



**WORLD 5** INTERIM GOVT COMMITTED TO FREE & FAIR POLLS: YUNUS | **MONEY 6** WINDFALL TAX ON CRUDE PETROLEUM REDUCED | **SPORT 7** LET'S JUST LEAVE IT TO THE GODS: CHOPRA ON 90M AND BEYOND

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## Patients suffer as doctors strike work over WB horror



Doctors and staff of RML Hospital stage a protest demanding justice for the woman doctor who was allegedly raped and murdered at Kolkata's R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, in New Delhi, on Saturday PTI

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Healthcare services across the nation were paralysed as doctors and other medical workers from the Government, private, and even corporate hospitals went on a 24-hour strike starting at 6 am on Saturday, leading to the shutdown of OPDs, elective surgeries, and IPD services. The strike — called to protest rape and murder of a trainee doctor at a State-run hospital in Kolkata last week — caused significant disruption,

with hospitals across the national Capital turning away patients, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. While many sympathised with the cause, they struggled to receive necessary medical treatment. The Indian Medical Association (IMA), which represents over 4 lakh medical professionals nationwide, called for the strike after resident and junior doctors, along with medical students, ceased work for six consecutive days

and took to the street to protest the August 9 incident. As senior doctors also joined the strike, medical services were hit hard in many States, severely impacting primarily poor patients who had traveled long distances from across the country to access care at centrally run facilities like AIIMS, Safdarjung Hospital, and Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital. A 60-year-old heart patient who had come to AIIMS for an OPD visit expressed his frustration and said, "I had an appointment for a routine

checkup today, but it was cancelled due to the strike. I understand the doctors' concerns, but we haven't done anything wrong. I hope the strike ends soon." Relatives of another patient echoed similar sentiment, acknowledging the tragedy in Kolkata but emphasising that the strike had severely affected them. They had travelled from Rajasthan to Delhi seeking treatment for their uncle, as they believed the best healthcare services were available in the Capital. In display of solidarity and demanding a Central Protection Act, doctors across the Capital also marched towards Jantar Mantar, despite resistance from Delhi Police, who tried to prevent the demonstration from disrupting public life. Nurses too joined the protest, holding a sit-in to show their solidarity and outrage over the West Bengal tragedy. Dr Arpit, a protesting doctor who participated in the march to Jantar Mantar, said, "Our demands are clear. We don't want another incident like the one in West Bengal. The Government must finalise the Central Protection Act. This is not about politics; it's about justice and safety."



## CBI focusing on victim's diary to crack case

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Was the murdered doctor from RG Kar Medical College and Hospital aware of any threats to her life? And if so, who were her tormentors? As they work to answer these questions, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) officials are focusing on the victim's personal diary and statements from her family, including her father, regarding the events leading up to the alleged rape and murder inside the hospital premises on the night of August 8 and 9. Sources indicated that CBI officials have identified around thirty individuals of interest in their investigation, including some doctors, interns, senior nurses, and other hospital staff. According to these sources, the victim's father informed investigators that his daughter had recently expressed reluctance to perform night shifts. She had also voiced suspicions about certain colleagues, fearing that they might cause her harm. The CBI is now meticulously

examining her personal diary to gather as much information as possible about her concerns and the potential threats she faced. The victim's father reportedly informed investigators, citing some of her colleagues, that she may have been murdered elsewhere and then her body was moved to the seminar hall of the Department of Chest Medicine, where she was a final-year postgraduate trainee. CBI officials, who interrogated Sandip Ghosh — the influential former principal of the college, known for his close ties with the topmost family in the State — for approximately 13 and a half hours on Friday night, resumed questioning him on Saturday. Sources suggested that Ghosh has started to crack under CBI pressure, and the interrogation was ongoing at the time of the last reports. On Saturday, a team of CBI officials visited the crime scene inside the hospital for the second time, equipped with three-dimensional cameras and other instruments to gather additional evidence.

## Guv OK's K'taka CM prosecution in MUDA scam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday ruled out his resignation, following Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot granting sanction to prosecute him, in connection with the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam', and said he had done no wrong to step down. He termed the Governor's decision "anti-Constitution and against law". The Chief Minister also said Governor's decision will be questioned in court and that he will battle it out legally. "It is a big conspiracy to dislodge the elected Government. They (BJP) have done this in several States including Delhi, Jharkhand. A conspiracy has been designed to destabilise the elected Government in Karnataka also. The Central Government, BJP, JD(S) and others are involved in this conspiracy," Siddaramaiah told reporters here. "High command (of Congress) is with me, the entire Cabinet and the Government is with me. All Congress MLAs, MLCs, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members are with me...I have done no wrong to resign," he asserted. Accusing the Opposition of wrong doings and behaving illegally and anti-Constitutionally, he further said, "They are using Raj Bhavan as a political pawn. The Governor is functioning like a puppet in the hands of the Central Government." The Governor has accorded sanction against the Chief Minister under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Section 21B of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 for the commission of the alleged offences as mentioned in the petitions of Pradeep Kumar S P, T J Abraham and Snehamayi Krishna.



## BBSR SIM box seizure Arrested Mandal's handler a Bangladeshi national

Calls from Pakistan, China, Middle East were rerouted

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Commissionerate police on Saturday made some sensational revelations regarding the seizure of seven SIM boxes from a house in the Laxmisagar area in Bhubaneswar on Friday.

Commissioner of Police Sanjeeb Panda said the arrested accused Raju Mandal's handler was a Bangladeshi national identified as Asadur Jaman. Around 1,000 SIM cards mostly pre-activated from West Bengal, old SIMs, routers and other equipments were seized following a raid on the rented house of Mandal.

Panda said Mandal hails from West Bengal and he was operating the SIM boxes. His job was to ensure that the UPS, internet, power and other services functioned properly.

In case of any SIM problem, Mandal used to visit the house and carry out necessary repair and maintenance work. Mandal, who has completed his Class-XII, informed that the SIM box was used to bypass international calls to Pakistan, China and the Middle East.



"SIM box is mainly used for cybercrimes, hate messages, terrorist activities, extortion and other crimes as original numbers get masked. Hence, it creates problems for law enforcement agencies. Jaman had visited India in October via Agartala and also stayed in a hotel in Bhubaneswar. He returned to Bangladesh in December. Jaman was making necessary payments to Mandal. He also set up two other SIM boxes and appropriate measures would be taken to bust them. The SIM boxes were smuggled to India via Bangladesh in a clandestine manner, said Panda. The exact nature of crimes committed through these SIM boxes would be probed. As a Bangladeshi national is involved, we will seek help from national investigating agencies and even the Interpol for further investigation, Panda added.

## Mumbai terror attack plotter faces extradition to India

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In a huge setback to Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a US court has ruled that the Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman could be extradited to India where he is wanted for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack carried out by Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists. "The (India US Extradition) Treaty permits Rana's extradition," the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit said in its ruling on Thursday. Ruling on an appeal filed by 63-year-old Rana, a panel of judges of the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit affirmed the District Court in the Central District of California's denial of his habeas corpus petition challenging a magistrate judge's certification of his as extraditable to India for his alleged participation in terrorist attacks in Mumbai. Rana, currently lodged in a jail in Los Angeles, faces charges for his role in the 26/11 Mumbai attack and is known to be associated with Pakistani-American Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the terror incident that hit India's financial hub in 2008.



Rana has the option of appealing against the ruling. He still has not run out of all the legal options to prevent his extradition to India. Under the limited scope of habeas review of an extradition order, the panel held that Rana's alleged offence fell within the terms of the extradition treaty between the United States and India, which included a Non Bis in Idem (double jeopardy) exception to extraditability "when the person sought has been convicted or acquitted in the Requested State for the offence for which extradition is requested". Relying on the plain text of the treaty, the US State Department's technical analysis, and persuasive case law of other circuits, the panel held that the word "offence" refers to a charged crime,

rather than underlying acts, and requires an analysis of the elements of each crime. The panel of three judges concluded that a co-conspirator's plea agreement did not compel a different result. The panel held that the Non Bis in Idem exception did not apply because the Indian charges contained distinct elements from the crimes for which Rana was acquitted in the United States. In its ruling, the panel also held that India provided sufficient competent evidence to support the magistrate judge's finding of probable cause that Rana committed the charged crimes. The three panel of judges were Milan D Smith, Bridget S Bade, and Sidney A Fitzwater. Rana, a Pakistani national, was tried in a US district court on charges related to his support for a terrorist organisation that carried out large-scale terrorist attacks in Mumbai. A jury convicted Rana of providing material support to a foreign terrorist organisation and conspiring to provide material support to a foiled plot to carry out terrorist attacks in Denmark. However, the jury acquitted Rana of conspiring to provide material support to terrorism-related to the attacks in India.



Women devotees carry holy water as they take part in the 'Kalahash Yatra' during 'Shravan' month, in Jaipur, on Saturday PTI

## Hoax bomb threats send cops into tizzy in NCR-Delhi, Maha

PARVESH SHARMA/STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM/NOIDA

Two malls in Gurugram and Noida were evacuated on Saturday after they received bomb threat through emails with police later saying nothing suspicious was found following anti-sabotage checks. The bomb threats to DLF Mall of India in Sector 18 of Noida and Ambience Mall in Gurugram came over three months after similar threats were emailed to multiple schools in the National Capital Region (NCR). The



Saturday threat, which had thrown police and security personnel into a tizzy, turned out to be a hoax in the wake of upcoming Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana, which announced by the Election Commission

on Friday. Besides Delhi and NCR, the Inorbit Mall in Vashi in Navi Mumbai was also evacuated by the police after the mall's management received a bomb threat email on Saturday afternoon. According to Gurugram police, the Ambience Mall management received a bomb threat email at 9.27 am. The email, which was sent from hiddenbones101@gmail.com, read, "I planted bombs in the building. Every person inside the building will be killed, none of you will escape. You deserve death."

## 9 die in thunderstorm in State

CM announces Rs 4L aid to each family

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

At least nine persons were killed in thunderstorm strikes in six districts of the State on Saturday.

Reports said two persons each were killed in the districts

of Mayurbhanj, Baleswar and Bhadrak and one each died in Keonjhar, Dhenkanal and Ganjam.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed deep sympathy to the families of the deceased and announced an assistance of Rs 4 lakh to each family. He also said the government would bear the expenses of the injured persons.

## Un-reserved vacancies

# Reserved category candidate can be promoted: HC

TATHYA ■ CUTTACK

In a landmark judgement, the Orissa High Court has held that a reserved category candidate can be considered for promotion and appointment against un-reserved vacancies on the basis of merit. Denial of promotion solely on the basis of some one's reserved category status constitutes a violation of his right enshrined under Article 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India.

After hearing the matter, Justice Sanjeeb Kumar Panigrahi, while allowing the prayer of the petitioner, specifically directed the concerned authorities to re-evaluate the promotion policies and promulgate appropriate rules to ensure the advancement of meritorious candidates irrespective of their reservation status within one month. While delivering the judgement, the High Court deprecated the clarification issued by the Revenue and Disaster

Management Department and stated that such a clarification dated 11.01.2019 is devoid of legal soundness.

The petitioner Lalit Kumar Naik, an ST employee, joined in Keonjhar district as an Amin in the year 2010 and was placed at serial number 7 in the gradation list whereas two other Amins of UR category who joined in the year 2012 were placed at serial numbers 20 and 21. Though the ST candidate was senior and fulfilled all the criteria for promotion

to the post of a Revenue Inspector, he was denied promotion on the ground that the post meant for UR category cannot be filled up by an ST candidate.

On such basis, junior UR candidates were given promotion.

The High Court held that the ST candidate being senior has fulfilled the eligibility criteria laid down in ODRS Rules as well as criteria for promotion rules.

In this regard, several clari-

fications issued by the government with respect to promotion of reserved category candidates against un-reserved posts were also taken into consideration.

The High Court has also relied upon several decisions of the Supreme Court, which has held that SC and ST candidates selected in open competition on the basis of open merit will be treated as open competition candidates and they will not be counted against reserved quota.

Moreover, un-reserved posts in government employment are not reserved for any category. In the present case, as the petitioner having completed five years of service as an Amin and successfully passed the requisite departmental examination in accordance with rules is unequivocally eligible to be considered for promotion to the higher post. Advocates PK Sinha and AK Chhatoi conducted the matter on behalf of the petitioner.

**Staines' murder**

**SC issues notice to Odisha on Dara's plea**

Accused seeks remission in jail sentence

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

The Supreme Court has issued a notice to the Odisha Government seeking a response to a plea for a premature release of Ravindra Pal alias Dara Singh, who was arrested on the charges of killing Australian missionary Graham Stuart Staines and his two minor sons in Keonjhar district in 1999.



In a petition filed through his advocate, Dara Singh has stated that he has already spent over 24 years in jail against the total sentence of 14 years in

case of life imprisonment. The petition has also cited the Supreme Court judgment regarding the premature release of the killers of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

A Bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and SVN Bhatti are hearing the matter. In another development, Telangana MLA T Raja Singh

15.9.2023 passed by the District & Sessions Judge, Khordha and awarded punishment for life. They are in jail custody for last 23 years. For such a long time in jail custody, they are suffering from mental trauma and their health condition is deteriorating day by day," the mercy petition read.

**Water from Peja Nala floods Singhadwar**

Puri devotees, servitors walk through dirty sludge

**PNS ■ PURI**

Resentment brewed among devotees and servitors after water from the Peja Nala along with rainwater flooded the Singhadwar (Lions Gate) of the Jagannath Temple on Saturday.



The servitors and devotees were forced to step barefoot on the dirty water to go to the shrine. Besides, the water emanated a severe stench, giving a nightmarish experience to devotees and tourists.

Such a situation in Puri, that too before the Shreemandir, is unacceptable," said a devotee.

"The administration must clean the water at the soonest.

temple. Even though crores of rupees were spent in the development of the infrastructure here, the same irregularities continue."

"If the drain is overflowing and dirty water is entering the Srimandir premises with

such little rainfall, imagine what will happen if there is heavy rainfall. There will be a flood on the Bada Danda," he added.

Meanwhile, the civic body authorities have pulled their socks up to clean the 'peja pani'.

**K'pada ASCO arrested in DA case**

**PNS ■ CUTTACK**

The Vigilance police on Saturday arrested Pradeep Kumar Mohapatra, Additional Civil Supplies Officer (ACSO), Kendrapada, for possession of disproportionate assets (DA).



of Rs 1.21 lakh and 850 grams of gold during the raid.

Mohapatra was arrested and forwarded to court after he could not provide any satisfactory explanation regarding the possession of disproportionate assets.

Earlier, simultaneous searches conducted by the anti-graft agency had found that Mohapatra was in possession of two buildings in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack along with two costly plots in the twin cities.

Apart from this, the Vigilance had also detected deposits of over Rs 2.86 crore in bank and mutual funds, cash

**Strike against Kolkata doctor death Services hit in hospitals including SCB**

**PNS ■ CUTTACK**

Doctors across the country are now staging a protest against the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at the RG Kar Hospital in Kolkata. Though essential services such as emergency care and critical treatments are available at the hospitals, routine outpatient services (OPDs) and elective surgeries will remain suspended on the weekend.



The doctors across the country, including Odisha, are staging demonstrations as per the nationwide withdrawal of non-emergency medical services for 24 hours as announced by the Indian Medical Association (IMA).

In the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack, patients are having a harrowing time. The worst-affected is the radiology department as the number of ultrasounds has come down to 40 from 100.

A patient from Angul said, "It is now almost four days since I had come to SCB to treat my stomach issue. The

doctors had advised me to go for an ultrasound, but so far it has not been done. The doctors here are on strike. We do not have money to seek treatment in a private hospital."

**Ration card holders to get wheat**

Along with rice again, says Min

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Once again, the ration card holders in Odisha will be entitled to get wheat along with their requisite quota of rice.

to the Centre to provide wheat to consumers. As per plans, the State has made a demand to provide wheat against 20 per cent of the rice quota. Such a demand has been placed after considering the wheat demand by the people.

This was informed by Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Department Minister Krushna Chandra Patra on Saturday.

Earlier, the previous State Government had stopped the supply of wheat to the ration card holders after placing a demand for additional rice. Subsequently, the card holders were provided rice.

According to Patra, the State Government has written

**In Baleswar Online gaming addiction takes youth's life**

**PNS ■ BALESWAR**

In a tragic incident, a 26-year-old youth in Baleswar district allegedly ended his life by hanging himself in his house after losing in an online game on Saturday.



The deceased was identified as Goutam Nayak from Sahajipatna village under Remuna block of the district.

Though family members rushed him to the District Headquarters Hospital, doctors declared him brought dead.

Police reached the spot and launched an investigation into the incident.

As per reports, Goutam had been playing an online game for the last five years. He had invested around Rs 5 lakh in the game. After losing, he tried his best to recover the amount. However, he allegedly committed suicide.

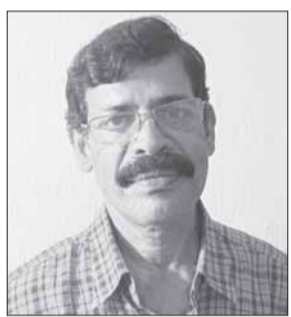
"Goutam was depressed and we had counselled him twice six months ago. However, he committed suicide this time," said a relative of the deceased.

Goutam was reportedly addicted to online gaming during the outbreak of Covid. Though the family members forbade him umpteen times not to play the game, he was not obeying them. He was investing in the game by borrowing money from some of his relatives. His family members had repaid some borrowed money. However, he continued playing the game to recover the money. Eventually, he committed suicide after losses.

**CT & GST Asst Commissioner in Vig net**

**PNS ■ CUTTACK**

The Vigilance police on Saturday conducted simultaneous searches at five locations linked to Binay Bhusan Tripathy, Assistant Commissioner, CT and GST Enforcement Unit, Jajpur.



The raids were conducted on the allegation of siphoning off government money of Rs 5.85 lakh. Tripathy allegedly did not collect taxes and

revealed that during the incumbency of Tripathy as Assistant Commissioner of CT & GST Enforcement Unit, Jajpur, had intercepted the goods vehicle carrying scrap weighing 22,240 kg worth Rs 8,89,600.

Tripathy subsequently contacted the owner of the goods and asked to deposit Rs 3.30 lakh in the cash ledger as tax and further demanded Rs 2.50 lakh towards illegal gratification to release the vehicle and material. Surprisingly, Tripathy allegedly sold the entire scrap to another scrap dealer when the bribe demand was not met. He then realised the tax and allegedly misappropriated the balance amount of Rs 5,85,356.

Tripathy is accused to have collected huge bribe amounts from various transporters/suppliers on grounds of evasion of taxes, the Vigilance said.

Later, Khurania was reported to have discussed security and crowd management arrangements with the temple authorities.

**Special battalion soon for Jagannath Temple**

Says new DGP after visiting shrine

**PNS ■ PURI**

A day after taking charge as Odisha's Director General of Police (DGP), YB Khurania along with his family members visited the Jagannath Temple at Puri and offered prayers before the sibling deities.

