



## DROP-DEAD GORGEOUS

Actor Janhvi Kapoor sets the temperature soaring with her series of back-to-back beach pictures from picturesque Maldives

LEISURE P2



## ORION CAPSULE RETURNS

NASA's Orion capsule barreled through Earth's atmosphere and splashed down in the Pacific ocean Sunday

INTERNATIONAL P10



## FRANCE MARCH ON

Defending champions France seal their last 4 berth in the World Cup with a hard-fought win over England

SPORTS P12

## 22% of Gujarat MLAs have criminal cases

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 11: About 22 per cent of winning candidates or 40 out of the total 182 in the recently concluded Gujarat Assembly elections have criminal cases against their names, according to an analysis conducted by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

Cricketer Ravindra Jadeja's wife Rivaba Jadeja is among the top three candidates who have shown high income as per their ITR declarations. Out of the 40 winning candidates with criminal cases lodged against them, 16 per cent or 29 candidates have serious criminal cases pending against their names.

Three victorious candidates have cases of attempt to murder registered against their names under IPC Section 307, according to ADR's analysis. Four winning candidates have cases related to crimes against women registered against them. One among these has a rape case registered against him under IPC Section 376. Out of the total 40 winning candidates with criminal cases against them, 26 belong to the BJP, nine from the Congress and two from AAP. Two Independents and one candidate of the Samajwadi Party are also in the list.

Of these, 20 candidates with serious criminal cases lodged against them belong to the BJP, four are from the Congress, two from the AAP, two are Independents and one is from the SP.

As per ADR's analysis, 83 per cent or 151 out of 182 winning candidates are billionaires. Of this, 132 belong to BJP, 14 from Congress, three Independents and one each from AAP and SP. These candidates have declared assets worth over ₹1 crore each, the report said.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I booked a ticket to Shimla on journalist quota; I got a ticket for Ahmedabad

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	31.6°C	30.4°C
MIN	18.8°C	18.0°C
Humidity	60%	77%
Rainfall	0.0mm	0.0mm
Forecast	Clear sky mainly	



BACK TO WORK: Fishermen gear up to venture into the sea with fibre boats after cyclone Mandous crossed the Tamil Nadu coast, at Kasimedu fishing harbour, in Chennai, Sunday.

PTI PHOTO

## Toddler flung out of cab, dies; mother molested

AGENCIES

Palghar, Dec 11: A ten-month-old girl died after she was flung from a cab on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway in Maharashtra's Palghar district while her mother was allegedly molested. The driver of the cab was arrested, police said Sunday.

The woman and her child had boarded the van, which operates from Chinchoti to Vapi, Saturday to go to Mastan Naka in Manor, a police official said.

The woman was allegedly molested by the cab driver and some co-passengers while she and her child were returning from Palghar to Poshere in Wada tehsil.

It is being probed whether she jumped off the vehicle with the child or whether she was pushed off and the infant flung out by the accused, the police official said.

"The child was declared dead on arrival at a nearby hospital, while the woman is undergoing treatment for injuries. The driver was arrested during the day," he said.

The driver has been charged under sections 302 (murder) and 354 (assault or criminal force to outrage modesty of woman) of Indian Penal Code, he said.

## Cybercrimes surge in state

From obscene video calls to UPI frauds, cybercriminals have a field day, while cops grope in the dark

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: Even though about 6,000 villages in Odisha don't have mobile connectivity, cybercrimes go on increasing in the state each year.

According to official data, 1,475 cybercrime cases were registered in 2019, which increased to 1,931 cases in 2020 and further to 2,037 last year.

Similarly, the fraud amount has also increased during the past three years. Cyber criminals swindled ₹16.18 crore from people in Odisha in 2019. This increased to ₹35.07 crore in 2020 and further to ₹40.39 crore in 2021.

It means the amount stolen by cyber crooks increased by nearly 150 per cent during a span of just three years.

In total, 5,443 cybercrime cases were registered and ₹91.65 crore cheated from cyber victims in Odisha in the past three years.

However, recovery has remained poor as the Odisha police man-



Year	Cybercrime cases	Amount defrauded
2019	1,475	₹16.18 crore
2020	1,931	₹35.07 crore
2021	2,037	₹40.39 crore

aged to recover only ₹1.37 crore against the cheated amount of ₹91.65 crore.

The state has been frequently witnessing cybercrimes in recent years. There has also been a rise in such frauds in the state capital Bhubaneswar over the last two years. About 146 cybercrimes were reported from Bhubaneswar urban police district in 2021 as compared to 108 in 2020.

In the maximum number of cases, unidentified cyber crooks took away money from the victims by offering them high returns through different schemes, obscene video calls, during online trading,

installation of mobile towers and UPI transactions. In some cases, the victims lost money after clicking on malicious links sent by the cyber criminals to their phones.

In March this year, a case was registered with cyber police that scammers allegedly duped a Keonjhar businessman of ₹2.35 crore by luring him with the promise of high returns for a life insurance policy he had bought.

In another tragic case, a bank manager from Subarnapur district allegedly committed suicide after being blackmailed by a cyber gang from Rajasthan.

One of the gang members made

a nude video call to the bank official and later threatened to implicate him in a pornography case. They extorted ₹26 lakh in 40 transactions from the bank official who jumped off a bridge into Ang river August 10 after being unable to meet the demands of the gang.

A cyber expert said that one hour from the deduction of money to cyber fraud is treated as a golden hour, during which the victim has to inform the authorities to get back the lost money.

To curb the rising cybercrimes, a cyber crime cell has been opened in the offices of superintendents of police while cyber police stations have been opened at 14 places.

Training is being given to police officers who are investigating cybercrimes, MoS for Home, Tusharkanti Behera stated in a recent reply in the Assembly.

A cyber forensic laboratory has been functioning in Bhubaneswar since November 22, 2017. People can lodge complaints online through the national cybercrime reporting portal www.cybercrime.gov.in.

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) on investigation of objectionable viral picture and videos in social media and seizure of digital devices have been issued to the SPs, Behera said.

## 17-yr-old Army aspirant drowns in Mahanadi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Manguli/Jagatpur, Dec 11: A 17-year-old youth, who was aspiring for selection in the Indian Army, drowned while learning to swim in the Mahanadi under Jagatpur police limits in Cuttack district, Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Sohail Khan, son of Muhammad Dawood Khan, of Jagatpur area, said inspector in-charge (IIC) Rabindra Nath Meher.

About 50 students of the physical training institute, including Sohail, had come to learn swimming in the Mahanadi when the mishap took place

Meher added that the Class XII Arts student had been practising physical activities like swimming at Nimpur Athletics in the locality for four months now.

According to sources, as many as 50 students, including Sohail, had come to learn swimming in the Mahanadi Sunday when the mishap took place.

"As Sohail had already learnt the basics of swimming last month,



A file pic of Sohail Khan

coach Bikash Swain asked him to train others in the river. Accordingly, Sohail took a few co-learners with him into the river. While others managed to return, Sohail drowned," Seikh Wasim, a co-learner, said, adding that they were being given plastic bottles instead of lifejackets during the training sessions.

On being informed, Fire Services personnel reached the spot and recovered a lifeless Sohail.

"The body has been sent to the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack for autopsy. The coach has been detained," the Jagatpur IIC said.

## Harbinger of prosperity: Blackbuck numbers double in Ganjam

LIKE THE BISHNOI COMMUNITY IN RAJASTHAN, THE PEOPLE OF GANJAM DISTRICT HAVE BEEN PROTECTING THE SPECIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, Dec 11: The blackbuck, the most elegant species of the antelope family, is on the list of endangered animals but in Ganjam district its number has almost doubled in the last six years.

There has not been a single case of blackbuck poaching for the past few years thanks to the protection given to them by locals at Balipadara-Bhetnani area near Aska, said Dilip Kumar Rout, DFO of Ghumsar South.

Like the Bishnoi community in Rajasthan, the people of Ganjam district have been protecting the blackbucks as they consider that seeing one is harbinger of prosperity for them, former Wildlife Warden of Odisha SS Srivastav said.

The number of blackbucks, locally called 'Krushnasara Mruga' or 'Kala Bahutia', has increased from 3,806 in 2015 to 7,358 in 2021. In 2011 their population in the area was 2194, Rout said. The southern Odisha district is in fact the only habitat of the mammal at present in the state and one can see herds of blackbucks roaming freely in the area. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in Balukhand-Konark wildlife sanctuary in Puri district where blackbucks, which were seen till 2012-13, are not seen any more.

Blackbuck is included in the Schedule-1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act-1972 and is listed as near threatened in IUCN Red list category.

Improvement of habitat, protection by local people and forest staff are the reasons for the in-



PICTURE USED FOR REPRESENTATION

crease in the number of blackbucks in Ganjam, Rout said. Some blackbucks have died in

accidents while moving across roads, fighting among themselves and dog bites. "But not a single

poaching case was reported in the last some years," he said.

Since 2019-20 a total 48 blackbucks had died in the area and of them 18 due to the road mishaps, Rout added.

"The blackbuck occupies a vital place in our religion, which encourages the local people to protect them. Sighting a living one is believed to break a long spell drought and a blessing for the prosperity of the area," said the president of Blackbuck Protection Committee (Ganjam) Amulya Upadhyaya.

The villagers do not harm the animals even if they destroy crops. Though the region is not protected by the government, the animals roam freely due to the protection given by the villagers, he said.

The Committee along with the forest workers is involved in cre-

ating awareness among the people to protect the species, Upadhyaya added.

The DFO said meadow development programmes for increasing food, water and safety of the animal was taken up in the area under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats scheme. Salt licks and water holes have also been created.

Besides a watch tower and a rescue-cum-treatment centre have been set up in the area to treat injured blackbucks.

With accidents during crossing roads becoming the major reason for the death of blackbucks in Ganjam, speed-breakers have been created in vulnerable areas. Signage advising vehicle drivers to reduce their speed limits in blackbuck habitats have also been put up, he said.

## Couple killed over sorcery

AGENCIES

Keonjhar, Dec 11: A 45-year-old man and his wife were hacked to death by miscreants in Keonjhar district with the police claiming that the double murder was committed on suspicion that they practised sorcery, an official said Sunday.

The bodies were found in a pool of blood outside their house in Rasool Jhumukipatiya Sahi under Daitari police station Sunday morning.

"It appears that suspicion of practising witchcraft was behind the murders. One person was detained. Further investigation is underway," Keonjhar SP Mitrabhanu Mahapatra said.

The couple's daughter said that her parents were sleeping outside their room Saturday night. "I was sleeping inside a room. After hearing a scream, I came out and saw that my parents were lying in a pool of blood," she said.



# leisure



## SELENA GOMEZ TALKS ABOUT STRUGGLE WITH DEPRESSION

Singer-actress Selena Gomez has always been open about her battle with anxiety and depression over the past six years. She is now hoping her candid new documentary will help other people speak out, reports *The Mirror*.

## P DIDDY SURPRISES FANS BY WELCOMING HOME A BABY GIRL

American rapper P Diddy has made a shocking announcement about his family and revealed that he recently welcomed a baby girl named Love Sean Combs. The rapper, whose real name is Sean Combs, took to Twitter to share the amazing news with followers, reports *The Mirror*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
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**ARIES**  
You can make a difference to others' lives. Considerate and thoughtful, today, you will be treasured more than ever as a boss, colleague, parent or beloved. Utilise this exchange of energy to sort out difficult issues. Ganesh gives a thumbs up to mega projects.

**TAURUS**  
Ganesh sees you taking a day off from your work and immersing your self in domestic activities. A lot of time will be spent blissfully with your family folk chatting away or doing this and that. The idea of getting your interiors redone and give your house a new look will surely occur to you.

**GEMINI**  
There is a likelihood of some household disturbance cropping up today. Your family members could make a lot of demands from you. You may feel angry because of your inability to meet all their needs and wants. Unexpected expenses are also indicated. You need to control your spending, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Watch out for winds of change and according to Ganesh warns you of drowning in a strong current. Your task will be easier if you adjust to circumstances. Fun and entertainment are today's password.

**LEO**  
You are advised to be more attentive to your work today. You will try to do the best work possible by putting in your maximum efforts. However, the results might turn out to be lower than your expectations. You need to be wary of excessive expenses or financial loss today.

**VIRGO**  
The thinking cap is on your head, and a passionate pulse shall run through you today. Yet, by the mid-day, expect a laid-back cavalier attitude to grip you. Government officials and other professionals will have an inspiring assenting day.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says you will give more importance to your family and there may be concerns about the health of a family member. There may be news from abroad regarding the health of a close family member, which may disturb you today. Do maintain your mental balance today and remember that this too shall pass.

**SCORPIO**  
A cloud of emotions surrounds you today and you would like to spend the entire day in introspection and self-analysis. You will try to raise your bar at professional level. Your far sightedness and capability to understand human psychology promises a leader in you, says Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You are in a mood to spend money of home décor, paintings or artefacts. Go ahead, and decorate your home. Ganesh foresees success on your cards today. Workplace has never been such an interesting place before. Planning and implementation will make your day easier.

**CAPRICORN**  
The day will be a maze of complex problems and situations, but you will find your way out in no time, says Ganesh. At work, you may love to play the leader, but that makes you accountable, for both the good as well as the poor performance of your subordinates. In all likelihood, you may be held responsible for the poor performance of your team members.

**AQUARIUS**  
You know how to examine the nuts and bolts of every assignment or project, and it consumes your resources to a great extent. But, like a stitch in time saves nine, your meticulous planning minimises the chances of a loss or a failure, feels Ganesh. Not many are good at this, and such efficient planning gives you an upper hand over others when the competition is tight.

**PISCES**  
You could find yourself re-establishing contact with long lost friends abroad, possibly on matters of business. You will also likely find yourself attending social events. There is a possibility that those who are unmarried, may find their match in these social settings. Long term personal or business relationships will likely be established today, says Ganesh.



## Managing work, family a tightrope walk: Shreyas

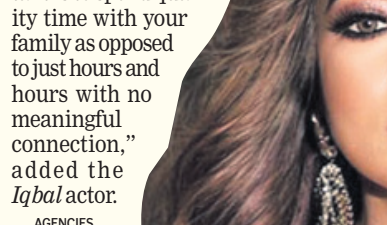
**NEW DELHI:** Shreyas Talpade is a renowned name in the entertainment industry, recently garnering a lot of appreciation for his work in *Kaun Pravin Tambe*, and now the film has been nominated for Filmfare Awards.

In a recently conversation with a portal about his career and reaching out to people, he said: "Every artist dreams of reaching out to maximum people worldwide and to have people start recognising you."

"It is definitely a dream come true and the kind of love I have been receiving for my work from all over the world is truly a blessing for me."

Sharing how difficult it is for an actor to balance work and family life, he said: "Managing family and work is always a tight rope walk for any artist or professional. But you have to make time for both work and family."

"I'm very grateful to my wife and my family for giving me my space and understanding. I think what is more important is to spend quality time with your family as opposed to just hours and hours with no meaningful connection," added the *Iqbal* actor.



## Uorfi turns out to be mischief-maker

**MUMBAI:** Internet sensation Uorfi Javed, who entered the dating reality show *Splitsvilla X4*, is the mischief-maker on the show and is reportedly all set to leave it soon.

After a lot of chaos, fights, and confusion over the real mischief-maker among the contestants including Sakshi Shrivastava, who has a penchant for creating drama or Sakshi Dwivedi who has been candid about her disliking for Uorfi and was constantly breaking the rules during a task, host Sunny Leone had to tell the latter to "follow the \*\*\*\*ing rules."

Apart from these names, many also thought of Aagaz Akhtar as a mischief-maker as recently he tried manipulating Uorfi against her connection.

But after all hue and cry, finally, Uorfi is found to be the mischief-maker as she is the one, who called Kashish Thakur 'a play-

boy', yelled at Aradhana Sharma and Saumya Bhandari, and threw shade at Sunny too. Her entry was to break the connections

and see who all are 'real' on the show.

She started off her game with her strong comment on 20-year-old Sakshi, who is a social media star. Later, she fought with her connection Kashish and called him 'boring', and broke all her ties with him on the show.

Hosted by Arjun Bijlani and Sunny Leone, the dating-based reality show *Splitsvilla X4* airs on MTV.



## Janhvi makes hearts skip with her blue beachwear

**MUMBAI:** Janhvi Kapoor is making hearts skip with her series of back-to-back beach pictures from the picturesque Maldives. While those stunning visuals around her are giving fans a major FOMO, the actress is looking drop-dead-gorgeous as she makes the most of her holiday.

Janhvi has dropped some new pictures from her sunny morning in Maldives by the beach. She can be seen wearing a blue bikini with a pair of denim shorts as she savours some coconut water. While she flaunts her chiseled body, netizens can't stop gushing over her.

She wrote, "on an island in the sun"

On work front, the ac-

which sees her alongside Rajkumar Rao and is produced by Karan Johar. She plays a cricketer in the film and has been training hard to be authentic for her part.

Apart from that, the actress will be sharing screen space with Varun Dhawan in *Bawaal*.

AGENCIES



## Tina opens up on her 'fake' friend

**MUMBAI:** As *Bigg Boss 16* contestant Tina Datta, who was recently evicted from the house, returned after Shalin Bhanot pressed the buzzer as told by *Bigg Boss* by losing the prize money of Rs 25 lakh. Tina, though, not happy with him and got into an argument with him, calling him a fake friend.

She told him: "That day I was going to leave the house so you did not press the buzzer and today suddenly you pressed it. Why did you take so much time to decide to support me, if I would be at your place I would have pressed it on the third count and saved you."

Salman said that Shalin will be able to save one only after Rs 25 lakh gets deducted from the cash prize or he could get his prize money and one of the contestants gets evicted.

When Shalin didn't press the buzzer and Tina was evicted. *Bigg Boss 16* airs on Colors.

