



## BREAKING STEREOTYPES

Actor Mrunal Thakur wants to break the stereotypes and mould into whatever role the character demands **LEISURE P2**



## RUSSIA RENEWS ATTACKS

Ukraine says Russia has destroyed homes in the south & knocked out power in the north in a new round of attacks **INTERNATIONAL P10**



## ENGLAND IN QUARTERS

Harry Kane breaks his goal drought at this year's World Cup, helping England beat Senegal and seal a quarterfinals berth **SPORTS P12**

## 2023 Hockey WC trophy tour begins

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** The trophy tour of the 2023 Men's FIH Hockey World Cup (WC) was kick-started Monday with Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik handing over the trophy to Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey.

Wishing the trophy tour a grand success, Patnaik said it will be a memorable World Cup for the teams and the fans. "I hope the Hockey Men's WC Trophy Tour will build excitement for the world cup across India. We will be hosting 16 teams and the matches will be played in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela," he said.

Sports Minister Tusharkanti Behera and Hockey India Secretary General of Bholanath Singh were among those present at the programme. The tournament will start January 13 and will continue till January 29. Over the next 21 days, the trophy will travel to 13 states and a UT, including West Bengal, Assam, Delhi, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, before returning to Odisha December 25.



**TROPHY TOUR KICKS OFF:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launches the trophy tour of 2023 Men's Hockey World Cup as he hands over the cup to Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey in Bhubaneswar, Monday

## Exit polls predict BJP's win in Guj, edge in HP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 5:** Exit polls Monday predicted a big majority for the BJP in Gujarat and a dead heat in Himachal Pradesh where most pollsters gave an edge to the ruling party over the Congress.

The counting of votes in both states will take place December 8. Elections for the Himachal Pradesh assembly took place November 12, while polling in Gujarat happened in two phases December 1 and 5.

All exit polls predicted a big mandate for the BJP in Gujarat in the range of 117-151 seats in the 182-member assembly while the Congress was predicted to bag seats in the range of 16-51 seats. The Aam Aadmi Party was projected to bag anything between two and 13 seats. The majority mark in Gujarat is 92.

In Himachal Pradesh, the exit polls projected a range of 24-41 seats for the BJP and 24-40 seats for the Congress. The majority mark is 35 seats.

GUJARAT	BJP	CONG-NCP	AAP
News X-Jan Ki Baat	117-140	34-51	6-13
Republic TV P-MARQ	128-148	30-42	2-10
TV9 Gujarati	125-130	40-50	3-5
<b>TOTAL SEATS-182, MAJORITY-92</b>			
<b>POLL OF EXIT POLLS</b>	<b>117-151</b>	<b>16-51</b>	<b>2-13</b>

HIMACHAL PRADESH	BJP	CONG	AAP
India TV	35-40	26-31	0
News X-Jan Ki Baat	32-40	27-34	0
Republic TV P-MARQ	34-39	28-33	0-1
<b>TOTAL SEATS-68, MAJORITY-35</b>			
<b>POLL OF EXIT POLLS</b>	<b>24-41</b>	<b>24-40</b>	<b>0</b>

While the Aaj Tak-Axis My India predicted 129-151 seats for the BJP in Gujarat, 16-30 seats for the Congress and 9-21 seats for the AAP, ABP News C-Voter predicted 128-140 seats for the BJP, 31-43 for the Congress and 3-11 for AAP.

News 24-Today's Chanakya also predicted a huge majority for the BJP in Gujarat with its survey stating that the BJP was likely to get 150, Congress 19 and AAP 11. **Continued on P4**

## In a 1st, leopard cat skin seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** In a first in Odisha, the Special Task Force (STF) of the Crime Branch has seized the skin of a leopard cat, a schedule-I protected animal under Wild Life Protection Act, from the possession of a wildlife criminal in Khurda, an official said Monday.

The wildlife criminal, identified as Umesh Rath of Baladhadi under Jankia police limits in Khurda, was also arrested by STF team.

The STF team with the help of Khurda Forest officials carried out a raid in Jankia area late Sunday night and found the skin of a leopard cat from the possession of Umesh who failed to present any documents for the illegal possession of the skin.

"The skin will be sent to Wildlife Institute of India (WII) in Dehradun for examination. This is the first case of seizure of a leopard cat skin in Odisha," said an official.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



The kind of event management is going on 24x7, I feel we are world's largest dramacracy

# SC: Charity can't be used for conversion

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 5:** Asserting the purpose of charity should not be conversion, the Supreme Court reaffirmed Monday that forced religious conversion is a 'serious issue' and against the Constitution. The court was hearing a plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay seeking direction to the Centre and states to take stringent steps to control fraudulent religious conversion by 'intimidation, threatening, deceivably luring through gifts and monetary benefits'.

The Centre told the court it is collecting information from states on religious conversion through such means. Appearing before a bench of Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta sought time to furnish detailed information on the issue.

Mehta sought a week's time from the court which it granted. "The purpose of charity should not be conversion. Allurement is dangerous," the top court said, and acknowledged that forced religious conversion is a very serious matter.

When a lawyer questioned the maintainability of the plea, the bench said, "Do not be so technical. We are here to find a solution. We are here for a cause. We are here to set things right. If the purpose of the charity is good then it is welcome but what is required to be considered is the intention."

"Do not take it as adversarial. It is a very serious issue. Ultimately it is against our Constitution. When

**...if the purpose of the charity is good then it is welcome but what is required to be considered is the intention**

**SC BENCH OF JUSTICES MR SHAH & CT RAVIKUMAR**



everyone stays in India, they have to act per the culture of India," the bench observed.

There have been accusations against some religious orders that they were converting people from other religions by offering various forms of charity including education for their children.

The apex court will now take up the matter on December 12. Forced religious conversion may pose a danger to national security and impinge on the religious freedom of citizens, the top court had said recently and asked the Centre to step in and make sincere efforts to tackle the "very serious" issue.

The court had warned a "very difficult situation" will emerge if proselytisation through deception, allurement and intimidation is not stopped.

**The Supreme Court observed that there have been accusations against some religious orders that they were converting people from other religions by offering various forms of charity including education for their children**

## PADAMPUR RECORDS 80% VOTER TURNOUT

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** More than 80 per cent of 2.57 lakh voters Monday exercised their franchise till 6pm in the bypoll to Padampur Assembly constituency amid tight security, an Election Commission official said.

The voting, which began at 7am, continued beyond the closure time of 4pm as about 12,000 people were in queues to cast their votes.

By 6pm, the number of voters waiting in 71 of the 319 polling stations dipped to 4,000, he said.

"Voting in Padampur Assembly segment was smooth and no untoward incident was reported. A record 80.5 per cent voter turnout was recorded till 6pm, with 4,000 people still in the queues," Bargharh district collector and district election officer Manisha Banerjee told reporters in Padampur.



Police teams responded to all the allegations and there was no incident of rigging or booth-capturing, she said.

State's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) SK Lohani said many polling parties have already returned to their destinations by evening and EVMs were being brought amid tight security. As many as nine companies comprising around 900 personnel of Central Armed Police Forces and 1,400 state police personnel were deployed across the as-

sembly segment, which borders Nuaapada and Bolangir districts, and Chhattisgarh.

Security forces were deployed in all the 319 polling stations, a senior police officer said.

As many as 10 candidates are in the fray for the bypoll. The ruling BJD has fielded Barsha Singh Baraha, the daughter of Bijay Ranjan Singh Baraha whose death necessitated the bye-election, while opposition BJP's nominee is former MLA and party's Krushak Morcha president Pradip Purohit. Congress candidate Satya Bhushan Sahu has earlier won the seat three times.

Noting that votes will be counted December 8, Banerjee said fool-proof arrangements have been made for the protection of the strong rooms where the EVMs will be stored. She said there will be at least 23 rounds of vote-counting in 14 tables.

## Youth, girlfriend die by suicide

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** A 20-year-old youth and his girlfriend have allegedly committed suicide by hanging from the ceiling fans at the girl's residence at Sriram Nagar in Salla Sahi area here, an official said Monday.

The deceased were identified as Chitrasen Gouda and P Barsha Reddy Both hailed from K Nuagaon area of Ganjam district. Chitrasen worked as a labourer in Andhra Pradesh, police said.

The incident took place when the girl's parents, who are daily

wage labourers, were out for work Sunday, they said.

"After returning from work in the evening, the girl's parents found the door locked from inside. They broke open the door to find the two hanging from as many ceiling fans in a room," said an official. They informed the police which reached the place and recovered the body before sending it for autopsy to Capital Hospital here. "During probe, we learnt that Barsha and Chitrasen were in love. Perhaps, they took the extreme step as the girl's family was about to fix her marriage elsewhere," an official said.

## SHORT TAKES

### ARCHANA: WHERE ARE THE 'VICTIMS'?

**Bhubaneswar:** Archana Nag, the key accused in an alleged 'extortion case', Monday claimed that she has not received any money from Odia film producer Akshaya Parija and questioned the silence of the "so called victims". The District and Sessions Court here allowed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to take lady "blackmail" Archana Nag on seven-day remand for further interrogation into the high-profile sextortion and money laundering case. When approached by journalists while being taken to court, Archana said, "Why are the so-called victims hiding? Where is Shradhanjali Behera? Why is she keeping mum in this case? I have not received any money from Akshaya Parija." **P3**

# Goblin mode: Oxford's word of the year 2022

TERM RESONATES WITH PEOPLE FEELING 'OVERWHELMED' WITH HAVING TO PRESENT THEIR BEST SELVES

AGENCIES

**London, Dec 5:** Goblin mode, or a type of behaviour which is unapologetically self-indulgent, lazy, slovenly, or greedy, typically in a way that rejects social norms or expectations, has been chosen as the Oxford word of the year after a public vote Monday.

The slang phrase was one of three shortlisted words put to a vote for the first time, with the others being metaverse or a virtual reality environment and #IStandWith — used on social media to depict solidarity with a cause.

Goblin mode won the online vote by a landslide, with 318,956 votes and 93 per cent of the total.

"I think that goblin mode really



does speak to the times and the zeitgeist, and it is certainly a 2022 expression," said Ben Zimmer, American linguist and language columnist and one of the panelists who chose the finalists.

"People are looking at social norms in new ways. It gives people the license to ditch social norms and embrace new ones," he said.

Oxford University Press (OUP) — the publishers of the 'Oxford

**The selection, according to Oxford, is meant to reflect the ethos, mood or preoccupations of the preceding year, while also having potential as a term of lasting cultural significance**

**The word of the year is based on usage evidence drawn from Oxford's continually updated corpus of more than 19 billion words, gathered from news sources across the English-speaking world**

English Dictionary' — said all three words experienced substantial spikes in usage and capture significant concerns, concepts, and states that we've faced this year. "I think as well as reflecting

the extent to which our experience of the world and communication is mediated increasingly by social media and the internet, it also perhaps represents ongoing questions about ownership and regulation on new technologies — especially those means by which we communicate," Jonathan Dent, Senior Editor, Oxford English Dictionary, OUP.

Describing 2022 as a year that has been characterised by reunion and reconnection after the pandemic and also by activism, and social and political change, OUP decided to open up its annual Oxford word of the year for 'everyone, everywhere' to have their say on what word best reflects their experience of 2022.

## 'COVID EMERGED FROM WUHAN LAB'

**Washington:** A US-based scientist who worked at a research lab in China's Wuhan, the city where virus first emerged, has said that the Covid was a 'man-made virus' that leaked from the facility. Covid was leaked from Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), a state-run and funded research facility, two years ago, "New York Post" reported, quoting US-based researcher Andrew Huff's statement in the British newspaper "The Sun". In his latest book, "The Truth About Wuhan," epidemiologist Andrew Huff claimed that the pandemic was caused by the US gov't's funding of coronaviruses in China. **P10**

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	62834.60 ↓ 33.90
NIFTY	18701.00 ↑ 4.90
DOLLAR	81.79 ↑ ₹0.47
EURO	86.06 ↑ ₹0.27
GOLD	₹53,649 ↓ ₹201
SILVER	₹65,465 ↓ ₹984

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	28.7°C	28.2°C
TEMP MIN	16.1°C	15.8°C
Humidity	78%	77%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Mainly clear sky	

# leisure



## THE AFTERMATH OF THE TRAGEDY WAS HUGE, HILARIA OPENS UP

Actor Alec Baldwin's wife Hilaria recently spoke about how they are coping with the aftermath of the fatal shooting on the set of 'Rust'. It was and is a tragedy that nobody could ever have imagined," she said.

## DUA LIPA CREDITS IMPOSTER SYNDROME FOR HELPING HER IN SONGWRITING

Singer Dua Lipa, who found fame after posting songs on YouTube said, "A lot of the time I get so inspired by artists that have quite a lot of self-doubt or darkness. I'm like, 'Oh my God, do I have to feel this much pain to be good at what I do?'"



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

#### ARIES

Today you will be focussed and unshakable in your work. The results will be noticeable by mid-day. In the evening you will meet one of your admirers and this will take a load off your shoulders. Ganesh predicts that if you are unmarried, you will meet someone remarkable.

#### TAURUS

You analysis, estimates and decisions, your planning and implementation is likely to be wayward and error prone. You could, thus, fall short of your targets today, warns Ganesh. Every thing you do is likely to be misplanned and misdirected. You are advised to maintain focus, and stick to the basics.

#### GEMINI

Ganesh warns that those around you could harbour feelings of enmity against you today. These people will try to malign your name and slander your reputation. However, in front of you these people will act like your well-wishers. You will taste the sweet fruit of success after much hard work, post noon, says Ganesh.

#### CANCER

You have two options to over-come the unwanted sad events. One is to run away and the other is to face boldly. Ganesh suggests you choose the second option. The evening promises a joyful mood. You will entertain guests at home.

#### LEO

You will take some important decisions regarding personal or professional matters today, says Ganesh. The later half of the day will be spent enjoying with your family and friends. An extremely progressive day awaits.

#### VIRGO

You are a master craftsman when it boils down to interpersonal relationships. In the afternoon, you may feel very secretive about some things. An insipid evening may make you miss the enjoyment you might otherwise have had. Nevertheless, Ganesh says it will be a happy and bright day.

#### LIBRA

Ganesh says today your children will make you happy by imparting good news to you and you will be able to spend a nice and happy time with them. This is a good day for you in money matters as you may get a salary rise or even gain an inheritance from relatives. Your interests in the finer arts will be appreciated.

#### SCORPIO

You are as inquisitive as a child today. There are a lot of queries in your mind that need to be solved. At work, you have umpteen challenges. But, this does not stop you from fulfilling your responsibilities towards your family. Love and affection rule in the family, says Ganesh.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Stars are aligned in a way that they shower both, luck & money on you today. Profits and achievements galore at business front, says Ganesh. You may go on a shopping spree with your partner and splurge on the exclusive jewellery. Tighten your purse strings.

#### CAPRICORN

You follow your gut feeling when it comes to making decisions. But, today is a different day. You examine nuts and bolts of every situation and make judgements accordingly. You will pay attention to your love life during the second half of the day. Impulsive and expressive, you will spend money and make extra efforts to bring a sweet smile on your partner's face.

#### AQUARIUS

Do you feel slightly awkward in social gatherings? Do you wonder how to break the ice and strike a conversation? Don't be conscious, in fact, be yourself to feel comfortable, feels Ganesh. You may find it difficult to get rid of some petty issues today. Listen to music, sing or play an instrument; it will relax your mind.

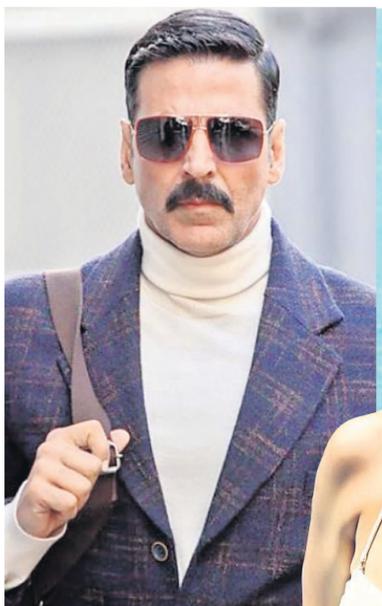
#### PISCES

With the blessings of Ganesh you will face fewer obstacles than you normally do. You will enjoy your favourite foods today. You will experience less mental stress today and you will be full of hopes and dreams. It will appear as though life is moving in the right direction. You will feel happy and satisfied today.

## Akshay on theatres suffering the brunt of Covid

**Mumbai:** Actor Akshay Kumar recently attended the Red Sea International Film Festival in Saudi Arabia wherein he opened up on whether theatrical businesses are feeling the pinch of the post-Covid world.

He said, "I think we have to try much harder than we used to do earlier, we have to try harder to get them out." The *Ram Setu* actor added, "It's our fault. We need to know what they want and stop blaming [the audience] for everything because a lot of people have blamed the [audiences] and are saying they don't want to come out, but I think it's our turn to please them and bring them out." Continuing his conversation further, Akshay expressed his opinions on whether OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime have made a mark in India. He said, "We are 1.5 billion people there and still Netflix, Amazon, Disney, ZEE5, all of these digital platforms, they have only tapped no more than about 10 to 12 per cent of the market. The market in India is huge." AGENCIES



## Mrunal fears not being cast Ishaan's love interest

**Mumbai:** Actress Mrunal Thakur will be seen playing the role of Ishaan Khatter's sister in an upcoming war drama, *Pippa*. According to the actress, people criticising her feel that she will never get to play Ishaan's love interest in future.



In an interview, Mrunal said that a lot of people criticised her playing the role of lead's sister in *Pippa*. She recalled people telling her that nobody in the future would cast her as Ishaan's love interest. According to the actress, she wants to break that stereotype. Mrunal added that if people don't like it, they should share their feedback with her so she can implement it the next time she works on the character. Elaborating further, she added that she has met a lot of friends who are actors and they have missed out on important roles because it was a sister's role or a wife's role. According to her, one should be ready to mould oneself into what the character demands. AGENCIES

## Grammy winner Falu announces India tour

**Mumbai:** Falu, who took home the Best Children's Album honour at the Grammy 2022, and has represented India at the White House, will be launching her India Tour in December which will see the celebrated musician play in the artistic hubs of Mumbai, Pune and Goa.

She will bring her signature combination of Indian classical music and new-age as well as western styles to present a musical experience like no other. She will be supported by distinguished poet Nirmika Singh in Mumbai and Pune.

About her India Tour, Falu says, "I am truly humbled and excited to come back home and share my music with my fellow Indians. You have loved, nurtured and supported me throughout my musical journey."

