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EXPLORING THE DEPTHS
OF THE HUMAN MIND

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IMMIGRATION PROGRAMMES

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JIO-BP INAUGURATES 500TH
EV CHARGING STATION

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Police altered documents in RG Kar case, claims CBI



Activists of various left wing parties clash with police personnel during a protest march against the alleged sexual assault and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, in Kolkata, Thursday

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Central Bureau of Investigation has reasons to believe that a section of Kolkata Police officials had tried to create fake documents in the Kolkata lady doctor rape and murder case. In its remand letter submitted before Court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Sealadah the CBI has said that the officials at Tala Police Station which has jurisdiction over the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital where the August 9 rape and murder took place had tried

to "create" and "alter" certain documents that could change the direction of the case. Hearing a writ petition the Calcutta High Court had transferred the case to the CBI following allegations that the Kolkata Police was trying to suppress facts. While seeking an extended remand for former Officer in-charge of Tala Police Station Abhijit Mondal and arrested former RGKMCH Principal Sandip Ghosh the CBI has told the Court that some additional facts had surfaced during the investigation of the two accused persons.

"During custodial interrogation of both the accused persons, new/ additional facts have emerged to the effect that some false records pertaining to the instant case were created/ altered in the police station," the CBI letter said. The agency also told the court that the CCTB footages of the said police station had been confiscated and handed over to the Central Forensic Laboratory for analysis. The parents of the victim had also alleged similar things before the media. "We had told repeatedly how we were

given three versions of "sudden illness, suicide and then death over telephone before we rushed to the hospital ... then in the hospital we were made to sit for three hours while her mother literally held their feet to let her see her daughter's face once," said the father of the victim. The ordeal did not end there as the old parents were made to sit in the Tala Police Station for more than an hour and were repeatedly monitored while they wrote the FIR. "They also forcefully cremated my daughter without our wishes ... as we wanted to get a second postmortem conducted" as the autopsy was done post sundown defying the general protocol in the Kolkata Police manual, they alleged. Incidentally, the postmortem was done not on the request of a DCP but that of a sub-inspector, a letter recovered by the CBI showed. The CBI has been trying to find out who was instructing Mondal and also who was instructing the person and who was instructing the arrested police officer and for what reason, sources said adding "everything will become clear in the coming weeks when the call details and forensic reports come up."

Domestic Violence Act applicable to all women: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, is a civil code that is applicable to every woman in India irrespective of her religious affiliation or social background. A bench of Justice BV Nagarathna and Justice N Kotiswar Singh said the 2005 legislation was applicable to all women for more effective protection of their rights guaranteed under the Constitution. "The Act is a piece of civil code which is applicable to every woman in India irrespective of her religious affiliation and/or social background for a more effective protection of her rights guaranteed under the Constitution and in order to protect women victims of domestic violence occurring in a domestic relationship," the bench said. The apex court delivered its verdict on an appeal filed by a woman challenging an order of the Karnataka High Court in a matter related to the grant of maintenance and compensation. The woman had earlier filed a petition under section 12 of the Act which was allowed by a Magistrate in February 2015 granting Rs 12,000 as monthly maintenance and Rs 1 lakh towards compensation to her. The top court noted that the husband had filed an appeal against the order which was dismissed by the appellate court on the ground of delay. The court noted that later, he filed another application under section 25 of the Act, which deals with duration and alteration of orders, before a magistrate but the same was dismissed. The bench said thereafter, he filed an appeal before the appellate court,



which allowed it and remanded the matter to the magistrate with a direction to consider his application by giving an opportunity to both parties to adduce their evidence. The judges noted that aggrieved by the order, the woman approached the High Court which dismissed her plea in April last year and directed the magistrate to consider the application filed by the man under section 25 of the Act. In its verdict, the Supreme Court referred to section 25 and said it was evident that an aggrieved person or a respondent as defined under the Act can seek for alteration, modification or revocation of an order made under the provisions of the Act if there was a change in the circumstances as per sub-section (2) of section 25. The bench said a Magistrate, while exercising discretion under section 25(2) of the Act, has to be satisfied that a change in the circumstances has occurred, requiring to pass an order of alteration, modification or revocation.



Hindu Temple vandalised in US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Unknown miscreants have vandalised the BAPS Hindu temple in California's Sacramento, desecrating it with expletive-laden graffiti saying "Hindus go back!", the BAPS Public Affairs said. "Less than 10 days after the desecration of the @BAPS Mandir in New York, our Mandir in the Sacramento, CA area was desecrated last night with anti-Hindu hate: "Hindus go back!" We stand united against hate with prayers for peace," the BAPS Public Affairs said in a post on X. Wednesday night's incident comes after the desecration of the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Melville, New York, on September 17. "Our condemnation of hate remains resolute; our sadness has only deepened; and our prayers for all, including those with hate in their heart, have grown stronger," the organisation said in a statement. "BAPS is working with law enforcement authorities on this hate crime," the statement said. "The BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Sacramento is home to a vibrant Hindu community engaged in numerous activities and projects to support the larger community. We are and shall remain an integral part of this community's fabric," the statement added.

Bengaluru horror 'Mahalaxmi humiliated Mukti Ranjan, leading to her murder'

Claims Mukti's brother
NALINI SAHU
■ BHUBANESWAR



police and was only released after paying a bribe of Rs 1,000," Satyaranjan disclosed to the media. Satyaranjan revealed that Mahalaxmi's so-called brother and his friends had threatened Mukti. "In a fit of rage, Mukti choked Mahalaxmi. When he realised she was dead, he panicked and tried to stage the scene as a suicide. Unable to hang her, he dismembered her body and dumped the mutilated organs in a refrigerator before fleeing to Odisha," Satyaranjan explained.

According to Satyaranjan, Mukti had been mentally disturbed for over a year due to "constant blackmail" and financial demands from Mahalaxmi. She had allegedly taken from him valuable items, including a gold necklace, a ring and an expensive mobile phone. "Mukti couldn't send money home or support my education because of his relationship with Mahalaxmi," Satyaranjan said. Mukti's stated, "He was always stressed. When I asked why, he confessed that he had

killed a girl in Bengaluru. He earned 40-50K per month but gave everything to her." Police recovered a suicide note of Mukti in which he admitted to the crime, expressing his frustration and anguish and why he killed Mahalaxmi. Mahalaxmi, originally said to be from Tripura, worked at a popular mall in Bengaluru where she had met Mukti. The police investigation revealed that she was married and had a child but was living separately. Mukti vanished following the murder and was later found dead, hanging from a tree in Bhadrak district, Odisha. The case, which has unfolded as a tale of love, betrayal and tragedy, has left both families shattered. The investigation continues as Bengaluru police personnel in association with Odisha cops piece together the events that resulted in the loss of a life.

FIRST WOMAN PRESIDENT TO MEET TROOPS AT SIACHEN



President Droupadi Murmu pays tribute at the Siachen War Memorial during a visit to Siachen Base Camp, on Thursday

PTI

Woman tortured, driven out of house for dark skin



Victim lodges complaints against in-laws with police, OSHRC
RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

A woman, who got married only three and a half months back, faced both physical and mental torture and was driven out from home by her in-laws and spouse. Her fault was that she has dark skin and she looks ugly. The matter came to the fore following the victim lodged a police complaint and also, filed a petition before the Odisha State Human Rights Commission.

According to sources, victim Manashi Patra of Bharatapada under Mahanga Police limits on last June 12 had married Sagar Kishore Dalai, son of Braja Kishore Dalai of Chanchal village under Kudanagari police limits as per Hindu Vedic rituals. Manashi's family members had given Rs 1 lakh and other articles as dowry to her in-laws as per their demands. But to her ill luck, Manashi began to face torture physically on the sixth day of her marriage as her in-laws assaulted her because of her dark skin. Even her husband also was disappointed with her skin just in a few days to their marriage. Chiding her as ugly, her in-laws also demanded her to bring more dowry from her parents. When she denied, the volume of torture grew. So much so that one day, her in-laws drove her out of the house. Though both sides on September 22 decided to settle the matter amicably in the presence of village gentry, but later, her in-laws allegedly threatened her to kill her if she dared enter the house. The victim later lodged an FIR at Kudanagari police station against her spouse and in-laws demanding to take action against them. When contacted, IIC of Kudanagari police station Ambika Prasad Das informed that a case has been registered and an inquiry has started. No body has been arrested in the case so far, the IIC added.

SC rejects Gujarat Government plea in Bilkis case



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed a plea filed by the Gujarat Government seeking a review of the court's verdict which contained certain observations against the State while quashing the remission granted to 11 men convicted of raping Bilkis Bano and murdering seven of her family members during the 2002 riots. A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan also rejected the application for listing review petition in open court. "Having carefully gone through the Review Petition, the order under challenge and the papers annexed therewith, we are satisfied that there is no error apparent on the face of the record or any merit in the Review Petition, warranting reconsideration of the order impugned. The Review Petition is, accordingly, dismissed," the bench said. The Gujarat Government in its plea had said the apex court's observation in the January 8 judgment, holding the State guilty of "usurpation of power" and "abuse of discretion" for complying with an order of another top court bench, was an "error apparent on the face of the record" primarily on three grounds.

Cong is spokesperson of Urban Naxalism: Nadda

'In BJP, a leader's son doesn't become leader'
NALINI SAHU
BHUBANESWAR



on August 5, 2019, that Article 370 was abrogated from the Constitution of India. As a result, Jammu & Kashmir fully became a part of India constitutionally," said Nadda. "The Supreme Court had ordered to stop 'triple talaq'. 'Triple talaq' doesn't exist in Islamic countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria and Indonesia. However, it was prevalent in India and Muslim sisters were deprived of being included in the mainstream," he said.

"People often talk about inflation and unemployment. When the economies of America, Europe, Australia, Japan and China are in crisis and their growth rate is below five, India's growth rate is expected to reach seven per cent. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says India is the only bright spot. We have become the fifth largest economy in the world; and in the third term of Modi, India is going to be the third largest economy. Ten years back, 92% of our mobiles were being imported. However, 97% of mobile manufacturing is done in India now. India is now the third largest exporter of toys in the world. India is now the third largest market in automobiles as well," he said. "There are more than 5,000 big and small political parties

and nearly 50 active parties in this country. However, the BJP is the only political party which is a national party," said he. "After the membership drive, there will be active members and then the election will start from the circle level. Subsequently, there will be district-level elections and State-level elections. The national-level president will be elected by State-level representatives. This kind of process is only followed by the BJP. This is why any leader's son doesn't become a leader in the BJP, rather a person who comes from the grassroots level becomes a leader of our party," Nadda said. "Our last membership was 18 crore. Our membership is renewed every six years. Now, our membership has crossed six crore," he said.

Loot in another city apartment Woman loses wedding ring, gold earrings

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The safety and security of Bhubaneswar residents residing in gated communities is in question once again following another burglary in a city apartment located in the Bomikhal area.
A woman lost her wedding ring and four gold earrings while she was out in her office. The looters also fled away with cash of Rs 16,000 she had withdrawn for some personal work.
This came a few days after a scientist was looted of over half a kilogram of gold ornaments from his luxurious apartment at Chandaka.



The looters target houses when the owners are usually out for office. Like every day, the victim S Triveni locked her apartment and left for office at around 10 am. The looters entered into her house at around 1-1:30 pm and looted all her belongings.
The burglars specifically targeted gold items and cash, leaving other valuables untouched. It seemed to be the handiwork of some professional looters as they broke the house lock using some weapons to enter her house.
On being informed, the Shaheed Nagar police went to the spot and launched a probe into the incident.

Heavy rains: Sun Temple waterlogged

PNS ■ KONARK/ PURI
Tourists visiting the Konark Sun Temple had a horrific time as heavy rains triggered massive waterlogging at the site on Thursday.
The visitors had to wade through knee-deep water as the entrance of the temple was submerged. Several tourists also sustained injuries as they fell accidentally while walking through the water.
A tourist from Gujarat said, "Despite being a heritage site, it is surprising to see no proper drainage system here."
This was not the first when such a situation cropped up at the temple. Even after a short spell of rain, waterlogging was witnessed on several occasions at the iconic site.
Meanwhile, the Puri district administration declared a holiday for all schools on Thursday due to a heavy rain-fall warning.