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

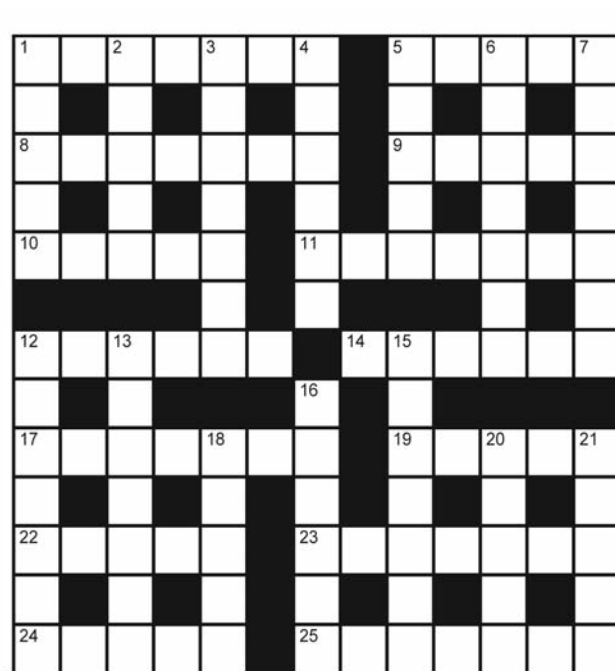


### BREVITY



### FUN post

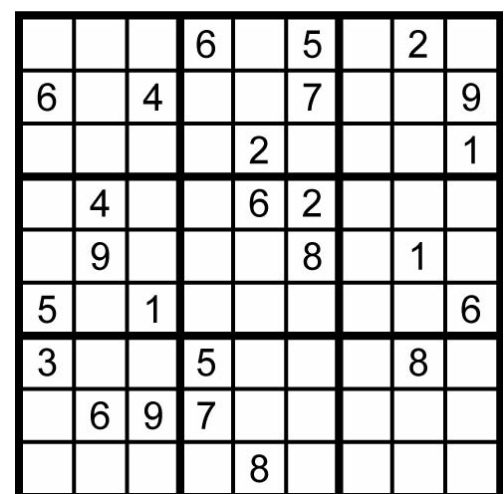
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Attribute
  - 5 Fairy tale name
  - 8 Rookie
  - 9 Swindle
  - 10 Prepare to propose
  - 11 Enthusiastic
  - 12 Layered
  - 14 Sylphlike
  - 17 Beaming
  - 19 Foyer
  - 22 Even-toed ungulate
  - 23 Feed
  - 24 Kind of preview
  - 25 Farewell remark
- Down**
- 1 Medical charlatan
  - 2 Astonish
  - 3 Ross Sea sight (3,4)
  - 4 Eurasian herb
  - 5 Beta's follower
  - 6 Hostility (3,4)
  - 7 Day play
  - 12 Exalts
  - 13 Chess final
  - 15 Bird of prey
  - 16 Kind of cuisine
  - 18 One way to be taken
  - 20 Tobacco pipe type
  - 21 Search engine

### 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.

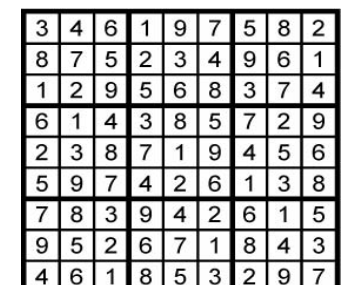


### SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



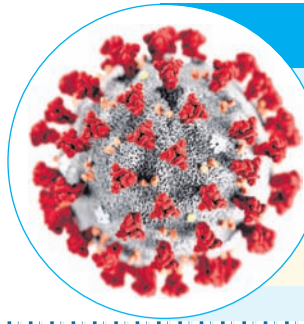
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





**CITY BEAUTIFICATION**

An artist draws mural near Lok Seva Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	65,35,43,817	62,90,19,254	66,58,265
India	4,46,74,822	4,41,40,251	5,30,658
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

**Chief Secy reviews work ahead of Hockey World Cup**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra Sunday reviewed the progress of the ongoing construction of the Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT) at Baramunda and BMC ICOMC building, and the functioning of the Multi-Level Car Parking (MLCP) facility in Saheed Nagar area here.



Mahapatra, along with BDA vice-chairman Balwant Singh and BMC commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange, interacted with the officials there and instructed them to complete the projects within the stipulated time.

The ISBT project, being executed by Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) over 15.5 acre of land, will have facilities that will enhance the convenience of the passengers such as office spaces, parking, food court, restaurant and commercial spaces. The Chief Secretary was apprised about the detailed master plan and of the details of the execution plan for the timely completion of the project. Later, Mahapatra directed BDA officials to complete the work by March 2023.

While visiting the MLCP building at Saheed Nagar, Mahapatra advised the officials of BMC and Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) to enforce no parking zones and to ensure safe passage for the commuters from the parking building to the nearby market areas. The MLCP will accommodate at least 250 equivalent car spaces.

Mahapatra, who also visited the new 12-storey BMC ICOMC building at Janpath, took stock of the capital city's ongoing landscaping works and the street art ahead of the Hockey World Cup scheduled in January 2023.

He visited the south lake zone where various citizen amenity activities are being planned like a park for children, cycling track, walking track which will cater to the localities of Satya Nagar, Saheed Nagar, and Kharavel Nagar. He directed officials for development of proper parking place on the front side.

The Chief Secretary also visited the national level painting camp and state level sculptures' camp at Kalabumi which are a part of the STAMP 3.0 initiative undertaken by Odisha Lalit Kala Academy and BMC to set up a platform where the state's art and culture will be showcased before the people visiting Bhubaneswar from across the country as well as from different countries during the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup in January 2023.

**Hundreds of Olive Ridley mating pairs sighted in deep sea**

AGENCIES

Kendrapada, Dec 11: Hundreds of mating pairs of endangered Olive Ridley turtles were sighted by the Forest personnel at the deep sea within Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary.

With the sighting of mating pairs, the surveillance in the Gahirmatha has been tightened in the prohibited zone of the sanctuary to provide a congenial atmosphere for the endangered marine fauna. Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary ranger in charge Manas Kumar Das said the Forest personnel have come across hundreds of Olive Ridley mating pairs in deep sea on Habalikhati site.

He said the Forest personnel have failed to sight mating pair at the coast water due to adverse weather and climatic condition.

The mating of the Olive Ridley sea turtles has just started and it is expected to continue till January mid week, Das said. Since the last few years, the Nasi-II beach proves to be the most favourite nesting place of the marine species.

**NCST seeks report from state on child deaths in Keonjhar**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has sought action-taken reports (ATRs) from the state's Chief Secretary, Health and Family Welfare department commissioner-cum-secretary and the director general of police (DGP) in connection with the allegations of negligence by the staff at the district head-quarters hospital (DHH) in Keonjhar that resulted in the death of 13 children in September this year.

Hearing a plea filed by rights activist Himanshu Sekhar Nayak, the NCST asked the officials to submit the ATRs within seven days of the receipt of the order. The commission



also noted that if the concerned officials fail to submit the reports within the stipulated time, it would be compelled to issue summons for their personal appearance.

Quoting media reports, Nayak has informed the commission that as many as 13 children died within 18 days at the Keonjhar DHH in September this year due to alleged negligence of the staffers there.

"The sudden deaths irked the parents and locals who later held

a protest before the hospital, demanding detailed probe and stringent action against the persons responsible," Nayak said.

The parents of deceased kids also alleged of the indifference of the staffers of the hospital and the absence of doctors and officials, including the Chief District Medical and Public Health Officer Sujata Rani Mishra, he said.

"Apart from the short supply of oxygen, relatives of the infants alleged the on-duty doctors were absent when the condition of kids worsened. There were no doctors present in the hospital through the whole night of September 17 and nurses were seen running for oxygen," Nayak added.

**Odisha gets pat for operationalisation of HWCs**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has felicitated Odisha for achieving the target of December 2022 for operationalisation of health and wellness centres (HWCs) in the state.

National Health Mission Odisha director Brundha D received the award from Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Mansukh Mandaviya during the Universal Health Coverage Day celebration at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, Sunday.



According to the Health and Family Welfare department, as many as 6,304 HWCs were operational in the state to provide com-

prehensive primary healthcare. Around 4,792 sub-centres, 1,260 primary health centres (PHCs), 105 urban primary health centres

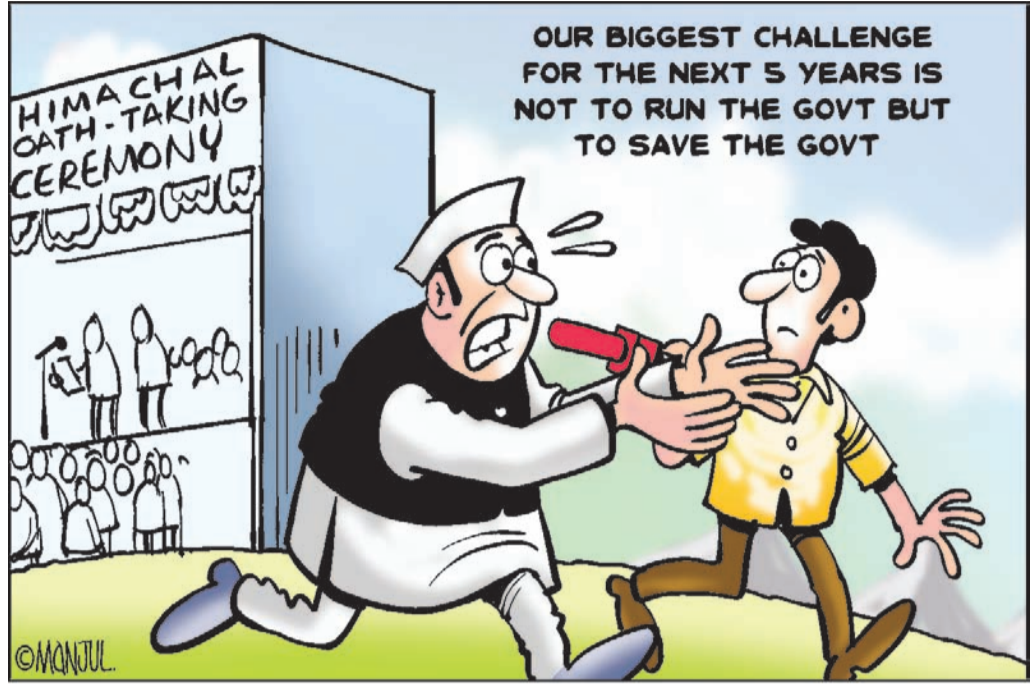
(UPHCs), 44 urban health and wellness centres (UHCs) and 100 AYUSH dispensaries have been converted and strengthened as HWCs.

In the HWCs, 12 types of primary healthcare services, along with expanded range of diagnosis and drugs, were being provided. Besides, specialist and super specialist consultations were also being provided through telemedicine (eSanjeevani) services by linking with district headquarter hospitals (DHHs), medical colleges and hospitals (MCH) and other tertiary level healthcare institutions.

Yoga sessions and various types of wellness activities were conducted at HWCs as part of preventive health. Population-based screening of common NCD like hypertension, diabetes, oral, breast, cervical cancer, and other communicable diseases like leprosy were conducted regularly by HWC team including ASHAs, it was learnt.

Earlier, Odisha bagged the first prize for generation of highest number of ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts) IDs during Universal Health Coverage Day 2022 campaign.

**POLITICKLE by MANJUL**



**Sports Minister flags off 'Tour de Kalinga'**



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: Sports and Youth Services Minister Tusharkanti Behera Sunday flagged off the fourth edition of 'Tour de Kalinga', Asia's longest community cycling campaign, at Kalinga Stadium here.

The campaign on pedal is being organised on the theme of save environment, global warning and drug abuse.

"Odisha has great landscape for eco-tourism. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, the state government has built lots of infrastructure in disaster management," Behera said.

Roots of Odisha Foundation (ROOF) has been organising the community cycling campaign since 2015 in a bid to provide solutions to bring rapid development in the state.

ROOF chairman Sudhir Kumar Dash, while unveiling the theme of Tour-de-Kalinga, said that Odisha has the unique landscape in the planet which makes it an ideal destination for eco-tourism.

"This will not just unleash the best secret of Odisha but will add to the tourism potential of the state," added Dash.

This year, the campaign will be held between Bhubaneswar and Koraput. The participants will pass through 10 districts and cover a distance of about 1,300 km.

During the cycling campaign, the team will have community engagement programmes at schools, colleges, universities, and villages to sensitise on the larger issues of pollution, global warming and drug abuses, it was learnt.

Tour de Kalinga has emerged as the longest community cycling campaign on social development issues and has witnessed participation from all states.



Glimpses from the concluding day of the national-level dog show by Orissa Kennel Club at Unit-VI playground in Bhubaneswar, Sunday. Sidharth Sharma's Obut, a German Shepherd from Lucknow, won the 'best in show' award

**Indian student leads 'plogging' missions to clean up UK streets**

An Indian student and award-winning environmentalist from the University of Bristol in south-west England has inspired a trend of plogging, or jogging combined with litter picking, across various cities of the UK.

Vivek Gurav, originally from Pune, was inspired by the Swedish concept of "plogging" - which combines "jogga" (jogging) with "plocka upp" (a pick-up) - to encourage people who use their local streets the most to take pride in keeping them clean.

In India, he set up a plogging community known as "Pune Ploggers" back in 2018, with over 10,000 members who have collected over 1 million kilograms of rubbish and wanted to continue the trend when he took up his scholarship position at Bristol University in

September last year. Since then, his university says he has covered over 420 miles on 120 plogging "missions" joined by volunteers from 180 countries and is now taking the drive to 30 UK cities.

"I have only been plogging in Bristol but I kept getting asked by people in Manchester, Leeds, Derby to come plogging there," said Gurav.

"So, I decided to do a plogging challenge across 30 UK cities. Ultimately, I want to set-up a UK-wide plogging community like I did back in India. So, if I can go out plogging across the UK, orientate people, give them a blueprint, then they can start their own groups," he said. The former app developer hopes to be joined by fellow ploggers, environmentalists and keen runners as he visits each city via public transport. His plogging across Derby, Nottingham, Leeds,



Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool, Leicester, Birmingham and Worcester is being tracked across his social media.

Earlier this year, his efforts won him the Points of Light Award from 10 Downing Street, which honours people making a difference

in their communities. Gurav was recognised for his 250 running challenges across Bristol to tackle litter and bringing together over 140 volunteers to clear over 3,750 kilograms of litter.

cause of climate action that I have been trying to promote through litter picking," said Gurav.

"Every individual matters, every action counts in the race to fight climate change and this award strengthens this belief of my entire community of ploggers based in India as well as UK to keep going," he said.

"I hope this award will really support and amplify our cause. When I told my parents they asked if I was lying. They are really happy and my father said he was very proud of me," he added.

Professor Judith Squires, Acting Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Bristol, said the student's drive to change the world for the better has been nothing short of inspiring.

"Together with his volunteers he has picked up thousands of tonnes

of rubbish. It has taken hard work, intelligence and generosity of spirit - all traits that Vivek has in spades," she said. The University of Bristol notes that Gurav's life has changed dramatically since he moved to the UK for his Master's in Environmental Policy and Management MSc. Such has been his plogging success that Gurav was recently invited to Egypt to speak at the Conference of Youth (COY) 17, the Official Youth Constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Gurav graduated from his Master's last month and is working for an environmental consultancy while continuing his plogging missions. According to the University of Bristol, he plans to use the skills he has learnt to help make India more sustainable.



# Vehicle catches fire; family escapes unhurt

## PENSIONERS' ISSUES DISCUSSED

## SAI International hosts UNWIND

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** Four members of a family including two women had a miraculous escape when their moving SUV car caught fire on Rasulgarh flyover under Mancheswar police limits here Sunday afternoon. The vehicle (OD 02 BU 2554) was severely damaged in the fire mishap.

Sources revealed that the incident took place while the owner of the vehicle Ashok Kumar Nayak along with three members of this family were en-route Bhubaneswar to their native at Jatani area on the outskirts of the Capital city. On Rasulgarh rail over bridge, Nayak suddenly spotted smoke billowing from the front part of the vehicle. He along with other family members came out of the vehicle which later caught fire.



Upon informed, a team of seven fire personnel from the fire station at Kalpana square reached the spot to douse the fire. The fire services personnel took around 30 minutes to completely extinguish

the fire. The authorities informed that a short circuit in the engine might have caused the mishap. Traffic came to a standstill on the national highway due to the accident.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** The OUAT Retired Employees Association held its 17th annual general body meeting Sunday at Mangla Mandap in the presence of the vice chancellor and officials of the university, where more than 300 pensioners discussed various aspects of pension benefits and participation in the university's development activities. The agenda of the meeting was the problems that pensioners are facing and also the inputs that were shared for the development of the university. In the meeting, the association decided to start publishing a bulletin. The proposal for a separate website was also discussed by all the council members of OUAT for the smooth functioning of the pensioners. Since pensioners are also facing problems related to family pensions, a request was made by the general body meeting of the association to the vice chancellor for the smooth functioning, informed by Bishma Charana Das, Secretary of the OUAT Retired Employees Association.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** The students of SAI International School organised the 13th edition of mega cultural fest 'UNWIND' Sunday with the theme "Fantasy: Embrace the Unknown". The day-long event was managed by the students of Class XI from the Commerce & Humanities stream with handholding support from mentors. The event housed more than 100 food stalls having a wide array of scrumptious national and international cuisines and 60+ game stalls with fun-filled activities. The event was graced by the chief guest, Omkar Rai, Executive Chairman of Startup Odisha. Addressing the students, he said, "I am happy to be here at UNWIND 2022 as this platform offers an entrepreneurial outlook in children and inculcates leadership skills in them, from a really young age, as envisioned by my friend, mentor and guide Late Bijaya Kumar Sahoo." The inmates of Pratibha Ashram, a child care home, also participated at the event.



Speaking on the occasion, Chairperson, SAI International Education Group, Silpi Sahoo said, "It gives me immense joy to see my students of Commerce and Humanities put up such a mega and immersive fest for UNWIND 2022. The vision of Founder-Chairman Dr Bijaya Kumar Sahoo was to build critical thinkers, problem solvers with insightful and focused thoughts, the future entrepreneurial citizens of India. I am elated to see

my students walking on the path laid down by our Founder-Chairman." The Women's Self-Help Groups (WSHG) under the aegis of 'Mission Shakti', also put up a stall at the mega event. Holistic Parenting Awards were also presented to the achievers of 2021-22 for their outstanding performance, their relentless efforts, perseverance and devotion in the CBSE Class XII Board exams.

## City to host conference of architects 'Kshitij'

## Rath elected president of CSI

## Centurion University observes 10th convocation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** Indian Institute of Architects' Odisha Chapter Sunday announced its flagship event 'Kshitij', Eastern Region Conference (ERC) 2022, from December 16 to 19 in the City. Announcing the conference, IIA Odisha Chapter chairperson Raj Kanwar Nayak said, "We are happy to announce the biggest conference of Architects in Eastern India - ERC 2022."

The ERC is one of the major events of the Indian Institute of Architects for the Eastern Zone comprising Odisha, West Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Jharkhand. "The conference envisages advancing the interests of members, their professional standards, and to expand and advocate the value of architects and architecture for the sustainable and harmonious growth of our country, society, economy, and culture," said Nayak.

The event theme has been kept Kshitij, "the Rising Architectural Horizon", to represent the dynamic and progressive nature of profession. The conference will be structured to facilitate valuable exchanges between regional, national and international architects, between speakers and delegates, technical partners and practitioners, students, professionals and authorities.

IIA national council member Akshay K Beuria said, "During the 4-day conference, we will witness a broad discussion between renowned architects heading from abroad and the national enclave in dialogue exchanges and panel discussions."