"Hence, it's incredibly special for me to perform in India. It will be my first time performing in Mumbai, Pune and Goa, and I would love if people experience the nostalgia with me as I find myself at home on stage in India. My band and I are preparing a special set just for the audience in India," she said. IANS

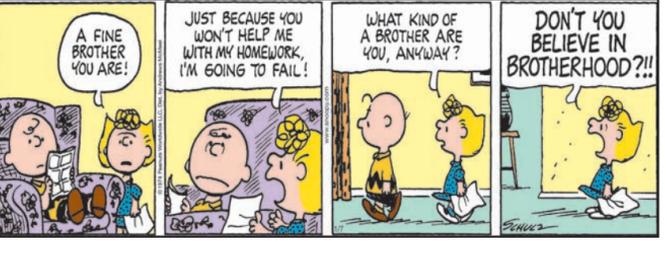
## Nora drops appreciation post for team

**Mumbai:** Nora Fatehi drops an appreciation post for team after her magnetic performance at FIFA World Cup 2022. Nora is not just an Indian superstar, but has made a mark on the global stage now. Recently, she gave a magnetic performance at a fan festival of the FIFA World Cup 2022 which took the internet by a storm. Soon after this development, Nora dropped an appreciation post for her team post her performance at the festival. For the unaware, Nora has danced to her *Light The Sky* anthem at FIFA World Cup 2022 and the lyrics of the song contains some verses in Hindi as well.

On Sunday, Nora dropped an appreciation post for her team who helped her deliver such a power-packed performance at fan festival of the FIFA World Cup 2022. Taking to Instagram, she dropped glimpses of Behind-The-Scenes preparations and captioned, "My Team Good, We Don't Really Need A Mascot." AGENCIES



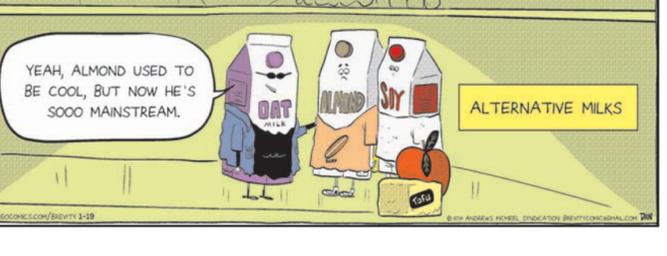
### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

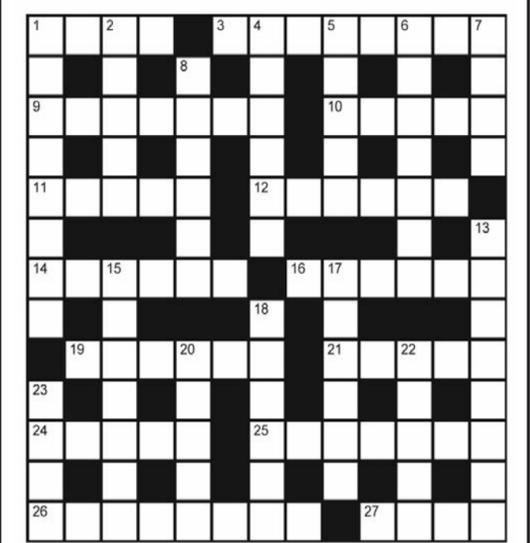


### BREVITY



### FUN post

### CROSSWORD



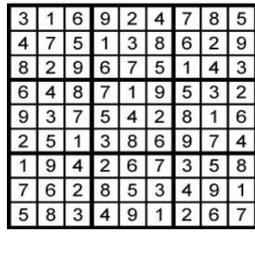
- Across**  
1 Penpoints  
3 Erect  
9 Palau Islands  
10 Tempest  
11 Spear  
12 Narrow channel of the sea  
14 Pumpkin-shaped  
16 Lab burner  
19 Paper clip alternative
- Down**  
21 Windbreak  
24 Sports stadium  
25 Large city in Israel (3,4)  
26 Seasonal allergy (3,5)  
27 Unwritten
- Across**  
5 Electric stun gun  
6 Sidekicks  
7 Tree branch  
8 Result  
13 Intermission  
15 Numbers pool  
17 Support  
18 Hockey player  
20 Serenity  
22 English port  
23 Hiker's trodden track

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

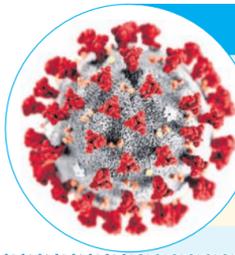


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



## GRACEFUL MOVES

Artistes performed Odissi during 'Nrutayana' organised by Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Monday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	65,01,26,812	62,71,57,257	66,46,993
India	4,46,73,618	4,41,38,554	5,30,630
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

# Where are the so-called 'victims': Archana

THE DISTRICT AND SESSIONS COURT ALLOWS THE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE TO TAKE ARCHANA NAG ON SEVEN-DAY REMAND FOR FURTHER PROBE INTO MONEY LAUNDERING

PNN/AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** Archana Nag, the key accused in an alleged 'sextortion case', Monday claimed that she has not received any money from Odia film producer Akshaya Parija and questioned the silence of the "so-called victims".

The District and Sessions Court here allowed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to take lady 'black-mailer' Archana Nag on seven-day remand for further interrogation into the high-profile sextortion and money laundering case. Earlier, the ED has requested the court to take Archana on 15-day remand.

The 26-year-old woman from Kalahandi district was arrested October 6 and sent to jail on charges of blackmailing rich and influential people along with running a sex racket.

A police team brought Archana from Jharpada jail here under tight security and produced her in the court.

When approached by journalists while being taken to court, Archana said, "I was sent to court with my mouth gagged and face covered. I was unable to find out what was happening to me during the first six days of my arrest. My fam-



Archana Nag being questioned by media while coming out of the court

THE ED HAS SO FAR GRILLED NINE PEOPLE, INCLUDING KHAGESWAR AND SHRADHANJALI, IN CONNECTION WITH THE CASE

THE CENTRAL AGENCY HAS TRACED ₹2.5 CRORE DEPOSITED IN THE ACCOUNTS OF THE COUPLE BETWEEN 2017 AND 2022

any money from Akshaya Parija."

She also demanded an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the case "so that truth will come out". Archana claimed that she is being falsely implicated in the case.

The ED has also registered a case against Archana, her husband Jagabandhu Chand and their associates Shradhanjali Behera and Khageswar Patra under Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

Earlier, the court had turned down her bail petition in the case

pertaining to an FIR lodged at Nayapalli police station by film producer Parija.

The woman had allegedly demanded ₹3 crore from Parija by threatening to release his intimate pictures and videos. She is seeking bail in the case, her lawyer Debashis Mohapatra said.

Her husband Jagabandhu and the couple's associate Patra were arrested by ED after the Central agency started investigating the money laundering angle of the case. The couple allegedly amassed over ₹30 crore by blackmailing politicians, businessmen and filmmakers using sexually explicit videos in four years – between 2018 and 2022.

The ED has so far grilled nine people, including Khageswar and Shradhanjali, in connection with the case. The Central agency has traced ₹2.5 crore deposited in the accounts of the couple between 2017 and 2022.

The sensational case came to limelight when Shradhanjali filed complaint against Parija, accusing him of sexually exploiting her. Following this complaint, some purportedly obscene pictures of Parija with a girl went viral in social media.



SCRUMPTIOUS DELICACIES: 'Bhajan Dwadashi' – the 12th bright lunar day of Margashira month – was celebrated on the premises of Srigrourbihar Ashram in Puri, Monday. Altogether 821 kinds of cuisines served to Mahaprabhu Srichaitanya and Sri Radhakrushna on the occasion

## ST&SC school hostels to get rice at doorstep

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** The state government has decided to provide rice to the hostels run by Scheduled Tribe (ST) & Scheduled Caste (SC) Development department at their doorstep.

The Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare (FS & CW) department allots subsidised rice in favour of ST/SC boarders of hostels run by the department under the welfare institution and hostels scheme.

As per the prevailing practice, allotted subsidised rice is lifted by the headmasters from the fair price shops concerned. However, considering the practical difficulties being faced by the headmasters in transportation of subsidised rice and to make the process coherent and cost effective, it was decided to provide rice to the schools and hostels at doorstep.

For this purpose, SC & ST Development secretary Roopa Roshan Sahoo has written a letter

to all the district Collectors, Monday

As per the letter, the transport contractors engaged to supply rice under mid-day meal (MDM) scheme of School & Mass Education department will be engaged for lifting and supplying subsidised rice meant for hostels run by ST & SC Development department.

The transportation cost will be borne by the headmaster concerned from the scholarship amount sanctioned for mess management, Sahoo said.

## ASHA workers pitch for permanent job status

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** The Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) and several other government scheme workers staged a peaceful protest at Lower PMG here, Monday, demanding regularisation of jobs and minimum wages.

More than 5,000 ASHA workers under the banner of AITUC (Nikhil Odisha ASHA Karmi Sangha) and Paschim Odisha ASHA Karmi Sangha congregated here and urged Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to consider ASHA, Anganwadi and mid-day meal (MDM) workers as permanent government employees. They said that this must be done as per the decisions taken during the Indian Labour Conference which battled for permanent job status to these workers. However, till now it has not been im-

plemented by the state government, the protesters alleged.

They are also demanding a minimum wage of ₹26,000 which is fixed by the Union government. The agitating ASHA workers also demanded hike in ex-gratia amount in case of death from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh. The workers also requested for a minimum monthly remuneration.

If the government does not accept and fulfil the workers' demands by March, they will launch a day-and-night stir on the street.

"The number of agitating workers is expected to reach 10,000 by March if the government does not concede our demands," said Odisha ASHA Karmi Sangha president Bijay Jena. He also said more than 45,000 workers and their family members across the state are suffering due to the apathy of the state government.



RAISING VOICE: Members of Nikhila Odisha ASHA Karmi Sangha staged a protest at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Monday, to press for fulfilment of their 12-point charter of demands

## Tyagi urges Naveen to join non-BJP front

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** Janata Dal (United) general secretary and former MP KC Tyagi, Monday, urged BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to forge alliance with non-BJP parties to ensure saffron's defeat in 2024 elections.

He said this while addressing the media at Gita Govinda conference hall here on 'Caste Census'. Tyagi mentioned that there has been a drastic change in Indian politics since 90s.

Urging the BJD chief to give up his policy of maintaining equidistance from both BJP and Congress, the former MP said following a middle path and travelling at the centre of the road involves the risk of meeting with an accident.

Asserting that Nitish Kumar and JD (U) will never return to BJP-led NDA, Tyagi said, "We have snapped ties with BJP for good and Nitish is in touch with leaders of all political parties and stepping up the efforts to unite them to take on the saffron outfit in a united manner."

Stating that the formula is to involve all like-minded political parties, he said "Naveen ji, known for espousing the cause of social justice, is most welcome to join our mission."

Recalling his close association with legendary Biju Patnaik, Tyagi said he has a special bond with Odisha and wants BJD to be with the non-BJP front. Nitish Kumar is also a good friend of Naveen, he said.

## CM salutes volunteers for their compassionate work

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday saluted all the volunteers who make meaningful difference in the society with their compassionate work on the occasion of International Volunteer Day for Economic & Social Development.

In his official Twitter account, Patnaik said, "Volunteers across the world are selflessly working to help

communities in times of need. On International Volunteer Day for Economic & Social Development, let's salute to those volunteers who make meaningful difference in the society with their compassionate work."

Odisha, which has bore the brunt of natural disasters many times, had many a time demonstrated remarkable volunteerism during disasters. There is an attempt to make volunteer action more effective and better coordinated through



## INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

the different initiative by civil societies from the state.

Sujit Mohapatra of Bakul Foundation, which works and promotes the spirit of volunteerism, spoke about the true meaning of volunteerism, represented by image of a raised hand. "We raise hands means to be active, not passive, to

participate, to offer to do something, to ask questions, to respond, to be active citizens," he said.

The day is also referred to as International Volunteer Day (IVD) to recognise and promote the tireless work not just of UN Volunteers, but of volunteers across the globe. The international observance was mandated by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1985. The day is commemorated by 80 countries in the world.

## Alarming rise in heart attacks after Cov; docs worried

As people took to social media about rising heart attacks in the young and seemingly fit people – on the street, at the dance floor, in the wedding and at the gym – leading cardiologists Monday reiterated that long-term Covid could possibly be responsible in some cases and people must stop unaccustomed heavy exercise regimes.

The hashtag #heartattack has been trending on Twitter for the past 2-3 days, with several examples of sudden heart attacks in those who were otherwise healthy and fit. "A 23-year-old girl (Josna Cotha) died suddenly (heart attack) at a wedding reception. Tragedy happened while dancing," tweeted a user, along with posting a video.

Another Twitter user posted a video: "A young man died due to a heart attack while walking".

According to the cardiologists, the steep rise in people dying unexpectedly of heart attacks is alarming. "Though we do not have sufficient data and evidence to prove whether this is a Covid induced

phenomenon, definitely this has increased post Covid. Long term Covid sequelae could possibly be responsible in some cases," Samir Kubba, Director-Cardiology, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Vaishali, told IANS.

Last month, TV actor Siddhaanth Vir Surryavanshi, who acted in popular shows such as 'Kkusum' and 'Kasautii Zindagi Kay', died from a heart attack at the age of 46. He was working out in the gym when he suffered the attack.

Earlier this year, comedian Raju Srivastava also collapsed in the gym while on the treadmill and after several weeks in hospital, passed away. In 2021, southern superstar Puneeth Rajkumar, also 46, died after he had a cardiac arrest while working out in the gym.

According to Sanjeev Gera, Director and Head, Cardiology, Fortis Hospital Noida, "Covid or long Covid may cause persistent inflammation in heart vessels.

This can rupture silent blockages and cause a heart attack, especially after an unaccustomed exercises



like heavy weight lifting or walking on a treadmill or running in a cold weather and the risk increases when there are risk factors for heart disease like high BP, Diabetes, high cholesterol, Smoking or obesity," Gera told IANS.

Indians are anyway at higher risk of heart attacks, that too at a younger age than the westerners because of the dietary habits, high incidence and prevalence of dia-

betes, hypertension, dyslipidemia, genetic factors, increasing prevalence of obesity and sedentary lifestyles and smoking.

"The atherosclerotic plaque can develop in the coronary arteries early in life and can suddenly become unstable with unaccustomed heavy exercise especially if done without proper guidance and supervision," said Dr Kubba.

Also, most of the cases of sud-

## POST-COVID BLUES

The steep rise in people dying unexpectedly of heart attacks is alarming, according to cardiologists

Though there is no sufficient data and evidence to prove whether the rise in heart attacks is a Covid induced phenomenon, definitely this has increased post Covid

Long term Covid sequelae could possibly be responsible in some cases, says the doctors

lation (diabetics, hypertensives, smokers, people with a strong family history of heart disease, people with high cholesterol, sedentary and obese people) before they hit the gym, participate in a marathon, or do a sudden unaccustomed high intensity activity," Kubba told IANS.

The screening may include a good clinical examination, ECG and possibly an echocardiogram. Also the exercise regimen must not be unsupervised.

"No harm in carrying 300-325 mg of aspirin which can be chewed, in case of a suspected heart attack," he advised.

The risk of death from heart attack or failure after Covid-19 is very high within the first 30 days of infection, but remains heightened for some time afterwards, a new research has revealed.

The large UK Biobank study, published in the journal Heart, linked Covid to a heightened risk of poor cardiovascular health and death, particularly among those whose infection is severe requiring hospital admission.

# Naveen attends G20 meet in Delhi



similar lines at a BJP meeting, saying that every citizen should be proud of the development.

The meeting was also attended by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Sikkim's Prem Singh Tamang, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Andhra Pradesh CM Jagan Mohan Reddy and Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin.

BJP President JP Nadda, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, CPI general secretary D Raja, Telugu Desam Party chief Chandrababu Naidu were also present in the meeting.

Significantly, India officially assumed the G20 presidency December 1. The country is expected to host over 200 preparatory meetings across the country beginning this month. The next G20 Leaders' Summit at the level of heads of states or governments is scheduled to be held September 9 and 10 next year in New Delhi.

G20 or Group of 20 is an inter-governmental forum of the world's major developed and developing economies. It comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the US and the European Union.

**India officially assumed the G20 presidency December 1. The country is expected to host over 200 preparatory meetings across the country beginning this month**

success as the government highlighted its year-long programmes to mark the exercise.

Modi, in his speech, asserted that it was an occasion for the entire country to be proud of and everyone should contribute to its success.

The prime minister spoke on

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Dec 5:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday attended the G20 preparatory meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Rashtrapati Bhawan to solicit suggestions for the G20 summit in 2023.

Patnaik, while talking to media before the meeting, said he's delighted that India has got the slot for chairmanship of the G20 meeting.

"I'm delighted that India has got the chairmanship of G20 this year," Patnaik said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday chaired the meeting of leaders from all parties on India's presidency of the G-20 and sought their cooperation to make it a big

# Celebrating 60 Years of Customs Act, 1962

## Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate

Bhubaneswar

05<sup>th</sup> December, 2022



**MARKING SIX DECADES:** Dignitaries at a programme titled 'Celebrating 60 years of Customs Act' organised by Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs at Institute of Life Science in Bhubaneswar, Monday

## Fake cigarette unit busted

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** The Commissionerate Police Monday busted a fake cigarette manufacturing unit on the outskirts of the City here. The accused owner of the manufacturing, P Raja Rao Subudhi has been detained by the police at the in Info valley police station till the last report came in.

Sources claimed that the illegal manufacturing unit, Vineesha Tobacco Private Limited had been operating from Alakar area under Info Valley Police limits for the last 18 months. The legal representative of a Bihar based tobacco company Monday lodged a complaint with the police regarding the manufacturing of duplicate products with their brand's logo and name.

Subsequently, a team of Info Valley Police station carried out a raid and sealed the unit here Monday afternoon.

## Cybercrooks siphon off ₹1.17 crore last month

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** The cyber fraudsters siphoned off Rs.1.17, 91,081 from the bank accounts of the 340 victims in Capital city last month. As many as 365 victims of cyber fraud from across the state have contacted the cyber crime help desk of the city seeking help during November 2022.

The city police revealed the fact in a press release here Monday.

The cyber help desk received 340 complaints from persons residing in the capital city while 25 victims from other parts of the state contacted the desk last month. The cyber criminals duped maximum number of persons through Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system in November.

As many as 131 victims in the city lost their hard-earned money to



UPI fraud during the above period. Similarly, the fraudsters cheated 78 and 64 victims through the Credit/Debit Card and Social Media related frauds respectively.

Meanwhile, the police managed to get back Rs. 10,97,466 out of the Rs 1.17 crores withdrawn by the criminals from the accounts of the victims in the city last month. This apart, the cops succeeded in blocking Rs. 9, 88,209 defrauded by the cyber criminals. As many as seven cases have been registered by the police in connection with the cyber fraud.

## Conserve soil to prevent nutrient loss: Panda

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** ICAR Indian Institute of Water Management (IIWM), Bhubaneswar organized a soil health awareness programme on the occasion of World Soil Day, Monday at Balipatna block of Khurda district of Odisha. Harapriya Das, chairperson, Balipatna block was the chief guest and Pabitra Kumar Patel, member Zilla Parishad was the guest of honour.

They highlighted the need to preserve soil health for sustain-



able production. RK Panda, Director, ICAR-IIWM, spoke about conservation of soil to prevent soil and nutrient loss. He highlighted the theme of this year's World Soil Day, 'Soils: where food begins'. M Raychaudhuri, Sachidul Raychaudhuri, Principal Scientists, PP Adhikary, A Maity and Sanatan Pradhan, Senior Scientists of ICAR-IIWM elaborated about the importance of 'World Soil Day', soil health for sustainable crop production, vermicompost, organic farming, natural farming, soil and water conservation and soil biological health.