Stating that adequate measures would be taken to enhance the security of the temple, he said steps would be initiated to ensure a safe and smooth experience for devotees visiting the shrine.

The police chief further stated that steps would be taken for deployment of a special police battalion to strengthen the security of the temple and ensure safety of devotees. "The most important duty for me as the head of Odisha Police and my police force is to provide better police service to the people of Odisha," he said.

The police chief further stated that steps would be taken for deployment of a special police battalion to strengthen the security of the temple and ensure safety of devotees. "The most important duty for me as the head of Odisha Police and my police force is to provide better police service to the people of Odisha," he said.

**In Cuttack dist Divyang kills widow for property, surrenders**

**PNS ■ CUTTACK**

A man allegedly killed a widow at Panchagaon village under the Tigiria police station in Cuttack district on Friday night and surrendered before the police after committing the crime.

The accused, identified as Kartik Sethi (35), is a resident

of the same village. Locals said Kartik, who is a Divyang, had been living in the widow's house from the time he was around 10 years old and doing household work, had a heated argument with the woman. In a fit of rage, he killed the woman by slitting her throat.

A senior police officer said, "The deceased's son has lodged a complaint that the man staying in their house as an adopted son has killed her mother over property. There is a deep neck injury on the woman's body. Investigation is underway to ascertain the exact motive behind the crime."

After committing the

crime, Kartik surrendered at the Tigiria police station, where he was taken into custody and was interrogated.

Sources alleged that Kartik committed the crime in an attempt to acquire the property of the woman. Police started an investigation into the incident after sending the body for postmortem.

**Asit quits WODC post**

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Former Chief Secretary Asit Kumar Tripathy has resigned from the post of Chairman of the Western Odisha Development Council (WODC).



In a notification on Saturday, the Planning and Convergence Department stated that Tripathy's resignation has been accepted with effect from August 17, 2024.

There are speculations as to why Tripathy decided to quit the WODC head post.

**Time to zero in on urban agriculture**

We need urban agriculture or farming for feeding the rising population. Agree?



**PIYUSH RANJAN ROUT**

Absolutely! Urban farming is where feeding the city isn't just a goal, it's a 'grown-up' solution. But Government often feels agriculture is a rural subject. So we hardly see any city's master plan that talks about urban agriculture; rather mostly it is concrete jungle everywhere. Then who would feed the cities in time of price escalation or pandemic?

It's a big question inside four walls of our boardroom. But we need to encourage urban farming for foods that can be grown in our backyards, such as green vegetables, papaya, coriander, tomatoes, and so on. Because residing in urban areas we get a lot of low-quality and

be used for agriculture to meet at least city's fifty percent requirements. Just like the Government encourages central business districts and Special Economic Zones for real estate as well as hotel and IT industry, it can allow modern agriculture in towers within cities like Bhubaneswar.

The problem with food security is simple. Since we have put much emphasis on cash crops and related farming in rural areas at the expense of food production, we can hardly think up subsidising agriculture in urban areas like we do in rural areas.

In the urban areas finding the right trade-off may not be easy. On the one hand, traditional open field farms may require less energy and technology. But costly manpower is needed, and the production yield

is lower than indoor farming while it is heavily dependent on weather conditions. On the other hand, indoor farms are climate resilient and yield much higher production with a need for fewer manpower. The operation is far more costly, especially in terms of energy use.

Similarly in today's policy framework, environmental considerations come to the fore. It is estimated that to produce 1,000kg of lettuce, 540kg of CO2 emissions are generated from traditional open field farming. Indoor farms and rooftop vertical farms generate 5,744kg and 158kg of CO2 emissions respectively to produce the same amount of lettuce.

It's a big question inside four walls of our boardroom. But we need to encourage urban farming for foods that can be grown in our backyards, such as green vegetables, papaya, coriander, tomatoes, and so on. Because residing in urban areas we get a lot of low-quality and

sometimes dangerous foods from markets. Therefore urban farming should also be part of the food security programmes.

So we need to have an urban planning master plan that should not only talk about rising blocks but also incentivise land that would

hold, demand drivers could also include the F and B sector, supermarkets and wet markets, and schools. Several countries including Italy, Switzerland, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States already practise CSA.

CSA not only allows a direct and adjustable connection between demand and supply which can be further facilitated by online purchase platforms, but also ensures higher nutrition value and greater food safety as the supply chain is more localised and shorter between farms and consumers.

In the context of urban areas in Odisha, particularly Bhubaneswar, the idea of CSA may well be suited for newcomers in the urban farming space, as they can decide on what to grow based on market information and on what consumers want.

By addressing price perceptions and increasing visibility and accessibility, local farms can sow the seeds of change and cultivate a deep rooted affinity for homegrown vegetables among residents of Bhubaneswar.

(Dr Rout is an urban planner. He can be reached on X @piyyushrout)

# K'jhar, M'bhanj leaders oppose B'swar dist in NODC

**PNS ■ KEONJHAR**  
The inclusion of undivided Baleswar district in the proposed North Odisha Development Council (NODC) has been opposed by the leaders of Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj here at a meeting held on August 14, which was convened by former MLA Subarna Naik.



attitude for the council. However, due to certain circumstances, there was no further progress and the matter was kept in cold storage. However, the issue again gathered momentum recently after CM Mohan Charan Majhi announced a task force under the chairmanship of Minister (Urban Development) Krishna Chandra Mohapatra to study the prospects of formation of the council.

area of north Odisha, which is considered as the most neglected area in spite of rich natural resources. If the proposed council is formed for Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj, then there will be more Government focus and more development of the area, they said.

# NITR 'Top Engineering & Research Institute' in Odisha

**PNS ■ ROURKELA**  
The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela has once again demonstrated its academic and research excellence by achieving impressive positions in the prestigious National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024. The NITR has shown notable progress in the 'Overall' category, advancing three positions to attain the 34th rank nationally. The institute's



strong performance in the category has also earned it the 2nd position among all NITs. The NIT Rourkela has made a significant mark in the field of 'Architecture and Planning,' securing a commendable 9th rank in India, placing it among the 'Top 10' colleges in the category. The institute has been recognized as the 'Top Engineering and Research' institution from Odisha, securing the 19th rank in the Engineering category and the 30th rank in the Research category in India. Notably, the NIT Rourkela

has achieved the top spot among all National Institutes of Technology (NITs) in the 'Research' category, highlighting its leadership in cutting-edge research and development. The institute has also been ranked among the top three NITs in the 'Engineering' category, further solidifying its reputation as a premier technical institution in the country. The NIT Rourkela, known for creating an environment that prioritizes innovation and nurtures potential startups, is ranked in the 'Band of Rank 11-50' in the country in the 'Innovation' category of the NIRF rankings. Commenting on the ranking, Director of NIT Rourkela,

Prof K Umamaheshwar Rao stated, "Achieving a top 10 rank in any category in India is a remarkable accomplishment. As the top-ranked institution in Engineering and Research in Odisha, we are now focused on accelerating our efforts to achieve even greater success on a national scale." It may be noted here that the NIRF ranking, established by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, is a highly respected benchmark that assesses institutions across the country on various parameters, including Teaching, Learning and Resources, Research and Professional Practice, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach and Inclusivity, and Perception.

# Purohit pushes for N'pada-Bargarh rly line

**PNS ■ BARGARH**  
Known for his advocacy of the Nuapada-Bargarh railway line project, Bargarh MP Pradeep Purohit has revived the demand. Purohit called on Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw recently and handed him over a letter requesting approval for the project. He emphasised that the development of western Odisha's economy depends on the railway line. He expressed unhappiness



over the fact that though six more Odisha railway projects were approved recently, the Nuapada-Bargarh railway line project was sidestepped. He said promises about the project were made during the last general elections. The delay was aggravating resentment among the local population, he pointed out.

# Fastest-ever in 4 months

## PPA handles 50 MMT cargo, informs Harandh

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The 78th Independence Day was celebrated by the Paradip Port Authority (PPA) with much gusto here. Gracing the occasion as chief guest, Chairman, PPA PL Harandh hoisted the Tricolour. Addressing the occasion, he said that the PPA cargo throughput zoomed past 50 MMT (Million Metric Tonnes) mark in current fiscal by the end of July. After a spectacular last fiscal, the PPA



has made an auspicious beginning to Financial Year 2024-25 and total cargo volume has reached 50.16 MMT (Million Metric Tonnes) within the first four months (122 days), which is the fastest ever in the PPA history. Paradip Port's competitive port tariffs undoubtedly play a significant role in attracting business, but there are several other factors like ease of doing

business initiatives, various system improvement measures and ecosystem of efficiency at the port, which make it the preferred port among the business community for moving EXIM cargo, he said. PPA pilots successfully carried out the first ever STS operation at NOJ of Paradip port to transfer special grade diesel on July 24. They have been

successful in handling ammonium nitrate vessel through Mediterranean mooring method, which is the first of its kind in Indian port history, Harandh said. The port has ambitious plans to expand its capacity to 400 MMTPA by 2030 and 500 MMTPA by 2047. As a part of the augmentation exercise, the port will commission two new berths in northern dock,

one berth in southern dock and one green berth by 2030. Apart from this, 4 semi mechanised berths also will be mechanised by 2030, thus upgrading the port to a level of over 80% mechanization, said Harandh. The Western Dock project with 25 MMTPA capacity is progressing rapidly which will be completed much before the target date of 2028. With the completion of the project, the port will be enabled to handle Cape Vessels, thus reducing the cost of logistics of customers substantially, he said. To develop Paradip Port as a Green Port, one hydrogen berth is proposed to be constructed near South Break Water. Under the National Green Hydrogen Mission, the port has been identified as one of the major ports to be devel-

oped as a hydrogen hub. Plans are underway for the development of port facilities, with a focus on hydrogen adoption and its derivatives such as ammonia and methanol as propulsion fuel for ships. The commencement of container services by major shipping liners like MSC, RCL facilitating direct connectivity to the ports of Colombo and Klangs, is a big leap in operationalisation of container traffic. Additionally, the completion of the Multimodal Logistics Park being developed by CONCOR will further boost container traffic through our port. There are also plans for facilitating setting up of two MDC CFSs in the region, he informed. Harandh also elaborated about the CER and CSR programmes of the port.

# Attack on agitating docs in Kolkata VIMSAR students hold demo, demand security

**NIMAI CHARAN SAHU ■ SAMBALPUR**  
The UG, PG and House Surgeon students of VSS Institute of Medical Science and Research (VIMSAR), Burla, on Friday, launched an indefinite protest against the mob attack on doctors and students protesting at RG Kar Government Medical College in Kolkata. Earlier, on Thursday, a march was held by students on Independence Day. The strike will continue to affect non-emergency services like OPD, IPD, elective OTs, academic events, and labs in the MCH. However, the emergency services like emergency OT, labour, and ICU are stated not to be affected by the ongoing students' protest, sources said. VIMSAR PG Students' Union president Punit Chhabria said, "We will continue strike until our demand to provide justice to our colleague doctors in RG Kar Medical College is not met. A safe workplace for the doctors must be ensured by the Govern-

ment. We have withdrawn from OPD, IPD, and elective OTs. The senior doctors, like professors and assistant professors, can run these services without us if they want." Punit added, "Every medical college in the country has some or other safety issues. We have demanded the authorities to install CCTV cameras and properly light the dim light areas. There should be rooms and toilets for residents, separate for male and female, restricted to entry of attendants. These are of safety demand for VIMSAR." Following the attack on protesting doctors in Kolkata, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) branch in Sambalpur has requested the local administration to declare all hospitals safe zones by providing security. "All major hospitals should have police camps and adequate security personnel and CCTV cameras should be compulsory at all vulnerable points," it demanded. Dr Sanjeeb Kumar Mishra of VIMSAR said, "It's unfortunate that three-layer security is ensured in airports but not at hospitals. Doctors and hospitals are expected to fend for themselves. Doctors deserve better consideration from the Government."

# BJD fact finding team's report 'P'varam dam to submerge 200 tribal villages in M'giri'

**SUDARSHAN CHHOTORAY ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
No public hearing done as per guidelines, report alleged  
A BJD fact finding team on the much talked about Polavaram issue, consisting of nine prominent leaders, found the budgetary allocation by the Union Government showing commitment to complete the dam project by February 2026 as disconcerting. The team raised fear and concern among as the project would affect tribal inhabitants living in 200 villages of Motu and Podia blocks in Malkangiri district. The committee which submitted its report to party president Naveen Patnaik on Mon-

day revealed that one of the most alarming findings was the complete lack of public consultation or hearing as per the standing guidelines of project implementation in the affected villages by the authorities responsible for the Polavaram Project. "There has been no survey conducted to assess the potential damage to human life, livestock, agricultural produce, Government institutions, public infrastructure, or the environment," informed the committee. The team comprising former Ministers Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak, Ramesh Majhi, Rabi Narayan Nanda, former MP Jhinna Hikaka, former MLAs Manohar Randhari, Raghuram Padal, Manas Madkani and party leaders Bhruhu Baxipatra and Iswar Chandra Panigrahi con-

cluded that the residents of the area expressed grave concerns that the Polavaram project would lead to the complete submergence of at least 200 villages affecting more than 6,000 population, majority of whom are tribals in the Motu and Podia blocks. The team was informed that the Motu block headquarters itself would be entirely submerged. At Kaleru village in Andhra Pradesh, where the team interacted with local residents, the latter expressed their extreme anger and frustration over the proposed Polavaram project. They highlighted that their villages are already prone to severe flooding during heavy rains, which has become a recurring issue, occurring at least two to three times every year. The villagers fear that the construction of the Polavaram

dam will exacerbate the flooding situation, leading to further displacement and destruction of their livelihoods. The team also visited Mugi Point, which is the last landmass of Odisha. The location is of great significance as it is the confluence point of the Saberi, Sileru, and Godavari rivers, and also the meeting point of the States of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh. At Mugi Point, the team met with officials from the Irrigation Department. The officials provided alarming information about the anticipated height of the Polavaram dam, which could range between 150 to 180 feet. However, they also informed that no impact assessment has been done yet. Despite repeated requests, the officials from the Polavaram project have not shared the

map or any other relevant documents with them. The team also observed the construction of a bridge by the Chhattisgarh Government over the Sileru river at a considerable height, which further raises concerns about the potential damage that could be caused by the Polavaram project. The team members told The Pioneer that on their visit to the villages of Alama, Muraliguda, Bariwansa, and Binayakpur in the Motu block, the tribal inhabitants shared their agony and pain, which they have been enduring since 2006, as their villages are frequently submerged during heavy rains. They stated that their entire vegetation and agricultural land get flooded at least two to three times a year, causing immense damage to their livelihoods.

The tribal residents vehemently opposed the construction of the Polavaram dam, expressing their fears that the project would lead to the complete submergence of their villages. They appealed to the Odisha Government and the Central Government to halt the construction of the project. The residents also urged BJD chief and Leader of Opposition Patnaik to present their plight at the appropriate forums to ensure that their voices are heard, and the project is stopped. They also expressed a pragmatic view that if the Andhra Pradesh and Central Governments proceed with the project, they should be adequately compensated. They demanded compensation at least three times the estimated damage to their property and livelihoods.

# Vedanta celebrates I-Day with 4K students



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest aluminium producer, celebrated the Independence Day with great patriotic fervour, embodying the spirit of unity and freedom. The event featured interac-

tive activities such as drawing and patriotic singing competitions, bringing together students, teachers, and the community to express their love for the country. "Participating in the drawing competition ignited a pro-

found sense of patriotism and deepened my love for my country. It was an incredible experience that allowed me to express my national pride through art. I am truly grateful to Vedanta for organising such an inspiring and engaging event that celebrated our shared values," said Government SSD High School, Gunpur student Trailoknath Bisoi. These initiatives highlight Vedanta Aluminium's dedication to positively impacting lives in and beyond its operational areas. By collaborating closely with local authorities, welfare organisations, and community members, Vedanta Aluminium is driving socio-economic transformation in rural Odisha and contributing to the region's growth and advancement.

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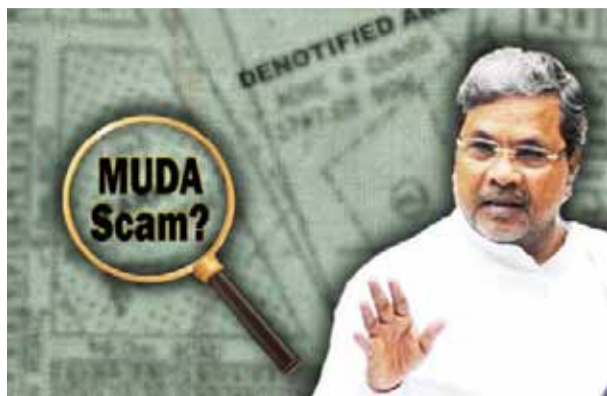
# K'taka CM must quit for fair MUDA scam probe: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday asked Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to step down from his post to ensure an impartial probe into his alleged role in the MUDA site allotment "scam" as it welcomed the Governor's decision to sanction his prosecution in the case.

BJP MPs Sambit Patra and Tejasvi Surya, at a press conference, rejected the Congress' allegation that Karnataka Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot's decision was motivated by politics and claimed that it was a serious case of corruption involving Siddaramaiah and his family. Taking a swipe at Mallikarjun Kharge, Patra said the Congress President went to Bengaluru to "protect" the Karnataka Chief Minister and wondered when will he go to Kolkata which is witnessing massive protests against the alleged rape and murder of a trainee woman doctor at a West Bengal Government-run medical college and hospital.

Surya said the Karnataka Government has constituted two commissions, one headed by an ex-IAS officer and another by a former High Court Judge, to look into the



allegations of corruption. It was an acknowledgement of irregularity, said the BJP MP from Bangalore South Lok Sabha constituency. In the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) 'scam', it is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi in an upmarket area in Mysuru that had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by MUDA. MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where MUDA developed a residential layout. Giving details of the alleged scam, Surya claimed the Karnataka Chief Minister's wife was allocated 14 prime upmarket sites in Mysuru in

compensation for a parcel of rural land which was first bought by their son-in-law from its original owner and then gifted to her. Siddaramaiah was first a Deputy Chief Minister and then Chief Minister when decisions were taken related to the land, while his son was a member of the Mysuru body which made the allotment, he claimed. Surya said any State probe agency reporting to the Chief Minister is unlikely to carry out a fair probe into the matter as he demanded Siddaramaiah's resignation. It is a scam like the National Heard case and the suspected hanky-panky in the allotment of land to Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law Robert Vadra, he alleged. Patra claimed that the entire "scam" runs into Rs 4,000

crore, adding mockingly that Congress Leaders do not commit any scam less than thousands of crore. The alleged National Herald scam in which Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi are the main accused is worth Rs 5,000 crore, he said. Governors used to sit over such files due to political compulsions but the corrupt will not be spared under the Government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Patra said. Karnataka Governor Gehlot on Saturday granted sanction for the prosecution of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in connection with the MUDA site allotment "scam". Siddaramaiah has repeatedly said that the Congress Government led by him is ready to fight legally and politically, in case the Cabinet's advice to withdraw the "show cause notice" to him, and grants permission for prosecution. Based on a petition filed by advocate-activist TJ Abraham, Gehlot had issued a "show cause notice" on July 26 directing the Chief Minister to submit his reply to the allegations against him within seven days as to why permission for prosecution should not be granted against him.