No decoration gates on Cuttack roads in Dussehra

**Orders HC
PNS ■ CUTTACK**
The Orissa High Court on Thursday ordered not to construct gates on roads in Cuttack city during the upcoming Dussehra festival.
The court also ordered to remove cables and other wires hanging over the roads that could be possible threats to the lives of people in the city.
Hearing a PIL about the problems of the city, the court expressed dissatisfaction over the poor condition of the roads. In response, the Work

Department Secretary assured that the road repair work would be completed by October 5.
Meanwhile, the court has also ordered to solve the issue pertaining to the protest by the Odisha Nursing Employees' Association (ONEA) through mutual discussion. The next hearing on the matter has been scheduled for October 3.
Earlier, the court had ordered the Cuttack DCP to file an affidavit mentioning the steps taken by it to prevent noise pollution in the city during the upcoming Durga Puja festivities.

Shift WODC office to W Odisha: SP urges CM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Odisha State Committee of the Samajwadi Party (SP) on Tuesday submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister demanding that the headquarters of the Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) office be shifted to western Odisha from Bhubaneswar.
The State Government established the WODC on November 11, 1998 with an objective of multi-dimensional development of Odisha. These

districts are Sundargarh, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Kalahadi, Nuapada, Subarnapur and Angul.
The government has provided Rs 325 crore to the council till the financial year 2023-24. However, it is alleged that many projects have not been implemented yet.
While many questions have been raised about the working of the council, it has been a repeatedly demanded to shift its headquarters to western Odisha from the State capital

Bhubaneswar for its smooth functioning.
At the time of elections, various parties, including the BJP, promised to make the WODC more active and bring its headquarters to western Odisha, but the promise has not been fulfilled. But after the formation of the new BJP government, the issue has also been neglected, said the Samajwadi Party memorandum.
It further said the WODC CEO resigned before the general elections while its

president Asit Tripathy also quit after the elections. Therefore, the council has become a completely stagnant and neglected institution. Despite the BJP government's promise of multi-dimensional development of the State, the WODC has not been made functional, the memorandum said.
Samajwadi Party State president Shiba Hati warned of launching an agitation in western Odisha if the WODC office is not shifted to western Odisha soon.

Anupam Kher associates with Vikas Group

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Krishna Vikas Group has set up a number of institutions in Odisha, Chhattisgarh and AP imparting quality education and health and tourism services, said its chairman D Murali Krishna.
Addressing a Press meet here, he said Bollywood actor and social activist Anupam Kher has come forward to associate himself with the mindset of Krishna Vikas Management. On the occasion, the first video of his brand endowment was released.
He said that in 2002, he and three other associates started Vikas Residential School. For 20 years as the chairman of Vikas Group, he has made a lot of progress in the field of education, health and tourism.
The Group runs hospitals,



schools and colleges at Bargarh, Rourkela, Brahampur and Angul, besides AIPH (Asian Institute of Public Health) in Bhubaneswar. AIPH University in Bhubaneswar is the first Allied Health Sciences University in Eastern India, he informed.
The Garuda Houseboat Project in Chilika has found a special place in Odisha's tourism map, Krishna added.

Sofia felicitated by CREDAI in Sydney

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Barabati-Cuttack MLA Sofia Firdous was felicitated by the CREDAI (Confederation of Real Estate Developers of India) at its 22nd national conference held in Sydney, Australia, from September 23 to 26. The CREDAI holds its annual conference in India and abroad.
Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal was the chief guest on September 24. The conference brought together about 1,100 real estate developers from India to Australia. Goyal urged the real estate industry to undertake welfare measures for the workers and encouraged the real estate industrialists to



consider expanding their operation in international market such as Australia.
The CREDAI felicitated Sofia for her good work in the real estate sector as a woman entrepreneur and praised her new role as a people's representative. Notably, Sophia worked as real estate entrepreneur before joining politics.

Mahanadi water dispute to be resolved soon

**Says Union
Minister for Jal
Shakti
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**
The longstanding disputes over Mahanadi river water-sharing between Chhattisgarh and Odisha would be resolved very soon, assured Union Minister for Jal Shakti CR Patil on Thursday.
On his visit to Odisha to participate in 'Ek Ped, Maa Ke Naam' programme, he said, "The tribunal is leaving no stone unturned to resolve the matter as soon as possible."
The Mahanadi is the lifeline for the people of both Chhattisgarh and Odisha with thousands of people living in the Mahanadi basin. Despite several attempts to resolve the differences, there has never



been an inter-State agreement so far.
The Odisha Government has complained to the Centre regarding the construction of

six industrial barrages on the Mahanadi in Chhattisgarh and the lack of water inflow from the river during the non-monsoon period.

Odisha has applied for sharing the Mahanadi water while Chhattisgarh claims that it is not obstructing the flow of water.

In Baleswar Man gets lifer for killing 4-month-old son

SIBDAS KUNDU ■ BALESWAR
Special Judge Biswajit Das on Thursday convicted a man on the charge of killing his four-month-old son and sentenced him to life imprisonment in Baleswar district.
The court further ordered the convict Dularam Baske (37) of Atta village under the Soro police station to pay a fine of Rs 5,000 and in default to undergo another two more months' imprisonment.
Police had begun investigation after Dularam's wife Gory Baskey lodged an FIR alleging that he had murdered their son.
According to her com-

plaint, Dularam never wanted a child out of their wedlock and tried eliminate the child from the time he was born. On January 14, 2003 when she was out of home, Dularam took the child out and killed him. When asked, he said he had left the child in an Ashram school.
The dead body of the child was found in a highly decomposed state on January 19 in a nearby field.
The court after examining 12 witnesses and 15 exhibits pronounced the verdict, said Special Public Prosecutor Pranab Kumar Panda.

SOCIAL CANVAS

Odisha one of most atrocity-prone States against SCs, STs

**Protective
legislations not
properly enforced**

The Annual Report for the year 2022 published by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment under section 21(4) of POA Act 1989 published in September 2024 gives a wider picture about the status of enforcement of one of the important protective legislations for SC and ST communities in the country.
The report is part of a legal obligation of the Union Government to place on the table of the both Houses of Parliament for annual periodic review that concerns the protection of socially discriminated communities constituting 25 per cent of the population of the country.
The report says in the year 2022 in order of number of cases the top five States having more number of cases booked under POA Act



MANAS JENA

in conjunction with IPC are UP, Rajasthan, MP, Bihar and Odisha.
Odisha had more cases than Maharashtra, AP, Karnataka, Telangana, TN, Harayana, Gujarat and Kerala. 13 States have about 98 percent of the total cases against SCs.
The top five States with the most

cases of atrocities on STs were MP, Rajasthan, Odisha, Maharashtra and Telangana out of 13 States that had about 99 percent of the total cases. It is reported that at all India level the number of cases increased from 53,886 in 2020 to 62,602 in 2022. About 95 per cent of the cases are pending in courts and the percent of cases ending in conviction was 32 per cent for the year 2022. The conviction percent was 40 in the year 2020 where as the annual disposal of cases is only 6 per cent.
Why are the cases of atrocities against SCs and STs in Odisha so high in comparison to other States? And what does the trend indicates? There were 2,902 cases of SCs and 773 cases of STs out of a total of 3,675 cases, registered during the year 2022 in Odisha. The State Government has identified atrocity prone areas in 18 districts out of a total 30 in the State.
Referring to the MSJE's report in the year 2022, let's have a look into the institutional mechanism

of Odisha and how it works to address such sensible issues that matter a sizeable population of the State.
The Government of Odisha is supposed to prepare an annual report to table in the State Assembly for a periodic review of the status of the enforcement of POA Act in the State as a matter of legal obligation but no such report is available in public domain. The State Vigilance and Monitoring Committee headed by the Chief Minister must meet twice in a year but the Ministry report says there was no meeting of the committee in the year 2022.
It was a general observation that during last 24 years of BJD rule, there was no regular meetings to discuss such issues at apex level even as a matter of legal obligation. Principal Secretary, SC and ST Development Department is the nodal office of the State as per rule -9 of the POA Act.
At district level there are 30 dis-

trict level vigilance and monitoring committees having the respective district's Collector as chairperson. It is a very important body which is supposed to review the cases and monitor their progress to take the cases into their logical end as per procedure of criminal justice administration. It is reported that 18 meetings were held in 30 districts during the year 2022.
There are also 58 sub-divisional level committees constituted in 30 districts but unfortunately only one meeting of such committee was held.
As per the provision of law the Government has to provide immediate relief and rehabilitation to the victims of atrocities within 7 days. However, it is reported that no the relief was provided far too late in the case of 2,288 persons.
The police administration has a most critical role in such cases. In some States there are special police stations to deal with such cases. A National helpline Against Atroci-

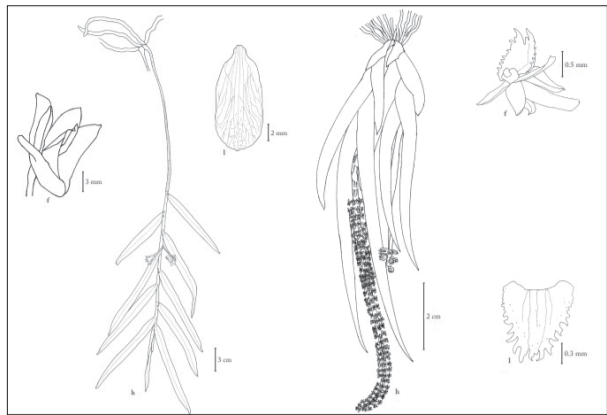
ties on SC and ST (NHAA) is functioning for prompt responses. The investigating officers are issued guidelines with a hand book compilation of Government orders.
A State level SC/ST Protection Cell under the charge of Additional Director General of Police and Human Rights Protection Cell in the State police headquarters are in place as per rule. It is reported that awareness programmes were conducted for 18 police officials and 62 other officials to sensitize them but it was not reflected in the submission of a timely charge sheet which is due within 60 days. It shows in most cases the investigation and charge sheet has been submitted later than 60 days. This delay in investigation and filing of charge sheets affects the judicial process in access to justice under criminal justice administration.
The Odisha Government has 3 exclusive special courts for speed trial of such offence at Cuttack, Baleswar and Balangir, along with 51 district

session courts and additional session courts designated for trial of such cases as special courts. There are 51 special public prosecutors in special courts and three exclusive special public prosecutors in three exclusive special courts appointed by the Government along with facilities of legal aid to victims. The report says during the year 2022, 839 SCs and 529 STs were provided legal aid.
The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs are jointly responsible for enforcement of this POA Act and the MSJE has provided a central assistance of Rs 2,145.8 lakh to Odisha for its effective implementation. But unfortunately the monitoring bodies under institutional mechanism and high powered committees under the provision of the rules have been largely dysfunctional, affecting the process of access to justice of the most vulnerable section of population.
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Two orchids discovered in Similipal forest

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Similipal forest in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, a National Park, a Tiger Reserve and a Biosphere Reserve, is a repository of diverse flora and fauna. It is a favorite home to orchids, members of the most advanced plant family. A 100 species in 41 genera of orchids are found in Similipal; this is against 144 species under 53 genera known from Odisha till date. This shows the richness of the Similipal forest. Orchids are truly considered as the indicator species of a healthy forest. Significantly, two epiphytic orchids have been recently discovered by renowned



orchidologist Sarat Misra in the Similipal forest. One of it is *Dendrobium prasannae* S. Misra and the other one is *Oberonia similipalensis* S. Misra. Orchid flower has unique

floral plan. Out of the three petals, the rear one, known as the lip, is differently shaped and differently coloured from the rest of the members. It contains nectar or food grains, real in deceit form. It is also

twisted half a round to occupy the front position in the flower. Both the above features are evolutionary changes to attract insects visiting the flowers. The lip is an important organ of the orchid flower and forms a diagnostic character in identifying the species. In *Dendrobium prasannae*, the lip is broadly oblong with an abruptly-ending short tip; the stems are drooping, long and slender. *Oberonia similipalensis*, on the other hand, is a much smaller curious-looking plant with knife-shaped slender leaves. Its lip is broadly ovate, undivided with deeply-cut the edges. The former species is named honoring late Prasanna Kumar

Dash, former Minister and Speaker of the Odisha Legislative Assembly, an ardent environmentalist and watchdog of the Similipal forest. When the Orissa Environmental Society (OES) mooted the proposal for declaring the Similipal forest as a Biosphere, it was Dash who as the president of OES, pursued the proposal both in the State and at the Centre, as a result of which the Similipal Biosphere was formed in 1994. The other orchid was named after its home, Similipal. Both these species have appeared in the book "Similipal - The Forest of 100 Orchids" published in 1922.