The messages of the Union Minister, Agriculture & Farmers' welfare and the Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR were conveyed in local language.

## 1 dies in mishap

**Bhubaneswar:** A student of a reputed engineering college Monday died in a road mishap at Pokhariput under Airport police limits. The deceased was identified as Priyansh Mishra, 18, of Khandapada area in Nayagarh district. Mishra along with his friend was going from Gandamunda to Pokhariput when he lost control over the motorcycle.

Continued from P1

## SC: Charity can't ...

"Incidents are reported every week throughout the country where conversion is done by intimidating, threatening, deceivingly luring through gifts and monetary benefits and also by using black magic, superstition, miracles but Centre and States have not taken stringent steps to stop this menace," said the plea filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey.

The plea has also sought directions to the Law Commission of India to prepare a report as well as a Bill to control religious conversion by intimidation and through monetary benefits.

## Exit polls predict ...

News X-Jan Ki Baat exit poll on Gujarat elections said the BJP was likely to get 117-140 seats, Congress-NCP 34-51, AAP 6-13 and others 1-2. Republic TV P-MARQ predicted 128-148 seats for the BJP, 30-42 for the Congress-NCP, AAP 2-10 and others 0-3. TV9 Gujarati forecast that the BJP would get 125-130 seats, Congress-NCP 40-50, AAP 3-5 and others 3-7.

For Himachal Pradesh, Aaj Tak Axis My India predicted a close contest between the Congress and the BJP. It said the BJP would get 24-34 seats and the Congress 30-40 seats.

News 24-Today's Chanakya also pointed to a cliffhanger in Himachal Pradesh, predicting 33 seats for both the BJP and the Congress with a margin of plus-minus seven seats for both.

While ABP News C-Voter said the BJP was likely to get 33-41 seats and Congress 24-32, India TV predicted that the BJP would bag 35-40 seats, Congress 26-31 and AAP zero.

News X-Jan Ki Baat survey said the BJP was likely to get 32-40 seats in the hill state, Congress 27-34 and AAP zero.

While Republic TV P-MARQ predicted that the BJP would get 34-39, Congress 28-33 and AAP 0-1, the Times Now-ETG said the average seats BJP was likely to get was 38 and the Congress 28.

For the Municipal Corporation of Delhi polls, most exit polls predicted a huge win for the AAP over the BJP with the Congress a distant third.

## STA's 'Pratikshya' mantra for wearing helmet

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 4:** Recently released Odia movie Pratikshya directed by Anupam Patnaik receiving overwhelming response from movie lovers across the state.

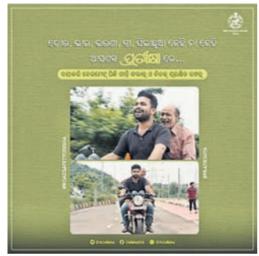
Riding on the popularity of the movie, the State Transport Authority (STA) has come up a unique and creative way to promote message of wearing helmet.

The STA shared a creative message on the micro-blogging site Twitter which aims at making people aware of wearing helmet for their safety.

Taking to Twitter, the STA shared the clip of the flick which is based on short story by Gourahari Das saying, "Mother, brother, sister, wife and children, someone is waiting (Pratikshya) for you, for them at least wear helmet. If you will be safe, your family will be safe." The STA tweet said

Earlier, STA had used other odia movies also to share message of road safety. Recently they shared actor Babushaan-starrer new Odia movie 'Damani', to eliminate fear of learner's license test among people.

The STA shared a creative message on the micro-blogging site Twitter which aims at making people aware of the traps laid by the



middlemen.

Recently at the International Film Festival of India, (IFFI) in Goa, Actor Anupam Kher got impressed with Odia film Pratikshya and announced the remake of the film in Hindi, which highlights the dynamics of a father-son relationship.

Inspired by a short story by writer Gourahari Das, it is the journey of Sanjay, a boy from a middle class family who is on the lookout for a government job, a few months before his father retires. His father, Bipin, is insistent that he finds a job as the family has debts, and Bipin is also diagnosed with a terminal illness. Sanjay learns about the Government's scheme of compassionate appointment where a family member gets the job of the deceased government employee. A frustrated Sanjay waits for his father's death.

## KISS Foundation to make Kandhamal TB-free

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** The KISS Foundation has adopted Kandhamal district to make it TB-free under the 'TB Harega Desh Jitega' campaign launched by the Indian government to eliminate TB from the country by 2025. The efforts of the Kandhamal Lok Sabha MP and KISS Foundation founder, Achyuta Samanta is going to play a crucial part in the success of this mission.

Samanta Monday launched the 'Food Basket' distribution programme for TB patients. The food basket comprises 3kg of cereals and millets for the adult patients,

2kg of cereals and millets for children, 1.5kg and 1kg of pulses for adults and children respectively, 250 grams and 150 grams of vegetables cooking oil for adults and children and 1kg and 750 grams of groundnuts for adults and children respectively.

The nutritional food distribution programme will cater 606 TB patients including 39 children in 6 blocks in Phulani and another 6 blocks in Baliguda.

The food basket will be distributed every month. This programme, the foundation has projected, will cost Rs 5 lakh per month and an approximately Rs 40 lakh in the next

six months.

While distributing the food baskets to the patients, Samanta said that the objective is to support the nutritional requirements of these patients as medicine alone is not enough to cure patients.

Kandhamal collector Ashish Ishwar Patil lauded the foundation's initiative of adopting the district and said that the support will expedite the government's mission to eliminate the disease from across the country by the targeted year of 2025. Additional district medical officer Abhay Patnaik was present on the occasion.

# This is what drives reckless behaviour on the road

**P**icture this: you're driving along in traffic when another car cuts you off.

Suddenly you have the urge to flip the other driver the bird, drive more recklessly, speed, or just yell obscenities at the vehicles around you.

This behaviour doesn't make sense as it is so out of character but the reality is many people would have felt these urges at some time over the past three years.

There are basic physiological reasons why

It's just that when it happens on a highway at 100 km per hour, in congestion or when a traffic light turns red, the consequences can be disastrous.

Covid-19 has exacerbated the issue.

With lockdowns and uncertainty, the pandemic has been a long-term disaster cascade which has put everyone under stress, ranging from mild to severe.

When reacting to stress, the human body has an innate overriding function — to stay alive and safe.

People often behave in a way that seems contrary to this but the physiological mechanisms are straightforward.

When we are overly stressed, feel threatened or sense danger, our limbic system activates in order to engage a response that will protect us.

This is where 'fight, flight or freeze' comes from.

The part of the brain responsible for logical reasoning, good decision making, and consideration of consequences tends to disengage.

The limbic system responds irrationally, emotionally, and sometimes aggressively.

Here is where the 'rubber meets the road'.

When the limbic system is highly active, people may do things that are more reckless, impulsive even dangerous.

Not for the sake of it, but because that part of the brain isn't designed to consider the consequences of our actions.

As many people have probably experienced, the physiological di-



**W**hen we are overly stressed, feel threatened or sense danger, our limbic system activates in order to engage a response that will protect us

**A**s many people have probably experienced, the physiological directive caused by the limbic system in a highly active state can cause problems in our day-to-day encounters and choices

rective caused by the limbic system in a highly active state can cause problems in our day-to-day encounters and choices.

Think of an incident when you have responded emotionally or uncharacteristically then asked yourself later 'why did I do that' or 'where did that come from?'

The same physiological challenges take place on the road, but under driving conditions we may

also be in a position to take risks that have life-or-death consequences.

This has the potential for the perfect combination of circumstances that lead to road rage, reckless driving and impaired driving.

With the limbic system in full flight, it may be more difficult to slow down and consider alternatives.

One of the other neurological complications of recovery from stress is an intense desire to feel

good again.

During Covid, people were limited in so many ways to socialise and have a good time that now, when an opportunity arises, many seize it with both hands with little regard for the consequences.

We are motivated by our neurochemistry to feel good, to seek out pleasurable experiences and find a rush from taking chances and risks.

There is another factor which puts many younger, inexperienced drivers at risk. The logical, consequence-oriented part of the brain (the prefrontal cortex) does not reach full development until humans are in their early 20s.

Globally, road injuries are the leading cause of death for people aged 5-29.

About three quarters (73 per cent) of all road traffic deaths occur among young males under 25 years who are almost three times as likely to be killed in a road traffic crash as young females.

As a colleague who works at a hospital emergency department

in Seattle said over the US summer "the kids have gone outside and lost their minds", referring to the increase in horrific car accidents and injuries she was seeing.

These physiological experiences and challenges are the norm as part of the incredibly complex disaster cascade recovery process.

Still, there are solutions.

Disaster science has much to say about positive long-term recovery outcomes and resilience.

What it takes is being aware of the risks associated with limbic responses. 'Practising the pause' before responding to others — before hitting 'send' on an aggressive text or email, before yelling at another driver, or before taking any unnecessary risk behind the wheel.

Giving pause gives the whole brain, not just the limbic system, a chance to engage and make rational decisions.

When on the road, this awareness might increase the chances of being less aggressive or impulsive and lessen the chances of disaster. ❏

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# No let-up in human-elephant conflict in Keonjhar district



FILE PHOTO

32 jumbos, 47 people die in 6 years despite preventive steps

**Keonjhar, Dec 5:** There is no let-up in the human-elephant conflict in Keonjhar district. It has claimed the lives of 32 elephants and 47 people in the last six years, a report said. With food scarcity growing by the day, elephant herds stray into villages bordering the jungles. In the process they destroy crops and property and even kill human beings who stray into their paths. People also retaliate by killing pachyderms. Then there is the menace of poachers. They kill elephants for the tusks. Most people in the district blame Forest department officials for this 'Catch-22' situation. They alleged that officials have failed miserably in their efforts to save both animal and human lives. The Forest department has taken steps like sending SMS alerts informing the arrival of elephants in human habitats. Trenches have

that most of the time they do not get adequate compensation due to improper assessment. Panda and his counterpart Bhagirathi Singh of Talapada village said that they have to spend sleepless night guarding their crops due to elephant menace. The farmers who have borrowed money for cultivation are the worst hit. With elephants destroying their produces, the farmers fail to repay their loans. Hence many of them are now abandoning cultivation and shifting to other vocations. Reports said that 13,329 farmers have faced crop losses on 10,732,866 acre of land from 2018-19 till now due to rampaging elephant herds. Similarly, houses of 781 people have been pulled down by the animals out of which 473 faced partial damage while 308 were fully destroyed. A compensation of ₹40.96 lakh has been paid towards house damage assistance. DFO HD Dhanraj said that people are being warned in advance about impending elephant attacks through SMS and through public address systems. Moreover, the movement of the animals is being tracked with drones and steps are being taken to keep them away from human habitats. Trenches have been dug up and solar fencing done at many places to prevent the animals from straying into human habitats. Raids are also being conducted at regular intervals against poachers and people attacking elephants, Dhanraj added. Farmer leader-cum-environmentalist Radhakanta Mohanta said efforts should be made for protection of elephant habitats and provision of enough food for them. He also demanded implementation of proposed Baitarani elephant reserve project to safeguard the animals.



**VOICING PROTEST:** Artists took out a rally Monday in protest against the staging of obscene dance in 'Bharata Lila' plays before submitting a memorandum to Bhanjanagar sub-collector in Ganjam district

# Facelift on cards for Badaghagra waterfall

₹2 crore to be spent for development of tourist facilities



**Keonjhar, Dec 5:** The Badaghagra waterfall, a major tourist site in Keonjhar district which is lying neglected since the last few years will soon get a facelift, sources said Monday. The Water Resources department will take up upgrading and beautification work at the tourist site at an expense of ₹2 crore. It will be done to attract more tourists to the waterfall. As part of this development, the beautification

work in the periphery of Sanamachhakandana dam will also be taken up. The matter came to the fore after the engineer-in-chief (EIC) of Water Resources department wrote a letter to his counterpart at the Baitarani basin project in Keonjhar. He has asked the latter to prepare a detailed report on beautification and development of Badaghagra waterfall. Sources said that a museum and a park will be constructed at Sanamachhakandana dam to provide amusement facilities to tourists. Other facilities will also be set up for the visitors. Tourist footfalls have dwindled due to the bad shape of the road leading to the waterfall and the dam. Also there is no electricity and hotels for the visitors. Sources said that even though a tender has been finalised for repairing the road, work is yet to start. It has sparked resentment among tourists and local residents. However, locals are optimistic as the Tourism department has decided to act quickly for facelift of the site. Sources said that both the Water Resources and Tourism departments will prepare a report for the development of the site on the lines of Kanjhari and Remal dams and implement it soon.

# Couple killed in road accident

**Daringbadi, Dec 5:** A couple was killed Monday after a car hit their bike at Kirikuti under this police limits in Kandhamal district. The deceased were identified as Kamadev Digal and his wife Dibika Digal belonging to Colony Sahi locality in Kumbharmunda village under Kirikuti panchayat. The couple was returning home from Baliguda on the bike. They were only three kilometres away from their residence when a car from the opposite direction rammed into the bike. The car was coming from Berhampur and was travelling towards Puntala in Bolangir district. On being informed, police and fire personnel rushed the injured man and woman to Daringbadi community health centre. However, both breathed their last while undergoing treatment. Police have registered a case and arrested the driver of the car and seized the vehicle. Family members have demanded adequate compensation for the family of the deceased.



**TRADITIONAL GAME:** Girls playing a game of traditional 'Puchi' during the annual sports meet at Bagabar Government Upper Primary School under Birmaharajpur block in Subaranapur district, Monday

# Bandh disrupts normal life in Bhadrak town

**Bhadrak, Dec 5:** Normal life was hit Monday in this town during an eight-hour bandh called by the Congress. The party has been demanding the establishment of a government medical college here and according of university status to Bhadrak Autonomous College. The bandh received support from various quarters as all government and private offices, courts, educational institutions and business establishments remained closed from 6.00am to 2.00pm. Vehicular movement came to a grinding halt as party workers staged road blocks at various junctions. The agitators led by Youth Congress president Subrat Behura also resorted to picketing at several places in the town. They also staged a road block on National Highway-16 for two hours leading to disruption of traffic. Their agitation got a boost after leaders of



various outfits joined them during their demonstration outside the district collectorate. Congress leader Nalinikanta Mohanty said the Odisha government has been establishing medical colleges in other districts while the same is not being done in Bhadrak. The government is neglecting Bhadrak, he alleged. Other party leaders warned of intensifying the agitation and staging protests in front of the Assembly in Bhubaneswar if the demands are not fulfilled by the government soon.

# Poacher arrested in Chilika for hunting birds

**Berhampur, Dec 5:** At least five carcasses of migratory birds were seized in Chilika lake Monday and a poacher was arrested for hunting down the winged guests, Forest department officials said. They suspect that the birds – two large whistling ducks, and one purple moorhen, pheasant tailed jaccana and common moorhen each – were poisoned near Kalupada channel under Tangi range of Chilika wildlife division. A country boat used for poaching was also seized, Tangi range officer Choodarani Murmu said. The dead birds were found inside a polythene bag on the boat of the accused, identified as Chaitanya Panda, a resident of Jatia Patna area near Tangi in Khurda district, Murmu informed. She added that the poacher tried to escape on seeing forest officials but was nabbed. The carcasses of the birds were buried after post-mortem examination, Murmu said.

# 'Magji Laddu' all set to get GI tag



Local people are excited and hopeful that the sweet will soon get the GI tag and it will help improve the financial conditions of cattle rearers and confectioners

**Bhubaneswar/Dhenkanal, Dec 5:** Dhenkanal is famous for its delicacy 'Magji Laddu' and the good news is that it is all set to get the Geographical Indication (GI) tag. The laddu is available with confectioners in Bhuban, Mandar, Kashipur, Sadangi, Gondia, Bidharpur, Deogaon and in Dhenkanal town. "If the sweet gets GI tag, people will visit Sadangi to taste 'Magji Laddu'. It will be a great thing for us," said local resident Khirud Chandra Das. This delicacy has a history of around 150 years. A confectioner named Chakradhar Sahu of Sadangi village under Gandia block in Dhenkanal district was the first person who tried his hand at preparing this sweet. The journey it has traversed so far is a glorious one. If someone is visiting their relatives from Dhenkanal, it is very un-

likely that they will be without a packet of 'Magji Laddu'. The process to prepare 'Magji Laddu' is very simple. The key ingredient for this sweet is the cheese made from buffalo milk. First sufficient quantities of cheese and sugar are boiled in a cauldron. When the texture of the mix becomes perfect, crushed cardamom is sprinkled and then it's given a final stir. Thereafter, bulbs of this mixture are prepared while rolling them in palms. "I am 64 years old. I have been preparing this sweet for the last 20 years. The demand for the delicacy is constantly increasing," observed Hrishikesh Sahu, a confectioner. The Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) had applied for the GI tag to 'Magji Laddu' in 2020. Later, an expert team carried out the necessary initial tests. If it gets the GI tag, 'Magji Laddu' will be the first food item

in the district to get it. "It is very tasty. Sometimes, people can be seen waiting for hours to savour this sweet. It is a matter of great pleasure that 'Magji Laddu' is going to get the GI tag," said Sadangi panchayat's sarpanch Sambit Kishore Ojha. Myth has it that one Shreedhar Swami offered this sweet to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu when the latter was at Kapilas Ashram. Later the sweet became popular as 'Magji Laddu'. Vyasakabi Fakir Mohan Senapati too mentioned about this delicacy during his stay in Dhenkanal. The local people are excited and hopeful that the sweet will soon get the GI tag and then it will help improve the financial conditions of cattle rearers and confectioners. Keeping in view of the uniqueness of 'Magji Laddu', details were collected and documented for application of GI tag by Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Dhenkanal. OUAT, being the authorised body of the state government, applied for the GI tag on behalf of Dhenkanal Sweets Association. After preliminary examination, the GI registry authorities raised a series of queries and OUAT submitted compliance. Now, the case is in advanced stage of consideration and GI registry officials from Chennai are coming to Bhubaneswar December 6, 2022 to give their final stamp of approval for the 'Magji Laddu'.

# Kochila barrage construction to start in Dec

**Dhamnagar, Dec 5:** The irrigation and farming sector in this locality of Bhadrak district is going to get a boost, as construction work of the proposed barrage on Kochila river will start by the end of December. Besides, an escape will be built at Mallimahara-Gourangpur. This information came to

the fore during a review meeting held in Bhubaneswar recently. Bhadrak MP Manjulata Mandal had a meeting about the two projects with chief engineer of the Water Resources department Bhakta Ranjan Mohanty and his counterpart in the Design wing, Lingaraj Gaud. According to reports, an estimated ₹30 crore has been allocated for the barrage while

its construction work has been awarded to an agency through tender. The construction agency has started survey work for the project. Gaud said a design for the proposed escape has been drawn up. "The government has already sanctioned funds for the two projects. The work will start by December. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will lay the foundation stones for

the projects soon," Gaud said. It may be noted here that people of Dhamnagar, Jajpur and Binjharpur have long been demanding construction of the Kochila barrage and Mallimahara-Gourangpur escape to facilitate communication as well as irrigation. People who have been affected due to the projects will get compensation soon, sources informed.

