



सत्यमेव जयते

Government of Rajasthan



# 4

## जनसेवा, सबका सम्मान आगे बढ़ता राजस्थान

### वर्ष सेवा ही कर्म, सेवा ही धर्म

“I extend my heartiest congratulations to one and all on the successful completion of 4 years of the responsive, transparent and accountable Government. I wish for a healthy, prosperous and a progressive life to all the citizen of Rajasthan. Come, let's reiterate our dedication and commitment to work together tirelessly for an all round development of Rajasthan.”

**Ashok Gehlot**  
Chief Minister, Rajasthan

## MODEL STATE RAJASTHAN

### Mukhya Mantri Chiranjeevi Swasthya Beema Yojna

Cashless Health Insurance of ₹10 lakh and Accidental Insurance of ₹5 lakh. So far, free treatment of ₹3,195 crore to 27.60 lakh patients.

### Old Pension Scheme

OPS implemented to all the Government Employees appointed from 1st January 2004.

### Government Jobs

1.36 lakh Government jobs given. 1.21 lakh Government recruitments in process. Recruitment proposed for additional 1 lakh posts.

### Indira Gandhi Shahri Rozgar Guarantee Yojna

Employment guarantee of 100 days in urban areas. So far, more than 3.5 lakh job cards issued.

### Rajiv Gandhi Rural Olympic Games

World's largest sports event. Approximately 30 lakh people took part. Urban Olympic Games from 26th January 2023. These Sports will be organised every year.

### Palanhaar Yojna

Financial assistance of ₹500 to ₹2500 per month to orphans and other children as per eligibility. So far, 6.64 lakh children benefitted.

### Rajiv Gandhi Scholarship for Academic Excellence

Every year, the State Government bears education expense of 200 students to study abroad.

### Mahatma Gandhi English Medium School

Quality education in 1670 English Medium Schools in the State.

### Scooty Distribution to Girl Students

Distribution of 20,000 Scooty every year to school and college going girls.

### Mukhya Mantri Nishulk Uniform Vitran Yojna

Two sets of uniform, given free of cost to the students of Class 1 to 8 in Government Schools.

### Mukhya Mantri Bal Gopal Yojna

Distribution of milk to students of Class 1 to 8 in Government Schools on every Tuesday and Friday.

### Development through Technology

Unique IT Institute- Rajiv Gandhi Fintech Digital Institute, Jodhpur.  
Rajasthan Institute of Advanced Learning for advanced research techniques in Medi-Tech, Climate-Tech, Agri-Tech etc.  
Plug and Play facility for startups in Rajiv Gandhi Knowledge Innovation Hub at Jaipur, Jodhpur and Kota.  
Finishing School- R-CAT

### Social Security Pension

Pension to approximately 1 crore people including elderly, specially abled, widows and single women.

### Affordable Electricity for Households

Zero electricity bill of 38.18 lakh families.

### Affordable Electricity for Farmers

No increase in agriculture electricity tariff. For this an annual subsidy of ₹16,000 crore.

### Mukhya Mantri Kisan Mitra Urja Yojna

Additional subsidy of ₹1000 per month to farmers on agriculture electricity connections. Zero electricity bill of 8 lakh farmers.

### Udaan Yojna

Providing 12 Sanitary Napkins free per month to girls and women. Approximately 1.45 crore adolescent girls and women benefitted.

### Indira Rasoi

Nutritious and quality meal for ₹8 only. Currently 951 Indira Rasoi functional in the state. A subsidy of ₹17 per Thali borne by the State Government.

### Mukhya Mantri Dugdh Utpadak Sambal Yojna

Subsidy of ₹5 per litre to milk producers. ₹718 crore of subsidy given, till now.





## JOHNNY DEPP REPRISES JACK SPARROW LOOK TO FULFIL WISH OF TERMINALLY ILL BOY

Hollywood star Johnny Depp resumed the role of Captain Jack Sparrow as he sent a sweet message of support to a terminally ill fan. The 59-year-old put on the costume to send a loving message of support to a terminally ill 11-year-old boy, as he battles a heart condition.

## JANE FONDA SAYS SHE'S IN REMISSION FROM CANCER

Hollywood star Jane Fonda's cancer is in remission, the star announced. "BEST BIRTHDAY PRESENT EVER!!!" wrote Fonda, who turns 85 on December 21. "Last week I was told by my oncologist that my cancer is in remission and I can discontinue chemo."



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

#### ARIES

For no reason whatsoever, you may clam up today. Of course, you will give credit to others wherever they've contributed. But you need to be more generous than that, says Ganesh, and share the secrets of your success with your compatriots. Also, do you really need to buy that \$100 wallet?

#### TAURUS

It is about time that you stopped running from your problems and stand up and face them, suggests Ganesh. Your loved ones will bask in your material generosity today. You will be magnanimous with the wallet to impress members of the opposite sex. Don't forget that time is also money, advises Ganesh.

#### GEMINI

It is better for you to swim with the current in all of today's dealings, suggests Ganesh. This will help you effortlessly deal with even the most morbid state of affairs. No need to be a hero, today. Pleasure is the key word for you.

#### CANCER

You have always been quite prudent when it comes to spending your hard-earned moolah, yet today you may feel stingier. And, you will rightly be so, for there may be unnecessary burdens and demands made on you by your near and dear ones.

#### LEO

You may not get the desired results inspite of working hard. You need to keep your weaknesses in mind, and your mistakes, before starting anew again. You will need to do more than necessary, if required, to make sure that your business relationships stay strong.

#### VIRGO

The time today is ripe to venture into a new business. Projects that have been put-off will finally be completed. Looking into the week ahead, you are most likely to give yourself an energy zap. Parties will be all fun and entertainment.

#### LIBRA

Ganesh says that for people you may appear to be a miser but when it comes to your closed ones you will never hold back or hesitate to spend. Today is a good day to take your loved ones shopping. You may overspend your budget but the spending will give you a feeling of happiness and contentment. Ganesh showers you with his blessings

#### SCORPIO

The day just went from bad to worse today, says Ganesh. Troubles are coming in faster and thicker than a locust swarm. But keep a leash on yourself, says Ganesh, and steer clear of it all. Take criticism in your stride today and pay attention to what is being said, not who is saying them.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Your far-sightedness and brilliance will not only impress your peers, but also help you to rope in big clients and huge projects. Cheers to that! Thanks to your systematic and disciplined approach, you are entitled to be the 'most desirable' employee of the company.

#### CAPRICORN

Now is the perfect time to showcase your talents and skills. You are all geared up to hit your target and do everything that is needed to be done. Your efforts will not go in vain as they will bear fruits for sure, says Ganesh. You will spend quality time with your family member and catch with old friends.

#### AQUARIUS

You will aim for the bull's eye today. Whatever you'll do today, will be done with your focus set firmly on your target, says Ganesh. You will not waste your resource on something unfruitful, and such an attitude will make your journey smoother and faster.

#### PISCES

You will find favourable conditions at work as you co-ordinate with your colleagues and seniors to tackle tough problems. You will be able to get the desirable results for all the effort you put in, in the office, says Ganesh.

## Esha roped in as brand ambassador for Khelraja

Mumbai: Actress Esha Gupta roped in as brand ambassador for the iGaming platform Khelraja. Its latest association comes close on the heels of its partnership with Manchester United and France legend Patrice Evra and is a momentous development for the growth of Khelraja brand as well as Southeast Asia's larger iGaming ecosystem.

As one of Indian cinema's hottest and boldest divas with films such as *Rustom* and *Jannat 2* under her belt, Esha Gupta will help the brand strengthen its position as a classy, reliable, and fun-filled online gaming platform. Her work in Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi cinema will also further accelerate the adoption of online gaming amongst regional audiences and raise Khelraja's profile as a premium iGaming brand across key demographics.

Esha Gupta added, "As one of the top iGaming platforms in Southeast Asia, Khelraja offers a bouquet of options for digital-first people like me, who play online games while also getting a chance to earn real money rewards. I am delighted to be representing Khelraja as its brand ambassador and am looking forward to representing the brand's offerings across channels".

AGENCIES

## Swara's take on trolls for Besharam Rang

Mumbai: Swara Bhaskar has responded to trolls attacking Deepika Padukone, Shah Rukh Khan and the makers of their new song *Besharam Rang*. *Besharam Rang* has been courting controversies ever since it came out earlier this week which features Shah Rukh and Deepika grooving in Spain.

Swara shared a screenshot of a news article that stated the BJP-led government in Madhya

Pradesh may ban the release of the new film for showing 'Muslim man groping woman wearing saffron.' She posted the screengrab on Twitter and wrote, "Milliye humare desh ke sattadhari netoan se. Abhinetriyon ke kapde dekhne se fursat milti, to kya pata kuch kar bhi lete (Meet our country's leaders in power. They may have done some work, had they had some time left after oggling at actor's dresses)."

On Wednesday, Madhya Pradesh home minister Narottam Mishra said that *Besharam Rang* 'has been shot with a dirty mindset'.

She also took a dig at the media sensationalising the trolling. A Twitter user wrote, "Criminals joining ministries is no longer news. Economists joining a Yatra is".

AGENCIES

## Big B reflects on freedom of expression

Mumbai: In a rare moment, megastar Amitabh Bachchan spoke about civil liberties and freedom of expression in films.

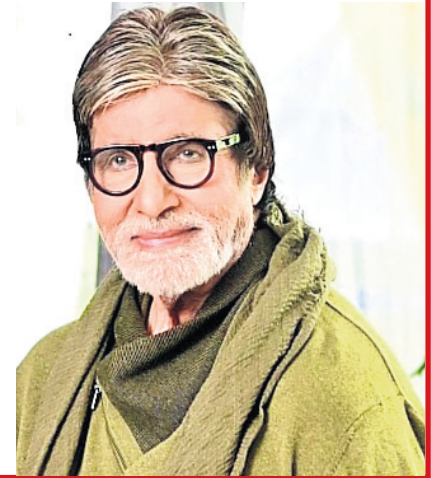
Big B spoke about cinema and censorship. He said, "The 1952 Cinematograph Act set out the structure of censorship as it stands today upheld by the film certification board (Central Board of Film Certification). But even now, ladies and gentlemen—and I am sure my colleagues on stage will

agree—questions are being raised on civil liberties and freedom of expression."

"Since early times there have been many changes in cinema content. From mythological films and socialist cinema to the advent of the angry young man and the current brand of historicals, couched in fictionalised jingoism, along with moral policing, the range has kept audiences reflecting on the politics and social concerns of

the times," the megastar said. He continued, "The festival (KIFF) has always celebrated the inclusive spirit of cinema beyond the confines of what Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore called 'narrow domestic walls'. I salute you Kolkata for giving me my first job and giving Jaya her first film but most of all, I salute you for your artistic temperament that embraces the essence of plurality and equality. This is what makes Bengal so special."

AGENCIES



## Vidya opens up about pay parity

Mumbai: Actress Vidya Balan opened up about the lack of pay parity in Hindi cinema in a roundtable conversation where she was joined by Nimrat Kaur, Huma Qureshi and Mrunal Thakur.

