rejected pleas to advance the date to 19 July 1949 on a par with the rest of the country and expressed dismay at the government's failure to detect

and deport foreigners from Assam. The Assam Accord of 1985 says that immigrants who came to Assam on or after 25 March 1971 should be detected and deported.

But the CAA seeks to fast-track citizenship to non-Muslim immigrants from certain neighbouring countries who entered on or before 31 December 2014 to flee religious persecution.

Most organisations and political parties in Assam including the Congress, AASU, BJP and AIUDF have lauded the SC ruling, saying that the judgment has "recognised" the Assam Accord. They demanded scrapping of the CAA and preparation of a flawless NRC.

Although the ruling BJP has officially hailed the top court's

CHALLENGE FOR INDIA

SIR, This refers to the report "Former RAW officer charged by US DOJ in Pannun assassination plot" (October 19). In a major setback for the Indian government, the US on Thursday announced the filing of murder-for-hire and money laundering charges against former RAW operative Vikash Yadav in connection with the alleged plot to assassinate pro-Khalistan extremist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun in New York, claiming that it will not shy away from indicting any person who tries to harm or kill US citizens, regardless of their position or proximity to power.

The indictment, for the first time, implicates the Indian government directly in the attempted murder of a dissident. Although New Delhi has said it is cooperating with the investigation in the US, it has not responded to the specific charges against Mr Yadav.

The US also stated that it is setting an example to spread a larger message to other nations, mainly China and Russia, which have also been accused of conducting overseas operations against rebels they regard as anti-national. US considers these charges as a grave example of the increase in deadly plots and other forms of violent transnational activities targeting diaspora communities in America. The issue poses a big challenge to India and its diplomats. The issue could well snowball into a row such as the one now on with Canada.

Yours, etc., Sanjay Chopra, Mohali, 19 October.

judgement, a section from the party has expressed dissent claiming the judgment is "unfortunate".

They think Assam would have to "bear the burden of foreigners

who came to India till 20 years later than the rest of India".

The Supreme Court justifiably finds that Section 6A of the Citizenship Act 1955 falls within the

bounds of the Constitution and is a valid piece of legislation.

Yours, etc., Sukhendu Bhattacharjee, Hooghly, 19 October.

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ASIAN VOICES

Preempting a waiting game

The explosive revelations on the drug war by several witnesses in recent House hearings may have given the government the impetus to seek international sanctions for the brutal killings under the previous administration, but it's an option it has chosen to forego. Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin said President Marcos was "not expected to change his mind and now refer the quad comm matter to the [International Criminal Court]," as the country "will not return to the ICC." The international court is investigating Duterte and other former officials for "crimes against humanity" over thousands of extrajudicial killings in his drug war. While Duterte and Mr. Marcos have insisted that the ICC no longer has jurisdiction over the country after its withdrawal from the Rome Statute in 2018, the ICC maintains that its jurisdiction covers crimes committed until the effective period of the Philippines' disengagement in 2019. In the House's quad comm hearings last week, Duterte's former close aide Police Col. Royina Garma disclosed the alleged existence of a reward system that earned police operatives up to P1 million for every drug suspect killed. She named her upper classman Col. Edilberto Leonardo as being on top of the reward scheme.

Garma and Leonardo, whose resignation from the National Police Commission has been accepted by the President, were both implicated by another witness in the killing of three Chinese drug lords inside a Davao prison in 2016, and in the 2020 ambush killing of Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office board secretary Wes-

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ley Barayuga. Previous witnesses have also linked former Duterte police chief and now Sen. Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa to threats and intimidation to force them to name opposition figures as part of the drug trade. Duterte's close aide Sen. Bong Go has meanwhile been identified as the alleged source of funds for the reward system. Both have denied the accusations. While the government's refusal to cooperate with the ICC is deplorable as it squanders an opportunity to hold to account those behind the drug killings, all is not lost.

Police or private individuals could still file the complaint, and the Department of Justice will launch a probe as long as there is an "initiation process," DOJ Undersecretary Raul Vasquez said.

Quad comm co-chair and Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers meanwhile reiterated that the House "cannot submit anything to the ICC" or "allow [it] access" to its records. But "if [other parties] use the proceedings under different social media platforms, they can do so because they're public," he said. Among the possible parties who could make use of the quad comm testimonies for the ICC investigation is the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers, which noted that Garma's being an insider could make her a valuable witness in the case.

The quad comm, too, can hand over its report to the DOJ, the National Bureau of Investigation, or the Office of the Ombudsman, as "these are the agencies that have the mandate to build on the findings," Solicitor General Menardo Guevarra said. The role of his office will come in "much later," he added. Meanwhile, the farthest Malacañang would venture on the issue is to say that it would support the filing of charges against Leonardo, a decision that it was however leaving "entirely" to the DOJ or Ombudsman. While commendable, the government's strict adherence to legal procedures also allows it to dribble the hard decision to other agencies that are understandably running confused by its mixed message of ostensibly pursuing a "rules-based order," while disengaging with an international court that advances it. Despite the confusion, the concerned government agencies should get their act together instead of tussling over turf and jurisdiction on the witnesses. They should move posthaste to secure several individuals being sought for alleged involvement either with illegal Philippine offshore gaming operators (Pogos), or the drug war.

Can there be a thaw in India-China ties?

HARSHA KAKAR

Prime Minister Modi signalled India's willingness to engage with China when during an interview with Newsweek in April this year he mentioned that 'stable and peaceful relations between India and China are important for not just our two countries but the entire region and world.' This was responded to by China. Soon after he assumed charge as PM in June, there were a series of meetings.

External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, once each in July and August. In September, India's NSA, Ajit Doval, met Wang Yi in St Petersburg, Russia, on the sidelines of the BRICS+ National Security Advisers meeting. The MEA statement mentioned after this interaction, "Both sides agreed to work with urgency and redouble their efforts to realize complete disengagement in the remaining areas."

Simultaneously, there were two back-to-back WMCC (Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs) meetings. These had never happened so frequently ever since the standoff began. The last Corps Commander level meeting was held on 19 February this year.

The 31st WMCC meeting held on 29 August had for the first time said in their joint statement that the two sides would, "narrow down the differences and find early resolution of the outstanding issues. For this, they further agreed to intensify contact through diplomatic and military channels." It gave an impression that a resolution could be on the cards prior to the BRICS+ summit scheduled in Kazan, Russia from 22 to 24 October.

The belief within the Indian security establishment was that even commencement of serious discussions on resolution of one of the two remaining standoffs could result in a Modi-Xi summit in Kazan. But some believe

that if China resolves the standoffs, how would it justify its operations, loss of lives and expenditure. However, the euphoria ended there. No Corps Commander level meetings were proposed nor conducted. No ground solution can be resolved without military-level talks.

The army chief, General Upendra Dwivedi, mentioned in a recent interaction, "The situation on the ground today is stable but it is not normal and it is sensitive," adding, "in the entire gamut we see that trust has been the biggest casualty." Both sides continue to maintain high force levels, doubting the intentions of the other. This will be the fifth winter with heightened deployment.

However, with existing mechanisms in place, stability continues. India desires restoration of status quo of April 2020, removal of buffer zones and recommencement to patrolling claim lines. China, on its part, has been hinting that the current deployment be considered the status quo.

Lack of trust has resulted in India changing its primary threat perception from the west to the north. A number of formations responsible for operations on the western border had their roles sidestepped to the north. This has added to Chinese concerns.

India began investing in developing military capabilities as also enhancing infrastructure development along the LAC. Delhi increased its interactions with the QUAD and moved closer to the US. India also began focusing on AI (Artificial Intelligence), space, defence technologies and other emerging sectors. Today, India stands tall in preventing China from attempting any new misadventures.

The Chinese attempted a similar grab at Yangtze in December 2022 resulting in a loss of face to the PLA. India has projected that any further attempt would be met by a quid pro quo, which could embarrass the Chinese. Delhi is willing to risk expansion of the conflict, knowing that PLA troops are no match for the hardened



Indian soldiers. Failure on the LAC could severely dent the Chinese image.

China, which never built infrastructure for housing troops in Tibet for seventy years, is now doing so at a feverish pace. While many believe that the intent is to maintain an enlarged troop presence as a threat to India, the other view is that it fears India adopting a similar salami slicing strategy in case it gets embroiled in a conflict in the South China Sea.

The Indo-China rivalry has also impacted US-China tensions. India is firmly in the US camp, which would remain a threat for China. India would also ensure that no multilateral institution, where India and China share a common platform, can turn against the US or the West. India was the first country to oppose any attempt to bypass the US dollar in favour of the Yuan at either the SCO or the BRICS. Partnership with India also benefits other China adversaries

including Japan and the Philippines.

China too cannot risk enmity with India in case it seeks to regain Taiwan by force. Troops needed for both sides cannot be met with current deployment in existing theatres. Additional forces will have to be moved from one to the other. Beijing is concerned that in case it is stalled in Taiwan, India could exploit the situation. It would definitely need to normalize ties with India prior to operations elsewhere. For India, the red line is to restore the status quo of April 2020.

While Russia would seek to push its anti-US agenda in conjunction with China at the forthcoming BRICS+ summit, it will be India which will tone it down. A lot could have changed had India-China ties been on a positive trajectory.

Amongst the subjects likely to be taken up in the forthcoming BRICS+ summit include ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia. Both Russia and China are pro-Palestine, while

India stands neutral. Other major subjects of interest would be an alternate system of payments to the US dollar, building an institution to challenge the IMF, and also inducting more members.

In every case, India's views may not be in tune with China and it cannot be bypassed. BRICS+ may be an institution in global demand but ongoing rivalry between India and China will have an impact. If BRICS has to grow, there has to be symmetry between the two largest economies in the group, India and China.

As was visible in the recently concluded SCO, India was the only opponent to China's BRI (Belt Road Initiative). In case Indo-China disagreements continue, the impact would also be felt in the BRICS. Thus far, neither side has proposed a bilateral indicating that the status quo in ties would remain.

(The writer is a retired Major-General of the Indian Army.)

100 YEARS AGO OCCASIONAL NOTE

NOT only the medical but all the scientific world is now interested in the ductless glands and the relation of their secretions to the human organism. Closely connected with the subject is that of food values and an endless series of experiments has been conducted with a view to ascertaining the exact quantities of vitamins contained in the various forms of animal and vegetable food that are consumed by human beings. It is here that the analytical chemist comes into touch with the physician. How close the connection may be is shown by some "digestibility trials" on animals recently concluded by the Agricultural Chemist to the Government of the Punjab and his assistants. The leaves of the shisham tree are consumed, apparently very eagerly, by cattle in India. An analysis of shisham leaves made by Dr. Lander showed them to possess a feeding value comparable to that of oats, but when feeding trials were undertaken on a couple of bullocks it was discovered that the animals were not able to tolerate more than five or six pounds daily. It is, therefore, evident that the farmer must no longer be satisfied with being told that certain foods are rich in fat, or carbo-hydrates, or proteins. It is the acids into which food is broken down in the course of digestion that matter. Unfortunately human beings cannot be experimented upon so easily as bullocks.

NEWS ITEMS

ADMIRAL RICHMOND

ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION AT KARACHI

His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Squadron, Rear-Admiral Richmond, has been in Karachi since Saturday when he arrived on board H. M. S. Chatham. Ceremonial calls were paid by the Commissioner-in-Sind, Lieut.-General Sir George Kirk-Patrick, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., Major-General H. F. Cooke, C.B., C.S.I., C.B.E., D.S.O. and several other high officials which were acknowledged by the Admiral's flagship by the usual gun salutes.

Various public and private dinners have been held in honour of the Admiral's visit, while officers and men of the ship are also being unofficially entertained. Admiral Richmond declared that he was much impressed with Karachi's natural advantages.

UNREST IN PERSIA

SALAR-ED-DOWLAH ACTIVE ONCE MORE

SALAR-ED-DOWLAH, uncle of the Shah, who was expelled from Persia some years ago owing to his anti-Government activities, has returned and is at the present moment in Persia. Owing to his being allied through his wife to tribes of Luristan, he could in taking the side of Sardar Aghdass lead the forces in the struggle in which the latter is now engaged against the Government.

About a thousand troops with artillery are leaving Teheran for an unknown destination, but very probably for Arabistan.

[Salar-ed-Dowlah, a younger brother of the ex-Shah, landed a force in Persia from the Caspian in 1911, which attempted to march to Teheran, but was completely defeated. He himself attacked from the south-west, via Ker-manshah and Hamadan, with no better results, and fled to Europe. Other information leaves no doubt that the troops now leaving Teheran for Ispahan are intended as a demonstration against the Sheikh of Mohammerah.]

LEPER MISSION

DR. COCHRANE'S EFFICIENCY TOUR OF THE EAST

DR. ROBERT COCHRANE, son of Dr. Thomas Cochrane, founder of Union Medical College at Peking, embarked for India to-day.

He hopes to visit all the leper missions in the forty stations in India and help to bring treatment to the highest state of efficiency. He will work for a time in research with Dr. Ernest Muir, at the School of Tropical Medicine, in Calcutta, and will then visit Burma, Siam, North Borneo, the Dutch Indies, and the Philippines.

After completing the tour he will engage in research work at the Medical College at Peking, returning home via Korea, and America.

An insider's account of the Biden years

MALEHA LODHI

Bob Woodward writes the ultimate 'insider' accounts about American presidents, politics and foreign policy. He is one of the duo of journalists who exposed the Watergate scandal that led to president Richard Nixon's downfall.

Woodward has long enjoyed unique access to America's top political and military leaders. Which is why he is sometimes unflatteringly described as an 'access journalist' who shows undue deference to his main, often anonymous sources.

His latest book, War, belongs to the same genre as earlier works and is based on scores of interviews offering insights into the highest levels of decision-making during Joe Biden's presidency. What gives this book added significance is its publication on the eve of the American presidential election, as he draws comparisons between Donald Trump and Biden in how they dealt with international crises.

Woodward considers Trump as "the most reckless and impulsive president in American history", who "is demonstrating the very same character as a presidential candidate in 2024". He, therefore, deems Trump to be unfit for a second term in office. These views are no different from what Woodward previously wrote in his trilogy of books on the Trump presidency. The first two, titled Fear and Rage, were about the chaos in the Trump White House and depicted the former president as a self-obsessed, ill-informed and impetuous leader.

The principal focus of his new book is on how the Biden administration handled the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, although Woodward's

disclosures about Trump's relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin — sending him Covid test kits when they were scarce at home — attracted greater pre-publication publicity for the book. War covers all these international engagements, but perhaps it is how the American exit from Afghanistan was botched up that might interest readers most in Pakistan.