<b>UCO BANK</b>	Zonal Office, UCO Bank Building, 2nd Floor, C-2, Ashok Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751009, Tel: 0674-2620423	<b>POSSESSION NOTICE</b> For Immovable Property
(Under Section 13(4) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act., 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 for Immovable Property)		
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the UCO Bank, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002(No.54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower/Guarantor to repay the amount with interest at the contractual rate together with incidental expenses and costs within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken <b>POSSESSION</b> of the property described here-in below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules. The Borrower/Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the UCO Bank for an amount plus interest & expenses thereon.		
<b>SATPATNA BRANCH/ Name and Address of the Borrower/ Guarantor</b>	<b>Amount Outstanding as on Specified Date</b>	<b>Date of Demand / Possession Notice</b>
Borrower: Mr. Kartik Charan Swain, S/o: Mr. Dhruv Charan Swain / Guarantor: Mrs. Sailabala Swain, W/o: Mr. Kartik Charan Swain, Both are Residing At: Kauda, Khamar Sahi, Dist.: Nayagarh- 752084	₹5,36,516.19 as on 31.03.2021 + further interest & other charges thereon	24.03.2022/ 03.12.2022
<b>Description of the Immovable Property</b>	All that part and parcel of the immovable property standing in the name of Mrs. Sailabala Swain, W/o: Mr. Kartik Charan Swain, Plot No.: 178/1049 & 178/1137, Khata No.: 230/283, Area: Ac.0.26 Dec, Sale Deed No.: 1145 & 1147, KISSAM: Gharabari, VIII: Haridabari, Taluk: Daspalla, SRO: Daspalla, Dist.: Nayagarh, Bounded by North: Laxman Sahoo, East: Moram Road, South: Laxman Sahoo, West: Santosh Kumar Sahoo	
<b>Place : Bhubaneswar, Date: 05.12.2022</b>	<b>Authorised Officer, UCO Bank</b>	

FOCUS LAW & ORDER

# THE BULLDOZING OF INDIA



The manner in which bulldozers as tools of retaliatory state violence and punishment are being normalised now is akin to illegal encounter killings which have now been normalised by police forces across the country

gal occupation of public land by migrant workers working odd jobs in the Mumbai economy, the current cases concern houses owned and occupied by rightful owners for long, coming up for and actually being demolished under the pretext of alleged violations or disputes as is the case in Bihar.

The manner in which bulldozers as tools of retaliatory state violence and punishment are being normalised now is akin to illegal encounter killings which have now been normalised by police forces across the country. What began as a limited approach to control extreme violence by gangsters quickly degenerated into a pretty standard operating procedure with local law and order readily signing on to the project and getting away scot free. Every once in a while, some policeman will face the music from the courts, but in general, killings in cold blood have become a way of life and a routine tool to manage law and order.

This has not controlled crime or limited the rise of gangsters who continue to grow and even thrive. It did mean, however, a further dirtying of the people in uniform. As the case of encounters in Mumbai against entrenched gangsters showed, the gangs were mirrored in the police force. Two gangs in the wild built two gangs within the police. Instead of gangsters bumping off rivals, the police now did it for them. There is more damage to the system that is unseen and unheard. There are many honourable senior police officers who do not agree with the methods in use. However, they remain silent and will willy-nilly be forced to sign on to corrupt practices and extreme violence that bulldozes the very idea of India as a democratic nation that stands tall to protect the rights of ordinary citizens.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.

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The stinging remarks by Justice Sandeep Kumar of the Patna High Court in a case of the bulldozing of the house of a petitioner on a land dispute serves to highlight the near total-collapse of the Indian law and order machinery, and how it works to serve the powerful and the mighty. That the weak and those at the bottom of the pyramid do not have a voice is generally known and accepted. That the system is corrupt is also well-known. But cases like the one highlighted by Justice Kumar tell us that we are in a freefall into a bottomless pit from which it will be difficult to come out soon. It brings to light the increasing brazenness with which powerful interests operate and routinely undermine the due process they are sworn to uphold.

Justice Kumar's comments in a video clip are now viral. In it, the judge remarks: "You have become agents of the land mafia. This has to be stopped... Who is so powerful that you took a bulldozer and demolished the house? Who do you represent - the State or some private person?" In his written order of Nov 24, Justice Kumar noted: "From reading the counter affidavit of the Station House Officer; it seems that all the officials are hand in glove with some land mafia and they have illegally demolished the house of the petitioner without following the due process of law." These are strong words from a High Court judge, and indicate how upset the Honourable Justice was on a bare reading of the case and the material before him.

Just about a week after those judicial remarks, in a separate state and in an unconnected statement, speaking as the campaign ended for the Gujarat Assembly elections, Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath told the audience, "We do not hesitate to use bulldozers" against what he called "professional rioters." It is under Adityanath's administration that bulldozers first became a weapon

of state choice against select targets, bringing a new level of force and violence to what should otherwise be everyday affairs of police and the local administration. This directed top-down approach to "teach a lesson" to those described nebulously as "professional rioters" comes loaded with assumptions, prejudices and the politics of hate that have together brought governance to a new low. Once sanctioned by a political leadership, the weapon becomes the weapon that all police forces begin to wield with impunity with or without the political master in control. The result is an arms race of a kind, where new and novel methods are used to terrorise in the name of law and order; often the targets being the weak and the downtrodden while the well-off usually get away. This is India in decline, not a resurgent India 75 years after Independence.

Warnings by the highest court of the land have done little to arrest the rot. In the UP cases, the Supreme Court had warned against short circuiting of due process



Jagdish Rattanani

ONCE SANCTIONED BY A POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, THE WEAPON BECOMES THE WEAPON THAT ALL POLICE FORCES BEGIN TO WIELD WITH IMPUNITY WITH OR WITHOUT THE POLITICAL MASTER IN CONTROL

## Online Hatred Back

What was feared, when Elon Musk clinched his deal with Twitter and became its owner, is now getting confirmed. Statistics reveal some frightening truths. Before Musk's takeover, hatred spewed against Black Americans on Twitter was, on an average, 1,282 times a day. After he became Twitter's owner, these jumped to 3,876 times a day. Slurs against gay men jumped from 2,506 times a day before Musk took over to 3,964 times a day after he bought it. Likewise, anti-Semitic posts referring to Jews or Judaism rose over 61 per cent in the two weeks after Musk acquired the site.

These findings are of Centre for Countering Digital Hate, the Anti-Defamation League and other groups that study online platforms. Their work gives the most comprehensive picture to date of the transformation of Twitter into a tool for hate-mongers. The numbers are small enough, but they seem to show the shape of things to come.

The policy shift after the sacking of nearly 50 per cent of Twitter staff, including those who used to monitor hate-filled posts, has helped dark forces, including the Islamic State, return to the social networking site with a vengeance. Similarly, accounts associated with QAnon, a Far-Right conspiracy theory group, have paid for and received verified status on Twitter. Nazism is being eulogised on the platform to such an extent that singer-rapper Kanye West, aka Ye, tweeted an image of a Swastika inside the Star of David. His account, which was restricted for a spell in October because of an anti-Semitic tweet, would again be suspended indefinitely, Musk himself was forced to announce.

These changes are alarming, indeed. Experts in the field say they have never before seen such a spurt in hate speech, troublesome content and restoration of previously banned accounts in such a short period on a mainstream social media platform. It is regrettable that Musk is being seen by hate-campaigners - every kind of racist, misogynist and homophobe - as their patron saint ready to give them carte blanche to use his platform to spread hatred.

What is even worse is that Musk claimed that the percentage of hate-filled tweets had come down since he took over. He did not care to substantiate his claim with statistics. Available data refute his contention. When his deal with Twitter was clinched, Musk declared the "bird", which is the social network platform's logo, was "freed" meaning no one would be barred from using it. Immediately thereafter, former US President Donald Trump was back on Twitter which had barred him for tweets that could incite violence.

Other social media companies are also increasingly concerned about how content is being moderated on Twitter. According to a report, Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, found accounts associated with Russian and Chinese state-backed operators campaigning on its platforms last month. It immediately tried to alert Twitter. But, the latter has not yet responded. Twitter staff, who used to handle such complaints, must have been fired and there is no one at the moment to take note of the developments.

Against this backdrop comes the news that Thierry Breton, a European Union official, has expressed concern to Musk about the spate of hate posts on Twitter and categorically told him the EU would not allow it. He plans to visit Twitter's San Francisco headquarters soon to make an on-the-spot assessment of its ability to moderate content and combat disinformation.

Be that as it may, liberal space in social networks appears to be under renewed threat after Musk's entry into the field. Already, Europe is virtually under siege following re-emergence of Far-Right forces capturing one government after another. The US is nearly vertically split into liberal and Far-Right forces. The impetus that anti-democratic forces have got following Twitter's new ownership is a small but important global indication that the future does not augur well for free thinking and the spirit of tolerance the world over.

### WISDOM CORNER

- Die to everything of yesterday so that your mind is always fresh, always young, innocent, full of vigor and passion. **JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI**
- Always recognize that human individuals are ends, and do not use them as means to your end. **IMMANUEL KANT**
- Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes. **CARL JUNG**

### WORDSWORTH

#### Deleb

The trouble with having some famous person endorsing your products or even becoming associated with them by accident is that they can - and often will - say or do things that adversely affect your reputation. How good it would be to have a celebrity on board who could be guaranteed to be the epitome of discretion, always there but always on message, or at least never off it. No risk of embarrassing faux pas, sudden disappearances to dry out, or upstaging winners at awards ceremonies. This is part of what lies behind a slang term of the marketing and entertainment business that has recently started to appear in media addressed to the wider world: deb, short for "dead celebrity". An edition of the US television programme 60 minutes found that there's a lot of money to be had representing famous dead people - everybody from Elvis to Einstein. On 29 October 2009 newspapers reported Forbes magazine's annual list of the Top-Earning Dead Celebrities. This put Yves Saint Laurent at the top, followed by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, with Michael Jackson coming third. The income of these debles (Michael Jackson had already earned \$72m since his death in June 2009) proves the truth of the old saying - sometimes death really can be a good career move. "Steve McQueen is a legend that many celebrities like to emulate, but few do," said Diana Brobmann, senior manager, new business development and product licensing at GreenLight. "The use of Dead Celebs (or as I call them 'Delebs') such as McQueen, continues to increase in the marketplace" (Licensing.biz, 19 Jun. 2008). Images of deceased stars have long been used in advertising. The most recent trend is for digital enhancement of images, seamlessly integrating "delebs" into current situations and, in some cases, putting words into their mouths (Marketing Week, 30 Apr. 2009).

#### Deliquescent

Many people first encountered this word during a school science lesson in which some crystals were put on the bench. Within a few minutes, as the result of being hygroscopic, they absorbed enough water vapour from the air to dissolve into solution. Such crystals are said to deliquesce or to be deliquescent. That's a specific technical application of a word whose meanings in English are intriguing. For example, how about dusty and deliquescent? In the nineteenth century, deliquescent was used jokingly of someone who has become so hot as a result of physical exertion that he's swimming in sweat. Dusty and deliquescent became what we may politely call a set phrase or, impolitely, a cliché

#### LOL

### Doctor & mechanic

A doctor is talking to a car mechanic. "Your fee is several times more per hour than we get paid for medical care."



"Yeah, but you see, doc, you have always the same model, it hasn't changed since Adam; but we have to keep up to date with new models coming every month."

### SPECTRUM FINANCE

## Rebooting the World Bank



Suma Chakrabarti & Chris Humphrey

ONE REASON, EMBLEMATIC OF HOW THE BANK'S GOVERNANCE PROBLEMS HINDER ITS ABILITY TO RESPOND TO BORROWER COUNTRY NEEDS, IS THE SLOW LOAN APPROVAL AND DISBURSEMENT PROCESS

The World Bank is on the cusp of a major transformation. Led by the US, G20 governments have pushed it to increase support for the fight against climate change. Following recommendations by a G20-created independent panel on how to update the Bank's financial policies to respond faster to global crises, shareholders have given it until Christmas to produce a roadmap for operational reform.

The World Bank is in dire need of a shakeup. It must leverage its considerable financial firepower more efficiently to mobilise private investors and redirect its own resources toward achieving sustainable development and other global priorities. But the reforms will be effective only if the Bank's shareholders address the reasons why low- and middle-income countries are reluctant to work with it.

One reason, emblematic of how the Bank's governance problems hinder its ability to respond to borrower country needs, is the slow loan approval and disbursement process. The most recent available data indicate that, on average, the Bank takes more than two years to process a loan, from conception to the first disbursement of funds. The waiting period can be considerably longer for complex infrastructure projects.

The anaemic pace of implementation is primarily the result of pressure by non-borrower gov-

ernment shareholders - themselves pressured by legislatures and civil-society organisations - to apply rigid, one-size-fits-all standards and procedures to all World Bank operations. For recipient countries, particularly in the developing world, this means frustrating delays.

To be sure, the Bank must maintain very high standards. Close scrutiny makes projects more effective, sustainable, and efficient. But the Bank's onerous bureaucracy goes beyond quality control. Applying for a loan typically involves multiple in-country missions, each requiring several days of effort from teams of overworked government officials. Complex and lengthy environmental and social safeguard reviews are sometimes more stringent than those adopted by the Bank's wealthy shareholders in their own countries.

Is it any surprise, then, that a developing country in need of financing might prefer to sign a contract with, say, the Export-Import Bank of China? The project could get moving immediately, and the recipient country could avoid sometimes pushy World Bank officials. The loan might cost a bit more, but elected officials in developing countries are under huge pressure to deliver results for their populations, and speed matters.

World Bank officials are well aware of these problems and have tried to push for change. As early as 2000, the Bank established a spe-

cial task force to address borrower complaints, particularly regarding safeguards and fiduciary rules. But while the Bank has taken tentative steps to simplify its process over the past two decades, including streamlined new outcome-based lending instruments and board approval for some projects based on risk, the results have been meager.

The main obstacle to deeper reform is the World Bank's dysfunctional governance. A small group of non-borrower countries, led by the US, dominates decision-making. And these governments have come to view the Bank as a problem rather than the extraordinarily powerful vehicle for sustainable development that it can be. At the first sign of any reform that could be viewed as weakening standards, US congressional representatives and other G7 legislators, encouraged by civil-society groups, apply pressure to dilute or block it.

The World Bank's major shareholders must get serious about overhauling the way the institution engages with client countries. If developed countries use their voting power to prioritise domestic political-economy concerns over the Bank's effectiveness in developing countries, everyone will be worse off.

A few critical changes could help. For starters, more widely adopting a risk-based approach to project review would significantly accelerate the Bank's operations. Implementing single safeguard re-

views for multiple projects in the same country or sector, and making greater use of strong domestic frameworks in some borrower countries, could simplify matters. Transferring loan-approval authority to the Bank's president or even regional vice presidents, together with a clear accountability framework, could streamline the loan approval process further.

These reforms could be piloted in middle-income countries, where legal frameworks and standards are likely more acceptable, before implementing them widely. World Bank staff, many of whom are among the most experienced development experts on the planet, should be encouraged to innovate and take calculated risks. Development is inherently complicated, and problems are inevitable. By trying in vain to avoid them, the World Bank has become overly bureaucratic, painfully slow, and less effective.

Until shareholder governments face this reality, the Bank will remain trapped in the Washington echo chamber, increasingly out of touch with the emerging and developing economies it was designed to help.

Suma Chakrabarti is a former president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Chris Humphrey is a specialist in development finance.

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#### Cyber challenges

Sir, The recent cyber-attack on the servers of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) is a serious jolt and a wake-up call for cyber-security preparedness. One of the most high-profile cases of data breach targeting a government-backed entity has exposed the vulnerabilities. The hack originated from another country and the possible involvement of a foreign state actor should lend urgency to developing robust safety locks. For the government agencies tasked with cyber-security, complex challenges springing up on a daily basis are a reality today. The sophisticated ransomware attack indeed would have wider national security implications. A cyber hygiene ecosystem has to be given utmost importance. Considering the tightening nationwide hold of cybercrime, much higher budgets need to be allocated to strengthen cyber cells across all districts of the country. There is a vast army of trained professionals waiting to be put on the job. Utilise their services and train them for the emerging cyber challenges.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

#### Plight of prisoners

Sir, President Droupadi Murmu has lamented the overcrowding of Indian prisons. She has said decongesting prisons is the need of the hour instead of adding to their number. Speaking at a conference, the President called for enhanced awareness among poor prisoners on their fundamental rights. From 69 per cent in 2019 to 77 per cent in 2022, the number of prisoners in jails waiting for their trials to reach a logical conclusion has steeply increased. Approximately 70 per cent of the country's undertrials come from socio-economically weaker sections. So, even after procuring bails, these undertrials may languish in jails unable to pay the bail amount. In Arnesh Kumar versus State of Bihar, the Supreme Court had ruled that arrests should be an exception in cases where the offences are punishable with less than seven years imprisonment with or without fine. Several past verdicts of higher courts have advised the subordinate courts to bear in mind that Article 21 of the Constitution speaks about protection of life and public liberty as fundamental rights of a citizen. No accused should be deprived of this precious privilege. In the Arnesh Kumar case, the two-judge bench of the SC had said that the power of arrest had become a lucrative source of police corruption. "Arrest first, proceed next" was highly despicable, the court had held.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: [edit@orissapost.com](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

Orissa POST

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# national

## of the day quote

The whole world is looking at India's youth with hope because you are the growth engine of the country and India is the growth engine of the world

ANURAG THAKUR | UNION MINISTER

People of India have such energy be it in music, sports, culture, soldiers...everyone is marching ahead to take India forward. I am confident by the time India celebrates the centenary of its independence, it will become the viswaguru and restore its pride

DRUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT

Whether it is monarchy or democracy, temples are for people only. They are for the public only, irrespective of any kind of rule. Shrines are not the personal property of someone. This (HR&CE) department was created during the Justice Party rule only to change that situation (of temples being in individuals' control)

M K STALIN | TM CN

## SHORT TAKES

### Lucky Ali alleges encroachment

**Bangalore:** Singer Lucky Ali has complained to DG and IGP of Karnataka Praveen Sood over alleged encroachment of his farm land by land mafia involving the husband of state IAS officer Rohini Sindhuri, police said on Monday. The police have taken up investigation following the complaint. Lucky Ali has also alleged that Rohini Sindhuri, presently working as the Commissioner of Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Department, is helping the land mafia and misusing state resources. In his complaint, Lucky Ali stated, "I am Maqsood Mahmood Ali. Son of the Late actor and comedian Mehmod Ali. And also known as Lucky Ali. I am currently in Dubai for work, hence the urgency."

### 14 rusticated

**Silchar:** Another case of ragging surfaced at a dental college in Assam's Silchar town where at least 14 students have been rusticated from the hostel by the authority, officials said Monday. A few students in 1st year at the dental college lodged a complaint a few days ago against some seniors. They alleged that senior students were causing mental and physical harassment. As a result, their academic performance at the college has been hampered as they could not concentrate on their studies.

### Arms seized

**Shillong:** The Meghalaya Police have seized a large quantity of various types of drugs, arms and ammunition, and arrested three persons in this connection in West Garo Hills district, bordering Assam, police said on Monday. A police spokesman in Shillong said that during a night-long operation on Sunday, the police recovered huge quantities of varied drugs, three mobile phones, one pistol and huge quantities of cartridges from a Maruti Wagon car at Garobadha.