Female actors' are getting paid less than their male counterpart was raised in the discussion. The

Sherani actor responded by saying she is happy with what she is being paid in the context of her films. In the roundtable discussion, Vidya was joined by actors Mrunal Thakur, Nimrat Kaur

and Huma Qureshi. Commenting on the issue of pay parity, Vidya said, "I don't know about pay parity because I am not doing films alongside the 'big heroes'. I think that's where it comes into

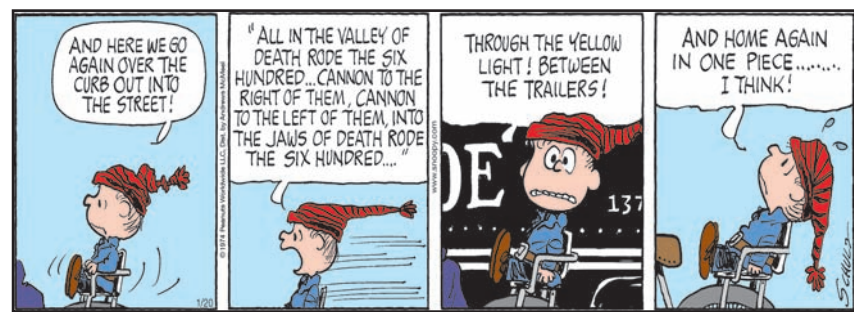
play. But if you had to see the overall percentage of what I get paid... within the budget of a film to what a hero gets paid, I think the percentage is the same. Now their films cost 10 times more than what my films do, so obviously I am getting paid ten times less. But, within my construct I am happy."

AGENCIES



### FUN post

#### PEANUTS



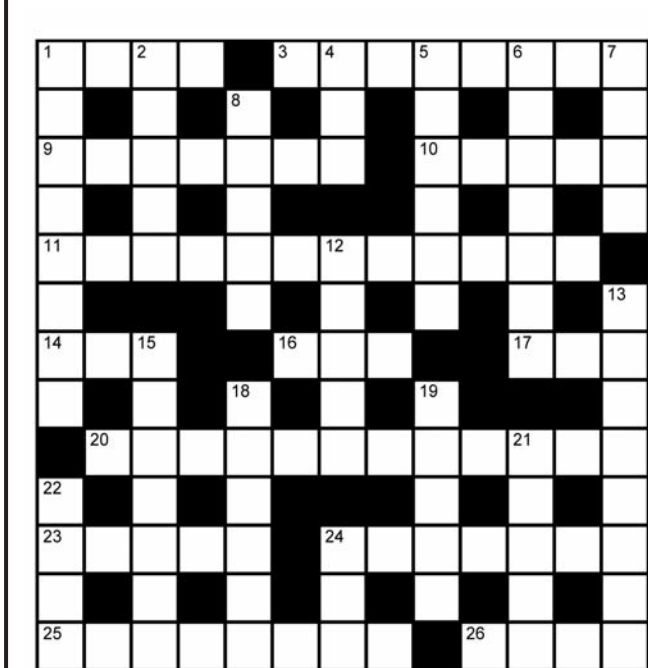
#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### BREVITY



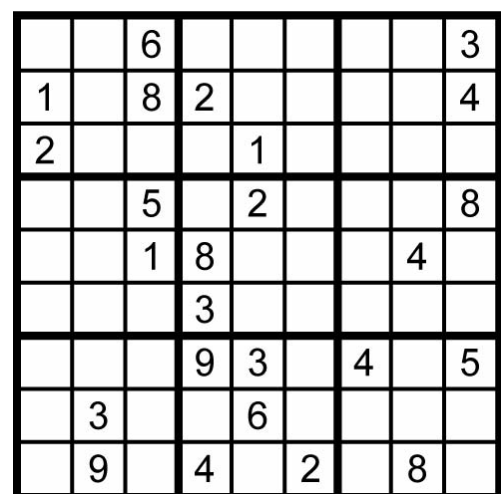
#### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Soybean paste
  - 3 Endurance contest
  - 9 Sir Walter \_\_\_\_\_
  - 10 Cupid's projectile
  - 11 Adventurer
  - 14 Piercing tool
  - 16 Quiche, e.g.
  - 17 Child's toy
  - 20 Desk drawer contents (7,5)
  - 23 Motif
  - 24 Dreamlike
  - 25 Pilgrim
  - 26 Consumer
  - 6 Farmer's reward
  - 7 Tidings
  - 8 Alcove
  - 12 Merger
  - 13 Diamond
  - 15 Unlawful act
  - 18 Goddess of wisdom
  - 19 Fifth wheel
  - 21 Burns and Allen, e.g.
  - 22 Potpourri
  - 24 Take to court
- Down
- 1 Sharpshooter
  - 2 Latin dance
  - 4 Volcanic fallout
  - 5 Kobuk Valley National Park locale

#### 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.

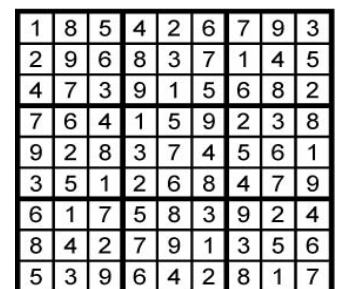


#### SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





## COMPLACENT VIDYA

Actor Vidya Balan opens up about the lack of pay parity in the Hindi film industry

LEISURE



## MAJOR ATTACK ON UKRAINE

Russia fires more than 70 missiles at Ukraine Friday in one of its biggest attacks since the start of the war

INTERNATIONAL P8



## INDIA IN COMMAND

Shubman Gill and Cheteshwar Pujara score splendid centuries to put India in control of the first Test against B'desh

SPORTS BACK PAGE

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# Rahul prods 'sleeping Centre' over China



AGENCIES

**Jaipur, Dec 16:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged Friday that China is preparing for war and the Indian government is sleeping over it and trying to ignore the threat.

He also alleged that China has taken away 2,000 square kilometres of Indian territory, killed 20 Indian soldiers and is "thrashing our jawans in Arunachal Pradesh."

"I can see the threat of China very clearly. I have been clear on this for the last two-three years, but the government is trying to hide it and ignore it. This threat can neither be hidden nor ignored. Going by their full offensive preparation that is on in Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh, the Indian government is asleep," Gandhi told a press conference here.

ference here.

"The government does not want to hear this but their (China's) preparation is on. The preparation is for war. It is not for incursion, but for war. If you look at their weapon pattern, what they are doing - they are preparing for war. Our government hides this and is not able to accept it," the former Congress chief said.

He said this is happening because the Narendra Modi government does event-based work and does not work strategically.

"They think in terms of event management but where geostrategy is involved, event-based action does not work, power works there. I have said three-four times that we should be careful and understand what is happening. They keep making statements, I see the external affairs minister keeps making remarks, I should not say it, but he should deepen his understanding," Gandhi said.

The Congress has been accusing the BJP-led government of succumbing to pressure from China and not taking on the neighbouring country after its frequent transgressions at the border.



**FIREPOWER:** Ukrainian soldiers fire a Pion artillery weapon system at Russian positions near Bakhmut in Donetsk region, Ukraine

AP/PTI PHOTO

# Row over Pak min's personal attack on Modi

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** India Friday launched a no-holds-barred attack on Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari for his 'uncivilised' outburst against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said the comments were a 'new low' even for that country.

In a strong condemnation, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the Pakistan foreign minister's 'frustration' would be better directed towards the masterminds of terrorist enterprises in his own country that has made terrorism a part of its 'state policy'.

"Pakistan is a country that glorifies Osama bin Laden as a martyr, and shelters terrorists like (Zakiur Rehman) Lakhvi, Hafiz Saeed, Masood Azhar, Sajid Mir and Dawood Ibrahim. No other country can boast of having 126 UN-designated terrorists and 27 UN-designated terrorist entities," Bagchi said.

In a highly objectionable comment Thursday, Bilawal Bhutto had said: "Osama bin Laden is dead, but the butcher of Gujarat lives and he is the Prime Minister of India." He was reacting to Foreign Minister S Jaishankar calling Pakistan the 'epicentre of terrorism' in a powerful takedown.

Lashing out at Bhutto-Zardari, Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi said: "Normally that is not the way the foreign minister of any sovereign nation speaks. But it is Pakistan. What can you expect from it? These are the people who have butchered people in Kashmir. These are the butchers of Punjab. These are the butchers of Karachi," she told reporters.

The BJP dubbed Bhutto's personal comments against Prime Minister Modi as "highly shameful and derogatory" and said it will hold nationwide protests against them Saturday.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Isn't the minister insinuating the Censor Board Chief appointed by his gov't not sanskari enough?

# BLAME GAME ON

BJP urges state government to address the unprecedented situation without any further delay, while BJD blames the Centre for the delay in setting up of the HC bench

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Friday indulged in blame game over the establishment of a permanent bench of Orissa High Court in western parts of the state in the wake of the arrest of 43 lawyers and suspension of licenses of all advocates of Sambalpur for violence during a protest over the same issue.

Five BJP MPs from western Odisha -- Suresh Pujari, Basant Panda, Sangeeta Singh Deo, Nitesh Ganga Deb and Jua Oram -- Friday wrote a letter to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for a fruitful resolution of the matter.

Speaking to reporters here, Bargarh MP Suresh Pujari held the state government responsible for the present situation in Sambalpur. He alleged that had the state government taken early measures, the situation could have been avoided.

The Union Law Minister has made statements in the Parliament and written letters to the Odisha government several times for an agreeable resolution towards establishment of the permanent bench of the Orissa High Court in the western part of Odisha, the MP said.

"The delay and lack of commitment of the state government neither in holding consultation



ORISSA HIGH COURT BENCH

government to address the unprecedented situation without any further delay. They demanded the state to release the arrested lawyers and take up the matter with the Bar Council of India to revoke the suspension of licenses of the lawyers in the interest of the poor litigants as well as restoration of peace, tranquility and conducive healthy atmosphere in the state.

Commenting on the issue, BJD MP Sasmit Patra blamed the Centre for the delay in setting up of the HC bench.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has written letters to the Centre several times before and again in September 5, 2018 assuring the Centre to provide all adequate resources including infrastructural and financial resources for setting up of the western Orissa High Court bench, Patra said.

"Despite the CM's blank cheque for all works in this regard, why the Centre is not proceeding to name the location in consultation with Orissa HC is surprising," he said.

The Rajya Sabha member said the Centre can only establish the High Court bench through Parliament by exercising its powers under Entry-78 of the Union list in the Constitution.

with the Chief Justice of Orissa High Court and Governor of Odisha nor providing the composite proposals sought by the Union Law Ministry has led to the present unpleasant law and order situation leading to the arrest of dozens of lawyers in Sambalpur and suspension of licenses of 43-odd lawyers for one and a half year and suspension of the license of all the lawyers of Sambalpur Bar Association till further order," said Pujari, who is a member of the same bar association.

As per procedure, he said, the state government should submit a composite proposal mentioning the exact location for establishment of the HC bench, its jurisdiction and assurance to provide required infrastructure for it.