# WB Govt accused of silencing doctors, media in cover-up bid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday accused the West Bengal Government of cracking down on doctors and a section of the media for demanding justice in the rape and murder case of a trainee doctor, terming it the "most sinister and institutional cover-up" to save the culprits. BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla claimed that the sole agenda of the Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee-led government is "silencing the truth, saving rapists and destroying evidence at any cost". He told reporters that 43 doctors were transferred in the state, including a few to remote areas, for allegedly raising their voice for justice while police have been warning citizens and journalists of legal action for their crusade for justice. In a swipe at Banerjee for leading a march seeking justice in the case, Poonawalla asked as to what she was protesting when she was in charge of home and health ministries. The priority of police is not to act against thousands of vandals who stormed RG Kar Medical Hospital but to act against those raising their voice for justice, he claimed, adding that some journalists have had to deactivate their social media accounts. "The TMC has come to represent an authoritarian



and Talibani mindset," the BJP spokesperson alleged, adding that the biggest of dictators will admire Banerjee for her action in this case. Poonawalla said TMC spokesperson Santanu Sen was removed from his position for saying that there were many complaints against the college Principal, who was immediately rehabilitated by the Government after his decision to quit. There is outrage across the country and everybody is demanding justice but the Government's priority is to save criminals, he said. Poonawalla also targeted Opposition INDIA bloc parties for their "conspiracy of silence". The postgraduate trainee doctor was allegedly raped and murdered while on duty at the RG Kar MCH last week. A mob entered the hospital in the early hours of Thursday and ransacked the stage where junior doctors had been demonstrating against the alleged rape and murder of the doctor and demanding security in their workplace. The mob also vandalised the emergency department, nursing unit and medicine store.

# Multilateral bodies failed to deliver during global crises: Jaishankar

PNS  
NEW DELHI

India on Saturday once again strongly pitched for reforms of key multilateral institutions, saying it is an "undeniable" fact that when the global order faced "critical challenges", solutions did not emerge from them. In his address at the third India-hosted virtual Voice of the Global South Summit, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar also called for facilitating low-cost financing and critical technologies to developing countries. "It is an undeniable fact that even as the global order faced critical challenges, solutions did not emerge from the multilateral domain," he said, calling for revitalising multilateralism. "The reason is both the obsolescence and the polarisation of multilateral organisations," he said, speaking at the foreign ministers' session of the summit. "Here too, India has argued for reformed multilateralism and sought reforms of Multilateral Development Banks through the G20. As a group, we need to press home our case," Jaishankar said. India has been consistently pressing for reforms of multilateral institutions, including the United



Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, arguing that they must reflect the realities of the current world. The external affairs minister put across his views in four specific areas of strengthening economic resilience, climate change and energy transitions, revitalising multilateralism and democratising digital transformations. On economic resilience, he said the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts and climate events have driven home the necessity for reliable and resilient supply chains. "Not just that, there is also an acute need to diversify production itself in various domains to de-risk the international economy," he said. "What we earlier argued for in terms of socio-economic justice is today an equally compelling logic for the entire world in terms of predictability," he noted.



# In fresh push to lateral entry UPSC advertises 45 posts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

Forty-five specialists will soon be joining on key posts of joint secretaries, directors and deputy secretaries in different central Ministries as part of the Modi government's ambitious plan to infuse fresh talent to further improve ease of governance. Usually, such posts are manned by the officers of all-India services -- the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service (IFS) -- and other Group A services, among others. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Saturday advertised 45 posts -- 10 of joint secretaries and 35 of directors/deputy secretaries to be filled through the lateral entry mode on contract basis. "The Government of India has submitted the requisitions for lateral recruitment of joint secretary and director/deputy secretary level officers. Accordingly, on line applications are invited from talented and motivated Indian nationals willing to contribute towards nation building to join the Government at the level of joint secretary or director/deputy secretary..." reads the advertisement. The vacancies in different Ministries/Departments with headquarters at New Delhi, are to be filled on contract basis (on deputation for officers of States/UT cadres, public sector undertakings (PSUs), autonomous bodies, statutory organisation, universities, recognised research institutes) for a period of three years (extendable to five years depending upon performance) through website <https://www.upsonline.nic.in> by September 17, it said. The 10 posts of joint secretaries are in Home, Finance and Steel ministries among others. Thirty-five posts of director/deputy secretary-level will be filled in the

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Civil Aviation and Information & Broadcasting among others. The latest induction is being done through the lateral entry mode referred to as the appointment of private sector specialists in Government Departments -- aimed at bringing fresh talent and perspective into the Government. The lateral recruitment, at the levels of joint secretary, director and deputy secretary in the Central Government, has been undertaken since 2018 to appoint persons for specific assignments, keeping in view their specialised knowledge and expertise in the domain area. The officers at these levels play an important role in policy-making. So far, 63 appointments have been made through lateral entry out of which 35 appointments were from the private sector. At present, 57 officers are in positions in Ministries/Departments, according to the latest data. The posts of Joint Secretary (Policy & Plan), NDMA, Ministry of Home Affairs, Joint Secretary (Emerging Technologies) and Joint Secretary (Semiconductors and Electronics) under Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Joint Secretary (Digital Economy, Fin Tech and Cyber Security), Department of Financial Services and Joint Secretary (Investment), Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and Joint Secretary (Shipping), Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, among others are to be filled through the latest recruitment drive. Of the total of 35 posts of Directors/Deputy Secretaries, a highest of eight are to be filled in the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, followed by three each in the Ministry of Jal Shakti and Ministry of Law and Justice, among others.

# Venugopal to head PAC to keep close eye on Govt expenditure

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

Senior Congress Leader KC Venugopal will head the Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which keeps a close eye on Government expenditure, according to the Lok Sabha Secretariat. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla also constituted four other Parliamentary panels, including Estimates and Public Undertakings committees which will be chaired by BJP Leaders. Public Accounts, Public Undertakings and Estimates committees are the key financial committees of Parliament tasked with keeping a watch on the Government's accounts and the functioning of public sector firms. The Lok Sabha Secretariat issued a bulletin on Friday announcing the constitution of parliamentary committees. The Committee on Welfare of OBCs will be headed by Ganesh Singh of the BJP. His party colleague Faggan Singh Kulaste will head the Committee on Welfare of SCs and STs. BJP Leader Sanjay Jaiswal will head the Committee on Estimates while his party colleague Baijayant Panda will chair the Committee on Public Undertakings.



The committees have a tenure of one year and have members from both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. They are elected by the two Houses. The PAC is usually headed by a senior Lok Sabha member of the principal Opposition party. Congress Leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury headed the PAC for five years. Unlike the previous Lok Sabha, committees in the 18th Lok Sabha have taken shape mostly through consensus instead of elections. Besides the PAC, Committee on Public Undertakings, Committee on Estimates, Committee on Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Joint Committee on Office of Profit and Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes have been constituted without an election this time.

# Rajnath to inaugurate Indian Coast Guard's MRCC building at Chennai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will inaugurate on Sunday the newly constructed state-of-the-art Indian Coast Guard's Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) building in Chennai, the Ministry said on Saturday. The Defence Ministry in a statement said the MRCC underscores the ICG's commitment to safeguarding lives at sea and ensuring swift response in critical situations. On Sunday, Rajnath will also inaugurate two additional key facilities, at the Regional Marine Pollution Response Centre (RMPRC) in Chennai and the Coast Guard Air



Enclave (CGAE) in Pudukcherry. "This landmark occasion highlights a major advancement in maritime safety and regional coordination, marking a significant step towards enhancing maritime security and emergency response along the Indian coastline," the statement said. The new MRCC is set to become an iconic structure, significantly enhancing the coordination and effectiveness of maritime

rescue operations for mariners and fishermen in distress at sea, officials said. The RMPRC, located on Chennai Port premises, represents a pioneering step in marine pollution management. As the first of its kind in the region, the RMPRC will play a crucial role in coordinating responses to marine pollution incidents, particularly oil and chemical spills, in the waters adjoining coastal states. The Coast Guard Air Enclave at Pudukcherry marks a significant milestone for the ICG and will be instrumental in bolstering maritime security along Pudukcherry and south Tamil Nadu coast, the Ministry said.



# BJP filling vacancies by undermining quota: Cong

PNS  
NEW DELHI

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday alleged the BJP is deliberately making recruitments in jobs in a manner that the SC, ST, OBC classes can be kept away from reservation. He asserted it is necessary to fully implement the provisions of economic, social and political justice contained in the Constitution and that is why the Congress is demanding a caste census for social justice. In a social media post in Hindi, Kharge said, "BJP, which has ripped apart the Constitution, has made a double attack on reservation!" "Today the Modi Government has issued an advertisement to fill at least 45 posts of Joint Secretary, Directors and Deputy Secretary at the Centre through lateral entry. Is there SC, ST, OBC and EWS reservation in this?" Kharge alleged. "Under a well-planned conspiracy, the BJP is deliberately making such recruitments in jobs so that SC, ST, OBC classes can be kept away from reservation," the Congress President alleged. The "reservation scam" in the appointment of 69,000 assistant teachers in Uttar Pradesh has now been exposed by a decision of the High Court, he claimed. Congress Leader Rahul Gandhi had raised the voice of the deprived candidates by writing a letter to the Prime Minister in the "reservation scam" in Dalit and backward classes in March 2024, he said. "The Yogi Government had filled these posts by doing injustice to the candidates in which the constitutional right of reservation of Dalit and backward classes was snatched from them," Kharge alleged. "Now we know why the Union Minister, who is a BJP ally, drew the attention of the Government to the irregularities in job reservation," he said.

# IAF, Army hold para-drop operation at 15,000 feet

PNS  
NEW DELHI

The IAF and the Army have jointly carried out a "first-of-its-kind precise para-drop operation of the Aarogya Maitri Health Cube at a high-altitude of about 15,000 feet, the Defence Ministry said on Saturday. These critical trauma care cubes have been indigenously developed under Project BHISHM (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita and Maitri). The operation was conducted in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of providing critical supplies to affected areas as part of humanitarian aid and disaster relief (HADR), it said. The IAF utilised its advanced tactical transport aircraft C-130J Super Hercules to airlift and precisely para-drop the cube. The Indian Army's Para Brigade, known for its operational acumen and agility, played an instrumental role in the successful



deployment of the trauma care cube, utilising their advanced precision drop equipment, the Defence Ministry said in a statement. This demonstration underscored the capability of such specialised military assets to effectively support HADR operations, even in the most remote and mountainous regions, it said. The successful para-drop and deployment of the BHISHM trauma care cube exemplified the synergy and jointness of the armed forces and underscored the commitment to providing timely and effective assistance as first responders, it added.

# Poachers target lesser-known species: WCCB

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

With heightened security measures making it increasingly difficult for the traffickers to smuggle high-profile species such as tigers and elephants, their focus seems to be now on lesser-known species like musk deer, avian species, otters, and monitor lizards, according to the data available from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB). These species are often disguised as plant roots or synthetic materials, making them easier to smuggle due to their relative obscurity and lack of widespread awareness, say wildlife experts. "The illegal trade in these lesser-known species is accelerating due to heightened security for charismatic species and a general lack of awareness. The presence of fake wildlife articles further complicates detection, making it nearly impossible for law enforcement to register cases

without concrete evidence," said an official from the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), an organization engaged in wildlife conservation in the country. During various operations since 2024 till date, the WTI official said that a staggering 128 kg of pangolin scales were seized. On average, 1 kg of scales can be extracted from one Indian pangolin, and 500-600 grams from one Chinese pangolin, indicating significant poaching activity. Another commonly trafficked item is hatha jodi, the hemipenis of the monitor lizard. In the last eight months, 590 hatha jodi were confiscated, revealing the rampant illegal trade of monitor lizards across India. The recent seizure of hathjodi was in early July during a joint operation by WCCB, the forest department, and Amritsar police along with the WTI. The raid resulted in the confiscation of 137 hatha jodi, 38 bear bile vials, 69 sea fans, 1.4 kg of organ pipe



corals, and 4.814 kg of gorgonian corals. These items, derived from Schedule I species under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, were intercepted as they were being transported through Delhi from Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir. In fact throughout the first quarter of the 2024 as per the WCCB data, enforcement officials were on their toe, curbing illegal wildlife trade. For instance, in Gujarat early this month, the wildlife security agency confiscated a Red Sand Boa snake and a Barn Owl, while Bihar saw the seizure of hundreds of

mongoose brushes. Uttar Pradesh's efforts led to the capture of 36 kg of calipee and 745 turtles. Other significant recoveries included 250 kg of processed sea cucumbers in Tamil Nadu, 9 kg of pangolin scales in Assam, and various wildlife parts in Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. In Madhya Pradesh, Carcass of sloth bear, body parts and meat of Barking deer, wild boar, peafowl and bear reproductive organ were seized in joint operation conducted by WCCB, STSF and MP Forest department at South Seoni forest division in February 25 while in West

Bengal, two jars suspected snake venom weighting 2.029 kg and 1.769 kg were seized on February 27. Also five Channa Barca, a rare species of snakehead which is endemic to the upper Brahmaputra River basin in northeastern India and Bangladesh were seized in joint operation conducted by WCCB, West Bengal Forest Department at Baruipur. Additionally, other lesser-known items seized were sea fans, mongoose hair brushes, turtle carapaces, and live birds along with their eggs—all protected under Schedule I and Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. However, there were a few cases involving large animals like big cats too. In Gujarat's Valsad, authorities seized a leopard skin and four leopard paws earlier this year. In Madhya Pradesh, a tiger skin was confiscated in Bichiya Mandla, underscoring ongoing challenges in wildlife protection.

# Interim govt committed to free & fair polls: Yunus

PTI n DHAKA

The caretaker government in Bangladesh is committed to ensuring a transition to inclusive and pluralistic democracy and creating an environment in which "free, fair and participatory elections can be held," its head Mohammad Yunus assured the international community on Saturday.

Yunus, the Chief Advisor of the interim government, said while addressing the third Voice of Global South Summit which was hosted by India in a virtual format.

"You all are aware that Bangladesh witnessed a 'Second Revolution' on 5th August 2024, through a mass uprising spearheaded by our valiant students and joined by the masses," the 84-year-old Nobel laureate said, referring to the political turmoil in his country and the resignation of prime minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5.

Noting that the current interim government led by him was

sworn in on August 8, Yunus said, "Our government is committed to ensuring a transition to inclusive and pluralistic democracy and creating an environment in which free, fair and participatory elections can be held," Yunus assumed charge of the interim government amid ongoing violence and vandalism, including against the minorities.

"Our task is now to carry out vital reforms in our electoral system, judiciary, local government, media, economy and education," Yunus said at the summit being attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"I invite you to visit Dhaka soon. Otherwise, you may miss something important. Much of Dhaka has turned into the graffiti capital of the world. Young students and children aged as young as 12-13 have been painting the walls of this 400-year-old city with images of a New Democratic environment-friendly Bangladesh," he said.

"There is no central planning

or guidance for that. No budget support from anybody. It is just an outpouring of their emotions and commitment to the goals of the Second Revolution," the noted economist said.

Former Prime Minister Hasina, 76, fled to India on August 5 after being forced to resign from her post amidst unprecedented anti-government student-led protests.

The student-led protests demanding reforms in government job quotas evolved into a government-toppling movement in early August.

Yunus further said, "We must place the youth and students, who constitute a significant portion of the Global South's population at the heart of our strategies. Two-thirds of our population are youth. They are the most powerful segment of the society. They are different. They are committed to creating a new world. They are capable. They are technologically far ahead of the previous generation..."

He also emphasised redesign-



ing the financial system to make sure that wealth is shared by all.

"It should not be a one-way path for wealth. We must ensure financial services for all people, particularly women and youth. We can learn from each other how this can be done successfully."

He also mentioned 'The Bengali language movement' in 1952.

"In 1952 the Bangladeshi students sacrificed their lives for their mother tongue. It inspired struggles for the right to speak in the mother language all over the world. Some seven

decades later our students-led Second Revolution is inspiring youth throughout the global south to raise their voice for democracy, human rights, dignity, equality and shared prosperity."

"I am honoured to be the oldest 'young person' to take part in this revolution and help them make their dreams come true. They need support from all of you," Yunus said.

"Being old should not mean that you have to retire, withdraw yourself from economic activities. Human creativity never stops on a date fixed by the state. It doesn't stop until the last breath. We may work together to see how to make societies supportive of the creativity of all people as long they live," the octogenarian economist said.

During the anti-government protest in Bangladesh, over 230 people died during violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina government on August 5, taking the death toll to 560 during the three weeks of violence.

# 10 killed in Israeli strike in southern Lebanon

AP n NABATIEH (LEBANON)

An Israeli strike in southern Lebanon early Saturday killed at least 10 Syrian nationals, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

The strike on Wadi al-Kfour in Nabatieh province is among the deadliest in Lebanon since the Hezbollah militant group and Israeli military started trading strikes on Oct. 8, a day after Hamas attacked southern Israel and sparked the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. Hezbollah maintains that it will stop its attacks once a cease-fire is reached in the Gaza Strip.

Among the dead were a woman and her two children, the ministry said. Five others were wounded, two of whom in critical condition.

An Arabic-language spokesperson for the Israeli military, Avichay Adraee, said the strike in the southern province targeted a weapons depot belonging to

Hezbollah.

Mohammad Shoaib, who runs a slaughterhouse in Wadi al-Kfour, said the area struck was an "industrial and civilian area" that contained factories producing bricks, metal, and aluminum, as well as a dairy farm.

The uncle of three of the people killed in the strike said they were factory workers who were in their housing accommodation when they were hit. He denied that there were weapons at the facility.

"There was nothing at all like that," Hussein Shahoud said. "There was metal for construction, for building, for all kinds of purposes."

Hezbollah has not immediately commented on the strikes.

The Lebanese government and international governments have scrambled for weeks to put an end to the monthlong clashes, with the region on a knife edge since July.

An Israeli strike last month in southern Beirut killed Hezbollah's

top commander, whom Israel accused of leading a rocket attack on the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights that killed 12 youths.

Hours later, an explosion widely blamed on Israel killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in the Iranian capital.

Both Tehran and Hezbollah vowed to retaliate, but have not yet launched strikes as diplomatic endeavors and Gaza cease-fire talks continue in Qatar.

Hezbollah and Israel fought a six-week war in the summer of 2006 that ended in a draw. Hezbollah's military capabilities have developed significantly since then.