Paradip Port observes World Maritime Day



PNS ■ PARADIP
The Paradip Port observed the 47th World Maritime Day with the theme, "Navigating the future: safety first" on Wednesday. Unlike the National Maritime Day, there is no fixed date of celebration of World Maritime Day. But generally, it is celebrated in last week of Sep-

tember every year. It depends on the individual governments to decide a suitable date for celebration during last week of September and the DG, Shipping, Govt. of India, decided to celebrate it on September 25 in India for this year. On this occasion, at Paradip the Port, Deputy Conservator Capt AC Sahoo hoisted the World Maritime

Day flag at the Marine Site office. In the evening, a seminar was held at the Officers' Club in which Marine Engineer MK Mohanta and Pilot Capt SS Misra deliberated on the topic of the day. The first celebration of World Maritime Day was done on March 17, 1978 to mark the occasion of enforcing first convention of IMO in 1958.

'Probe B'deshi migrants' movements in Ganjam'

NGO writes to Prez, PM, CM
PNS ■ CHHATRAPUR
A Ganjam based NGO VAROSA (Voluntary Organisation for Regional and Social Advances) has demanded immediate investigation of illegal and suspicious movements of Bangladeshi migrants in Ganjam NAC area. Secretary, VAROSA, Durga Madhav Panigrahy has written a letter to the President of India, Prime Minister, Home Minister, Union Minister of Education, Odisha CM, local MP and MLA raising apprehensions over the safety and

security of people of Ganjam district. He also submitted a copy of the letter to the Police DG, Odisha, State Home Secretary, Ganjam Collector, Ganjam SP, Tehsildar, Ganjam IIC and NAC Executive Officer. In his letter, the VAROSA has given a detailed report regarding the vulnerability of Ganjam town due to its geographical location and multiple entry points through land and water ways. It has suspected unchecked entry of illegal Bangladeshi migrants into Ganjam area. Panigrahy demanded detailed checking and verification of people with suspicious background.

Vedanta introduces 'Swarna Prasan' in Kalahandi

Initiative to be extended to Rayagada, Koraput
PNS ■ BHAWANIPATNA
The Vedanta Aluminium on Thursday announced its partnership with the Ministry of Ayush's "Swarna Prasan" initiative by reaching out to 500 students of Manikeshwari High School and Saraswati Shishu Mandir in Bhawanipatna. The company plans to extend the scheme to adjacent Rayagada and Koraput districts. Kalahandi District Assistant Medical Officer Dr Ayodhyanath Behera said, "Swarna Prasan is a time-tested Ayurvedic practice and its benefits in boosting immunity and cognitive function in



children are well-documented. Vedanta Aluminium's support in bringing such impactful health interventions to underserved regions is commendable." Vedanta Aluminium COO Sunil Gupta said, "We aim to expand and strengthen the existing government schemes for a holistic development of communities. The Swarna

Prasan programme reflects our dedication to improving child health while respecting community values." Vedanta Aluminium Bauxite Mines COO Nitin Kumar Tiwari said, "We aim to expand the Swarna Prasan programme to benefit 30,000 children, from infants to 16-year-olds, across Koraput, Kalahandi and Rayagada

within 2024." Notably, Swarna Prasan, an ancient Ayurvedic practice, involves administering gold particles mixed with honey and ghee to children. This combination is believed to enhance memory, boost immunity and improve overall health, ensuring holistic development during critical growth phase.

In Sundargarh Woman's body found in house

Paramour detained
PNS ■ SUNDARGARH
A woman's decomposed body was recovered from her house at Gurundia village under the Sadar police station in Sundargarh district. It was suspected that the incident was fallout of an extramarital affair. The matter came to the fore after foul smell started emanating from the house. Suspicious villagers informed police

who broke open the house to find the woman dead. It was not clear when she was killed. Her body had almost decomposed and a foul smell was emanating from the house. The Rourkela police have detained the woman's boyfriend in this connection while a further probe into the incident was underway. The body was seized and sent for postmortem. Police registered a case and launched a probe. The incident has triggered shockwaves in the village.

B'pur Rotary Club felicitates 53 teachers

NATION BUILDER AWARD (TEACHERS' FELICITATION)
PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR
The Rotary Club of Berhampur, District 3262, proudly recognised 53 exceptional teachers with the prestigious Nation Builder Award at a ceremony held on November 22 here. The award is a testament to the teachers' tireless efforts in shaping the minds of future generations. It is an initiative of the Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM) to recognize and encourage outstanding teachers. The event commenced with a warm welcome by NBA Chair Rtn Prasanta Patra, followed by a floral welcome, the

National Anthem by Rtn Satyakam Patro, and the 4-Way Test by Rtn Bhawani Shankar. President Rtn CA R Laxmi Tarun delivered the welcome address and introduced the guests. The dignitaries who joined as guests on the occasion included Dr Ritesh Acharya, Consultant Cardiologist and Dr Ayaskanta Mohanty, Director of Sunshine Hospital. Assistant Governor Rtn V Dhanavantri Rao encouraged the teachers to continue their outstanding work. The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks by Rtn KVG Ravi Kumar.

Faculty crunch, poor infra S Odisha's only govt law college in bad shape

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAMPUR
The Lingaraj Law College, the only Government law college in south Odisha, has come under intense scrutiny from the State's Higher Education Department due to severe staff shortages and neglected infrastructure. Affiliated with the Berhampur University, the 55-year-old institution serves around 400 students pursuing a 3-year law course, but its operation has been significantly hampered by administrative and financial stagnation. Once staffed with seven permanent faculty members, the college now functions with only two, one of whom is on deputation from Berhampur University. Out of the 20 non-teaching staff positions, only three remain filled. Students have raised concerns about frequent disruptions in their academic schedules, citing the critical shortage of faculty and



administrative support. The absence of an integrated law course, despite growing demand, further adds to their frustration. The college, home to the State's largest law library with over 20,000 books and journals, has seen its facilities locked up due to a lack of staff to manage them. Basic amenities like computer labs remain inaccessible, and there is no proper drinking water supply. Essential academic activities such as moot courts, study

tours, and sports events have all been suspended, depriving students of holistic educational experiences. The growing discontent among students has led to frequent protests. In response, Berhampur University Chairman, Dr Narayan Charan Patnaik, assured that discussions with the university authorities are underway to address the issues. "We are committed to filling the gaps in a phased manner," he stated, adding that recent efforts have

seen the recruitment of one Professor and two Assistant Professors, who are expected to join soon. Berhampur University Vice-Chancellor Professor Gitanjali Dash expressed her concern over the long-standing issues at the college, particularly the delay in introducing the integrated law course. "Efforts have been insufficient in this regard," she remarked, calling for a more concerted approach to resolving the college's challenges. While some steps have been taken, such as addressing the immediate faculty shortage, the larger systemic issues remain unresolved. The vacant permanent positions, locked library, lack of student amenities, and the overall neglect of infrastructure continue to cast a shadow over the institution's future. Lingaraj Law College has been a cornerstone of legal education in south Odisha, but its survival now hinges on prompt and effective intervention from the authorities.

Tusker kills 4 people in 3 days in Mayurbhanj

PNS ■ BARIPADA
A lone tusker, separated from its herd, has been going on a rampage and trampled at least four people to death in the last three days in villages under the Betanoti police limits in Mayurbhanj district. The latest victim is a woman who was killed in her sleep at Radhikasol village. She was identified as Manaka Hansda. She was sleeping inside her house when the tusker entered into it. The animal damaged at least four houses before trampling Manaka to death. Her husband Sitanath, who was sleep-

ing next to her, had a close shave and ran out of the house. The incident spread outrage in the village with locals blaming forest officials for failing to check the movement of the tusker. On Thursday morning, forest personnel seized the woman's body and sent it for autopsy. Besides, another tusker has been wreaking havoc in the Bonai Forest Range of Sundargarh district, giving sleepless nights to villagers. Efforts are on to drive the elephant back into the woods to reunite with its herd but to no avail.

In Gajapati Jeweller looted of 1 kg of ornaments

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI
Unidentified miscreants allegedly looted one kg of gold and silver ornaments worth lakhs of rupees from a jeweller in the Mohana area in Gajapati district on Wednesday night. As per reports, when the owner of Srihari Jewellery was shutting down his shop at the Mohana market at around 10 pm, two bike-borne persons reached the

spot and snatched a bag from his hand. They fled from the spot on their bike after the incident. As per the owner of the jewellery shop, there was around one kg of gold and silver ornaments in the bag. Later, the shop owner lodged an FIR at the Mohana police station. After registering a case, the Mohana police reached the spot and started an investigation into the incident.

Clear bills before Dussehra: Contractors to BeMc

Critical issues affecting projects execution highlighted
PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR
In an appeal to the Mayor of Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMc), contractors have demanded immediate intervention to address several critical issues affecting project execution in the city on Wednesday. They reported prolonged delays in clearing pending bills, particularly for school and college works, and urged that these be resolved before the upcoming Dussehra festival to maintain financial stability. The contractors also demanded swift action to remove site encroachments that are obstructing construction activities, emphasizing the need for unhindered access to project locations. They further highlighted that current project deadlines are unrealistic, considering external factors like weather and material availability, and called for more practical timelines to avoid penalties and delays. Inconsistencies in project estimates were another key concern, with contractors demanding accurate assessments and immediate measurements post-completion to ensure timely bill processing. To improve transparency, they also called for the implementation of a flow chart for file movement to track bill submissions and status. The contractors stressed that clearing all pending bills, including those for various projects, is crucial for ensuring continued progress. They urged the Mayor to take swift action to address the pressing demands.

ECoR Waltair Dvn meet Stress on rly infra dev in Brahmampur, other stns

Decision taken to expedite key projects
PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR
The East Coast Railway's Waltair Division held its Divisional Committee meeting in Visakhapatnam on Monday, with significant focus placed on addressing the concerns of Brahmampur and other regions of Odisha. The meeting, chaired by Union Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu, saw the participation of four Odisha MPs, including Rajya Sabha MP Mujibullah Khan,

Nabarangpur MP Balabhadra Majhi, Koraput MP Saptagiri Shankar Ulaka and Brahmampur MP Pradeep Panigrahy. The MPs highlighted several key issues, including delays in land acquisition for major railway projects such as the Gopalpur Padmapur (Rayagada), Nabarangpur-Jeypore and Jeypore-Malkangiri lines. They urged swift action to expedite these projects and called for the immediate commencement of work on the Nabarangpur-Junagarh and Malkangiri-Bhadrachalam railway lines. A key topic of discussion was the Gunupur-Therubali

railway project, with particular emphasis on the detailed project report (DPR) for the Padmapur-Gumada (Andhra Pradesh) line. The MPs also advocated for increasing train speeds between Koraput and Rayagada, as well as Nuapada and Gunupur, to improve regional connectivity and meet growing passenger demands. The MPs proposed the introduction of two new trains from Jagdalpur to Bhubaneswar/Puri and New Delhi via Koraput and Rayagada. Additionally, they pressed for immediate upgrades to several stations, including Rayagada, Koraput,

Damanjodi, Jeypore, Gunupur, Ambadola, and Muniguda, under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. Extending several trains that currently operate in the Koraput parliamentary area was also suggested to better serve passengers in these regions. Brahmampur MP Panigrahy underscored the need for urgent improvement of Brahmampur's railway infrastructure and services, highlighting the importance of enhanced facilities and better rail connectivity for the city and nearby districts. His demands included the modernization of stations and the in-

troduction of new train services to improve passenger convenience. Another crucial point raised was the recruitment of a Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) or Officer on Special Duty (OSD) for the Rayagada Division, which would help streamline operations and decision-making. The MPs also called for the reintroduction of concessions for senior citizens and journalists, which had been previously discontinued. Cleanliness and passenger amenities, particularly on the Kirandul Express, were discussed, along with improving

accommodations at smaller stations like Kusumi and Charamula Kusumi. Security concerns and the duplication of the KK and KR railway lines were also prioritized. Visakhapatnam DRM Saurabh Prasad responded positively to the MPs' demands, assuring them that their suggestions would be thoroughly considered. Senior railway officials, including ADRM Sudhir Kumar Gupta and Operations ADRM Manoj Kumar Sahu, were also present, focusing on improving infrastructure, addressing passenger needs, and expediting key projects across the division.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Trouble for Siddaramaiah

Karnataka CM faces fresh political and legal challenge as alleged land scam during his previous tenure gains traction

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is facing the heat as a special court has directed the Mysuru Lokayukta police to investigate his connection with an alleged MUDA scam. This follows the Karnataka High Court's dismissal of Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the Governor's approval for the investigation. Siddaramaiah finds himself embroiled in a controversy as a probe into an alleged land scam during his previous tenure (2013-2018) gains momentum. The allegations revolve around irregularities in the denotification of prime land in Bengaluru, where government-owned land was allegedly released for private development, bypassing legal procedures. This development has not only triggered a political storm but also raised questions about the stability of his government, which is already navigating internal challenges. The case, brought to light through opposition parties and activists, accuses Siddaramaiah of misusing his position to facilitate the denotification of land in favour of private individuals. It is claimed



that these actions led to substantial financial losses to the state exchequer. The denotification process is typically reserved for cases where the government no longer requires the land for public purposes. However, the opposition alleges that the decision-making was influenced by vested interests.