The BJP MPs urged the state

# Teacher hits girl with scissors, throws her off school building

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** A Class V student in a Delhi school was allegedly hit with a pair of scissors by her teacher who then chopped her hair and flung her off the building's first floor, fracturing her facial bone, officials said Friday.

According to the police, the teacher locked herself inside a classroom with students and "violently" threw water bottles before she picked up the girl and tossed her from the balcony.

According to doctors, the girl,

aged around 11, has sustained fracture in a facial bone. Police said the accused teacher, Geeta Rani Deshwal (26), has been arrested.

The incident took place at around 11 am at the Delhi Nagar Nigam Balika Vidyalaya. Papers, books and bags lay scattered in the classroom as students ran out of the classroom in panic, as she allegedly even threatened to harm some of them, the police said. The girl's father said that his daughter was bleeding after she was thrown by the teacher, and she sustained injuries to her jaw and legs.

# Beggar donates ₹1L to temple

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** An aged woman has donated ₹1 lakh that she has earned through begging in her entire life for renovation of an old Jagannath temple at Phulbani in Kandhamal district.

Tula Behera has been begging for alms near various temples in Phulbani for the past 40 years. She was married to Prafulla Behera, a differently-abled person. Later, Prafulla passed away leaving Tula alone. As the lady does not have any near or dear ones, she has surrendered herself at the feet of Lord Jagannath. On the occasion of Dhanu Sankranti Friday, Tula donated her earnings of ₹1 lakh to the managing committee of the Jagannath temple.



Chairman of the committee Sunashir Mohapatra along with other members of the panel received the money from Behera.

"I was saving the money for years by begging for alms. I neither have parents nor children. Whatever money I have saved during my life is donated to Lord Jagannath," Tula

said. She requested the temple managing committee to utilise the money for the renovation of the old Jagannath temple in Phulbani.

"When she approached me, I was reluctant to take the money from her. But, when she insisted, we decided to accept it," said a member of the committee.

# A satellite to map the world's oceans, lakes, rivers

NICKNAMED SWOT, THE SATELLITE IS NEEDED MORE THAN EVER AS CLIMATE CHANGE WORSENS DROUGHTS, FLOODING AND COASTAL EROSION

AGENCIES

**California, Dec 16:** A US-French satellite that will map almost all of the world's oceans, lakes and rivers rocketed into orbit Friday.

The predawn launch aboard a SpaceX rocket from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California capped a highly successful year for NASA.

Nicknamed SWOT — short for Surface Water and Ocean Topography — the satellite is needed more than ever as climate change worsens droughts, flooding and coastal erosion, according to scientists.

"We're going to be able to see things that we could just not see before... And really understand where water is at any given time," said



Benjamin Hamlington at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in

Pasadena, California. About the size of an SUV, the

satellite will measure the height of water on more than 90 per cent of Earth's surface, allowing scientists to track the flow and identify potential high-risk areas. It will also survey millions of lakes as well as 1.3 million miles (2.1 million kilometres) of rivers, from headwater to mouth.

The satellite will shoot radar pulses at Earth, with the signals bouncing back to be received by a pair of antennas, one on each end of a 33-foot (10-metre) boom.

It should be able to make out currents and eddies less than 13 miles (21 kilometres) across, as well as areas of the ocean where water masses of varying temperatures merge.

NASA's current fleet of nearly 30 Earth-observing satellites cannot

make out such slight features. And while these older satellites can map the extent of lakes and rivers, their measurements are not as detailed, said the University of North Carolina's Tamlin Pavelsky, who is part of the mission.

Perhaps most importantly, the satellite will reveal the location and speed of rising sea levels and the shift of coastlines, key to saving lives and property. It will cover the globe between the Arctic and Antarctica at least once every three weeks, as it orbits more than 550 miles (890 kilometres) high. The mission is expected to last three years.

NASA and the French Space Agency collaborated on the USD 1.2 billion project, with Britain and Canada chipping in.

# NO AADHAAR, NO PROBLEM FOR VOTERS

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** The names of people who do not share their Aadhaar number to link with the election identity card will not be struck off the voters list, the government said Friday, noting that the exercise is voluntary.

The Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021, allows electoral registration officers to require the existing or prospective elector to provide the Aadhaar number for the "purpose of establishing identity" on a "voluntary basis," Law Minister Kiren Rijju said in Lok Sabha.

He was responding to a question on the linkage of Aadhaar with electoral rolls. The Election Commission has launched a programme to collect the Aadhaar

number of existing and prospective electors on a voluntary basis from August 1 in all the states and UTs.

It is voluntary to link Aadhaar with a Voter ID and consent is obtained from the elector for Aadhaar authentication in Form 6B which was recently introduced, he said.

However, the minister made it clear that "there is no provision for withdrawing the consent" to share Aadhaar details.

Asked whether the name of the voters whose voter IDs are not linked with Aadhaar will be struck off from the voters' list, he replied in the negative.

The minister informed the Rajya Sabha Thursday that more than 54 crore of the nearly 95 crore total voters have opted to link their Aadhaar details with the voter list.





**TECH CONFAB:** Utkal University Vice-Chancellor Sabita Acharya, in presence of IT Secretary Manoj Kumar Mishra and PG Council chairman Durga Shankar Pattanaik, inaugurated the first International Conference on Innovations in Intelligent Computing and Communications (ICIICC-2022) on the varsity premises in Bhubaneswar, Friday

# State to emerge as a sports hub: Chief Secy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: Odisha is all set to rise in sports in coming years and necessary modern amenities are on the anvil, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said here Friday.

Mahapatra said this while unveiling a book titled 'Seizing The Opportunity: The Artist's Gallery For Penalty Corner & Drag Flick', written by renowned sports scientist Saju Joseph.

Under the guidance of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, the state has created enviable sports facilities. Around 100 multipurpose indoor stadiums have been constructed in urban areas with facilities of gym, badminton, table tennis and other sports activities to attract talent pools in the state, he said.

Speaking on the hosting of Men's Hockey World Cup next month, the Chief Secretary said that for the first time in the history the Hockey World Cup will be played at two venues - at Bhubaneswar and Rourkela.

India's largest hockey stadium, with all modern amenities, has been set up at Rourkela within a year. Commercial flights to steel city are expected very soon, he asserted. Arranging such internationally acclaimed tournaments has brought laurels to the state even at the international level.

After historic performance by both the hockey teams at Tokyo



**Speaking on the hosting of Hockey Men's World Cup next month, the Chief Secretary said that for the first time in the history the Hockey World Cup will be played at two venues**

Olympics, the state government has also extended sponsorship contract for them for another 10 years till 2032, he reiterated adding that a half of the hockey players in national teams will be from Odisha in coming years and the state government is also preparing for it. He further said that a total of 21

Astroturf fields are under construction in the blocks of Sundargarh district including Rourkela and will be completed before the Hockey World Cup.

On the occasion, Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey said that such a book needs to be translated into Odia as hockey players at grassroots level can read it and can draw inspiration.

He was also felicitated with a 1,200 gram silver hockey stick on the occasion.

Sports secretary R Vineel Krishna and police commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi also spoke on the occasion.

The event was organised by Hockey Association of Odisha in support of the state government.

## Lawyers' plight: Pujari seeks Centre's intervention

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 16: BJP MP Suresh Pujari Friday raised the issue of arrest of advocates and suspension of their licences in Sambalpur and requested the Union Law minister to take up the matter with the state government and Bar Council of India.

Speaking during the Zero Hour in Lok Sabha, the Bargarh MP said an unpleasant and tense situation has erupted in the state as 43 lawyers have been arrested and licences of all bar members suspended

since Monday. "This matter is arising out of a strike by the lawyers demanding a permanent Bench of the Orissa High Court in western part of Odisha. Since last Monday, 43 lawyers have already been arrested. The Bar Council of India has suspended the licences of all the members of Bar, including me," the BJP MP said.



**ODISHA IN PARLIAMENT**

## BJP rakes up mining scam

New Delhi: The BJP Friday alleged massive corruption in mining activities in Odisha and requested the Centre to order an inquiry and seek a report from the state government on the issue.

Speaking during the Zero Hour in Lok Sabha, Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi said that the state government had auctioned iron ore mines in 2020-21 and, surprisingly, the mining companies began showing higher volumes of low-grade ore from the auctioned mines in 2021-22. "In 2019-20, during the pre-auction period, the proportion of low-grade ore in a mine

was 0.9 per cent. However, after the auction new miners working on the same mines started showing disproportionately higher volumes of low-grade ore, precisely 27.3 per cent, in 2020-21 and 2021-22, she said. The proportion of low grade ore in these mines was 42.3 per cent and 58.9 per cent in April and May respectively, she added.

"There is loss of thousands of crores to the exchequer by deliberately downgrading the quality of ore being produced in many of the auctioned mines. It reduced the average sale price and led to payment of lower premium to the state", she alleged.

## KITian gets Royal Astronomical Society fellowship

Bhubaneswar: An electronics and electrical engineering student from KIT Deemed-to-be-University Snehaadeep Kumar has been nominated as a fellow of the prestigious Royal Astronomical Society, London, thus joining the club of select few Indians who have been bestowed with this honour. Snehaadeep, who was nominated by The Royal Society of Chemistry president Tom Welton, sets his name amongst the world's greatest scientists such as Charles Babbage and William Herschel to be a fellow of the learned society.

## Murderous attack on hotel owner

Bhubaneswar: The owner of a small hotel here Friday sustained severe injuries after he was attacked by a person over past enmity at Rasulgarh Square. The injured was identified as Bimbadhara Jena alias Bombay, 60. According to locals, the families of the victim and accused Deepak Baliarsingh are in a long-standing dispute over a plot behind the former's hotel. Recently, Bimbadhara's family took over the land in the presence of revenue officials after the Orissa High Court granted decree in their favour. Baliarsingh, who was seething in anger, Friday morning attacked Bimbadhara. Locals rushed Bimbadhara to Capital Hospital from where he was shifted to a private hospital here. Baliarsingh has been detained at Mancheswar police station.

## Vig nabs Tamando SI

Bhubaneswar: Vigilance sleuths Friday arrested Abhimanyu Chaudhury, the sub-inspector of Tamando police station on charges of amassing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. He was remanded to judicial custody by the court till December 27. "After thorough search, he was found in possession of DAs 113% higher than his known sources of income," vigilance sources.

## Run Paradip-Kendrapara passenger: BJD to Centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 16: A delegation of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MPs Friday met Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and requested him to start passenger train service between Paradip-Haridaspur.

The delegation comprising Sulata Deo, Mamata Mohanta, Sasmit Patra, Niranjan Bishi, Sujeet Kumar and Amar Patnaik submitted a memorandum to the Union Railway Minister. The BJD said that the Paradip-Haridaspur railway line connects people of Kendrapara to the railway network and the passenger service on this line would benefit the people of Kendrapara. "The railway line between Paradip-Haridaspur railway line is open for goods and commercial traffic but has not been opened for passengers. We request you to kindly start the passenger services for Paradip-Haridaspur railway line which will ensure that after 75 years of Indian Independence, the people of Kendrapara would benefit from railway connectivity," the BJD stated in the memorandum.