More than 500 people have been killed in exchanges since Oct. 8, most of them fighters with Hezbollah and other armed groups but also including around 100 civilians and noncombatants. In Israel, 22 soldiers and 24 civilians have been killed. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced on both sides of tense frontier.

# Nearly 650 people killed in recent violence in Bangladesh: UN report

PTI n DHAKA/GENEVA

Nearly 650 people have been killed in the recent unrest in Bangladesh between July 16 and August 11, the UN Human Rights Office has said in a preliminary report, suggesting a thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into reports of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions.

According to the 10-page report titled "Preliminary Analysis of Recent Protests and Unrest in Bangladesh", nearly 400 deaths were reported between July 16 and August 4 while around 250 people were reportedly killed following the new wave of protests between August 5 and 6, leading to the ouster of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The available public reports by media and the protest movement itself claimed that between July 16 and August 11, more than 600 people were killed due to the wave of violence following the Anti-Discriminatory

Student demonstrations. The number of reported killings in revenge attacks since that time remains to be determined, the report, released on Friday in Geneva, said.

Several deaths were reported between August 7 and 11, including those who died while undergoing medical treatment for injuries sustained in the violence, the UNHCR report suggested.

Those killed include protesters, bystanders, journalists and several security forces personnel, it said, adding that thousands of protesters and bystanders were injured, with hospitals overwhelmed by the influx of protesters.

The report said the reported death toll was likely an underestimate as information collection faced a hindrance by restrictions on movement due to the curfew and the internet shutdown.

Furthermore, hospitals were reportedly prevented by state authorities from providing

details of those killed and injured, the report suggested. Triggered by the reinstatement of a quota system for the allocation of jobs in civil services, the student protests in Bangladesh in mid-June turned violent, with reports of severe human rights violations by security forces.

"There are strong indications, warranting further independent investigation, that the security forces used unnecessary and disproportionate force in their response to the situation," the report said.

"Additional, alleged violations, that also warrant thorough, impartial and transparent investigations included extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detention, enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment, as well as severe restrictions on the exercise of freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly," the report said.

There were also reports of looting, arson and attacks on members of religious minorities, as

well as reprisals against and revenge killings of members of the former ruling party and police following the resignation of Hasina on August 5, the report said.

On August 15, mobs armed with bamboo sticks, iron rods and pipes reportedly assaulted the former prime minister's Awami League Party supporters who had gathered to pay their tributes to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on his death anniversary.

The UN report emphasised the importance of restoring law and order, as well as the need for effective measures to prevent further loss of life, violence and acts of reprisals.

"Law enforcement agencies need to receive clear instructions and training on the use of force, in line with international human rights standards. They must protect populations at risk against any retaliatory or revenge violence, including minority communities," the report said.

# Missile hits Ukraine as Kyiv's troops push into Kursk region

AP n MOSCOW

A Russian missile strike sparked a blaze in the Ukrainian city of Sumy on Saturday, while Ukrainian forces continued to push into Russia's Kursk border region. Two people were injured in the Sumy strike, which also damaged cars and nearby buildings, said Ukraine's State Emergency Service. It said that the hit had involved an Iskander-K cruise missile and an aerial bomb.

Ukraine's air force also said it had shot down 14 Russian drones overnight, including over the Kyiv region.

Meanwhile, fighting continued in Russia's Kursk region, where Ukrainian troops have been deployed since August 6 in a bid to divert the Kremlin's military focus away from the front line in Ukraine.

Alexander Kots, military correspondent with the pro-Kremlin newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda, said that Ukrainian pressure in Kursk "is not weakening yet."

"In the main sections of the ragged front, the situation has stabilized. But there are areas where the enemy continues to try to expand its bridgehead," he wrote on his Telegram channel.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Friday that Ukraine had destroyed a bridge across the Seim River in the Glushkovskiy district with US-made HIMARS rockets, marking their first use in the Kursk region.

Zakharova's statement couldn't be independently confirmed, although the Washington-based think tank the Institute for the Study of War said that geolocated footage published on August 16 showed that the bridge had collapsed following the strike.

Russian military bloggers said that the destruction of bridges would impede deliveries of supplies to Russian forces, but not cut them off completely.

"No one has cancelled the pontoons," said Kots, stressing that



A damaged monument to Soviet founder Vladimir Lenin stands in a central square in Sudzha, Kursk region. AP/PTI

the Kursk incursion is notable for its size, speed, the reported involvement of battle-hardened Ukrainian brigades and the length of time they have stayed inside Russia. As many as 10,000 Ukrainian troops are involved, according to Western military analysts.

The incursion, which Russian authorities say has led to the evacuation of more than 120,000 civilians, came as a shock to many, Yan Furtsev, an activist and member of local opposition party Yabloko, told the AP.

Ukrainian forces have also captured a number of Russian troops as they have moved across the region.

On Friday, the AP visited a detention centre in Ukraine, the location of which cannot be disclosed due to security restrictions. Dozens of POWs were seen, some of them walking with their hands tied behind their backs while a guard led them down a corridor. Some had rations of a thin soup with cabbage and onions.

# Teenager shoots Indian-origin man dead in US

PTI n WASHINGTON

A 36-year-old Indian-origin man has been shot and killed after a teenage boy robbed a convenience store in the US state of North Carolina, authorities said.

Mainank Patel, the owner of the Tobacco House store at 2580 Airport Road, died after the shooting on Tuesday morning, the Salisbury Post reported.

A juvenile male is in custody for the crime, according to Rowan County Sheriff's Office. Because the young man is a juvenile, deputies are not able to release his name.

The juvenile was arrested Tuesday evening but no additional details have been released.

Deputies initially responded to the Tobacco House convenience store in response to a 911 hang-up call, said Captain Mark McDaniel, public information officer for the Rowan County Sheriff's Office.

While they were en route to the location, communications were received that there had been a shooting. When the deputies arrived on scene they found Patel suffering from multiple gunshot wounds, said McDaniel.

The victim was taken to Novant Health Rowan Medical Center and then transported to Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte, where he died as a result of his injuries, the report added.

A security video showed a tall, slender white male running across the store parking lot away from the building. He was wearing black shorts, a black hoodie, a black ski mask and white Nike tennis shoes with burgundy logos, and appeared to have a black handgun in his hand, said McDaniel.

McDaniel said that the sheriff's office is not certain of the motive in the shooting, but that it currently appears to have been a robbery. No one else was injured.



American businessman and Microsoft founder Bill Gates during flagging off the First India Day celebrations, in Greater Seattle area, USA. PTI

# Rana can be extradited to India, rules US court

PTI n WASHINGTON

In a huge setback to Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a US court has ruled that the Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman could be extradited to India where is wanted for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack carried out by Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists.

"The (India US Extradition) Treaty permits Rana's extradition," the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit said in its ruling on Thursday.

Ruling on an appeal filed by 63-year-old Rana, a panel of judges of the US Court of

Appeals for the Ninth Circuit affirmed the District Court in the Central District of California's denial of his habeas corpus petition challenging a magistrate judge's certification of his as extraditable to India for his alleged participation in terrorist attacks in Mumbai.

Rana, currently lodged in a jail in Los Angeles, faces charges for his role in the 26/11 Mumbai attack and is known to be associated with Pakistani-American Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the terror incident that hit India's financial hub in

2008.

Rana has the option of appealing against the ruling. He still has not run out of all the legal options to prevent his extradition to India.

Under the limited scope of habeas review of an extradition order, the panel held that Rana's alleged offence fell within the terms of the extradition treaty between the United States and India, which included a Non Bis in Idem (double jeopardy) exception to extraditability "when the person sought has been convicted or acquitted in the Requested State for the offence for which extradition is requested".

# Pak Intel agencies continue to abduct critics, reveal families

PTI n LAHORE

Intelligence agencies in Pakistan continue to abduct social media activists and vloggers for criticising the government and the powerful military establishment in the country, their families have alleged and approached courts in Punjab province.

Two social media activists of former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, Naem Ahmad Yasin and Arsalan Akbar, and vlogger-comedian Aun Khosa, have allegedly been arrested by intelligence agencies in the Punjab province of Pakistan.

They have been reported "missing" by their families.

The Shehbaz Sharif government and the establishment have been facing criticism on social media for "abducting" Khosa for singing a parody song on soaring electricity bills.

Days before his abduction, Khosa had sung a song "Bill Bill Pakistan", a parody of the

famous Pakistani song "Dil Dil Pakistan" and released a video on social media criticising the high prices of electricity and extra taxes added to it. Khosa also took on the worthlessness of the Pakistani passport and the cash-strapped country's loans. The comedian has a following of 137,000 on YouTube.

The families of three "missing persons" filed petitions in the Lahore High Court which on Friday directed the Punjab police chief to recover Khosa by August 20.

Binish Iqbal, the wife of Khosa, told LHC Justice Syed Shahbaz Ali Rizvi that unidentified persons barged into her house a few days ago and manhandled her husband before bundling him into a van and speeding away.

Separately, LHC Justice Shakil Ahmad directed the Punjab police to recover missing PTI activist Arsalan Akbar before August 28.

The PTI has expressed concern over recent "forced disappear-

ances" of its political workers. Professor Mazhar-ul-Hassan and Zahoor-ul-Hassan, the brothers of PTI former social media head Azhar Mashwani, and Khan's close aide Shahbaz Gill's brother Ghulam Shabbir have also been missing since June last year.

"Whereabouts of all five individuals remain unknown despite their families' efforts to locate them by approaching the police and the court. A pattern of enforced disappearance is emerging, seemingly to intimidate those living abroad, who are critical of the Pakistani government," a PTI official said on Saturday.

He urged the judiciary to ensure the safe recovery of all the missing people associated with the PTI.

Amnesty International has also demanded that the Pakistan government immediately disclose their whereabouts and "ensure an effective, independent, and impartial investigation into these disappearances".

Army officials, civic authorities and scientists on Saturday confirmed that the massive flash floods in a high-altitude village in the Everest region of Nepal were caused by two glacial lake outbursts leading to widespread devastation. Hurling down the steep slopes, carrying boulders, debris and muck with it, the floods devastated more than half of the homes in Thame village in the scenic Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality-5. The incident occurred at around 1.30 pm local time on Friday.

Although no deaths have been reported so far, one person is reportedly missing, news portal MyRepublica said about the damage caused due to the flooded Thame rivulet, one of the tributaries of Dudhkoshi River.

"Authorities reported that around 93 villagers who fled to higher altitudes or were rescued are now being sheltered in an army camp, while 42 others have been temporarily placed in a nearby community building," The Himalayan Times newspaper reported.

# Glacial lake outburst devastated Everest village

PTI n KATHMANDU

A team of experts and authorities were dispatched in a helicopter to inspect and monitor the disaster site and investigate the cause of the sudden flood and mudslide that struck the village. The helicopter went right upstream up to the glacial lakes in higher reaches.

"Following the aerial inspection, the Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality confirms that the flood was triggered by the outburst of a glacial lake, one of the many lakes situated above the valley," The Himalayan Times said.

The Kathmandu Post quoted officials to report that two of the five lakes formed above the Thame village had burst and flooded downstream areas. Glacial lake outburst floods, or GLOF, are a sudden release of water from a lake fed by glacier melt that has formed at the side, in front, within, beneath, or on the surface of a glacier. Experts have warned that global warming poses major threats to glacial lakes and subsequent GLOFs in the Hindu Kush Himalayan Region.

Corroborating that it was indeed a GLOF, the Cryosphere Society

of Nepal (CSN), a group of Nepal-based glaciologists working in the Himalayas, said in a post on X: "The lake, which is approximately 39,081.87 square

meters in size and located upstream of Thame Village in Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality, caused the devastation in Thame Village on August 16th.

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**CORRIGENDUM**

This is with reference to the Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited advertisement of Hiring of Ambulance (ALS & BLS Type) of 3x560 MW Thermal Power Plant released on 17 August 2024 in financial express all edition & pncor all edition please note that submission date of tender fee for issue of bid document to be extended to 26<sup>th</sup> August 2024 instead of 18<sup>th</sup> August 2024. All other contents shall remain same.

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# Majority blue-collar jobs pay less than ₹ 20,000 per month: Report

PTI | MUMBAI

Majority of blue-collar jobs in India pay within the salary range of Rs 20,000 or less per month, suggesting that a substantial portion of the workforce is grappling with financial strain, struggling to meet essential needs such as housing, healthcare, and education, a report has said.

Over 57.63 per cent of blue-collar jobs fall within the salary range of Rs 20,000 or less per month, indicating that many workers earn close to the minimum wage, tech-enabled blue collar recruitment platform WorkIndia said in a report. In addition, the report revealed that about 29.34 per cent of blue-collar jobs are in the moderate earning bracket, with salaries ranging from Rs 20,000-40,000 per month. Workers falling under this category, experience marginally improved financial security but are far from achieving a comfortable standard of living, it said. The income in this range may



cover necessities but it leaves little room for savings or investments, which highlights the economic vulnerability of a large segment of the blue-collar workforce, it added.

"The data reveals a significant concentration of low-wage jobs and limited opportunities for higher earnings within the blue-collar sector. This disparity not only reflects the economic challenges faced by a large portion of the workforce but also has broader implications for

social stability and economic growth," WorkIndia CEO and co-founder Nilesh Dugarwal told PTI. Addressing these issues may require targeted interventions such as skill development, wage reforms, and the creation of more high-paying job opportunities, he added. The report further revealed that a very small segment of the workforce, constituting only 10.71 per cent, get salaries over Rs 40,000-60,000 per month. This higher earning bracket

among the blue collar reflects the presence of specialised skills or experience among these workers, yet the restricted availability of such positions suggests that upward mobility within the segment remains challenging, it said. Only 2.31 per cent of blue-collar jobs offer salaries exceeding Rs 60,000, which is an extremely small percentage that signifies the scarcity of well-paying opportunities in this sector, it stated. Positions in this top bracket are typically highly-specialised or involve significant responsibility, making them accessible only to a select few, the report added. The report is based on an analysis of job data collected from the WorkIndia platform over the past two years, which includes over 24 lakh job postings across various industries. The report said, field sales positions lead the list of the highest-paying blue-collar roles, with 33.84 per cent of roles offering salaries above Rs 40,000 per month.

# Identify high-value cash transactions at hotels, hospitals: CBDT to I-T Dept

PTI | NEW DELHI

Rampant cash transactions in business sectors like hotels, luxury brand sales, hospitals and IVF clinics need to be checked in a "non-intrusive" manner, the CBDT has asked the I-T department.

The apex body for direct taxes administration in the country — the Central Board of Direct Taxes — has also asked the tax department to undertake "concerted efforts" to recover arrear demands which have been witnessing a "steep rise" since the last financial year. The CBDT recently issued an annual action plan dossier called the central action plan (CAP) 2024-25. Senior officials told PTI that transactions over Rs 2 lakh in cash were required to be reported through a statement of financial transaction (SFT) by financial institutions but that was not happening. "While examining such reports, it is noticed that the circumvention of these provisions is widely prevalent," the Board told the I-T department. "Further, although section 139A requires PAN (permanent account number) to be provided or obtained in specified transactions, there is



no reporting/verification mechanism for determining the compliance with this obligation," it said. In any case, it said, "high value" consumption expenditure needs to be verified with information about the taxpayer and therefore, it is imperative to identify the sources which could be involved in possible circumvention. The department identified some of the businesses, such as hotels, banquet halls, luxury brand retailers, IVF clinics, hospitals, designer clothing stores, and NRI quota medical college seats, where the non-adherence to these rules and large cash transactions was being found. "Such sources will have to be identified and a verification exercise could be conducted by calling for information in a non-intrusive manner," the

CBDT directed the tax department.

A senior officer said the extent of cash in the economy can be gauged from the fact that during the 2023-24 fiscal, the tax department mounted 1,100 searches or raids across the country to check tax evasion, resulting in seizure of assets amounting to about Rs 2,500 crore out of which Rs 1,700 crore was in cash.

The CBDT also informed the I-T authorities that "new opportunities for identification of potential taxpayers have opened up due to data mining and data analytics" and effective use of such data may result in "identification of a large number of potential taxpayers."

"The case of non-filers and those whose ITRs (income tax returns) do not match with financial transactions done by them are selected based on rules through management information system and taken up for e-Verification. The outcome of e-Verification results in widening and deepening of taxpayer base," it said.

The Board said the tax department has been given a target to add in the current fiscal 10 per cent more tax return filers to what the filer base was at the end of 2023-24.

# Windfall tax on crude petroleum reduced to ₹ 2,100/tonne



PTI | NEW DELHI

The government has slashed windfall tax on domestically produced crude oil to Rs 2,100 per tonne, from Rs 4,600 per tonne with effect from Saturday.

The tax is levied in the form of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED).

The SAED on the export of diesel, petrol and jet fuel or ATF, has been retained at 'nil'. The new rates are effective from August 17, an official notification said.

India first imposed windfall profit taxes on July 1, 2022, joining a host of nations that tax supernormal profits of energy companies.

The tax rates are reviewed every fortnight based on average oil prices in the previous two weeks.

# Sebi proposes expansion of sustainable finance framework in securities market

PTI | NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has proposed expansion of the sustainable finance framework in the securities market by introducing a new category of financial instruments.

This category will include Social Bonds, Sustainable Bonds, and Sustainability-linked Bonds in addition to the current green debt securities. It aims to provide issuers with flexibility in raising funds for projects that align with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) objectives.

In a consultation paper released on Friday, Sebi proposed that issuers, in addition to existing green debt securities, be allowed to raise funds through issuance of social bonds, sustainable bonds, and sustainability-linked bonds. These bonds will collectively be known as ESG Debt Securities. This will enable issuers to raise money for more sustainable projects, assisting in closing the funding gap for the Sustainable Development Goals.



Sebi said it received representations from market participants including the Confederation of Indian Industry to expand the scope of the regulatory framework pertaining to sustainable finance to include Social Bonds, in addition to existing Green Debt Securities as a mode of raising sustainable finance, in line with global practices. As per the consultation paper, Sebi said, it "proposed to introduce the concept of Sustainable Securitised Debt Instruments for the purpose of providing originators of the underlying credit facilities which are within such international or domestic frameworks for sustainable finance, and thereby provide

investors as well an opportunity to participate in the sustainable securitised debt instruments".

The consultation paper also addressed the initial and continuous disclosures for sustainable securitised debt instruments that would be based on international frameworks.

Initial disclosures could be made in the offer document for the securities, while continuous disclosures might be included in annual reports or other mandated formats. The markets watchdog also suggested that issuers of ESG debt securities and sustainable securitised debt instruments appoint an independent external reviewer or certifier, to facilitate transparency and credibility.

The review could take various forms including, secondary opinions, verification, certification, or scoring/rating. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has invited comments and suggestions from the public on the consultation paper by September 6.