The probe, aims to examine Siddaramaiah's role and whether he acted within the framework of the law. While the investigation is in its preliminary stages, the political ramifications are already visible. With the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) demanding a thorough investigation and even his resignation, the pressure on Siddaramaiah is mounting. In response to the accusations, Siddaramaiah has strongly denied any wrongdoing, calling the probe a politically motivated attempt to tarnish his image and destabilise his government. Siddaramaiah's defence rests on his claim that the land denotification was carried out in compliance with legal procedures and was vetted by relevant authorities. He also pointed out that similar cases have been registered against several politicians across party lines, suggesting that this is a standard political practice to harass the CM's of the Opposition parties and not unique to his administration. If the investigation gathers pace and incriminating evidence surfaces, it could weaken his authority, both within his party and in the eyes of the public. The BJP, as the principal opposition in Karnataka, is likely to leverage the land scam to question Siddaramaiah's integrity and leadership. Their demand for accountability could lead to prolonged political uncertainty, especially if the case moves into the courts or if there are calls for judicial oversight. Further, any perception of corruption, especially in a state like Karnataka where electoral battles are fiercely fought, could erode Siddaramaiah's public image. His government, which came to power on promises of transparency and development, may find itself in a difficult position defending its track record if this case gains momentum and more evidence surfaces.

PICTALK



An artist gives finishing touches to a clay idol of Goddess at artisans' village Kumartuli, in Kolkata

World tourism day: Uniting people, fostering peace

Whether visiting cultural landmarks, enjoying local cuisine, or simply interacting with people, tourism fosters global unity and peace

Every year on September 27, the world celebrates World Tourism Day, a reminder of the crucial role that tourism plays in fostering cultural exchange, boosting economies, and promoting peace. As borders open and people explore new destinations, tourism serves as a bridge, uniting diverse cultures and breaking down barriers between nations. In 2024, as we celebrate World Tourism Day, the theme focuses on the far-reaching benefits of travel beyond leisure, recognising how tourism helps us understand the world, its people, and its many cultures in deeper and more meaningful ways.



Tourism is not merely about sightseeing; it's about experiencing the essence of a place, its history, and its culture. As Bulat Nurmukhanov, Deputy Chairman of the Moscow City Tourism Committee, emphasises, "Tourism is primarily a way to immerse oneself in new cultures and experience history." Through tourism, individuals are given the chance to see the world through different lenses, fostering greater acceptance and understanding of other people and their ways of life. This broader understanding is why cities like Moscow have prioritised cultural tourism as a key driver for their economic and social growth. The Moscow tourism strategy emphasises the importance of museums, exhibitions, and cultural events, which help travelers connect with the history and artistic traditions of the region. This approach reflects a global shift in tourism, where travelers seek deeper, more authentic experiences that expand their worldviews.

Tourism has always played a unique role in creating connections between people from different backgrounds. It allows us to learn from one another, building bridges of

understanding and respect. On World Tourism Day, this aspect of travel is especially highlighted, as we reflect on how it fosters harmony in an increasingly interconnected world.

As Kush Kapoor CEO of Roseate Hotels & Resorts, points out, "Tourism is about the connections we forge and the cultural experiences we offer." Kapoor stresses the importance of offering travelers more than just a stay, but a chance to explore different cultures and traditions. In a world where differences can sometimes divide, tourism brings people together, promoting peace and mutual respect.

For hotels and resorts, the focus is now on providing culturally aware experiences, from diverse culinary offerings to personalised services that reflect the traditions and customs of visitors. This kind of attention to cultural diversity enriches the overall travel experience, making it more inclusive and meaningful. Beyond cultural connections, tourism is a major economic driver for many countries. It generates millions of jobs, supports local businesses, and

contributes to the global economy. Sustainable tourism focuses on minimising the environmental footprint of travel while maximising the positive social and economic impact on host communities. From eco-friendly hotels to tours that support local artisans, tourism can be a powerful tool for inclusive development and environmental protection.

Perhaps the most significant impact of tourism is its role in promoting global peace and understanding. By encouraging interactions between people of different cultures, tourism helps to break down prejudices and build mutual respect. As we celebrate World Tourism Day, it's important to remember that each journey is not just a trip to a new place but an opportunity to engage with the world in a way that promotes peace and harmony. When people experience the customs, values, and traditions of other cultures, they begin to appreciate the similarities and shared humanity that unite us all. (The author is a travel writer, views expressed are personal)



ANJALI PATHAK

The human mind is a unique organic entity whose lengths of reach and visions of the range are still to be fully mapped. Many believe that an average mind works at less than 30 per cent of its potential. Putting this in the context of artificial intelligence, the matter becomes even more complex. There is a theory doing the rounds in the field of artificial intelligence that suggests that entities of artificial intelligence have the potential of organic functioning, just like the human mind.

The evidence for this is fairly mixed. Some conclusions may emerge over time. The crucial question concerning artificial intelligence however does include its possibilities and potential for organic evolution and growth. As observed, sooner or later, answers will emerge. Even otherwise, the human mind is a suo motu logic of its existence. Attempts to map it, are indeed one of the exciting aspects of human endeavour. Notwithstanding some breakthroughs in mapping the brain, there are areas of brain function that need a closer look both physically and operationally. Interestingly, notwithstanding all this, there is a common reference to the 'second childhood' of human beings, where people, upon reaching a certain

age, start behaving with child-like traits. It is difficult to explain this process, but it is fairly obvious to notice. Similarly, the jury is out on the age by which, the basic orientation of the brain fully takes place. One also needs to know when it matures enough to develop a relationship between the 'conscious' brain and the 'subconscious' brain.

Notwithstanding the diverse interpretations of the above narrative, it is obvious that at some stage the basic foundations of the mind seemingly get concretised. One such example is the influence of early childhood experiences on a growing human being. There are stages of childhood emerging into early adulthood. All this becomes integral to the individual's ways of thinking and behaving. Popularly, this is known to affect the orientations of a growing individual on matters of finance, gender or for that matter even values.

The list can be extended but more to the point one does not know, exhaustively, of all the influences which go into the making of an operationally adult human mind. Very often, there may be latent influences on a human mind

Exploring the depths of the human mind



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

As AI draws comparisons to human cognition, the mystery of the mind grows more complex, raising crucial questions about its unused potential



that may not manifest themselves until a much later point in adulthood. All in all, many ambiguities remain, and so do many contradictions that stay alive so far as the working of the mind is concerned. Above all, it is generally believed that hormonal changes affect the working of the mind. Both men and women reportedly pass through menopause in their later life. Many are of the view that menopausal effects are more identifiable amongst the women than the men. An issue, however, remains to be fully answered: what are the factors that influence the working of the mind?



MANY AREAS OF THOUGHT, REFLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND RESEARCH MAY CONTAIN INDICATIONS OF UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF THE MIND. IT MAY BE A CHALLENGE, BUT A CHALLENGE THAT CANNOT BE EVADED

Yet another element that influences behaviour is the fall out of a mental shock. It can have many approximations of derailing the thought process of the individual, and indeed, impacting many values. Put simply, many areas of thought, reflection, analysis, and research may contain indications of understanding the dynamics of the mind. It may be a challenge, but a challenge that cannot be evaded.

Further, there are also some transgenerational aspects to it. Say, how two parents deal with each other, or singly and collectively deal with a child

is an important factor for the child's growth. This can carry on across generations. Physiologically, the passing of some genes is known to happen across generations.

This is not only in terms of physical characteristics but also certain diseases that may have affected one of the grandparents in a given generation and resurfaced again two generations later in the physical system of a descendant. The mapping of this process, as of today, needs much additional work to be done.

This also contains a whole research agenda of human physiology, physical anthropology, medicines and more. Such a subject matter would deserve an integrated approach of not just, anthropology, psychology, genetic sciences and more, but a whole setup of support disciplines with appropriate interdisciplinary framework.

This will give insights into the physiology of the human being and the composition of the brain and mind. It is a challenging task, but it is a task that cannot be avoided.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GOVERNOR SPARKS CONTROVERSY

Madam — Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi, in an unprecedented move on the evening of June 29 last year, unilaterally removed Tamil Nadu Minister V Senthilbalaji from the Council of Ministers. But he hastily backtracked from his decision late at night because he too knew that his act was not only illegal but also unconstitutional. Some people say that Ravi has always been in the habit of being in controversies. But I believe that R N Ravi is a Governor later, first he is the order follower of the ruling Home Ministry. The ideology of the Home Ministry is clearly visible in every decision and every speech of him.

For example, just two days ago, while giving a lecture, he said that 'secularism is a European concept, that is why it was not a part of the Indian Constitution earlier, later, an 'insecure Prime Minister' got it added to the Constitution during the Emergency'.

For example, in one of his sentences, he first hinted at the concept of a Hindutva nation and secondly, he also criticised former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Some critics are demanding the immediate removal of R N Ravi from the post of Governor, whereas I believe that this is an ideological war which has been started by the central Government through the Governor, hence it would be better to answer this verbal war with thoughts only. Ravi should be asked, and then he will also say that the entire Constitution of India is external and is a copy of Europe, especially Britain, hence the entire Constitution should be abolished? Is our Constitution, on the basis of which we are proudly waving the flag of being the largest democracy today, also a European concept?

Has the Governor forgotten that he has taken oath of this Constitution? Secularism is an integral part of our Constitution. It is our biggest duty to keep religion separate from politics. Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Ukraine appreciates India's efforts



The meeting of Ukrainian President Zelensky with the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of his US visit for the Quad is taken with the overwhelming gesture from the Ukrainian counterparts. Ukraine has been visited by almost all the Quad leaders in person, and India particularly is playing a spe-

cial role in establishing peace within Ukraine with its humanitarian assistance, negotiating stability deals and peace settlement mediation between Ukraine and Russia. The Indian efforts for peace initiation is so far are still moving ahead in the back channel diplomatic level. For which Ukraine is thankful for the clear support of India towards Ukrainian integrity and sovereignty. India's efforts in this regards is particularly welcoming that, we take care of every nation near or far from us; stuck in the political or economic or geopolitical turmoil, India's assistance will be helpful to ensure peace and tranquillity in the war hit country. Also such moves will also help India to meet its commitment of becoming Vishwa Shanti Guru or World's Peace Leader in the time to come. This peace collaboration between India and Ukraine will take Indian diplomatic skills to the next level.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

INDIA'S HOCKEY DOMINANCE CONTINUES

Madam—Indian hockey is on a high as exemplified by the way Manpreet Singh's men dominated the Men's Asian trophy at China's Hulunbuir. Notwithstanding the fact that India was the favourites to lift the title, the boys had to perform on the day, and they did. Although India fought hard to overcome an unexpected resistance from China in the final, the same team it had blanked in the league match, there was little doubt that it was the best team on display throughout the tourney.

The 2020 Tokyo Olympics bronze medal, 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games gold medal, bronze at the recent Paris Olympics, and now Asian gold: India has had an excellent run on the astro turf for a couple of years, after a long, long period. The best part of the present Indian hockey team is the unity and spirit with which they come across the field come what may. Coach Craig Fulton's disinclination towards unnecessary and unwarranted chopping of players, in contrast to a few former coaches, has played its role. The talented players, of course, are indispensable

to Indian hockey. At the same time, it is felt that India should not rest on its laurels; 2026 World Cup in Belgium and the Netherlands should be another platform to showcase their undoubted brilliance. Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

ENCOUNTERS RAISE CONCERNS

Madam —The recent reports of police encounters resulting in the deaths of alleged criminals raise a critical question about our justice system and accountability, such as how can we allow a system where police act as judge, jury, and executioner? Does law enforcement cross the line from justice to vigilantism? The tragic killings in Badlapur, Unnao, and Chennai reveal a disturbing trend. We need to consider how we can assure accountability that seems to reward extrajudicial actions. It is imperative for supreme courts to intervene and uphold the principles of justice in democracy.

Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

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FIRST COLUMN

SHARPENING THE QUAD VISION

Quad summit focused on maintaining peace in the Indo-Pacific region as its top priority



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Modi's high-profile visit to the US this week reiterated the salience of US-India bilateral, underscored by several key decisions with a clear focus on the future of this 21st century partnership. This visit by the Indian PM, coming after his trips to Russia and Ukraine, points towards a multi-pronged approach, where India is willing to have diplomatic engagements at the highest level, keeping its national interests sacrosanct.

That PM Modi and President Biden have found a mutual friendship framework, despite the Indian PM having held a political roadshow of sorts with his predecessor in the Oval Office, is a signal to the large world, that the US-India bilateral has bipartisan support. The Quas leaders' summit, Modi's rockstar concert-style engagement with the Indian diaspora and his meeting with top CEOs from the technology sector in the US, all point towards an escape velocity having been achieved by the US and India, with no scope of a look back.

China was the invisible elephant in the room, at the Quad leaders' summit. The statement from the Quad summit without naming an aggressive, maritime international law violator, China, mentioned "As four leading maritime democracies in the Indo-Pacific, we unequivocally stand for the maintenance of peace and stability across this dynamic region, as an indispensable element of global security and prosperity.

We strongly oppose any destabilising or unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion. We condemn recent illicit missile launches in the region that violate UN Security Council resolutions. We express serious concern over recent dangerous and aggres-



sive actions in the maritime domain. We seek a region where no country dominates and no country is dominated—one where all countries are free from coercion, and can exercise their agency to determine their futures. We are united in our commitment to upholding a stable and open international system, with its strong support for human rights, the principle of freedom, rule of law, democratic values, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and peaceful settlement of disputes and prohibition on the threat or use of force in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter. Respect for the leadership of regional institutions, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), is and will remain at the centre of the Quad's efforts." While Quad is not a defence partnership like NATO, the presence of a global superpower, China with its coercive maneuverers in the entire Indian Ocean region, bore heavily on the leaders during the summit in Delaware. Delhi, Delaware (President Biden's hometown), Sydney, and Tokyo are keenly watching the international waters, and violations by China have been reported. The leaders announced "Today we are announcing a new regional Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI), to enable our partners in the region to maximise tools provided through IPMDA and other Quad partner initiatives, to monitor and secure their waters, enforce their laws, and deter unlawful behavior. We look forward to India hosting the inaugural MAITRI workshop in 2025. In addition, Quad partners intend to layer new technology and data into IPMDA over the coming year, to continue to deliver cutting edge capability and information to the region." China would continue to be a key concern for Quad leaders, and would perhaps serve as the super glue closely packing these four countries, with major interest in the Indo-Pacific region in a tighter embrace. The next Quad leaders' summit is likely to be hosted by Delhi, where a new US president is likely to be the key guest of honour. Given that ex-President Trump had encouraged the Quad grouping and President Biden has elevated it to leaders summit, it is safe to assume that QUAD is here to stay.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Dissanayake's rise amidst Sri Lanka's political uncertainty

As the nation transitions under Dissanayake's leadership, questions loom about his ability to navigate the complex web of rivalries that define Sri Lanka's volatile democracy



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

One of the senior editors in Colombo recounted an experience he had in Parliament after a crucial debate, where he observed two politicians discussing serious issues. After the discussion, the editor remarked to one of the leaders, "Look, you always attack him in Parliament, but behind the scenes, you are so close and listen to him carefully." This leader was none other than Anura Kumara Dissanayake, the newly elected ninth Executive President of Sri Lanka and leader of the Marxist-Leninist Party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna. The person he was listening to was his predecessor, former President Ranil Wickremesinghe, a neoliberal democrat. In response to the editor's comment, Dissanayake stated, "Whatever we say in Parliament, listening to him for five minutes behind the scenes is where we can learn a lot about politics." Wickremesinghe embodies the craft of political manoeuvring, while Dissanayake represents an idealism that has sought to reshape politics through violent revolution, a pursuit that has, lamentably, cost over 60,000 young lives. But later, he engineered a shift among a few key party members to adopt a middle ground to attract liberal democrats through the NPP alliance. So far, it has been a successful story.

The friendship between these two leaders grew for a reason: Wickremesinghe was facing serious internal rifts within his party, the United National Party, where his junior, Sajith Premadasa, was rebelling against him. The history of this party is filled with tales of internal conflicts and bitter betrayals that continue to haunt its prosperity. Nevertheless, Wickremesinghe demonstrated resilience, showing that no matter who declared a power struggle against him, he could adeptly play the game of politics. This Machiavellian politician, well-versed in power dynamics, understands that he would never engage in a battle when it could be won through deception. The painful reality, however, is the consequences of these internal conflicts within political parties as the country enters a new era dominated by "political coalitions." In my opinion, this is not a healthy exercise for a robust democracy.

The erosion of political parties, the backbone of political ideologies, inevitably paves the way for unprecedented crises and precarious social outcomes. However, few realise that the friendship between Wickremesinghe, a man from Colombo's elite and a well-established political family, played [knowingly or unknowingly] a vital role in President Dissanayake's victory. The longstanding enmity between Wickremesinghe and Premadasa was undoubtedly a significant factor in Dissanayake's success, even though many predicted that no candidate would secure the over 50 per cent of votes required to win.

The results reflect the polarised political divisions in Sri Lanka, where minority-dominated areas remarkably rejected Dissanayake, presenting a significant challenge for the forthcoming general elections, as his political alliance will need to secure over 113 seats out of 225 to establish its power in Parliament.

Erik Solheim, former Norwegian minister and climate change advisor to Sri Lanka, who has been actively involved in Sri Lankan politics since the LTTE era as



THE RESULTS REFLECT THE POLARISED POLITICAL DIVISIONS IN SRI LANKA, WHERE MINORITY-DOMINATED AREAS REMARKABLY REJECTED DISSANAYAKE, PRESENTING A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE FOR FORTHCOMING GENERAL ELECTIONS, AS HIS POLITICAL ALLIANCE WILL NEED TO SECURE OVER 113 SEATS OUT OF 225 TO ESTABLISH ITS POWER IN PARLIAMENT

a mediator in peace talks, commented on the significance of this election, stating, "The weakness of the election winner is that his coalition has very little experience running a complicated state like Sri Lanka. They may struggle to achieve a majority in Parliament and implement their many promises in a challenging economic environment."

Despite the worldwide congratulatory messages pouring in for the new leader, I find these insights particularly useful for forecasting the future trajectory of electoral outcomes and the challenges that the island nation is likely to face. The caretaker government, appointed for just two months until 14 November, faces low expectations and should refrain from making new appointments, wisely retaining some senior ministry secretaries from the previous administration.

If the President fails to secure a majority in the House, he will need to form a coalition, but if that proves impossible, the opposition may take control of Parliament, leading to chaotic infighting—an alarming scenario for an inexperienced President unprepared for Sri Lanka's complex political landscape. This situation accentuates significant uncertainties ahead. Historical trends suggest that a President's party or coalition often secures a majority in subsequent elections; however, the recent election results, where the winning candidate failed to garner over 50 per cent of the vote amidst three main contenders, complicate this.

The strong support for Sajith Premadasa and Ranil Wickremesinghe in Tamil-dominated provinces indicates a serious challenge for the newly elected President and his coalition as they approach the upcoming par-

liamentary elections. However, what is remarkable about this election is that it was exceptionally peaceful, with no violence reported, allowing for a refreshing power transition. The commendable role played by the Elections Commission in Sri Lanka cannot be overstated.

This calmness is particularly surprising in a country where people previously took to the streets, violently ousting the Prime Minister and President after experiencing a devastating economic crisis. Many find it hard to believe. Nonetheless, this should not be seen as the calm before the storm, as the country's economy remains precarious. No leader can fulfil all the promises made during the election campaign. The responsibility now lies with the leader and his team to convince the public, fostering understanding and collaboration to overcome the challenges ahead. This is where the reality of the much-discussed "new renaissance" will be tested against the ground realities. The nation-state and its historical trajectory will provide important lessons in understanding what the future may hold. What does it mean for a nation's history to be an intricate weave of choices and consequences rather than a mere succession of events? This perspective compels us to reflect on the profound implications of individual and collective decisions on the essence of a nation. The dismissal of "what ifs" simplifies a complex reality rich with potential paths, urging us to explore the interplay between certainty and possibility.

In the post-independence landscape, missed opportunities for reconciliation and economic transformation reveal a dissonance between political aspira-

tions and societal realities. The notion of a 'false renaissance' recurs throughout pivotal moments: the 1948 declaration of Independence, the 1956 Sinhala Only Act, the 1972 establishment of a republic, the 1977 shift to an open economy, the election of the first female executive president in 1994, the conclusion of the civil war in 2009, and the election of an apolitical leader (Gotabaya Rajapaksa) to overhaul the social structure in 2019—all serve as warnings against complacency born from superficial progress that obscures unresolved tensions and deep-rooted systemic issues.

Therefore, sensationalising the new leader's humble family background and expressing anger towards the "self-proclaimed elites" and their alleged corruption may not provide the sustainable answers that the nation desperately seeks. Instead, it is the collective will and the leader's capacity to engage with those who oppose him that will be essential for embarking on this new journey. While propaganda may orchestrate a false renaissance, the shimmering illusions of progress starkly contrast with the gritty ground reality, exposing a profound philosophical enigma: the allure of superficial advancement often obscures the underlying fractures of society. This compels us to confront the uncomfortable truths of our existence that we habitually choose to ignore in our quest for meaning and coherence. This challenge now lies before the new leadership. Behold an essential, paradoxical truth: within this tranquil interlude lies the profound anticipation of the storm to come.

(The writer is a journalist and author. Views expressed are Personal)

Agri-tech 2.0 : Digital innovations paving the path to sustainable farming

By boosting productivity, promoting sustainability and reducing environmental impact, these technologies offer a pathway for sustainable future

As the global population heads toward an estimated 10 billion by 2050, the agricultural sector faces mounting pressure to significantly increase food production. For India, with its vast and diverse agricultural landscape, this presents a critical challenge. Traditional farming methods alone will not be enough to meet the needs of a growing population while also addressing the threats posed by climate change, dwindling natural resources and the imperative for sustainable practices. In this context, agri-tech, the convergence of technology and agriculture, offers a transformative pathway forward. By integrating cutting-edge digital technologies into farming, India has the potential to enhance productivity, sustain-



AUROBIND UPADHYAYA

ability, and resilience. This article explores how these emerging technologies are reshaping the agricultural sector in India, positioning it to meet the demands of the future.

Agriculture at a Crossroads: For decades, agriculture has been the backbone of India's economy, employing over 50 per cent of the workforce and contributing significantly to GDP. However, the sector is

now facing unprecedented strain. The growing population, along with environmental challenges such as erratic weather patterns, water scarcity, and soil degradation, has placed the industry at a critical juncture. The traditional methods of farming are no longer sufficient to meet the increasing demand for food while preserving the environment. This is where agri-tech comes into play, providing innovative solutions that can transform Indian agriculture by improving efficiency and promoting sustainable practices.

Precision Agriculture: Data-Driven Farming: One of the most promising advancements in agri-tech is precision agriculture, which leverages technologies such as GPS, IoT sen-

sors, and drones to optimise farming operations. By gathering and analysing real-time data on factors like soil health, weather conditions, and crop growth, precision agriculture enables farmers to make informed decisions. This approach helps in the efficient use of water, fertilisers, and pesticides, minimising waste and environmental harm while maximising crop yields.

In India, the adoption of precision agriculture is accelerating. According to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), these techniques have the potential to increase yields by 15-25 per cent while reducing input costs by 10-15 per cent. The precision agriculture market in India is expected to grow significantly, from USD 57.6 mil-



lion in 2020 to USD 124.2 million by 2025. Government initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for water conservation and the Soil Health Card Scheme for better fertiliser management are further driving this growth.

AI and Machine Learning: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are also playing a crucial role in modernising Indian agricul-

ture. By analysing vast amounts of data from satellite imagery, weather forecasts, and historical crop performance, AI algorithms can predict potential problems like pest outbreaks and suggest the best times for planting. AI-powered platforms are already being used to predict pest infestations and optimise pesticide use, potentially reducing the need for harmful chemicals by up to 30 per cent.

Ensuring Transparency: Blockchain technology is emerging as a revolutionary tool in agricultural supply chains. By offering a decentralised ledger for recording transactions, blockchain ensures transparency, reduces fraud, and promotes fair trade practices. For farmers, suppliers, and consumers alike,

blockchain provides verifiable information about the origin and journey of food products, ensuring adherence to sustainability standards. The blockchain market in India's agriculture and food supply chain is expected to grow at a CAGR of 47.8 per cent, reaching USD 289 million by 2027.