### Five Maoists held

**New Delhi:** In operations carried out in the states of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) arrested five Maoists, while seven others surrendered, a spokesperson said. According to the CRPF, the five militia members were arrested on Sunday from the forest area under the Cherala police station of Telangana.



The Prime Minister says KCR, I will throw your government out. What is that we should understand out of this? Are we not an elected government like yours? Have we won without people's mandate? On what reason would you throw my government out? Can a Prime Minister go to West Bengal and say 40 of your MLAs are in touch with us. Can he say that?

K CHANDRASEKHAR RAO | TELANGANA CM

## CALCUTTA HC FORMS PANEL

In a move to prevent rapes or attempted rape taking advantage of darkness in some areas, a division bench of the Calcutta High Court Monday constituted a special committee that will identify the pockets in remote areas in Bengal which are yet to receive electricity connections



# Congress slams EC for PM's 'roadshow'

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 5:** The Congress Monday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of violating the model code by taking out a "roadshow" before casting his vote in the second phase of polling in Gujarat and claimed that the Election Commission is "afraid" to act.

Congress head of media and publicity Pawan Khara alleged inaction on the part of the Election Commission on its complaints over the last several weeks and said the party is deliberating on taking necessary legal measures on the issue. "The BJP is continuously violating the model code but the EC is not acting against them and has turned silent. It seems the EC is afraid of taking action," he said.

Khara said the value of the vote of the prime minister or that of any common man is the same. "But how is it that the PM holds a roadshow for 2.5 hours when he goes to vote," he said. "What are the compulsions of the Election Commission that it cannot see any violations by the prime minister," he said.

"We have been making representations to the Election Commission at various levels. Every second or third day, we have made some representations or the other in Gujarat, in Delhi, but, I am afraid the Election Commission looks like it is willingly under pressure," he said.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi also alleged that "BJP goons" have attacked his party's Danta tribal candidate. "Congress tribal leader and Danta Assembly candidate Kantibhai Kharadi was brutally attacked by BJP goons and is now missing. Congress had sought deployment of additional paramilitary forces from EC, but



## 59 per cent voter turnout till 5 pm

**Ahmedabad:** A voter turnout of 59.19 per cent was recorded till 5 pm Monday across 93 seats in the second and final phase of the Assembly elections in Gujarat, said the Elections Commission (EC), down from nearly 70 per cent polling registered in these constituencies in 2017. Barring a few untoward incidents, the polling was peaceful in the 93 Assembly seats spread across 14 districts of north and central regions of Gujarat, where 833 candidates were in the fray. The state administration received multiple complaints of malfunctioning of EVMs (electronic voting machines) and VVPATs (voter verifiable paper audit trails) from many places due to which voting at those booths was impacted. The provisional voter turnout in the second phase till 5 pm was 59.19 per cent, the EC said, adding the figure is expected to increase as many people were still standing in queues at many booths.

the Commission kept sleeping," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

"The BJP should listen - we are not afraid and will never be afraid, we will fight firmly," Gandhi said, using the hashtag "#DaroMat". Khara claimed sitting MLA Kantibhai Kharadi wrote to the Election Commission seeking additional security as he apprehended a threat to his life. "The Election Commission did not pay timely attention to his pleas. We have also shared time and again visuals of the BJP distributing liquor in a state, where there is a prohibition, openly, shamelessly and distributing liquor in their vehicles with BJP logos on the vehicles. They are not afraid," he alleged and questioned the EC's "silence".

"We are not concerned with A government or B government. So far as Punjab is concerned, the drugs problem is increasing. The youth will be finished. It is very unfortunate that this is happening. Who is the sufferer? The poor people. Illegal manufacture and transportation has to stop because it ultimately affects the health and the society. "If somebody wants to finish the country and more particularly from the border state, they



AIADMK interim general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami with party workers pays tribute to former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalithaa on her death anniversary, at her memorial in Chennai

# SC raps Punjab over spurious liquor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 5:** "The youth will be finished," an anguished Supreme Court said on Monday voicing concern over the burgeoning illicit liquor trade and drug menace in Punjab, and asked the state government to fix responsibility on the local police for failing to keep vigil.

A bench of justices M R Shah and C T Ravikumar asked the Punjab government to spell out specific steps taken to curb the production and sale of illegal liquor. Senior advocate Ajit Kumar Sinha, appearing for the Punjab government, assured the court that the state is taking action and has already destroyed over 13,000 illegal liquor 'bhattis' (distilleries).

"We are not concerned with A government or B government. So far as Punjab is concerned, the drugs problem is increasing. The youth will be finished. It is very unfortunate that this is happening. Who is the sufferer? The poor people. Illegal manufacture and transportation has to stop because it ultimately affects the health and the society. "If somebody wants to finish the country and more particularly from the border state, they



A bench of justices M R Shah and C T Ravikumar asked the Punjab government to spell out specific steps taken to curb the production and sale of illegal liquor

The apex court asked the Punjab government to file a reply stating what concrete steps have been taken to stop domestic and commercial production of spurious liquor

will start with the borders. Every extra caution should be taken to save the country. Tell your government to be very serious. They have to take

every effort to save the country, it is very easy to ruin the youth," the bench said.

The top court was hearing a plea arising out of a September 2020 order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court that had disposed of a petition seeking transfer of some FIRs registered in Punjab in relation to distillation of spurious liquor, its sale and inter-state smuggling to the CBI.

The high court had disposed of the plea following an assurance by the state's counsel that concerns raised by the petitioners will be duly dealt with and suitable action initiated. Sinha told the Supreme Court that over 36,000 FIRs have been registered in the last two years.

The bench shot back, saying: "You (government) are only filing FIRs, but according to you in every gali and mohalla there is a 'bhatti'." When one of the lawyers sought compensation for the families of those who died due to consumption of spurious liquor, the bench said it has to be a policy decision.

"It's very unfortunate. But who asked you to consume the (spurious) liquor? Why should a common man who is paying taxes suffer?" the bench said.

# Farooq re-elected NC president

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Dec 5:** Farooq Abdullah was Monday re-elected unopposed the president of the National Conference (NC), barely a fortnight after the 85-year-old leader announced he would not run for another term.

Abdullah, who has served as NC president for nearly three decades after being elected first in 1981, said though he wanted to step aside and let the younger leadership run the party, he was persuaded to continue as "we are passing through a very difficult phase".

Abdullah was elected the party's chief at the NC's delegate session held here after party leaders offered prayers at the mausoleum of NC founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah at Naseem Bagh in Hazratbal on his 117th birth anniversary.



# Modi opens BJP poll meet in Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 5:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Monday that India's presidency of the G-20 is a matter of pride for all citizens and it is an occasion to establish globally Indianness and its culture.

Addressing a key meeting of BJP leaders from across the country, Modi also asked party members to maintain direct connect with border villagers and said they should be developed as places that draw visitors.

Former Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh briefed reporters on the meeting and Modi's closed-door address.

The prime minister inaugurated

the BJP's national office-bearers meeting and said there is an acknowledgement worldwide of the country's emergence as an economic power amid global challenges like the Ukraine war and the Covid pandemic.

He also lauded the "Kashi Tamil Sangamam", a month-long event going on in Varanasi that celebrates ancient cultural ties between the two places.

Modi said "sneh milan", an idea he had first voiced during the party's national executive meeting in Hyderabad, programmes should be promoted for cultural exchanges as being seen in Kashi, an ancient name of Varanasi.

Singh said the two-day meeting

will discuss various topical issues and also upcoming state elections. Party leaders are deliberating on further strengthening its presence at booths.

Besides its national office-bearers, presidents and general secretaries (organisation) of the BJP's state units are also part of the meeting chaired by the party's national president J P Nadda.

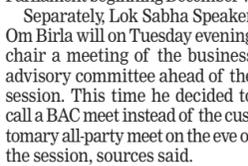
The party's future strategy, preparations for the next round of state assembly polls and various ongoing organisational activities will be discussed in the meeting which is also serving as a stock-taking exercise for leaders who are engaged in organisational works round the year, party sources have said.

# Govt calls all-party meet today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 5:** The government has convened an all-party meet of floor leaders on Tuesday to discuss the legislative agenda and important issues likely to be discussed in the Winter Session of Parliament beginning December 7.

Separately, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will on Tuesday evening chair a meeting of the business advisory committee ahead of the session. This time he decided to call a BAC meet instead of the customary all-party meet on the eve of the session, sources said.



The BAC discusses the legislative agenda of the House as well as issues on which parties would like to have discussion. Last week, the government had listed 16 new bills for introduction in the Winter Session.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi had recently sent out invites to floor leaders of various parties to attend the all-party meet.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to be present. The session begins a day before the votes of Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh assembly elections, along with those of six assembly and one Lok Sabha bypolls, are counted.

# WOMEN LAGGING DUE TO DIGITAL DIVIDE: REPORT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 5:** The percentage of men owning phones is as high as 61 per cent while only 31 per cent of women-owned phones in 2021, according to a new report, which claimed that India's growing inequalities based on caste, religion, gender, class, and geographic location, are being worryingly replicated in the digital space.

Oxfam India's latest 'India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide' report said on Monday that the reach of digital technologies remains limited to largely male, urban, upper-caste, and upper-class households and individuals.

As per the Mobile Gender Gap report by GSMA, women are less likely to use mobile internet by 33 per cent when compared to men in 2021," it said.

The report said the percentage of men owning phones is as high as 61 per cent while only 31 per cent of women-owned phones in 2021. "India's growing inequalities based on caste, religion, gender, class, and geographic location are being worryingly replicated in the digital space," it claimed.

The report analyses primary data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's (CMIE) household survey from January 2018 to December 2021. The report looks at CMIE's data on internet access, mobile ownership, computer, and broadband availability to assess the inclusivity of digital initiatives to deliver public services and



entitlements. The report also uses secondary analysis from the National Sample Survey (NSS).

The report revealed a digital divide based on employment status where 95 per cent of the salaried permanent workers have a phone whereas only 50 per cent of the unemployed (willing and looking for a job) have a phone in 2021.

The report also highlights that contrary to popular perception,

the use of computer devices decreased in rural areas. Pre-pandemic, only 3 per cent of the rural population owned a computer. "This has come down to just 1 per cent post-pandemic. Whereas in urban areas, the number of people with computers is 8 per cent," it said.

The use of digital technologies in delivering essential services such as education and health is also reflecting the country's digital

divide and its consequences, the report said. Amitabh Behar, CEO of Oxfam India said, "India's growing inequality is accentuated due to the digital divide. The growing inequality based on caste, religion, gender, class, and geographic location also gets replicated in the digital space. People without devices and the internet get further marginalised due to difficulties in accessing education, health, and public services. This vicious cycle of inequality needs to stop."

The report recommended that the government's efforts to bridge India's current income inequality by improving the income of the poor become pertinent and can go a long way.

This can be done by setting a decent minimum living wage, easing the indirect tax burden on citizens and provision of uni-

versal health and education services, it said. The most basic step toward bridging the digital divide is availability, the report said, underlining that in rural and hard-to-reach areas, internet availability is either intermittent, poor or non-existent.

Service providers need to ensure its availability through community networks and public WiFi/internet access points. Community networks are a subset of crowd-sourced networks, designed to be open, free, and neutral, and often reliant on shared infrastructure as a common resource, it said. They are usually built, used, and managed with a bottom-up approach by communities. Such networks should also have good-quality upload and download speeds, sufficient for the local needs of internet users, the report said.

# BJY in Rajasthan, Gehlot alleges media 'boycott'

Rajasthan is the only Congress-ruled state where the yatra has entered and will cover about 500 km passing through Jhalawar, Kota, Bundi, Sawai Madhopur, Dausa and Alwar districts over 17 days before entering Haryana December 21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jhalawar (Rajasthan), Dec 5:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi began the Rajasthan leg of his Bharat Jodo Yatra (BJY) from Jhalawar district Monday, with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot in attendance.

The 89th day of the yatra started from Kali Talai in Jhalrapatan, a rural area on the Rajasthan-Madhya Pradesh border. Gandhi set off the yatra at 6.10 am when the temperature was 13 degrees Celsius, but he was seemingly comfortable walking in a half sleeves T-shirt and trousers teamed with sports shoes, while the other leaders and workers were seen in jackets.



The other notable leaders who accompanied Gandhi were AICC general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee chief Govind

Singh Dotsara, senior leader Bhanwar Jitendra Singh, and Food and Civil Supplies Minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas. Addressing a press conference

here, Gehlot lashed out at the mainstream national media, claiming they have "boycotted" the yatra as editors and owners were under pressure. Gehlot claimed the media has completely failed to fulfil their responsibility as the fourth pillar of democracy, and history will not forgive them for that.

"Kaan khool kar sun lo...national media wale bhi. State media wale bhi. Itihas apko maaf nahi karega!" he said. ("Listen carefully...National and state media, history will not forgive you.")

As the Rajasthan Chief Minister launched his tirade against the media, All India Congress Committee general secretary (Communication) Jairam Ramesh intervened to defend the journal-

ists present there, saying they should not be blamed as they have been doing their job properly. However, he also lamented the coverage of the yatra in the mainstream was not as per their expectations.

The Rajasthan Chief Minister further said the Bharat Jodo Yatra was attracting the attention of "the whole world" and the youth associated with it would prove to be an asset for Rahul Gandhi. He was referring to the 10 yatrins who have accompanied Gandhi from the beginning of the yatra September 7.

"This yatra is not only attracting the attention of the country but the whole world. It is a big message for those countries where there is democracy," Gehlot said.



An elderly woman voter being assisted by her relative as they arrive to cast their votes during the re-polling of the DDC elections at a polling station, Bandipora in Jammu and Kashmir

PTI PHOTO

## BOOSTING TOURISM

# Raj to organise folk art festivals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, Dec 5:** As the tourism industry is recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Rajasthan government has planned to organise folk art festivals from the panchayat to the state level to give a boost to the sector.

These festivals will also conserve arts and culture of different regions of the state and work toward uplifting artists.

Currently, Rajasthan has 22 types of folk festivals, but now the state government is planning to hold festivals from the panchayat to the state level, according to an official. The tourism department is preparing a detailed plan for it and cultural competitions will be held with a budget of Rs 27 crore, he said.

"The Rajasthan folk art festival organised from the panchayat to the state level will increase the arrival of domestic and foreign tourists in the

state. Major local tourist places would be selected on priority for organising the festival," the official said.

He said that the protection of folk arts and culture of different regions of Rajasthan will be done through the festival. At the same time, the platform will also be used to promote local folk artists who faced a hard time during the pandemic, he added.

"It will not only assist folk artists but also promote local folk art and tourist destinations among visitors," the official said.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has directed officials to prepare the plan at the earliest.

Most tourists visit places such as Jaipur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Alwar, Sawai Madhopur but there are many other unexplored tourist sites in other districts where there is a huge potential to promote tourism, he has said.



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

## J&K: Srinagar records season's coldest night

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Dec 5:** At minus 3.4 degrees Celsius, Srinagar recorded the coldest night of the season so far even as the mercury settled below the freezing point across Kashmir, officials said Monday.

The minimum last night in the city was 2.5 degrees below the normal for this time of the season,



they said. The night temperature was lesser than the famous ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, which recorded a low of minus 3.2 degrees Celsius.

The officials said mercury at Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir's Anantnag district settled at a low of minus 4.4 degrees Celsius. Qazigund, the gateway town to the Valley, recorded a minimum of minus 3.4 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag town, also in South, registered a low of minus 1.4 degrees Celsius.

Kupwara in north Kashmir recorded minus 2.7 degrees Celsius, the officials added.

The Met Office said the weather is likely to stay dry but hazy till December 8. A fresh western disturbance is likely to affect Jammu and Kashmir and adjoining areas from December 9.

# J&K to create pool of cyber security analysts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Dec 5:** Jammu and Kashmir is planning to create a pool of cyber security analysts under the recently launched Cyber Security Policy (CSP) to combat cyber terrorism and cyber attacks.

The CSP also talks about setting up computer energy response team (CERT), a nodal agency which will ensure safer and stronger internet by responding to major incidents, analysing threats and exchanging critical cyber security information with trusted partners. According to the official document, the government is also mulling over establishing a think tank for policy and decision inputs, an information security management system to manage sensitive data and a Centre of Excellence to combat modern-day security threats.

Further, the Union territory administration is working towards introducing cyber insurance. The CSP along with a digital vision document was launched by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on the concluding day of the two-

day national conference on e-governance in Katra November 27.

"The Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir is committed to create and sustain a safe and resilient cyber space to promote well-being of its citizens and to ensure protection and sustainability of its infrastructure in the cyber security sector," the policy document read.

It mentioned equipping professionals with requisite cyber security skills and knowledge, promoting Jammu and Kashmir as an ideal destination for businesses that work on develop cyber security products and encourage inter-institutional partnerships to promote collaborative research efforts to tackle cyber attacks.

"The Union territory shall create a pool of cyber security analysts to work as part-time security specialists of the government, advising it in combating cyber terrorism, protecting from cyber threats, simulating cyber-attacks to help find security loopholes, and assisting CERT on the ground in case of a cyber-security incident," the document read.



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

# Fear among KPs palpable after fresh terror threat

RECENTLY, A BLOG LINKED TO TRF, AN OFFSHOOT OF THE LET, PUBLISHED A LIST OF 56 KASHMIRI PANDIT EMPLOYEES UNDER PMRP, AND WARNED OF MOUNTING ATTACKS ON THEM



FILE PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Dec 5:** Kashmiri Pandits working in the Valley are in a state of panic after a terrorist group released a hit list of 56 employees from the community.

In the aftermath of targeted killings by terrorists, several Kashmiri Pandits employed in the Valley under the Prime Minister's Rehabilitation Package (PMRP) have shifted to Jammu and are on a protest for over 200 days demanding relocation.

They have been camping outside the rehabilitation commissioner's office here. Recently, a blog linked to The Resistance Front (TRF), an offshoot of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), published a list of 56 Kashmiri Pandit employees under PMRP, and warned of mounting attacks on them.

"Terror groups have previously sent us threat letters, but this time,

the warning is accompanied by a list of employees. This has created a fear not only among the protesting employees but the entire community," Ranjan Zutshi, one of the protesting employees, told PTI Monday.

He said the latest warning cannot be dismissed as a propaganda as "they (terrorists) have all relevant information about the employees". Demanding a probe into the leak of names to terrorists, Zutshi said it shows the terror ecosystem is deep-rooted and needs to be dismantled by taking stern action against over-ground supporters.

"The government must find out who leaked such vital information to terrorists. The police should take such things seriously and ensure the safety of those employees who are still stationed in the Valley," he said in a statement.

Another employee Rakesh Kumar said their demands for the past 208 days have gone unanswered. "The

government is stopping our salaries and using pressure tactics to force us to move back to our place of postings in the Valley. How can we even think of returning in such a situation?" he said.

Kumar said the Kashmiri Pandits have decided not to rejoin their duties in the Valley as it is directly related to their "life and death".

"We can work only if we are alive...The government should immediately relocate us to save our families who are suffering immensely, both mentally as well as financially," he said.