# Open to exploring more ways to increase India's collaboration with IMF: FM



PTI | NEW DELHI

India is open to exploring more ways to increase its collaboration with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said during a meeting with IMF's First Deputy Managing Director Gita Gopinath on Saturday. During the meeting, Gopinath congratulated the Finance Minister on policy continuity in the fiscal consolidation path being followed by the Government

of India. "FM Smt. @nsitharaman stated that India deeply values its relationship and continuous engagement with IMF; and looking ahead, the Government of India is open to exploring more ways to increase India's collaboration with the IMF," the finance ministry said in a post on X. Besides acknowledging the vibrancy of the Indian economy, Gopinath appreciated the strength of India's relationship with IMF - valuable to both India, IMF, and to the world at large.

# CBIC asks GST officers to consult board on law interpretation while conducting audit

PTI | NEW DELHI

The CBIC has asked GST officers conducting audit to refer to the board those cases where they face issues of conflicting interpretation of provisions of the tax law.

In an instruction to field offices, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said during the process of audit, a CGST Audit Principal Commissioner may come across a scenario where a taxpayer has followed a prevalent trade practice based on particular interpretation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) law and more than one such interpretation of the law could result in litigation.

"In such cases, it is desirable that the zonal (Pr.) Chief Commissioner make a self-contained reference to the relevant policy wing of the Board i.e. The GST Policy or TRU (Tax research Unit)," the CBIC said, adding that the Commissioner would make the reference before conclusion of the audit and before issuing show cause notice to promote uniformity and avoid litigation. Moore Singhi Executive Director Rajat Mohan said industry has been facing significant challenges during GST audits and one of the recurring issues has been the inconsistency in interpretations of GST laws by various audit authorities. These inconsistencies have often resulted in conflicting decisions, leading to increased litigation and uncertainty for businesses. Industries have frequently reported that during audits, differing views among audit officers regarding the applicability of certain provisions have led to undue pressure and prolonged disputes. This not only causes



operational disruptions but also increases compliance costs for businesses as they are compelled to engage in prolonged legal battles, Mohan said.

"In response to these concerns, the CBIC's instruction aims to standardize the audit process by requiring Zonal Principal Chief Commissioners to consult with the relevant policy wing of the Board (GST Policy or TRU) before concluding any investigation where multiple interpretations of the law exist."

"This step is crucial in ensuring that a uniform interpretation of the GST laws is maintained across different jurisdictions, thereby reducing the likelihood of unnecessary litigation," Mohan added.

Deloitte India Partner and Leader Indirect Tax, Mahesh Jaing said "this proactive step, applicable to ongoing audits as well, ensures policy alignment, focuses on ease of doing business and reduces unnecessary litigation by maintaining uniformity"

# India exports first consignment of fig juice to Poland

PTI | NEW DELHI

India has exported the first consignment of fig juice to Poland as part of its initiative to increase shipments of unique agro products from the country, the commerce ministry said on Saturday.



The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) facilitated the export of India's first ready-to-drink fig juice, made from GI-tagged Purandar Figs, to Poland, it said. The GI (geographical indication) tag provides legal protection to that item,

# Govt invites bids to empanel AI infra providers under ₹ 10,372-cr India AI mission

PTI | NEW DELHI

The government has invited bids for the empanelment of entities for providing artificial intelligence services on cloud under the Rs 10,372-crore India AI mission, which was approved by the cabinet in March this year.

The empaneled agencies, like data centers and cloud service providers, will have to provide access to high-speed computing AI infrastructure like graphics processing unit (GPUs), accelerators, Tensor Processing Units (TPUs), storage etc to academia, startups, researchers, government bodies among others at the lowest rate that

will be discovered through the bidding process.

Under the IndiaAI Mission, supercomputing capacity, comprising over 10,000 GPUs, will be made available to various stakeholders for creating an AI ecosystem.

"With an objective to empanel service providers for making this possible, IndiaAI - an IBD under Digital India Corporation, MeitY has issued a RFE (request for empanelment)," Meity, Additional Secretary Abhishek Singh said in a social media post.

The rapid development of AI across the globe has led to an increase in demand for GPU-based servers, as they can



process data at a higher speed compared to CPU-based servers.

The rate of accessing GPU-based cloud services in India is estimated to be at double the price compared to the price of countries that have installed a

large number of GPUs.

According to the bid document floated by the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) empaneled agencies will be responsible for offering high-performance computing,

network, and storage services that are essential for implementing the activities planned under the IndiaAI Mission, such as the development of indigenous LLMs (large language models like ChatGPT) and AI applications.

"IndiaAI will approve the end users who can access these cloud-based AI services, ensuring that the services are provided at prices determined through a transparent and competitive process. The empaneled AI service providers will be engaged for a period of 36 months, with the possibility of extension based on mutually agreed terms," the document said.

The document categorically mentions that the 'Invitation for Application' is not an offer to enter into a procurement agreement but rather an invitation to receive proposals from eligible and interested bidders.

"IndiaAI would make the payments for the utilised AI services of the approved projects from the end users to the extent of the approved subsidy," the document said.

"The agencies eligible for bids will have to make available 1,000 AI compute units through their cloud service platform, as AI services on cloud within 6 months from the date of signing the agreement with IndiaAI.

# India will need more reforms to stay on growth path, create jobs: Gita Gopinath

PTI | NEW DELHI

India will need to undertake more reforms to be able to continue on the path of raising economic growth and to make sure that enough job creation happens in the country, IMF deputy managing director Gita Gopinath said on Saturday. Addressing an event here, Gopinath further said that India will be required to reduce import tariffs if it wants to be an important player in the global supply chains.

the years in terms structural reforms."

While noting that the world is in an environment where trade integration has been questioned, Gopinath said it is important for India to remain open for global trade. "Tariff rates in India are higher than in its other peer economies. If it wants to be an important player on the world stage and an important part of global supply chains, it is going to require reducing those tariffs," the eminent economist said.

Gopinath said it is a tremendous aspiration to get to a developed country status but it does not happen

automatically, and requires ongoing, consistent efforts, pretty broad scale, across many areas to deliver on that. "India has grown well in terms of its overall growth rate, and at 7 per cent, it is the fastest growing major economy in the world.

"The question is, how does one keep up the momentum and raise it further so that you can increase per capita incomes in India to get to being an advanced economy," she said.

Responding to a question on taxation, she said India has parallels with other developing countries, where most of the tax revenue that is

collected is indirect taxes and not direct taxes, not in form of income taxes.

"We have been advising other developing countries too, that it is helpful to broaden the personal income tax base and so that you can have more income coming from there," she said.

Referring to the cut in corporate tax rate by the Modi government, Gopinath said although it was helpful it is less the tax rate that matters, but what matters is just making sure that there are no loopholes and there are not too many leakages that happen in terms of tax exemptions.

# Demand for warehousing spaces in Delhi-NCR dips 77% in Jan-June; Chennai sees 3-fold jump: Vestian

PTI | NEW DELHI

Delhi-NCR witnessed a 77 per cent decline in leasing of warehousing and logistics spaces during January-June this year, while Chennai saw a 3-fold jump in demand, according to real estate consultant Vestian.

As per Vestian's latest Warehousing and Logistics Sector review for January-June 2024, the absorption of warehousing and logistics spaces in January-June across seven major cities rose 8 per cent to 16.6 million square feet during the first half of this year, from 15.4 million square feet in the year-ago period.

Among seven cities, Delhi-NCR reported the highest annual decline of 77 per cent at 1.1 million square feet during January-June, from 4.7 million square feet in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Similarly, the demand in Kolkata fell 65 per cent to 0.3 million sq ft from 0.8 million square feet. In Bengaluru, the leasing of warehousing spaces declined 19 per cent to 1.4 million square feet, from 1.7 million square feet. However, the leasing of spaces in Chennai jumped to 1.5 million square feet and in Hyderabad, the absorption of

warehousing spaces rose 48 per cent to 1.9 million square feet, from 1.3 million square feet. Mumbai and Pune together accounted for 63 per cent of the total absorption in H1 (January-June) 2024.

Leasing of warehousing and logistics spaces in Mumbai rose 80 per cent to 6.8 million square feet, from 3.8 million square feet. In Pune, the absorption of spaces grew 40 per cent to 3.6 million square feet in January-June 2024, from 2.6 million square feet in the corresponding period of the previous year.

According to Vestian, the warehousing and logistics properties received

investments worth USD 1.6 billion in H1 2024, accounting for 42 per cent of the total institutional investment received in the real estate sector.

Shrinivas Rao, CEO, Vestian said, "As participation of foreign investors increased, availability of funds eased in the sector."

"Moreover, recent government announcements to boost infrastructure developments is likely to reduce logistics costs from 8-9 per cent to 5-6 per cent of the GDP, which in turn will lead to an increase in real estate activities in the warehousing sector," Rao added.

# LET'S JUST LEAVE IT TO THE GODS: CHOPRA ON 90M AND BEYOND

**PTI n NEW DELHI**  
Having missed out on breaching the elusive 90m mark at the Paris Games, two-time Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra has left that widely debated matter "to the gods". After all, Chopra has been chasing that milestone for years and the wait got longer when his only leg throw of 89.45m got him a silver at the Paris Olympics earlier this month. A back-to-back medal at the Summer Games was a monumental feat for an Indian athlete but it was way short of Arshad Nadeem's sensational 92.97m that comfortably secured a historic gold for the Pakistani. Nursing a long-standing groin injury, Chopra managed to be on the podium and now he will be seen in the Lausanne Diamond League starting August 22. After a busy couple of days post the Olympic final on August 8, Chopra started training in Switzerland and is determined to finish the season on a high despite being restricted by the injury. "I need to leave it to gods now," he said when asked about his target throw in the foreseeable future.

"I just want to prepare well and see where the javelin goes. There has already been talk about 90m, now I feel just let it be. In Paris, I thought it would happen and it could have happened. "Now I will give my 100 percent in the next two or three events and see what happens," he said in a virtual interaction arranged by JSW. Following the season-ending Diamond League in Brussels from September 13-14, Chopra will consult the doctors on his groin injury with surgery being the most likely option. The 26-year-old has been managing the injury since winning the gold in the World Championships last year. With Arshad producing an Olympic record throw in the final, Chopra needed to up his game but he said he could not do that because of his physical state. "I felt I could increase the distance. My two no throws in qualification and final, they were second and third best throws and my season best as well. To increase distance I need to be injury free. "In my mind I know need to give 100 percent but because of the injury I am not able to give 100 percent. My body and mind stops me from making



that extra effort. "What is most important in training session is throwing sessions which I have not been able to do as much as I would like (due to injury). If you can't throw regularly then you are not able to work on your technique. I need to throw as much as I can. The rest is all fine," said Chopra. He needs to make a few technical tweaks in his game. "When we run with the javelin there is also lot of strain on groin, when we take cross step. But right now I am not able to tweak my technique. Also my line of the javelin was also not perfect. "Arc speed was good in Paris but the line was disturbed. If it would be straighter, I could have got two three metres out of it. However, not for once I thought that Arshad's throw could not be bettered. My mind was ready to push the limits but body was not," said the champion athlete. Chopra needs to finish in the top-six of Diamond League Meetings series to qualify for the season finale in Brussels. "I came to Switzerland for training ahead of Diamond League. Luckily I did not aggravate my injury as I took extra care of that. I thought of continuing my season like most other athletes. There is one month to go for season end. I will go to the doctors in free time," he said. **WE NEED TO SPOT TALENT BETTER TO BECOME SPORTING POWERHOUSE:** India finished an abysmal 71st in the Paris medals tally with five bronze and Chopra's silver. Asked what India needs to do to become a sporting power, Chopra said: "Overseas, there are more talent spotters. For example I took up javelin I don't know how, I liked it so I pursued it. But if we try multiple sports and pick the best one on recommendations of an expert that way Indian sport can move forward. We need to spot talent better. "Also, we can't just focus on one sport. We need to be good in all sports. I feel the leaders in the medals tally (China, USA, Japan). They all are powerful nations in various fields, sports play a big part as well in lifting the profile of the nation. "Hope we do well in the next Olympics, and qualify for FIFA World Cup as well. Cricket we already are doing well. There is no dearth of talent, mental, we also need to have more coaches," added Chopra, who plans to open javelin academies going forward.



## Driver line-up announced for Indian Racing League

**PTI n CHENNAI**  
Akhil Rabintra and Nikhil Bohra will be among the Indian racers who will be seen in action in the Indian Racing League that gets underway on August 24. Six teams comprising four drivers each will feature in the IRL. The teams will feature two Indians and two overseas racers, including female driver. Akhil Rabintra made the headlines in 2019 after being selected by Aston Martin for their racing academy as the only Asian and later clinched the inaugural IRL title in 2022. Noted Swiss driver Neel Jani, who has an impressive resume, having won the World Endurance Championship and the prestigious 24 Hours of Le Mans in 2016, will be seen in action in the league, said a press release here. Returning to the competition again will be South Africa's Raul Hyman, along with his partner Sohil Shah, who won the 2023 Car Championship by earning the most points. "The Indian Racing League is a testament to the excitement and passion for motorsports in

our country. The grid here is extremely competitive, pushing each of us to our limits and showcasing the immense talent we have," said Shah. The racers would be whizzing around in their rapid World Thunder GB08s, single-seater cars that can achieve a top speed of 240 kmph. Ruhaan Alva, who was the youngest race winner last year, will be joined by Shahan Ali Mohsin and Rishon Rajeev, fresh from their success in the Formula 4 Indian Championship, along with debutant Julius Dinesen, a 17-year-old Danish prodigy with a F4 title to his name. The IRL, comprising five rounds, will begin at the Madras International Circuit at nearby Sriperumbudur on August 24-25, followed by India's first-ever night race at the Chennai Formula Racing Circuit on August 31-September 1. The six participating teams in the IRL are: Kolkata Royal Tigers, Speed Demons Delhi, Goa Aces JA Racing, Hyderabad Blackbirds, Chennai Turbo Riders and former champions Bangalore Speedsters.

## Jhajharia confident of 25 medals' target despite Pramod suspension

**PTI n NEW DELHI**  
The shadow of Pramod Bhagat controversy won't linger on the Indian contingent, and Paralympic Committee of India president Devendra Jhajharia is hopeful of winning at least 25 medals at the Paralympics. India have an 84-member contingent across 12 disciplines for the Paralympics slated in Paris from August 28-September 8. Tokyo Paralympics gold medal-winning shuttler Pramod Bhagat was handed an 18-month suspension for breaching BWF's anti-doping whereabouts clause. "Look, there is no doubt that Pramod Bhagat is our star athlete but the target of 25 medals that we have set is from our current contingent of 84 players. Pramod Bhagat is not included in this," the two-time Paralympics gold medal-winning

javelin thrower Jhajharia told PTI Bhasha. "Pramod being a gold medal winner of the last Games not being in the Indian team is extremely sad and unfortunate, but we cannot do anything." Asked about his confidence about target of 25 medals, he said, "I have kept this target after closely monitoring our players." "You may think I am exaggerating. But I have seen the practice sessions of players. We have worked hard on their physical fitness and mental strength." Badminton's world governing body (BWF) had on Tuesday announced that Bhagat has been "suspended for a period of 18 months and will miss" the Paris Paralympics. "On 1 March 2024, the Court of Arbitration of Sport Anti-Doping Division found Bhagat in breach of the BWF anti-doping regulations for



committing three whereabouts failures within 12 months." The five-time para world champion Bhagat had appealed this decision to the CAS Appeals Division but it was rejected last month. Jhajharia further said the number of players this time is much more than the previous games and they are competing in more sports. India were ranked 24th in the Tokyo Paralympics table with 19 medals

which included five gold. "I have set a target of 25 medals and to be in the top 20 in the medal table, but we will win more medals than this," said the 43-year-old former javelin thrower. "We had 56 players in the Tokyo Paralympics, this time 84 players will compete. For the first time, our players will participate in Blind Judo, Para Sailing and Para Cycling." Jhajharia is expecting the highest medal haul from the athletics team and is hoping new stars to emerge from these games. "Each and every player of our contingent is a medal prospect. We have 38 track and field athletes and I am expecting the most medals from them. "Our contingent has 47 new players, despite their first Paralympics games they are very confident and mentally strong about their performance," he concluded.

## Aspas caps eventful game with late winner as Celta Vigo beats Deportivo Alaves 2-1 in Spain

**AP n MADRID**  
Iago Aspas avoided an early red card thanks to a video review, had a goal chalked off just before halftime and then capped an eventful game by scoring Celta Vigo's winner against Deportivo Alaves in the Spanish league on Friday. The 37-year-old Aspas was the focal point for Celta for much of last season and picked up where he left off in its opening game, netting in the 84th minute to seal a 2-1 victory for the hosts. He had been shown a red card after seven minutes when his arm made contact with Antonio Blanco, but it was downgraded to a yellow after a VAR review. Blanco's cross to Kike Garcia then set up the opening goal for Alaves 10 minutes later. Aspas had a goal disallowed for offside before halftime but Celta equalized midway through the second half thanks to Williot Swedberg's superb strike with the outside of his boot. Aspas then received Swedberg's defense-splitting pass to score the winner with six minutes left. "Iago is eternal," Alaves coach Luis Garcia



said. "He gets one chance and he puts it away." **SEVILLA DRAWS AT LAS PALMAS:** In the night's other game, Las Palmas came from a goal down twice to hold Sevilla to a 2-2 draw at home. Alex Suarez's deflected a cross from the left past his own keeper to give Sevilla the lead after 24 minutes but an own goal at the other end by Tanguy Nianzo leveled the scores just before halftime. Juanlu Sanchez then converted a neat cross by Isaac Romero to put Sevilla 2-1 up on the hour mark only for Sandro Ramirez to equalize 10 minutes later, just moments after coming on as a sub. Las Palmas' two Scotland internationals, recent signings Oliver McBurnie and Scott McKenna, both appeared for the home side and it was McBurnie's pressure on Nianzo that led to Las Palmas' first goal. With three of the first four league matches ending in draws, Celta's win means it can enjoy at least one night atop the La Liga standings. Barcelona is away at Valencia on Saturday, while defending champion Real Madrid visits Mallorca on Sunday.