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** PC Rath was elected the president of prestigious Cardiologist Society of India (CSI) for the year 2023-24 in the annual meeting held in Chennai Saturday. Cardiologist Society of India is a national body of Cardiologists of India and Indian Cardiologists settled abroad. It consists of more than 5000 members. Cardiologist Society of India was formed in 1948 in Kolkata headed by late Bharat Ratna Vidhan Shankar Roy, the first Chief Minister of West Bengal in Independent India. He was the 1st president of CSI. The Society is going to celebrate the 75 years of platinum jubilee in December 2023 in Kolkata. PC Rath, President-elect will be organising scientific programme for the platinum ju-



bilee celebrations in Kolkata in December 2023. PC Rath is presently working as the director and head of the department of Cardiology at Apollo Hospital, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** Centurion University of Technology and Management observed its 10th convocation in the presence of Governor, Ganeshi Lal, guest of honour, Professor Iain Martin, Vice Chancellor, Deakin University, Australia and guest of honour Peter Wuffli, Founder & Chairman, elea Foundation for Ethics in Globalization, Switzerland, at its Mother Campus situated at Paralakhemundi. Supriya Patnaik, presented the vice chancellor's report at the opening of the ceremony. In her speech, she encouraged the graduating students to apply their learning and industry experience to nurture entrepreneurship as job creators. Greeting the students to commit



themselves to growth with sustainability and responsibility, she said, "Climb a mountain to see the world, not for the world to see you". The Governor in his speech congratulated the students and praised Centurion's relentless effort to build dynamic workforce through its well-structured edu-

cation initiatives. He rekindled feeling of oneness among young minds and said the learners are like divinities and mediums of radiating happiness. Prof Iain Martin appreciated Deakin University's relationship with Centurion University and the shared goals for developing lead-

ership qualities among students. Peter Wuffli, in his speech, stressed upon the importance of digital innovation and digital transformation and appreciated how Centurion University is leading with innovation and entrepreneurial vision. In the convocation, 22 scholars received their doctoral degree out of which one received the vice chancellor's 'Best Thesis Award'. Overall, 12 graduates were conferred gold medals. A total 2,298 students from the 2020-22, and 131 students from earlier batches were conferred degrees at the Ceremony. The convocation ceremony was also graced by the Collector & District Magistrate, Lingraj Panda, Mukti Kanta Mishra, President, DN Rao, Vice President, Anita Patra, Registrar and deans of all schools of Centurion University.



COMMEMORATING ANNIV: Dignitaries releasing the souvenir Hirak Dipti on the occasion of Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of Ravenshaw University's New Hostel in Cuttack, Sunday

## ATC celebrates its foundation day

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** The annual day function of the Autism Therapy Centre (ATC), Bhubaneswar along with the Autism Awareness Day was celebrated in the Activity Hall of DAV Public School, Unit-VIII here Sunday. The function was attended by the autistic children, their parents and family members besides a number of distinguished dignitaries. Ashok Kumar Mahapatra, Vice Chancellor, SOA University was the chief guest. After reception of the chief guest and other dignitaries, auspicious lamp was lighted to mark the commencement of the



function. The annual report presented by the chairman, MAN Trust, Swarna lata Mishra enumerated various activities conducted by the ATC. Prominent among them are annual sports meet, observance of various important National celebration days,

religious celebration days and Bano Mahostava. The winner of prizes in 'sports meet' as well as debate competition organised on the topic "Autism a difference not a Disability" with a view to creating awareness about autism in the society were awarded prizes in the function. Gautam Panda (CHINU) was awarded the 'ATC Champion-2022' prize. The function was presided over by Madan Mohan Panda, one of the Trustees of MAN Trust and DN Mishra, Principal of DSBM & member, executive committee of ATC rendered the vote of thanks. Autistic Children presented cultural programme after the meeting.



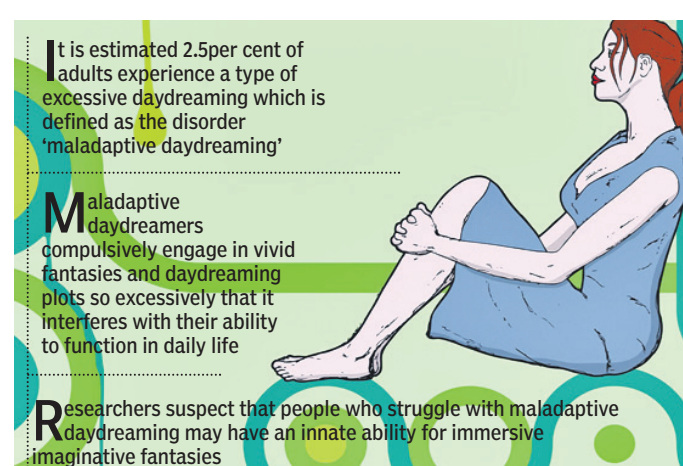
# Maladaptive daydreaming can cause mental distress

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary, Jaleswar that RAJIBA LOCHAN DEY, S/o. Lt. Harendra Nath Dey, Vill-Dharashatak, Nayabazar, PS-Jaleswar, Dist-Balasore, Odisha- 756032 that I have changed my name to RAJIBA LOCHAN DEY from RAJIB LOCHAN DEY or RAJEEV LOCHAN DEY. Hence I should be known as RAJIBA LOCHAN DEY for all Govt. and official purposes.

Despite what we are often taught to believe, daydreaming can be immensely useful. Not only can it be a source of pleasure and a way to relieve boredom, research shows that our ability to mentally escape the present can also boost creativity, problem-solving and planning, and provide an antidote to loneliness. Daydreaming, when defined as thoughts that aren't tied to what you're currently doing, occupies a good chunk of our waking lives - an average of around 30 per cent of the time if you randomly probe people. It is part of our everyday conscious experience. You might even think of it as our default mode which we return to, especially when doing things that don't require a lot of brain power, such as mundane tasks like hanging out washing. But it is estimated 2.5per cent of adults experience a type of excessive daydreaming which is defined as the disorder "maladaptive daydreaming". So-called maladaptive daydreamers compulsively engage in vivid fantasies and daydreaming

plots so excessively that it interferes with their ability to function in daily life. What is maladaptive daydreaming? Maladaptive daydreaming differs from typical daydreaming in several ways. Unlike typical daydreams which can be fleeting (lasting seconds), maladaptive daydreamers can spend several hours at a time in a single daydream. According to one study, maladaptive daydreamers spent an average of at least half their waking hours immersed in deliberately constructed fantasy worlds. These invented worlds are often rich and fantastical, with complex plots and intricate storylines that evolve over many years. Maladaptive daydreamers' fantasy worlds are vivid and rewarding, and the need to continue the fantasy can be compulsive and addictive. With maladaptive daydreaming, there's a strong urge to daydream and annoyance when this is not possible or interrupted. Most also find it difficult to stop or even reduce the amount of time



they spend daydreaming. But prioritising spending time in alternative, imagined realities at the expense of physical and social needs can create problems at work, at school and in maintaining close relationships. Many people with maladaptive daydreaming report experiencing psychological distress, difficulty sleeping and feelings of shame about their daydreaming activity - something that they may hide from others. It is important to note that immersive daydreaming and vivid fantasy activity isn't by default maladaptive. What makes daydreaming "maladaptive" is when it becomes difficult to control, when time to daydream takes precedence over real life, and when the compulsion to daydream interferes with important life goals and relationships.

Why does it happen? Researchers suspect that people who struggle with maladaptive daydreaming may have an innate ability for immersive imaginative fantasies. Many discover this ability early on in childhood, realising fantasy and daydreams can be used to regulate distress. By creating an inner world of comfort, they're able to escape from reality. Many discover their ability to create imaginative fantasies in childhood, but not all maladaptive daydreamers may use daydreaming as a coping strategy. For example, daydreaming activity can distract from an unpleasant reality which may help to cope with trauma, difficult life events or social isolation. But doing so can lead to a vicious cycle of compulsive fantasy where using fantasy to avoid negative emotions exacerbates the urge to daydream. In many ways, daydreaming becomes an addictive behaviour that fuels the very problems it was intended to alleviate. Perhaps unsurprisingly, maladaptive day-

dreaming tends to occur alongside other disorders, the most common being ADHD, anxiety, depression and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). There seems to be a strong relationship between OCD and maladaptive daydreaming. One study found that over half of participants with maladaptive daydreaming also exhibited signs of OCD. This may suggest possible shared mechanisms between the two disorders, including intrusive thoughts, dissociation and a lack of cognitive control. Though maladaptive daydreaming has been garnering an increasing amount of attention online and through social media, it's not yet formally recognised in psychiatric diagnostic manuals. This means many health professionals may be unaware of the condition, leading to misdiagnosis or dismissal of symptoms, creating further distress, isolation, and shame for maladaptive daydreamers. Many instead turn to online forums for peer support and recognition.

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# Probe on into jumbo poaching in Similipal

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, Dec 11:** Death of an elephant in Similipal Tiger Project (STP) area of Mayurbhanj district has triggered grave concern and a controversy. Such an incident happening in spite of the tight security around STP is a matter of concern for the Forest department and the wildlife activists.

Meanwhile, three Forest officials have been suspended after it was learnt that there was an attempt to hide the elephant death. Some Forest officials had buried some parts of the jumbo carcass and set the remaining parts afloat in a river.

Elephants are in danger after incident came to the fore in the sanctuary. The department has taken the matter seriously and started an investigation into it.

Notably, Similipal sanctuary is the second largest biodiversity zone in Asia. Despite the fact, the population of elephants is dwindling here.

Poaching and lax security have been among various factors responsible for death of elephants here. About 15 days ago, an elephant was poached in Gurandia section under Jenabili range of Similipal Tiger Project area.

The poachers had cut away its tusks. The Forest officials engaged in the area had tried to hush up the matter. They had buried a major part of the carcass



3 forest officials have been suspended after it was learnt that there was an attempt to hide the elephant death

Forest officials had buried some part of the jumbo carcass and remaining parts were set afloat in a river

in the ground and set the remaining part afloat in a river.

Local residents had informed the deputy director of the Similipal sanctuary about the incident. Forest officials have seized some bones from the river and sent it to OUAT laboratory in Bhubaneswar.

Forester Shib Shankar Samal, Chandrabhanu Behera, and forest guard Binod Kumar Das were suspended.

"After the investigation is over, action will be taken against those

responsible for it," said deputy director Samrat Goud.

Honorary wildlife warden Mitrabhanu Acharya recalled an incident that took place in 2010. At that time, carcasses of 10 elephants were burnt and buried. Then, a forester and a guard had been suspended.

Besides, carcasses of eight elephants had been buried in 2012 and two officials had been suspended. Acharya has expressed concern over such incidents.



**CULTURAL FEST:** Children participated in a drawing competition held on the occasion of Patha Utsav organised for Koraput's tribal Lok Mahotsav Parab in Jeyore

## DFO injured in attack by stone mafia; plaint filed

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, Dec 11:** Stone mafia have reportedly attacked Dhenkanal DFO Prakash Chand Gogineni near Kuramtangar village under Sadar police limits late Saturday night.

Wounded on right side of his head, he was admitted to the district headquarters hospital.

According to reports, the DFO had made a surprise visit to Kuramtangar village to review how members of elephant squads are patrolling in Kapilash range. At that time, mafia were extracting stone from an unauthorised stone quarry near the village at night. When the DFO asked the stone mafia to show documents, the stone mafia attacked the DFO with a brick and fled the spot.

The DFO filed a complaint at the Sadar police station in this regard, Sunday.

He said that action will be taken against the stone mafia. Collector Saroj Kumar Sethi said that the attack on the DFO will not be tolerated and action will be taken against the stone mafia.

## Quack's faulty injection kills youth in Rayagada

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, Dec 11:** Tension prevailed after a youth died allegedly due to being administered with wrong injection and medicines by a quack having his clinic at BC Road in JK Pur of Rayagada district, Saturday.

The deceased was identified as Prasant Kaushalya, 26, only son of Tulsama and Lokanath Kaushalya of Sanachandili village under Chandili police limits in the district. He was working from home for a private company. His death has come as a tragic shock for his elderly parents.

Family members cried foul over the incident and held the quack B Anand Rao alias Nandu Babu responsible for his death and demanded stringent action against him. Family members and villagers termed it as medical negligence and staged a demonstration outside the Chandili police station.

They relented after police assured them of action. Meanwhile, police have detained Anand and are questioning him in this connection, SDPO Debajyoti Das said.



Further investigations were on. The body was handed over to his family members after post-mortem.

Family members said that Prasant experienced headache and stomach pain Saturday morning for which he visited Rao's clinic where he administered him with two injections and gave him syrup and some medicines. He came back home but within 10 minutes of his arrival he vomited and experienced pain in his chest. He, however, died before they could rush him to the hospital.

## 7 held for fishing in Gahirmatha

**Rajnagar:** A patrolling team of Forest department arrested seven fishermen and seized a trawler for fishing in the prohibited zone of Gahirmatha marine sanctuary in Kendrapara district, Sunday. The fishermen on a trawler were found fishing in the prohibited zone of Gahirmatha despite a ban on fishing and movement of trawlers as the place is the nursery of rare Olive Ridley turtles. Forest officials led by forester Naveen Kumar Mallick caught them while fishing. Two quintals of fish, one GPS set, two VHF sets, a fish finder and six trawling nets were seized from the possession of the fishermen.

## Leaf-plates to empower Chitrakonda women

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chitrakonda, Dec 11:** In another attempt to push women empowerment in Chitrakonda area of Malkangiri district, the administration has provided leaf-plate making machines to members of SHGs at Ralegada panchayat under this block.

The administration with help of the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) aims at making tribal women of this remote area self sufficient by providing them a source of livelihood. Notably, leaves of certain tree



species are found aplenty in this remote region sharing borders with Andhra Pradesh.

Project Administrator of the ITDA Trinath Majhi, BDO Raghunath

Mundari, Ralegada sarpanch Kamalu Hantali and an official of the Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM) handed out leaf-plate making machines to members of six SHGs of

Sakrubandh village. Besides, such machines were provided to SHGs of Tunnel Camp village.

The administration has been making continuous efforts to create scope of alternative earning for the women. Earlier, the block administration had provided necessary assistance to women members of the SHGs to manufacture sattu and turmeric powder.

"The administration has shown the women a way of earning by making use of leaf-plate making machines. They will be successful in their effort," said the officials.



**ARMS EXPO:** Firearms and ammunitions on display at a stall put up by CRPF 12th battalion on the occasion of the Lok Mahotsav Mondei at Nabarangpur

## False Point, 1st lighthouse on east coast, to get a facelift

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, Dec 11:** False point, an old harbour with a light house about 45 km from Kendrapara district will soon get a facelift to help increase footfall of tourists.

The False Point lighthouse situated about 45 km from the district headquarters is near the Kharinasi river bank north of the Mahanadi estuary. The lighthouse is situated on a large island created by the Mahanadi river delta.

Like most harbours, False Point too has a lighthouse but what makes it so special is the fact that it is the first lighthouse installed on the eastern coast of India. The construction of the lighthouse had commenced in 1819 and concluded in 1826. Reports said that attractive galleries, a jetty, rest house and Jatri Nivas for providing accommodation to visitors will be constructed to attract tourists to the site.

Moreover, a market will be established in the area incorporating the local culture.



The whole island will be electrified with solar power. All these developmental works will be implemented on public-private partnership (PPP) mode at an expenditure of ₹10,000 crore.

The revelation was made by Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Highways Sarbananda Sonowal

in reply to a question in the Parliament, Friday.

As the project comes under the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) a letter has been written to the office of the CRZ authority seeking its permission to implement the projects, the minister informed during his reply. A total of 65 lighthouses in the

country including the ones in Paradip, Gopalpur, Chandrabhaga, Puri and False Point in Kendrapara will be developed and upgraded under the Centre's ambitious Sagarmala project, the minister said.

However, except False Point the rest four lighthouses in Odisha have roads to commute and accommodation for visiting tourists. This is the reason why the rest four lighthouses witness large footfall of tourists every year while the Kharinasi bridge has been a roadblock for visitors to the False Point lighthouse.

The False Point light house after its renovation will provide a veritable atmosphere to the tourists to witness the mangrove forests, estuarine crocodiles, marine and other wildlife in its surroundings.

Sources said that the lighthouse was re-constructed in 1836 after it got damaged. The lighthouse was lit up with petroleum gas October 16, 1836. The lighthouse named as Diopetria was inaugurated by then Bengal Governor General Sir

Ashley Eden in 1880. The last few decades saw generators being used to light up the lighthouse whereas now, power supply has been made available to the lighthouse. The lighthouse having a height of 125 metre was constructed with stone available at Barabati fort in Cuttack. To reach the top, one has to climb 138 steps and a 16-step ladder. The specialty of this lighthouse is that it has remained operational from the date of its lighting.

There are some clusters of graves and a well on the premises of the lighthouse. The lighthouse surrounded by mangrove forests on a small island threatened by rapid coastal erosion. Prawn gherries have mushroomed and illegal intrusion is taking place due to negligence of the administration.

Senior residents said that if the island where the lighthouse is situated is developed then it will be off benefit for the residents and provide great employment opportunities to the local youths by pulling tourists.

## Guest lecturer moonlights as porter to teach poor kids

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, Dec 11:** Thirty-one-year-old Ch Nageshu Patro from Ganjam district works as a guest lecturer in a private college during daytime and at night moonlights as a porter at Berhampur railway station.

Patro moonlights as a porter not to fill his own pocket but to pay salary of teachers, whom he has employed in a coaching centre to teach poor students for free.

As the day begins Patro attends a private college as guest faculty, later in the day he attends classes at a coaching centre run by him for poor students for free. At night he moonlights as porter at Berhampur railway station.

Patro said during the Covid pandemic instead of sitting idle at home he started teaching poor children for free. As the number of students increased, he set up a



coaching centre for students of class VIII to XII. While he himself taught Hindi and Odia, he hired teachers for other subjects.



Patro now has employed four teachers at his coaching centre, whom he pays from the money around ₹10,000 to ₹12,000 which

**Whatever people think, let them think, I love teaching and want to continue for poor students**

CH NAGESHU PATRO

he earns as a porter at the railway station.

"Whatever people think, let them think, I love teaching and want to continue for poor students," Patro told PTI when asked if he felt ashamed while working as a porter, after being a lecturer himself.

The ₹8,000 he earns as a guest lecturer in a private college is used by him to run his family which consists of his father and mother who stay at Manohar village in Ganjam district.

Coming from a humble background, Patro could not appear in the high school certificate examination in 2006. His father who used to graze goats and sheep had a tough time in

making both his ends meet. In such circumstances education was a distant dream for him.

Since then Patro has been on a mission to educate as many kids as he can. He does not want kids coming from marginalised backgrounds to discontinue their studies due monetary problems of the family.

Patro has been registered as a porter in the railway station since 2011. He decided to appear for the class XII examination in 2012 through correspondence course. After passing the HSC examination, he did his graduation and later his post graduation from Berhampur University. He did all his higher education by self financing, working as a porter at night.

He said nowadays people are using trolley bags and escalators, so earning as a porter or collie has come down and urged Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to do something for the porter community working hard at railway stations.

### HANDICRAFTS EXHIBITION

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SALE



FOCUS CONSERVATION

# ECO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Earth's biodiversity and the services provided by healthy ecosystems are under massive pressure from climate change and the challenge of supporting eight billion people in a sustainable way. Key ecosystem services – such as timber from forests, pollinators, and ocean fishing – must be conserved and cherished, yet they are being rapidly eroded. The ongoing 2022 United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in Montreal offers a chance to build on humanity's shared vision of living in harmony with nature.

Biodiversity is an important goal for World Bank Group programmes. But to reverse its loss, economic decisions must take nature into account. That is why we are working to help countries integrate nature into their economic growth models, development plans, and climate agendas. Doing so means establishing policies that consider nature's real economic value, building institutions that support nature, developing public-private partnerships to support that goal, and mobilising finance from all sources to transform economies and policies – going well beyond isolated interventions.

Fishing is a good example of why nature matters for growth and development. Globally, fish stocks are declining, owing to the triple threat of climate change, overfishing, and pollution. If business as usual continues, the world could lose up to 25% of fish catches by the end of the century. That should concern everyone, for several reasons.