For Biden, the 20-year US military presence in Afghanistan was "a classic case of mission creep" that he pledged in his election campaign to end. The mission had lost its purpose and direction and as vice president he warned president Barack Obama that he was being fed "bullshit" by military generals who were taking advantage of his inexperience. When Biden became president, he inherited the 2020 Doha agreement Trump concluded with the Taliban, which committed the US to withdraw from Afghanistan by May 2021.

Three options were presented to Biden: stay on indefinitely, undertake a slower, "gated" withdrawal, or pull out quickly and safely. Like Trump, he wanted an expeditious out, and accordingly announced that in April 2021. Criticism followed from former military officials, and even ex-president George Bush. Biden remained undeterred. His administration, however, "failed to anticipate contingencies and plan for worst-case scenarios", says Woodward. It was taken by surprise by how swiftly the country fell to the Taliban without a fight.

Blaming the Afghan government and military for the debacle, Biden, however, stood by his decision while also passing the buck to Trump, saying he forged the original deal with the Taliban. None of this obscured the

monumental intelligence failure that produced the chaotic exit, which had echoes of the US scramble from Vietnam. This inevitably damaged America's global standing and credibility.

The chapters on the war in Gaza portray a frustrated US president, angry with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his constant lies about his intention to escalate the conflict, which Biden saw as inextricably linked to his political survival. "Defined by distrust", their tense relationship is described in graphic detail. Woodward cites several occasions when Washington's advice was willfully ignored, including on a ceasefire deal, Israel's invasion of Rafah, siege of Gaza, air strikes on Beirut, and on avoiding civilian casualties. He quotes Biden as telling Netanyahu that "the perception of Israel around the world increasingly is that you're a rogue state, a rogue actor". He cites Biden's frequent use of four-letter words for the Israeli leader.

Biden wanted to contain the war to Gaza and, according to Woodward, told Netanyahu that the US is "not on board" on a preemptive attack on Hezbollah. He also told him Washington would not participate in any Israeli offensive action against Iran. He was concerned that 45,000 US military personnel and contractors stationed across the Middle East would become targets of attack. The book details heated arguments between Biden and Netanyahu over humanitarian assistance for Gaza. The Israeli leader repeatedly responded to this by saying he will not allow "a drop or ounce to go into Gaza to help the people". Netanyahu's refusal to listen to Biden and unwillingness to provide urgent access for aid meant Washington failed to avert a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.



Despite their many disagreements on the conduct of the war, Biden remained steadfast in his support of Israel. Whatever Woodward's explanation of his inability to prevent Israel from escalating and broadening the war, this failure was a reflection of Washington's strategic compulsion to avoid a rupture with Tel Aviv as well as the limits of a tired superpower's eroding leverage, with a manipulative Netanyahu getting the better of a lame-duck Biden.

The role of key Arab states is highlighted in anecdotes of several meetings. For example, King Abdullah of Jordan tells US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, "We want Israel to defeat Hamas." Similarly, the UAE ruler conveys to the Americans that "Hamas must be eliminated". Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman says to Blinken in discussions on a future Palestinian state "Do I want it? It

doesn't matter that much. Do I need it? Absolutely". Significantly, though, he added he would never betray the Arab or Muslim world on this issue.

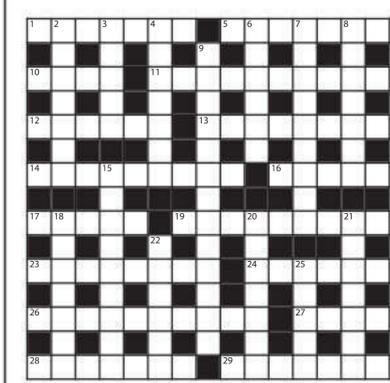
The war in Ukraine also receives detailed treatment. The most striking disclosure concerns US intelligence information in September 2022 that Putin was considering using tactical nuclear weapons, and efforts by the Biden national security team to stop him. Direct US warnings to Russian officials are claimed by the book to have averted the danger of nuclear escalation.

Whether or not one agrees with many of Woodward's assessments and conclusions, this is a compelling, must-read book for its rich detail and insights into decision-making at the top echelons of the US government in times of war and crisis.

Dawn/ANN.

CROSSWORD

NO-292937



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

ACROSS

- Shark tail is seen within banks of Forth (7)
- Bear's paunch (7)
- Hands university a list of courses (4)
- Game monarch hosting cool queen's band at dinner (6,4)
- What workers collect almost swamps court (6)
- Sexy Mike's not into improvised soul music (8)
- Begin introducing a medic at Yankee pre-match bash (4,5)
- Story involving very rare organ (5)
- Throw away unfinished jam (5)
- Girl and boy return clasping new spring flower (9)
- Meat loaf half eaten during flight (8)
- Police officer gets bad review (6)

DOWN

- Binge before opening oxygen tank (7)
- What's spread before (5,5)
- Like some cakes brought in twice daily (4)
- Red Cross tails vehicle heading off in fog (7)
- Cereal producer's large diary kept in barrel (7)
- Paper covers nearly bankrupt seed repository (5)
- Performed tune backwards for drink (7)
- Long time associated with a YBA (6)
- Die from it, shattered and humiliated (9)
- Tot tucked into ice cream that's put away (7)
- Reveal how to clumsily pod legumes? (5,3,5)

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

Sanjay Raut scotches speculation of meeting Amit Shah



AGENCIES MUMBAI, 21 OCTOBER

Shiv Sena-UBT MP and Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut on Monday categorically denied speculation in some quarters that he reportedly met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the run-up to the November 20 Maharashtra Assembly elections.

Interacting briefly with media persons amid seat-sharing negotiations of Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies, Raut also rubbished a ruling Shiv Sena leader's predictions that the SS-UBT, led by Uddhav Thackeray would return to the BJP-NDA fold. To buttress his claims, the Shiv Sena leader contended that Thackeray and the SS-UBT were reportedly being short-changed in the matter of seat allocation by the MVA, specifically the Congress.

"These are just rumours being spread by the ruling side's media machinery. We know who is doing it and why... We also have our own small 'Pegasus' set-up which keeps us informed," asserted Raut, citing to the infamous Israeli spyware controversy.

When some media persons pressed him on the issue claiming that Congress had allegedly raised the matter, the SS-UBT MP said that this question was indeed "laughable".

PM Modi and Spanish PM Pedro Sanchez to inaugurate C-295 aircraft plant in Vadodara

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said on Sunday that the state government is consistently striving to tackle the issues and challenges faced by the people

AGENCIES

AHMEDABAD, 21 OCTOBER

Accompanied by Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the final assembly line of Tata Advanced Systems' aircraft manufacturing plant in Vadodara on October 28.

The plant, a collaboration between Tata Advanced Systems Limited and Spain's Airbus Defence and Space (Airbus DS), will produce the first 'Made in India' C-295 medium-lift tactical transport aircraft for the Indian Air Force

(IAF).

Under the agreement, Tata Advanced Systems - selected as the Indian Production Agency (IPA) by Airbus DS - will produce 40 fly-away C-295 aircraft from its facilities and will subsequently provide MRO support and service for the total 56 aircraft that will be procured by IAF.

The project aims to deliver the first aircraft by 2026.

The Spanish PM is scheduled to arrive in Vadodara on the night of October 27. The two leaders will jointly launch the plant and meet prominent industrialists. Though plans for a roadshow featuring both



PMs are being discussed, official confirmation is pending for security reasons. Following the inauguration,

both leaders will hold bilateral discussions and have lunch at Vadodara's iconic Laxmi Vilas Palace.

Later in the day, PM Modi will head to Amreli district, where he will address a public rally. He is also scheduled to

PM Modi will return to Delhi in the evening, concluding his one-day visit to Gujarat. Home Minister Amit Shah will also visit Gujarat on 22 October.

inaugurate the 'Amrit Sarovar' in Dudhala village, the hometown of industrialist Savji Dholakia, and will lay the foundation stones for various developmental projects.

PM Modi will return to Delhi in the evening, concluding his one-day visit to Gujarat. Home Minister Amit Shah will also visit Gujarat on October 22.

Meanwhile, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel

said on Sunday that the state government is consistently striving to tackle the issues and challenges faced by the people.

As he inaugurated developmental projects worth Rs 640 crore for Viramgam, Patel affirmed that several other significant initiatives are underway to develop the country's green energy sector under Prime Minister Modi's leadership.

Congress appoints Manoj Chauhan as party co-incharge for Assam bypolls



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE GUWAHATI, 21 OCTOBER

In a strategic move ahead of the upcoming by-elections in Assam, the Congress has appointed Manoj Chauhan, All India Congress Committee (AICC) secretary, as the new co-in charge of the state.

Elections to five assembly seats of Assam will be held on November 13.

In addition to Chauhan's appointment, Congress pres-

ident Mallikarjun Kharge has approved the nomination of six candidates for the by-elections in Assam and Madhya Pradesh.

Four candidates have been nominated from Assam, namely, Dhruvrajyoti Purakayastha for the Dholai constituency, Sanjib Warle for Sidli, Brajenjit Sinha for Bongaigaon, and Tanzil Husain for Samaguri. Two candidates have been fielded in Madhya Pradesh.

Chauhan, who played a significant role during the recent Haryana Assembly elections, is expected to bring his experience and fresh leadership to strengthen the party's position in Assam.

Originally from Sidhi district in Madhya Pradesh, Chauhan rose to prominence after being identified by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during a talent search initiative aimed at nurturing young leadership.

Kharge holds CEC meet to discuss names for Maharashtra Assembly polls

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday chaired a meeting of the party's Central Election Committee (CEC) to discuss the name of candidates for the forthcoming Assembly elections in Maharashtra.

Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, party's general secretary in charge Organisation KC Venugopal, Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole were also present during the meeting held at the party headquarters here.

During the meeting, they deliberated on the names of candidates to be released for the Maharashtra Assembly polls.

Earlier, the Maharashtra Congress chief said, "We will take forward the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance. We will contest on all 288 Assembly seats. Maha Vikas Aghadi will form the government in Maharashtra."

It may be mentioned that the Congress, Shiv Sena Uddhav Balasahb Thackeray (UBT) and NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar (NCP-SCP) led MVA released a chargesheet against the BJP-Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) Mahayuti gov-



ernment-led by Eknath Shinde, aptly titled Gad-darancha Panchnama."

The MVA in its chargesheet accused the ruling dispensation of corruption. The Opposition also alleged that under the Mahayuti government, farmers are "deprived" of guaranteed prices and crop issues in the state.

In the Assembly polls, there would be a direct

contest between the Mahayuti alliance and MVA alliance.

In the 2019 Assembly elections, the BJP won 105 seats, Shiv Sena bagged 56, NCP 54 and Congress 44 Assembly constituencies.

Elections to 288 Assembly seats in Maharashtra will be held in a single phase on 20th November. The counting of votes will take place on 23rd November along with Jharkhand.

Manipur still awaits: Congjibe at Modi ahead of his Russia visit

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

The Congress on Monday took a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of his visit to Russia for the BRICS Summit, and said Kazan certainly beckons but sadly Manipur still awaits. Notably, the grand old party has been attacking the PM for not visiting the strife-torn state of Manipur.

The party general secretary in-charge of Communications Jairam Ramesh said, "Tomorrow the BRICS+ Summit begins in Kazan, Russia. Like most things the non-biological PM claims credit for, there is a solid pre-2014 history to such a Summit."

"It was in November 2001 that the British economist Jim O' Neill first coined the term BRIC--Brazil, Russia, India and China---to draw attention to a quartet that could become major economic powers of the world by 2050. In September 2006, Foreign Ministers of these four countries met in New York to explore how they could give political weight to O'Neill's economic concept," he recalled.

Ramesh, who is also the Congress MP in Rajya Sabha, said, "In June 2009, the Pres-



idents of China, Brazil, and Russia, and the Prime Minister of India, met in Russia for the first ever BRIC Summit. South Africa was included in the group two years later when BRIC became BRICS. New Delhi hosted the BRICS Summit in March 2012."

"Now BRICS includes Egypt, Iran, UAE, and Ethiopia as full members. A number of other countries are waiting to join. The New Development Bank formally launched by BRICS in July 2014 is headquartered in Shanghai," he wrote on X.

Referring to Manipur, Ramesh said, "Kazan certainly beckons but sadly Manipur still awaits (PM's visit)."

Earlier, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had said the PM's abject failure in Manipur was unforgivable. He also demanded dismissal of Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh and a Supreme Court-monitored investigation into the ongoing violence.

EAM Jaishankar slams Canadian 'double standards'

AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar on Monday slammed the "double standards" adopted by the Justin Trudeau-led government in Canada on the way it treats Indian envoys, and its expectations from New Delhi on Canadian diplomats' privileges.

Speaking at an event in the capital, EAM Jaishankar said: "The licence they give themselves is totally different from the restrictions they impose on diplomats in Canada."

He also took a swipe at Ottawa for interpreting freedom of expression as per its own convenience.

Mahapolls: Nominations start on Tuesday, parties burn midnight oil to finalise candidates

AGENCIES MUMBAI, 21 OCTOBER

As the process for the November 20 Maharashtra Assembly elections officially kicks off from Tuesday (October 22), all political parties from the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) and ruling combine MahaYuti are burning the midnight oil to finalise their lists of candidates.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) notification

will be issued on Tuesday opening the floodgates for filing nominations till the last date, October 29.

This would include the official candidates from the ruling and opposition alliances, smaller parties, other blocs like Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi, Independents, rebels, pressure-groups like the Marathas, dummies, vote-splitters and frivolous candidates.

The MahaYuti ally

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced its first list of 99 candidates while the lists of the others -- Shiv Sena and Nationalist Congress Party are eagerly awaited.

On the other side, the MVA of Congress-Shiv Sena (UBT)-Nationalist Congress Party (SP) is in the grip of a veritable civil war over seat-sharing that threatens to push the alliance on the brink.