## Frustrated Carlos smashes his racket in 3-set loss to Gael Monfils at Cincinnati Open

**AP n CINCINNATI**  
Carlos Alcaraz repeatedly smashed his racket on the court in a rare show of frustration, and the four-time Grand Slam winner fell to Gael Monfils 4-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-4 at the Cincinnati Open. In a match that was suspended by rain on Thursday night with the players in a second-set tiebreaker, the 37-year-old Monfils advanced by taking the last two sets from the second-seeded Alcaraz, who called the loss his "worst match." "I felt like it was the worst match that I've ever played on my career," Alcaraz said. "I've been practicing really well. I was feeling great. But I couldn't play. I want to forget it and try to move on to New York." The U.S. Open begins there on Aug. 26. Trailing 3-1 in the tiebreaker when the match was halted, Alcaraz was hoping for a reset when play resumed Friday. But, the No. 3 player in the



ATP rankings wasn't able to control his emotions. "It never happened before, because I could control those feelings," Alcaraz said. "Today I couldn't. I was feeling that I was not playing any kind of tennis. It was really frustrating for me. At some point, I didn't want to be on the court anymore." Alcaraz was playing his first match since earning a silver medal at the Paris Olympics after losing to Novak Djokovic, who also beat him last year in the Cincinnati final. Monfils returned to the court later Friday and lost to No. 15 seed Holger Rune 3-6, 6-3, 6-4. "It was a big win for me against Carlos, unexpected to be honest," Monfils said. "To play again in a couple hours against (another) good and younger player, I knew it would be tough." In women's action, top-ranked Iga Swiatek advanced to the quarterfinals with a convincing 6-2, 6-2 win over Marta Kostyuk. Swiatek bounced back with a more

complete performance after losing a second-set tiebreaker on Wednesday before outlasting France's Varvara Gracheva. "Today, I just kept my intensity at a high level all the time," Swiatek said. "It didn't really matter to me what the score was, I just wanted to continue playing my game. I focused on myself." No. 3 Aryna Sabalenka also advanced with a 7-5, 6-2 victory over Elina Svitolina, but No. 5 Jasmine Paolini, the runner-up at the French Open and Wimbledon, lost to Mirra Andreeva 3-6, 6-3, 6-2. Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova upset No. 7 and Olympic gold medalist Zheng Qinwen 7-5, 6-1. Spaniard Paula Badosa defeated Yulia Putintseva, who upset Coco Gauff on Thursday, 6-4, 6-4. Top men to advance included No. 1 Jannik Sinner, who got a walkover against Jordan Thompson on his 23rd birthday, No. 3 Alex Zverev, No. 5 Hubert Hurkacz, No.

## 43-member Indian contingent for U-20 Athletics World Championships

**PTI n NEW DELHI**  
A 43-member Indian contingent including 23 in the men's category will vie for top honours across multiple events in the Under-20 World Athletics Championships scheduled in Lima from August 27-31. As per the entry list, more than 1700 athletes from 134 teams will compete in the event at Estadio Atletico de la Videna. India had won two silver and a bronze to be ranked joint 25th in the last edition. **INDIAN SQUAD** **MEN:** Himanshu, Sachin (10,000m Race Walk); Karthik Raja Arumugam, Murad Kalubhai Sirman (400m hurdles); Ankul, Rihan Chaudhary, Bapi Hansda, Abiram Pramod, Jay Kumar (4x400m relay); Bapi Hansda, Jay Kumar (400m); Siddharth Choudhary, Anurag Singh Kaler (Shot Put); Mrutyam Jayaram Dondapati (100m); Hariharan Kathiravan, Nayan Pradip Sarde (110m hurdles); Sahil Khan (800m); Saruk Khan, Ranvir Ajay Singh (3000m steeplechase); Dev Kumar Meena (Pole Vault); Prateek (Hammer Throw); Ritik (Discus Throw); Mohammed Atta Sazid (Long Jump); Dipanshu Sharma, Rohan Yadav (Javelin throw). **WOMEN:** Aarti (10,000m Race Walk); Rujula Amol Bhonsle, Neole Anna Cornelio, Sudeeksha Valduri, Abinaya Rajarajan, Siya Abhijit Sawant (4x100m relay); Neeru Pahtak, Unnathi Aiyappa Bolland (200m); Neeru Pahtak, Anushka Kumbhar (400m); Tamanna (Shot Put); Abinaya Rajarajan (100m); Unnathi Aiyappa Bolland (100m hurdles); Shreyas Rajesh (400m hurdles); Ekta Dey (3000m steeplechase); Amanat Kamboj, Nikita Kumari (Discus Throw); Pavana Nagaraj (Long Jump); Pooja (High Jump); Laxita Vinod Sandilela (800m); Laxita Vinod Sandilela (1500m); Neeru Pahtak, Kanista Tenna Maria Deva Shekar, Sandramol Sabu, Shrivani Sachin Sangle, Anushka Kumbhar (4X400m relay).

# DOUBLE TRAP GREAT PETER WILSON APPLIES FOR POST OF INDIAN SHOOTING COACH



**PTI n NEW DELHI**  
Legendary double trap marksman Peter Wilson of Great Britain, who guided country-mate Nathan Hales to trap gold at the recently-concluded Paris Olympics, has shown interest in the Indian team coaching job and wants to train the shooters for the 2028 Los Angeles Games. Wilson, 37, was the youngest competitor in double trap at the 2012 London Olympics to win a gold medal. He holds the world record in double trap

and took up shooting after a snow-boarding accident left him unable to play cricket. After double trap was removed from the Olympic curriculum, Wilson started coaching the Great Britain team in trap, with the crowning glory coming in Paris where his ward Nathan won gold with an Olympic record to break a 12-year-long wait for the country in the event. "I have e-mailed my CV waiting to hear from them," Wilson told PTI from UK. "I want to work with the senior

team to prepare them for the LA Games and the juniors to prepare them for the next 8-12 years," said Wilson, adding that he only aims for "success" and nothing less. Asked if it would be a challenge coming to terms with the setup in India, he categorically said "there shouldn't be any problem". He added that for him the continental championships such as the "Asian Games, the World Cups, World Championships among others are a stepping stone towards the ultimate aim of winning an

Olympic medal" and he would strive for that. Wilson, who has been honoured with the Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) has been coached by the great Ahmad Al Maktoum, who is a member of the ruling family of Dubai and the 2004 Athens Olympics gold medallist in double trap. India's Rajyvardhan Singh Rathore had finished second behind Al Maktoum in Athens. India is without a foreign trap coach for quite some time with most shooters, who competed

# Durand Cup derby cancelled amid protests over doctor's rape and murder; fans to unite for a cause

**PTI n KOLKATA**

The Durand Cup derby between Mohun Bagan and East Bengal, scheduled at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Sunday, has been called off because of the prevailing unrest in the city. The decision was taken following a meeting between the Kolkata Police officials and organisers of the tournament. The city has witnessed widespread protests following the alleged rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9. On Saturday, the Indian Medical Association called for a 24-hour nationwide strike to protest the heinous crime. Around one lakh people are expected to gather near the 66,000-capacity stadium, especially after both Mohun Bagan and East Bengal fan clubs called for protests. "On behalf of the Durand Cup Organising Committee, this is to regretfully inform you that the final Group A fixture between Mohun Bagan Super Giant and Emami East Bengal FC, scheduled to be played at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Kிரangan in Kolkata on August 18, 2024 at 7.00pm, stands abandoned," said a statement from Durand Cup Media. "The Pre-derby press conference scheduled for 5.30pm today (August 17, 2024) also stands cancelled," it added. All online and offline tickets will be refunded following the cancellation of the match, according to their ticketing partner, Bookmyshow. "The dates and the refund process will be notified within the next two days," it added.



It is learnt that both the teams will be awarded a point each, but it has to be decided by the All India Football Federation (AIFF), the sport's apex body in the country. It is also not known whether the knockout stage matches and the summit clash, which is slated at the Salt Lake Stadium on August 31, will be shifted. The marquee clash between arch-rivals Mohun Bagan and East Bengal, which was the season's first derby, was also the concluding league match of the tournament. As per the current standings, Mohun Bagan are ahead on goal difference against East Bengal and both have six points each. The six group toppers and two best second-placed teams will make the cut for the last-eight. **FANS TO 'UNITE FOR A CAUSE':** Despite the cancellation of the derby match, Mohun Bagan and East Bengal fans clubs have vowed to come together and make "their voices heard". "Sarkar maath atakale amra raasta atkabo (If the government stops us to enter the stadium, we will block the roads)," reads a poster jointly issued by Mohun

Bagan and East Bengal fan clubs. Terming this a 'Black Day' for Kolkata Maidan, Prasenjit Sarkar, president of the Mariners' Base Camp — Ultras Mohun Bagan said fans from both the clubs will join together for "one common cause: justice for RG Kar victim". "The government has dealt a severe blow to football by calling off the derby. The government's action has shown a desire to impose an autocratic rule, and we cannot stand by it silently," Sarkar told PTI. "Tomorrow, Mohun Bagan and East Bengal fans will join for a cause, and no one can stop us from our voices being heard. There will be thousands on the street opposite the stadium. "Politics should never be allowed in the stadium. This time we will stand up together for a bigger cause. "Together, with tifos and banners, we will demand justice. They may try to silence us, but we will not let our voices go unheard," he added. Rabi Shankar Sen of East Bengal the Real Power' also said they will come in huge numbers and gather in front of the stadium's VIP gate.

**AP n LONDON**

# Zirkzee scores on debut for Man United in 1-0 win over Fulham on opening night of Premier League

Joshua Zirkzee marked his debut for Manchester United by coming off the bench and scoring an 87th-minute goal to give his team a 1-0 victory over Fulham on the opening night of the Premier League season on Friday. The Netherlands striker poked out his left foot to guide home a cross by fellow substitute Alejandro Garnacho at Old Trafford. Zirkzee, who joined from Bologna for a reported \$47 million last month, was one of three offseason signings to make their first appearances for United, along with defenders Noussair Mazraoui and Matthijs de Ligt. "To win here in my first home game, and to grab a goal, it couldn't be better," Zirkzee said. Zirkzee, Mazraoui and De Ligt

have arrived as part of a \$180 million spending spree by the record 20-time champions, a club under new leadership and looking to return to its former glories. Erik ten Hag was retained as manager despite guiding United to an eighth-place finish last season and this was a solid, if unspectacular, start to the campaign by his team. "It's just the first game, but it's good to strengthen the belief and confidence in the team," Ten Hag said. "I have seen the places where we need to improve. But that's normal in the first game of the season." With Zirkzee not fully match



sharp and Rasmus Hojlund injured, United started the season without an out-and-out striker on the field and it showed, with midfielders Bruno Fernandes and Mason Mount wasting the best opportunities in a game that was petering out before Zirkzee's late intervention. Fulham goalkeeper Bernd Leno came to his team's rescue, saving twice at the feet of Fernandes in one-on-one chances then getting down sharply to deny Mount from close range in the second half. Leno had no chance with Zirkzee's shot in front of the Stretford End, however, and Garnacho

squandered a great chance to make it 2-0 in stoppage time when he dragged a shot wide in front of an empty goal. "That's the only criticism I have of the team," Ten Hag said. "To kill. Kill in the box." Mazraoui played 81 minutes at right back - and was one of United's better players, along with Casemiro - before being replaced by De Ligt, three days after they both joined from Bayern Munich. Zirkzee entered in the 61st. On Saturday, there are six more games in the league's first round, including Liverpool - under a new manager in Arne Slot - at promoted Ipswich and Arsenal - the runner-up in the last two seasons - hosting Wolverhampton. Reigning champion Manchester City begins its title defense at Chelsea on Sunday.

# Matsuyama, McCarthy tied for lead in opening PGA Tour playoff event



**AP n MEMPHIS**  
Hideki Matsuyama and Denny McCarthy combined to make nearly 300 feet of putts, so it was no surprise to see them sharing the lead going into the steamy weekend of the FedEx St. Jude Championship. Matsuyama recovered from a shaky start - he missed a 4-foot birdie putt on No. 2 and put his tee shot into the water on the par-3 fourth - with two long birdie putts and a 3-wood to about 12 feet on the par-5 16th for one of his easier birdies. He had a 6-under 64. McCarthy, with a reputation for a smooth putting stroke, put that to good use on the smooth greens of TPC Southwind. He holed three birdie putts from about 25 feet or longer to offset a pair of bogeys in his round of 63. They were at 11-under 129, one shot ahead of another great putter, Sam Burns, shot 29 on the front nine before cooling slightly. He had a 63. Scottie Scheffler got on track late with three straight birdies for a 65 and was two back. The first PGA Tour post-season event is the most

consequential. The points are quadrupled, and the top 50 players in the FedEx Cup advance to the BMW Championship next week and are assured of playing in all the \$20 million signature events next year. Jordan Spieth moved closer to the end of his year. He had a pair of double bogeys on the par 3s, one from the water on No. 4, another by taking two shots to get out of bunker on No. 14, and posted a 75 that left him in a tie for 65th. Spieth has talked about the possibility of wrist surgery in the offseason, and he could have the next three months clear barring two of his best rounds of the year. Others who had better seasons could afford a spotty performance. Rory McIlroy is the No. 3 seed going into the post-season and turned in a lackluster performance on another day when the heat index was in the range of 110 degrees (40 degrees Celsius). He played the two par 5s in 3 over and shot 73, leaving him in a tie for 58th. This is a big week for McCarthy, who has never won on the PGA Tour and is at No.

# India's Riiohlang to supervise in FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

**PTI n NEW DELHI**

Riiohlang Dhar became the second Indian woman assistant referee to be selected for the upcoming FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, which will be held in the Dominican Republic. Riiohlang, a 34-year-old articulate lady from Meghalaya, has been on Friday named by FIFA among the elite list of 38 match officials, who will be on call for the October 10-November 3 event. Uyena Fernandes is the first Indian woman assistant referee to have the honour of supervising in the World Cup. She did duty in the 2016 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Jordan. "My appointment for the World Cup has come as a great honour for me," said Riiohlang, who works for the Meghalaya



police department. "I have to work harder to live up to FIFA's expectations. I will also keep in mind that I will be there as a representative of India. I will do everything to keep India's flag high," said the assistant referee. Riiohlang said refereeing has been a part of her life since 2009. "After I stopped playing football, I joined a referee course in my local town and found it interesting since it will keep me in touch with the game I love dearly.

"So, I decided to take up the whistle and the flag. I have come a long way since then. I have supervised many international tournaments, but the World Cup is going to be a different experience," she said. The Chairperson of the AIFF Referees' Committee, K Sankar, said Riiohlang's fine performance in AFC and FIFA international matches remained one of the main reasons behind her appointment. "In this year's AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup in Indonesia, Riiohlang officiated in one of the semi-finals and also the third-place play-off. Her performance was excellent. Her appointment is a great honour for the AIFF too. On behalf of the Referees' Committee, I wish her a great World Cup ahead," Sankar said. AIFF's secretary general, M

Satyanarayan, said: "FIFA's announcement that Riiohlang is among the match officials for the U17 Women's World Cup is like an Independence Day gift for us.

# Aditi exits early, Lee, Khang share lead as Olympic champion Ko lies 6th

**PTI n IRVINE (SCOTLAND)**

Indian golfer Aditi Ashok lcarded a 3-over 75 in the second round to make an early exit from the ISPS HANDA Women's Scottish Open. Aditi, a five-time winner on the Ladies European Tour, had a 81 in the first round. Aditi had a bogey on the front nine and a double on the back nine and no birdies. It was one of those rare weeks, when she had no birdies in either round. The Scottish Open has never been kind to Aditi, who has now missed the cut at the event six times in eight starts since 2017 with a best of T-55 in 2023. She will be back in action at the AIG Women's Open next week at St. Andrews. At the top, Minjee Lee and Megan Khang share the lead on eight-under-par at the

midway mark of the event that precedes the AIG Women's Open. Australian star Lee led overnight thanks to an opening round of 67 (-5) at Dundonald Links and she followed that up with a 69 (-3) on day two. Three players sit in a tie for third place on the leader board with American Lauren Coughlin (69-69), England's Charley Hull (70-68) and New Zealand's Olympic gold medallist Lydia Ko (69-69) all on six-under-par. Three-time LET winner Hull had a colourful scorecard on day two with an eagle, six birdies and four bogeys for her round of 68 (-4). Olympic gold medallist Ko produced a second consecutive round of 69 (-3) which included four birdies and one bogey to also be two shots off the lead.

# AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Executive Magistrate Bhubaneswar, I, Sri Samir Ranjan Dash aged about 42 years, s/o - Niranjan Dash, resident of odia sahi (Lembu Bagicha) P.O- Golia P.S- Buguda, Dist. Ganjam, Odisha do hereby solemnly affirm and state that my name is Samir Ranjan Dash but in most of my documents (Govt & private) I have been named as Samir Ranjan Das. So Samir Ranjan Das & Samir Ranjan Dash is one and same person. Henceforth I will be known as Samir Ranjan Dash for all future purposes.  
Sd/-  
Samir Ranjan Dash

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
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Pamanandpur, Railway Station Road, Bhawanipatna, Dist. Kalahandi, PIN-766002  
e-mail: sebhbwat@gmail.com

**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement**  
Identification No. SEPH-BHPT- 19 of 2024-25 Dt. 16.08.2024  
e-Procurement Notice

C-443

01. Name of the Work	: 1 no Work.
02. Type of Bid	: Double Bid System
03. Estimated Cost	: Rs. 964.65 lakh
04. Period of Completion	: 3 (Three) Calendar Months
05. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From 11.00 AM of dt. 23.08.2024 to 5.00 PM of 17.09.2024
06. Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal	: 5.00 PM of 17.09.2024
07. Date & Time of opening of technical bids	: At 11.30 AM of 18.09.2024.
08. Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhawanipatna, Railway Station Road, AU/PO- Pamanandpur, 766002 Dist. - Kalahandi.

Further details can be seen from the web site <http://tenders.ori.nic.in> or [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)

Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhawanipatna  
OIPR-1305911/001/2425

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES,  
OIO THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, ANGUL IRRIGATION DIVISION, ANGUL.  
e-Mail Id - seangulirrigation@gmail.com

**'e'-Procurement Notice No. SE-AID-5/2024-25**  
The Superintending Engineer, Angul Irrigation Division, Angul on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites online percentage rate basis bid in single cover system through e-procurement for the work mentioned below.

1. Total No. of Works	: 13 (Thirteen) Nos. Civil work
2. Cost of work put to tender	: Approximately Rs. 5.81 Lakh to 19.95 Lakh
3. Tender Paper Cost	: Rs.4000/- / Rs.5,000/- (Non Refundable)
4. Class of Contractor	: 'D' & 'C' equivalent Grade / Class
5. Period of Completion	: 60 Days / 90 Days
6. Availability of Bid Documents and receipt of bid through online	: From 10.00 A.M. of 20.08.2024 to 5.00 P.M. of 30.08.2024 in the website ( <a href="http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in">www.tendersodisha.gov.in</a> )
7. Date, time & place for opening of online tenders	: 31.08.2024 at 11.00 A.M. and onwards in the oio the SE, Angul Irrigation Division, Angul.
8. Date, time & place for finalization of tender through transparent lottery system (if required)	: 11.09.2024 at 11.00 A.M. in the oio the SE, Angul Irrigation Division, Angul.
9. Digital Signature Certificate	: The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class-I or Class-III
10. Name and Address of Officer Inviting Tender ( OIT )	: Superintending Engineer, Angul Irrigation Division, Angul, AO/PO- Hakimpada, Dist- Angul, Odisha. e-mail id- seangulirrigation@gmail.com

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal of Government of Odisha at [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in))  
Superintending Engineer Angul Irrigation Division Angul  
OIPR-32048/11001/2425



"Love does not begin and end the way we seem to think it does. Love is a battle, love is a war; love is a growing up"  
— Gareth Thomas



Photo: Pankaj Kumar

# RAKSHA BANDHAN

## CELEBRATING THE BEAUTY OF PURE BONDS

In the heart of Delhi, with monsoon clouds overhead, the streets burst into life for Raksha Bandhan. Amidst the lively chaos and bright colours, the festival unfolds as a touching celebration of sibling love. Each stall, filled with colourful rakhis, tells a story of pure bonds and heartfelt traditions, turning everyday moments into cherished memories, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

As the festive season arrives, bringing with it a time of warmth, togetherness and cherished traditions, one celebration stands out for its profound significance — the bond between brothers and sisters. Raksha Bandhan, a festival that embodies untold love and silent care, is not just a ritual but a celebration of a "PURE BOND." Amidst this atmosphere, the vibrant marketplaces come alive with the spirit of Raksha Bandhan and nowhere is this evident than in Delhi's iconic Sadar Bazar. The festival's essence is captured not just through rituals but through the bustling, colourful preparations that fill the market, making it a focal point of the celebration.