The BJD also said that development of railways in Odisha has historically been neglected dur-

**The BJD said that the Paradip-Haridaspur railway line connects people of Kendrapara to the railway network**

ing the last 75 years. "Successive governments have not given adequate attention to the state in terms of railway connectivity. The Odisha government under leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has been providing free land and 50 per cent project cost for various Railway projects in the state," the memorandum reads.

Significantly, Bishi told Vaishnaw that Bolangir has always been neglected as far as introduction of new trains is concerned and requested the minister to make provisions for running direct trains from Bolangir to Delhi and Prayagraj. The BJD MP requested the minister to run Samata Express via Bolangir and extend Jammu-Tawi express up to Bolangir. He also requested the minister to start Sambalpur-Puri intercity express from Bolangir instead of Sambalpur.

## Blood transfusion: NHRC seeks report on 2 deaths in Keonjhar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Friday sought an action-taken report (ATR) from the chief medical officer (CMO) of Keonjhar in connection with the death of two persons allegedly due to wrong blood transfusion in the tribal-dominated district in May this year.

While hearing a plea filed by rights activist Himanshu Sekhar Nayak, the commission asked the CMO to submit the report within four weeks.

In his petition, Nayak had informed the commission that Dama Munda, a resident of Kandarpashahi under Sadar block, and Suni Sahoo of Raisuan under Sadar block, died allegedly due to transfusion of wrong blood in Keonjhar district headquarters hospital (DHH) May this year.

Family members of the duo blamed the blood bank officials and on-duty doctor as well as nurses at the DHH of being negligent, Nayak said.

Quoting family sources, Nayak



said Dama was admitted to the DHH after he developed complications due to tuberculosis (TB) March 29, 2022. Doctors advised his son Ajit to collect a unit of 'A +ve' blood from the blood bank April 2. The blood bank officials, however, handed over a 'B +ve' blood unit to Ajit.

"Without verifying the details, doctors and nurses transfused Dama the B +ve blood unit, leading to deterioration of his health. Despite requests by Ajit, the doctors and nurses didn't visit Dama. On the next day, Dama was discharged though he was unwell," Nayak said quoting his family as saying. An ailing Dama died May

15. On the other hand, Nayak said, Suni was admitted to the DHH May 13. Doctors advised her to arrange two units of 'B +ve' blood. Accordingly Suni's brother brought the same and it was transfused. Suni's health deteriorated soon after and she was admitted to SCB Medical College and Hospital where the family was taken aback to learn that Suni's blood group was 'AB +ve'. The woman died May 29 this year, Nayak said.

Highlighting the negligence of the authorities that claimed two innocent lives, Nayak approached the commission and sought justice for the two families.

## Applying for DL? Get medical cert online

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: If you are above 40 and applying for a driving licence (DL) or for its renewal, then it's for you. In order to improve the ease of getting DL and reduce footfall at regional transport offices (RTOs), the Transport department has decided to issue medical certificate in Form 1A electronically under the 5T policy of the state government.

According to sources, the state is all set to launch Aadhaar-integrated citizen-centric transport related services online. As per the new MV Act, medical certificate is must for those above 40 applying for a DL or for its renewal. The new arrangement makes online issuance as well as submission of medical certificate mandatory.

Joint transport commissioner Diptiranjana Patra said necessary arrangements are in place on Sarathi portal where registered doctors can issue medical certificate directly. It eliminates the process of submission of medical certificate and verification in manual mode.

Patra added that the online process will help ensure no one can upload a fake medical certificate and get a DL.

## Usha Padhee new SD&TE secretary

Bhubaneswar: The state government Friday appointed IAS officer Usha Padhee as principal secretary to Skill Development and Technical Education (SD&TE) department. Padhee, who has returned from Central deputation, has been allowed to remain in additional charge as principal secretary of Commerce and Transport department, as per a notification issued by the General Administration & Public Grievance department. The additional appointment of Hemant Sharma as principal secretary, Skill Development and Technical Education department and Bishupada Sethi as principal secretary, Commerce and Transport department will stand terminated from the day Padhee took the charges.

## MoU inked for centre for tribal literature

Bhubaneswar: Odisha State Museum and Kendra Sahitya Akademi Friday signed an MoU for setting up of the Centre for Oral and Tribal Literature at the State Museum here. This centre will focus on promotion and research on tribal literature of north eastern and eastern parts of the country. The MoU was signed in the presence of Odia Language, Literature and Culture director Ranjan Kumar Das, State Museum superintendent Bhagyalipi Malla, Kendra Sahitya Akademi secretary Srinivas Rao and others.

## CII holds CSR summit

Bhubaneswar: Principal Secretary of Women and Child Development department Subha Sharma Friday invited the corporate world to work together on corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. Speaking at the CSR Summit on Maternal and Adolescent Health organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Odisha State Chapter here Friday, she said if both government and corporate entities work together on welfare programmes, available resources will be utilised prudently and there will be less chance of duplication. "We have seen tangible results only in 30 per cent of the cases," she added.

## We've changed Odisha's edu scenario: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: Addressing a state-level training programme for district education officers (DEOs) and block education officers (BEOs) at Krushi Bhawan Auditorium Friday, School & Mass Education (S&ME) Minister Samir Ranjan Dash said that the department, under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, has holistically transformed the educational backdrop of Odisha.

Dash underlined the importance of re-imagining education ecosystem in the state by brainstorming on strategies and policies.

At the inaugural session of the two-day conference, Dash emphasised on policy and regulatory issues, implementation of best practices, offering solutions for implementation challenges and the need of establishing frameworks to improve education delivery by devising innovations in education.



**The S&ME minister laid importance on smooth release of pension to retired teachers and timely disbursement of scholarships to eligible students**

The minister also laid pressing importance on smooth release of pension to retired teachers and timely disbursement of scholarships to eligible students.

"Under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Naveen

Patnaik, our department has holistically transformed the educational backdrop of Odisha. Transparent and timely execution of development projects by prioritising regular PTA meetings have firmed the foundation for the

state government to ensure that accessible quality education to the students of the state is not compromised with," the S&ME minister said.

In this regard, collective functionality of headmasters, teachers, CRCCs, BEOs and DEOs will furbish the performance of students in board exams, said Dash while shedding light on the current sustainable education system that prioritises creativity over conformity.

Applauding the efforts and efficiency of the teachers of government and government-aided schools, Dash said that time has come to channelise their skills in transforming schools as state-of-the-art education hubs.

The much-appreciated approach of the government's role and subsequent outcomes in implementing Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) and Learning Recovery Plan (LRP) in schools was also discussed.

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# Gahirmatha riddled with risks facing Olive Ridleys

Apart from natural disasters like cyclones, a host of man-made threats claim the lives of the rare turtles as they throng to Gahirmatha for nesting

## HOSTILE BREEDING GROUND



Regular testing of missiles from the nearby Wheeler island also affects their breeding process in Gahirmatha

**M**ovement of fishing boats and trawlers in the prohibited zone leads to death of the turtles due to getting hit by propellers apart from illegal poaching

**E**ver increasing soil erosion on the coastlines has been shrinking their breeding and nesting ground gradually

The turtles have arrived at the Gahirmatha marine sanctuary for nesting but the movement of trawlers has posed serious risk to their lives. The turtles get hit by the trawlers or get caught in fishing nets and die. Moreover, erosion of the coastline has led to shrinking of their breeding ground.

The regular testing of missiles from the nearby Wheeler island has also affected their breeding in Gahirmatha which is known as the nursery of these sea turtles. The turtles travel thousands of miles across seas and oceans to reach Gahirmatha for mating and laying eggs.

The fear is not without basis as Forest department and marine police grapple with manpower crunch and lack of infrastructure. The speedboats of Forest department are lying defunct and the marine police stations are struggling without adequate number of staff. Besides, these two departments have failed to establish proper coordination with the Indian Coast Guard personnel.

While the Forest department lacks proper speed boats to keep tabs on the fishing trawlers in-

truding into the prohibited zone, marine police stations at Jambhu, Tantiapal and Kharinasi are struggling with skeletal staff and inadequate infrastructure.

Local intelligentsia Ganesh Chandra Samal, Jagannath Das, Dolagobind Jena and environmentalists Hemant Kumar Rout and Ashok Kumar Swain said that every year 4 to 5 lakh turtles visit Gahirmatha for mating and breeding. The turtles' selection of this place as well as the timely gathering for nesting has baffled nature lovers and researchers.

Gahirmatha sanctuary is spread over 1,435 sq km out of which only 27 sq km of area is land mass. The area has come under various threats owing to a host of factors. The rare turtle is listed as vulnerable in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List. The IUCN has stated that out of 1,000 hatchlings, only one grows up to be an adult Olive Ridley turtle and expressed concern over the premature deaths of the turtles.

The state Forest and Wildlife department separated the marine region of Gahirmatha from Bhitarkanika National Park September 27, 1997 and granted it special status of a marine sanctuary. The land mass of Bhitarkanika is now facing coastal erosion. The Nasi 1 and 2 islands, Babubali and Ekakula islands have shrunk due to erosion during the last few years.

When contacted, DFO Jogendra Gopinath Yadav said the Forest department has taken a number of steps for protection of the turtles. Special camps are being conducted and patrolling has been intensified in the area. Moreover, raids are being conducted on the fishing trawlers entering the prohibited zone.

# Twice hit by landslides, Kumbharipadar locals to be shifted to safety



People of four nearby villages have also urged the administration to relocate them elsewhere

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Daringbadi, Dec 16:** Kumbharipadar, a remote and inaccessible village of Hatimunda panchayat under Daringbadi block in Kandhamal district, was hit by landslides twice in September and October this year following heavy rains. As the village is on a hilly slope, it is invariably vulnerable to landslides.

Hence, the district administration has taken a decision to relocate the residents of the village to another place.

According to reports, with the effort of the district administration, a team of geologists and experts had visited the area and examined the soil, sand and stone of the area. After the soil testing at Berhampur, they came to know that the area is prone to potentially dangerous landslides.

Keeping this in view, the administration has initiated the process to rehabilitate them elsewhere. Meanwhile, people of nearby vil-

lages such as Tamangi, Pidikaripi, Dasangsahi and Kasapanka have become apprehensive of landslides during future monsoons.

Hundreds of people from these four villages have urged the administration to relocate them to somewhere safe. They even submitted a memorandum to the district administration through the tehsildar in this regard.

Later, they visited the block office and submitted a copy of the memorandum to BDO Gadadhar Patra. "We are worried about the lurking danger to our existence. We plead with the administration to shift us to safe places as soon as possible," they said.

Contacted, the BDO informed of having received a memorandum in this regard, but it all depends on the decision of the district administration.

The residents of the four villages said that they will forward copies of the memorandum to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, the Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC, Berhampur), Baliguda Sub-Collector, Kandhamal SP, Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC), Kandhamal MP, MLA, Brahmanigaon IIC and the block chairperson.