## AAP expresses concerns

The Aam Aadmi Party Monday expressed concerns over the fresh terror threat to Kashmiri Pandit employees and demanded a probe into the leak of names of employees from the community posted in the Valley. AAP spokesperson Pratap Jamwal criticised the silence of the Jammu and Kashmir administration and the central government on the terror threat putting the employees in a state of trauma. "Kashmiri Pandit employees as well as reserved category employees serving in Kashmir are on protest following (targeted) killings and are on the road for months but the government of India as well as the Jammu and Kashmir government are mute spectators," he said.

# Raj: Men sulk as women occupy more than half of MGNREGS mates' position

With the number of women mates still low across Rajasthan, MGNREGS Commissioner PC Kishan had issued fresh orders two years ago instructing to employ 50% women as mates in every gram panchayat, giving special priority to the differently-abled, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and those living below the poverty line (BPL)

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhilwara (Rajasthan), Dec 5:** The issue of 33 % reservation for women in Parliament and state legislatures has faced several obstacles. Not just in democratic institutions, sharing power seems to be a cause of disagreement even when it comes to schemes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGS).

Six months ago, when the Bhilwara administration declared that all MGNREGA mates in the district will henceforth be women, many men protested as they were not interested in working under women. While men claimed the move was "unconstitutional", women were a happy lot.

"Why are men jealous? We have to do physical labour even as a mate, for which we are paid Rs 235 per day. How does it hurt men when a poor village woman is able to earn this much money?" Bhupendra Kaur, a mate in Hanumangarh district's Chak Buhd Singh village, told 101Reporters.

Bhilwara is no exception. In fact, Rajasthan government's decision to fill more than 50 per cent of the mate positions across the State with women has been met with resistance. Though the decision was



made around seven years ago, it was not implemented properly.

Due to persistent pressure from the administration on the district-level officers and extensive publicity, women started to come forward. For instance, Hanumangarh district had only 21 per cent women mates two years ago. Today, the number has increased to 59.86 per cent.

Except in Banswara, Baran, Barmer, Bundi, Chittorgarh, Dausa, Dholpur, Dungargarh, Jhalawar and Tonk districts, 50 per cent of MGNREGS mates in all other districts of Rajasthan are women. In Hanumangarh, Bharatpur, Churu, Jaisalmer, Jalore, Jodhpur, Kota,

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, Dec 5:** Construction of the district's second passenger ropeway has started at the Khole Ke Hanuman Temple complex here, an official said.

The service - Annapurna Mata Ropeway - will be the fifth in the state and the second in Jaipur after Samod Hanumanji Ropeway, District Collector Prakash Rajpurohit said. He said the 436-metre ropeway will connect the Annapurna Mata Temple to the Vaishno Mata Temple on the hill housing the Khole Ke Hanuman Temple.

The district administration has signed an agreement with the construction company to build the network after which a licence will be issued under the Ropeways Act. The 85-metre-high ropeway will be supported by five towers and have a capacity of 24 trolleys. It will be



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

able to ferry 800 passengers per hour, an official statement said.

The collector has already given instructions to finish the work in two years. Rajpurohit said passenger safety was the biggest priority and special attention should be paid to the quality of construction. The construction company has been directed to provide free rides to children below five years of age and adults above 70 years as well as persons with disabilities once the operating licence is granted, Rajpurohit said.

mate in Dhaliya, said women found it difficult to get work outside the village. "If they manage to get employed outside, family responsibilities still dissuade them. In such a situation, it is better that we get work in the village itself. Men have the option to migrate for work. If the government is providing us employment, men should welcome such steps," she said.

Women mates in Bhilwara have also been made suraksha sakhis under a scheme of the police department. They speak to women in the village and collect information on issues affecting them. The move, Rishikesh said, helped the police as well.

Women believe MGNREGS can be a medium to uplift themselves. Malarampura resident Saroj told 101Reporters that the earnings from MGNREGS work have helped improve their lives. However, working as a mate has not been smooth.

Saroj, who is both an MGNREGS mate and a worker in her village, said, "As a mate, I barely get a fortnight's work in a month. Hence, I work as a labourer for the rest of the days. Also, MGNREGS labourers usually receive their salaries before the mates. I am yet to get my one year's salary as a mate," she informed, adding that the pay was assured since it was a government job.



of the day quote

There is so much disunity in the BJP. They have not even been able to establish themselves as a proper opposition in the last four years in Rajasthan

SACHIN PILOT | CONGRESS LEADER

The government has created 2,063 posts for the new department which will formulate policies for the welfare of the disabled by taking into consideration views of the stakeholders

EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

The current model of selection of students for National Law Universities, which involves cracking the Common Law Admission Test, may not result in the selection of those with the right ethos

D Y CHANDRACHUD | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Two cops booked

Sultanpur: On the directives of the court, a police inspector and constable (both women) posted in Mahila Thana of Uttar Pradesh's Sultanpur have been booked for allegedly kidnapping a male police inspector, accused of rape by another woman constable in July. Inspector Nishu Tomar was suspended after a case was lodged against him and had gone to surrender before a local court in Sultanpur where he was arrested by Meera Kushwaha, the SHO of Mahila Thana on September 22. He has been missing since then. Tomar's wife had approached the court seeking action in the matter.

4 devotees killed

Amaravati: Four people were killed and 15 others injured in a road accident in Andhra Pradesh's Bapatla district on Monday. The accident occurred near Jampani village in Vemuru mandal when a mini-truck in which they were travelling overturned. The injured were shifted to a hospital in Tenali. The victims were Ayyappa devotees from Krishna district. The deceased were identified as Pasham Ramesh (55), B. Panduranga Rao (40), B. Pavan Kumar (25) and Bodina Ramesh (42).

Three arrested

New Delhi: Customs officials at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai arrested three people for concealing gold in specially designed undergarments. According to information, the incident took place on the intervening night of December 2 and 3. "Three passengers were placed under arrest for carrying 1,872 grams gold dust concealed in specially designed undergarments whereas 2,840 grams was recovered during rummaging the flight's toilet," a Customs official said.

Four injured

Amaravati: An aide of a TDP leader and three workers of the party were injured in an attack allegedly by the functionaries of ruling party YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh's Eluru district. Shiva Babu, personal assistant of former MLA Chintamaneni Prabhakar and three workers of the opposition TDP were injured in the attack on Sunday night near Koppaka in Pedavegi mandal. The TDP men, who were on their way to Pedakadimi village, were stopped by the group of YSRCP workers when they reached Alugulagudem. The victims told police that they were attacked with sticks and rods.



India's assets were transferred from the maharajas to the people of India through the Constitution and the BJP is reversing them now. Your assets are now being snatched away and are being sought to be given back to the maharajas

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

KIDNEY TRANSPLANT SUCCESSFUL: TEJASHWI

Doctors in Singapore successfully transplanted the kidney of former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav on Monday, his son and Bihar's Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav said



NOT HERE TO REOPEN HISTORY: SC Apex court junks 'Paramatma' PIL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 5: The Supreme Court Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking removal of alleged wrong historical facts related to the construction of the Taj Mahal from history books and find the age of the monument.

A bench of Justices M R Shah and C T Ravikumar asked the petitioner to approach the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and make a representation before it.

"The PILs are not meant for fishing enquiry. We are not here to re-open history. Let history continue. The writ petition is dismissed as withdrawn. The petitioner is granted liberty to make representation to the ASI. We have not expressed any merits on the same," the bench said.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by Surjit Singh Yadav seeking direction to the Centre to remove the alleged wrong historical facts related to the construction of the Taj Mahal from history books and textbooks.

The plea also sought directions to the ASI to carry out a probe into the age of the Taj Mahal. The petitioner contended that his re-



The top court was hearing a plea filed by Surjit Singh Yadav seeking direction to the Centre to remove the alleged wrong historical facts related to the construction of the Taj Mahal from history books and textbooks

search shows that a magnificent mansion already existed at the site where the body of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan's wife Mumtaz Mahal was placed in a dome-like structure.

"It is extremely strange why all the court chroniclers of Shah Jahan have not mentioned the name of the architect of this magnificent mausoleum. Therefore,

this quite clearly indicates that the mansion of Raja Man Singh was not demolished but only modified and renovated to create the current look of the Taj Mahal. That is why there is no mention of any architect in the accounts of the court chroniclers of Shah Jahan," the plea submitted. The 17th century monument is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 5: India is a secular country and everybody has a right to their religion, the Supreme Court said on Monday while dismissing a PIL seeking to declare late religious figure Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra as 'Paramatma'.

A bench of Justices M R Shah and C T Ravikumar imposed a cost of Rs 1 lakh on the petitioner for filing a "publicity interest litigation".

As the petitioner Upendra Nath Dalai started to read from his petition, the bench said, "Sunu hum ye lecture sunne ke liye nahi aaye hain (Listen, we are not here to listen to your lecture). Is this a public interest litigation? Aisa kaise ho sakta hai? Jisko jolo manna hai wo mane. Apni country me sabko religious adhikar hai. Hum kaise keh sakte hain ki particular sect ko him maane. (How can this be possible? Everybody is free to follow his or her religion. How can we ask people to follow a particular religion.

"If you want you can consider



him as 'Paramatma' (supreme being). Why enforce it on others?" the bench observed.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by Dalai seeking to declare Chandra as 'Paramatma'.

While dismissing the plea, the apex court said in its order, "India is a secular country and the petitioner cannot be permitted to pray that the citizens of India may accept Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra as 'Paramatma'. This is not genuine public interest litigation at all and it seems to be publicity interest litigation which deserves to be dismissed with costs."

4 BABIES DIE AT GOVT HOSPITAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ambikapur, Dec 5: Four newborn babies died in the special neonatal care unit (SNCU) of a government hospital in Chhattisgarh's Surguja district Monday, prompting the state government to order a probe, an official said.

The deaths occurred between 5.30 am and 8.30 am at the Government Medical College Hospital (GMCH) in Ambikapur, around 300 km from capital Raipur, collector Kundan Kumar told reporters.

While the kin of the deceased infants claimed that the babies, two of whom were on ventilator support, died as a result of a power outage in the hospital, the administration has maintained that the deaths can't be linked to the power cut.

"The four babies were in a critical condition and were admitted in the special neonatal care unit (SNCU) of the hospital. Of them, two were on ventilator support," the collector said.

As per preliminary information, there was a fluctuation in the power supply in the hospital between 1 am and 1.30 am, which was rectified in a short while. However, such a fluctuation does not affect the SNCU, as it has alternate power supply, which was functioning, he said. At least 30 to 35 children are undergoing treatment in the SNCU, the official said.

A detailed investigation into the matter is underway, following which the exact cause of deaths will be known, he said, adding that the medical report of the four infants will soon be released by the hospital.

Meanwhile, state Health Minister TS Singh Deo has directed the health secretary to constitute a team to probe the incident. "After learning about the death of four infants in Ambikapur Medical College Hospital, I have asked the health secretary to constitute a probe team and send it to the spot for an enquiry. I have also apprised Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel," Singh Deo said in a video statement.

The minister said he will be reaching Ambikapur in a helicopter this afternoon and will visit the hospital. He has also directed officials to take stern action if necessary into the matter. Parents of the deceased infants have alleged that the power supply in the hospital was disrupted for more than three hours in the night, and accused the hospital staff of negligence.

India, Germany ink mobility pact

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 5: India and Germany Monday inked a mobility partnership pact and held comprehensive discussions on key global challenges including the Ukraine conflict, the situation in Afghanistan and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

At a media briefing after talks with his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the mobility pact will make it easier for people to study, do research and work in each other's country and is a strong signal for a more contemporary bilateral partnership. Jaishankar also strongly defended India's import of crude oil from Russia and noted that it is largely driven by market forces.

From February to November, European Union has imported more fossil fuel from Russia than the next 10 countries combined, he said in a sharp retort to a question on why India has been procuring crude oil from Russia.

The German foreign minister arrived here this morning on a two-day visit to discuss ways to further expand bilateral cooperation in a range of areas including energy, trade, defence and security and climate change.

At the joint media briefing, Jaishankar said that India's position on the Ukraine issue is clear that this is not an era of war and the conflict should be resolved through dialogue.

The visiting German foreign minister described India as a role model for many countries and noted that Berlin wants to bolster its security cooperation with New Delhi.

Asked about challenges facing the region from China, Baerbock said there is a need to assess the threats while describing Beijing as a competitor and rival in many ways.

"We now know what happens when a country becomes too dependent on another that doesn't share the same values," Baerbock said.



Youth Congress supporters raise slogans during a protest over various demands in Kochi

PTI PHOTO

BENGAL TEACHERS' RECRUITMENT SCAM

21,000 candidates hired illegally, CBI to Calcutta HC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Dec 5: A total of 21,000 candidates were recruited illegally in all categories of West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) and more than 9,000 optical mark recognition (OMR) sheets were tampered with, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)'s Deputy Inspector General and the newly-appointed Chief of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the multi-crore teachers' recruitment scam in West Bengal, Ashwin Senvi told Calcutta High Court on Monday.

He also informed the court that starting from the main panel of recruitment to waiting lists, evi-



In November, Senvi, a 2006-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Haryana cadre took over as the Head of the SIT, probing the teachers' recruitment scam in West Bengal

dence of corruption had been everywhere. He also said that in November 2021, the investigation began on the basis of allegations of rank-jumping.

"But with the recovery of hard-discs, the issue of tampering with the OMR sheets has come to the forefront," Senvi added. Reacting to the submission from the SIT Chief,

Justice Biswajit Basu told him that the court is ready to extend all cooperation to him to go to the end of the investigation in the matter.

"Whatever help you need, just inform the court, which is ready to extend all possible cooperation. There is a need to reach the end in the probe on this issue of corruption. None of those who are involved in such corrupt practices should be spared," Justice Basu said.

He also added that the probe into this issue of corruption has gone a long way and now it seems that it is nearing its achieved target. "The eligible candidates who were illegally denied appointments are eagerly waiting for actions on

part of WBSSC and CBI. They want appointment letters," Justice Basu observed.

In November, Senvi, a 2006-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Haryana cadre took over as the Head of the SIT, probing the teachers' recruitment scam in West Bengal, following an order of Calcutta High Court's bench of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay.

At the same time, Justice Gangopadhyay also revamped the SIT constituted for that purpose replacing some officers as well increasing the staff strength of the team. Earlier Justice Gangopadhyay also expressed displeasure over the performance of certain members of the SIT.

After being drowned in a sea of sound, Gujarat rests for a while

After being drowned in a sea of sound, Gujarat rests for a while. Months of election-campaign turmoil and tumult building up to a crescendo as the two-phased voting ended on December 5 and then the questioning calm. That is up to December 8 when the ballot boxes open to smiles for the victor and sadness for the vanquished.

Tethered in this twilight zone, it is time to pause and ponder. The highest stake in this Gujarat election is for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP and the lowest for Arvind Kejriwal and his Aam Aadmi Party with the Congress nestling somewhere in between. Long targeted by friend and foe alike for its jagirdari-like hold on the Grand Old Party (GOP), the Nehru-Gandhi family distanced itself from active campaigning. Rahul Gandhi addressed just two meetings in a single day and the Prime Minister for 50 of them.

For Modi retaining his citadel is a compulsion. A defeat in Gujarat can be disas-

trous for the prospects of his return to power in 2024 while a victory will work as a morale booster. AAP is the disruptor-in-chief with its supremo Arvind Kejriwal pegging a profile higher than its professed reach but capable of hurting both the BJP and Congress prospects though without the heft to abrogate power for itself. How much dent and to whom remains unquantified.

The ruling BJP has pulled out all stops and led by Prime Minister Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, an army of national and leaders from states have been hurled into a carpet-bombing campaign. Billed as the country's longest road show of 50 kms in Ahmedabad on Thursday last by the Prime Minister coincided with the first phase of polling in other parts of the state. The road show covered 13 constituencies in Ahmedabad and one in Gandhinagar.

"Such an extended effort by any Prime Minister in a state election has never been seen in the annals of India's electoral history", said a former BJP big-wig now with



Gujarat files RK MISRA

the Congress, adding that it is also indicative of the high stakes of Modi and the perilous position of his party in the state.

A highlight of the campaign has been the showcasing of bulldozers at BJP elections rallies, marking an ominous introduction of an Uttar Pradesh model in the electoral politics of Gujarat. Narendra Modi came to power in Delhi projecting Gujarat as the model for national development and now the BJP showcases bulldozers and Adityanath symbolising the UP model during campaigning in his home state.

The bulldozer had become a mascot of the BJP in UP with its chief minister earning the name of "bulldozer baba", after the party's victory in the elections there. The phenomenon has now made an entry in Gujarat.

Though communal overtones have been a continuous strand of BJP governance in Gujarat, the Gujarat model of governance and development has been projected as the force-multiplier of Narendra Modi's decade and a quarter-long reign in the state. It is on the strength of this projection that he was catapulted onto the national stage in 2014 and re-elected thereafter. It is for the first time that a 'yogi' model, symbolized by the bulldozer has been introduced into Modi's Gujarat.

Interestingly, the manifestoes of the BJP, five years apart, present a noticeable study in contrasts. The 2017 manifesto spoke of interest-free loan to farmers, brick houses, water connection and toilets for the poor; Rs 1000 crore to make

youth self-sufficient, setting-up of district welfare boards, encouraging start-ups and free higher education for women, mohalla clinics, 252 public diagnostic centres and pharmacies selling medicines at affordable prices and metro trains in Surat and Vadodara.

The salient features of the 2022 manifesto include implementation of Uniform Civil Code, anti-radicalisation cells to identify sleeper cells, terrorists, law for seizure of property to compensate for damages during violent demonstrations and riots, Dwarka corridor to establish the largest spiritual centre in western India, Rs 1000 crores to renovate and extend temples, task force to examine Waqf property and fine for forcible conversion, Rs 500 crore to augment facilities in gaushalas and 1,000 additional veterinary clinics besides Rs 25,000 crores to expand irrigation network and create 20 lakh jobs in the next five years. This says it all.

# international

## of the day quote

Solving the Ukrainian crisis through political means is in the best interest of Europe and the common interest of all countries in Eurasia



XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

Public protests in Britain, Germany, France, Canada and Australia are bad and deserve strong responses, but riots in their target countries are good and deserve support!



NASSER KANAANI | IRAN, DIPLOMAT

I would believe in everything General Bajwa would tell me because our interests were the same. That we had to save the country



IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PAK PM

## SHORT TAKES

### UAE leader makes surprise visit to Qatar

Doha: The leader of the United Arab Emirates made a surprise visit Monday to Qatar as it hosts the World Cup — his first since leading a yearslong four-nation boycott of Doha over a political dispute that poisoned regional relations. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who also serves as the ruler of Abu Dhabi, made the trip at the invitation of Qatar's ruling emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. Photos later emerged of him smiling with Sheikh Tamim and even riding in a white Bentley Bentayga SUV with Qatar's ruling emir driving. "I congratulate my brother Tamim bin Hamad and the people of Qatar on hosting the FIFA World Cup and wish them continued success," Sheikh Mohammed said.

### Lanka to get help from India's NDDB

Colombo: Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe has appointed a committee to work with India's National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) to develop the island nation's dairy industry. The committee consisting of representatives of the public and private sectors will work with the multidisciplinary team of the NDDB to prepare a short, medium and long-term plan to increase local milk production to reduce the country's dependence on imported milk powder.