First, we are already facing one of the largest food-security crises in modern history. Since fish are an important dietary component for 3.3 billion people, a reduced supply will exacerbate food crises now and in the future. Fish are rich in nutrients that are particularly important for child development, and they are an especially valued source of protein for the poor, because they are easier to obtain and cheaper to preserve than other sources. Hence, fish contribute 50% or more of the total animal-protein intake in Ghana, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone. Moreover, a fish shortage



Faced with growing threats to biodiversity and the natural systems that are crucial to all economies, conservation efforts that merely stop nature loss are no longer enough. Rather, we need to reverse the decline, which means changing how we produce and consume

will affect the entire food chain, because fish products are important components of other foods, including livestock feeds.

Second, as fish become scarcer or migrate to colder and deeper waters because of climate change, many fishers will be forced to travel farther to catch them, to change the way they fish, or to find new jobs. Many will not be able to adapt. Among the 38 million people globally who are employed directly in fishing, the most vulnerable will be the hardest hit. This includes small-scale fishing communities, which are often located in remote areas that are already disproportionately affected by climate change. Women, who make up 50% of employees in the broader aquatic-food value chain, will also be significantly affected. For those with little formal education, alternative livelihoods will be hard to find.

Third, the impact of these threats will grow over time. Fish

stocks do not respect international boundaries. Without the right regulations and incentives, fleets will continue to maximise their catches in the short term, with major economies overfishing far beyond their territorial waters. If all countries do this, a bad problem will become much worse. Fifty years ago, about 10% of global fish stocks were being fished at biologically unsustainable levels, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN. Today, that figure has risen to 35%. While many countries will suffer, the poorest communities stand to lose the most.

Faced with these challenges, conservation efforts that merely stop nature loss are no longer enough. Rather, we need to reverse the decline, which means changing how we produce and consume.

One approach is to invest in nature-based solutions that protect

nature while also supporting economic development, creating livelihoods, and helping countries mitigate and adapt to climate change. Consider mangroves, which are rich in biodiversity, act as nursery areas for fish, protect more than six million people from annual flooding, and absorb carbon emissions. They are estimated to have an economic wealth valued at \$550 billion. Another example is seaweed farming, which has the potential to create jobs, alleviate food insecurity, and absorb carbon.

The World Bank Group is working across many fronts to help countries recognise both the value of nature and the risks that would follow from losing it. Often working through ministries of finance, we provide funding, knowledge, policy advice, and technical capacity to mobilise partners behind nature-based solutions. With our support, countries are identifying promising new interventions that can be replicated and scaled up.

For example, by involving different stakeholders in marine planning, Vietnam is reducing conflicts over resource use across sectors. In China, we're working with the Chongqing and Ningbo municipalities to reduce the amount of marine plastic that reaches the ocean from river effluent, building on earlier projects that helped establish China's water-treatment capacity. By applying technologies like satellites and drones, we are helping Tanzania and other countries obtain real-time data on coastal and marine degradation, so that they can act to prevent it. And through innovative financial instruments such as blue carbon credits, Ghana aims to restore 3,000 hectares of mangroves and bring in more private funding.

We are working to expand efforts like these. Near-term goals include more financing for projects in poor countries, a bigger role for the private sector, and coordinated action from local communities to national governments. But if we are going to stop biodiversity loss, much more needs to be done, both by us and the global community.

The writer is President of the World Bank Group. @PROJECTSYNDICATE



David Malpas

TO REVERSE BIODIVERSITY LOSS, ECONOMIC DECISIONS MUST TAKE NATURE INTO ACCOUNT

## Israeli Far-Right

The killing of a man by an Israeli soldier in broad daylight in the occupied West Bank has once again brought back the spectre of violence and bloody confrontation between Israeli armed forces and Palestinians. Benjamin Netanyahu's return to power as Prime Minister with the help of rabid, Right-wing forces last month raised fears about such a prospect, but many in Israel hoped the exigencies of holding on to the government may force the ruling parties to temper their anti-Arab and anti-Palestine rhetoric. The killing of 23-year-old Ammar Mufleh has, instead, sparked widespread anger among Palestinians with calls on social media to step up resistance acts against the Israeli occupation. The video of the shooting of an unknown Palestinian shows a cold blooded murder by an Israeli soldier. Mufleh appeared to strike the soldier and attempt to take hold of his rifle before the soldier pulled out a handgun and shot him several times. The Palestinian slumped down on the road and the two men, who had been trying to free him from the soldier holding him, were seen stunned by the act of killing an unarmed man. Of course, at another level, the reaction of the Israeli soldier seems justified since, had he not shot the attacker, his weapon would have been snatched and he could have been dead today.

UN's peace envoy Tor Wennesland was reportedly 'horrified' by what he saw in the video footage and raised the matter in the Security Council. Since January, about 140 Palestinians have been killed in the area by Israeli forces, while Palestinian attacks have left 30 Israelis dead.

Such bloody confrontation has been the norm, but what shocks the world is the response of the incoming national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, the pivotal figure of the Far-Right Jewish Power party. Instead of chastising the officer for a virtual public execution, he hailed him as a hero. This might have been necessitated because Israel depends heavily on its armed forces for the very survival of the country.

The Religious Zionism bloc, led by Ben-Gvir and the Jewish supremacist Bezalel Smotrich, is now the third-largest group in the Knesset (Parliament). It had been catapulted into this position in last month's elections by whipping up racism and homophobia. Ben-Gvir has been aptly described as "the modern Israeli version of an American white supremacist and a European fascist." His track record buttresses such an impression. He has been convicted of racist incitement and advocacy of terrorism. Israel's Arab minority is fearing eviction from their homes as he has repeatedly pledged to relocate Bedouins and Palestinian Israeli citizens to neighbouring Arab states.

In fact, since January, tempers have been rising and many Palestinians have lost their lives in the occupied territories of the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and East Jerusalem so far. But, reports suggest a perceptible change in the behaviour of the Israeli forces in the occupied territory following the victory of the Far-Right. A new stage of conflict between the Israel government and the Palestinians seems to be on the cards. A more aggressive policy under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has cobbled together the most Far-Right Israeli cabinet ever, is all set to be followed. Netanyahu is now sharing power with Smotrich, who opposes Palestinian statehood, and Ben-Gvir who is an anti-Palestinian religious settler.

In a way, Netanyahu becomes instrumental in the rise of the Far-Right. This is more for his personal reasons than for any ideological commitment. He is on trial for corruption charges which he denies. He can escape the law only if he succeeds in distorting Israel's justice system through new legislation mooted by his Far-Right and ultra-Orthodox allies. This seems to be a trade-off. Netanyahu can dodge the laws by letting the Far-Right reshape the policies in the occupied territories. At the moment, a radical wave is sweeping Israel as the recent voting patterns revealed about 60 per cent of voters now consider themselves Right wing. Only three years back, this figure stood at 46 per cent.

The killing of Mufleh appears to be an outcome of the changing political climate. Smotrich supports the annexation of the West Bank, the expansion of settlements and the demolition of Palestinian homes. Ben-Gvir plans a provocative ministerial visit to Haram al-Sharif, site of the third-holiest shrine in Islam, under the pretence that Israeli Jews are struggling for their religious rights.

On the other hand, Netanyahu has not yet said a word on the fresh spate of violence. This will most likely encourage the Far-Right to carry out its agenda of hatred which could be a sure fire recipe for disaster.

### WISDOM CORNER

Accept the things to which fate binds you, and love the people with whom fate brings you together, but do so with all your heart. MARCUS AURELIUS

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony. MAHATMA GANDHI

Disobedience is the true foundation of liberty. The obedient must be slaves. HENRY DAVID THOREAU

### WORDSWORTH

#### Disintermediation

A fairly horrid mouthful, but if you pick disintermediation apart you will find it is a noun based on intermediate. The concept is that of removing links from a trading chain, what is called in more colloquial language "cutting out the middleman", or putting the producer of goods or services directly in touch with the customer. It is currently a buzzword in several fields but particularly in banking, because banks have seen much of their traditional market drift away to businesses which trade directly with the public by telephone or post. Another key area is that of insurance, where telephone-based direct traders have creamed off much of the business that used to go through local insurance brokers. Other middlemen already affected are share brokerages and travel agencies where big providers of services are using electronic communications and the Internet to bypass them and so lessen the trading distance between them and their customers, in the words of one expert "to use information to replace mobility". The adjective and participle is disintermediated.

#### Ditto

This commercial term was originally Italian. Merchants from that country, you may recall, were versed in bookkeeping and accountancy very early. Double-entry bookkeeping, for example, was invented in that country and was popularised in a famous book of 1494 by Luca Bartolomeo Pacioli, a monk and friend of Leonardo da Vinci, though there are known examples of the method going back to the thirteenth century. It was in the early seventeenth century – about a century after Frater Pacioli's work appeared – that ditto is first recorded in an English book. It had been borrowed from the Tuscan dialect, in which ditto was a variant of detto, the Italian word meaning said. In turn, this derives from Latin dictus with the same meaning. At first, English used it like Italian, to avoid having to repeat the name of a month already mentioned: Anno 1577. Decemb. 13. Mr Francis Drake with five Ships and Barks and 165 men, set out from Plymouth, 27 ditto he came to Madagar, where the Natives treacherously got one of his men (An Introduction to Astronomy, by William Leybourn and Robert Morden, 1702). Late in the seventeenth century its meaning widened to refer to anything at all that had gone before. It became common in lists, frequently in abbreviated form as do.

### SPECTRUM MISSION 2024

## Emotions to surpass economy



Shivaji Sarkar

CONTROVERSIES, THE BJP'S POLL MANAGERS KNOW, ARE VOTE CATCHERS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's magic worked with a record victory of 156 Gujarat seats for the BJP as he toils hard with Union Home Minister Amit Shah. From now on it may be an intense Hindu makeover, surpassing the economy, to continue the spree till 2024 Lok Sabha election.

The economic rhetoric of five trillion dollar would remain there as it was also in Gujarat for a state GDP of one trillion dollar, though it could not create the mood that the party may have liked. That led its leaders to walk the extra mile. The magic attraction of Modi finally did the trick as also party's capability to muster over 16 lakh people at the polling stations in a jiffy in the second phase December 5. The party's financial and manpower strength virtually wiped out Opposition parties.

The big election of 2024 once again may not be contested on an economic blueprint as it is not easy to make it a reality in an inflation and recession-hit world economy torn by wars, sanctions, low or little growth and high unemployment. India may be doing better with over 6% growth, but it may not be enough to lure voters or provide work to the needy.

Controversies, BJP poll managers know, are vote catchers. The party may again gamble on polarisation, population or the divide with unique packs in each state. It has almost now centred on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) to create a wave across the country. The discussion on the issue of personal laws touches almost all Indians. That gives an opportunity to woo communities and widen the divide.

A small instance with larger import was witnessed in the Rajya Sabha, December 9, with introduction of a private member's bill by BJP MP Kirodi Lal Meena. He demanded a panel to prepare and implement the UCC. This divided the House. Expectedly, Congress, TMC, DMK, CPI-M, CPI, IUML, MDMK, Samajwadi Party and RJD lodged strong protests amid uproar. Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar called for division and the motion was cleared with 63 votes in favour and 23 against. The controversy officially begins.

Yes, notwithstanding controversies, the UCC has become the next major agenda and vote drawer. The adage that the BJP is always in campaign mode becomes a reality.

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Yes, notwithstanding controversies, the UCC has become the next major agenda and vote drawer. The adage that the BJP is always in campaign mode becomes a reality.

It takes precedence over the Union Budget preparations, allocations or populist moves that a government puts on the agenda. The UCC would be garnished with the population control policy for sharpening the campaign.

If the BJP concentrates on scrapping the junking of 10-year-new cars, started by UPA, in all the states, it would touch the heart of several crore families. It can be a game changer as Switzerland has taken the first step to do away with electric vehicles. Anger simmering against forced junking of cars and tractors is increasingly being witnessed among farmers of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Punjab and several others.

While there may or may not be freebies, the free food dole is likely to get an extension till the Lok Sabha polls along with many other programmes for tribals, and disadvantaged groups. The minorities are to be given special favour in allotments of PM Awas Yojana houses, jobs in EWS quota, allocations to religious schools, madrasas and some other programmes. It is interesting to note that backward minority commu-

nities are gradually being attracted to the Hindu party. The subtle campaigning among minority groups of different religions by RSS leader Indresh Kumar has caught their fancy.

The minority denominated constituencies in the Northeast, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka would be approached by the party cadre for the next year religiously to lure them to vote for the BJP. The party is in touch with different churches. Various programmes tailored for each of the states is aimed at swinging the mood in favour of the saffron party. The approach, packaging and methods are special to each state concentrating on welfare and the popular imaging.

The novel campaign plank has been designed to surpass the economic issues and capture the electorate's imagination. The clear aim being to win the elections with a mix of emotions, connect and divide and to perpetuate its rule till 2047 or the centenary of Independence.

The writer is Professor, Indian Institute of Mass Communication. @INFA

## 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

OrissaPOST  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

#### Avoid confrontation

Sir, The Supreme Court has warned the Centre against some ministers and politicians freely voicing their opinion on the merits of the collegium system to appoint High Court and Supreme Court judges. Since collegium is the law, it has to be scrupulously adhered to. Not that the earlier system was beyond reproach; but it is true that the collegium system took a lot of flak for some of its decisions. One solution was forming a heterogenous committee with representation to the executive and the legislature as well apart from the judges. However, the government's efforts to ensure the above by putting in place the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) came a cropper. Indisputably, the collegium has the exhausting task of not only selecting honest judges but also efficient ones when one considers the monumental pendency of cases in twenty four HCs and the SC. Similarly, the Centre cannot vent its frustration on the collegium by indefinitely withholding names proposed to higher courts even after reiteration of the names. A confrontation between the government and the judiciary will be detrimental to the litigants. Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

#### Change for children

Sir, Currently, UNICEF is among the largest organisations in the world that promotes the wellbeing of children. It is present in nearly 192 nations and territories. UNICEF has spent 70 years working to improve the lives of children and their families. The main goals of UNICEF are to safeguard children everywhere and ensure that they have access to fundamental freedoms including a good education, healthy food, clean water, and immunisations. UNICEF also aims to contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. Some of the agency's activities focus on issues related to child safety online, such as online child exploitation and cyber-bullying. Today, UNICEF offers several possibilities all across the world and works to provide a better future for children who are living in poverty. UNICEF also received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1965 and the Indra Gandhi Prize in 1989. The organisation also enjoys a great deal of other benefits. Every year December 11, UNICEF Day is commemorated to raise awareness about protecting children's lives by standing up for them and assisting them in achieving their goals. The significance of the day is in raising awareness of the necessity of ensuring the long-term development and prosperity of children. Goals include eradicating racism, gender inequality, and discrimination based on other identities. Dr. Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD



# national

## of the day quote

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi** believes that when we are celebrating the Amrit Mahotsav of Independence, it is necessary to make the country healthy. Only a healthy society can build a prosperous country  
**MANSUKH MANDAVIYA** | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

**Angry protests** greeted Nitish Kumar when he launched his poll campaign in Kurhani two days before the December 5 polls. As Nitish reached the venue, protestors created ruckus, shouted slogans against him and flung the chairs... People's anger against the CM can be seen everywhere. The chief minister cannot walk without security guards even in a small village in the state  
**PRASHANT KISHOR** | POLITICAL STRATEGIST-TURNED-POLITICIAN

The **expressway** between Delhi and Mumbai would be almost complete in December. With this, the distance between the two cities can be covered in 12 hours  
**NITIN GADKARI** | UNION ROAD TRANSPORT MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Bhupendra to take oath today

**Ahmedabad:** Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Bhupendra Patel will take oath as the Chief Minister of Gujarat for a second straight term in Gandhinagar Monday in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other dignitaries, BJP leaders said Sunday. Patel will be administered the oath as the 18th chief minister by Governor Acharya Devvrat at a function to be held at the Helipad Ground near the new Secretariat in Gandhinagar at 2 PM.

### Three injured

**Thane:** Three devotees walking to the Saibaba temple in Shirdi were injured when an unidentified vehicle knocked them down in Shahapur in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said Sunday. The incident took place near Kalambe village late on Saturday night, an official said. A case has been registered and a search has been launched for the vehicle involved in the accident, he said.

### Woman ends life

**Hyderabad:** A woman died by suicide a few hours before her wedding in Telangana's Nizamabad district. Ryagala Ravali (26) hanged herself at her residence in Navipet late on Saturday night. The wedding was scheduled at 12.15 p.m. on Sunday at a function hall in Nizamabad. The tragedy plunged the family into gloom when it was busy making last-minute preparations for the wedding.

## HIGH COURT VACANCIES

**THERE ARE 25 HIGH COURTS IN THE COUNTRY. AS ON DECEMBER 5, 778 JUDGES ARE WORKING IN THE HIGH COURTS AGAINST THE SANCTIONED STRENGTH OF 1,108**

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** Amid a stand-off between the government and the Supreme Court Collegium over the appointment of judges, a parliamentary panel has asked the



Women take selfie during Delhi Comic Con 2022, at NSIC Exhibition Ground, Okhla, in New Delhi

# MCD poll fallout: Delhi BJP chief quits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta Sunday resigned from the post, days after the party's defeat in the municipal corporation polls to the Aam Aadmi Party.

The BJP's Delhi unit vice-president Virendra Sachdeva has been appointed as the acting president. "The resignation of Adesh Gupta as Delhi BJP president has been accepted as per the direction of BJP national president Jagat Prakash Nadda. Delhi unit vice-president Virendra Sachdeva is being appointed working state unit chief till the next order," BJP's national general secretary Arun Singh said in a communication.

Soon after taking over charge as acting president at the Delhi BJP office, Sachdeva exhorted party workers to start working for a victory of the party on Delhi's all the seven Lok Sabha seats in the 2024 elections.

"I am grateful to the party's central leadership for giving this responsibility to an ordinary worker



**You should bring our government, the Congress should come to power. I'm today the AICC President, for my honour and that of my party you should ensure the Congress government in Karnataka. If we are in power, we will be able to work for the people and implement various pro public works. I'm confident you will give us strength**  
**MALLIKARJUN KHARGE** | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

## NEW INITIATIVE

Uttar Pradesh government has started a facial recognition-based teacher and student attendance monitoring system for the public schools in the state



## DELHI LIQUOR SCAM

# CBI grills Kavitha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, Dec 11:** A team of CBI sleuths Sunday examined Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's daughter and BRS MLC K Kavitha here in connection with the 'Delhi excise policy scam' and recorded her statement.

The officials, who arrived at 11 am, left her residence at 6.30 pm. The city police beefed up security near her residence.

Party sources said the former MP from Nizamabad requested the BRS cadre and Kavitha's supporters to not gather at her residence.

As stated earlier when she was served a notice, Kavitha reiterated that she will be cooperating with the central agency, the sources added.

Posters in support of Kavitha were put up near her house by her supporters and also party workers carrying her photo along with slogans.

One of the posters read 'Daughter of Fighter Will Never Fear: #We Are With Kavithakka'.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had last week informed Kavitha that a team from the premier investigating agency would visit her residence in the city on December 11 for examination.