# 1 dead, over 30 injured as bus turns turtle

**Baripada:** A passenger died and over 30 others were injured when a bus carrying them overturned on NH-18 near Kuliarna Chhak in Mayurbhanj district, Friday. Condition of 10 injured passengers is stated to be critical. The critically injured were admitted to PRM Medical College and Hospital at Baripada. The deceased was identified as Nilambar Mohant(50) of Rairangpur. Till the last report came in, rescue operation was on. Notably, the private bus was carrying passengers from Khiching to Baripada, but faced accident on the way due to foggy weather condition.



**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** No.C-1960:  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**P.H. DIVISION, BALANGIR**  
 Ph. No - (06652 - 234647) Email. ID - eepbhgr@yahoo.co.in  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDERS**  
**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement**  
**Bid Identification No. EE PH BGR 32/2022-23 Dt. 12.12.2022**

01. Name of the Work	: 02 Nos.
02. Estimated Cost	: Rs. 11.60 to 19.36 Lakhs
03. Period of Completion	: 03 (Three) Calendar Months
04. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From 11.00 AM of dt. 19.12.2022 to 5.00 PM of dt. 02.01.2023
05. Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal	: 5 PM of dt.02.01.2023
06. Date & Time of opening of bids	: At 11.00 AM of dt.03.01.2023
07. Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Balangir, At- Tulsinagar, Dist-Balangir-767001

Further details can be seen from the web site <http://tenders.ori.nic.in> or [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in).  
**Sd./- Executive Engineer, P.H.Division, Balangir**  
 OIPR-13005/11/0028/2223

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**MAIN DAM DIVISION, BURLA**  
 AT/PO - BURLA, DIST.-SAMBALPUR (ODISHA) 768017  
 No.A-881:  
**"e" Procurement Notice No.MDD-e-06/2022-23 (Online)**  
 Email id : semaindamdivn@gmail.com  
 Date: 15.12.2022

No.14518	: 2 Nos.
1. No. of work	: 2 Nos.
2. Estimated cost	: Rs.8.70 to 12.32 lakhs
3. Period of completion	: 2 (Two calendar) months
4. Date & Time of available of bid document in the Portal.	: 22.12.2022 at 10 A.M.
5. Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal	: 31.12.2022 upto 05.00 P.M.
6. Date of opening of bid	: 02.01.2023 at 11.00A.M.
7. Name & Address of the Officer inviting bid	: Superintending Engineer Main Dam Division, Burla AT/PO- Burla, Dist-Sambalpur, Odisha Email- semaindamdivn@gmail.com

Further details any corrigendum or addendum can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>.  
**Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Main Dam Division, Burla**  
 OIPR-32017/11/0005/2223

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**CUTTACK (R&B) DIVISION NO.II: CUTTACK**  
 No.B-987:  
 E-Mail I.D.-eepwcuttack2@gmail.com, Tel./Fax No.(0671)-2973399  
**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e" procurement Notice**  
**e-procurement Notice for Road work**  
**Bid Identification No. E.E. CTC(R&B)-II-19 of 2022-23**

1. Name of the work	: 02 No. of Road Work
2. Estimated Cost	: Rs. 21,17,683/- to Rs. 29,06,006/-
3. Period of completion	: 2 (Two) calendar Months
4. Date & time of sale & receipt of bid document	: From 17.12.2022 to 5 PM of 31.12.2022
5. Last date / time of receipt of bids	: 5 PM of 31.12.2022
6. Date & time of Opening of Bids	: 11 AM of 02.01.2023
7. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer, Cuttack (R&B) Division-II, Cuttack

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in>. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.  
**Sd./- Superintending Engineer**  
 OIPR-34137/11/0013/2223 Cuttack (R&B) Division No.II

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, BALANGIR**  
 E-mail: mid\_balangir@yahoo.co.in, Ph.No. 06652-232982  
 No.A-871:  
**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
**BID IDENTIFICATION No: MIBLGR/07/2022-23**

Name of work	: Civil Construction Works
No. of works	: 17 (Seventeen) Nos.
Estimated cost	: 06.70 lakhs to 32.86 lakhs
Tender paper cost	: Rs 4,000.00 to Rs 6,000.00
Period of completion	: Critical Works-02 (Two) Calendar months
Class of Contractor	: "B, C & D".
Availability of bid documents	: From 22.12.2022 from 11.00 AM to 02.01.2023 upto 5.00 PM in website ( <a href="http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in">www.tendersorissa.gov.in</a> )
Period of Receipt of bid	: From 22.12.2022 from 11.00 AM to 02.01.2023 upto 5.00 PM through online
Mode of Payment	: Online
Date of opening of bid documents	: 03.01.2023 at 11.30 AM
Date of Lottery ( If required)	: On dt.17.01.2023 at 11.00 AM onwards
Digital signature certificate of Bidder	: The bidder must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class-II or Class-III.

The detail tender call notice can also be seen in the DOWR website- <http://dowrorissa.gov.in>  
 Name & Address of the OIT : Executive Engineer, M.I.Division, Balangir, Near Sub-Collector Office Balangir, Dist-Balangir,PIN-767001.  
**E-mail: mid\_balangir@yahoo.co.in**  
 Further details can be seen from : <http://tendersorissa.gov.in> the E-Procurement market place.  
**Sd./- Executive Engineer, M.I.Division, Balangir**  
 OIPR-32063/11/0010/2223

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
 Tender Notice No. ST-OT-AMC-DATALOGGER-295, Dt. 15.12.2022  
**NAME OF WORK : PROVISION FOR COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR ELECTRONICS MAKE : DATA LOGGERS OF DIFFERENT CAPACITY AT VARIOUS STATIONS / LOCATIONS INCLUDING MAINTENANCE OF VARIOUS CENTRAL MONITOR EQUIPMENT / SOFTWARE AT KHURDA ROAD DATA LOGGER ROOM AND HEADQUARTER (BHUBANESWAR) OVER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.**

**Tender Value in (₹) : 3,36,08,480/-**  
**EMD (₹) : 3,18,100/-, Tender Document Cost (₹) : 11,800/-**

**Bidding Start Date : 23.12.2022**  
**Date and Time of Closing of Tender : At 1100 Hrs. of 06.01.2023.**

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
 Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available in website : <https://www.ireps.gov.in>

**Note :** The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / Corrigendum issued for this tender.

**Divisional Railway Manager (S&T) / PR-818/N/22-23**

## SHORT TAKES

### Kotia people turn down Andhra healthcare offer

**Pottangi:** Neighbouring Andhra Pradesh has been making repeated bids to win people's hearts in Kotia panchayat of Koraput district to stake its claim on the territory by offering sops to them. Its latest attempt to offer healthcare to some people of Harmadingi village has been turned down making it clear that they will always side with the Odisha government. Reports said, Linga Himrika and Kamali Himrika, two residents of Harmadingi village were affected by diarrhoea after eating in a community feast. On being informed of the case, a team of health officials from Kotia primary health centre on instruction from Dr Jagdish Satpathy reached the village and treated the two. At this time, another team of health officials from Salur community health centre reached the village to offer treatment, but the villagers rejected the offer outright. The healthcare team from Andhra had to return disappointed.

### Row over ineligible getting ration cards

**Baliapal:** A ruckus ensued at the third meeting of the Baliapal panchayat samiti as scores of ineligible people have managed to grab ration cards under National Food Security Act (NFSA) in various panchayats under this block of Balasore district. Civil Supplies Officer Ambika Prasad Rath admitted that many who are not eligible to get ration cards have got the cards while many other eligible people have been waiting in queue. During field survey on new ration card application, officials are finding ineligible people owning ration cards, he added. He made it clear that if all people's representatives -- sarpanchs, samiti members and zilla parishad members -- cooperate in investigation, then the names of the ineligible beneficiaries will be struck off from the list. This has come amid allegations from various panchayats that huge quantities of rations are being siphoned off through ghost beneficiaries.



**RALLY FOR RIGHTS:** Tribal people affiliated to Birsu Munda Ho Samaj Marshal Akala took out a rally at Champua in Keonjhar, Friday, demanding language status to Ho dialect, appointment of Ho teachers in some schools and Anganwadi centres

# Odia veteran recalls heroics of Indian soldiers in 1971 war

Sulabh had joined the Indian Army in 1956 and took part in Indo-China war in 1962 and Indo-Pak war in 1965 before retiring in 1983

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, Dec 16:** The whole country Friday celebrated the 51st Vijay Diwas marking the victory in 1971 Indo-Pak war. Sulabh Charan Behera, then a soldier of India Army, had taken part in the war. A resident of Karilopatana under Marshagnai block of Kendrapara, he recounted the horrific war scenes and Indian soldiers' heroics and humanitarian acts in handing out much-sought after Independence to Bangladesh from Pakistan. He also narrated how the Indian soldiers celebrated Vijay Utsav at Dhaka after East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was carved out of Pakistan after the war. After partition of India, people of East Pakistan were struggling to sep-



arate from West Pakistan to become an independent nation. Leader of East Pakistan Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had formed an army Mukti Bahini to take on West Pakistan. He was being supported by India. India used to impart military training to jawans of the Mukti Bahini. At that time, Sulabh said, he was engaged in the signal unit of the Indian army. Soldiers of West Pakistan had destroyed bridges and roads leading

to East Pakistan. At that time, Indian soldiers were busy reconstructing the damaged bridges and roads, apart from ensuring supply of food, arms and ammunition to Mukti Bahini.

Sulabh vividly recalled some scenes when Indian soldiers were giving food packets to the hungry civilians during the war.

The war continued for 17 days and soldiers were dying in large numbers. The casualties could not be assessed rightly. Nearly 92,000 Pakistani soldiers with Lt General AAK Niyazi, martial law administrator of East Pakistan, had surrendered before the joint army of Indian soldiers and Mukti Bahini at Dhaka.

Lt General of Indo-Bangla joint army Jagjit Singh Arora was present. After the surrender, Indian soldiers were immersed in victory celebrations at Dhaka. Sulabh had joined the Indian Army in 1956 and took part in Indo-China war in 1962 and Indo-Pak war in 1965. He retired in 1983. A brave Indian soldier, he has still treasured many medals given to him during service, for which his family still takes pride in him.

### 2 brown sugar peddlers held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak, Dec 16:** Police arrested two drug peddlers near Gelpur in Bhadrak and seized 11 gm of brown sugar from their possession, Friday.

Police also seized a bike and two cell phones. The accused were identified as Sambit Mishra from Nuasahi in Choudwar area and Gyanendra Moharana from Adheigundi in Narsinghpur area.

Police registered a case against the two. Despite raids in various parts of north Odisha, drug menace has not yet been curbed.



Our life should be governed by the love for the Truth and the thirst for Light.

THE MOTHER



## Rift over Protocol

A rift has appeared and seems to be widening between Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officers and those in Customs and GST over protocol, involving guard of honour and salutes 'demanded' by IRS officers. Customs officers say that these rituals interfere with their duties of apprehending economic offenders, including smugglers and traffickers. Unlike the IPS and other armed forces, they argue, revenue and finance babus are not regimental, requiring uniforms and British-era salutes and parades.