### Flight diverted after bomb scare on board

Prague: An EasyJet flight bound for the UK from Poland had to be diverted to the Czech Republic due to a report of a "possible bomb" on board, according to a media report. The low-cost British airline's flight EZY6276 was heading from Krakow to Bristol on Sunday evening but the pilot was forced to make an emergency landing so that law enforcement agencies could sweep the plane for explosives, CNN reported. Prague Airport officials confirmed in a tweet that the plane landed safely in the capital of the Czech Republic at 10:50 p.m. local time.

### Power outages in North Carolina

Carthage (US): Two power substations in a North Carolina county were damaged by gunfire in what is being investigated as a criminal act, causing damage that could take days to repair and leaving tens of thousands of people without electricity, authorities said. In response to ongoing outages, which began just after 7 p.m. Saturday across Moore County, officials announced a state of emergency that included a curfew from 9 p.m. Sunday to 5 a.m. Monday.



Inflation has increased globally. Many developed countries are at stake economically and facing trouble -- their reserve is declining. But, we can say that we have been able to keep Bangladesh in a stable condition

SHEIKH HASINA | BANGLADESH PM

## JIANG ZEMIN CREMATED

China's former president Jiang Zemin was cremated in Beijing Monday in the presence of the top leaders of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) including President Xi Jinping. He was the President and General Secretary of the CPC from 1989 to 2002



# Russia renews missile attacks on Ukraine

### AIR RAID ALERTS SOUNDED ACROSS THE COUNTRY, AND AUTHORITIES URGED PEOPLE TO TAKE SHELTER

AGENCIES

Kyiv, Dec 5: Ukraine said Russia had destroyed homes in the south and knocked out power in the north in a new round of missile attacks Monday as the West tried to limit Moscow's ability to finance its invasion by imposing a price cap on Russian seaborne oil.

It followed reported incidents at two air bases inside Russia overnight, both hundreds of miles from Ukraine.

Three people were killed when a fuel tanker exploded at the air base in Ryazan, 185 km (115 miles) south-east of Moscow, state news agency RIA said.

Roman Busargin, regional governor of Saratov, further to the southeast, acknowledged separate reports of a blast at a base housing bomber planes that are part of Russia's strategic nuclear forces.

The Engels base, about 730 km (455 miles) south of Moscow, is one of two strategic bomber bases hous-



ing Russia's air-delivered nuclear capability, comprising 60-70 planes.

Ukraine did not claim responsibility for either incident, or for earlier mysterious explosions. Weapons stores and fuel depots have been hit in Russian regions close to the border with Ukraine and at least seven warplanes destroyed

Mykhailo Podolyak wrote on Twitter Monday.

The Russian attacks later Monday killed two people in the Zaporizhzhia region where several houses were destroyed, the deputy head of the presidential office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, said in one of the first reports of the damage.

Buildings had been hit in the suburbs of the city of Zaporizhzhia and some Russian missiles had been shot down, a city official said.

The governor of the Kyiv capital region said its air defences were working there, and told residents to remain in shelters. An energy provider said power had been knocked out in the northern region of Sumy by the latest missile strikes.

Russian forces have increasingly targeted Ukrainian energy facilities in recent weeks as they have been forced to retreat on some battlefronts, causing major power outages as winter sets in.

## Putin drives across repaired bridge to Crimea

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin has driven a vehicle across a bridge to Crimea that was damaged by a truck bomb attack in October. Putin Monday took the wheel to drive across the bridge that links Russia's mainland with the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow annexed from Ukraine in 2014. He also spoke to workers and discussed the repairs of the Kerch Bridge with a senior government official responsible for the project. The October 8 truck bomb attack disrupted travel on one of the two automobile lanes of the bridge.



## At 6, Indian-origin boy is youngest S'porean to trek to Everest Base Camp



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Singapore, Dec 5: A six-year-old Indian-origin boy has become the youngest Singaporean to have trekked to the Everest Base Camp in Nepal at an altitude of 5,364 metres.

Om Madan Garg trekked for 10 days in October along with his parents, covering an altitude gain of around 2,500m from the village of Lukla at 2,860m to the base at 5,364m, according to the Singapore Book of Records.

Om, a Kindergarten 2 student from Canossaville Preschool, "managed well despite bad weather, flight cancellations, lack of creature comforts, hot days and the cold nights".

The Garg family arrived at Lukla, which is the starting point and also the gateway to the base camp trek on September 28, and reached the base October 7.

They were accompanied by a qualified guide and two porters. From Lukla, they trekked to Phakding and continued ahead to reach Namche Bazaar -- the trade centre in the Everest region.

From Namche Bazaar, the trail goes to Tengboche, and then finally the Everest Base Camp at 5,364m. "I threw my hat in the sky and caught it and we climbed on the top of Mount Everest Base Camp rock and we took a photo. "We flew the Singapore flag," he told Channel News Asia in an interview.

The pre-school student was awarded a certificate from the Singapore Book of Records.

## Top leaders of Nepal's ruling coalition meet to discuss govt formation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Dec 5: The top leaders of Nepal's five-party ruling coalition on Monday met at Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's official residence here to review the general elections and discuss the formation of a new government.

Nepali Congress chief Deuba, senior leader Ram Chandra Paudel, vice-president Purna Bahadur Khadka, CPN (Maoist Center) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', senior vice-chairman Narayan Kaji Shrestha, CPN (Unified Socialist) chair Madhav Nepal and Rastriya Janamorcha vice-chairperson Durga Paudel were among those who attended the meeting held at Baluwatar.

five-party coalition has won 90 House of Representatives (HoR) seats out of 165 under the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system. During the joint meeting, the

top leaders of the ruling alliance expressed the view that the election results have re-confirmed the need and relevance of the alliance.

In a joint statement issued after the meeting, the coalition leaders said that the results have pointed at the need for moving ahead forging mutual understanding and co-operation.

"It is necessary to continue the present coalition to face the challenges before the country," said the statement.

It was the first joint meeting of the ruling alliance after the recent elections. Senior NC leader and former deputy prime minister Prakash Man Singh told PTI that the meeting mainly dwelt on issues relating to power-sharing and formation of the government.

Prime Minister Deuba's Nepali Congress (NC) has emerged as the single largest party by winning 57 seats as the counting of votes under the direct system concluded Monday. The CPN (Maoist Centre) has won 18 seats, CPN (Unified Socialist) 10, Loktantrik Samajwadi Party (LSP) 4 and Rastriya Janamorcha one.

Elections to the House of Representatives (HoR) and seven provincial assemblies were held November 20 to end the prolonged political instability that has plagued the Himalayan nation.

## Landslide buries bus in Colombia; 27 dead

Bogota: At least 27 people died when a landslide buried a bus in Colombia's northwest Sunday, Colombia's President Gustavo Petro said. The landslide, caused by strong rains, hit the vehicle between the villages of Pueblo Rico and Santa Cecilia in Risaralda province, about 230km (140 miles) from the capital Bogota. "With sadness I



must announce that so far 27 people - including three minors - have lost their lives in the tragedy in Pueblo Rico, Risaralda," Petro posted on Twitter. "Solidarity with the families of the victims," he added, pledging support from the national government. Pueblo Rico Mayor Leonardo Fabio Siagama told reporters that bodies were being brought to a covered stadium in the town that is normally used for sport. Risaralda's governor, Victor Manuel Tamayo, said earlier that five people had been rescued alive from the bus. Officials had said at least 25 people were on the bus traveling between Cali, Colombia's third largest city, and Condoto, in Choco province.



A demonstrator speaks as people hold placards during a protest against China's Covid-19 restrictions, in front of the Chinese Embassy in Berlin, Germany

## Dominique Lapierre, author of 'City of Joy', passes away at 91

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Dec 5: Dominique Lapierre, the bestselling French author well-known in India for his ode to the city of Kolkata titled 'The City of Joy', has died aged 91, his wife has confirmed.

Lapierre, who was conferred the Padma Bhushan in the 2008 Republic Day honours, founded a humanitarian association with his wife entitled the City of Joy Foundation rescuing children suffering from leprosy from the slums of Kolkata. Dating back to 1981, it was supported by the royalties from his many literary successes. "At 91, he died of old age," the author's wife Dominique Conchon-Lapierre was quoted as saying by the French newspaper 'Var-Matin' Sunday.

The couple's foundation from the 1980s is believed to have rescued 9,000 children suffering from leprosy and other diseases due to malnutrition and poverty in India.

## NK fired artillery rounds near border, says S Korea

The North Korean firings were possibly a response to South Korean artillery exercises scheduled from Monday to Wednesday near the inland border town of Cheorwon

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, Dec 5: South Korea's military said North Korea fired about 130 suspected artillery rounds on Monday into the water near their western and eastern sea borders, the latest military action contributing to worsening relations between the neighbours.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the weapons, fired Monday afternoon from North Korea's western and eastern coastal areas, fell within the northern side of buffer zones created under a 2018 inter-Korean agreement to reduce military tensions. There were no immediate reports of shells falling inside South Korean terri-



torial waters.

South Korea's military said it communicated a verbal warning to North Korea over the firings and urged it to abide by the agreement. The South Korean and US militaries were closely monitoring North Korea's military activities while strengthening their readiness to respond to any "potential contingency", the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

The firings also came days after Washington, Seoul and Tokyo announced largely symbolic sanctions on some North Korean people and institutions accused of illicit activities to finance the

country's nuclear weapons and missile programmes.

It was the first time North Korea has fired weapons into the maritime buffer zones since Nov 3, when around 80 artillery shells landed within North Korea's side of the zone off its eastern coast.

North Korea has fired dozens of missiles as it increased its weapons demonstrations to a record pace this year, including multiple tests of an intercontinental ballistic missile system potentially capable of reaching deep into the US mainland, and an intermediate-range missile launched over Japan.

# 'Covid man-made virus leaked from Chinese lab'

### ANDREW HUFF, WHO WORKED FOR A NEW YORK-BASED NON-PROFIT THAT STUDIED VIRUSES, MADE THE REVELATIONS IN HIS BOOK 'THE TRUTH ABOUT WUHAN'

A US-based scientist who worked at a research lab in China's Wuhan, the city where virus first emerged, has said that the Covid was a "man-made virus" that leaked from the facility.

Covid was leaked from Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), a state-run and funded research facility, two years ago, 'New York Post' reported, quoting US-based researcher

Andrew Huff's statement in the British newspaper 'The Sun'.

In his latest book, "The Truth About Wuhan," epidemiologist Andrew Huff has claimed that the pandemic was caused by the US government's funding of coronaviruses in China.

According to the 'New York Post' report, Andrew Huff is the former vice president of the EcoHealth Alliance, a non-profit organisation



based in New York that studies infectious diseases.

Andrew Huff claimed that China's gain-of-function experi-

ments were conducted with inadequate security, resulting in a leak at the Wuhan lab, according to 'New York Post'.

"Foreign laboratories did not have the adequate control measures in place for ensuring proper biosafety, biosecurity, and risk management, ultimately resulting in the lab leak at the Wuhan Institute of Virology," Andrew Huff, said in his book.

"China knew from day one that this was a genetically engineered agent," Andrew Huff wrote adding that, "The US government is to blame for the transfer of dangerous biotechnology to the Chinese. "I was terrified by what I saw," he told 'The Sun', as per 'New York Post'. "We were just handing them bioweapon technology," he said.

Andrew Huff, who worked for a New York-based non-profit

that studied viruses, made the revelations in his book 'The truth about Wuhan'.

"Foreign laboratories did not have the adequate control measures in place for ensuring proper biosafety, biosecurity, and risk management, ultimately resulting in the lab leak at the Wuhan Institute of Virology," Huff said in his book, which was quoted exclusively by 'The Sun'.

Huff claimed in his book that the 'pandemic was the result of the US government's funding of coronaviruses in China'. He added that China's 'gain-of-function experiments' were done with minimal security leading to a leak at the Wuhan lab.

AGENCIES

## of the day quote

**Growing our network is an essential part of Air India's Vihaan.AI transformational journey and we remain committed to increasing connectivity and frequency of flights both domestically and internationally**

**CAMPBELL WILSON** | MD AND CEO, AIR INDIA

**We are evaluating a price increase basis some of the residual effect that is left as far as the commodity prices are concerned. Battery prices and new regulations have also impacted the EV side**

**SHAILESH CHANDRA** | TATA MOTORS MD - PV & EV

**We will work to ensure that**

**interrelationship between the MSME sector and other important pillars of the Indian economy are further strengthened as India grows**

**BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA** | MINISTER OF STATE FOR MSME

## SHORT TAKES

### Discoms' losses down to 17 pc

**New Delhi:** Aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses of power distribution utilities declined to 17 per cent in 2021-22 from 22 per cent in the previous year. Reduction in AT&C losses improves finances of utilities (discoms), enabling them to better maintain the system and buy power as per requirement and benefit the consumers, a power ministry statement said. The AT&C loss and ACS-ARR (Average Cost of Supply-Average Realizable Revenue) gap are key indicators of discoms' performance. Ministry of Power has taken a number of measures to improve the performance of utilities, the statement said. Preliminary analysis of data for 2021-22 of 56 discoms contributing to more than 96 per cent of input energy, indicates that AT&C losses have declined significantly to 17 per cent in FY2022 from 22 per cent in FY2021, it stated.

### Meta to jointly invest with Airtel

**New Delhi:** Social media giant Meta Platforms and Bharti Airtel Monday announced a collaboration to jointly invest in telecom infrastructure to cater to the rising demand of high speed data and digital services in India. The announcement comes on the back of telecom operators' demand to share revenue with service providers to build networks. "Airtel and Meta will jointly invest in global connectivity infrastructure and CPaaS (communications platform as a service) based new-age digital solutions to support the emerging requirements of customers and enterprises in India," the statement said. As part of the collaboration, Airtel will partner with Meta and STC (Saudi Telecom Company), to extend the world's longest subsea cable system, 2Africa Pearls, to India.

### Power volume trade on IEX up 9%

**New Delhi:** The total electricity trade volume on Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) has registered a 9 per cent year-on-year growth to 7,392 million units (MU) in November 2022. The overall consumption of energy has grown 13 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) to 113 billion units (BU) during November 2022, IEX said in a report on Monday. "The total electricity volume traded in November was 7,392 MU, an increase of 9 per cent on YoY," it said.



**A series of tactical measures and digital initiatives undertaken over the past few years played a crucial role in our journey to the ₹5 lakh-crore mark under personal banking advances**

**DINESH KUMAR KHARA** | SBI CHAIRMAN

### G7 PRICE CAP ON RUSSIAN OIL KICKS IN

The Group of Seven price cap on Russian seaborne oil came into force Monday as the West tries to limit Moscow's ability to finance its war in Ukraine, but Russia has said it will not abide by the measure even if it has to cut production.



# Services sector growth hits 3-month high

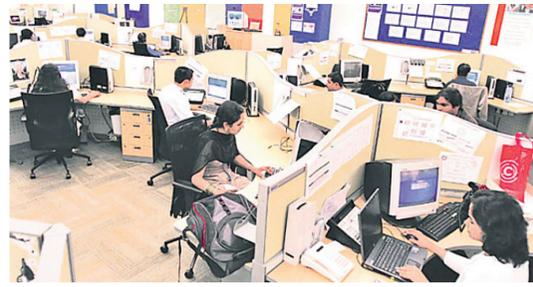
*The expansion was linked to demand strength, successful marketing and a sustained upturn in sales*

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 5:** India's services sector output growth touched a three-month high in November as business inflows rose markedly amid accommodative demand conditions, a monthly survey said Monday.

The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Services PMI Business Activity Index rose from 55.1 in October to 56.4 in November, indicating a sharp increase in output that was the quickest in three months even amid higher operating expenses.

Survey participants linked the latest expansion to demand strength, successful marketing and a sustained upturn in sales. For the 16th straight month, the headline figure was above the neutral 50 threshold. In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.



"Indian service providers continued to reap the benefits of strong domestic demand, with PMI data for the penultimate month of 2022 showing faster increase in new business and output," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

On the jobs front, sustained expansions in new work intakes and demand buoyancy continued to promote job creation in the service economy. "Employment rose at a solid pace that was among the quickest in over three years," the survey said.

On the prices front, services companies across India reported

higher operating expenses. In addition to greater transportation costs, firms reported higher prices for energy, food, packaging, paper, plastic and electrical products.

"Whilst on the whole the latest results are encouraging, the trend for inflation is somewhat concerning. Strong demand for services again boosted firms' pricing power, with more companies transferring cost increase to their customers," Lima said.

The overall upturn in input costs was sharp and little-changed from October, while output charges rose at the quickest rate in over five years, Lima said.

"Evidence of stubborn inflation

may prompt further hikes to the policy rate at a time when global economic challenges could negatively impact India's growth," Lima added.

The RBI will come out with its next bi-monthly policy review December 7 at the end of a three-day meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) beginning Monday. According to experts, the Reserve Bank may opt for a lower rate increase of 25-35 basis points in lending rates amid retail inflation showing signs of moderation and the need to push growth.

Meanwhile, the S&P Global India Composite PMI Output Index - which measures combined services and manufacturing output - rose from 55.5 in October to 56.7 in November. "Private sector activity in India increased for the 16th consecutive month in November, and at the fastest pace since August," the survey said.

The S&P Global India Services PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 service sector companies. The panel is stratified by detailed sector and company workforce size, based on contributions to GDP. Data collection began in December 2005.

# MPC deliberations begin; moderate rate hike expected

*RBI has hiked key benchmark lending rate by 50 bps thrice since June over and above an off-cycle 40 bps increase in repo in May*



AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Dec 5:** The Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel Monday started brainstorming for the next round of monetary policy amid expectations of a moderate interest rate hike of 25-35 basis points as inflation has started showing signs of easing and economic growth tapering.

The RBI has hiked key benchmark lending rate by 50 basis points (bps) thrice since June over and above an off-cycle 40 bps increase in repo in May.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das would be announcing the bi-monthly monetary policy Wednesday (December 7) the conclusion of the three-day of Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meet.

India's largest lender State Bank of India in a research report authored by Group Chief Economic Adviser Soumya Kanti Ghosh Monday said: "We expect the RBI to hike rates in smaller magnitude in December policy attuned to emerging market central banks and the overall rate setting tone. A 35-bps repo rate hike looks imminent. We believe at 6.25 per cent, it could be the terminal rate for now."

The current policy repo rate is 5.9 per cent.

Several other experts too expect the rate hike to be in the range of 25-35 basis points Wednesday. September 30, the RBI had hiked

the key policy rate (repo) by 50 basis points with an aim to check inflation.

It was the third successive hike of 50 bps. Before the September hike, the central bank had raised the repo rate by 50 bps each in June and August, and 40 bps in May.

Consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation, which the RBI mainly factors in while arriving at its monetary policy, is showing signs of moderation but still remains above the central bank's upper tolerance level of 6 per cent since January this year.

The inflation dropped to 6.77 per cent in October from 7.41 per cent in the preceding month, mainly due to easing prices in the food basket, though it remained above Reserve Bank's comfort level for the 10th month in a row.