Kavitha, who has been served

a notice by the CBI for recording her statement in connection with the case, recently said she will be able to meet the officials from December 11-15 (except for 13th).

The probe agency issued the notice under Section 160 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and asked her to intimate the place of residence as per her convenience for the "examination" at 11 am on that day. Under Section 160 of CrPC, the investigating officer can summon any person as witness in a particular case.

After her name cropped up in a remand report filed by the Enforcement Directorate in a

Delhi court on the alleged kickbacks in the 'scam', Kavitha had said she was ready to face any probe. The CBI on November 25 filed its first charge sheet in the case against seven accused.

"As per the investigation carried out so far, Vijay Nair, on behalf of leaders of AAP has received kickbacks to the tune of at least Rs 100 crore from a group, called South Group (controlled by Sarath Reddy, Ms K Kavitha, Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy) by various persons including Amit Arora," the ED had said in the remand report filed on one of the accused -- Amit Arora -- in a Delhi Court.

**The officials, who arrived at 11 am, left her residence at 6:30 pm. The city police beefed up security near her residence**

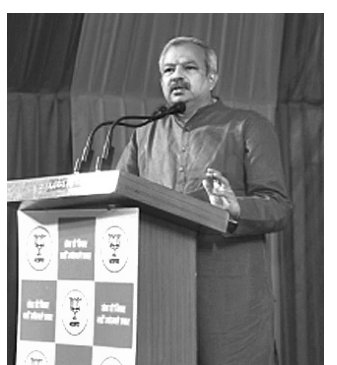
# 151 Guj MLAs 'crorepatis': Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, Dec 11:** A total of 151, or 83 per cent, of the 182 MLAs elected in the recent Assembly polls in Gujarat are 'crorepatis' (worth over Rs 1 crore), up from 141 in the 2017 polls, as per a study conducted by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and Gujarat Election Watch.

The study showed the ruling BJP has 132 crorepati MLAs, followed by 14 of the Congress, all three Independents, and one each of the Aam Aadmi Party and the Samajwadi Party. The BJP won the seventh straight term in Gujarat by winning a record 156 seats in the 182-member House.

Of these 151 'crorepati' legislators, 73 have assets of more than Rs 5 crore and 73 have assets in the Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore range. The average assets per winning candidate in Gujarat now stands at Rs 16.41 crore, almost two times the figure for 2017, which was Rs 8.46 crore.



like me. It's a responsibility that I will discharge taking together all the party leaders and workers," Sachdeva told reporters. Gupta in a tweet welcomed Sachdeva on his appointment as working president of Delhi BJP. "Heartly congratulations to my friend and old colleague Virendra Sachdeva on being appointed as working president of Delhi BJP," Gupta tweeted.

Delhi BJP under Gupta's leadership managed to put up a spirited fight against AAP and win 104 out of 250 wards in Municipal Corporation of Delhi polls.

Gupta told reporters that he took "moral responsibility" for party's defeat and decided to step down from Delhi BJP president post. The AAP won 134 wards in the polls and ended BJP's 15-year rule at the civic body.

Sachdeva, who was associated with RSS earlier as a volunteer, discharged duties on various posts in the Delhi BJP, including district president of Chandni Chowk and Mayur Vihar. Appointment of Sachdeva, whose ancestors came to India from Pakistan after partition, temporarily rested speculations over Gupta's exit and claims on his post by several party leaders.

"The party may decide to continue with Sachdeva as the president if his performance as working president is impressive," said a senior Delhi BJP functionary. Several leaders were set to be in the race for the post, including MPs Parvesh Verma, Ramesh Bidhuri, Meenakshi Lekhi and Gautam Gambhir, party's co-incharge for Jammu and Kashmir Ashish Sood, Kapil Mishra and state general sec-

retary Harsh Malhotra.

The demand for an organisational overhaul in the Delhi BJP had begun immediately after the party's loss in the MCD elections. Amid the clamour for change, Gupta had in a meeting on the result day (Thursday) asserted he was not going to give up to "conspiracies" against him.

Gupta's performance has been under the scanner since he took charge as president of the Delhi BJP in June 2020. Under his leadership, the party failed to win by-polls to some MCD wards in 2021 as well as the Rajender Nagar Assembly bypoll.

According to some Delhi BJP functionaries, Gupta's resignation does not mean much as he was anyway nearing the end of his term. The organisational elections of the BJP at the national level are scheduled to be complete in January 2023. BJP leaders said the party constitution mandates that organisational restructuring should be done in 50 per cent of state units ahead of changes at national level.

# Couple fined for roaming after 11 pm, cops suspended

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, Dec 11:** Two policemen in Bangalore were suspended for allegedly harassing a couple and imposing a fine of Rs 1,000 for roaming on the road after 11 pm.

A head constable and a constable attached to the Sampigehalli police station were suspended by Deputy Commissioner of Police (North East division) Anoop A. Shetty on Sunday after the incident came to light. "Two police personnel from Samigehalli police station responsible for the incident have been identified, suspended and departmental action initiated. Bengaluru police will not tolerate deviant behaviour from its staff," the DCP tweeted in response to a series of tweets by one Karthik Patri



narrating the harassment meted out to them by the police personnel on Hosyala patrolling duty on the night of December 8.

The victim wrote that he and his wife were walking back home near Manyata Tech Park around 12.30 a.m. after attending a friend's cake-cutting ceremony. Two men in uniform asked the couple to show identity cards. Though taken aback, the couple showed photos of their Aadhaar cards on their phones. "To our surprise, they took our

phones away and started quizzing us about our relationship, place of work, parental details, etc.," the victim tweeted. Not stopping at that, the cops issued a challan saying 'you are not allowed to roam on the road after 11 p.m.'.

Though the couple apologised and assured that they will not venture out at night, the policemen refused to let them go and demanded Rs 3,000 as penalty.

"I could barely hold my nerve, while my wife was in tears. Perhaps realising that they had pushed a woman too far and fearing the legal consequences, they changed tack. They said only I would be penalised. The man in the driving seat took me aside and advised that I pay a minimum amount to avoid further trouble."

## LAKHIMPUR VIOLENCE

# Brother of witness attacked by youth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lakhimpur Kheri (UP), Dec 11:** The brother of the witness in the last year's Lakhimpur violence was allegedly attacked by a youth, police said Sunday.

The incident that happened Friday night had no connection with the 2021 violence, they said. Injured Sarvajeet Singh is reported to be the brother of Prabhjeet Singh, who is a witness in the Lakhimpur violence of October 3, 2021, in which eight persons, including four farmers, a journalist, two BJP workers and a driver were killed.

In his complaint, Singh alleged that he was attacked when he had gone to attend a party in Tikunia town organised by a friend. Accused Vikas Chawla along with his associate abused and attacked him with sharp weapons, thereby, injuring him.

Police said an FIR under section 307 (attempt to murder) of IPC has been registered on the complaint of the aggrieved person and legal proceedings are underway.

Lakhimpur Kheri's Superintendent of Police (SP) Sanjiv Suman said in a statement, the brother of Tikunia case witness Prabhjeet was attacked by the accused, following a dispute while attending a 'mundan' party organised by their friend. The incident had no connection with the one-year-old Tikunia violence case, the SP added.



# Govt, judiciary not adhering to timelines: Parl panel

Executive and the Judiciary to come up with "out of box thinking" to deal with the "perennial problem" of vacancies in high courts.

The department-related standing committee on Law and Personnel in its report tabled in Parliament on Thursday said it is not in agreement with the comments of the Department of Justice in the Union Law Ministry that "time for filling up of vacancies of judges in the higher judiciary cannot be indicated".

The timeline has been drawn in the Second Judges Case and also in the Memorandum of Procedure (MOP) regarding the appointment of judges, it pointed out. "But regrettably, those timelines are not adhered to by both, the Judiciary and the Executive, which is leading to delay in filling up of the vacan-



cies," it lamented. It said as per the data provided by the government, as on December 31, 2021, there were three high courts of Telangana, Patna and Delhi where vacancies were more than 50

per cent and 10 HCs where vacancies are more than 40 per cent of their respective sanctioned strength.

"These all are large states, where judge to population ratio is already skewed and such level of vacancies

is a matter of deep concern," the panel headed by senior BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi observed.

The government and the Judiciary, the committee noted, "should come up with some out of box thinking to deal with this perennial problem of vacancies in the HCs". The committee also said that it is "surprised" to note that the Supreme Court and the government have failed to reach at a consensus on revision of the Memorandum of Procedure (MOP) for the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and the high courts, though the same is under consideration of both for "about seven years now".

The committee expects the government and the Judiciary to finalise the revised MOP, which is

more efficient and transparent. There are 25 high courts in the country. As on December 5, 778 judges are working in the high courts against the sanctioned strength of 1,108.

On November 25, the governmental had asked the Supreme Court Collegium to reconsider 20 files related to appointment of high court judges. The government had expressed "strong reservations" about the recommended names. Out of the 20 cases, 11 were fresh cases and nine were reiterations made by the top court Collegium.

The government has returned all the names related to fresh appointments in various high courts on which it had "differences" with the Supreme Court Collegium, sources had said.



# Every family in J&K to get unique ID

BJP WELCOMES MOVE, OTHER PARTIES RAISE CONCERNS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Dec 11:** The Jammu and Kashmir administration is planning to create an authentic database of all families in the Union territory with each of them having a unique alpha-numeric code -- the objective being easy selection of eligible beneficiaries of various social welfare schemes.

The proposed move to allot Family ID has been welcomed by the BJP but panned by other parties which raised concerns over personal data safety.

At the recent national conference on e-governance in Katra in Reasi district, Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister of Haryana Manohar Lal Khattar released the Digital J&K Vision Document, unveiling the government plan to create an authentic, verified and reliable database of all families of the Union territory. According to the vision document, "Each family will be provided with a unique alpha-numeric code called JK Family ID. The data available in the family database would be used to determine eligibility through automatic selection of beneficiaries for receiving social benefits."

The database would identify each and every family in J&K and would collect the basic data of the family, provided with the consent of the family, in a digital format.

The document further reads that all the applicable laws and regulations in respect of data protection shall be complied with in the management of data.

To thwart risks and protect sensitive and critical data, it said the Jammu and Kashmir government plans to work on an information security policy and also envisages formulation of appropriate cyber security framework.

Commissioner Secretary of the IT Department Prerna Puri said the objective of creating the database,



Each family will be provided with a unique alpha-numeric code called JK Family ID

The database would identify each and every family in J&K and would collect the basic data of the family, provided with the consent of the family, in a digital format

The data available in the family database would be used to determine eligibility through automatic selection of beneficiaries for receiving social benefits

which will be at par with Haryana's 'Parivaar Pehchaan Patra', is that families or individuals will not have to apply to receive benefits under each individual scheme.

Once the data in the JK Family ID database is authenticated and verified, a beneficiary will not be required to submit any more document to avail a service, she told PTI. The Congress, National Conference and the PDP slammed the proposed move. Congress chief spokesperson and former legislator Ravinder Sharma questioned the government's intention and also its capacity to protect such digital databases from cyber attacks.

"Why does the government wish to peek into everything? They already have enough data through Aadhaar and are providing benefits through direct bank transfer (DBT) mode," Sharma said.

Referring to cyber attacks by Chinese entities and ransomware attack on the AIIMS servers, he said in such a situation, protection of personal data of the people is a major challenge.

National Conference provincial president Rattan Lal Gupta termed

the exercise unproductive use of resources. "They already have a database of every individual because of Aadhaar. So, creating another database is not fruitful...The administration is keeping the staff busy with data collection while people are left devoid of basic facilities," he said.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) asked who the government wanted to identify through this database. "There are a lot of problems in J&K which the government ignores. Now who the government is trying to identify through this database," PDP leader Virendra Singh Sonu said. However, the BJP welcomed the move and said the people who have to stand in queues to get various benefits and certificates will benefit once a verified database is prepared.

The new database will be helpful in many ways as people have been alleging that Census 2011 was not correct and many people have been wrongly added under BPL category, he said, adding a similar family database is already there in Haryana and so there is nothing to worry about.

The vision document itself acknowledges that in the absence of coherent policies relating to data security and privacy, the progress of digital transformation is bound to be slow and fraught with several risks. Senior Superintendent of Police, Security, MY Kichloo said vulnerabilities and possibilities of cyber attacks will remain when it comes to digital storage of data.

"We will face the same problems in Jammu and Kashmir which are faced across the country viz-a-viz data. Whenever a database is prepared by the government, an IT audit is conducted by experts," he said. As far as data protection is concerned, the officer said, the Jammu and Kashmir government will soon issue a notification under Section 70 of the Information Technology (IT) Act to declare all information structures of government offices and public sector undertakings as protected systems.

In case of data breach, the quantum of punishment would be 10 years which would work as a deterrent, Kichloo said.

Chief Town Planner of the Jammu Development Authority Jagdish Raj Hans said the exercise would be helpful in more ways than just extending benefits of government schemes.

"Currently, JDA is conducting a socio-economic survey for revising the master plan and a door-to-door survey of nearly 9,000 households is being undertaken with the help of a Delhi-based consultancy firm. If a bigger database with all social indicators of families of J&K becomes available, then we would not have to do this sample survey," he said.

According to the vision document, over the next five years the government aims to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and equitability in the delivery of public services and all the functions of the government using emerging technologies.

# Festering wounds of protests keep CAA issue alive in Assam

The stir against the Act in Assam was different from those in other parts of the country as agitators asserted that the state cannot be a dumping ground for foreigners irrespective of their religion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, Dec 11:** Widespread protests in Assam after the enactment of CAA on this day three years ago have left behind a festering wound that has kept the citizenship issue alive in the north-eastern state sharing a long border with Bangladesh.

The BJP government at the Centre asserts that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 will be implemented but is yet to frame the rules, leading to allegations from various quarters that the saffron party is using it as a political card to polarise the nation.

The Citizenship Act, 1955 was amended to provide citizenship to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian religious minorities fleeing persecution from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan and seeking refuge in India till 2014.

The Opposition protested the Act as being based on religious criteria and wanted it to be amended.

The protests against the Act in Assam were led by the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) but the stir was different from those in other parts of the country as agitators asserted that the state cannot be a dumping ground for foreigners irrespective of their religion.

The agitation in Assam had



turned violent, with five people losing their lives in police firing and four others being arrested. The stir was called off with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the aftermath of the agitation, two new political parties -- Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) led by the then AASU leader Lurinjyoti Gogoi and Rajior Dal headed by Akhli Gogoi -- were born in Assam. "The BJP uses CAA as a political tool, particularly during elections, and it has not framed the rules as it wants to keep the 'foreigners' issue' alive in Assam. What's worse is that the party has brought a communal angle through the Act with its narrative 'Hindu khatre mein hain' (Hindus are in danger)," AJP president Lurinjyoti Gogoi told PTI.

The CAA has made the Assam Accord and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) irrelevant, he claimed. The Centre must give constitutional safeguards to Assam like those accorded to other north-eastern states against further settlement of 'foreigners', Rajior Dal working president Bhasco de Saikia said.

"We are firm on our opposition to the Act which we consider to be a part of the BJP's communal politics and if they frame the rules, the 'foreigners' should be taken to other states," Saikia said.

The RSS and the BJP, however, asserted that both the CAA and NRC are not against any Indian and that the communal narrative has been created by some for political mileage.

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat had pointed out here last year that no Muslim will face any persecution due to CAA.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had also asserted that the CAA is for those who are victims of Partition and persecuted in a communal country created on the basis of religion.

Sarma had claimed that so-called secular protesters at the national level tried to give a communal colour to the protests in Assam. Political writer and analyst Sushanta Talukdar said the government has been delaying the implementation of CAA as it is wary of adverse reactions in Assam and Tripura where the ruling BJP has high stakes.

"The Centre is apprehensive of exposing linguistic and ethnic fault lines in the Northeast and antagonising its own and alliance partners' electoral support base because, without adequate constitutional safeguards, the Act could lead to the marginalisation of indigenous people by the migrant population which might result in their loss of political power and identity," Talukdar added.

# Pilgrim footfall at Vaishno Devi in 2022 at 9-year-high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Dec 11:** Nearly 87 lakh pilgrims have paid their obeisance at the famous Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine atop Trikuta hills in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir so far this year, the highest in the past nine years, an official of the shrine board said Saturday.

The inflow of the pilgrims is expected to pick up further in the coming days as the year draws to close, the official said, hoping that the figure may surpass 90 lakh by the end of December.

Till December 6 this year, 86.40 lakh pilgrims visited the cave shrine for the blessings of Mata Rani - a manifestation of the Hindu mother goddess, Durga or Adi Shakti - which is highest annual figure in the past nine years, a shrine board official told PTI.

He said about 13,000 pilgrims on an average are visiting the shrine at present on a daily basis but the number is likely to go up in the coming weeks ahead of the new year celebrations.

The official said the highest number of more than 11.29 lakh pilgrims visited the shrine in June, while the lowest number of 3.61 lakh pilgrims offered their prayers at the temple in February.

Despite a stampede at the shrine on the New Year's Day that left 12 pilgrims dead and 16 others injured, January recorded a turnout of more than 4.38 lakh pilgrims.

More than 7.78 lakh pilgrims visited the shrine in March, 9.02 lakh in April, 9.86 lakh in May, 9.07 lakh in July, 8.77 lakh in August, 8.28 lakh in September, 7.51 lakh in October and 6.01 lakh in November,

the official said.

Only 17 lakh pilgrims, the lowest in more than three decades, visited the shrine in 2020 when the shrine, for the first time in its history, remained closed for five months due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and reopened for visitors August 16 (2020).

From 13.95 lakh in 1986 when the shrine board took over the affairs of the shrine for better management, there has been a steady increase of pilgrim footfalls with each passing year, touching an all time high of 1.04 crore turnout in 2012 against 1.01 crore the previous year (2011).

The pilgrim arrivals at the shrine touched 31.15 lakh in 1991 and reached 74.17 lakh in 2007. However, the number dropped to 67.92 lakh in 2008 which was attributed to the two-month long Amarnath land row agitation but again went up to 82 lakh in 2009 and 87.2 lakh next year (2010).

The pilgrim arrivals dropped from 93.24 lakh in 2013 to 78.03 lakh in 2014 and further to 77.76 lakh in 2015 and 77.23 lakh in 2016. It increased to 81.78 lakh in 2017 and 85.87 lakh in 2018 but again dropped to 79.40 lakh in 2019 -- the year when the central government revoked special status under Article 370 of the constitution to Jammu and Kashmir, and bifurcated the erstwhile state into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

The work on mega projects at Bhawan, including Durga Bhawan having provisions to accommodate 2,500 pilgrims, and the Skywalk to overcome the problem of multi-directional flow of yatra and a chaotic condition at Bhawan - are going on at full speed and are likely to be completed soon.



# Work on Jammu's artificial lake project back on track



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Dec 11:** Work on construction of the Tawi artificial lake here, which is aimed at giving a boost to tourism in Jammu province, has finally taken off after encountering scores of delays in the past 13 years.

The artificial lake and river front beautification work in the Tawi river will be completed at a cost of Rs 280 crore by April next year.

If all goes as planned, the gated Tawi barrage project (artificial lake) would be completed by April 2023 along with ongoing work on other components of artificial lake,

including river bank protection, development of Tawi river front on the pattern of Sabarmati, Jammu Mayor Rajinder Sharma told PTI.