IoT and Smart Farming: The Internet of Things (IoT) is revolutionising how farmers monitor and manage their crops. IoT devices, such as soil moisture sensors and weather stations, provide real-time data on environmental conditions, allowing for better decision-making in the field. For example, smart irrigation systems can adjust water usage based on real-time data, saving water and improving crop health. The IoT in agriculture market

in India is projected to reach USD 634.5 million by 2027, growing at a CAGR of 12.5 per cent.

Use of Drones: Equipped with high-resolution cameras and sensors, drones provide farmers with detailed aerial imagery of their fields. This helps in identifying issues such as nutrient deficiencies, pest infestations, and water stress. Farmers can then take targeted actions, reducing waste and environmental damage. The use of drones in Indian agriculture is expected to grow substantially, with the market anticipated to reach USD 108 million by 2025.

(The writer is chief growth officer with Arahax Technologies; views are personal)

CBDT reshuffles responsibilities

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the authority that supervises the income-tax department's work in the country, has carried out a fresh reshuffle of responsibilities amongst its members, with the investigation wing reporting to the chairman.

An official order issued on September 24 said CBDT Chairman Ravi Agrawal, a 1988-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer, will be in charge of "coordination and overall supervision" of the board's work and that of the investigation, central and criminal investigation directorates. Earlier, there used to be an independent post of member (investigation) in the CBDT, but it was done away with last year as part of the work re-orientation of the board and



the chairman was authorised with the "supervision of the work of investigation", a senior officer told PTI. Some other members' responsibilities were also reorganised then, he said. According to the order, Harinder Bir Singh Gill, a

1987-batch IRS officer, will be the member (taxpayer services and revenue), apart from holding the additional charge of member (systems and faceless services). Sanjay Kumar, a 1988-batch officer, will hold the charge of member (audit and

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

judicial), besides the additional charge of member (income tax). Prabodh Seth of the 1989 batch will be the member (administration) and his batchmate, Ramesh Narain Parbat, will be the member (legislation), according to the order that also listed out the zonal charges for these officers.

The CBDT, under the Department of Revenue in the Union finance ministry, is headed by a chairman and can have six members in the rank of a special secretary. The board currently has a vacancy of two members. The latest reshuffle was affected as the tenure of two members ended in August, with Pragma Sahay Saxena taking voluntary retirement from service and the scheduled superannuation of Pravin Kumar, the officer said.

Jio-bp inaugurates 500th EV charging station



Nita Mukesh Ambani, Director, Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and Murray Auchincloss, CEO, bp, on Thursday inaugurated the 500th Jio-bp pulse EV-charging station of Jio-bp.

Jio-bp is a fuels and mobility joint venture between RIL and global energy giant BP.

"The commissioning of the EV-charging station enables access for guests at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre, Jio World Plaza and Jio World Convention Centre in Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), Mumbai, marking the installation of the 500th Jio-bp pulse charging point in India," a company statement said.

Jio-bp has expanded its network of EV-charging stations at a rapid pace, growing from 1,300 to 5,000 in just a year.

With 95 per cent of its EV-charging network comprising fast charging stations -- the

highest in the industry -- the company is poised to deliver high speed electrons with unmatched industry-leading uptime of 96 per cent, establishing itself as the country's most reliable charging network, it said.

Jio-bp is also the first in the industry to deploy the top-rated 480 KW chargers backed by unique CVPs, which enables it to provide an efficient and quick charging experience at locations such as malls, public parking, corporate parks, hotels, and wayside amenities.

"By reducing range anxiety through its rapidly growing charging infrastructure, minimising charging time

ICRA sees room for petrol, diesel price cuts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A reduction in crude oil prices in recent weeks has improved margins on retail auto fuels, providing state-owned firms a headroom to cut petrol and diesel prices by Rs 2-3 per litre, rating agency Icrs said on Thursday.

The price of a basket of crude oil India imports averaged USD 74 per barrel in September, down from about USD 83-84 a barrel in March when petrol and diesel prices were last cut by Rs 2 per litre. In a note, Icrs said the marketing margins on retail sales of auto fuels for the Indian Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have improved in recent weeks with the reduction in crude prices.

The rating agency anticipates that there is headroom for the downward revision of retail fuel prices if crude prices remain stable at current levels.

Girishkumar Kadam, Senior Vice President and Group Head, Corporate Ratings, ICRA, said: "ICRA estimates that the OMCs' net realisation was higher by Rs 15 per litre for petrol and Rs 12 a litre for diesel vis-à-vis international product prices in September 2024 (till September 17). The retail selling price (RSPs) of these fuels have been unchanged since March 2024 (Rs 2/litre was reduced on petrol and diesel on March 15, 2024) and there appears to be headroom for their downward revision by Rs 2-3 per litre, if crude prices remain stable".

Crude prices have witnessed a sharp decline in the last few months, primarily due to weak global economic growth and high US production and the OPEC+ has pushed the rollback of its production cuts by two months to combat the declining prices.

A decline in the price of crude oil -- which is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel at



refineries -- had rekindled hopes for a reduction in petrol and diesel rates that have been on a freeze for over two years now barring a pre-election reduction in March. While petrol and diesel pricing is deregulated (meaning oil companies have the freedom to fix retail rates), the state-owned fuel retailers, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), have rarely used this freedom since late 2021 by not revising prices in line with cost.

They stopped daily price revision in early November 2021 when rates across the country hit an all-time high, prompting the government to roll back a part of the excise duty hike it had effected during the pandemic to take advantage of low oil prices. The freeze continued into 2022 but the war-led spike in international oil prices prompted a Rs 10 a litre hike in petrol and diesel prices from mid-March 2022 before another round of excise duty cut rolled back all of the Rs 13 a litre and Rs 16 a litre increase in taxes on petrol and diesel done during the pandemic. That followed the current price freeze which began on April 6, 2022, and continued till March 15 reduction. Thereafter there has been a freeze in rates again. Petrol costs Rs 94.72 per litre in the national capital and diesel comes for Rs 87.62 a litre.

Icrs said the Singapore Gross Refining Margins (GRMs) witnessed significant moderation in the first half of the 2024-25 fiscal (April 2024 to March 2025) to about USD 4 per barrel due to a drop in crack spreads with higher product output and reduced demand.

The impact is mainly on account of weak demand from China due to rising electric vehicle (EV) sales, muted industry demand and real estate downturn. Further, demand in Europe has also been subdued due to weak industrial activity and a structural shift in vehicle fleets towards EVs, it said.

"A marketing gain of Rs 1 per litre on petrol and diesel would compensate for the GRM loss of USD 0.9 per barrel for the domestic refining and marketing industry," Icrs said.

Commenting on the OMCs' profitability, Kadam said: "The OMCs reported healthy operating margins in FY2024 (April 2023 to March 2024), recouping the losses incurred during FY2023. Despite moderation in the GRMs, the improvement in marketing margins is likely to result in the OMCs maintaining their profitability in H1 FY2025".

However, inventory losses due to a sharp decline in crude prices could impact profitability to an extent in Q2 FY2025. Further, the profitability for standalone refiners would take a hit with the declining GRMs.

Icrs' outlook on the refining and marketing sector remains Stable.

India aims to integrate scalable food security interventions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India is seeking to integrate scalable food security interventions into existing government programmes while promoting local crop varieties, a top government official said on Thursday.

Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi outlined these priorities during a review of the implementation of the United Nations World Food Programme's (WFP) country strategic plan (CSP) for India spanning 2023-2027.

Chaturvedi, who chaired the first meeting of the Country Programme Advisory Committee (CPAC) under the new CSP, suggested the officers to "identify the scalable interventions and



initiatives and prepare mechanisms for including the same in ongoing programmes of ministries/departments." The secretary called for a dedicated workshop to discuss the agriculture sector initiatives in detail, highlighting the need for a focused approach, an official statement said.

Chaturvedi emphasized promoting nutritious local varieties of rice and millets alongside fortified cereals, signalling a shift towards indigenous crop promotion. He advised exploring the possibilities of bringing the Farmer Producer Organizations (FPO) into different initiatives.

The secretary also emphasised that while accessing the

nutritional outcomes of the programmes "we should also look at the standards on nutrition applicable for the Indian population."

The committee, comprising joint secretaries from various ministries and NITI Aayog representatives, is tasked with coordinating and reviewing progress on initiatives outlined in the strategic plan.

The CSP, underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding between India's agriculture ministry and UN-WFP, focuses on four key outcomes: enhancing food-based social protection systems, promoting diverse and nutritious diets, empowering women financially, and building climate-resilient food systems.

WFP Country Director Elizabeth Faure briefed the committee on ongoing initiatives, including efforts to boost food security for smallholder farmers in Assam, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh, and the nationwide push to bring millets in mainstream.

The meeting saw participation from various ministries, including Food & Public Distribution, Women and Child Development, and Rural Development, as well as agencies like the National Disaster Management Authority and India Meteorological Department.

India, the world's most populous country, faces significant challenges in ensuring food security for its 1.4 billion people.

India set to achieve GDP growth in FY25 says Finance Ministry

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is set to achieve 6.5-7 per cent GDP growth in the current financial year as indicated by the movements in high-frequency indicators till August, a finance ministry report said on Thursday.

The recent developments analysed indicate strong foundations of macroeconomic stability in India with steady growth, investment, employment and inflation trends, a strong and stable financial sector and a resilient external account, including a comfortable foreign exchange reserve position.

"A challenge on the macroeconomic front is of navigating the continuing uncertainty in global economic prospects. We will likely encounter a cycle of policy rate cuts globally amid fears of a recession in advanced economies and continuing geopolitical conflicts," the Monthly Economic Review for August said.

On balance, the report said, the GDP growth of 6.7 per cent in Q1 FY25 and the



movements in high-frequency indicators till August fit well with the real GDP growth projection of 6.5-7 per cent for FY25, provided by the Economic Survey 2023-24.

For the remaining part of the financial year, it said, a reasonable expectation is that public expenditure will pick up, providing added growth and investment impetus.

In the farm sector, higher kharif acreage is already visible. Adequately replenished reservoir levels will potentially give a fillip to the upcoming Rabi crops as well.

The skewed spatial distribution of rain may have an impact on farm output in a few regions. However, in the absence of any serious adverse climate shocks, rural incomes and demand should get stronger, and food inflation will be milder, it said.

There are also incipient signs of strains in certain sectors. For instance, the automobile dealers' body FADA has pointed to moderating sales of passenger vehicles and a build-up of inventory, it added.

Data from Nielsen IQ indicated that the growth of fast-moving consumer goods sales in urban areas slowed in Q1 FY25.

While these may turn out to be transient with the onset of the festival season, they warrant monitoring. Further, capital spending by Indian states has declined in the current financial year.

Stock markets around the world are booming, reinforced by recent policy announcements in a few countries, it said.

"Consequently, the risk of an eventual correction has risen. If the risk materialises, the spillover effect may be felt globally as well," it said.

Dr Reddy's faces penalty in Mexico for regulatory deviation



Dr Reddy's Laboratories said on Thursday the Mexican drug regulator has imposed a penalty of around Rs 28 lakh.

The drug regulatory body of Mexico has imposed a penalty of MXN 6,51,420 (Rs 28 Lakh) on the company for deviation from prescribed guidelines for filing intimation of import of a reference standard for one of the active pharmaceutical ingredients, the Hyderabad-based drug major said in a regulatory filing.

Shares of the drug maker were trading 0.39 per cent up at Rs 6,720 apiece on BSE.

Fixing SpiceJet's broken wings

Can the low-cost airline heal enough to effectively compete with IndiGo and Air India?

KUSHAN MITRA ■ NEW DELHI

Days after low-cost carrier SpiceJet raised Rs 3000 crore from institutional investors, the airline promptly cleared pending salary dues estimated to over Rs 80 crore. It is believed that the beleaguered low-cost airline will use much of the remaining funds to settle dues with a host of creditors from leasing companies to airports. However, even if much of the funds the airline has raised will go towards clearing dues, the fact is that SpiceJet did successfully manage to raise this large sum of money. This is despite the airline having to face a litany of problems and constantly being dragged to the courts by everyone from the previous owners, the Maran family of the Sun Group to various leasing firms. In fact, just last week the Supreme Court upheld a

Delhi High Court order mandating the return of three engines used by the airline on their Boeing 737 aircraft.