### THE ENCHANTING FESTIVAL ATMOSPHERE

Sadar Bazar, one of Delhi's oldest and busiest markets, undergoes a remarkable transformation as Raksha Bandhan approaches. The market, typically known for its wide range of goods, turns into a hub of colour and excitement, with rakhis and festive decorations taking center stage. Every shop and vendor gears up for the big day, filling the air with a lively sense of excitement. The narrow lanes of Sadar Bazar, usually crowded with shoppers, become even more packed as people move from stall to stall, searching for the perfect rakhi. The market itself seems to join in the celebration, with every corner reflecting the spirit of Raksha Bandhan. Despite the unpredictable weather during the monsoon season, with sudden bursts of rain and heat, enthusiastic shoppers continue to pour into Sadar Bazar. The market remains crowded, even in the rain, as people carry umbrellas or brave the elements to get what they need. There is a shared determination among the shoppers, a sense that no amount of rain or heat can dampen the joy of preparing for Raksha Bandhan.

### A MARKET FULL OF CHOICES

One of the most striking features of Sadar Bazar during Raksha Bandhan is the sheer variety of rakhis on display. The market caters to all tastes and budgets, ensuring

“ONE OF THE MOST HEARTWARMING SIGHTS IN THE MARKET IS THE SELECTION OF CHILDREN'S RAKHIS, OFTEN FEATURING POPULAR CHARACTERS. A YOUNG GIRL, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS OVERHEARD ASKING A VENDOR, "BHAIIYA, DO YOU HAVE A SPIDER-MAN RAKHI?" THIS SMALL MOMENT BEAUTIFULLY ENCAPSULATES THE SIBLING BOND, A SISTER KNOWING EXACTLY WHAT WILL MAKE HER YOUNGER BROTHER SMILE

that everyone can find something special. From simple, traditional rakhis costing as little as ₹ 10 for a dozen to more elaborate designs priced at ₹ 70 or ₹ 100 per dozen, the market offers something for everyone. Rakhis come in every imaginable style, from classic designs featuring beads and threads to more modern versions adorned with glitter and stones. Children's rakhis, often featuring popular cartoon characters and superheroes, are among the most popular items. Little girls excitedly pick out rakhis for their brothers, carefully choosing ones that they know will bring a smile to their siblings' faces. A young girl, for example, was overheard asking a vendor, "Bhaiya, do you have a Spider-Man rakhi?" This small moment beautifully encapsulates the sibling bond, a sister knowing exactly what will make her younger brother smile. A small moment that perfectly captures the thoughtfulness and love that define Raksha Bandhan. The girl knew exactly what her brother would love and she was determined to find it for him.

### THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE FESTIVAL

The vendors and artisans are integral to the Raksha Bandhan experience. Their work begins long before the festival, with many starting preparations at least a month in advance. Crafting each rakhi requires skill, patience and a deep understanding of what the festival means to people. For these artisans, Raksha Bandhan is more than just another business opportunity; it's a chance to contribute to a tradition that has been passed down through generations. A shopkeeper in Sadar Bazar explained how much effort goes into preparing for Raksha Bandhan. "We start getting ready about a month before," he said. "There's a lot of hard work, but it's worth it when you see the market come alive like this. Even in the rain, people come. It's something we love." His words highlighted the dedication that goes into making the festival special for everyone. Despite the long hours and sometimes challenging conditions, the vendors take pride in being part of something bigger than just selling rakhis. They are part of a tradition that brings people together, year after year. The artisans also take great care in crafting each rakhi. They understand that these simple threads carry significant emotional weight. For them, it's important that every rakhi reflects the love and care that

siblings have for each other. They often work late into the night, ensuring that their creations are perfect. It's not just about making something that looks good, it's about creating something that will be cherished.

### A FESTIVAL OF EMOTIONS

Raksha Bandhan is a time of joy and celebration, but it can also bring about feelings of longing, especially for those who are separated from their loved ones. Not everyone is fortunate enough to be with their siblings on this special day, and for them, the festival carries a bittersweet note. A woman in Sadar Bazar, carefully choosing rakhis to send to her brother who lives far away, shared her plans to send them by post. Despite modern courier services offering faster delivery, she preferred the traditional method, finding something special in the anticipation that comes with receiving a package by postman. Her story is just one of many that highlight the emotional depth of Raksha Bandhan. The festival is not just about the physical act of tying a rakhi, it's about the connection that siblings share, a connection that goes beyond time and distance. Even when miles apart, the bond remains strong and the act of sending a rakhi is a way of maintaining that bond. It serves as a reminder that, no matter where life takes people, the relationships that matter most are always worth celebrating.

### THE ESSENCE OF TRADITION

As Raksha Bandhan draws near, the market becomes a living embodiment of tradition. With its rich history and vibrant atmosphere, it reflects the enduring values of family and togetherness. In a world that often moves too fast, these moments offer a chance to slow down and appreciate what truly matters. The festival is a time to reconnect with loved ones and honour the bonds that have shaped lives. During this time, the market becomes more than just a place to buy rakhis, it transforms into a space where memories are made. Every purchase, conversation and shared smile contributes to the festive atmosphere. The streets serve as a symbol of the festival,

where tradition is not just remembered but actively experienced, blending the past and present in a heartfelt celebration of love and family.

### THE MEANING BEHIND THE RAKHI

At the heart of Raksha Bandhan is the rakhi itself — a simple thread that carries profound meaning. It's more than just a decorative piece, it's a symbol of a sister's love, gratitude and appreciation for her brother. Tying a rakhi is an act of trust, a way of saying, "Thank you for always being there." This small thread binds not just wrists but hearts, reinforcing a bond that is as old as time. For many, the rakhi is also a reminder of the shared history that siblings have, the moments of joy and support and the times when they've stood by each other. It's a token of the relationship that has shaped who they are. Though it may be simple in appearance, the rakhi holds a depth of meaning that goes beyond words. It's a symbol of a bond that is pure, unbreakable, and everlasting.

### A CELEBRATION OF LOVE

Raksha Bandhan is more than just a date on the calendar, it's a celebration of the relationships that connect people, the memories that hold them together, and the love that sustains them through life's challenges. In today's fast-paced world, festivals like Raksha Bandhan remind everyone of the importance of family and the connections that define them. In Sadar Bazar, the spirit of Raksha Bandhan is alive and well. The market, with its history and vibrancy, captures the essence of the festival. It's a place where love is expressed through simple gestures and where the bonds between siblings are honored in all their beauty. As brothers and sisters across the country prepare to tie the rakhi this year, they are reminded of what the festival truly stands for. It's not just about the rituals, it's about the love, care and unbreakable bond that siblings share. In the end, that's what makes Raksha Bandhan so special — a celebration of love that goes beyond time, distance and the challenges of life.



# NOE – WHERE GLOBAL FLAVOURS MEET RARE INGREDIENTS!

Nestled in the heart of Lutyens Delhi in the iconic Diplomat Hotel, the recently launched 'NOE' is set to redefine the dining culture in the city, bringing a vibrant social atmosphere and an innovative culinary experience

By SHARMILA CHAND

I wanted an elevated comfort food zone to take guests through a culinary journey blending global flavors with local influences to craft a unique experience," says Sandeep Bishnoi, the Founder who has been associated with creative brands such as Perch Wine & Coffee Bar and Hoots. Here innovative culinary experience is the key with Chef Dhruv Nijhawan, at the helm of affairs. An alumnus of Le Cordon Bleu, India, Chef Dhruv's passion for ingenious cooking techniques and for reviving rare, authentic ingredients, is well known. At NOE, he brings forth his passion as is evident in the distinctive menu that celebrates the art of 'elevating comfort food'. Evoking nostalgia and inspiring innovation, the kitchen at NOE re-invents handpicked traditional comfort dishes from world cuisines using lesser-known ingredient pairings and creative cooking techniques. From high-quality produce to regional and international cuisines, each dish encapsulates a rich tapestry of flavours and the ingredients' culinary heritage.

Speaking about the cooking methods, chef Dhruv tells me, "Every dish tells a story of a unique ingredient and a different cooking method. Reinventing modern classic dishes in a flavour forward method lies at the heart of our cooking. NOE incorporates culinary techniques from around the world using star ingredients to create an innovative dining experience." Hence, Potato & Chilli Orange sits nicely looking pretty in front of me. Swedish Hasselback potatoes in smoked brown butter with savoury cheena, bajji chili, orange zest, Korean chilli oil and pea shoot cress, is one perfect example of Dhruv's philosophy. And so is 'Tofu & Garum' - an umami flavoured silken tofu with vegan mushroom garum, soy, leek circles, porcini mushrooms & nori powder. For mutton lovers, what better than 'Kanda & Picante'? "Kaffir lime and coriander mutton kanda with broccoli picante puree finished with chermoula crumble," explains chef. He also recommends 'John Dory & Mazavaroo' - pan-seared John Dory with cauliflower crème, smoked Mazavaroo, tossed almond flakes served with cashew duqqa. The menu is extensive with a lot more stars like 'Lamb & Molé' - medium-rare cooked lamb chop with curry leaf, thyme, black molé sauce, togarashi tossed snap peas, sumac onions with seasonal cress. For crab lovers, 'Crab & Wasabi' is strongly recommended. Crab meat with avocado, wasabi, lime puree, water chestnuts, asparagus, compressed cucumbers and seasonal cress. From large plate section, Pumpkin & Pomegranate turned out to be my favourite. Braised pumpkin with pomegranate sauce reduced with all spice and tahini, served with a sumac cress salad. 'Potato & Capers' is another one I lapped up. You will love layered potato slices with lemon zest cream, asparagus and olive. The relish of smoked onion added to the flavor



brilliantly accompanied by a side salad in orange dressing. 'Onigiri & Rasam' is a brilliant take on innovative experimentation. Jasmine rice onigiri with a light rasam sauce finished with celery dust, furikake peashoot, you would have never relished rasam in this medium. The dessert section looks pretty impressive, each dish comes with a lavish dose of drama to oomph things up. For me, Biscoff & Chai was the perfect way to wind up the meal. A vanilla cardamom sponge cake with Biscoff mousse and masala chai whipped cream cheese, with a spiced ginger sable & Biscoff gelato, simply bowled me over. Complementing culinary experience is the creative highball cocktail program served at NOE's bar. Managed by Hoots - recently awarded as one of Asia's Top 50 Bars, the highball bar concept emphasises refreshing, perfectly balanced cocktails created with premium spirits and house-made mixers, showcasing creativity and craftsmanship. Inspired by its prestigious address



flows effortlessly into a trendy bar and a plush rustic outdoor deck as well as an intimate courtyard," tells Amit Chhabra, of studio LDC, the team behind the design architects of NOE. With diverse settings, NOE offers layers of sensory experiences for all moods and occasions where guests can enjoy different spaces in a single visit or each separately over multiple ones. Whether it's a casual gathering over food and drinks, a rendezvous with a friend, a special celebration, solo culinary adventures, a romantic date, or even small events, NOE promises for a memorable time. Featuring an extensive breakfast spread, an all-day dining menu, delectable Sunday brunches, and a creative drinks menu along with rotating seasonal menus and pop-up surprises, NOE welcomes you to a world of elevated comfort food, exquisite cocktails, and unforgettable dining experiences. Overall, the vibe at NOE is elegant and chic. Sharmila Chand is an author and independent journalist who writes on Travel, Food and Lifestyle



# A NOSTALGIC CULINARY FARE AT INDIAN REPUBLIC CANTEEN

By SHARMILA CHAND

Ever heard of Waffle Imarti, Mac n Cheese Pakora, Waffle Bread Pakora, Samosa Cannelloni? If no, head to Indian Republic Canteen in the heart of capital's popular Connaught Place and you will get to taste innovative dishes with a flair for fun. Why the name Indian Republic, I asked the team. "The concept is inspired by the diversity of the Indian Republic, aiming to create a welcoming and accessible environment to a familiar canteen setting, where all patrons can feel comfortable and engaged," is the answer. Alok Aggarwal Co-Founder- Indian Republic Canteen further explains, "Our establishment is founded on the concept of nostalgia, aiming to evoke cherished memories of simple, beloved foods such as noodles, samosas, and bread pakoras from one's college days. We are devoted to celebrating these dishes and encouraging patrons to savor

them without reservation. The interior design of our space is a contemporary fusion of modernity and nostalgia. It reflects both cutting-edge trends and traditional influences, presenting a vision of India that is globally stylish yet deeply rooted in Indian sensibilities."



**BREAKFAST SOIREES**  
If not in a mood to rustle up breakfast at home, then just hop in here. They have introduced a new breakfast menu, serving a delightful array of morning treats that promise to start your day on a flavorful note. Imagine the perfect morning with a spread of traditional and contemporary breakfast dishes, curated to suit every palate. From 8 AM to 11 AM, you can indulge in a hearty and wholesome breakfast experience that blends the best of regional flavors with popular morning staples. The highlight of my breakfast was the comforting taste of Nagori Halwa, a classic dish that combines the rich flavors of semolina and sugar, bringing a touch of nostalgia to your breakfast. How could I miss the delicious Bedmi Sabzi, just perfect for my taste. For a flavour of traditional regional classic, Indori Poha, garnished with fresh



coriander, sev, and a squeeze of lemon, captures the essence of Indore's street food culture so beautifully. If you prefer something nutritious and savory, the Besan Chilla with Chutney

provides a protein-packed option, featuring a gram flour pancake served with a side of tangy chutney. The Bombay Sandwich offers a taste of Mumbai with layers of fresh vegetables and

tangy chutneys sandwiched between slices of soft bread. Health-conscious diners need not worry as they have option of Masala Oats, Banana Muesli Bowl, a refreshing mix of

muesli, fresh bananas, and yogurt, offering a perfect balance of taste and nutrition. For the ubiquitous South Indian flavors, the menu includes crispy and golden Dosa, served with traditional sambar and chutneys, transporting you to the streets of Southern India. Complement your meal with a selection of fresh juices, made from seasonal fruits, to add a refreshing touch to your breakfast. Or go for signature drinks like The IRC Shichanji, a longstanding favorite, alongside the Imli Fritz. Each drink is crafted to be unique and memorable, aligning with the overall concept of the place.

**TO CONCLUDE**  
Whether you are looking for a quick bite or a leisurely breakfast, Indian Republic Canteen's thoughtful and exciting menu is well curated to cater to all your hunger cravings.  
**CHECK IT OUT**  
Time: 08:00am to 11:00am  
Location — H-26, Connaught Circle, Block H, Connaught Place, New Delhi



BKP SINHA



DR ARVIND K JHA

# FOREST RIGHTS ACT: A BEACON OF HOPE OR A VICTIM OF EXPLOITATION?

The Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006 was heralded as a transformative piece of legislation designed to recognise and empower forest dwelling communities while promoting sustainable forest management. However, the implementation of FRA has faced significant hurdles, including mismanagement, exploitation, and inadequate scrutiny write **BKP SINHA** and **ARVIND KUMAR JHA**

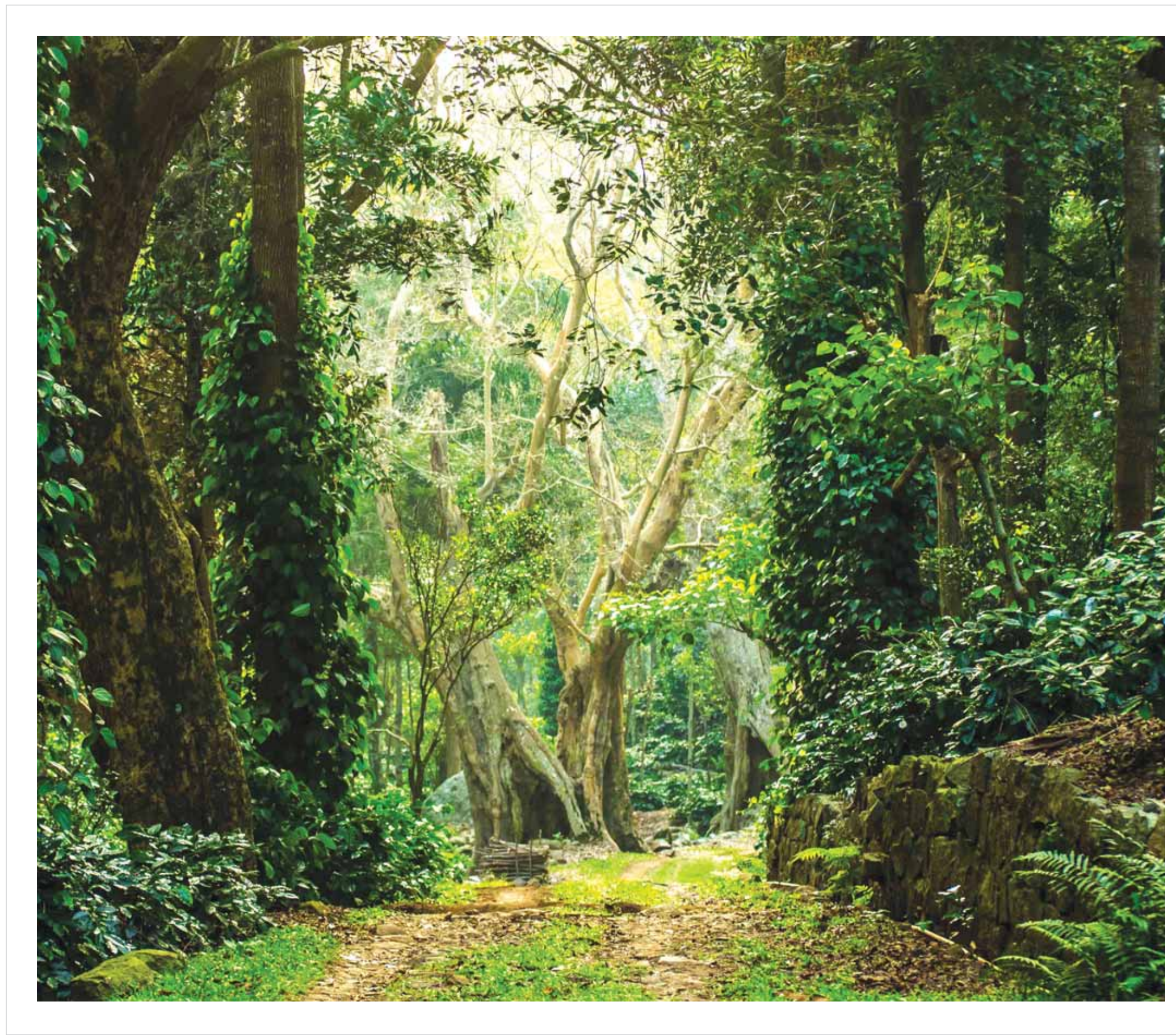
The Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006, a landmark legislation in India, was introduced to recognise forest rights (FRs) of the Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes (FDST) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFD) and empower them aiming at strengthening the conservation regime of forests. It was seen as a beacon of hope ushering in an era of community-led sustainable use of forest resources, conservation of biodiversity, and maintenance of ecological balance, which are essential for the sustenance of FRs. The Act however has faced serious implementation challenges and is overly involved in debates about the fulfilment of this vision indicated in the preamble.