"We should be happy that at least work has now started again (after many delays). It is a difficult task. But we hope it will be completed by the deadline," he said.

The Mayor said the lake will totally change the tourism landscape of Jammu. The lake at the entry point will have great attractions. It will beautify Jammu, which is known as the city of temples, Sharma said.

Indresh Prajapati, who is an expert on lake projects, said work

is going on full swing. The bed work, channelisation of water, embankment constructions and diversions are being done. It is a difficult task, he said.

The project, which was launched in 2009 by the Congress-NC government, has been marred by delays, missing as many as seven deadlines, before work came to a standstill in 2018.

The state government has spent more than Rs 58 crore on the project in the past decade, after its foundation stone was laid by the then Chief Minister Omar Abdullah December 5, 2009. After missing the first target date in 2022, the contractor missed deadlines in 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 when the work stopped.

In 1986, then Governor Jagmohan gave his approval to the lake project. The state government began the construction project in 2008-09 after much delay.

As per the project plan, an auto-mechanical barrage would be constructed on river Tawi, one km downstream of main Tawi bridge, the officials said.

# Youngsters use puppets to spread gender awareness

PUPPETPEOPLE, A GUWAHATI-BASED GROUP USES PUPPETRY AS AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF STORY-TELLING WHILE GIVING IMPORTANT SOCIAL MESSAGES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, Dec 11:** A group of young people are using puppets in Assam to spread awareness on the ills of early marriage and gender-based violence and exhorting the youth, especially girls, to complete their formal education.

Members of PuppetPeople, a Guwahati-based group which uses puppetry as an alternative method of story-telling while giving important social messages, are also using song-and-dance to make the people understand the issues better.

"We have been performing in interior areas, especially in parts

where literacy rate is low. Just last week, we did several shows in the northern part of the state," Drishana Kalita, founder of PuppetPeople, told PTI.

Their current format consists of a five-minute song-and-dance enacted using string puppets, followed by a 15-minute play using body puppets.

Kalita said the entire show has been presented in the local language and the characters of the play have been developed in a manner so that the audience can relate to them.

"The practice of quitting education midway and getting mar-



ried at a tender age is very prevalent among girls, especially in the tea garden areas. Our own research has found it. Through the play's main character, we try to project how wrong choices could lead to problems for the entire life," she said.

The performances draw mixed

crowds, though the focus is on the women. Children and men are also part of the audience and show keen interest, Kalita said.

She is accompanied by her team members Manash Protim Neog, Navanil Nilavh, Rituparna Saikia, Biswajit Handique and Deepijyoti Dutta, among others.

"We can only hope that at least a few of the girls and their families take back and keep with them the message we are trying to put across. If we can impact even a handful of lives now, we believe a beginning has been made

DRISHANA KALITA | FOUNDER, PUPPETPEOPLE

The response to the shows has been positive and the people even take part in the song-and-dance during the performance, Kalita said.

"We can only hope that at least a few of the girls and their families take back and keep with them the message we are trying to put across. If we can impact even a handful of lives now, we believe a beginning has been made," the puppeteer added.



of the day quote

I wonder what would the animals and trees around us tell us if they could speak. What would our rivers say about human history and what would our cattle say on the topic of human rights. We have trampled on their rights for long and now the results are before us

DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT

The Hindu code is already there, did it bring uniformity in Hindus, Sikhs and Jains? We are a country of diversity. Uniform civil code is not about marriages or customs... It is about equal justice

ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN | KERALA GOVERNOR

The average time taken to dispose of a Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) case is 509 days

SMRITI IRANI | WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Stray dogs attack woman

Lucknow: A 40-year-old woman has been seriously injured after being allegedly bitten by a pack of dogs in Lucknow's Jankipuram Extension area. She was admitted to a private hospital from where she was later discharged after treatment. Rihamna Asif, a resident of Shristi apartment, was on an evening walk along with her father-in-law at 9 p.m. when the latter got exhausted and sat on a bench on the premises.

Yellow alert in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has announced a Yellow alert in 11 districts of Kerala. The weather department cautioned of light to heavy rains in all the districts of the state except Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta districts. The fishermen have been warned not to venture into the sea till Tuesday as the sea would be turbulent and there is a possibility of high waves as well. Many areas of Kerala witnessed heavy rains since Saturday night and this is attributed to Cyclone Mandous that lashed Tamil Nadu on Friday night and Saturday morning.

Three die in UP

Hardoi: Three persons were killed when they were hit by an unidentified vehicle Sunday. All three were on a motorbike when the accident took place in Padarwa village. The deceased have been identified as Rajkumar Kushwaha, Sanjay and Bablu Kushwaha. They worked as masons and were going to work when the accident took place.

Man arrested

New Delhi: Most wanted auto-lifter, who used to steal bikes only for joyrides, was held in Delhi's Dwarka District. A senior police officer said that the accused used to do the crime only for pleasure. Ten stolen vehicles were recovered from him. "Our beat staff received secret information regarding the movement of an active auto-lifter, who will come in the area of Bindapur for committing the crime. We formed a team and laid a trap to catch the accused. The police asked him to slow down the vehicle but instead he accelerated and tried to run away. The police chased him for half a kilometre and caught him," the police said.

New Himachal CM braces for a bumpy road

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla/New Delhi, Dec 11: The decisive move on new leadership in Himachal Pradesh notwithstanding, the Congress has its task cut out in the hill state as it faces the twin challenge of keeping factional fighting at bay and delivering on ambitious poll promises. Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu and his deputy will be bracing for a bumpy ride ahead, with the first hurdle being the cabinet formation that reflects the interests of competing pressure groups in the party, principally the one led by incumbent state chief Pratibha Singh.

Allocation of portfolios would be the immediate vexatious issue for the party, with supporters of Virbhadr Singh already feeling sidelined after the elevation of the late chief minister's professed rival Sukhu. Virbhadr Singh's wife Pratibha Singh may have made all the right noises to start with, but it remains to be seen what bargain she strikes in order to satisfy her camp.

The buzz is that she has sought a meaty portfolio for her son Vikramaditya Singh, who returned to the assembly from Shimla Rural. Sources in the party said the top leadership has agreed to make Vikramaditya Singh a senior minister in the state cabinet. Organisational unity challenge apart, the Congress government in the state would need to hit the ground running and deliver on the manifesto promises, which ap-



Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi after the swearing-in ceremony in Shimla

peared to have struck a chord with the voters.

The uphill task would be to generate finances for the range of promises which, all put together, would entail an expenditure of around ₹10,000 crore annually on the part of the state government. How Sukhu and his team achieve this will be closely watched considering Himachal's massive debt burden of around ₹65,000 crore till March 31, 2002.

With the state's finances already

under stress, the CAG has also warned that the state government utilised 74.11 percent of borrowed funds for the repayment of previous borrowings (principal) and 25.89 percent for capital expenditure.

As per the CAG's latest report tabled in the state assembly for 2020-21, around 39 percent of the debt (amounting to around ₹25,000 crore) is payable in the next two to five years. Implementing the lofty promises made by the Congress is going to be a challenging task,

The chairmanship of G-20 is a matter of pride for the country ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

CONGRESS GEARING UP

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will lead an all-women march in each state capital and read out a 'women's manifesto' as the Congress gears up to take Bharat Jodo Yatra to booth level



Bombay HC CJ Justice Datta elevated to SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 11: Chief Justice of Bombay High Court Justice Dipankar Datta was Sunday elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court.

Once he takes oath, the number of judges in the top court will go up to 28. The sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court, including the Chief Justice of India, is 34. The Department of Justice in the Union Law Ministry issued a notification announcing the appointment.

Born on February 9, 1965, Justice Datta turned 57 this year and will have a tenure till February 8, 2030, in the apex court where the retirement age is 65.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Justice Dipankar Datta, Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, to be a Judge of the Supreme Court of India with effect from the date he assumes charge of his office," the notification read.

His name was recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium then headed by Justice U U Lalit (now retired) in September last year. Another notification issued by the ministry said Justice Sanjay Vijaykumar Gangapurwala, senior-most judge in the high court after Justice Datta, will be the Acting Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court after the incumbent relin-



Born on February 9, 1965, Justice Datta turned 57 this year and will have a tenure till February 8, 2030, in the apex court where the retirement age is 65

quishes his charge.

Justice Datta was elevated to the bench of the Calcutta High Court as a permanent judge on June 22, 2006.

He was made the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court on April 28, 2020. Justice Datta is the son of late Justice Salil Kumar Datta, who served as a judge of the Calcutta High Court, and brother-in-law of Justice Amitava Roy, who was a former judge of the apex court.

Cops break Sharmila's fast, shift her to hosp

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Dec 11: Police foiled the indefinite fast of YSR Telangana Party (YSRTP) president, Y S Sharmila and shifted her to a hospital here in the small hours of Sunday, after her health deteriorated. Sharmila had launched the indefinite hunger strike at the party headquarters here on Friday in protest against alleged denial of permission to continue her statewide 'padayatra'.

Police forced media personnel, party leaders and cadres to move away from the location and foiled Sharmila's fast before she was "forcefully" shifted to the hospital at around 1.00 AM today, the party said. Sharmila, did not even consume water, which resulted in her health condition deteriorating rapidly, it said.

Doctors, who were monitoring her health, stated that Sharmila's blood pressure and glucose levels had fallen to alarming levels, and expressed concern over dehydration, which could lead to electrolyte imbalance, potent enough to pose danger to her kidneys, a release from the party said.

Sharmila, daughter of former Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, submitted a memorandum to the Ambedkar statue near Hussain Sagar lake on Friday in protest against denial of permission to her 'padayatra' and sought to hold a fast there.

As such fasts are not allowed at the Ambedkar statue, where activities like garlanding and submission of memoranda take place usually. Meanwhile, a statement from the private hospital, where Sharmila was admitted, said she has low blood pressure, weakness and giddiness besides dehydration and orthostatic hypotension.

Rains hit normal life in parts of Andhra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, Dec 11: Rains continue to lash parts of south coast and Rayalaseema regions of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday under the impact of the cyclonic storm Mandous which crossed Tamil Nadu coast on Friday night and has now weakened into low pressure area.

The incessant rains inundated low-lying areas, affecting vehicular traffic, throwing normal life out of gear and damaging crops. Heavy rains lashed SPSR Nellore, Prakasam, Tirupati, Chittoor, Annamayya and YSR Kadapa districts, inundating low-lying areas. Rivulets, streams and lakes were overflowing due to incessant rains since Friday.

According to IMD, heavy to very heavy rainfall occurred at isolated places over south coastal Andhra Pradesh and heavy rainfall at isolated places over Kerala, Tamil Nadu, south interior Karnataka and Rayalaseema during 24 hours ending 8.30 a.m. on Sunday.

SUVs bought with Nirbhaya funds used by Shinde's faction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 11: Some of the vehicles procured by the Mumbai Police earlier this year under the Nirbhaya Fund to fight crime against women are being used for providing Y-plus security to the MLAs and MPs of the Shiv Sena faction led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, a police official said on Sunday.

In June this year, the city police force procured 220 Boleros, 35 Ertigas, 313 Pulsar motorcycles and 200 Activa two-wheelers using the ₹30 crore corpus that it had received under the Nirbhaya fund. The development prompted the op-

position Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) to attack the Shinde-led government, as they asked if the security of the ruling legislators was more important than protecting women.

The Nirbhaya Fund is being given to the state governments by the Centre since 2013 to implement schemes related to women's safety. "After the vehicles were procured in June, they were distributed to all 97 police stations, cyber, traffic and coastal police units in July," the official said.

"Of these vehicles, 47 Boleros were requisitioned from several police stations by the Motor



Transport Department of the Mumbai Police following an order from the VIP Security section of the state police stating that they are required for use as an escort vehicle for MPs and MLAs of the Shinde faction to provide Y-Plus security cover to them," he said. However, 17 of the vehicles which were used for the security

of these lawmakers were returned to police stations after the requirement was fulfilled, he added. "But 30 Boleros are yet to be returned, which has impacted the police patrolling in the jurisdiction of respective police stations," the official said.

Hitting out at the state government, Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant said, "Is the security of ruling MLAs more important than protecting women from abuse? It is appalling and outrageous to see the Nirbhaya Fund, which is meant for the Nirbhayas of Maharashtra being used for the security of MLAs." NCP spokesperson Clyde Crasto

said, "SUVs bought with Nirbhaya Fund diverted to provide Y-plus security to Shinde legislators. Shameful misuse of power by the Shinde-Padnavis government. Eknath Shinde's legislators must hang their heads in shame."

President of NCP's Maharashtra unit Jayant Patil said the Nirbhaya Fund was set up by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government for the protection of women. "It is shocking that vehicles procured for helping the police to carry out their duties of protecting women are being misused for the protection of the breakaway MLAs," he said.

Kuru Kolumn Setback for BJP in Delhi, Himachal

The BJP created a record in Gujarat. But a full-blown war has broken out in Delhi and Himachal BJP after the defeat of the party in MCD and Assembly polls. The BJP had not expected loss in Himachal Pradesh as J P Nadda belongs to the state and the party had decided to retain Jairam Thakur as

Chief Minister despite an adverse feedback. It may be music to the ears of young Anurag Thakur as he will now re-build the party. Anurag's name was doing the rounds earlier also as Chief Minister. Clearly, Himachal may see the return of the Dhimals. But the war is bitter in Delhi as most of its top leaders are sheepish after each one of them lost a majority of seats to AAP in their own constituency. The best performers were Gautam Gambhir and Dr Harsh Vardhan where they were able to ensure the victory of around 50% of wards under their belt. There is a demand that the entire BJP be overhauled and the majority of MPs be denied tickets in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Kejriwal gearing up

Arvind Kejriwal is gearing up to make a mark in the South beginning with Karnataka. The state will go to polls in

March next year and the AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal thinks that people in Karnataka are looking for a new face and party. It is not as if AAP had not tried to expand its wings in Karnataka earlier. The AAP contested the Lok Sabha polls way back in 2014. But much water has flowed in the Cauvery since the AAP's maiden effort since then. The AAP roped in the former director of Infosys, V Balakrishnan, and the founder of India's first low-cost airline, Air Deccan, GR Gopinath. Kejriwal is busy chalking out strategy in Karnataka.

Will Jaiswal get extension?

It is no secret that the CBI has not been playing ball with the powers

that be as was the case earlier. CBI's current director Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, a Maharashtra cadre IPS officer, is made of a different mettle. He is stickler to the rules and considered a tough nut. Since he was selected for the post in May 2021 by a panel composed of the PM, CJI and Leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha, the government also had some hesitation. The government is extremely comfortable with the ED's Director, Sanjay Mishra and gave him a record tenure of almost five years by giving one extension after the other. But the record of CBI under Jaiswal is no less. Since Jaiswal's tenure will end in May 2023, there are reports that the government may consider giving him an extension rather than bring a new person in the election year. The government has already amended the

law enabling it to extend the tenure of ED and CBI directors up to five years.

Agencies press pause button

All of a sudden, the Centre's probe agencies have pressed the pause button in Maharashtra, Punjab and a couple of other states. The ED, CBI and Narcotics Control Bureau are smoking the peace pipe. Though some leaders of rival parties may be summoned by these agencies, there will be no coercive action or pro-active approach. It is said that the BJP leadership wants some breathing space as the political churning is going on and a lot of behind the scenes activities are at a feverish pitch. Therefore, there is no need to accelerate cases against other senior leaders of the Shiv Sena (Thackeray), NCP and Congress.



# international



We are increasing production of the most powerful means of destruction. Including those based on new principles  
DMITRY MEDVEDEV | EX-PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

## LASCAR VOLCANO SPITS ASH

Chile authorities issued an alert after Lascar volcano in the Andes belched ash almost 20,000 ft into the sky. Lascar, which rumbled into action Saturday triggering minor earth tremors. No damage has been reported, however, an initial green warning was raised to yellow which means that the volcano is unstable



## of the day quote

If the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) doesn't bring a formula for holding general elections by December 20, the Punjab and KP assemblies will be dissolved  
FAWAD CHAUDHRY | OPPOSITION'S SENIOR VP, PAKISTAN

It's important to show clearly that we have sufficient capacity to make any would-be aggressor think twice  
KOICHI HAGAUDA | LDP'S (RULING PARTY) POLICY CHIEF, JAPAN

We will focus on our efforts to strengthen these partnerships across a wide range of sectors spanning from businesses to health to peace and security, but our focus will be on Africa next week  
KARINE JEAN-PIERRE | WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

## SHORT TAKES

### Blast kills 3 in UK

London: Three people were killed and several others were missing after a "devastating" explosion Saturday flattened a low-rise apartment block in Jersey, authorities said. Chief Minister Kristina Moore confirmed at least three fatalities, after a suspected gas leak in the Channel island's port capital St Helier. Security camera footage showed a fireball engulfing the three-storey, bayside building followed by thick smoke. The fire was put out but emergency services were conducting "significant work" at the scene, and the rescue operation could take days, police said.

### Shehbaz's son returns home

Lahore: Suleman Shehbaz, the absconding son of Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, returned to the country in the early hours of Sunday after four years of self-exile in London, according to the PML-N, local media reported. His return comes days after the Islamabad High Court barred the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and NAB from arresting him in an assets-beyond-means reference, while hearing his petition for protective bail that would enable him to surrender before a trial court. Suleman had been in London with his family since 2018 when the National Accountability Bureau (FIA) registered multiple cases against him ahead of the general election and he left Pakistan after appearing in a few hearings, Dawn reported.

### SpaceX launches Japan's spacecraft

Washington: A Japanese startup's spacecraft was launched to the Moon Sunday in the country's first-ever lunar mission and the first of its kind by a private company. The launch was carried out by Elon Musk's SpaceX in Cape Canaveral in the US state of Florida after two postponements for additional pre-flight checks. The spacecraft, produced by Tokyo-based startup ispace, blasted off aboard a Falcon 9 rocket, live footage of the launch showed.

### Dorothy Pitman Hughes no more

New York: Dorothy Pitman Hughes, a pioneering Black feminist, child welfare advocate and community activist who co-founded Ms Magazine with Gloria Steinem and appeared with her in one of the most iconic photos of the second-wave feminist movement, has died. She was 84. She died in Tampa, Florida, at the home of her daughter and son-in-law. Her daughter said the cause was old age.

# 1988 Lockerbie bombing suspect in US custody

THE BOMB ON BOARD THE BOEING 747 EN ROUTE TO THE US KILLED ALL 259 PEOPLE ON BOARD AND 11 ON THE GROUND, THE DEADLIEST EVER MILITANT ATTACK IN BRITAIN

REUTERS

London, Dec 11: A man accused of making the bomb that blew up Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988 is in custody in the United States, Scottish prosecutors said Sunday. The United States had announced charges against Abu Agila Masud

two years ago, and Scotland's Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) said he was in custody. "The families of those killed in the Lockerbie bombing have been told that the suspect Abu Agila Mohammad Mas'ud Kheir Al-Marimi (Mas'ud or Masoud) is in US custody," a spokesperson for the COPFS said.