TENDER

S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER

Tender Notice No.: ST-OT-PointShift.
TR-ABB, Dtd. 18.10.2024. e-Tender is invited by Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer (Co)/Kharagpur-721301, S.E.Railway for and on behalf of the President of India for the following works and will be opened at 12.00 hrs. **Description of works:** S&T portion of work in connection to Shifting of 03 Nos. of 1 in 12 points & X-ing, 01 No. DS and dismantling of 01 No. 1 in 8.5 points & X-ing at Abada Yard and S&T portion of work for TTR (FS+CS+CMSC) - 23 sets (1.8.5) in Howrah-Santragachi Jn. section. This includes EI Alteration at Abada, commissioning of MSDAC in section Abada-Nalpur and Abada-Sankrail. **Tender value:** ₹ 4,29,60,682.84. **EMD:** ₹ 3,64,800/- **Cost of tender document:** Nil. **Completion Period:** 15 Months. **Date of Submission:** Upto 12.00 hrs. of 18.11.2024. **Date of Opening:** 18.11.2024. Interested Tenderers may visit website www.irops.gov.in for full details, description, specification of the tender and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these works will be accepted. (PR-720)

Tender Notice No.: DRMENGGRNC-56-58-2024, Dated 21.10.2024. Tenders are invited by Divisional Railway Manager (Engg), S.E. Railway, Ranchi for and on behalf of The President of India for the following works: **Sl. No. & Notice No.:** **Name of work; Tender value; EMD Value:** (1) **DRMENGGRNC-56-2024;** Construction of additional platform number 1B at Ranchi station; ₹ 6,48,16,633.33; ₹ 4,74,100/-; (2) **DRMENGGRNC-57-2024;** Ranchi Division: Supply, Installation, Commissioning & Operation (For 5 years) of Track Based Rail Gauge Face Lubricator 06 Nos. (Hydraulic Type for 2 Km.) complete system for 60 Kg. Rail as per RDSO's Technical Specification in Ranchi Division; ₹ 44,65,092/-; ₹ 89,300/-; (3) **DRMENGGRNC-58-2024;** Ranchi Division: Supply, Installation, Commissioning & Operation (For 5 years) of Track Based Rail Gauge Face Lubricator 221 Nos. (Hydraulic Type for 1 Km.) complete system for 60 Kg. Rail as per RDSO's Technical Specification in Ranchi Division; ₹ 16,44,64,222/-; ₹ 9,72,300/- **Tender Closing date & time:** 11.11.2024 at 15.00 hrs. for each. Tenderers can visit the website www.irops.gov.in for online tendering. PIN Code-834003. (PR-722)

e-Tender Notice No.: e-54-DYCEE KGPW-ER25-24-25, dated 01.10.2024. e-Tender is invited by Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer(Workshop)/Kharagpur Workshop, S.E.Railway for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work before 16.00 hrs. on the date mentioned. **Name of the Work:** Repairing/Rehabilitation with up-gradation of out of warranty defective different make ERRU of 25KW to Rev-3 or latest of RDSO Spec No. RDSO/PE/SPEC/AC/0013-2011(Rev-3). **Approximate Cost of work:** ₹ 43,83,960/- **Earnest Money:** ₹ 87,700/- **Date & Time of Closing e-Tender:** 16.00 hrs. on 04.11.2024. **Website particulars:** www.irops.gov.in Interested Tenderers may visit website www.irops.gov.in for full details/description/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for this work will be accepted. (PR-725)

Notice Inviting Tender

The E-Bids is hereby invited on behalf of the Chairman, Ashokenagar-Kalyangarh Municipality. **Tender ID:** 2024_MAD_763633_1 & 2024_MAD_763640_1 & 2 **Tender Reference Number:** AKM/3193/DEV/ET-CB/2024-25, AKM/3194/DEV/ET-CB/2024-25. **Bid Submission End Date:** 11-Nov-2024 03:00 PM, 28-Oct-2024 03:00 PM for details, please see website at www.wbtender.gov.in. Sd/- Chairman Ashokenagar-Kalyangarh Municipality

MORE TENDER ADS ON PAGES 4&5

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY					
OPEN TENDER		Batch No. 28/24		dated -18.10.2024	
E-Tender Notice for supply of materials "participation in through" web portal of IREPS - www.irops.gov.in offers are invited for supply of the following materials. The closing time for all tenders is at 14:00 hr.					
Sr.No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Quantity	Published on/time	Closing on
1	14245014	Supply of LT aerial bunch cable of working voltage	20000 MTR	14.10.24/11:51:12	11.11.2024
2	04240195A	Face plate for buffer plunger	3140 Nos	10.10.24/12:49:54	11.11.2024
3	03241516B	Complete brake gear arrangement for WAP4 Loco	12 Nos.	16.10.24/13:58:10	11.11.2024
4	14244728	Diesel Loco Starter Battery, 8V, 500AH LM Lead Acid Battery	220 Nos.	15.10.24/15:24:03	11.11.2024
5	14244939	Low maintenance Lead acid battery type 75 AH for locos	91 Set	15.10.24/16:26:44	11.11.2024
6	14244936B	Lead Acid Starter Batteries for Cranking Diesel Engine of Power Car, 24V, 290AH	100 Set	24.09.24/14:22:04	11.11.2024
7	08245024	Supply, Installation & Commissioning of CNC Surface Wheel Lathe (BG) with AMC	CNC Surface wheel lathe-01 No & AMC for CNC Surface Wheel Lathe- 01 No.	17.10.24/15:54:59	11.11.2024
8	08245013	Supply of fabricated lifting Tackle installation, erection and testing of capacity 65 Ton	4 Nos.	17.10.24/15:52:11	11.11.2024

Participants are required to submit their offer only on-line through the web portal of IREPS. www.irops.gov.in before the closing date and time. Other details regarding Consignee and detailed description of stores are available in tender document in tender notice on the above portal. **PR/01352/HQ/STORE/T/24-25/80 SMMC & W**

DELHI JAL BOARD GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI

Short Press N.I.T.No. 10 (2024-25)						
S. No.	Name of Work	Approximate value based on Schedule of rates/ item rates/ lump sum (Rs in Lacs)	Earnest Money in Rs	Tender Fee	Date of release of tender/ Tender in e- procurement solution	Last date/ time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Deployment of staff required at various sites of Haderpur WTP Ph-I up to 30.04.2025. Tender ID: 2024_DJB_263786_1	Item Rate.	Rs. 99200/-	500/-	18.10.2024	28.10.2024
2.	Removal of floating material manually by labour at different bar screens installed at RWPH of WTP Haderpur Phase-I up to 30.04.2025. Tender ID: 2024_DJB_263786_2	Item Rate.	Rs. 94600/-	500/-	18.10.2024	28.10.2024
3.	Removal of floating material manually by labour at different bar screens installed at Twin main point under HPWV-I up to 30.04.2025. Tender ID: 2024_DJB_263786_3	Item Rate.	Rs. 68100/-	500/-	18.10.2024	28.10.2024

NIT No. 08 (2024-25) Executive Engineer (E&M) HP-I
 S.No. Name of Work Amount put to tender, EMD, Tender Fee Date of release of tender in E-Procurement solution Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-Procurement solution
 1. Replacement of old damaged silt up sewer line at juice corner to Rani ki kothi post office road Gautam Nagar under EEM/343. Rs. 40,60,672/- Rs. 81,300/- Rs. 500/- 16.10.2024 Tender I.D. No. 2024_DJB_263611_1 02.11.2024 At 3:00 PM.
 Executive Engineer (D)-102 <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>. J.S.V. 37(2024)-15

EASTERN RAILWAY

E-AUCTION NOTICE

E-Auction is invited by Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Eastern Railway, Malda (Auction Conducting Officer), Malda Office Building, P.O.-Jhaljharia, District : Malda, PIN-732102 (West Bengal) has published e-auction catalogue on www.irops.gov.in for operation of Parking lots at Dhuliangana (DGL) Railway Station over Malda Division. **Auction Catalogue No. : PARKING-MLDT-DGLE-MX-24-24-3 and Station : Dhuliangana.** Prospective bidders are requested to visit IREPS e-auction module for further details. **MLD-115/2024-25**
Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.irops.gov.in
Follow us at : @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

MAHESHTALA MUNICIPALITY

P.O. - Maheshtala, Dist.- South 24 Parganas, PIN - 700141
 Phone : (033) 2490 1651, 2490 3389
 Email : maheshtalamunicipality@gmail.com

Abridged Tender Notice

Sr. No.	NIT	Work description	Last date of download and submission of tender
1	MAD/MM/NIT-26/24-25/Sl-1 to 4	Laying of pipeline under Ward-14, 19, 22, 35	06/11/2024 at 3:00 p.m.
2	MAD/MM/NIT-27/24-25	Interconnection work under Ward-27, 28	06/11/2024 at 3:00 p.m.

Details may be had from the <http://wbtenders.gov.in> Chairman

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD ELECTRICAL DIVISION BARAN

Date 16.10.2024

S.No. 651 Notice Inviting Bid (NIT No 16/2024-25)

Bids for 01 Electrical work at Baran are invited from interested bidders up to 06.00 PM of 31.10.2024 (Sunday) Other particulars of bid may be visited on the procurement portal <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in/http://sppp.r.j.nic.in> of the Rajasthan State. The approximate value of the procurement is Rs 164.64 Lacs

(Rachit Sharma)
 Executive Engineer
 PWD Elect. Dn Baran

1. PWD2425WSOB08374
 DHPRC/10199/2024

EASTERN RAILWAY

Open E-Tender Notice for E-Tender No. EL-MLDT-E-TENDER-320, dated 18.10.2024. Open e-tender notices are invited by Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (G), Eastern Railway, Malda Office Building, P.O.-Jhaljharia, District : Malda, PIN-732102 (West Bengal), from firms/Agencies/Contractors of repute having experienced and financial solvency for the following works: **Tender No. : EL-MLDT-E-Tender-320.** **Name of Work :** Electrical work in connection with "Annual maintenance schedule and breakdown contract of 1 No. Lift of capacity 20 person (G+1) (Make - Thyssenkrupp) at Divisional Railway Hospital, Malda for three (03) years." **Tender Value :** ₹ 4,65,165.44. **Earnest Money :** ₹ 9,300.00. **Cost of tender document :** Nil. **Date & time for submission of e-tender:** From 25.10.2024 to 15.30 hrs. of 08.11.2024. **Website particulars and Notice Board :** Website www.irops.gov.in Notice Board : Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (G), Eastern Railway, Malda Town's office. Tenderers are requested to go through the detailed Tender Notice & document on the website www.irops.gov.in No manual offer will be accepted in any circumstances. **MLD-115/2024-25**
Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.irops.gov.in
Follow us at : @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

EASTERN RAILWAY

Open Tender Notice No. TRD-WC-T-2024-25-21, dated 18.10.2024. E-tenders are invited by Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD, Eastern Railway, Asansol Division, Station Road, PIN-713301 for the following works from required tenderers having valid Electric contractor license and Supervisory license and capable to complete the following work financially. **Tender Case No. : TRD-WC-T-2024-25-21. Name of the Work :** "The following TRD portion of works: (A) Asansol Division - Remodelling of Mugma Station Yard. (B) Asansol Division - Underground cables for transmission of 25 KV Power from Durgapur Thermal Power Station (DTPS)/GSS to Waria (OYR)/FP for both feeder lines. (C) Asansol Division - Provision of Foot Over Bridge with other ancillary work at Vidyasagar". **Tender Value :** ₹ 61,95,077.16. **Earnest Money :** ₹ 1,23,900/- **Completion period for the work:** 12 (Twelve) Months from the date of issue of letter of acceptance. **Validity of offers for the work:** 45 days from the date of opening. **Date and time of opening:** 19.11.2024 at 11.00 hrs. Complete details can be seen in the Railway website www.irops.gov.in ASN-198/2024-25
Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.irops.gov.in
Follow us at : @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

Israel targets Hezbollah's financial arm and begins striking Beirut

Evacuation warnings affected southern Beirut, the eastern Bekaa valley and parts of southern Lebanon

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIRUT, 21 OCTOBER

Israel's military announced Sunday it is now taking aim at the Lebanon-based Hezbollah's financial arm and will attack a "large number of targets" in Beirut and elsewhere. Explosions began in Beirut's southern suburbs about an hour later.

Evacuation warnings affected southern Beirut, the eastern Bekaa valley and parts of southern Lebanon. AP video showed strikes near Lebanon's only airport but it continued to operate.

The strikes will target al-Qard al-Hassan "all over Lebanon," a senior Israeli intelligence official said. Al-

Qard al-Hassan is a Hezbollah unit that's used to pay operatives of the Iran-backed militant group and help buy arms, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with army regulations.

The registered nonprofit, sanctioned by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, provides financial services and is also used by ordinary Lebanese. Its name in Arabic means "the benevolent loan," and Hezbollah has used it to entrench its support among the Shiite population in a country where state and financial institutions have failed in recent years.

"It's a big deal," said David Asher, an expert on illicit financing who has worked at the U.S. Defense and State



Departments and is now a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

"AQAH is a cash-based organization. The cash will be trash" in the event of strikes, he said, adding that it has large accounts with big

Lebanese banks.

Al-Qard al-Hassan in a statement called the decision to target it a sign of Israel's "bankruptcy" and assured customers it had taken "measures" to ensure their funds were safe. A stream of people

left the areas surrounding its branches in Beirut.

In one evacuation notice, for the Choueifat area south of Beirut, the Israeli military mislabeled one target, causing confusion and panic. The location was labeled as Grand Cinema ABC Verdun, a theater in an upscale shopping mall in central Beirut more than 10 kilometers (6 miles) away.

A year of escalating tensions and frequent cross-border fire between Israel and Hezbollah over the war in Gaza turned into all-out war last month. Israel sent ground troops into Lebanon early this month.

Israel's announcement came a day after U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin called civilian casualties in Lebanon

"far too high" in the Israel-Hezbollah war, and urged Israel to scale back some strikes, especially in and around Beirut. Israel has increased strikes on southern neighborhoods of Beirut known as the Dahiyeh, a crowded residential area where Hezbollah has a strong presence. It is also home to many civilians unaffiliated with the militant group.

In southern Lebanon, the Lebanese army said three soldiers were killed in an Israeli strike on their vehicle. There was no immediate comment on that from the Israeli military, which said it struck more than 100 Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon in the past day and continued ground operations there.

Lebanon assesses damage after wave of Israeli strikes



AGENCIES
BEIRUT, 21 OCTOBER

Lebanese were surveying the damage on Monday after overnight Israeli strikes hit nearly a dozen branches of a Hezbollah-run financial institution that Israel says is used to fund attacks but where many ordinary people keep their savings.

The strikes targeted Al-Qard Al-Hassan branches in the southern neighborhoods of Beirut, across

southern Lebanon and in the Bekaa, where Hezbollah has a strong presence. One strike flattened a nine-story building with a branch inside it. Smoke was still rising from several locations on Monday and bulldozers were removing the debris.

The Israeli military had issued evacuation warnings ahead of the strikes, and there were no reports of casualties.