The FRA outlines fourteen distinct FRs for its target group but its initial implementation focused primarily on just two viz. habitation and self-cultivation. This emphasis led to large-scale encroachments by people claiming that they occupied the forest land before the mandated cutoff date of December 13, 2005. Not very surprisingly, the high volume of cases and the pressure to decide them quickly resulted in many ineligible claims getting recognized as valid. This, in turn, encouraged even more people to make similar claims, hoping that theirs would also be approved. During this time, the claims related to Community Forest Rights (CFRs) were given low priority, except for those involving traditionally collected minor forest produce.

In 2012, significant amendments to the FRA Rules were made and new guidelines issued thereafter. Although these amendments purportedly aimed to streamline implementation, they resulted in unintended consequences. Some of these amendments, allegedly extending beyond the Act's original scope, relaxed the eligibility criteria for claimants, allowing non-deserving individuals and communities to exploit the system. The amended Rule introduces a new right, known as the 'Title' to Community Forest Resources.

It enabled communities with only a few members from the FDST and OTFD to make such claims thus allowing the rural elite and powerful individuals to take advantage of the system marginalizing the genuine target group of FRA. Additionally, the evidentiary value of satellite imagery was lowered, making it more challenging to distinguish between legitimate and fabricated claims. No system was established to scrutinize the approved claims while the Tribal Ministry, GOI repeatedly issued directives to review just the rejected ones. In the existing atmosphere, it was 'practical' to approve claims rather than reject them even when the evidence was weak and essential criteria were not met. At times hundreds of cases were cleared in just one meeting which often lacked adequate representation of non-officials and women members, and objections by foresters, even when based on ground reality, were generally labelled as anti-tribal and anti-FRA.

The protection-related duties of forest right holders, gram sabhas, and village-level institutions mentioned under Section 5 of the FRA still await alignment with existing Acts and Rules given the purport of Section 13. Some state tribal departments, as nodal agencies for implementation, have excluded the forest department from village-level management plan committees constituted for community forest resources. Such exclusion precludes inputs from trained foresters and consideration of a landscape-based forest management approach, which is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of biodiversity, survival of wide-ranging wildlife, and the provision of eco-services that extend beyond village boundaries. Village-centric



management systems, influenced by electoral politics, may undermine long-term conservation efforts and harm ecological balance. Instances of clear felling and over-exploitation in bamboo coupes, in violation of sustainability principles, have already been observed in some villages. Encroachments and land-use alteration near watercourses and on slopes pose significant risks. In 1992, the Forest Department attempted to remove encroachments in Mundakai, Wayanad but faced violent resistance resulting in assaults, injuries, and the torching of six vehicles by locals. Over time, emboldened encroachers and developers constructed large resorts on slopes increasing landslide susceptibility. This risk was tragically realized with the recent landslide in Mundakai in July 2024.

Under FRA also, recognition of claims by ignoring the terrain is an extremely serious issue. In Maharashtra, a 2014 satellite-based study on FRA implementation revealed that out of randomly selected 56,029 claims for cultivation and habitation in Gadchiroli, Gondia, Nandurbar, and Dhule districts; 8,472 and 11,988 sites respectively were within 50 and 100 meters of water bodies or watercourses. Similar claims were found in different districts on slopes exceeding 20 degrees, pockmarked with a total area of

485 acres, many of which could potentially become the epicentre of additional encroachments and imminent disasters.

To date, 5.18 million acres of forest land scattered over 2.37 million sites have been recognized in the country as individual FRs of cultivation and habitation and the process is still on. The absence of a cut-off date for claim submission, however, makes misuse of the Act easier with time since the verifiability of evidence about 2005 becomes increasingly difficult. It may allow the exploitation of the Act for political purposes too.

An analysis of cases cleared just before elections, for instance, 1,33,920 titles granted to podu cultivators reportedly based on village elders' statements; ramping up of claim clearances in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh; and current invitations for new claims in Jharkhand should be revealing. A worrying trend, however, has emerged in Madhya Pradesh, with encroachers from other villages and districts targeting forest land in Burhanpur district and nearby areas, often with local politician's support. These actions have sparked violent clashes between the encroachers, local villagers, and forest officials, who are struggling to protect the forests.

An examination of randomly selected CFR cases in Maharashtra reveals that the 'nature' and 'extent' of FRs are often missing from title documents. The issue reportedly

“THE PROTECTION-RELATED DUTIES OF FOREST RIGHT HOLDERS, GRAM SABHAS, AND VILLAGE-LEVEL INSTITUTIONS MENTIONED UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE FRA STILL AWAIT ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING ACTS AND RULES GIVEN THE PURPORT OF SECTION 13. SOME STATE TRIBAL DEPARTMENTS, AS NODAL AGENCIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION, HAVE EXCLUDED THE FOREST DEPARTMENT FROM VILLAGE-LEVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN COMMITTEES CONSTITUTED FOR COMMUNITY FOREST RESOURCES

exists in other states as well. Understanding the quantity of forest produce (as a forest right) is crucial for the sustainable management of community forest resources and the long-term continuance of the exercise of forest rights. Accurate quantification can prevent issues such as the dwindling supply of medicinal plants for the Ayurvedic industry, which has led to the use of substandard materials and tarnished the reputation of Ayurveda. Unregulated removals could lead to future disputes over forest produce among neighbouring villages which would simply be disastrous.

The process adopted for recognizing Rights over Community Forest Resources (RCFR) raises significant concerns. According to Section 3(1)(i), RCFR of management is admissible only for communities of FDSTs and OTFDs who have traditionally protected and conserved these resources for sustainable use. Further, section 4(3) of the Act mandates that these communities must have occupied the forest land before the cutoff date of December 13, 2005. However, in practice, management rights under Section 3(1)(i) have been liberally granted, ignoring the mandated criteria, on more than 13.5 million acres out of the country's total recorded forest area of 191.5 million acres. The trend continues unabated also

due to the absence of a deadline for claim submission. Surprisingly, RCFRs for management have been granted on thousands of acres in the core areas of Tiger Reserves and Protected Areas in Achanakmar, Udanti Sitanadi, Dhantari, Navegaon Nagzira, and Tansa without fulfilling the required criteria. Apart from the illegalities involved in RCFR cases, the overall situation indicates that the concerned District Level Committees have unauthoritarily transferred the State's responsibility mentioned in Article 51A of the Constitution. In the past, forests were vast and tribal populations were small and cohesive with minimal influence from market forces. They existed harmoniously. Today, we face a crisis of fractured village populations and fragmented forests. The traditional arrangements that once worked may no longer be effective. Any harm to forest conservation and management has far-reaching consequences and Nature responds to it in compounded ways, leading to unpredictable weather patterns, desertification, global warming, and ecological crises. These environmental changes exacerbate climate change, creating a vicious cycle that further threatens the sustainability and health of our forests and communities. It is crucial to set a deadline for claim

submissions, revisit the rules under the FRA, and swiftly correct its implementation to benefit genuine beneficiaries. Cancelling irregularly granted rights, removing encroachments, and relocating FR holders from high-risk areas will establish confidence in the administration among the voiceless target group of the FRA.

The Supreme Court must prioritize the hearing of writ petition 109/2008, duly because their earlier order to evict encroachers was stayed on February 28, 2019, due to the Tribal Affairs Ministry's submission that due processes were not followed in implementing the FRA. The ministry had also highlighted that the process of settling the claims and rights of the applicants left much to be desired.

At this critical juncture, the choices we make will shape the destiny of India's forests, its people including forest-dependent communities, and its ecology and economy. The question remains: Will the FRA fulfil its promise of empowering legitimate forest right holders while safeguarding India's ecological wealth, or will it succumb to exploitation and misuse? Only time, and our commitment to a sustainability-oriented implementation of the Act, will tell.

(The writer are former PCCFs, UP and Maharashtra; views expressed are personal)



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

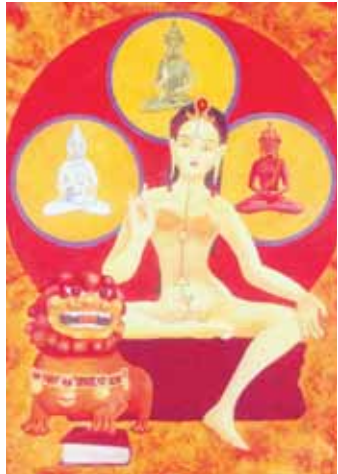
MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

You're currently experiencing a period marked by keen observation and active communication. This phase is ideal for engaging with new concepts and exploring different perspectives with an open and eager mind. You'll feel a surge of mental vitality, perfect for diving into research or expanding your knowledge. This heightened energy will enhance your confidence in sharing your thoughts and ideas. However, it's important to temper this enthusiasm with caution to avoid appearing too critical or making hasty decisions. Stay vigilant about the accuracy of the information you encounter, as appearances can sometimes be deceiving. Trust your intuition, but make sure to confirm your findings. Strive for a harmonious balance between exploring bold ideas and thoughtful analysis. Engage in open conversations, allowing your sharp intellect to uncover more profound insights.

Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Purple  
Lucky day Sunday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

This week invites you to introspect and embrace transformation. A period of deep reflection is at hand, where you may find yourself revisiting previous decisions and their impacts on your life. This process offers a chance for significant personal renewal. You might find an increased clarity and conviction in facing these realities, helping you to let go of what no longer benefits you. This is an ideal time to foster personal growth and initiate a new beginning. Use this opportunity to re-evaluate your life's path and implement changes that genuinely represent your true self. Welcoming this phase of change can lead to a more genuine and rewarding future. Allow the insights from your experiences to guide you forward.

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Coral  
Lucky day Saturday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week heralds a period ripe for embracing new opportunities and embarking on bold ventures. The essence of adventure and spontaneity is in the air, inviting you to take steps forward in directions you've perhaps not considered before. There's an underlying force encouraging you to break free from routine and explore fresh horizons. It's an ideal time to initiate projects, explore new places, or set transformative personal objectives. Let go of any hesitations or perceived barriers that might be holding you back. This period calls for trusting the journey of exploration and being open to where it might lead. Embrace this phase with enthusiasm and a readiness to venture into the unknown, as the possibilities for growth and exhilarating experiences are particularly strong now.

Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour Olive  
Lucky day Sunday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week, you may experience a sense of entrapment, driven by personal beliefs or external demands. You could perceive your options as being quite limited, feeling a heavy weight from ongoing challenges. It's crucial to recognize that these barriers are often more psychological than tangible. The key to overcoming them lies in challenging old habits or assumptions that constrain you. Take time to deeply consider what is truly restricting your progress and explore ways to adjust your outlook to uncover fresh opportunities. This period demands robust inner fortitude and adaptability. Don't hesitate to seek support when necessary, and keep in mind that true freedom begins with a shift in how you view your circumstances. Embrace the potential for change by actively addressing these mental obstacles.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Saffron  
Lucky day Friday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week invites a time of deep reflection and emotional exploration. You may find yourself facing moments of uncertainty or confusion as certain aspects of your life that were previously obscured begin to surface. This period calls for a reliance on your inner guidance, urging you to look inward and trust your instincts, even when clarity seems distant. As you navigate through intricate emotions and perhaps discover underlying truths, patience becomes vital. It's important not to rush decisions based on transient emotions. Instead, focus intently on the gentle murmurs of your dreams and the nuanced signals from your subconscious, which abound with valuable insights. Embrace this journey of self-exploration, keeping an open mind and heart, and let your innate wisdom guide you through these introspective days.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Turquoise  
Lucky day Wednesday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

This week, you may encounter a phase of contemplation and reconsideration. It's a period where progress could appear slow, encouraging you to see things from a fresh viewpoint. Embrace this pause as a chance for introspection and reassessment of your goals and priorities. During this time, you might feel the pressures of duties or encounter hurdles that challenge your usual pace. By setting aside strict expectations and opening yourself to new perceptions, you can uncover meaningful insights. Recognize that this temporary standstill is a preparatory stage, setting the groundwork for forthcoming advancements. Seize this moment to refine your understanding and patience, as you prepare for a transformative journey ahead. Remember, every pause is an opportunity for growth and personal evolution.

Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour White  
Lucky day Tuesday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week, your focus will intensify around personal connections and pivotal decisions. There's a heightened emphasis on unity, partnerships, and aligning with your fundamental values. You might notice your close relationships flourishing or becoming more profound, particularly those that align well with your deepest beliefs and desires. This period calls for choices to be made with affection and collective respect, covering both romantic ties and joint ventures. It's an opportune moment to fortify relationships or resolve any prevailing conflicts. Aim to align your actions with your loftiest ideals and be receptive to nurturing bonds that propel your personal development. Embrace chances for harmony and equilibrium, trusting that the guidance from your emotions will steer you rightly.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Teal  
Lucky day Thursday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week marks a period of emotional rejuvenation and beginnings in personal connections. You're entering a phase where your feelings and potential for meaningful interactions intensify, promising a bounty of affection, empathy, and contentment. It's the perfect moment to deepen bonds, explore new relational or creative avenues, and embrace projects that satisfy your soul. This phase invites you to cultivate your emotional landscape and act on your heart's desires. Whether you're starting a new romantic chapter, enriching existing relationships, or pursuing artistic expressions, the time is ripe to open your heart. Allow yourself to both give and receive love in its myriad expressions, and tap into your natural reservoir of compassion and artistic spirit. Embrace this cycle of growth and connection.

Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Burgundy  
Lucky day Friday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week invites you to reevaluate your foundations in both material and emotional aspects. You may find yourself reflecting on how well you secure what you deeply care about, as stability becomes a theme. This period is about reassessing how you manage what you possess and confronting any underlying anxieties about potential losses or shortages. While you generally lean towards embracing change, you might notice a tendency to hold tightly to certain elements of your life or resist shifts in your usual approach. It's a good time to find equilibrium between your innovative impulses and a grounded perspective. This will help you solidify your base, ensuring that you are well-prepared and confident as you plan for future endeavors.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Fuchsia  
Lucky day Wednesday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week emphasizes stability, family, and long-term security, reflecting a period of completion and fulfillment in your life's tangible and emotional areas. You might find yourself contemplating your accomplishments and the legacy you're shaping. It's an opportune time to invest in your future or partake in activities that strengthen your home and familial connections. Expect highlights around financial or material advancements, signaling rewards for previous endeavors. Seize the chance to honor your achievements and those of your loved ones. This period encourages you to prioritize enduring security and happiness, underlining the significance of robust foundations and valued relationships. This supportive setting promotes development and strengthens relationships essential for your personal growth.

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Indigo  
Lucky day Monday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This week heralds a period of dynamic energy and passionate pursuits. You will embody confidence and charisma, reflecting a time when you can harness your inner strength and creativity. This is an ideal moment to take charge with enthusiasm and determination. Embrace your leadership qualities and let your passion propel you toward your goals. This is a powerful time for initiating projects, asserting your vision, and inspiring those around you. Your magnetic presence will attract positive attention and support. Channel your energy effectively, and don't hesitate to step into the spotlight. Use your innate creativity and confidence to make significant strides in both personal and professional areas of your life. This week is about actively shaping your future with vigor and vision.

Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Lavender  
Lucky day Tuesday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week may bring potential for discord or tension in your interactions. You could find yourself in situations that are emotionally taxing or lead to disagreements. These conflicts, while challenging, offer a chance to practice discernment in choosing which issues to engage with. Aim to resolve disagreements peacefully and steer clear of power struggles. It's a time to reflect on what is truly causing friction and explore constructive solutions to these problems. Emotional resilience and clear thinking are crucial during this period. By staying composed and opting to distance yourself from minor disputes, you will be able to maintain your inner peace and handle challenges gracefully. Cultivate patience and understanding to navigate through this period with ease.

Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Baby Pink  
Lucky day Tuesday

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**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Shakti trinity deified as Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh



visualise things in larger perspective, as they have self-centric narrowed vision. Out of ignorance, such people are often not sure what they should look for in life and therefore, are usually found to be directionless. They are restful by nature, which induces a sense of inertia,

indolence, ignorance, and more often a negative mind-set. To such people, the indwelling Rajasa element keeps the desire element alive. But at the same time, they are not keen to take pains to pursue their desires in right earnest. So, invariably they are left behind in the

run of life. Their sense of want, however, makes it difficult for them to digest the riches available with others either. That in turn, breeds in a sense of jealousy and hatred towards the achievers. This way, particular mix of the three in a being, with one or the other prominently displayed, defines the unique character of each being. To sum up, Sata, Rajasa, and Tamasa, begin their course as three dimensions of creative intelligences, whose imprints stretch on to even the last point in the evolutionary chain. For, their psychological imperatives very much find reflection in the personality frame up of manifest beings, especially in terms of one's thought trends on ground. That makes continuum between the primal source and manifest being, evident. The spoken primal word 'Om' has in its store sound trinity designated by the three letters 'A', 'U', and 'M'. All sound syllables in active use are believed to have evolved out of these three root sounds. 'Om', thus, has in its womb the seeds of all letters with their related sounds. The three letters are

respectively marked with Rajasa, Sata, and Tamasa. The first two letters - 'A' and 'U' - apparently coalesce into 'O' in dicta-lingua. The three are also respectively identified with waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep state of a being in day-to-day life. Waking state is evidently identified with Rajasa, as it involves action. Dream state is marked with Sata, for it involves simply working on an idea either real or assumed, in the inner realm of mind, which evidently can't be seen in real terms. Tamasa is that restful state of mind devoid of any creative thoughts. Ancient India's seers, realising the relevance of the three creative intelligences - Rajasa, Sata, and Tamasa - deified them respectively through the symbolism of Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh. The concept of God-trinity, thus, is nothing but Energy concept of creation deified.

Concluding the discussion on Om, goodbye pioneer readers.

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