With leasing companies asking the airline to pay up, and taking their aircraft away, the airline is down to just having 21 operational aircraft according to website airfleets.net. This is a precipitous decline from the halcyon days of the airline before Covid when the airline had almost five times as many aircraft in its fleet and was the first Indian operator of the Boeing 737 MAX aircraft. However, the one-two punch of the coronavirus shutdown and the grounding of the Boeing 737MAX fleet worldwide following two deadly disasters almost knocked the airline out. But this is not a time to dwell on the past, the fact is that despite difficult odds the airline has managed to raise a



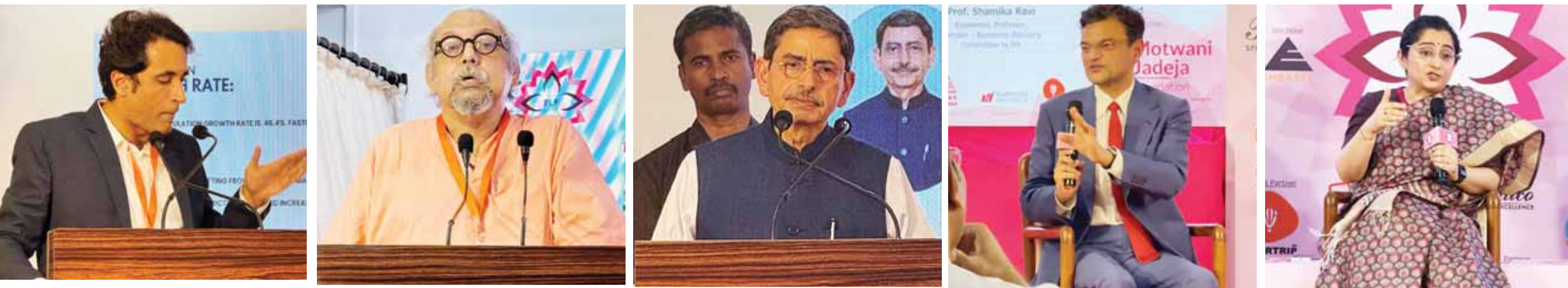
large sum of money from Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP) with institutions such as Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs, BNP Paribas, Nomura and Tata Mutual Fund subscribing to the issue. The quality of investment is a very positive indicator of the future prospects of the airline. SpiceJet has a lot to do, first and foremost to regain the confidence of employees, service providers and most importantly customers. They can do this by becoming more reliable and offering more services. Due to issues with leasing companies, the airline has been forced to wet-lease temporary aircraft from airlines in Cambodia and Turkey. They should now concentrate on operating their own fleet and by repaying dues owed to leasing firms, rebuild their

confidence in SpiceJet as a reliable airline. There is now talk of the airline growing to 100 aircraft by the end of 2026.

If this fructifies, it is a welcome move as the Indian aviation sector needs the competition as the domination of IndiGo and Air India/Air India Express leave customers with little choice. This duopoly needs to be challenged, and SpiceJet

INBRIEF

- NGEL INKS JV AGREEMENT WITH MAHAPREIT**
NEW DELHI: NTPC Green Energy Limited, entered into a Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) with Mahatma Phule Renewable Energy and Infrastructure Technology Ltd. (MAHAPREIT) on 25th September 2024.
- KATTANKULATHUR: SRM Medical College Hospital & Research Centre (SRM SKMCH&RC) has inaugurated a Tobacco Cessation Centre at its Kattankulathur location. The center, located at the Psychiatry OPD (C-1/37), First Floor, C Block, will operate from Monday to Saturday, 8 AM to 2 PM.**
- AMRITSAR: The Punjab government has approved the renaming of government schools to honor prominent freedom fighters and martyrs, aiming to commemorate their sacrifices for the country's independence.**
- AMRITSAR: An orientation workshop for college eco-club in-charges from seven districts was organized by the College Development Council, Guru Nanak Dev University under the Environment Education Programme.**
- SRM HOSPITAL OPENS TOBACCO CESSATION CENTRE**
- GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOL KHATARAYE KALAN RENAMED**
- GNDU ORGANISED ORIENTATION WORKSHOP**



PONDICHERRY LITERARY FESTIVAL

SHAPING INDIA'S LITERARY FUTURE

As India's literary festivals increasingly become platforms for political agendas and sensational debates, the Pondicherry Literary Festival offers a breath of fresh air

BY KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Literary festivals are reasonably new phenomena that have sprouted across the globe. They are gatherings of authors who come from all corners of the world to discuss the evolution of literature and the modern trends that drive it. A festival syndrome has taken over India's literary world. The land of Kalidasa is bereft of any authors who are incapable of matching the stature of global-quality writers. Though there are writers who get patronage from some publishing firms or newspapers because of their obsession with anarchy and "out-of-the-box" stances like equating Maoists as "Gandhians with AK-47 rifles" and comparing their country to a "mobile-free republic", they are mere pygmies when compared to the ones in the global arena. The literary festivals that mushroomed across India gave a lot of hope to average Indians. The general expectation was that young authors would get a platform to tell the world what they felt about the emerging Indian literary world. But what we saw was that the festivals were getting hijacked by a coterie who set the agenda for wannabe writers. They want the new-generation authors to speak and write only against the concept of India. These literary festivals became an extension of the

Progressive Writers' Forum of the former Soviet Union, where the Communist Party was the last word on literature. The Party would decide what constitutes literature and ask the writers to "compose" ideology in the form of novels and poems. The two-day Pondicherry Literary Festival held on 21st and 22nd September brought in a refreshing change. The Pondicherry Literary Festival, officially launched in 2018, has emerged as one of the leading cultural events in south India - nay, in India itself. The event featured the crème de la crème of India's intelligentsia. It saw the active participation of authors like Aravindan Neelakantan, Anand Ranganathan, Kanchan Gupta, Vikram Sampath and many others. The event has systematically avoided noise from debates that are curated for the sake of polemics, thus giving an undesirable lease of life to debunked narratives. "We empower with knowledge on spiritual, religious and cultural subjects that showcase Bharat Shakti and critically evaluate what holds her back via lectures and conversations, book talks and presentations on science and technology, defence and security. This year we focus on Bharat in the New Age. 'Bharat Shakti' is a phrase we have chosen from the writings of Sri Aurobindo to serve as our guiding principle. Pondicherry is Sri Aurobindo's seat of sadhana and we take these



associations with reverence and respect," said Alo Sud, the festival director, who is the moving spirit behind this event. Pondicherry Lit Fest had a baptism by fire in 2018. "There were attacks and diatribes on us from the Left ecosystem, who had no qualms in designating this festival as a Sanghi, right-wing event. We do not categorise people based on rights, lefts or based on religions. This is an event where delegates can come, take part and return with their minds filled with ideas, knowledge and ground realities," said Alo Sud. In an era where commercial writers/authors advertise their new



works well in advance, authors like Aravindan Neelakantan and Anand Ranganathan are exceptions. They do not publicise their new works and it is by word of mouth that their contents get disseminated. The "secular media" blackout their groundbreaking works because of the unpalatable facts they highlight. It is Pondicherry Lit Fest that offers everyone (irrespective of caste, creed, ideology, and religion) a platform to air their views and grievances. The delegates were given a bird's-eye view of the happenings in spheres like science, technology, defence and security. The festival

stood out because there was no name-calling or Modi-bashing. The rest of the literary festivals staged across India seem to be dedicated to abusing Narendra Modi. Sometime in 2016, a Carnatic musician, feeling he was being relegated to the fourth round, came out with a startling disclosure that there was no freedom of expression under the Sangh Parivar regime. It hogged national limelight, as even the staunchest critic of Modi was hearing such an allegation for the first time. The result? The musician became an overnight star and was honoured with the

title Sangeeta Kala Nidhi! What Dr M Rajeev Kumar, a noted critic and author of many short stories and dramas, says about lit fests is noteworthy. "We do have many lit fests, but their agenda is fixed. There is no literature or culture in these events other than promoting certain politicians, their ideologies and some publishing houses. Lit festivals are for open discussions and not for name-calling and abusing rivals," said Dr Kumar, who has been writing for more than five decades and has yet to be invited to at least one lit fest in Kerala. Interestingly, there are lit festivals in West Asian countries too, where the targets are Modi and Indian nationalism. There are frontal organisations of extremist outfits as well as the CPI(M) (masquerading as cultural associations). This is what makes Pondicherry Lit Fest stand out from other events. Lucid speeches, lively discussions, and speakers who are keen to take the participants into confidence make it distinct from other such festivals. Delegates are treated to sumptuous meals of knowledge, wisdom and erudition. Who said avant-garde art and literature are meant only for intellectuals? Come to Pondicherry and you will be elevated to the level visualised by Sri Aurobindo, for whom the waterfront state was the second home.

NEW ARRIVALS

SEPTEMBER RELEASES

Time to Come Home: Sowing the Seeds of Self-Love for Lasting Happiness by DAMINI GROVER (PRICE: ₹399, PAGES: 280) Hay House

Turtle Moon By HANNAH GOLD (Price: ₹499, Pages: 337) HarperCollins Children's Books

In *Time to Come Home*, award-winning psychologist and life coach Damini Grover offers a transformative guide that dives deep into the vital themes of self-love and personal growth. The book emphasises that self-love is foundational for a fulfilling life, helping readers reconnect with their true selves while embracing their imperfections. Grover provides actionable steps and relatable stories to create a clear roadmap for understanding and practising self-love in everyday life, addressing common challenges of self-acceptance and personal development. This inspiring work invites readers to honour their worth and prioritise their happiness, ultimately leading to lasting fulfillment.

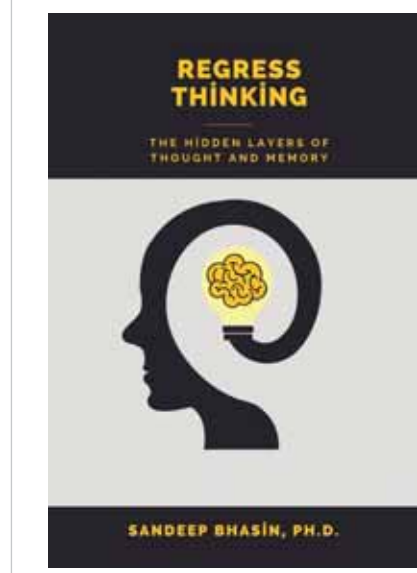
Turtle Moon
By HANNAH GOLD (Price: ₹499, Pages: 337) HarperCollins Children's Books

In *Turtle Moon*, Silver Trevelon's family grapples with unhappiness due to the absence of a long-awaited sibling. When her father receives an invitation to paint at a turtle rescue centre in Costa Rica, Silver hopes it will be the adventure that brings her family closer together. As she settles into life at the animal centre, she witnesses a rare leatherback turtle nesting on the beach. However, excitement turns to alarm when the turtle's eggs are stolen, propelling Silver and her new friends into a perilous quest to retrieve them. Their journey into the heart of the jungle uncovers long-buried secrets, testing their courage and resolve.

Exploring the interplay of thought and memory

In 'Regress Thinking: The Hidden Layers of Thought and Memory', author SANDEEP BHASIN explores the complexities of the mind and how understanding our thought processes can enhance creativity and memory, writes SAKSHI PRIYA

Regress Thinking: The Hidden Layers of Thought and Memory by Sandeep Bhasin invites readers on an enlightening journey through the complexities of the mind, combining historical insights with contemporary applications to offer a fresh perspective on creativity and cognitive processes. With over thirty years of experience across various fields, Bhasin draws on his extensive knowledge to explore these themes further. The book is structured around several central themes, each highlighting the vital role of creativity as a multi-dimensional process. Bhasin explores the psychology of creativity, illustrating how ideas emerge from the intricate interplay of different brain functions. He introduces the notion of Regress Thinking, a concept that encourages readers to retrace their cognitive steps to uncover hidden insights that might have been overlooked in the rush of everyday thought. This methodology is not just an academic pursuit, it has tangible applications in business, technology, and personal development. Bhasin's writing is both clear and engaging, making complex concepts accessible to a broad audience. He encourages readers to adopt a mindset of experimentation and to regard failure as an essential part of the creative process. By drawing connections between historical innovations and modern challenges, he highlights that lessons from the past can provide crucial strategies for tackling present-day problems. A standout aspect of the book is its use of case studies and real-life examples,



which illustrate the various manifestations of regression and its impact on individual's lives. These narratives offer practical insights and inspiration for overcoming challenges, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding and managing regression. Bhasin empowers readers to harness the potential of regression while mitigating its negative effects. One particularly compelling section of the book focuses on the four stages of the creative process: preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. Bhasin explains how each stage contributes to idea



ABOUT THE BOOK
Book : Regress Thinking: The Hidden Layers of Thought and Memory by SANDEEP BHASIN PH.D.
Publisher : Notion Press
₹990.00

generation, urging readers to embrace the non-linear nature of creativity. He also discusses the significance of environmental factors, mindset and collaboration in enhancing creative potential, reminding us that creativity

flourishes in supportive and stimulating settings. Moreover, Bhasin's examination of cognitive efficiency sheds light on the brain's remarkable ability to prioritise information and dismiss what it considers unimportant. This selective forgetting is framed as a beneficial feature, reinforcing the idea that understanding our mental processes can significantly enhance our learning experiences. Regress Thinking serves as a guide to individual creativity, it advocates for harnessing collective intelligence in our interconnected world. Bhasin promotes a culture of openness and collaboration, positioning these

elements as essential for addressing the pressing issues we face today. Regress Thinking is a fascinating read that intertwines history, psychology and practical application. It acts as both a manual and a companion for those looking to unlock their creative potential and navigate the intricacies of modern life. With its actionable insights and philosophical reflections, this book is a significant addition for anyone interested in enhancing their cognitive abilities and nurturing innovation. Bhasin's approach will resonate with those eager to explore the depths of their minds and utilise the past as a springboard for future success.