Israel invaded Lebanon earlier this month, saying it aims to push Hezbollah back from the border after more than a year of rocket, missile and drone attacks that began after Palestinian Hamas militants launched their surprise Oct. 7, 2023, attack into Israel from the Gaza Strip. Israeli airstrikes have pounded large areas of Lebanon for weeks, forcing over a million people to flee their homes.

Most voters think the economy is poor, but split on whether Trump or Harris can fix it: AP-NORC poll

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, 21 OCTOBER

Voters remain largely divided over whether they prefer Republican Donald Trump or Democrat Kamala Harris to handle key economic issues, although Harris earns slightly better marks on elements such as taxes for the middle class, according to a new poll.

A majority of registered voters in the survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research describe the economy as poor. About 7 in 10 say the nation is going in the wrong direction.

But the findings reaffirm that Trump has lost what had been an advantage on the

economy, which many voters say is the most important issue this election season above abortion, immigration, crime and foreign affairs.

"Do I trust Trump on the economy? No. I trust that he'll give tax cuts to his buddies like Elon Musk," said poll respondent Janice Tosto, a 59-year-old Philadelphia woman and self-described independent.

An AP-NORC poll conducted in September found neither Harris nor Trump had a clear advantage on handling "the economy and jobs." But this poll asked more specific questions about whether voters trusted Trump or Harris to do a better job handling the cost of housing, jobs and



has an edge on jobs and unemployment.

Voters, meanwhile, are slightly more likely to prefer Trump on the issue of tariffs, which were defined in the poll as taxes on imported goods.

Poll respondent Amber Moody, 36, from Halifax, Virginia, said she trusts Trump — and Republicans in general — much more on economic matters.

"It seems to me that in my lifetime, every time a Democrat holds office, the economy suffers," she said. "Prices go up, taxes go up and the national debt goes up. While I don't approve of everything Donald Trump says and does, I do believe he is the better choice."

Putin hosts a summit in a bid to show the West it can't keep Russia off the global stage

AGENCIES
TALLINN, 21 OCTOBER

In the coming days, Russian President Vladimir Putin will be shaking hands with multiple world leaders, including China's Xi Jinping, India's Narendra Modi, Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Iran's Masoud Pezeshkian.

They will all be in the Russian city of Kazan on Tuesday for a meeting of the BRICS bloc of developing economies, defying predictions that the war in Ukraine and an international arrest warrant against Putin would turn him into a pariah.

The alliance, which aims to counterbalance the Western-led world order, initially



included Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, but started to rapidly expand this year. Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia joined in January; Turkey, Azerbaijan and Malaysia formally applied, and a number of others expressed a desire to be members. Russian officials already see it as a massive success. Putin's foreign policy aide

Yuri Ushakov said 32 countries confirmed participation, and more than 20 will send heads of state. Putin will hold around 20 bilateral meetings, Ushakov said, and the summit could turn into "the largest foreign policy event ever held" on Russian soil. Analysts say the Kremlin wants both the optics of standing shoulder-to-shoulder with its global allies amid continued tensions with the West, as well as the practicality of negotiating deals with them to shore up Russia's economy and its war effort. For the other participants, it's a chance to amplify their voices and narratives.

"The beauty of BRICS is that it doesn't put too many obligations on you," says

Alexander Gabuyev, director of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center. "There are not that many strings attached, really, to being part of BRICS. And at the same time, there might be interesting opportunities coming your way, including just having more face time with all of these leaders."

For Putin, the summit is important personally because it shows the failure of Western efforts to isolate him, Gabuyev says.

The gathering will demonstrate at home and abroad that "Russia is really an important player that is leading this new group that will end the Western dominance—that's his personal narrative," he says.

Self-exiled Turkish spiritual leader Fethullah Gülen dies in Pennsylvania

AGENCIES
SAYLORSBURG, 21 OCTOBER

Fethullah Gülen, a reclusive U.S.-based Islamic cleric who inspired a global social movement while facing accusations he masterminded a failed 2016 coup in his native Turkey, has died.

Abdullah Bozkurt, the former editor of the Gülen-linked Today's Zaman newspaper, who is now in exile in Sweden, said Monday that he spoke to Gülen's nephew, Kemal Gülen, who confirmed the death. Fethullah Gülen was in his eighties and had long been in ill health.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said the death has been confirmed by Turkish intelligence sources. "The leader of this dark

organization has died," he said.

Gülen spent the last decades of his life in self-exile, living on a gated compound in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains from where he continued to wield influence among his millions of followers in Turkey and throughout the world. He espoused a philosophy that blended Sufism—a mystical form of Islam—with staunch advocacy of democracy, education, science and interfaith dialogue.

Gülen began as an ally of Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan, but became a foe. He called Erdogan an authoritarian bent on accumulating power and crushing dissent.

Erdogan cast Gülen as a terrorist, accusing him of orchestrating the attempted military



coups on the night of July 15, 2016, when factions within the military used tanks, warplanes and helicopters to try to overthrow Erdogan's government.

Heading a call from the president, thousands took to the streets to oppose the takeover attempt. The coup-plotters fired at crowds and

bombed parliament and other government buildings. A total of 251 people were killed and around 2,200 others were wounded. Around 35 alleged coup plotters were also killed.

Gülen adamantly denied involvement, and his supporters dismissed the charges as ridiculous and politically motivated. Turkey put Gülen

on its most-wanted list and demanded his extradition, but the United States showed little inclination to send him back, saying it needed more evidence. Gülen was never charged with a crime in the U.S., and he consistently denounced terrorism as well as the coup plotters.

In Turkey, Gülen's movement—sometimes known as Hizmet, Turkish for "service"—was subjected to a broad crackdown. The government arrested tens of thousands of people for their alleged link to the coup plot, sacked more than 130,000 suspected supporters from civil service jobs and more than 23,000 from the military, and shuttered hundreds of businesses, schools and media organizations tied to Gülen.

Big tobacco companies reach tentative multibillion-dollar settlement with Canada

AGENCIES
TORONTO, 21 OCTOBER

Three large tobacco companies would pay nearly \$24 billion to settle a long-running legal battle in Canada, according to a proposed deal.

Philip Morris International said Friday that a court-appointed mediator had filed the proposed settlement with its Canadian affiliate, Rothmans, Benson & Hedges, over tobacco product-related claims and litigation in Canada. Similar deals were also filed covering JTI-Macdonald Corp. and Imperial Tobacco Canada Ltd. "After years of mediation,



we welcome this important step towards the resolution of long-pending tobacco product-related litigation in Canada," Philip Morris International's CEO Jacek Olczak said in a statement. The three tobacco companies had sought creditor protection in Ontario in

early 2019 after they lost an appeal in a landmark court battle in Quebec.

The Canadian Press reported that under the \$32.5 billion Canadian dollar (\$23.53 billion) deal, Canadian provinces and territories would get a combined C\$24.8 billion; members of the class action would get C\$4.25 billion; Canadian victims from provinces outside Quebec would receive C\$2.5 billion; and the three tobacco companies would also pour more than C\$1 billion into a foundation to fight tobacco-related diseases—that amount includes C\$131 million taken from the money allocated to the Quebec plaintiffs.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-23. Includes clues for Across and Down.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD. Includes answers for Across and Down with letter counts.

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker

Comic strip panels showing Beetle Bailey and Sarge. Dialogue includes: "OTTO ALWAYS GOES WITH SARGE. DOES HE SEARCH AND SNIFF FOR HIM?" "HE HELPS HIM WITH GROWLING AND BARKING." "HEY! YOU GUYS!! GROWL! GRRR! ARF! GRRR! ARSHH!"

RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson

Comic strip panels showing Red Eye and a character. Dialogue includes: "HERE'S YOUR DINNER, REDEYE!" "GROWL!" "MOST MEN LIKE WILD RICE!"

DADDY DAZE/John Kovalski

Comic strip panels showing Daddy Daze and a character. Dialogue includes: "OK, FINE. I'LL CUT THE CRUSTS OFF YOUR SANDWICH." "Y'KNOW, IF SOME COMPANY MARKETED CRUSTLESS BREAD TO PARENTS, THEY'D HAVE A LICENSE TO PRINT MONEY." "BA BA BA?" "IF I KNEW HOW TO APPLY FOR THAT LICENSE, I WOULD'VE DONE IT BY NOW."

NEED TO KNOW

Local service listings including Ambulance, Life Care, Police/Fire, and Blood Banks.

SCRABBLE and FIVE RACK TOTAL word games with grids and instructions.

SUDOKU puzzle grid and instructions for solving the puzzle.

THUMBNAILS

'Will deliver more home-grown solutions to empower next-gen digital natives in India': Fintech major PhonePe on Monday said it is committed to transparency and accountability while showcasing its approach to delivering innovative financial solutions for the Indian market. Releasing its inaugural annual report that provides a comprehensive overview of the company's vision, strategy, governance and financial performance, the company said it will continue to deliver homegrown solutions that empower the next generation of digital natives in the country.

Bigger homes continue to dominate buyers' demand in India: Bigger homes continue to dominate demand in India and in the first half this year, at least 51 per cent property preferred 3-BHKs and 39 per cent opted for 2-BHKs, a report showed on Monday. Premium and luxury homes demand surged as 28 per cent respondents now prefer homes priced between Rs 90 lakh-Rs 1.5 crore, compared to 18 per cent in pre-Covid period, according to an Anarock-FICCI survey.

Indices drop on profit booking

The Sensex was down 73.48 points or 0.09 per cent at 81,151.27, and the Nifty was down 112.50 points or 0.45 per cent at 24,741.50

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

Market remained under pressure on Monday amid selling across the sectors barring auto.

At close, the Sensex was down 73.48 points or 0.09 per cent at 81,151.27, and the Nifty was down 112.50 points or 0.45 per cent at 24,741.50.

On Nifty, the gainers included HDFC Bank, Bajaj Auto, Asian Paints, M&M and Eicher Motors while the biggest Nifty losers were Tata Consumer Products, Kotak Mahindra Bank, BPCL, IndusInd Bank and Bajaj Finserv.

Trent, Adani Enterprises, Adani Ports & SEZ, Hindalco Industries, Britannia Industries, Cipla, Bajaj Finance, Bharat Electronics, UltraTech Cement, and Grasim Industries recorded declines of over 1.5 per cent.

Among the sectors, Nifty Auto Index concluded the session with a gain of 0.42



per cent, marking its second consecutive day of gains.

Rebound in Bajaj Auto shares, supported by Mahindra & Mahindra, significantly contributed to the index's positive performance.

Nifty Media index fell by 2.83 per cent, while the Nifty Metal, Nifty Oil & Gas, Nifty FMCG, Nifty Realty, and Nifty IT indices all recorded losses of over 1 per cent.

Nifty Bank ended the session with a cut of 0.25 per cent at 51,962 points.

Notably, the recent surge in alumina prices has brought increased attention to metal stocks such as Vedanta, National Aluminium Company (NALCO), Hindalco Industries, Arfin India, Century Extrusions, Maan Aluminium, and MMP Industries.

Further, the BSE Midcap and smallcap indices shed 1.5 per cent each.

On the BSE, including, Amber Enterprises, BF Investment, Dixon Technologies, Garware Technical, GFL, HCL

Technologies, Indigo Paints, JSW Holdings, Maharashtra Scooters, MCX India, NALCO, Pilani Investment, Summit Securities, Suven Pharma, Tech Mahindra, among others touched their 52-week-high.

HDFC Bank shares surged 3 per cent after positive September quarter performance. However the shares of Kotak Mahindra Bank tumbled and fell nearly 5 per cent following the release of the bank's September quarter numbers. Zomato shares rose 3 per cent after the company announced plans to launch QIP.

RBL Bank was another stock that faced heavy selling pressure after its Q2 FY25 performance fell below street estimates. It closed down 14.19 per cent at Rs 176.

Asian shares were mixed after US markets rose overnight and Chinese stocks tumbled.

European shares were little changed as oil prices dropped on a report that Israel will refrain from striking Iranian energy targets.

Indian apparel exporters to register 9-11 per cent revenue expansion in FY2025: ICRA

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER:

Indian apparel exporters to register a 9-11 per cent revenue expansion in FY2025, rating agency ICRA said on Monday.

The growth will be aided primarily by the gradual liquidation of retail inventory in the key end markets and a shift in global sourcing to India, a part of the derisking strategy adopted by several customers, it said.

This follows a tepid performance in FY2024 when exports were affected because of high retail inventory, sluggish demand from the key end markets, supply chain issues (including the Red Sea crisis) and heightened competition from neighbouring countries.

ICRA highlighted that the long-term prospects for Indian apparel exports are favourable, aided by enhanced product acceptance in end markets, evolving consumer trends and a boost from the Government in the form of the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, export incentives, the proposed free trade agreement with the UK and the EU, among others.

With the revival in demand, ICRA expects the capex spending to increase in FY2025 and FY2026 and may stay in



the range of 5-8 per cent of the turnover.

Further, at US\$ 9.3 billion (in CY2023), the US and the European Union (EU) region account for over two-thirds of apparel exports from India and remain the preferred destinations.

While headwinds persist in certain end markets because of geopolitical tensions and macroeconomic slowdown, there has been a gradual recovery in apparel exports from

India in the current year.

In H1 FY2025, apparel exports grew by ~9 per cent on a YoY basis to US\$ 7.5 billion on the back

of a gradual liquidation of inventory, a shift in global sourcing to India as a part of derisking strategy adopted by several customers and a higher order booking for the

upcoming spring/summer. Recent geo-political tensions in Bangladesh could result in capacity additions outside the country, including India.

Nevertheless, the availability of labour at competitive costs and preferential duty access, given its least developed country status for another two years on exports to the US and the EU help Bangladesh to remain competitive against most other developing countries.

The interest coverage ratios of ICRA's sample set of companies are likely to moderate marginally to 5.0-5.5 times in FY2025 and FY2026 from 5.8 times in FY2023 due to inorganic expansions and large debt-funded capex expected.

The Total Debt/ OPBDITA is expected to be in the range of 2.0-2.4 times in FY2025 and FY2026.

Vikram Dev Dutt assumes charge as Secretary of the Ministry of Coal



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

Vikram Dev Dutt assumed the charge as the Secretary of the Ministry of Coal on Monday.

Dutt is a 1993-batch IAS officer of the Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre, and has previously served as the Director General of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

He succeeds VL Kantha Rao, who currently serves as the Secretary of the Ministry of Mines and holds additional charge of the Ministry of Coal. Prior to Rao, Amrit Lal Meena served as the Secretary of the Ministry of Coal.

Ministry of Coal has been posting positive numbers in the recent past recording spike in the coal production reflecting a notable growth of 2.49% YoY achieving 68.94 Million Ton (MT).