The GDP growth in the second quarter of the fiscal slowed to 6.3 per cent as against a growth of 13.5 per cent in the preceding three months.

The RBI has been tasked by the government to ensure the retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent. However, it failed to keep the inflation rate below six per cent for three consecutive quarters beginning January 2022. So it had to submit a report to the government detailing reasons for the failure to contain prices and remedial steps to rein in the price rise.

## Adani now NDTV's biggest shareholder post open offer

REUTERS

**Bangalore, Dec 5:** Billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate Monday raised its stake in New Delhi Television Ltd to more than 37% through an open offer, making it the biggest shareholder of one of the country's most popular news networks.

Although Adani's group was looking to take another 26% stake in NDTV, the open offer attracted bids for just 5.3 million shares, translating to an 8.3% interest in the company. Last week, Adani acquired a stake of about 29.2% in NDTV by buying a company backed by the television network's founders, Radhika Roy and Pranjoy Roy, who have a 32.3% stake in NDTV.

The ports-to-energy conglomerate's takeover of NDTV has raised fears among some journalists that one of the country's last bastions of free media is under threat.

Soon after Adani's acquisition of NDTV's founder entity, Ravish Kumar, a senior executive editor of NDTV, resigned.

Adani, however, has said that he sees the takeover of NDTV as a "responsibility" rather than a business opportunity, adding that he has invited Pranjoy Roy to remain as chair when the acquisition is completed. In the open offer that concluded Monday, corporate investors tendered 3.9 million shares, while retail investors offered to sell over 706,000 shares. It was not immediately clear who the participants were. Adani had offered to buy NDTV shares at ₹294 in the open offer, which represents a 25% discount to Monday's closing price.

While a fully successful open offer would have meant Adani would have owned a majority stake in NDTV, the 37.4% stake still makes him the single largest shareholder, said Shirram Subramanian, managing director of Bangalore-based InGovern Research Services, a corporate governance advisory firm.

"With the resulting shareholding, they (Adani) can still seek control of the board by reconstituting it. They can propose their own set of directors and removal of current directors," Subramanian said.

# Jyote Nexa hosts 'Off Rooding experience with Grand Vitara'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** Jyote Nexa played host to the 'Off Rooding experience with Grand Vitara' for prospective customers and off-roading enthusiasts Monday and the event will continue till December 7.

This off-roading experience is executed on a custom-built off-roading track, designed keeping in mind the key attributes and features of the Grand Vitara. Customers enjoy driving on specially made off-road track and maneuver obstacles such as hill climbing, hill descent, acceleration, braking, rumpblers, axle twister, articulation and tilt angle.

This kind of off-roading experience gives the enthusiasts a chance to drive the Grand Vitara under trained supervision to understand the prowess of its ad-



vanced technology.

"There is no better way to improve a customer's understanding of the Grand Vitara than by getting them to experience their true prowess in this special set-up. An off-roading experience such as this gives us an opportunity to showcase the extreme capabilities and dynamics of the Grand Vitara which

is designed and engineered to perform even in the most challenging terrains. We at Jyote NEXA are delighted with the success of the Grand Vitara and I would like to thank our patrons and all off-roading enthusiasts for participating in this drive experience programme," said Devjyoti Patnaik, Managing Director, Jyote Group.

## ₹ falls 52 paise to close at 81.85 against US dollar

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Dec 5:** The rupee pared its initial gains to settle down by 52 paise at a nearly two-week low of 81.85 against the US dollar Monday weighed down by weak domestic markets, forex outflows and a rise in crude oil prices.

Forex traders said a weak dollar in the overseas market cushioned the downside for the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 81.26, but pared the gains and ended at 81.85, down 52 paise which is its biggest single-day loss in over six weeks.

During the day, the local unit witnessed an intraday high of 81.25 and a low of 81.87. Friday, the rupee had settled down by 7 paise at 81.33 against the dollar.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell

0.10 per cent to 104.44. Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures rose 1.82 per cent to USD 87.13 per barrel.

According to Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, the Indian rupee depreciated on Monday on weak domestic markets and higher crude oil prices. However, the weak US dollar cushioned the downside.

The US dollar declined on optimism over reopening in China. However, upbeat job market data cushioned the downside. The US non-farm payrolls added 2.63 lakh jobs in November, beating estimates of 2 lakh jobs, Choudhary said.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on weak domestic markets and recovery in crude oil. Any fresh outflows by FIIs may also weigh on rupee. However, a weak dollar may support the rupee," Choudhary said.

# Sensex slips on profit taking

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Dec 5:** Benchmark BSE Sensex fell for the second straight session Monday in a volatile trade due to profit taking in oil, IT and auto stocks ahead of the RBI policy announcement December 7.

The 30-share BSE benchmark dipped 33.9 points or 0.05 per cent to settle at 62,834.60. During the day, it fell 360.62 points or 0.57 per cent to 62,507.88.

The broader NSE Nifty eked out marginal gains and ended 4.95 points or 0.03 per cent higher at 18,701.05. Among the Sensex pack, Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Dr Reddy's, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finserv and Mahindra & Mahindra were the major laggards.

Tata Steel, NTPC, State Bank of India, IndusInd Bank and Power Grid were among the winners.

"Market continued its profit-taking trend from the record high as they exercised prudence ahead of the RBI policy announcement



December 7. Partially, it was also due to increase in crude prices due to OPEC decision not to cut output target, and ease in China's Covid policy," said Vinod Nair, Head of

Research at Geojit Financial Services. In the broader market, BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.25 per cent and midcap index advanced 0.10 per cent.

## AHEAD OF BUDGET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 5:** Ahead of the Union Budget 2023-24, 51 eminent economists have written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and demanded an increase in social security pensions and an adequate provision for maternity benefits.

The signatory of the letter includes Jean Drèze (honorary professor, Delhi School of Economics), Pranab Bardhan (professor emeritus of economics, University of California Berkeley), R Nagaraj (professor of economics, IGIDR, Mumbai),

Reetika Khara (professor of economics, IIT, Delhi), and Sukhadeo Thorat (professor emeritus, JNU), among others.

"This is a follow-up to our letters of 20 December 2017 and 21 December 2018 (addressed to your predecessor, Shri Arun Jaitley), where we tried to flag two priorities for the next Union Budget: an increase in social security pensions, and adequate provision for maternity benefits."

"Since both proposals were ignored, we are writing again, well in advance of the next Budget, with the same recommendations," the letter said.



According to the letter, the central government's contribution to old-age pensions under the National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS) has stagnated at just ₹200 per month since 2006.

"This is unfair. It is also a missed opportunity," it said. The letter said the central government's contribution should be immediately raised to ₹500 (preferably more) at the very least.

"This requires an additional allocation of ₹7,560 crore or so, based on the current NOAPS coverage (2.1 crore pensioners)," the letter said, adding that similarly, widow pensions should be

raised from ₹300 per month to ₹500 at the very least.

As per the letter, this would cost just another ₹1,560 crore.

The signatory economists also demanded that the Union Budget 2023-24 should provide for full-fledged implementation of maternity entitlements as per NFSA norms. "This requires at least ₹8,000 crore. Along with this, the illegal restriction of maternity benefits to one child per woman should be removed," they said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the 2023-24 Budget in Parliament February 1, 2023.

# England sail through

# Livakovic keeps Croatia alive at WC, props team into last 8

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Al Khor (Qatar), Dec 5: England captain Harry Kane scored his first goal of this year's World Cup, helping his team beat Senegal 3-0 Sunday and setting up a match against France in the quarterfinals.



Harry Kane rejoices after scoring against Senegal

Kane scored for the 52nd time for his country to move within one of Wayne Rooney's England record. He also overtook Gary Lineker as his country's leading scorer in major tournaments with 11 goals. "The ball just sat up nicely and the connection was perfect," Kane said. "I had one just before that I should have done better with so it was nice to see that one go in."

Jordan Henderson and Bukayo Saka also scored at Al Bayt Stadium while Jude Bellingham played a key role in the opening two goals and Phil Foden had two assists.

England, which reached the semifinals at the last World Cup in Russia, will face defending champion France at Al Bayt Stadium Saturday.

"We enjoyed this one, but of course our focus turns straight to that," Kane said. "It's going to be a really tough game. They're reigning champions but it'll be a good battle."

The must-see contest will feature the tournament's leading scorer in Kylian Mbappe and one of its standout players in Bellingham. Mbappe scored twice against Poland in a 3-1 victory to take his total at this year's World Cup to five goals.

Bellingham only has the one he scored in England's opening 6-2 rout of Iran, but his game is about so much more. "Goodness me, @BellinghamJude is unbelievably good. He's the leader in this team. His parents must be so proud. Love him," Lineker wrote on Twitter after the Borussia Dortmund midfielder crossed for Henderson to score the first goal in the 38th minute.

Up to then, Senegal had been creating the more dangerous chances. Ismaila Sarr sent a shot over from close range and then England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford had to throw out an arm to block another effort

from Boulaye Dia.

All that without the team's player, Sadio Mane, who was ruled out of the tournament with an injury before play even started in Qatar.

Everything changed once Bellingham seized control, charging into the box before setting up Henderson. In first-half stoppage time, he went on another unstoppable run, carrying the ball from just outside England's box and deep into Senegal's half. Foden

then played in Kane to double England's lead.

With the 1966 World Cup champions well on their way to a showdown with France, Saka scored in the 57th minute by converting Foden's cross.

#### STAYING POWER

The match was played to the beat of the Senegal fans' drums, which provided the soundtrack from start to finish. England's fans struggled to be heard over the noise

— even when the result was beyond doubt.

#### STERLING WAIT

Raheem Sterling was ruled out before the match started because of a "family matter." England coach Gareth Southgate did not offer any indication if or when the forward would be able to return.

#### RECORD SET

Bellingham became the youngest England player to provide an assist at a World Cup.



SPLENDID SHOW: Ecstatic Croatian players rushes to goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic after winning the penalty shootout against Japan in their round of 16 match, Monday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Al Wakrah, Dec 5: Croatia is going deep at another World Cup, and the team is taking the long route once again. Goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic saved three penalty kicks Monday in Croatia's 3-1 win over Japan in a shootout, securing a return to the quarterfinals for the runner-up in the 2018 tournament.

On their run to the final four years ago, Croatia needed extra time in each round in the knockout stage — and twice came through a penalty shootout. This time, Mario Pasalic converted the clinching penalty for Croatia after the teams were tied at 1-1 after extra time.

Livakovic saved penalties from Takumi Minamoto, Kaoru Mitomo and Maya Yoshida, and it was the Dinamo Zagreb goalkeeper who took most of the acclaim from the jubilant Croatia team after the shootout. Croatia, who also reached the semifinals in 1998, will play ei-

ther Brazil or South Korea next.

Japan had been looking to reach the quarterfinals for the first time but fell short again, just like in 2002, 2010 and 2018. The Asian team lost to Paraguay in a penalty shootout in the round of 16 in 2010.

In an even 90 minutes of regulation play, Daizen Maeda put Japan ahead in the 43rd minute by sweeping in a close-range finish. Ivan Perisic equalized by meeting Dejan Lovren's cross from the right with

a header into the bottom corner from near the penalty spot in the 57th.

The result guarantees at least one more World Cup game for 37-year-old Croatia captain Luka Modric, one of the best midfielders of his generation.

Since 1998, all of Croatia's knockout matches at a World Cup or European Championship have gone to extra time except for the 2018 World Cup final loss to France.



Japanese players looks dejected after their loss to Croatia, Monday

# Yuvi backs Gill to open at 2023 ODI World Cup



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gururam, Dec 5: The highly rated Shubman Gill is a strong contender to open for India in the 2023 ODI World Cup at home, feels World Cup winner Yuvraj Singh. Gill is not a part of the ODI series in Bangladesh but was part of the second string India squad in New Zealand.

"I think Shubman is doing very well and is performing consistently. I believe he is a strong contender to open for India in the 2023 World Cup," Yuvraj replied to a PTI query on the sidelines of the inauguration of the T20 World Cup for the visually impaired.

Yuvraj, who retired from all forms of the game in 2019, has been mentor to some of the young cricketers from his state including Shubman.

During the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, Shubman stayed with Yuvraj and trained under him alongside current Punjab skipper and Sunrisers Hyderabad all rounder

Abhishek Sharma. "Shubman is very hardworking and is doing all the right things. I believe he is destined for greatness in the next 10 years," Yuvraj said.

Yuvraj declined to comment on India's show in the T20 World Cup or the sacking of national selectors. On a different note, Yuvraj said that he is open to work as a sports/cricket administrator.

"I can't say what will happen in future but if I can help in growth of sports in the country, I wouldn't mind. But it is not just cricket but I will like to help in growth of sports in this country," said the hero of 2007 and 2011 global triumphs.

# Kaur bets on WPL for smooth transition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 5: Stars such as Harmanpreet Kaur and Smriti Mandhana feel the women's IPL could help newcomers in making a seamless transition from domestic to international cricket.

The inaugural women's IPL is set to be held in March and some of the country's top players, from national team captain Harmanpreet to senior opener Mandhana, are looking forward to the event that will also see participation from overseas stars.

Speaking on Star Sports show 'Follow the Blues', Harmanpreet said, "The IPL will be a great platform for players that are really good, but you know for them, international cricket is still something that they cannot change their approach and mind-set overnight."

"But in the IPL, when they get a chance to play against overseas players, it will give them a platform, they can play well, they can understand what is international cricket."

"So, when they are playing for the Indian team, they will not face any extra pressure, because right now, the players that are selected from the domestic teams, sometimes I can see that they are blank, they are not able to understand how to change their game plan."

"To cut that gap, the tournament will play a major role. So, the coming years, with the girls who play in the IPL, we will definitely see some major changes in their performances."

The Women in Blue have made a lot of progress in the past year, but have not been able to win championships. The team made it to the semi-finals of the ODI World Cup, beat Sri Lanka in a T20I and ODI bilateral series, won a Commonwealth Games silver medal and bagged a historic 3-0 win in England. The, they won the Asia Cup for a record seventh time.

Talking further about the IPL, Harmanpreet said, "The IPL is a

huge step forward for women's cricket, because before this, we have witnessed the Australia board, England board, they have looked after the WBBL and The Hundred.

"We have discussed that there's a big gap between domestic and international cricket, because even if you play well in domestic cricket and then suddenly play international games, you're not able to understand what to do and how to do it."

Mandhana compared the women's IPL with leagues such as The Hundred and the WBBL and spoke about how they have helped their domestic players.

"All of women's cricket, I won't say the Indian team or the domestic set-up. We keep talking about

how it will increase the bench strength.

"But actually, the fact is that it's going to help the domestic girls massively because that sort of experience in playing in leagues like this will get a lot of things sorted for women's cricket," Mandhana said.

"Grassroot wise and we have seen how the Big Bash and The Hundred have helped Australia and England respectively in their domestic set-up as well as other things. So, I'm actually really happy, the Indian team will benefit a lot from the women's IPL, but it's also going to benefit a lot of domestic girls which I'm looking forward to."

Batter Jemimah Rodrigues said the women's IPL would take the game to the next level in India. "The women's IPL is going to change a lot of things for women's cricket in India. I think this is like the best platform for us now that we as an Indian team have been doing so well in all the major events like the World Cup, the Commonwealth.

"This is just the right time for it to happen and I'm sure that we are going to get so much more talent that's going to come out from here. I am very sure that women's cricket in India is all set to go to the next level after the women's IPL," Rodrigues said.

# NEYMAR LOOKALIKE CAUSES DOUBLE TAKES AT WC

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Doha, Dec 5: While one Neymar was about to make his return at the World Cup, another was going home after a short — and tumultuous — stint in Qatar.

The real Neymar has recovered from an ankle injury and was expected to play Monday against South Korea in the round of 16, while his lookalike was leaving the country after causing some havoc with his public appearances.

Eigon Oliveira, who calls himself "Ney's Lookalike," was busy during his time in Qatar, where he attracted a lot of attention making appearances impersonating the Neymar.

ence between the lookalike and the real Neymar when Oliveira put on Brazil's training uniform and wore similar sunglasses, hat and beard as the Brazil star.

He also appears to have the same tattoos as Neymar, and was usually accompanied by a friend who dressed as a member of staff of the Brazilian football confederation. Some of his friends also often acted as his security guards.

A Puma store in Doha had to temporarily close when Oliveira visited and attracted hundreds of fans. He had to be taken to the back of the store until things calmed down.

There was also trouble when the lookalike made it to one of Brazil's World Cup games, as fans clamored



Neymar's lookalike Eigon Oliveira was surrounded by fans while appearing during one of Brazil's matches

to get autographs and a photo. Some of the Brazil players on the field

before the match looked up to see what was going on. Security even-

tually escorted the lookalike away.

Before one of the matches, Oliveira managed to make it all the way to the field as some security guards apparently thought he actually was Neymar.

Being Neymar's double has become a job for Oliveira. He has traveled around the world imitating the player, including to France, where Neymar plays for PSG. He makes money out of his appearances and by acting as the player's double in commercial shoots.

He told Brazilian media it all started while he worked as a waiter at a restaurant in Brazil and people started to talk about his resemblance with the real Neymar, which led to him getting hired by an agency.

He has met Neymar a few times during some of his commercial shoots, and said that the player was fine with him acting as his lookalike. "I never imagined this moment," he said in a recent post.

"I'm blessed to have gotten this far with this job. I'm very thankful and I'm a fan of this guy who welcomes what I do with open arms. He changed my life in a gigantic way, giving me millions of possibilities and opportunities, and allowing me to go places and meet people that I would have never imagined going or meeting."

Oliveira said he plans to be back in Qatar for the semifinals if Brazil advances, so there could be more chaos caused by the Neymar lookalike before the World Cup is over.

# England defeat Pakistan in 1st Test by 74 runs

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rawalpindi, Dec 5: England showcased their masterful approach of aggression in Test cricket with a superb 74-run victory over Pakistan in the final session of the first Test Sunday.

Needing 263 runs with eight wickets in hand on Day 5, Pakistan was dismissed for 268 against the reverse swing of James Anderson (4/36) and Ollie Robinson (4/50) — losing its last five wickets for just 11 runs after tea.

Jack Leach wrapped up the game by having the last wicket of Naseem Shah, trapped leg before wicket, after England delayed the second new ball for well over an hour with Anderson and Robinson doing the damage with the old ball.



Pakistan also succumbed to the relentless attacking field settings of England captain Ben Stokes throughout the final day before Robinson and veteran Anderson sliced through the lower order with the host needing 86 runs.

The win on a docile Pindi Cricket Stadium wicket firmly underlined England's fearless aggressive approach under new coach Brendon McCullum, which saw them win six of the seven test matches back home this summer.

Robinson exposed Pakistan's long tail soon after tea when he had Agha Salman (30) trapped leg before and then Azhar Ali (40) fell in the fielding trap when Joe Root grabbed a low two-handed catch in the leg slip.

Robinson had earlier ended the nearly four-hour defiance of one of the four Pakistan debutants — Saud Shakeel — in the second session to a brilliant diving catch by Keaton Jennings as the lefthander top-scored with 76.

Anderson broke the 87-run stand by having Mohammad Rizwan caught behind off a delivery which moved a shade outside the off stump and took the outside edge of the bat.