Abhijit Srivastava, secretary of the Central Excise Inspectors Association, has criticised the move by senior officers overseeing the Mumbai Customs and GST departments to train customs officers on modes of saluting, seating and walking behind IRS officers.

Apparently, this training was conducted recently at the National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics Centre, Bhandup by Additional DG (training) Rajiv Kapoor. Junior officers complained of unproductive hours wasted in training frontline officers on saluting, opening car doors, seating and walking three paces behind IRS officers, providing escort and protocol, giving right of way for IRS officers in elevators and escalators, wearing caps and snapping to attention when a senior IRS officer passes them.

Reportedly, senior IRS officers were upset with an incident report filed against IRS officers for abusing and manhandling on-duty junior officers at the Mumbai International Airport. Deputy Customs Commissioner, Air Intelligence Unit of the Mumbai Airport Customs, Manudev Jain had allegedly threatened and manhandled a junior officer for detaining a passenger with excess duty-free alcohol.

As of this reporting, there seems to be little effort to sort out this issue, but clearly quick action is required to soothe the ruffled feathers.

### ONGC gets a full-time chief, finally

While rumours are flying that the Centre is planning to appoint a professional from the private sector as the first CEO of the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), it has ended the speculation about the next chairperson of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) by naming Arun Kumar Singh, the former CMD of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd to the post for a tenure of three years. This has ended the long-stretched ad hocism which began with the superannuation of Shashi Shanker in April last year.

Three interim chairmen were appointed during this period while the search-cum-selection panel headed by PESB chairperson Mallika Srinivasan and including Oil Secretary and former Indian Oil chief B Ashok sifted through the candidates, who sources have told DKB, included Engineers India Ltd CMD Vartika Shukla.

Singh's appointment was enabled by the government's decision to relax the age for candidature. The previous minimum age prescribed for eligibility was 45 years and internal candidates needed two years of residual service and external candidates needed three years, but after the relaxation of the rule, an eligible candidate should not be older than 60 years.

Singh has got a lot on his plate, with ONGC reporting a 30 per cent fall in its net profit, due to the windfall tax by the government to take away the gains from the spurt in international oil and gas prices.



### BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

### Woman top cop keen to break stereotypes

Last week, Laxmi Singh, a 2000 batch IPS officer, took over as the Commissioner of Police in Noida, becoming the first woman officer in Uttar Pradesh to head a commissionerate. While she is not the only woman to be appointed to a top government position in Noida, it is still rare to find women in high positions in the state police.

Despite much talk, the representation of women in India's police force remains low, a mere 10.5 per cent, according to recent data. Apparently, none of the states and Union Territories has achieved their targets for reservations for women in the country.

Sources have told DKB that Singh's stellar track record was hard for UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to overlook. She was a key player during the Lakhimpur Khari incident during the farmers' agitation last year, taking the initiative to pacify the angry farmers after four of their companions were mowed down. She received the Chief Minister's Excellence Service police medal for it.

During her initial training stint at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy, Hyderabad, Singh was declared the best probationer and also received a silver baton from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Having served in top positions in Varanasi, Baghpat and Bulandshahr previously, her current high-profile assignment may be her most challenging one yet. Though over time acceptance has grown for women police officers in Uttar Pradesh, it is still hard for many male cops to accept a "lady" boss. But Singh is determined to change that perception.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

### WISDOM CORNER

- Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul - and sings the tunes without the words - and never stops at all. EMILY DICKINSON
- It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple: one must be a woman manly, or a man womanly. VIRGINIA WOOLF
- Money is only a tool. It will take you wherever you wish, but it will not replace you as the driver. AYN RAND

### WORDSWORTH

#### Doryphore

We owe this word to Sir Harold Nicolson, who introduced it to the world in the Spectator magazine in August 1952. In an issue of the same magazine later the same year, he described a doryphore as a "questing prig, who derives intense satisfaction from pointing out the errors of others." A writer in the New Yorker in 1989 described being taken out to lunch one day by the magazine's editors: "They were rigidly abstemious, lest they fuddle their minds and give hostages to subsequent doryphores on returning to work." (This writer follows a similar regime, with less success.) In 1996, Herb Caen commented in the San Francisco Chronicle: "For a doryphore, what is more delightful than a mistake in a correction?" Sir Harold took it from French, in which it's the usual name for the Colorado beetle, hence a pest. Doryphora was at one time the genus of the potato beetle, though its formal name today is Leptinotarsa decimlineata (decimlineata, ten-lined, in reference to its striped back). The old genus name was taken from Greek dorophoros, a spear-carrier, which echoes a one-time folk name for the insect in the US, the ten-striped spearman. The French presumably acquired their term for it from its old genus name.

#### Doula

This word isn't especially new - it's recorded as long ago as the 1980s and the association Doulas of North America has been in existence since 1992 - but it is only slowly becoming known outside the US and as yet is rarely recorded in dictionaries. A doula is a supportive companion, herself a mother, who is trained to help a new mother during childbirth and afterwards. The doula is employed to give advice, practical assistance and emotional support, but doesn't get involved with the medical aspects of the birth. After the birth, she may continue to advise and perhaps do some light chores around the house to help mum cope with the new baby, though the birth and post-birth types of assistance are often separated. The term comes from the Greek name for a female slave, a household servant, by implication one who would have helped the woman of the house during childbirth.



Shivaji Mohinta

### EMPLOYEES' BEHAVIOUR IS SHAPED BY THE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND THE WAY EMPLOYEES 'FEEL' ABOUT THEIR JOBS

In Nov 2008, 10 armed terrorists infiltrated into Mumbai and held the city hostage for three nights, killing more than 160 people, injuring several hundreds to leave behind deep scars to haunt us every year as the dreaded 26/11. The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel was one of the ill-fated destinations where the terrorists stormed in at that night. It was 9.30 pm and a high-profile corporate event was going on at the second floor banquet hall. Mallika Jagad, 24, was assigned to oversee the dinner which had the top brass of Unilever. There were 65 guests and as the seven-course meal was ready to be served they heard the first shots, which were ignored as firecrackers! Soon Mallika was informed that the hotel has been attacked and she locked the doors, switched off the lights and asked everyone to crouch under the furniture. Family members were split and advised to stay put in different corners of the hall. She advised everyone to stay calm, the staff on duty served them water and alcohol to keep their hopes high and voices low. The entire night passed but early morning next day the corridor was in flames. It was suffocating and they ushered the guests to the window to be rescued by the firefighters. All guests were evacuated to safety and Mallika was the last to leave along with the other staff.

Several such heroic acts unfolded in different sections of the 100-year-old property. 48-year-old senior waiter of Japanese restaurant, Thomas Varghese had formed a human chain with all his colleagues to make way for the guests to escape through a spiral stair case. Unfortunately, he was gunned down when he was about to leave but all guests were unhurt.

Telephone operators who escaped safely earlier again came back to take up their positions, calling each room and advising them what has to be done. They

### FOCUS EMERGENCY RESPONSE

## WAH TAJ!



Taj domes and spires which were engulfed with fire symbolised the acts of terrorism on that night but today they stand tall as a beacon of inspiration of customer-first culture and employee leadership

were there till next day noon, amidst the mayhem surrounding all of them. Karam Bir Singh Kang, GM, was in another Taj property but he rushed to the Hotel to take up the responsibility to coordinate the rescue efforts. He lost his wife and two young children to the fire which spared none in the sixth floor. Even after this personal tragedy he was in the hotel till the next day to ensure that the guests were safely disembarked.

There were 1700 people on that night in the hotel. Thirty-four lost their lives (out of which more than half were hotel employees) but what followed the next day was only praises and appreciation for the staff of Taj. Guests were overwhelmed with the character, courage and bravery shown by the employees during such an extraordinary situation. There were no manuals, no instructions to tackle such a situation but each employee (right from waiters to senior managers) displayed exemplary leadership skills in protecting the lives of the guests.

Rohit Deshpande and Anjali Raina did extensive research on the events at Taj and they asked the sen-

ior management of Taj as to what led the employees to do what they did. None had the answers to that. Normally during terror attacks of this magnitude, the first response of any human being is to flee towards safety but it was intriguing to learn that none of the employees ran away. So what could be the plausible reasons which can validate the actions of each employee that night? A deeper probe into the Taj culture and inherent values might enlighten us as to why they defied conventional behaviour.

Although there can be several dimensions to this extreme customer-centricity, the most important ones to me can be captured in an acronym ANCHOR:

Attitude: Taj recruits for attitudes and not grades. They go to schools to recruit frontliners and speak to headmasters to find out who are the best in terms of showing respect to elders, courteous and cheerful in their conduct but might not be the best in rankings.

Neediness: Taj assesses who badly needs the job. The recruits during their 18 months training are given free food and accommodation while they can remit

their monthly earnings to support their family who need them the most. Due to this the trainees want to make a career in the hotel.

Customer Ambassadors: The employees are trained to be the ambassadors for their clients. They are taught to do the right things for their guests without any questions asked. They are assured that they have the backs of the senior management in such cases.

Hiring from Hinterland: Taj generally hires from smaller towns, not from metros. It is felt that the traditional Indian values are still practiced in the hinterland, which is the cornerstone of Taj's customer-first mindset.

Organisation Culture: A lot of it has to do with the Tata corporate values and culture which stands for honesty, integrity and customer-oriented service. The philanthropic care and volunteering environment created by the founders reflects on the employees as well. Employees' behaviour is shaped by the work environment and the way employees "feel" about their jobs.

Recognition System: Taj rates their employees on the basis of compliments from guests. Any positive feedback from guests is immediately circulated and the concerned staff is recognised within 48 hours! The timing of the recognition is more important than the reward itself.

Taj domes and spires which were engulfed with fire symbolised the acts of terrorism on that night but today they stand tall as a beacon of inspiration of customer-first culture and employee leadership. They re-wrote the definition of hospitality and "Atithi Devo Bhava" on that horrific night.

We can only bow our heads in gratitude and say Wah Taj!

The author is a business consultant & a certified NLP Coach. Views are personal.

### SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

## Climate change is making us sick



Naveen Rao & Eloise Todd

### THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CLIMATE AND HEALTH IS DEEP AND MULTIFACETED

and bacteria will jump from animal hosts to humans - just as SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, likely did. This makes another pandemic increasingly likely.

Global warming is also worsening air pollution and, in turn, chronic non-communicable diseases like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Arvind Kumar, who founded the Lung Care Foundation in Delhi, laments that practically everyone in India has the health profile of a smoker, simply because of air pollution. In fact, nearly 1.7 million Indians die every year from its effects.

The people most affected by these climate-related health issues have often done the least to create them. Many residents of Bangladesh, Mozambique and Pakistan do not even own cars. Yet they are suffering from the floods, cyclones, and rising sea levels that have resulted from developed-country emissions.

Fortunately, key lessons from the pandemic response can help us tackle the health challenges that climate change raises. For starters, we need a revolution in data collection and analysis. Global systems to capture and share relevant data progressed significantly during the pandemic, but we are still using only a small share of the information generated. Worse, the data tend to be divided into siloes.