Coal dispatch also saw notable growth in September reaching 73.37 MT, compared to 70.31 MT during the same period in FY' 23-24, with a growth of 4.35%.

Government has also appointed V Umashankar as the new secretary of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

Umashankar is a 1993 batch IAS officer from the Haryana cadre, and has previously served as principal secretary to both former Haryana Chief Minister M L Khattar and current Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini.

Further, Tanmay Kumar, a Rajasthan cadre IAS officer, has been designated as the next secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change. Kumar.

He is currently special secretary in the same ministry, and will succeed Leena Nandan when she retires at the end of December.

In another significant move, Subrata Gupta, a 1990 batch IAS officer from the West Bengal cadre, has been appointed as the new secretary of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, effective December 1. Gupta is set to replace Anita Praveen, who will retire on November 30.

Wall Street edges back from its all-time highs

AGENCIES
NEW YORK, 21 OCTOBER

Some of the steam is coming out of Wall Street's record-breaking rally, as U.S. stocks edge back from their all-time highs. The S&P 500 was 0.1% lower in early trading Monday, coming off its sixth straight winning week. The Dow Jones Industrial Average also slipped 0.1%, as did the Nasdaq composite. Boeing rose 4.7% after reaching an agreement with the union representing striking machinists. Kenvue, which makes Band-Aids and Tylenol, rose 6.3% after the Wall Street Journal reported that activist investor Starboard Value had taken a significant stake in the company. Treasury yields rose in the bond market.

Wall Street tipped toward losses before the open on Monday as markets gird for another busy week of corporate earnings reports. Futures for the S&P 500 fell 0.4% before the bell, while futures for the Dow Jones industrials ticked down 0.2%.

India's growth outlook is supported by robust domestic engines: RBI

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER:

In spite of recent geopolitical tensions, India's growth outlook is supported by robust domestic engines. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on Monday.

The global economy remained resilient in the first half of 2024, with declining inflation supporting household spending, RBI said in its October Bulletin.

It noted that some high-frequency indicators have, however, shown a slackening of momentum in the second quarter of 2024-25, partly attributable to idiosyncratic factors like unusually heavy rains in August and September.

"In parallel, there are other high frequency indicators which show steady growth. Consumption spending is shaping up for a festival season revival, especially in small towns and lower tier cities. Despite high prices tempering some of the enthusiasm, many buyers are prioritising discounts," the article said.

Consumer spending is expected to be about 25%



higher than during Dussehra-Diwali last year. This is expected to be driven by off-line retail, followed by the online channel, it added.

Private investment is showing some encouraging lead indicators, although the slack continues. Corporate results for the first quarter of 2024-25 had shown a deceleration in real gross value added by non-government non-finance companies.

There is a view gaining ground that the time for private investment is now; delay risks loss of competitiveness. The stage is set for the private

sector to deploy capital and invest in growth, build capacities, create employment and improve efficiencies.

RBI Bulletin said the corporate India needs to reinvest its profits to digitize the production value chain with the goal of designing, building and selling innovative products and services that cater to the needs of the increasingly differentiating Indian consumer. In conjunction with schemes announced in Union Budget 2024-25, it also needs to invest in an employable manufacturing workforce.

Adar Poonawalla to acquire 50 per cent stake in Karan Johar's Dharma Productions

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

Serene Production, led by business tycoon Adar Poonawalla, is set to acquire 50% stake in Karan Johar's Dharma Productions and Dharmatic Entertainment, for Rs 1,000 crore, the company said in a press release.

Johar will retain the remaining 50 per cent stake in Dharma and will continue to remain as the company's Executive Chairman. Apoorva Mehta will remain as the Chief Executive Officer.

"I am delighted to have the opportunity to partner with one of the most iconic production houses in our nation, along with my friend Karan Johar. We hope to build and grow Dharma and scale even greater heights in the years to come," Poonawalla said.

By leveraging this synergy, Serene Productions and Dharma seek to meet the evolving demands of today's digitally savvy consumers while pushing the boundaries of creative storytelling, the companies said in the release.

Together, they aspire to

shape the future of entertainment for digital-first generations, embracing new platforms and formats to deliver compelling narratives that entertain, inspire, and engage audiences worldwide, they added.

"From its inception, Dharma Productions has been synonymous with heartfelt storytelling that captures the essence of Indian culture. My father dreamed of creating films that would leave a lasting impact, and I've dedicated my career to expanding that vision. Today, as we join forces with Adar, a close friend and an exceptional visionary and innovator, we're poised to elevate Dharma's legacy to new heights. This partnership represents a perfect blend of our emotional storytelling prowess and forward-thinking business strategies," Karan Johar said on the development.

The Raine Group served as the exclusive financial advisor to Dharma. AZB & Partners served as the legal counsel to Dharma Productions. JSA served as the legal counsel to Serene Productions.

Nextgen Business Support Services: Helping clients grow on e-commerce platforms

RITWIK MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA, 21 OCTOBER

If you are good at making or manufacturing products, continue to focus on that and let other issues related to your business be handled by someone else, who is a seasoned professional firm engaged in this. That is the philosophy and guiding principle this Kolkata-based company was founded with.

Speaking to The Statesman, C.A Rajiv Haralka, founder-CEO, Nextgen Business Support Services Pvt Ltd, explains how they develop clients' business on Amazon, Flipkart and other platforms with their leading-edge expertise in the management of seller accounts, including all services from product listing and inventory management to advertising to ensure the best possible return on investment and thereby, make your business stand out.

Excerpts:

Q: Where and when did you get this idea of floating this company- Nextgen Business Support Services Private Limited?

A: We had been running a CA firm for quite some time, providing accounting and audit services, serving a large number of clients across the country. Some 17-18 years ago, around 2007, with the

advent of e-commerce business, I realised that it was time we should look beyond accounting and audit and think of providing a wide range of services to online/ e-commerce sellers. The whole idea was to have a team of experienced and knowledgeable professionals, who would dedicatedly help online sellers grow their business and succeed in the highly competitive e-commerce market. Thus came Nextgen Business Support Services Private Limited.

Q: So what do you do, I mean what kind of services do you offer?

A: Nextgen offers a range of services including e-commerce onboarding, Compliance, Business Support service, and more. The company is dedicated to helping online sellers streamline their operations, reduce costs, increase sales and maximise profits with their cutting-edge technology and expertise in the e-commerce industry. Nextgen provides the tools and resources needed for online sellers to succeed in today's market.

We develop your business on Amazon and Flipkart and other such platforms with our leading-edge expertise in the management of seller accounts, including all services from product listing and inventory management to advertising

to ensure the best possible return on investment. We make your business stand out on these platforms.

Q: What exactly do you do on Amazon, Flipkart and other such platforms?

A: Our expertise spans various verticals in Amazon account management services in Kolkata. We can supercharge your sales and optimize product listings. You can outrank other sellers by collaborating with our agency.

We also offer virtual CFO services that increase your chances of success in this competitive e-commerce domain. Each seller in major e-commerce portals is trying to develop unique products and services. If you focus too much on account management, you will lose your ultimate vision of selling uniquely. We can boost your popularity on Amazon and reduce your operational costs.

The Amazon seller account setup is overwhelming, especially when processes of brand and category approval are involved. At Nextgen, we make the process easy for you by helping you develop your Amazon Seller account and obtain all brand and category approvals that are required.

Amazon Product Listing Services in Kolkata and Optimisation: Product listing is the foundation of your success



at Amazon. We offer the best Amazon product listing services in Kolkata by ensuring your products get listed accurately and optimized for Amazon's search algorithms.

Amazon A+ Content & Enhanced Brand Content: Use advanced content features like A+ and EBC to differentiate your listings and provide customers with a better experience.

Amazon Brand Registry & Protection and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO): Brand protection develops trust in Amazon. Nextgen will walk you through the process of the Amazon Brand Registry to get rid of unauthorized resellers and counterfeiters. In addition, we optimize your product listing for the best search engine optimization on and off Amazon.

Account Management & Ads on Amazon: Managing an Amazon seller account is a task that requires one's attention all the time. Complete account management at Nextgen also includes the management of your advertising campaigns. We design and manage Amazon ads to provide the best ROI by targeting your products to the best audiences.

On-site and Off-site Promotions including Social Media Campaigns: Promoting your products is one of the significant ways to increase your sales. Nextgen will help you run on-site and off-site promotions, something which is very crucial in giving your products the exposure they need. From the internal promotion tools of Amazon to social media campaigns, we handle all aspects of your promotions.

Amazon Seller Issue Resolution: Customer service is crucial for success anywhere, especially on Amazon. All consumer issues are dealt with directly by Nextgen on your behalf to make the consumer's experience as seamless as possible. We can handle customer inquiries and complaint repossession professionally.

Data Analytics for Growth on Amazon: To fuel growth, it's very important to understand how your products are

performing on Amazon. Nextgen uses analytics to track sales, consumer behaviours, and, more importantly, market trends with deep analytics. We provide insight into what is working and what needs to be fixed, so you can make an informed decision.

Amazon FBA Management: FBA can be quite advantageous for your business in numerous ways. However, knowing detailed information about managing it is best left in the hands of professionals. Nextgen provides prime Amazon FBA services, where your products are secured, packed, and delivered by Amazon itself.

Amazon PPC Advertising: PPC is one of the most efficient ways of optimizing your visibility within the Amazon store. Nextgen is capable of handling your Amazon PPC campaigns for optimization. We will search for relevant keywords, analyze campaign metrics, and make changes to improve the overall outcome aimed at providing you with better value.

Account Health Monitoring: Continuous monitoring of your account's health, addressing compliance issues, resolving disputes, and mitigating potential account suspension risks.

Q: So who do you target- the small companies, mid-sized or the smaller ones?

A: Whether you are a small

start-up or a large corporation, Nextgen Business Support Services Private Limited is committed to providing you with the support and resources you need to grow your business and achieve your goals. With their focus on quality, affordability, and customer satisfaction, Nextgen is a leading service provider for online e-commerce sellers.

With the sincerity of our professionals, we have carved a niche for ourselves in this domain by offering premium quality services to our clients. Experts of our team are devoted towards offering finest quality services at our users' end. Also, the enriched experience of our professionals, enable us to provide clients customized services as per their detailed specifications.

Having said all these, I must admit that MSME sector is our prime focus.

Q: How do your clients stand to gain by using your services?

A: Availing Nextgen for your Amazon account management services in Kolkata will open up several avenues. Saving one's precious time that is spent on the hectic management activities that come along with operating an Amazon seller account remains one of the major constituents of our services.

We enhance your product

visibility with optimized listings and targeted ads. Additionally, through our strategy informed by data, you get the insights you need to make better decisions. With us, you will experience faster growth on Amazon, customer satisfaction, and sales.

We take that headache away from you by outsourcing your Amazon account management and letting you focus on what you do best: running your business.

Q: What are the other services you offer?

A: A wide range of other services, which include: Monthly GST Return Filing, GST Annual Return, Fssai Registration, Fssai State License, Fssai Central License, Fssai Renewal, APOB Services, Profession Tax Registration, Professional Tax Return, Income Tax Return, TDS/ TCS Returns, Account Outsourcing services, Account Reconciliation Services and other Compliance Services, virtual CEO and virtual CFO services.

Q: What would you attribute your success to?

A: I think the reasons behind our success, so far, are: We care for our Clients, we have Competent professionals, we maintain Global quality standards, we ensure Transparent dealings, we offer Budget friendly rates and we always take Client-centric approach.

'You are not my king,' Oz senator yells at King Charles

'You committed genocide against our people,' she shouted. 'Give us what you stole from us, our bones, our skulls, our babies, our people. You destroyed our land. Give us a treaty. We want a treaty.'

ASSOCIATED PRESS CANBERRA, 21 OCTOBER

An Indigenous senator told King Charles III that Australia is not his land as the British royal visited Australia's parliament on Monday.

Sen. Lidia Thorpe was escorted out of a parliamentary reception for the royal couple after shouting that British colonizers have taken Indigenous land and bones.

"You committed genocide against our people," she shouted. "Give us what you stole from us — our bones, our skulls, our babies, our people. You destroyed our land. Give us a treaty. We want a treaty."

No treaty was ever struck between British colonizers and Australia's Indigenous peoples.

Charles spoke quietly with Albanese while security officials stopped Thorpe from approaching.

"This is not your land.

You are not my king," Thorpe yelled as she was ushered from the hall.

Thorpe is renowned for high-profile protest action. When she was affirmed as a senator in 2022, she wasn't allowed to describe the then-monarch as "the colonizing Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II."

She briefly blocked a police float in Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras last year by lying on the street in front of it. Last year, she was also banned for life from a Melbourne strip club after video emerged of her abusing male patrons.

Albanese, who wants the country to become a republic with an Australian head of state, made an oblique reference to the issue in his speech welcoming the monarch.

"You have shown great respect for Australians, even during times when we have debated the future of our own constitutional arrangements and the nature of our



relationship with the Crown," Albanese said. But, he said, "nothing stands still."

Opposition leader Peter Dutton, who wants to keep the British king as Australia's monarch, said that many supporters of a republic were honored to attend a reception for the Charles and Queen Camilla at Parliament House in the capital Canberra.

"People have had haircuts, people have shined shoes, suits have been pressed and that's just the republicans," Dutton quipped.

But Australia's six state government signaled their support for an Australian head of state by declining invitations to the reception. They each said they had more pressing engagements on

Monday, but monarchists agreed the royals had been snubbed.

Charles used the start of his speech to thank Canberra Indigenous elder Auntie Violet Sheridan for her traditional welcome to the king and queen.

"Let me also say how deeply I appreciated this morning's moving Welcome to Country ceremony, which offers me the opportunity to pay my respects to the traditional owners of the lands on which we meet, the Ngunawal people, and all First Nations peoples who have loved and cared for this continent for 65,000 years," Charles said.

"Throughout my life, Australia's First Nations peoples have done me the great honor of sharing so generously their stories and cultures. I can only say how much my own experience has been shaped and strengthened by such traditional wisdom," Charles added.

South Korea calls for immediate withdrawal of North Korean troops allegedly in Russia

ASSOCIATED PRESS SEOUL, 21 OCTOBER

South Korea on Monday demanded the immediate pullout of North Korean troops allegedly deployed in Russia as it summoned the Russian ambassador to protest deepening military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow.