"Scottish prosecutors and police, working with UK government and US colleagues, will continue to pursue this investigation, with the sole aim of bringing those who acted along with al-Megrahi to justice." The COPFS said it would be inappropriate to comment further on a live criminal investigation. In 1991, two other Libyan intelligence operatives were charged in the bombing: Abdel Baset Ali al-Megrahi and Lamem Khalifa Fhimah. Megrahi was found guilty of the bombing, and was jailed for life in 2001. He was later released because he was suffering from cancer, and died in 2012. Fhimah was acquitted of all charges, but Scottish prosecutors have maintained that Megrahi did not act alone. In 2020 the United States unsealed criminal charges against Masud, a suspected third conspirator, adding he had worked as a technical expert in building explosive devices.

## Sunak faces new demands from his fractious party

REUTERS

London, Dec 11: British Conservative politicians Sunday launched two campaigns to address concerns about the direction of the party and the government, the latest challenge to new Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's attempts to unite a fractured party. The Conservative Party has already ousted two Prime Ministers in 2022 - Boris Johnson and Liz Truss - and trails the opposition Labour party in the polls by double digits, with another national election expected in 2024.

China's zero-Covid policy kept its infection rate low but crushed already weak economic growth and prompted complaints about the rising human cost. The policy was later revoked after severe protests in all major cities

REUTERS

Beijing, Dec 11: Beijing's Covid-19 gloom deepened Sunday with many shops and other businesses closed, and an expert warned of many thousands of new coronavirus cases as anger over China's previous Covid policies gave way to worry about coping with infection. Facing a surge in Covid-19 cases, the country is setting up more intensive care facilities and trying to strengthen hospitals as Beijing rolls back anti-virus controls that confined millions of people to their homes, crushed economic growth and set off protests. China dropped most of its strict Covid curbs Wednesday after unprecedented protests against them last month, but cities that were already battling with their most severe outbreaks, like Beijing, saw a sharp decrease in economic activity after rules such as regular testing were scrapped.

## INFECTIONS RISE AFTER PROTESTS

# China's Covid gloom deepens



- FACING COVID-19 SURGE, CHINA EXPANDING HOSPITALS, ICUS
- 10,815 NEW CASES, INCLUDING 8,477 WITHOUT SYMPTOMS
- TOTAL CASE COUNT OF 363,072 IS UP NEARLY 50% FROM OCT 1
- DEATH TOLL IS 5,235, COMPARED WITH 1.1MN FOR THE US

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many businesses have been forced to close as infected workers quarantine at home while many other people are deciding not to go out because of the higher risk of infection. Zhong Nanshan, a prominent Chinese epidemiologist, told state media that the Omicron strain of the virus prevalent in China was

highly transmissible and one infected person could spread it to as many as 18 others. "We can see that hundreds of thousands or tens of thousands of people are infected in several major cities," Zhong said. With regular Covid testing of Beijing residents scrapped and reserved only for groups such as health workers, official tallies for new cases have plunged. "HIGHER RISK" Sunday is a normal business day for shops in Beijing and it is usually bustling, particularly in spots

The transition out of zero-Covid will eventually allow consumer spending patterns to return to normal, but a higher risk of infection will keep in-person spending depressed for months after re-opening  
MARK WILLIAMS | CHIEF ASIA ECONOMIST, CAPITAL ECONOMICS

like the historic Shichahai neighbourhood packed with boutiques and cafes. But few people were out and about Sunday and malls in Chaoyang, Beijing's most populous district, were practically deserted with many salons, restaurants and retailers shut. Economists widely expect China's road to economic health to be uneven as shocks such as labour crunches due to workers calling in sick delay a full-fledged recovery for some time yet. China's economy may grow 1.6% in the first quarter of 2023 from a year earlier, and 4.9% in the second, according to Capital Economics. Epidemiologist Zhong also said it would be some months before a return to normal. "My opinion is in the first half of next year, after March," he said. While China has removed most of its domestic Covid curbs, its international borders are still largely closed to foreigners, including tourists. Inbound travellers are subjected to five days of quarantine at centralised government facilities and three additional days of self-monitoring at home. But there are even hints that that rule could change. Staff at the main international airport in Chengdu city, asked if quarantine rules were being eased, said that as of Saturday whether or not one needed to do the three days of home quarantine would depend on a person's neighbourhood authorities.

## Era of classifying terrorists as bad, good must end: India at UNSC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Dec 11: The era of classifying terrorists as "bad" or "good" on the basis of "political convenience" must end immediately, a concept note circulated by India in the UN Security Council here has said, underlining that categorising terror acts by intent as religious or ideologically motivated will dilute the shared global commitment to fighting terrorism. India, the current president of the 15-nation UN Security Council, will hold two signature events on reformed multilateralism and counter-terrorism to be chaired by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar December 14 and 15. India proposes to organise a briefing of the Security Council December 15 on 'Global counter-terrorism approach - principles and the way forward' under the 'Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts'. Ahead of the meeting, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, in a letter to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, asked that a concept note intended to guide the discussions on the topic be circulated as a document of the Security Council. "The terrorist attacks in New York on September 11, 2001 were a turning point in the global approach to counter-terrorism. Since then, London, Mumbai, Paris, many parts of West Asia and Africa have also experienced terrorist attacks," the concept note last week said. It added that these attacks highlight that the threat of terrorism is grave and universal and that terrorism in one part of the world seriously impacts peace and security in other parts of the globe. "The threat of terrorism is transnational. Terrorist actors and their supporters, facilitators and financiers collaborate while remaining in different jurisdictions to organise acts anywhere in the world. A transnational threat can be defeated only by the collective efforts of all States Members of the United Nations," it said.

## RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

# Drones leave 1.5mn in darkness

Since October, Moscow has been targeting Ukraine's energy infrastructure with large waves of missile and drone strikes

REUTERS

Kyiv, Dec 11: All non-critical infrastructure in the Ukrainian port of Odesa was without power after Russia used Iranian-made drones to hit two energy facilities, leaving 1.5 million people without power, officials said Saturday. "The situation in the Odesa region is very difficult," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address. "Unfortunately, the hits were critical, so it takes more than just time to restore electricity... It doesn't take hours, but a



few days, unfortunately." Norway was sending \$100 million to help restore Ukraine's energy system, he added. Serhiy Bratchuk, spokesperson for Odesa's regional administration, said electricity for the city's population will be restored "in the coming days," while complete restoration of the networks may take two to three months. Odesa had more than 1 million residents before the February 24 invasion that Russia calls a "special military operation" to "denazify" its smaller neighbour. Kyiv says Russia has launched hundreds of Iranian-made Shahed-136 drones at targets in Ukraine, describing the attacks as war crimes due to their devastating effect on civilian life. Moscow says its attacks are militarily legitimate and that it does not target civilians. Ukraine's prosecutor general's office said two power facilities in Odesa region were hit by Shahed-136 drones. Ukraine's armed forces said on Facebook that 15 drones had been launched against targets in the southern regions of Odesa and Mykolaiv, and 10 had been shot down. Britain's defence ministry said Saturday that it believed Iran's military support for Russia was likely to increase in the coming months, including possible deliveries of ballistic missiles.

## TRIP AROUND MOON

# NASA's Orion capsule returns safely to Earth

By coincidence, the return to Earth of Artemis I unfolded on the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 17 moon landing of Gene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt December 11, 1972. They were the last of 12 NASA astronauts to walk on the moon during a total of six Apollo missions starting in 1969

REUTERS

Washington, Dec 11: NASA's Orion capsule barreled through Earth's atmosphere and splashed down in the Pacific ocean Sunday after making an uncrewed voyage around the moon, winding up the inaugural mission of the US agency's Artemis lunar program 50 years to the day after Apollo's final moon landing. The gumdrop-shaped Orion capsule, carrying a simulated crew of three mannequins wired with sen-

sors, plunked down in the ocean off Mexico's Baja California peninsula, executing a key demonstration of how future lunar astronauts would safely return to Earth. "From Tranquility Base to Taurus-Littrow to the tranquil waters of the Pacific, the latest chapter of NASA's journey to the moon comes to a close. Orion, back on Earth," said Rob Navias, a NASA commentator speaking on a live stream. The splashdown capped a 25-day mission less than a week after passing about 127 km above the

moon in a lunar fly-by, and came about two weeks after reaching its farthest point in space, nearly 434,500 km from Earth. The capsule committed to its fiery, 20-minute plunge at 24,500 miles per hour (39,400 kph) into Earth's atmosphere when it shed its service module, exposing a heatshield that reached peak temperatures of nearly 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit (2,760 degrees Celsius). Orion blasted off November 16 from the Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral, Florida, atop NASA's towering next-generation Space Launch System (SLS), now the world's most powerful rocket and the biggest NASA has built since the Saturn V of the Apollo era. The debut SLS-Orion voyage kicked off Apollo's successor pro-



gram, Artemis, aimed at returning astronauts to the lunar surface this decade and establishing a sustainable base there as a stepping

If Artemis I is deemed a success, a crewed Artemis II flight around the moon and back could come as early as 2024, followed within a few more years by the program's first lunar landing of astronauts, one of them a woman, with Artemis III

stone to future human exploration of Mars. By coincidence, the return to Earth of Artemis I unfolded on the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 17 moon landing of Gene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt December 11, 1972. They were the last of 12 NASA astronauts to walk on the moon during a total of six Apollo missions starting in 1969. Re-entry marked the single most critical phase of Orion's journey, testing whether its newly designed heat shield can withstand atmospheric friction and safely protect astronauts that would be on board. Though the capsule encountered some unexpected communication blackouts and an electrical issue during its voyage around the moon, NASA has given high marks to the performance of both SLS and Orion so far, boasting that they exceeded the US space agency's expectations.



# business

## of the day quote

The government will take all possible measures to meet the 230 gigawatt (GW) single-day peak demand expected in April 2023

**ALOK KUMAR** | POWER SECRETARY

We have a plan to easily add 1,200 to 1,500 rooms in about three years' time and that will happen at an estimated capital expenditure of about Rs 1,200 crore to Rs 1500 crore

**KAVINDER SINGH** | MD AND CEO, MAHINDRA HOLIDAYS & RESORTS INDIA

On the domestic front, our industrial production and retail inflation numbers will be announced on December 12, while wholesale inflation numbers will be announced on December 14

**SANTOSH MEENA** | HEAD OF RESEARCH, SWASTIKA INVESTMART

## SHORT TAKES

### Three IPOs to hit market next week

**New Delhi:** Three companies -- Sula Vineyards, Landmark Cars and Abans Holdings -- are set to launch their initial public offerings (IPOs) next week to collectively raise Rs 1,858 crore. The initial share sales of wine producer Sula Vineyards and Abans Holdings, the financial services arm of Abans Group, will open for public subscription December 12, while that of automobile dealership chain Landmark Cars will begin December 13, data with stock exchanges showed. This comes after 10 companies had floated their IPOs in the month of November. In 2022 so far, as many as 33 companies have come out with their IPOs to mop up over Rs 55,000 crore. In 2021, 63 IPOs raised more than Rs 1.19 lakh crore, as per the data.

### Twitter Blue dearer for Apple users

**Washington:** Twitter Inc will relaunch a revamped version of its subscription service Twitter Blue Monday at a higher price for Apple users, the company said. It said users could subscribe to the revamped service that will allow subscribers to edit tweets, upload 1080p videos and get a blue checkmark post account verification, for \$8 per month through the web but for \$11 per month through Apple iOS. Twitter did not explain why Apple users were being charged more than others on the web but there have been media reports that the company was looking for ways to offset fees charged in the App Store. Twitter had initially launched the Twitter Blue early in November before pausing it as fake accounts mushroomed. It was then scheduled to launch again November 29 but was pushed back.

## IGNORING SANCTIONS

# Russia remains India's top oil supplier in Nov

India's appetite for Russian oil swelled ever since it started trading on discount as the West shunned it to punish Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** Russia has for the second month in a row remained India's top oil supplier in November, surpassing traditional sellers Iraq and Saudi Arabia, according to data from energy cargo tracker Vortexa.

Russia, which made up for just 0.2 per cent of all oil imported by India in the year to March 31, 2022, supplied 9,09,403 barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil to India in November.

According to Vortexa, an energy intelligence firm, India imported 8,61,461 bpd of oil from Iraq in November and 5,70,922 bpd from Saudi Arabia. The United States was India's fourth largest supplier at 4,05,525 bpd.

As per Vortexa, India imported just 36,255 barrels per day of crude oil from Russia in December 2021, compared to 1.05 million bpd from Iraq and 9,52,625 bpd from Saudi Arabia.

There were no imports from Russia in the following two months, but they resumed in March, soon after the Ukraine war broke out in late February.

India imported 68,600 bpd of Russian oil in March, while it increased to 2,66,617 bpd in the following month and peaked at 9,42,694 bpd in June. But in June, Iraq was India's top supplier with 1.04 million bpd of oil. Russia, in that month, became India's second-biggest supplier.

Imports dipped marginally in the following two months. They stood at 8,76,396 bpd in September before rising to a record 9,35,556 bpd in October, according to Vortexa.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar December 7 told the Rajya Sabha that Indian refiners

Russian oil imports lead for the second month in a row

Oil supplies from Iraq stands at second spot followed by Saudi, US

From 0.2%, Russia now makes up for more than a fifth of India's oil supplies

Imports from Russia in November were lower than the volumes bought in October



**The Indian government has been vehemently defending its trade with Russia, saying it has to source oil from where it is the cheapest. The imports in November were made ahead of a price cap agreed by the EU on Russian seaborne oil. But, the government has indicated that oil companies will continue to buy oil from Russia outside the price cap**

will continue to look for the best deals in the interest of the country

"We do not ask our companies to buy Russian oil. We ask our companies to buy oil (based on) what is the best option that they can get. Now, it depends on what the market throws up," he had said

while replying to clarifications sought by MPs on his suo moto

The opportunity in India has to be considered to be very significant. There are issues in India not unique to aviation but the regulatory regime and bureaucracy can hinder the pace (of growth)

**WILLIE WALSH** | CHIEF, IATA



## TWITTER HQ ASSETS ON SALE

Twitter is selling "surplus office assets" from its San Francisco headquarters in an auction next month with bids starting at \$25. The items include chairs, pizza ovens, coffee makers, beer dispensers, bikes to charge your phone, a Twitter Bird statue, etc



## M-CAP OF FIVE OF TOP-10 COS LOSE ₹1.67TRN



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** The combined market valuation of five of the 10 most valued firms eroded by Rs 1,67,602.73 crore last week, with Reliance Industries taking the biggest hit.

Last week, the Sensex lost 686.83 or 1.09 per cent amid an overall weak trend in equities.

While Reliance Industries, TCS, Infosys, Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank were the laggards from the top-10 pack, Hindustan Unilever, HDFC Bank, Adani Enterprises, SBI and HDFC emerged as the gainers.

The valuation of Reliance Industries tumbled by Rs 76,821.01 crore to reach Rs 17,65,173.47 crore. Tata Consultancy Services' market capitalisation (mcap) declined by Rs 53,641.69 to Rs 12,04,797.55 crore.

The valuation of Infosys eroded by Rs 29,330.33 crore to Rs 6,60,184.76 crore and that of Bharti Airtel fell by Rs 7,705.08 crore to Rs 4,64,529.84 crore. ICICI Bank's mcap diminished by Rs 104.62 crore to Rs 6,49,102.84 crore.

However, Hindustan Unilever (HUL) added Rs 24,882.17 crore, taking its market valuation to Rs 6,39,370.77. HDFC Bank's valuation jumped Rs 13,493.73 crore to Rs 9,09,600.11 crore and that of Adani Enterprises advanced Rs 8,475.91 crore to Rs 4,55,521.65 crore.

State Bank of India's mcap grew by Rs 7,942.90 crore to Rs 5,50,157.69 crore and HDFC gained Rs 1,129.55 crore to Rs 4,86,755.77 crore.

Reliance Industries retained its top spot in the list of most valued firms, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, ICICI Bank, HUL, State Bank of India, HDFC, Bharti Airtel and Adani Enterprises.

# Power deficit drops to 0.2% in November from 2% in April '22

THE DISCOMS REDUCED THEIR DUES BY ₹24,680CR IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS TILL NOVEMBER 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** Power deficit, or the gap between electricity required and supplied, has fallen from 2 per cent in April this year to 0.2 per cent in November 2022, as per latest government data.

However, the power deficit has increased sequentially from 0.1 per cent (124 million units) in October 2022. It stood at 0.2 per cent (233 million units) in November 2021.

The data showed that the deficit was 2,752 million units (MU) in April this year, which came down to 199 MU in November 2022. The power deficit was 609 MU (0.4 per cent) in May, 796 MU (0.6 per cent) in June, 434 MU (0.3 per cent) in July, 465 MU (0.4 per cent) in August and 312 MU (0.2 per cent) in September.

During the April-November period of this fiscal, power deficit rose to 0.6 per cent from 0.4 per cent in the same period in 2021.

Power deficit in actual terms increased to 5,691 MU in April-November 2022 from 4,058 MU in the year-ago period. Power deficit in the entire fiscal 2021-22 was 5,787 MU (0.4 per cent).

Union Power Minister RK Singh recently told the Lok Sabha in a written reply that against a peak demand of 215 GW, capacity of 408.7 GW has already been installed

and 25,580 MW of thermal power capacity and 76,130 MW of renewable energy capacity is under installation.

The whole country has been connected by one integrated grid which can transfer 112 GW power from one corner of the nation to another, he had stated.

Experts said the meagre power deficit is either because of technical reasons or due to discoms' inability to pay for the required power supply.

They also said the power deficit would be completely eliminated as the government has taken many steps to improve the financial health of the discoms, with main focus on reducing their outstanding dues towards generating companies (gencos).

"With the implementation of Electricity (LPS and Related Matters) Rules, 2022, remarkable improvement has been seen in recovery of outstanding dues of Suppliers including Generating Companies, Transmission Companies and Traders," a power ministry statement had stated.

The total outstanding dues of states which were at Rs 1,37,949 crore as June 3, 2022 have been reduced by Rs 24,680 crore to Rs 1,13,269 crore with timely payment of just four EMIs (equated monthly installments), it had added.



## RENAISSANCE UNDER TATA

# Air India nears historic order for up to 500 jets



REUTERS

**Paris, Dec 11:** Air India is close to placing landmark orders for as many as 500 jetliners worth tens of billions of dollars from both Airbus and Boeing as it carves out an ambitious renaissance under the Tata Group

conglomerate, industry sources said Sunday.

The orders include as many as 400 narrow-body jets and 100 or more wide-bodies, including dozens of Airbus A350s and Boeing 787s and 777s, they said, speaking on condition of anonymity as finishing touches are placed on the mammoth deal in coming days.

Such a deal could top \$100 billion dollars at list prices, including any options, and rank among the biggest by a single airline in volume terms, overshadowing a combined order for 460 Airbus and Boeing jets from American Airlines over a decade ago.

Even after significant expected discounts, the deal would be worth tens of billions of dollars and cap a volatile year for an industry whose jets are back in demand after the pandemic but which is facing mounting industrial and environmental pressures.



BMW India has launched the brand new BMW M340i xDrive in the country December 11. Locally produced at BMW group plant Chennai, the car is available for bookings and deliveries will commence from January 2023 onwards. Vikram Pawah, President and CEO, BMW Group India unveiled the car. Introduced exclusively for the Indian market in 2021, the model is the first high-performance BMW with an M engine to be made in India.