To get a more complete picture of the health effects of climate change, we must integrate clinical, epidemiological, and genomic data from health systems with di-

fective response depends on community trust and engagement. As with face masks and vaccines, community-based organisations and civil society will play a pivotal role in determining whether there is broad public buy-in for a bold agenda that covers both climate and health.

This will require a comprehensive, policy-shaping discussion that establishes a common language and shared intentions across sectors. Where should we aim to prevent the health consequences associated with climate change, and where should we mitigate them? Where should we adapt to the health effects of a warming planet, and why is an adaptation agenda becoming increasingly urgent?

In October, the UN confirmed that the world is far from meeting the goal, established in the 2015 Paris climate agreement, of limiting global warming to 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and we may instead be headed to a catastrophic 2.8°C temperature rise by the end of the century. As the United Kingdom's COP27 representative Alok Sharma noted after the conference, the 1.5°C goal is now on "life support."

Concerted action must be taken to revive it - and that starts with recognising that climate and health are part of the same conversation. They can and must be tackled together.

Naveen Rao is Senior Vice President of Health Initiative at The Rockefeller Foundation. Eloise Todd is Co-Founder of the Pandemic Action Network.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

### Stop acid attacks

Sir, A 17-year-old girl was attacked with acid in the national capital Wednesday by two hooligans masquerading as college students. Luckily the young girl has survived the heinous attack. Like the Delhi girl, many women who have survived acid attacks have lived with grit, courage, dignity and determination sending a firm message that their will power cannot be destroyed by meek sadists. Though the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report says there has been a downhill in acid attack incidences in India over the last three years, one cannot overlook the fact that there is a large gap between acid attack incidences and police chargesheets. Section 326(A) the IPC provides for a punishment of not less than ten years that may extend to imprisonment for life with or without fine. In 2013, the Supreme Court had directed the states to allow only select stores to sell acid, and ensure there was no over the counter business of acid. Further, governments were asked to make sure that both the sellers and the buyers possessed valid licences to transact the business. One cannot say the states have not taken stock of the situation. But it is also true that the top court order has not been implemented with utmost seriousness.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

### Away from social media

Sir, Among the many factors hindering Meta-owned Facebook's growth in India are content with nudity, and regional language barriers, and the fact that most internet users in the country seek video content, its internal study has found. The most significant factor that is stalling Facebook's growth in India, its biggest market, is Indian women keeping away from the social networking giant, the study has found. Many women in the country have shunned "male-dominated" Facebook because they are worried about their safety and privacy, the reported found. According to the company's internal employee forum, Facebook has shared that the study had been conducted over a period of more than two years and identified different roadblocks that are stopping Facebook's growth in India. What is known from the above information is that social media is being used as a means of propagating obscenity. This is affecting the youth. Images and videos that you don't want are appearing in front of you when you open the Facebook screen. Even if you delete or hide them, they don't go away from the screen.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

## 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, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



# national

## of the day quote

What was achieved by Wednesday's meeting of Union home minister Amit Shah with chief ministers of Maharashtra and Karnataka? It was rubbing of salt into our wounds. As always, the deliberations favoured Karnataka

UDDHAV THACKERAY | SHIV SENA PRESIDENT

The Kerala government envisions to have 15,000 startups and two lakh jobs. This financial year alone the state has witnessed creation of one lakh small and medium enterprises

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CM

I would like to tell KCR. This is democracy and people bury repression in the dustbin in a democracy. The Modi government is working for strengthening all sections of society, while the KCR government is corrupt and anti-people

JP NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

## SHORT TAKES

### Five drown

**Amaravati:** Five male students, aged between 13 and 15, drowned in the Krishna river in Andhra Pradesh's Krishna district Friday, officials said. Two bodies have been recovered so far while search operations are on to trace the others, Mandal Revenue Officer Satish Kumar said. Police officials said that the accident occurred in the afternoon when seven students went to the river for a bath in the river near Yenamalakuduru, but started to drown.

### Three killed

**Morigaon (Assam):** A woman and her two minor children drowned when a boat carrying seven people capsized in the Brahmaputra in Assam's Morigaon district on Friday, a police officer said. The country boat, in which the victims were travelling, overturned after colliding with another engine-driven boat at Hamu Chapori in Laharighat area of the district. "All passengers of the country boat fell into the river under the impact of the collision. Three of them drowned, while four others managed to swim to safety," the officer said.

### Clerk arrested

**Muzaffarpur:** A registration department clerk in Bihar was arrested on Friday for allegedly sharing sensitive information, obtained from an ordnance factory where he formerly worked, with a suspected female ISI agent in Pakistan. Senior Superintendent of Police, Muzaffarpur, Jayant Kant told reporters that the arrested person, Ravi Chaurasia, came in contact with the woman on Facebook, who used a pseudonym, fell in love and remained smitten even after she revealed her identity. "Chaurasia, who hails from Munger district, works at the registry office here. He formerly worked at an ordnance factory at Avadi near Chennai. He has confessed to have passed on sensitive information to the woman," said Kant.

### Teen ends life

**Jaipur:** A 15-year-old boy allegedly committed suicide by jumping from the fifth floor of a residential building in Rajasthan's Alwar district. The incident occurred in Bhiwadi police station area on Thursday evening, they said. The deceased, identified as Kavya, lived with his parents in Gurugram, they said. According to the boy's parents, Kavya was in depression and came to Bhiwadi with his grandparents on Thursday, police said.



This government is keen to resolve the long-pending border dispute with Karnataka and does not want to indulge in political mudslinging over the sensitive issue

EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

## MUMBAI GETS 'VIJAY UDYAN'

Marking the 51st anniversary of 'Vijay Diwas', the Indian defence forces inaugurated a unique war-themed memorial garden, 'Vijay Udyan' in Mumbai dedicated to all the brave-hearts of the 1971 India-Pakistan War that saw the birth of Bangladesh



Indian Army, NCC, Jal Police and local boat club members take part in a boat race during the 'Vijay Diwas' celebrations at Sangam in Prayagraj

## Dialogue only way forward: PM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin and reiterated his call for dialogue and diplomacy as "the only way" forward to resolve the Ukraine crisis.

The two leaders also reviewed bilateral cooperation in areas of energy trade and defence during a telephonic conversation. A Russian readout said Putin gave "fundamental assessments of Russia's line on the Ukrainian direction at the request of Modi".

The Prime Minister's office (PMO) said Modi briefed the Russian President on India's ongoing Presidency of the G-20, highlighting its key priorities. It was the fifth telephonic talk between the two leaders this year. They held phone conversations on February 24, March 2, March 7 and July 1.

### The two leaders reviewed bilateral cooperation in areas of energy, trade and defence during a telephonic conversation

Modi and Putin held a bilateral meeting in Uzbekistan's Samarkand on September 16 during which the Prime Minister told him that "today's era is not of war" and nudged the Russian leader to end the conflict.

"Following up on their meeting in Samarkand on the sidelines of the SCO Summit, the two leaders reviewed several aspects of the bilateral relationship, including energy cooperation, trade and investments, defence and security cooperation, and other key areas," the PMO said in a statement.

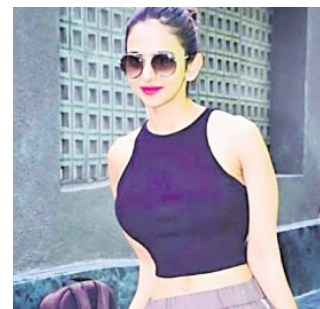
"In the context of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the Prime Minister reiterated his call for dialogue and diplomacy as the only way forward," it said. The phone conversation came days after it emerged that Modi will not be travelling to Russia for the annual India-Russia summit this year.

Putin visited India last year for the summit. "The Prime Minister briefed President Putin on India's ongoing Presidency of the G-20, highlighting its key priorities. He also looked forward to both countries working together during India's Chairship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation," it said. The PMO said the two leaders agreed to remain in regular touch with each other. The Russian readout said the two leaders discussed prospects for cooperation in areas such as mutual investment, energy, agriculture, transport and logistics.

"Having expressed satisfaction with the high level of bilateral cooperation developing on the principles of the Russian-Indian special and privileged strategic partnership, the leaders discussed in detail the prospects for practical interaction in such areas as mutual investment, energy, agriculture, transport and logistics," it said.

It said Modi and Putin underscored the importance of continuing close coordination within the framework of international organisations, including in the context of the Indian presidency in the G20 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

## ED SUMMONS RAKUL PREET



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday summoned, on December 19, actress Rakul Preet Singh in connection with a four-year-old drug trafficking and consumption case.

Her statement was recorded by the ED in this connection last year too. "The actress has been asked to appear before the investigating agency on December 19. Rakul Preet was questioned by the ED on September 2, 2021. Several Telugu actors were also questioned in the matter," a source said.

The anti-money-laundering agency has been probing this drug trafficking and consumption case for the past four years after a high-end drugs cartel, supplying LSD and MDMA and other narcotics, was busted in 2017 by Telangana's Prohibition and Excise department.

The present case was lodged by the ED on the basis of that matter after it found that money of that drug cartel was laundered via various channels.

## No SC benches will sit during winter break: CJI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud Friday said no regular vacation bench of the Supreme Court will be available from December 17 to January 1 during the winter vacation.

The CJI's announcement made in the apex court assumes significance in the wake of Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju's statement in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, in which he said there is a feeling among people that long court vacations are not very convenient for justice seekers.

"There will be no benches available from tomorrow till January 1,"



Justice Chandrachud informed the lawyers present in the courtroom. However, according to a notification issued by the apex court, an urgent fresh matter can be listed for hearing even during the two-week winter break by approaching the designated vacation officer.

Friday was the last working day of the top court before it goes on the two-week winter break. The apex court will reopen on January 2. The issue regarding court vacations has been raised earlier also but judges, including former CJI N V Ramana, had said there is a misconception that

judges stay in ultimate comfort and enjoy their holidays.

Delivering the inaugural Justice SB Sinha Memorial Lecture on "Life of a Judge" in Ranchi in July, the then CJI Ramana had said judges spend sleepless nights rethinking their decisions. "There exists a misconception in the minds of the people that judges stay in ultimate comfort, work only from 10 am to 4 pm and enjoy their holidays. Such a narrative is untrue... When false narratives are created about the supposed easy life led by judges, it is difficult to swallow," he had said.

Friday was the last working day of the top court before it goes on the two-week winter break. The apex court will reopen on January 2. The issue regarding court vacations has been raised earlier also but judges, including former CJI N V Ramana, had said there is a misconception that

## Two civilians killed in firing; FIR registered

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Rajouri/Jammu, Dec 16:** Two civilians were killed and another was injured in firing outside an army camp in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district Friday, leading to massive protests and demands for a fair probe.

While the army said in a tweet that some "unidentified terrorists" had started firing at the camp, eyewitnesses claimed a sentry posted at the gate opened fire at approaching locals, resulting in the casualties.

"FIR has been registered with regard to the early morning incident. We assure a fair probe in a professional manner. Police were the first to reach the scene after the firing and they shifted the injured to a hospital," Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Haseeb Mughal told reporters.