INDIA LIKELY TO MAINTAIN SUPREMACY OVER BANGLADESH

PTI ■ KANPUR

India would want their big guns Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma to fire when the mighty hosts aim for a clean sweep against a beleaguered Bangladesh in the second and final Test starting here on Friday.

The all-round show of Ravichandran Ashwin, Shubman Gill's sublime hundred, Ravindra Jadeja's quality batting and Rishabh Pant's roaring comeback allowed India to script a comfortable victory in Chennai despite being put under pressure by the Bangladesh pacers on day one.

The way India bounced back in the game reaffirmed their supremacy in Test cricket, especially at home where they are on course for a record extending 18th consecutive series win. Having made a successful return in white-ball cricket, it was time for Pant to show that it is the Test arena where he can make the maximum impact.

It seems he has even added one more dimension to his game: curbing his aggressive instinct



if the situation demands, making him even more dangerous.

However, both Rohit and Virat's bats remained silent in the series-opener as Bangladesh pacers — Hasan Mahmud and Taskin Ahmed — bowled probing lines on a supportive track and were rewarded. With a long Test season ahead of them, the two premier batters must be itching to get back among the runs.

Playing his first Test at home since March 2023, Kohli did not look at his sharpest and one can trust him to not go for expansive cover drives at the start of his innings.

CHANGE IN COMBINATIONS: The Green Park wicket has traditionally been a low and slow track that assists spinners. While it is expected to offer some assistance to the fast bowlers initially, the basic nature of the pitch, prepared with black soil brought from Unnao, is not expected to change much.

The wicket will become slower as the game progresses. It means, India can field three spinners instead of three

their playing eleven. They struggled against a high-quality Indian pace attack in their first essay in Chennai and then could not handle Ashwin and Co while chasing an improbable target.

The team management has given contrasting statements on Shakib Al Hasan's availability. While a selector had said that he is doubtful due to a finger injury he suffered while batting in Chennai, chief coach Chandika Hathurusinghe said he is eligible for selection.

On the other hand, Bangladesh, who failed to apply themselves with the bat in the series opener, are expected to make changes to

pose a huge challenge for the players. The humidity has been very high in the city in the last few days. The Indian team made Thursday's practice optional, saying it needs to save players from searing heat.

The match may see interruptions on first and third day with weather forecast predicting rain.

India have not lost a Test to Bangladesh till date and the visitors will need a special effort to reverse that statistic.

TEAMS (FROM):

India: Rohit Sharma (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (WK), Dhruv Jurel (WK), R Ashwin, R Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd. Siraj, Akash Deep, Jasprit Bumrah, Yash Dayal.

Bangladesh: Najmul Hossain Shanto (C), Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Zakir Hasan, Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim (wk), Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Kumer Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Nayeem Hasan, Nahid Rana, Hasan Mahmud, Taskin Ahmed, Syed Khaled Ahmed, Jaker Ali Anik.



Shakib retires from T20Is, says Kanpur Test will be his last if no farewell at home

PTI ■ KANPUR

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan on Thursday announced his retirement from T20 Internationals with immediate effect and also said that the second Test against India will be his last if his country's board doesn't give him a farewell match against South Africa at home.

His final international game for Bangladesh will be in the Champions Trophy which is likely to be held in UAE and Pakistan.

The 37-year-old great, who featured in 129 T20Is for Bangladesh will, however, continue to play in franchise leagues.

"I have played my last T20 match in T20 World Cup. We have discussed this with the selectors. Looking at the 2026 World Cup, this is the right time for me to move out. Hopefully, BCB will find some great players and we will perform well," said Shakib on the eve of the second and final Test against India here.

Shakib, who has played 70 Tests, scoring 4600 runs and taking 242 wickets might just play his last Test in the North Indian industrial town in case the cricket board can't assure him of his security after being accused of murder although he wasn't even in the country at that time.

"I have expressed my desire to play my last Test in Mirpur to BCB. They agreed with me. They are trying to organise everything so that I can go to Bangladesh. If that won't happen, the match against India in Kanpur would be my last in Test cricket," he added.

Shakib was named as an

India is capable to make a strong impression in women's T20 WC: Sthalekar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Australian captain Lisa Sthalekar said India have the all-round depth to grab an elusive ICC title during the upcoming women's T20 World Cup.

The global showpiece will be held in the UAE from October 3 and India's best effort in the event remains a final berth in 2020, where they lost to Australia.

"I can see Australia in the semifinals as they are aiming to win their fourth (title) in a row. England too had a strong pre-tournament build-up. India's chances are also very high and I expect them to be in the semifinals, if not in the finals," Sthalekar told a select group of journalists at the ABC — International Development's five-day cricket commentary



and mojo programme at the Australian High Commission. The former Australian skipper validated her argument citing good options through India's line-up.

"India has got power, depth, decent bowlers and if their 4-7 number batters can score at a good strike rate, they will be in a good position. They need a good start from the openers. Jenimah Rodriguez did well in the West Indies (in the CPL) recently. It will be fascinating to see how she performs in the WC," she said.

Delving further deep into the chances of the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side, Sthalekar said India have the wherewithal to beat Australia, their nemesis in global events over the years.

"For example, in the 2020 T20 WC, Poonam Yadav took four wickets in the first game and

dislodged Australian middle-order. India won that match by 17 runs.

"If any top order Indian batter scores a century or bowlers have a good day, they can take the game away," said the veteran who was the first woman to score 1,000 runs and take 100 wickets in ODIs. Expressing delight over ICC's decision of having equal prize money in men's and women's WCs, the 45-year-old said it will have a bigger impact on the game.

"From a prize money perspective, I think it's really good. But what I am most pleased about than just the winner getting the same prize money as their male

counterpart is how much money teams are getting for just participating in the World Cup.

"So, it ensures that it's not just the strong nations getting stronger and wealthier, but there is an effort at growing the global game," she said.

She used Scotland to leverage her point.

"Scotland coming in for the first time will earn money, probably more money than their national contract. The headline is equal prize money and that was primarily the intention.

"But when you look a little bit deeper, they would like to have a bigger impact on the game." After her playing days, Sthalekar has established herself as a respected voice of the game over the last decade.

The Indian-origin Aussie described the effort she put in to reach the higher rungs of her job as a commentator.

"Not everyone has to be a Richie Benaud or a Danny Morrison. But we all have different skills and strengths that we bring to the commentary box. That's why you have diverse personalities (doing commentary)," she said.

Sthalekar picked commentating during the IPL as her biggest career moment.

"You have to have goals in your career and IPL (commentary) was my 10-year goal as a commentator. But I got a call to be in the IPL commentary team within six months.

"I remember my first IPL game as a commentator at the Eden Gardens in 2015. Some 70000 screaming fans were there and I had to do an interview with Gautam Gambhir," she said.

Pujara was backbone of Indian batting on last two Aus tours, he will a big miss this time: Vihari



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hanuma Vihari, part of India's back to back series wins in Australia, reckons the services of veteran batter Cheteshwar Pujara will be dearly missed when the team aims for a hat-trick Down Under later this year.

The five Test series begins in Perth from November 22. Out of favour Pujara was the leading run-getter in the 2018-19 series with 521 off 1258 balls and was once again the backbone of Indian batting three years later when he accumulated 271 runs off 928 balls.

Across the two teams, the 103-Test veteran by far faced the number of balls to wear out the opposition attack comprising Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc.

India U20 face stern Iran test in AFC Qualifiers



PTI ■ VIENTIANE (LAOS)

India will be looking to iron out the rough edges before facing Iran in their next Group G game of the AFC U20 Asian Cup 2025 qualifiers here on Friday. India put up a good show to register a 4-1 victory against Mongolia in their first Group G match but there is still a lot of work to be done.

"The last match was a big motivation for our team. I've always maintained that winning the first match of a tournament is crucial, and the boys stuck their heads in and played extremely well against Mongolia," said Ranjan Chaudhuri in a release.

"But we cannot rejoice in the victory just yet. We must immediately begin preparations for the next game. We missed a lot of chances against Mongolia, and that is something we cannot afford against Iran.

"They are an extremely good side, but we have made our plans according to their game

as well. Anything can happen on the day, and with a little luck, our boys can get a good result. The most important thing for us is to play our game well, and come out of the match with our heads held high, with a smile," he said.

While India registered a 4-1 win against Mongolia, Iran trampled hosts Laos 8-0, a result that puts them firmly on top of Group G. However, Iran head coach Hossein Abdi was wary of India's potential threat.

"India have quality players, many of whom I've seen at the U-17 level in Thailand last year. They play a fast game, have shown a good understanding of football. I think the game has progressed very fast in India recently, and we will see further advances in the future," he said.

"We will give it our best against them, but the most important thing at this level is that the players are safe. It's all about building good human relations and doing well for the country," said Abdi.

Man United stunned 1-1 by Dutch club Twente in revamped Europa League

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag questioned his players' killer instinct after they were held to a 1-1 draw by his old club FC Twente in the revamped Europa League.

Sam Lammers capitalised on a mistake by Christian Eriksen in the second half at Old Trafford and raced away to fire an equalizer for the Dutch underdog.

"You saw that was the game of their life. They fought for every yard and we didn't," Ten Hag said. "99% is not enough, You have to give 100%. You have



kill the game. You have to finish it off."

Eriksen had put United ahead with a stunning first-half strike but was caught in possession by Lammers, whose goal secured an unexpected point for the visitors.

Ten Hag had spoken before the game of his affection for the team he supported as a boy in the Netherlands and represented as a player. He said it was "not nice to have to hurt something you love."

Instead it was United fans left in pain, despite Eriksen seemingly putting the home team on course for victory.

United has won just three of

seven games in all competitions this season and Wednesday's draw came after a 0-0 draw at Crystal Palace in the Premier League on Saturday.

Eriksen swept United ahead in the 35th with a first-time shot into the top corner. Connecting with a loose ball just inside the box, the playmaker didn't break stride as he whipped his effort past past Twente goalkeeper Lars Unnerstall with power and precision.

With one fist clenched, he ran to the corner to celebrate in front of the home fans.

But it was Twente's supporters

deflected by defender Abdul Rahman Baba into his own net early in the second half. Giannis Konstantelias equalized on a rebound before Osimhen set up Yunus Akgün to net the winner. Mauro Icardi added a stoppage-time goal.

Lazio cruised past Dynamo Kyiv 3-0. Boulaye Dia struck twice and Fisayo Dele-Bashiru added one. Both teams ended the game with 10 men.

Real Sociedad, struggling in La Liga, got a goal from Ander Barrenetxea at Nice but the home team salvaged a 1-1 draw thanks to Pablo Rosario's goal late in the first half.

Another team struggling

"And you have to fight until the end and score the second goal." Like the Champions League, the second-tier Europa League has a new format and 36 teams instead of 32. It features a league system in which each team plays eight games against different opponents through January, replacing the old group stage.

In a clash between the Turkish and Greek champions, Galatasaray beat PAOK 3-1. Victor Osimhen, who moved from Napoli to Galatasaray earlier in September, made his presence felt.

The Nigeria striker's goalbound header was

left cheering the loudest after Lammers' goal in the 68th when beating Andre Onana at his near post.

"There's a lot of football (still to play) when you (are) one up and the game takes more than 90 minutes," Ten Hag said.