South Korea's spy agency said Friday it had confirmed that North Korea sent 1,500 special operation forces to Russia this month to support Moscow's war against Ukraine. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy earlier said his government had intelligence that 10,000 North Korea soldiers were being prepared to join invading Russian forces. During a meeting with Russian Ambassador Georgy Zinoviev, Vice South Korean Foreign Minister Kim Hong Kyun "condemned in the strongest terms" North Korea's troop dispatch that he said poses "a grave security threat" to South Korea and the international community, the South Korean Foreign



Ministry said in a statement.

Kim said that South Korea in collaboration with the international community will mobilize all available means to deal with an act that threatens its vital national security interests, according to the statement. The Russian Embassy quoted Zinoviev as saying that the Russian-North Korean cooperation is not aimed against the security interests of South Korea. In a telephone call with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte on Monday, South Korean

President Yoon Suk Yeol said that Seoul won't sit idly by "reckless" military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow. Yoon said South Korea will soon send a delegation to NATO to exchange information about Russian-North Korean cooperation, according to Yoon's office. Rutte wrote on X that North Korea possibly fighting alongside Russia would "mark a significant escalation." The U.S. and NATO haven't confirmed that North Korean troops were sent to Russia.

Sudan, South Sudan discuss resumption of oil transportation

AGENCIES KHARTOUM, 21 OCTOBER

Sudan and South Sudan stressed the need to address the obstacles facing the resumption of South Sudan's oil exports via the Sudanese territory.

This came after Chairman of Sudan's Transitional Sovereign Council and General Commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan met on Sunday with South Sudan's Presidential Advisor on National Security Tut Gatluak in Port Sudan, the capital

city of the Red Sea State in eastern Sudan, Xinhua news agency reported.

"All technical teams in the two countries are ready to increase production and ensure the flow of oil through the Sudanese port of Bashayer," Gatluak said in a statement, highlighting South Sudan's readiness to implement what was agreed upon with the Sudanese government.

A meeting between the two countries' ministries of energy and petroleum is expected in this regard, Gatluak said, noting that

"oil is a lifeline for the people of both countries."

In March, the Sudanese government announced the suspension of South Sudan's oil exports through Sudanese territories due to a fault in the transportation lines.

According to the Sudanese authorities, the fault was a result of a blockage in an underground pipeline, situated in the north of Sudan's White Nile State, an area controlled by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

The meeting followed a previous one in early June.

New President Subianto swears in Indonesia's largest Cabinet since 1966

ASSOCIATED PRESS JAKARTA, 21 OCTOBER

Newly inaugurated President Prabowo Subianto swore in Indonesia's largest Cabinet since 1966 on Monday, with 109 members representing his pledge for a strong government.

He announced the lineup late Sunday and named his Cabinet of ministers, vice ministers and head of national agencies the "Red and White Cabinet," referring to the colors of Indonesia's flag.

Subianto became the eighth president of Southeast Asia's largest economy on Sunday.

The Cabinet of Subianto's



predecessor, Joko Widodo, had 34 ministers and head of government agencies. Subianto's Cabinet is the largest since 1966 when Indonesia's first President Sukarno formed a lineup of 132 ministers in an extremely

tense political situation after a failed 1965 coup. The so-called Dwikora Cabinet 2 was dismissed a month later.

Subianto has said earlier that he needs a strong administration, even though analysts said that his "fat" Cabinet

would bloat the bureaucracy.

"I want to create a strong government that would unite our multicultural society and diverse political interests," Subianto said before inviting more than 100 people for interviews at his residence last week. "It must be a big coalition, and some will say my Cabinet is fat."

The Cabinet features politicians from a coalition of seven parties who supported his victory in the February election, and figures allied with Widodo's Cabinet, who were reappointed to continue their jobs under Subianto's presidency. Analysts said the move was a political reward

to Widodo for the latter's tacit support in the election.

Subianto was sworn in with his new vice president, 37-year-old Surakata ex-Mayor Gibran Rakabuming Raka. He chose Raka, who is Widodo's son, as his running mate, with Widodo favoring Subianto over the candidate of his own former party. The former rivals became tacit allies, even though Indonesian presidents don't typically endorse candidates.

Subianto was a longtime rival of the Widodo, who ran against him for the presidency twice and refused to accept his defeat on both occasions, in 2014 and 2019.

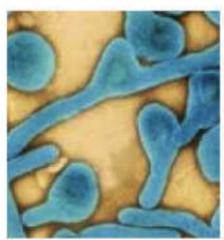
Rwanda sees promising progress in Marburg response as recovery rates improve

AGENCIES KIGALI, 21 OCTOBER

Rwandan Minister of Health Sabin Nsanzimana said that there have been no new infections of Marburg virus disease (MVD) in the country for the past five days, indicating significant progress in the fight against the deadly virus.

Nsanzimana provided this update during a press conference in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, as the country continues its efforts to contain the spread of the virus.

"Among the 62 individuals who contracted the disease, approximately 15 have succumbed to it, while most of



the patients have recovered. Currently, only three individuals remain in treatment. Two of the patients who have been on intubation for more than ten days have been extubated, which is the best news you can get in the medical profession," he said.

Nsanzimana added that this marks the first time patients with Marburg have been extubated in Africa, highlighting the potential for recovery even after contracting the virus, Xinhua news agency reported.

He emphasized Rwanda's proactive measures to address the MVD threat, including vaccination of health care workers and first responders, enhanced public health protocols, and the necessity for public vigilance.

He reiterated Rwanda's cooperation with international health organizations, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), to strengthen surveillance and

response systems, ensuring preparedness to effectively manage any potential cases.

"Over the last five to six days, we have seen zero new infections and zero deaths. We hope this trend continues, but even if we had one case, it provides us with an opportunity to trace every single contact before we declare the outbreak over," Nsanzimana said.

He praised health care workers for their dedication to saving lives, saying, "The fatality rate is low at 24 per cent compared to other Marburg outbreaks. Supportive treatment, critical care, and ICU (intensive care unit) specialists have made this possible."

Moldovans narrowly vote to secure country's path toward EU membership

ASSOCIATED PRESS CHISINAU, 21 OCTOBER

Moldovans voted by razor-thin majority in favor of securing the country's path toward European Union membership, electoral data showed Monday, following a ballot that nearly caused a major setback for the pro-Western president, who accused "criminal groups" of trying to undermine the vote.

With 99.41% of the 1.4 million votes counted in the EU referendum held Sunday, the "Yes" vote stood at 50.39%, to 49.61% who voted "No," according to the Central Electoral Commission.

The "No" vote had looked to be ahead right until the last few thousand votes were counted from the country's large diaspora. A loss would have been a political disaster for the pro-Western government, which strongly supported the pro-EU campaign.

A Japanese police chief apologizes to a man acquitted after 50 years on death row

ASSOCIATED PRESS TOKYO, 21 OCTOBER

A Japanese police chief on Monday apologized in person to Iwao Hakamada for his decades-long suffering that started from an overbearing investigation and wrongful conviction that had kept him on death row until last month, when he was acquitted in a retrial.

The 88-year-old Hakamada, a former boxer, was acquitted by the Shizuoka District Court, which said police and prosecutors had collaborated to fabricate and plant evidence against him, and forced him to confess with violent, hours-long closed interrogations.

The acquittal was finalized earlier this month when the prosecution waived its right to appeal — though it complained about the ruling — finally ending Hakamada's nearly 60-year legal battle to prove his innocence.

Shizuoka Prefectural Police chief Takayoshi Tsuda on Monday visited Hakamada



at his home and offered an apology in person. As he entered the room where Hakamada, his sister Hideko Hakamada and their supporter waited, Hakamada silently rose from his sofa to greet him.

"We are sorry to have caused you unspeakable mental distress and burden for as long as 58 years from the time of the arrest until the acquittal was finalized," Tsuda said, as he stood straight in front of Hakamada and bowed deeply. "We are terribly sorry." Tsuda promised a "meticulous and appropriate investigation."

Hakamada, who has difficulty carrying out conversation due to his mental condition from the decades

of death row confinement, responded: "What it means to have the authority... Once you have the power, you're not supposed to grumble."

Hakamada's 91-year-old sister, who had stood by her brother through the long process to clear his name and now lives with him, thanked the police chief for visiting them.

"There is no use complaining to him after all these years. He was not involved in the case and he only came here as his duty," she told reporters afterward. "But I still accepted his visit just because I wanted (my brother) to have a clear break from his past as a death row inmate." He was arrested in August, 1966, in the killing of an executive at a miso bean paste company and three of his family members in Hamamatsu, central Japan. He was initially sentenced to death in a 1968 district court ruling but was not executed because of the lengthy appeal and retrial process in Japan.

Vietnam appoints army general as new president after months of turmoil

ASSOCIATED PRESS HANOI, 21 OCTOBER

Vietnam elected Luong Cuong, a military general, as its new president on Monday, the fourth official to fill the largely ceremonial role in 18 months.

Cuong, 67, was elected by the National Assembly to replace To Lam, who remained president even after he was formally appointed as the general secretary of the ruling Communist Party in August.

The role of the general secretary is the most powerful position in Vietnam while the presidency is mostly ceremonial and involves meeting foreign dignitaries.

Cuong in a speech vowed to conduct foreign policies that sought independence and peace and to promote Vietnam "as a friend, a trusted partner, an active and responsible member of the international community." Cuong, who has served in the Viet-

namese army for over four decades, has been a Politburo member since 2021. His appointment took place after months of uncharacteristic tumult in Vietnam's politics and the death of former party general secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, who had dominated the country's leadership since 2011.

Trong was an ideologue who viewed corruption as the single gravest threat in maintaining the party's legitimacy

and launched a sweeping anti-graft campaign known as the "blazing furnace." It singled both business and political elites, including former presidents Nguyen Xuan Phuc and Vo Van Thuong and the former head of parliament, Vuong Dinh Hue. As Vietnam's top security official at the time, Lam had led the campaign until May. When he became the new general secretary, he promised to maintain the anti-corruption fight.

Information wanted notices for Madhabi Das, Hadisha Khatun, Akash Rajbanshi, and an Unknown Female Deadbody.

Shifting of 1st class coach of suburban EMU service to middle position and information wanted notices for Durga Jaiswal and Radhashyam Jaiswal.





Paving the way for education- Empowering tribal children of Gutti Koya

ANINDITA CHOWDHURY

Tribal children living deep inside the forests in Telangana are increasingly falling through the gaps due to the lacunae in the state-run public education system. The Gutti Koya tribals in the state live in remote habitations, located deep inside the forests, where they have no access to modern amenities such as electricity and no schools as well. In most cases, the children have to travel long distances through the forest and even cross flooded streams during monsoons to reach state-run schools, making it impossible for them to attend regularly. Since the Gutti Koyas are not original inhabitants of Telangana and settled here from Chhattisgarh, the authorities had not initially been very encouraging about the settlements.

The Gutti Koyas are an Adivasi tribe who had been caught in the crossfire between Maoists and Salwa Judum, a militia unit backed by the state government in Chhattisgarh between 2005-06. The terrified adivasis of Dantewada, Sukma, Bijapur and Bastar fled their homes and took shelter in the forests of the neighbouring

state – the unified Andhra Pradesh. They settled mostly in the forests of Bhadradi Kothagudem, Mulugu, Jayashankar Bhopalpalay and Khammam districts in Telangana.

They eventually created settlements in the forests and cultivated crops. Initially, the state government was not very encouraging, but gradually the local police tried to help the tribals while maintaining a vigil since Telangana has its share of the Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) problem in these parts. Primarily, NGOs were roped in to provide certain basic amenities like borewells for potable drinking water and solar lanterns in these settlements. Since the Gutti Koyas stayed in deep forest areas where construction activity is barred by the Centre, there was no scope for establishing schools. Both Mulugu and Bhadradi Kothagudem districts are agency areas where non-tribals cannot buy land.

Nowadays, the local administration ensures that the children are sent to residential tribal schools run by the state government. However, the Gutti Koya children are at a disadvantage in these residential schools,

where classes start from Grade III. In the absence of local schools, the Gutti Koya children are not even familiar with the alphabet, and hence dropouts increase.

Nagaraj Pingili, a software employee who had set up Priya Nestham Charitable Trust has stepped in to come to the rescue of these tribal children. Nagaraj, who had been carrying out welfare activities first, started his study centres to act as bridge schools during the time of COVID-19. As the pandemic raged on, schools across the world switched to digital mode and rural children all over the country were on the verge of falling through the gaps. The disadvantaged Gutti Koya children were more vulnerable than the rural students. Nagaraj realised it did not make any sense to give them tabs since they had no electricity to charge them. He then engaged a teacher among those from the settlements to teach the children who were isolated from the rest of the world, and social distancing was not an issue. Currently, he runs two study centres. The Lions Tribal Study Centre, which started running in 2021 with funds from the Lions Club educates 16

Gutti Koya tribal kids at Kumuram Bheem Nagar in Eturnagaram mandal. The other, Priya Nestham Tribal Study Centre educates about 50 Gutti Koya tribal kids at Gundengavai habitation in Eturnagaram mandal. The children are provided study materials, uniforms for tribal kids and infrastructure for the study centre. A teacher from the Gutti Koya inhabitants is appointed with a remuneration of Rs 5000 per month who teaches the children. This model also ensures empowerment of the teacher who usually is a class VIII dropout or even had studied till Class X.

Every morning, the teacher sends in the attendance. Nagaraj makes surprise visits and also provides stationary and textbooks. But these are just the tip of the iceberg, as there are many such habitations spread across these districts. "The Gutti Koyas are at least two generations behind other kids. But the state government is now also trying, and officials are visiting the habitations to identify the kids who are eight-nine years old and putting them in tribal welfare schools," said Nagaraj. Some of the students from the study

centres this year have successfully transitioned to residential tribal welfare schools with far better amenities, offering a ray of hope to the rest.

Not all the study centres succeeded. Some have also failed, particularly since teachers of the nearby government schools where students were enrolled but did not attend, opposed the centres. Nagaraj had started Priya Nestham tribal study centres to educate 28 Gutti Koya tribal kids at Rayabandam in Eturnagaram Mandal and at Motlagudem in Venkataram mandal which failed because of the opposition of teachers of local schools.

However, it is not only the Gutti Koya children who require charitable organisations to lend a hand. The local state-run primary

schools, attended mostly by children from Dalits and other economically backward families have poor infrastructure and look up to private benefactors for assistance. Nagaraj roped in the Jadavpur University Alumni Association, Hyderabad Chapter to construct washrooms at Laxmidivpet Mandal Parishad Primary School in Mulugu. Similarly, in other mandal parishad schools in the vicinity, his organisation donated gates, desks and benches, shoes, study materials to the kids and even plates and utensils to serve the food to children in residential hostels. However, the efforts hardly make a dent in addressing the overall needs of the children and only highlight the poor state of affairs in our primary education system.