## UNREST, ISOLATION

# Iranian currency slides to new low

REUTERS

**Dubai, Dec 10:** Iran's troubled currency fell to a new low against the US dollar Saturday amid continued unrest and the country's increasing isolation in the face of Western criticism of its security crackdown and ties to Russia.

The dollar was selling for as much as 370,200 rials on the unofficial market Saturday, up from 367,300 Friday, according to the foreign exchange site Bonbast.com.

The rial has lost 13.8% of its value since nationwide protests erupted after the death in police custody of a 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian woman, Mahsa Amini, September 16. The unrest poses one of the biggest challenges to theocratic rule in Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The economic Ecoiran website said traders saw little hope for the revival of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers and saw Western pressure increasing over Tehran's crackdown against the protests and its military ties with Russia.

These include the alleged sales of drones used by Russia in the war in Ukraine, which Tehran and Moscow have denied.

"Some (traders) say current international conditions are such that the chances of reviving the nuclear deal are low, and this has caused cautious buyers to enter the dollar market," Ecoiran said. "The price of this currency is on an upward path."

"From the point of view of some (traders), this news (of U.S. and Western pressure on Iran) can attract the attention of currency speculators," Ecoiran said, adding that the central bank may still be able to support the rial.



# THE GHOST OF INSTAGRAM HAUNTS MICROSOFT'S FUTURE

US Federal Trade Commission December 8 sued Microsoft to block its \$69 billion acquisition of video-game developer Activision Blizzard, arguing that the combination would hurt consumers because it would give the software company an unfair edge against competitors of its Xbox gaming consoles and cloud-gaming business

REUTERS

**New York, Dec 11:** Facebook is Microsoft's antitrust boogeyman. The US regulatory agency, the Federal Trade Commission, is seeking to block the software titan's \$69 billion deal for gaming giant Activision Blizzard, partly to stop domination of the industry as it evolves.

The FTC's leader Lina Khan might be making up for regulators who waved through Mark Zuckerberg's \$1 billion purchase of Instagram. Though Microsoft's deal is different, punishment under Khan's regime seemed inevitable.

The FTC is concerned that Microsoft, the owner of the Xbox

gaming console, will withhold popular games made by Activision including "Call of Duty" and "World of Warcraft" from competing platforms including Sony's PlayStation and Nintendo's Switch. Microsoft has tried to appease this concern. This month, the company led by Satya Nadella agreed to offer games to Nintendo and Sony for 10 years.

The question is what happens after that. Microsoft could try to corner the market by forcing consumers to not only buy the Activision games from Microsoft, but the platform as well. It's not a stretch either. Outlook, Teams, and other Microsoft operating systems are now all a crucial part of daily life that enterprises buy collec-



tively, not to mention the \$1.8 trillion giant's cloud capabilities.

Still, how the future shakes out

for the gaming business is anyone's guess. Microsoft's rationale for buying Activision is to better

We continue to believe that our deal to acquire Activision Blizzard will expand competition and create more opportunities for gamers and game developers

**BRAD SMITH** | PRESIDENT, MICROSOFT

compete in the gaming market against the likes of Tencent and others. Online gaming has few barriers to entry, and consoles are going the way of Atari. Streaming is the future, and in that way, Microsoft could easily be sidelined in the business if it doesn't innovate.

Khan has vowed to rethink the way antitrust laws are applied.

The agency is seeking to reconsider concentration thresholds to be adjusted to consider "alternative metrics" and "qualitative factors" beyond market share. That requires regulators to imagine harms that may not yet exist.

Zuckerberg and the year 2012 loom large in that sense. That's when Meta Platform's Facebook bought Instagram, then a much smaller rival. The threat of dominance was hard to see. But that transaction, small as it was, turned out to catapult Facebook into one of the world's largest beneficiaries of digital ad dollars. Khan may be thinking ahead. But it's the ghost of Facebook that is haunting Microsoft.



# Les Bleus hunt down 3 Lions

England's quarterfinal jinx in WC continues as they go down 1-2 to France in a thrilling encounter

AGENCIES

**Al Khor (Qatar), Dec 11:** Olivier Giroud sent France into a World Cup semifinal clash with Morocco as his late header after Aurelien Tchouameni's opener clinched a gutsy 2-1 win over England here late Saturday night with Harry Kane blazing a penalty over the bar six minutes from time.

Four years ago Giroud did not manage a shot on target in the entire tournament as France won the title but in Qatar he now has four goals and has become his country's record goalscorer along the way.

France are now one win away from becoming the first back-to-back finalists since Brazil in 2002 and two from being the third team to retain the trophy after Brazil in 1962 and Italy in 1938.

Manager Didier Deschamps, who captained them to their first World Cup triumph in 1998 and coached them to their second title four years ago, described the victory as fabulous.

"It was a big game, we played a



**NO STOPPING HIM:** Olivier Giroud (No 9) beats the challenge of two England defenders to head in France's second and winning goal in the quarterfinal encounter Saturday

invitingly into the path of Tchouameni, whose 25-yard low shot flew just inside the post.

England eventually got going, pushing and probing, and France keeper Hugo Lloris was quick off his line to save at the feet of Kane and then parried another drive from England's captain.

Lloris was in action again at the start of the second half, tipping a fierce Jude Bellingham shot over the bar as England came out full of purpose and energy.

The dangerous Bukayo Saka was then tripped by Tchouameni and Kane smashed the penalty high beyond his Tottenham Hotspur teammate Lloris to draw level with forward Wayne Rooney as England's record scorer on 53 goals.

England, beaten semifinalists four years ago, were buoyed by the goal and were playing with huge confidence. However, it was France who scored. Griezmann swung in a perfect centre that Giroud did brilliantly to reach in front of Harry Maguire, planting his header into the slimmest of gaps after 78 minutes.

England were then given another lifeline via VAR when Theo Hernandez flattened Mason Mount but this time Kane sent his spot kick wildly over the bar in a painful reminder of Chris Waddle's effort when they lost the 1990 semifinal shootout to West Germany.

France now face the unlikely of semifinal opponents in Morocco. Deschamps was quick to recognise their worth. "Morocco deserve praise," he said. "Maybe they were not expected to be here (in the semis), but they conceded only one goal and seeing them here is not a surprise at all," the French coach added.

# This penalty miss will haunt me for life: Kane

SKIPPER ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENGLAND'S EXIT

AGENCIES

**Al Khor, Dec 11:** Kylian Mbappé's immense sense of joy was written all over his face after Saturday's game. The France forward's mouth opened as wide as could be and his eyes squinted tight in elation after what he had just witnessed at the World Cup. France's fragile 2-1 lead in a tough quarterfinal match was still intact after England skipper Harry Kane sent a penalty kick high over the bar in the 84th minute.

Kane is one of the most reliable penalty takers in world soccer, and his first chance from the spot in the 54th minute had evened a back-and-forth game at 1-1. Missing the second was a surprise to everyone. Mbappé knew it and let his glee show, a reaction that some may find disrespectful but can easily be excused given what was at stake.

If there was unbridled joy among the French side and their fans, England were beyond consolation. Kane accepted responsibility for his

side's defeat and said the penalty miss would haunt him for the remainder of his life.

"I can't fault my preparation or the details before the game. I felt confident taking it, just didn't execute it the way I wanted to. It will be something I have to live with and take on the chin," Kane told the 'BBC'. "It's tough to take for me personally and the team. We played very well and I couldn't be prouder of the boys. We had better spells, better chances but football comes down to small details. As captain and the one who missed the penalty, I take responsibility for that," Kane added.

Kane's teammates however, were not ready to blame Kane for the loss. "We know how many penalties Harry's scored for us - he scored the first one - how many goals he's contributed for us to even get here," England midfielder Jordan Henderson said. "He'll be stronger for it in the long run," he added.

**I can't blame myself for lack of preparations. It's just that I did not execute the penalty the way I wanted to and we lost the game**

HARRY KANE



**COSTLY MISS:** England captain Harry Kane tries to hide his face after missing the penalty as French players celebrate

STAT FACTS		
	France	England
Possession	58%	42%
Shots on goals	16	8
Shots on target	8	5
Corners	5	2
Penalties	0	2

superb England team who are strong technically and physically," Deschamps said. "It's brilliant for the players to be in the last four again. We got a bit lucky although we gave away two penalties but we kept our lead with our hearts

and our guts," he added.

France really did have to work hard for the win against their arch rivals. It was really an edge-of-the-seat thriller: They went ahead after 17 minutes when, after Antoine Griezmann rolled the ball



**WINNING MOMENT:** Kylian Mbappé and Antoine Griezmann celebrate after France's victory over England, Saturday

## SHORT TAKES

### Title for Yamaguchi

**Bangkok:** Japan's Akane Yamaguchi beat Tai Tzu-Ying of Chinese Taipei 21-18, 22-20 in the final to clinch the women's singles title at the Badminton World Federation (BWF) World Tour Finals, here Sunday. With this, the Japanese became the first women's singles player since Ye Zhaoying in 1997 to claim the All England Open, World Championships and end-of-season finals all in the same year. "She (Tai) kept coming at me, to put pressure on me. But I wanted to be aggressive to hold on to the lead. I don't know if it's the best I've ever played but I did have a good week here," said Yamaguchi after her win. "I am happy that I did not have to play the third game," she added.

### Eves triumph

**Valencia (Spain):** India began their campaign in the FIH Women's Hockey Nations Cup with an emphatic 3-1 win over Chile in a Pool B match here Sunday. Kumari Sangita opened scoring for India with a second minute strike before Sonika (10th) and Navneet Kaur (31st) added to the tally. Villagran Fernanda pulled one back for Chile through a penalty corner conversion in the 43rd minute. All the three Indian goals came from field efforts. India play Japan in their second pool match Monday and their concluding pool game December 14 against South Africa. Incidentally, India had lost to Japan in the 2018 Asian Games final.

### Back to business

**New Delhi:** After a successful 2022, Tokyo Olympics javelin throw gold medalist Neeraj Chopra has begun his training at Loughborough University in England, ahead of the 2023 season. The Indian javelin throw ace took to Instagram to share a video of himself sweating it out Sunday from the University's high-performance centre. "Working hard to get back in shape for the new season," Chopra wrote along with his picture and video. Chopra landed in England a few days ago and will be camped at Loughborough University, which is known for its state-of-the-art sports gym and training facilities, for 63 days. "I am hoping that 2023 will be as good as 2022," Neeraj added.

## Ban threat looms large on Messi

Disciplinary proceedings start against Argentina skipper

AGENCIES

**Doha, Dec 11:** Argentina may face a huge crisis ahead of their World Cup semifinal match against Croatia. Sources said Sunday that FIFA has initiated disciplinary proceedings against Argentina skipper Lionel Messi following the criticism that he had lashed out at the match referee Antonio Mateu Lahoz after the quarterfinal game Friday against the Netherlands.

It has also been alleged that during the quarterfinal game, Messi was involved in an argument with Dutch coach Louis van Gaal. Messi had apparently rushed to the touchline and got into an argument with the veteran coach. It has also been alleged that during a TV interview immediately after the game, Messi had abused a Dutch player. If any one of these allegations is proved, then Messi could face a three-game ban. If that happens, then Messi will miss not only the semifinal, but also the final if Argentina qualify for the summit clash.

The game between Argentina and the Netherlands bordered on high tension with players and the coaching staff coming close to clashing on a number of occasions. Apart from verbal spats, fights broke out during and after the game. Denzel Dumfries of the Netherlands received two yellow cards and was sent off after the penalty shootout. After the match, Lahoz was criticized by Messi and Argentinian goalkeeper Amy Martinez.

FIFA has decided to open disciplinary proceedings not just against Messi, but also against the Argentina Football Association. The association may also face stiff financial penalty for the actions of the players on the field.

It will indeed be a huge blow for Argentina if Messi is banned from taking part in the semifinals. He has been the fulcrum of the side. In the quarterfinals against the Dutch, he created one goal and scored the other from a penalty.

The semifinal between Argentina and Croatia will be played Friday.



Lusail Stadium

# Moroccans across the world erupt in ecstasy

HISTORIC FEAT BY ATLAS LIONS AS THEY REACH WC SEMIFINALS



Moroccan football fans celebrate in the national capital of Rabat after their team's historic win over Portugal, Saturday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Rabat, Dec 11:** Ecstatic Moroccans poured into the streets of their capital and in cities across the North African country Saturday, waving flags, honking horns and lighting flares to celebrate the national soccer team's historic victory over Portugal at the World Cup.

Morocco beat the Portuguese 1-0 in Qatar, knocking Cristiano Ronaldo out of the tournament and making the Atlas Lions the first African and first Arab team to reach the World Cup semifinals.

The capital, Rabat, was bursting with joy while Morocco fans also celebrated in the streets of Doha and in cities across Europe, where many Moroccans live.

"We were so stressed as if we were on the pitch with the players, but now we want the trophy," said Mohamed Amine, who was celebrating here. "The players, this team lifted Morocco's reputation high among the football nations of the world," he added.

The victory has Morocco fans full of confidence for the days ahead even though they now face defending

champions France in the semifinals Wednesday.

"I am so happy that I don't even know if I can express myself, but if we are here now, I believe that we can make it to the final," Yasmine Benmehredj said during celebrations in the Moroccan capital. "I think we can win this World Cup."

In Qatar, hundreds of elated fans clad in green and red outside Al Thumama Stadium celebrated Morocco's win, chanting, ululating, banging on drums and waving the national flag. Some chanted: "Congratulations to us for this beginning! It will only go on and on!"

"This is unbelievable. It's the first time ever," said Saleh al-Rayes, a 27-year-old fan from Saudi Arabia in Doha. As an Arab at the first World Cup held in the Middle East, al-Rayes said he feels a sense of inclusion and representation in the world of soccer, a spot that has been dominated by European and South American teams. "You come in as an underdog and then you win. It's Arab pride," al-Rayes said. "All Arab countries were here in the stadium supporting Morocco," he added.

Morocco's phenomenal run in Qatar also reverberated Saturday across Africa. "Continental history!" the Confederation of African Football wrote on Twitter after Morocco's victory.

## Injured Rohit ruled out of first Test against Bangladesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chattogram, Dec 11:** India captain Rohit Sharma was ruled out Sunday of the first Test against Bangladesh, starting here Wednesday, due to a thumb injury. Rohit had hurt his left thumb December 7 while fielding in the second ODI against Bangladesh in Mirpur. Sources had earlier also said that chances of Rohit being available for the Test series against Bangladesh was doubtful. However, the BCCI was waiting for the official confirmation from its medical team.

"India captain Rohit Sharma met with a specialist in Mumbai for his left thumb injury, which he sustained during the second ODI against Bangladesh. He has been advised appropriate management for this injury and will not be available for the first Test against Bangladesh," the BCCI said in a statement.

"The BCCI medical team will take a call on his availability for the second and final Test at a later stage. The All-India Senior Selection Committee has named Abhimanyu Easwaran as his replacement for the first Test," the BCCI added.

Pacer Navdeep Saini and uncapped Saurabh Kumar were named as replacements for injured Mohammad Shami and Ravindra Jadeja earlier by the BCCI. Left-arm pacer Jaydev Unadkat was also added to the Indian squad a couple of days back.

# India level series with super over win

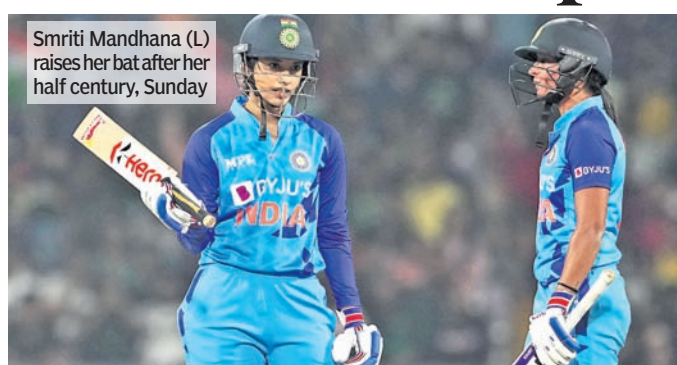
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Navi Mumbai, Dec 11:** Smriti Mandhana (79, 49b, 9x4, 4x6) sizzled in regulation time as well as the super over to script a famous win for India against the mighty Australia in a high-scoring second women's T20 International here Sunday.

Tahlia McGrath (70 n o, 51b, 10x4, 1x6) and Beth Mooney (82 n o, 54b, 13x4) had earlier plundered the Indian bowling attack with their belligerent knocks to power Australia 187 for one after the visitors were asked to bat.

McGrath and opener Mooney shared an entertaining 158-run stand off 99 balls for their second successive 100-plus stand. The partnership was highest ever for Australia for any wicket in T20s.

In front of a packed DY Patil Stadium, India were able to take the match right down to the wire after



Smriti Mandhana (L) raises her bat after half century, Sunday

a whirlwind 76-run opening wicket stand between Mandhana and Shafali Verma (34, 23b, 4x4, 1x6). India needed 14 off the last over bowled by Megan Schutt and Devika Vaidya managed to find two fours to reach 187 for five and tie the game, forcing the match into the super over: One should also not forget the knock played by Richa Ghosh (25 n o, 13b, 3x6).

The hosts scored 20 runs in the super over bowled by Heather Graham, thanks to a six and four from Mandhana after Ghosh smashed the first ball for a maximum.

Renuka Thakur was able to defend that total under extreme pressure after getting rid of Alyssa Healy, handing Australia their first loss of the year. In the process, India levelled the five-game series 1-1.

Earlier in the run chase, Mandhana changed gears after the fall of Shafali who was caught at extra cover off leg spinner Alana King. Mandhana then shared a 61-run stand with skipper Harmanpreet Kaur who struggled for 22-ball 21.

Mandhana dispatched a full toss from King over deep mid-wicket for a maximum before slog-sweeping her for a four to bring her half century. Her sublime knock brought the equation down to 55 runs off the last 30 balls. After Mandhana's departure Ghosh hit a barrage of sixes to bring down the equation to 18 runs off 12 balls.

**Brief scores:** Australia 187 for 1 (Beth Mooney 82 n o, Tahlia McGrath 70 n o); India 187 for 5 (Smriti Mandhana 79, Shafali Verma 34, Richa Ghosh 25 n o). Match tied. **India won in super over**

# Odisha swimmers shine

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** Odisha swimmers hogged the limelight in the Swimming Federation of India (SFI) qualifying zonal meet which ended Sunday at the Biju Patnaik Swimming Pool inside the Kalinga Stadium here.

On the concluding day of the event, Arpita Sahu of the state won gold in the 100m butterfly segment. Then Mannata Mishra emerged victorious in the girls' 200m breaststroke and individual medley events. Later in the day, Sonia Patel sprinted to glory in the 50 metres freestyle, 50 metres butterfly and 100m freestyle events to make it an eventful day for Odisha. As expected Pratyasha Ray took home the gold for Odisha in the 200 metres backstroke.

Among the Odisha men swimmers, Jadu Budek won silver in the 100m and 50m butterfly and 100m freestyle while Bikash Haripal from



Odisha stood second in 200m and 800m freestyle events.

The men's segment was dominated by swimmers from Chhattisgarh. Ayan Ali Khan won the gold in 1,500m and 800m freestyle races while compatriot Rudrakesh Sahu was the winner in the 200m and 100m freestyle, 100m butterfly and 200m individual medley events.