The writer is a special correspondent of The Statesman



Students' Space

VIVACIOUS VOCABULARY

UNLATCH

Verb
Pronunciation: Uhn- lach
Meaning: Unfasten something
Example: She struggled to unlatch the seat belt
Synonym: Unbarred, unlocked

VAGRANT

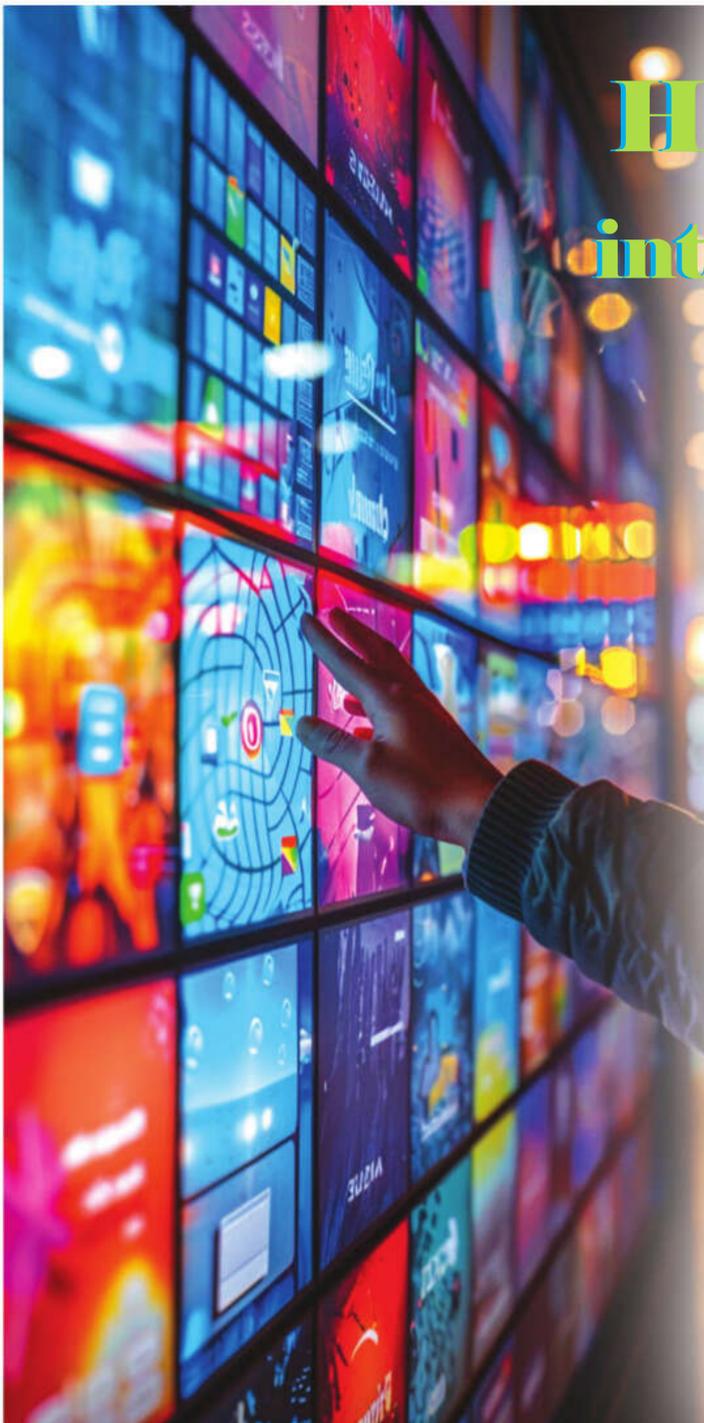
Noun
Pronunciation: Vay- gruhnt
Meaning: A person who has no work or home and wanders
Example: The vagrant attitude of my sister
Synonym: Wanderer, nomad, vagabond

WAGGISH

Adjective
Pronunciation: Vag- uhsh
Meaning: Humorous in a mischievous way
Example: The character of the book was pretty waggish
Synonym: Roguish, jesting

- Compiled by Priyanjali Das

If you are a school or college student who has a poem, essay or other fiction or nonfiction pieces which you would like to share with The Statesman's readers please write in with your submission to readers@thestatesmangroup.com. Don't forget to mention your name, the name of your school, your class and your phone number. Please write "C&C" in the subject field. Publication is at the discretion of the editors.



How AI is revolutionising interactive displays in education

RAMYA CHATTERJEE

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is making a significant impact across various sectors, and education is no exception to it. A UNESCO report highlights that AI has the potential to address some of the biggest challenges in education today, via innovative teaching and learning practices. The AI-powered revolution can accelerate the growth of the educational industry towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 - which focuses on providing access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities to all.

Given the potential of AI, it is evident that the future is bound to be all about flexible learning outcomes. In the coming times, adaptability will be crucial in educational approaches, especially since many educators rely on conventional practices which may delay the progress of many students. With the successful integration and implementation of AI, educational systems can offer more advanced and responsive learning experiences suitable for all age groups.

The landscape of education is undergoing a significant transformation with the introduction of generative AI. This subset of artificial intelligence, which focuses on creating new content based on existing data, has started to make its mark on interactive displays in educational settings. By leveraging the power of generative AI, interactive displays are becoming smarter, more intuitive, and more

adaptive, leading to enriched learning experiences and reshaping how students and educators interact. Let's delve into how generative AI is revolutionising interactive displays in education.

Creating personalised learning content on the fly

Generative AI can dynamically generate personalised content for students, ensuring that learning materials cater specifically to individual needs. For instance, if a student is struggling with a math concept, the AI can instantly create new practice problems tailored to their level of understanding. By analysing the student's previous responses, the AI can adapt to the difficulty of questions, offering just the right level of challenge to aid learning. This real-time, personalised approach ensures that every student can learn at their own pace and have access to resources that best suit their learning style.

Generating real-time visual aids and interactive models

Interactive displays have always been known for their ability to make lessons more engaging, but generative AI takes this to a new level. By using AI, these displays can create real-time visual aids, such as diagrams, graphs, and even 3D models, based on the topic being discussed. Imagine a biology class where students can see a 3D model of a cell generated on the spot, allowing them to explore each part interactively. Generative AI can also simulate historical events, scientific experiments, or even art

creation, bringing abstract concepts to life and enhancing students' understanding through visual learning.

Facilitating interactive storytelling and scenarios

One of the most exciting applications of generative AI in interactive displays is its ability to create interactive storytelling experiences. For example, in a history class, AI can generate a narrative set in a specific historical period, allowing students to explore different scenarios and understand the consequences of various decisions. This immersive, narrative-driven approach makes learning more engaging and memorable. Additionally, in language learning, generative AI can create real-time dialogues, helping students practice conversations in a variety of contexts, improving both their language skills and confidence.

Enhancing student creativity with AI-generated ideas

Generative AI encourages students to think creatively by providing them with new ideas, designs, or even prompts that can inspire projects and assignments. In art or design classes, for instance, students can use interactive displays to generate different styles of artwork, experimenting with various colour schemes and patterns. The AI can suggest alternatives or enhancements, fostering a spirit of creativity and exploration. This not only helps students discover their creative potential but also equips them with the skills to utilise AI as a collaborative tool in the future.

Creating adaptive learning paths

One of the major benefits of generative AI is its ability to analyse data and adjust learning paths for individual students. By understanding each student's strengths and weaknesses, the AI can generate adaptive learning paths that guide students through topics at their own pace. Interactive displays can use this technology to present different sets of learning materials, quizzes, and exercises, ensuring that each student remains engaged and motivated. This adaptability allows educators to cater to a diverse range of learning needs without overwhelming any student or holding others back.

Automated generation of practice exercises and assessments

Generative AI can also be a game-changer in generating practice exercises, quizzes, and assessments. Instead of relying on pre-made question banks, the AI can create new exercises based on the specific areas where students need improvement. This means that no two students will receive the same set of questions, making assessments more tailored and effective. Additionally, AI can offer instant feedback, helping students understand their mistakes and learn from them. This continuous, personalised feedback loop is crucial for reinforcing concepts and promoting long-term retention.

Breaking language barriers with real-time translation

Generative AI's lan-

guage capabilities are also enhancing inclusivity in education. Interactive displays powered by AI can offer real-time translations of lessons, making it easier for students who are non-native speakers to follow along. This ensures that language is no longer a barrier to learning. Furthermore, AI can generate multilingual resources, allowing students to learn in their preferred language and fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Generative AI is more than just a technological trend; it is a powerful tool that is transforming the educational experience by making interactive displays smarter, more adaptive, and more engaging. From generating personalised learning content to facilitating creative exploration, generative AI is equipping educators with the tools they need to cater to diverse learning styles and needs. As this technology continues to evolve, it holds the potential to reshape the future of education, making learning more accessible, interactive, and enjoyable for all students.

Educators and institutions that embrace the possibilities of generative AI will be better positioned to meet the needs of modern learners, preparing them for a future where creativity, adaptability, and technological literacy are key. The future of education is here, and it is being shaped by the limitless possibilities of generative AI.

The writer is Chief of Solitaire Brand Business, CEO & Director of Printek Global Innovations

La Liga: Lewandowski, Torres on rampage as Barca thrash Sevilla

Robert Lewandowski, Pablo Torres smash a brace each as former champions earn 5-1 win

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BARCELONA, 21 OCTOBER

Vintage Barcelona. The original practitioners of the famous 'Tiki Taka' style that took Spain to the very pinnacle of global football with back to back title wins at the 2008 Euro Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

It was this very same 'Tiki Taka' style - admired and feared in equal measure by rival teams - that was on full display as FC Barcelona took on Sevilla FC in a La Liga clash early on Monday (India time).

Added to that was the blistering finishing power of Robert Lewandowski, one of the best strikers of the current generation and the Catalans seemed simply unbeatable.

Braces from Robert Lewandowski and Pablo Torres, as well as a goal from Pedri, earn Barcelona three points as they cruise past Sevilla 5-1 in the La Liga.

Lewandowski's brace took his tally for the season to an outstanding 12, while Pedri netted a beauty in between. The goals looked to have dried up in the second half. But young Torre had different ideas. Two late goals from him and that was a total return of five from a fantastic day at the office.

The win saw Barcelona consolidate their position at the top of the La Liga standings with 27 points from 10 matches, having won four of their last five matches. Arch-rivals Real Madrid at the second spot with 24 points.

Sevilla are currently at the 13th spot in the 20-team La Liga table with 12 points.

Things were a little slow to get started, but in the 24th minutes Lewandowski opened the scoring from the penalty spot. Former La Masia man Peque clumsily brought Raphinha to the ground and the Pole coolly converted the kick.

Sevilla had started brightly, but once they were off the mark, Barca were utterly in command. By half-time it was already 3-0 and the three points were as good as won.

Goal number two came off a blistering counter attack spearheaded by Lamine Yamal, who set things up perfectly for Pedri to curl in the most exquisite of finishes.

Then a long range goal from Raphinha turned out to be another stroke of genius from Lewandowski. The Brazilian's shot was actually heading wide, but the Pole, onside by the narrowest of margins, had managed to divert it goalwards.

Sevilla never looked convinced that a comeback was



even remotely possible and although Dodi Lukebakio had a goal disallowed for offside and fellow Belgian Stanis Idumbo did grab a late consolation, by this stage they were largely on a damage limitation exercise.

And on that front, they were successful, at least for most of the second half. For much as Barca pushed and pushed for more goals, they weren't forthcoming until the final minutes, when two goals both came from the

feet of Pablo Torres.

Having already rifled in on 82 minutes, the youngster then whizzed a free kick goalward. There was some confusion when it appeared that Inigo Martinez had nicked the definitive touch from an

offside position, but replays confirmed that he hadn't made contact with the ball.

A 5-1 victory makes it six wins in a row against Sevilla and an unbeaten run of 18 games against the Andalusians.

Deepika wins 6th medal at Archery World Cup Final



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

Indian archer Deepika Kumari added sixth World Cup Final medal to her kitty with a silver in the Archery World Cup Final after a 0-6 loss to China's Li Jiaman in the final in Tlaxcala (Mexico).

The 2010 Commonwealth Games champion had performed strongly in the quarter and semi-finals as she thrashed Li's Chinese teammate Yang Xiaolei 6-0 before knocking out eventual bronze medallist Alejandra Valencia 6-4 on her home turf.

"It's an honour to be part of this World Cup, to win this World Cup. Now, I'm going to work even harder after that," Deepika told the media.

Deepika Kumari enjoyed a smooth run as she went through the challenge in the semifinals with apparent ease.

However, once in the final, it seemed that the pressure of competing in a gold medal match proved too much to

handle for Deepika Kumari.

Facing up against the fourth-seeded Li Jiaman of China, a silver medal winner at the 2024 Paris Olympics, Deepika Kumari struggled to come up with a best form.

It was Deepika's ninth appearance at the World Cup Final where she has also bagged a bronze.

Dola Banerjee is the only Indian archer to have won a gold in the World Cup Final, having topped the podium in Dubai 2007.

Meanwhile, Li won the finale of archery's premier international circuit on her first attempt which features eight of the best archers from each event (compound and recurve) per gender who qualify either from winning one of three World Cup stages over the course of the year or their position in the world rankings.

The five-member Indian squad including three compound and two recurve archers concluded their campaign with one medal in the season-ending tournament.

Champions League: Dortmund fret over roller coaster form ahead of Real Madrid tie

AGENCIES
BERLIN, 21 OCTOBER

Borussia Dortmund find themselves in a peculiar position, balancing between contrasting fortunes ahead of their crucial UEFA Champions League 2024-25 clash against Real Madrid. While their European campaign got off to a flying start, with a 3-0 win over Club Brugge and a stunning 7-1 thrashing of Celtic, their domestic form has been a cause for concern. The 2024 Champions League finalists are enduring their worst Bundesliga start in a decade, creating a tense atmosphere for head coach Nuri Sahin, who now faces mounting pressure.

Sahin, the 36-year-old former Dortmund player and Turkey international, has been under scrutiny from regional media, who pointed out tactical shortcomings and speculated about possible mental struggles within the squad.

However, Sahin has rejected the notion of mental issues, insisting that such high-level performances cannot be achieved with a "wavering mind."

Expectations were raised significantly after a busy summer transfer window, with notable signings including Guinean star striker Serhou



Guirassy, German international Waldemar Anton, Maximilian Beier and Pascal Gross, and Manchester City defender Yan Couto. Despite these reinforcements, Dortmund's inconsistent league form, marked by two defeats and a disappointing draw in seven, has fans growing restless, reports Xinhua.

Adding to the challenge, Sahin must contend with several key players sidelined due to illness and injury. Niclas Sule and Gross are out with infections, while Karim Adeyemi, Julien Duranville, Giovanni Reyna,

and Couto are also unavailable for the Madrid game. The recent 2-1 win against newly promoted St. Pauli did little to quell concerns.

By contrast, Dortmund's Champions League form has been promising, and the club is hoping that this competition will continue to bring out the best in them. Much of the responsibility will fall on Guirassy, who has been in fine form with four Bundesliga goals and three in the Champions League.

Sahin views the match against Real Madrid, the reigning European champions

and Dortmund's opponents in the 2023/24 final, as an opportunity to prove their mettle.

"This is a special occasion," Sahin said ahead of the game in Madrid, framing his side as underdogs.

"Real Madrid carries the pressure, but we are ready for the challenge, and the Champions League always gives us a positive mindset."

Despite the current frustrations, Dortmund are determined to use this match as a statement of intent as they aim to stabilize their season on the European stage.

Railways women win department hockey title

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

The women's team of Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) secured a thrilling 3-1 victory over Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) in the final of the 4th Hockey India Senior Women's Inter-Departmental National Championship 2024, avenging their defeat in last year's summit clash. The match, held at New Delhi's Major Dhyanchand National Hockey Stadium, featured some of India's top hockey stars and provided an electrifying conclusion to the tournament.

In a closely-fought contest, Indian Oil broke the deadlock in the 18th minute with a stunning goal from Deepika. However, Railways responded immediately with a powerful strike from India's most capped player, Vandana Katariya, levelling the score just a minute later. The two teams remained neck-and-neck until the fourth quarter when Railways' captain, Navneet Kaur, put her team ahead with a crucial goal. The victory was sealed by a final strike from Indian star Salima Tete, ensuring Railways' triumph with a 3-1 scoreline.

High-flying Arsenal set sights on UEFA Champions League triumph



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

Enjoying a run of superb run in the English Premier League, Arsenal have set their sights on the ultimate prize in European club football - the UEFA Champions League.

Arsenal's midfield reinforcement for the season Mikel Merino, who made his debut against Paris Saint-Germain in the side's second UCL game, has made a bold statement claiming winning the UEFA Champions League is the team's ultimate goal.

"I've been lucky enough to win a lot of trophies in my career with the national team as well. I know the feeling -

something you can't compare with anything else. Knowing what this club is about how big the Champions League and winning trophies is.

"Winning the Champions League here would be amazing. There is still a long way to go to achieve that. We have the basics, the players; we have the mentality; that has to be the ultimate goal," said Merino in the pre-game conference.

The Gunners will have to shackle off the side's disappointing 0-2 loss against Bournemouth as they turn their attention to their UCL match against Shakhtar Donetsk. Arsenal currently sit in 13th place in the UCL

League table with one win and one draw their name. A win for the North London side will be of huge importance as 36 teams are battling for the top eight spot.

"You do not have time to think about the last action you also have new things coming, new challenges. It's really good to have a game now, try to win, try to give our best version in front of our fans. Not erase, we have to get better and learn from the mistakes but to have a new feeling."

"I think we have a pretty complete team, pretty complete coaching staff as well. They have that winning mentality as well," he added.

East Bengal's hunt for victory to meet firm Odisha FC challenge

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 21 OCTOBER

Usually one of the most feared teams in Indian football, East Bengal are going through one of the worst phases in their history. Already five matches into their campaign in the 2024-25 season of the Indian Super League (ISL), East Bengal are yet to pick up even a single point, having come out second best in all their engagements so far.

The Kolkata giants are looking more like pygmies at the moment. They cannot seem to be getting anything right in recent times. Their defenders seem to have forgotten how to defend and their forwards seem to forget their way in front of goal while their listless supporters watch in abject dismay from the stands. However, the red and gold brigade will try to put their poor form behind them and return to winning ways when they take on Odisha FC in an away fixture on Tuesday. The two teams must



be determined to immediately find their footing in this campaign since the Red and Gold Brigade are yet to open their account, whereas the Juggernauts sit at the 10th spot with four points from as many encounters. However, a duel between

these two eastern outfits often produces fireworks, and the fans at the home turf of Odisha FC must be gearing up for an end-to-end battle that pushes each team to put their best efforts forward to walk away with three points. Odisha have a

lot of confidence to draw from their on-going seven-game-long unbeaten streak against East Bengal FC, in which they have struck 23 goals. With the Kolkata side giving away two goals per match on average in this campaign, it is to be noted

that the Juggernauts have struck at least twice in each of their last seven home games, thus setting an exciting match-up altogether. Odisha have been exemplary in breaking the opposition's attacks, recording an 88.1% tackle success rate in ISL 2024-25.

Aryna Sabalenka pips Iga Swiatek to return to top position in WTA rankings

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

Aryna Sabalenka surpassed Iga Swiatek to climb back to the No. 1 spot in the latest WTA rankings released on Monday. Neither player was in action last week, but with continuing year-end adjustments for falling short of certain tournament quotas, Sabalenka dropped fewer points than Swiatek.

Sabalenka has 9,706 points compared to second-placed Swiatek's 9,665, taking a narrow 41-point lead. American Coco Gauff is third with 5,963 points followed by compatriot Jessica Pegula (5,785) in fourth and Elena Rybakina in fifth with 5,471 points.

"N1.... Let's see for how long this time," Sabalenka posted on X after becoming the world No. 1 player.

Sabalenka spent eight weeks at the summit last year before Swiatek overtook her with a victory at the season-



ending WTA Finals and the Belarusian hopes for a longer stay at No. 1 in WTA rankings.

Heading into the Cincinnati Open, Sabalenka was ranked No. 3 behind American Gauff and Swiatek was up 3,289 points. But even though Swiatek reached the semifinals, Sabalenka won the title and collected 1,000 points that went with it. As the duo lined up for the US Open, Swiatek produced a good

result, reaching the quarter-finals, but Sabalenka again won the title. That sliced the margin to 2,169 points. Swiatek was the defending champion at the China Open but elected to skip the Asian swing while attending to a coaching change. So while 1,000 points came off Swiatek's total, Sabalenka went to the quarters, picking up 215 points -- leaving her down 1,069 points.



JACK LEACH FEARED INJURY WILL END CAREER

England's left-arm spinner Jack Leach admitted that he feared about his international career being over after being left out of the home summer games. Leach was out of action since January due to a knee injury sustained during the first Test against India in Hyderabad. But Leach, 33, was recalled into England's Test team for their ongoing tour of Pakistan, where he's picked 14 wickets in two games at Multan. In his absence, off-spinner Shoab Bashir has become a regular player with the England Test team.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Van Dijk confirms discussions on new contract with Liverpool: Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk is now in the final year of his four-year deal with the Premier League club, which he signed back in 2021. After weeks of speculation, the Dutch defender has now confirmed that discussions over a new deal have 'started up'. "Discussions have been started up," Van Dijk was quoted as saying by BBC when asked about a new deal with the Anfield outfit. In his six years at Liverpool, the center back has the Premier League, Champions League, FA Cup and two League Cups to his name. Liverpool signed Van Dijk in January 2018 for 75 million pounds, a then-world-record transfer fee for a defender. He quickly went on to assert dominance in the league and was undoubtedly one of the best defenders in the world before a cruciate ligament tear injury in the 2020/21 season kept him out of action for 254 days. "I feel very good, physically, mentally and I am having fun. What the future brings, I have no idea at the moment, but like I said in my previous answer, discussions are ongoing with the right people and when it's time to make a decision or whatever, I think you guys (the media) will know it as well. But now full commitment and focus is on Liverpool and to be successful." AGENCIES

Spinning track expected in Pune as India aim to level series

India add Washington Sundar to squad for remainder of New Zealand series

TRIDIB BAPARNASH
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

Shaken by the eight-wicket loss in the opening Test of the three-match rubber against New Zealand in Bengaluru, India have bolstered their squad with the addition of off-spinning all-rounder Washington Sundar for the remaining two Tests in Pune and Mumbai, respectively. The Kiwis secured a 356-run lead after bowling the hosts for a record-low total of 46. Despite India's fightback in the third innings, the Black Caps ensured they went into the second Test 1-0 up after overcoming an ask of 107 in the final innings. In the follow-up, India have added Sundar to their Test squad. The right-arm spinner has six wickets from his four Tests, and has 265 runs with an average of 66.25.

Although the original squad had Axar Patel as a fourth spinner along with Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav, who played the first Test, the selectors have added a 16th member to the squad in Sundar, thus dropping enough hints of the nature of tracks expected in the two venues. Under pressure to make it 2-1 in the three-match rubber and remain in contention to make the World Test Championship



final next June, the pitches in Pune and Mumbai are expected to be slow turners with the bounce being the only difference between the two. The varying bounce is a result of the difference in the soil: black at Pune's Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, and red at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium. The pitch was expected to be similar in Bengaluru but the overcast conditions coupled with intermittent rains in the lead-up to the first Test, made it favourable

for seamers at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, where the New Zealand pacers dominated after India elected to bat. But going by India's latest addition in the squad, India is expected to once again go ahead with three spinners, though the combination could be altered keeping in mind the amount of spin that can be extracted from the slow surface. Pune's tryst with Test cricket hasn't been a mixed bag, as the first match it hosted was the opener of

the 2016-17 Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which Australia rode on left-arm spinner Steve O'Keefe's inspiring tally of 12 wickets to hand a 333-run humiliation to the hosts by tea on the third day. The pitch was rated poor by ICC match referee Chris Broad, as spinners accounted for 31 of the 40 wickets to fall. In 2019, the venue was allotted another Test, this time against South Africa, and India rode on a Virat Kohli double ton to record an innings victory. As Pune

gears up for its third Test, and the home side already down 0-1, a lot will bank on the natural of the track, which is expected to have very less grass cover due to which there could be minimal seam movement after the first hour of play. The lack of assistance to the quicks and the sluggish nature of the wicket could make the toss a critical factor here as both captains could be tempted to bat first, survive the initial scare and put up a huge first innings total.

Shami eyes domestic route to Australia-bound Test squad



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

On the sidelines for nearly a year, pacer Mohammed Shami claimed that he is now 100 percent "pain-free" and wants to play a couple of Ranji Trophy games to test himself before India travels to Australia for the five-match Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, starting with the first Test in Perth from November 22. Shami, who underwent surgery on his right Achilles tendon in February, last played for India in the ODI World Cup final in Ahmedabad on November 19 last year. He was expected to return to action during the ongoing New Zealand series but a swelling on his knee delayed his comeback. On Sunday, the Bengal pacer was seen bowling full tilt at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. Shami said that was the first time he had bowled with a

full run-up since his recovery. "It felt great yesterday because I had been bowling with half a run-up on and off since I can't put too much stress on my body. Yesterday, we decided that I would bowl properly, and I gave my 100 percent. It felt great, the results are good. Hopefully, I'll be back on track soon," he said. Insisting that he was 100 percent pain-free, Shami expressed his desire to spend time at the ground and turn up for a couple of domestic matches before touring Down Under. "The Australia series is still far away. The only thing I want to focus on is how to keep myself fit, and how strong I can be before going there. I know what kind of an attack we want for that Test series, so it's better I spend some more time on the ground. If I get fit and I get a gap of eight to ten days, then it's better I play domestic matches before going to Australia."

White Ferns out to inspire next generation of New Zealand stars with historic Sunday

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

It turned out a historic day for New Zealand cricket on Sunday — first the men's team broke a 36-year-old wait to record a Test victory in India, and later in the evening, the women's enjoyed a drought-breaking triumph by clinching the ICC Women's T20 World Cup trophy for the first time in Dubai. Tom Latham's debut as full-time skipper began on a promising note as the Black Caps thrashed India by eight wickets in Bengaluru to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match rubber, before Sophie Devine led the White Ferns to beat South Africa by 32 runs and record a ground-breaking triumph at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup. It was the White Ferns' first major trophy in women's cricket since



their triumph in the ICC women's 50-over World Cup on home soil in 2000. For Devine, it was a case of being third time lucky with the veteran New Zealand skipper having been part of the side that fell to defeats in the first

two editions of the T20 World Cup in 2009 and 2010 against England and Australia respectively. And Devine hopes the triumph in Dubai will help the White Ferns reach even greater heights in the future as the next generation of

younger players are ushered into the national side. "I think the impact is going to take a bit of time to sink in. We've spoken about it before, the 2000 World Cup and the impact that had and that took years to see the swell of numbers and the interest in cricket grow and fingers crossed we can do that too back home as inspire that next generation of players," Devine said. "But I think the great thing about being a Kiwi is we all get in behind each other. It doesn't matter what sport you play. I think the amount of support we've had from fellow athletes, from members of the public, from celebrities, it's been pretty cool to have that support and it does, it just shows you how connected New Zealand is and makes you really proud to be a Kiwi."

India captain Harmanpreet included in Women's T20 WC team of the tournament

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 21 OCTOBER

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur has been included in 2024 Women's T20 World Cup team of the tournament, which includes champions New Zealand and runners-up South Africa being represented by three players each, along with players from West Indies, Bangladesh, England and Australia. Though India didn't enter the semi-finals under her leadership, Harmanpreet ended the tournament with 150 runs in four matches and being dismissed just once in four innings. The right-handed batter also made unbeaten half-centuries against Sri Lanka and Australia at Dubai and Sharjah respectively. The team includes New Zealand all-rounder Amelia Kerr, who picked up Player of the Match in the final as well as the Player of the Tournament trophy.



Amelia, 24, took 15 wickets — the most by any player in an edition of Women's T20 World Cup — and scored 135 runs, including top-scoring with 43 in the final to help

New Zealand lift the trophy for the first time. She is joined in the side by her team-mates — pacer Rosemary Mair, who took 10 wickets at an average of

11.70, including three in the final, and off-spinner Eden Carson, listed as 12th player in this team after picking nine wickets. South Africa's opening pair of captain Laura Wolvaardt and Tazmin Brits — the two highest run-scorers in the competition — have been selected too. Laura was remarkably consistent, with four scores of 40 or above including a best of 59 not out in the opener against West Indies and ending with a tally of 223 runs at 44.60 and strike-rate of 113.19 in six innings. Tazmin, meanwhile, made 187 runs in total with a best of 57 not out. They are joined by England's Danni Wyatt-Hodge, who scored 151 runs in four innings. She top-scored with 41 in England's opening victory against Bangladesh before important knocks of 43 and 51 not out in wins over South Africa and Scotland respectively.

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