Rajouri residents Kamal Kumar and Surinder Kumar, both in their late 30s, were killed and Anil Kumar from Uttarakhand was injured, police said. Following the incident, locals, carrying their bodies, blocked the Jammu-Poonch national highway for nearly seven hours and demanded a probe into the matter and adequate compensation to the families of the victims.

They relented only after senior administration, army and police officials assured them of action, including registration of FIR. The bodies were taken to the Rajouri Government Medical College for postmortem and other legal formalities, Mughal said.

Police said the firing took place around 6.15 am when a group of people, who worked as porters, were approaching the 'alpha' gate of the camp, located along the highway and about 150 kms from Jammu. Though the army claimed that "unidentified terrorists" started firing at the camp and in retaliatory fire, the two people were killed, eyewitnesses, denied it and alleged unprovoked firing by the sentry.



## Man kills brother over drug use

**New Delhi:** A man in Delhi killed his younger brother after being infuriated over the latter's drug use and his daily quarrels with the family, a police official said on Friday.

The accused, Lalit Kumar, 26, surrendered before the Mangolpuri police station on Wednesday and revealed the details of the murder after which the body of the victim, 23-year-old Jaikishan, was recovered from the area. According to the official, Lalit told the police that he killed Jaikishan on Tuesday and he can show where he dumped the body in a park near their house.

## 12-yr-old boy dies of cardiac arrest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhind, Dec 16:** A 12-year-old boy died of cardiac arrest after collapsing in his school bus in Bhind in Madhya Pradesh, with a doctor who treated him saying on Friday he may be the youngest victim of cardiac arrest in the state.

Manish Jatav, a Class IV student, had lunch with his brother in their school on Etawah Road on Thursday afternoon and collapsed soon after he boarded his bus at 2pm, his family members said. The driver of the bus alerted school authorities, who rushed the child to a nearby hospital where doctors failed to revive him, the kin added.

"Manish was brought dead to the hospital on Thursday afternoon. We gave him cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) but could not revive him. As per his symptoms, he died of cardiac failure," district hospital surgeon Dr Anil Goyal said.

The parents of the deceased decided against conducting a post mortem, Goyal added. Speaking about the death, Dr Goyal said, "Such incidents have risen after COVID-19 as per a study. It is possibly the first time someone this young has died of cardiac arrest in MP." Manish's father Komal said his son had no health issues so far.

## PILs being used to target infra projects: SC

The bench made the observation while declining to entertain a plea against the re-development of a plot of land in Mumbai, saying that the Bombay High Court actually smelled the rat here and this is happening across Delhi, and Mumbai

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** The Supreme Court Friday observed that public interest litigation (PIL) matters could become an instrument of blackmail when it is an issue of an infrastructure project, adding that



This actually makes a plank to target such projects." The bench made the observation

while declining to entertain a plea against the re-development of a plot of land in Mumbai, saying that the Bombay High Court actually smelled the rat here and this is happening across Delhi, and Mumbai. Counsel, representing the petitioner, however, contended that she will convince the bench that there is no rat involved here.

The top court said the high court's finding that the PIL was filed to target the infrastructure project was correct and told the petitioner's counsel that the plea is targeting the project and not

the issue. The petitioner urged the bench to examine the matter.

The top court said the high court is often aware why the party has moved it, when a particular property is targeted in a PIL.

Noticing that the top court is not willing to entertain the plea, the petitioner's counsel urged the court to waive off the Rs 1 lakh fine imposed on the petitioner. However, the top court declined to interfere with the part of the high court order imposing a cost on the petitioner.





## Bihar: Hooch traders rounded up as illicit liquor tragedy toll rises

The opposition BJP Friday alleged that the government is hiding the total number of deaths in the hooch tragedy



Leader of Opposition in the Bihar Assembly and BJP leader Vijay Kumar Sinha (4th from right) with legislators shouts slogans during a protest against Bihar government over the Chhapra Hooch tragedy in Patna

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Saran/Patna, Dec 16: The Bihar hooch tragedy toll climbed to 28 with two more deaths reported, a top Saran district official said, however unconfirmed reports claimed up to 50 died by drinking the illicitly brewed liquor.

Saran District Magistrate Rajesh Meena told PTI, "The suspected hooch death has increased to 28 (till Thursday night) in the district".

The DM said that action raids across the district have been conducted and 126 traders involved in selling locally brewed country liquor have been caught.

"We have also conducted intensive raids across the district in the last 48 hours and nabbed 126 hooch traders. More than 4,000 litres of illicit liquor have also been seized," he told reporters Thursday.

Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar, had declined to divulge whether the arrested persons included those directly involved in the latest hooch case, saying that "the matter is still under investigation and disclosing much at this stage could hamper the probe".

### NHRC sends notice

NEW DELHI: Taking cognizance of the deaths due to consumption of poisonous liquor in Bihar, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sent a notice to the Chief Secretary and the DGP of the state. The officials have been asked to submit the inquiry report within 4 weeks. The NHRC said that it took suo motu cognizance of the media reports of several deaths allegedly due to the consumption of toxic liquor. The Commission noted that the sale and consumption of liquor was completely banned in Bihar since 2016 and observed that these reports, if deemed true, would raise human rights' concerns.

"For speedy investigation, an SIT consisting of 31 police officials, headed by an additional SP and including three deputy SPs, has also been set up", the district magistrate had said.

Meanwhile, the opposition BJP Friday alleged that the government is hiding the total number of deaths in the hooch tragedy. Talking to PTI, Leader of Opposition in Bihar Assembly, Vijay Kumar Sinha Friday said, "Spurious liquor sale has been flourishing in Bihar under the protection of police officers and state

## Bihar civic bodies to give notice to encroachers before demolition drive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Nov 16: The state assembly Thursday passed the Bihar Municipality (Amendment) Bill, 2022, which made it mandatory for civic bodies to give prior notice to encroachers before conducting a demolition drive on public land.

The bill, tabled by Deputy Chief minister Tejashwi Prasad Yadav, who also holds the Urban Development Department portfolio, was passed in the House amid uproarious scenes by Opposition members over the Saran hooch tragedy.

According to the bill, civic officials can remove temporary encroachment 24 hours after issuing a notice and permanent encroachment only after a 15-day notice period.

The state government is also coming out with a rehabilitation pol-



icy to provide alternative accommodation to slum-dwellers, whose houses were demolished during recent anti-encroachment drives, Yadav said.

Authorities concerned are already conducting surveys of the affected people. According to the initial survey, the government is preparing to rehabilitate 48,000 affected slum-dwellers whose houses were demolished during recent drives in Patna, he said.

The assembly also passed the Bihar Technical Service Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

The House was adjourned for the day after the passage of the bills. As the proceedings of the House began, BJP MLAs started raising slogans against Chief Minister Nitish Kumar over the Saran hooch tragedy, in which 26 people have died after consuming spurious liquor.

## State is under police raj: Sushil



NEW DELHI: Former Deputy Chief Minister and BJP MP Sushil Modi lashed out at Nitish Kumar-led Bihar government over the hooch tragedy in Chapra, and said the state was under 'police raj' and the number of deaths in the recent hooch tragedy was much higher. While speaking to IANS, he said, "More than 100 people died after drinking spurious, illicit liquor. But, the numbers are being hidden. Even in Bihar, the media has put the death toll at around 50. The people are hiding the bodies of their kins fearing police inquiry. There is police raj in Bihar. This is not the first tragedy in Bihar. Before this tragedy, 17 deaths had occurred earlier due to illicit liquor in the same district".

administration despite prohibition in place. But the chief minister is silent and he does not take any action against the accused." "The Saran incident is a mass murder by the government and the state administration is responsible for it. We (BJP MLAs) visited the affected areas in Saran Thursday, the number of deaths is much higher than the figure that is being provided by the district administration. We will again raise this issue in the Assembly Friday," Sinha said.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Thursday warned that if people drink spurious liquor, they will die.

The Chief Minister's blunt comments came as his policy of prohibition came under attack from many quarters including from his former political strategist turned activist Prashant Kishor, who demanded scrapping of the prohibition law. Kumar when he brought in prohibition had won praise from many women's groups who felt it would save their men-folk from the "curse of drunkenness and save homes from financial ruin."

Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 16: Gender representation in business sector is highly skewed even though young girls have proved their mettle by participating in big numbers and outsmarting their male counterparts in many innovation competitions like hackathons, the founder of a startup said.

This was observed by S Sandeep, the co-founder of Avasarshala, a successful startup that provides information about opportunities for students in various domains including arts and sports or finding mentors in their field of choice, during the Huddle Global startup conclave, organised by the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) which began at Kovalam, an official release said.

Young girls grab a majority of the prizes during innovation competitions like hackathons. "Maybe that will be reflected in the coming years as the new generation grows up," said his wife Ashwathy Venugopal, the co-founder of Avasharsala. The panel kicked off their talk with moderator Sibi Sudhakaran, founder of Startup-Middle East,

## 6 Bihar cities in list of country's most polluted

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Dec 16: While the temperature is dipping across most of the country, the Air Quality Index (AQI) continues to remain above severe in most of the cities.

In the list of 10 cities with the most air pollution, six are in Bihar. Saharsa is considered as the most air polluted city in the country having an air quality index of 366 which comes as health hazards for people hav-

ing asthmatic problems.

Besides Saharsa, Muzaffarpur was at 344, Bhagalpur at 330, Patna at 318, Begusarai at 270 and Purnea at 269, as per data recorded at 8 p.m. on Monday.

An official, however, said that the AQI of Saharsa and Muzaffarpur crossed the 400 mark during the daytime.

The official said that the dust is the main reason for deterioration of AQI in these cities. Rampant construction, and trans-



portations of sand and construction materials are the main reasons for AQI deterioration. As a result of this, PM 2.5 and PM 10 levels increased five and three-folds from the normal days.

AQI from 0 to 50 is considered as good, from 51 to 100 moderate, from 101 to 150 is considered "unhealthy for the sensitive group, from 151 to 200 is considered unhealthy for all, from 201 to 300 is very unhealthy, and from 301 to 500 are hazardous for human health."



Artistes wearing Kathakali costume at the opening ceremony of the Kochi Design Week in Kochi, Kerala

## Girl power yet to make a mark in technology

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



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## Innocents becoming victims of false cases under SC/ST Act

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



Kochi, Dec 16: The Kerala High Court has urged lower courts to carefully analyse cases under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act while considering pleas for anticipatory bail, in order to rule out the possibility of false implication.

Noting that it cannot be disputed that the stringent provisions of the SC/ST Act have been incorporated to curb the menace of atrocities against members of SC/ST communities, he said that it is because of the stringent provisions in the matter of grant of anticipatory bail that the Court must go into the genesis of the cases to rule out the possibility of ulterior motives in filing complaints under the Act.

The court made these observations while considering an appeal moved by a woman against the order of a Special Judge under the SC/ST (POA) Act that refused to grant her anticipatory bail in a crime alleging commission of offence punishable under Section 3(1)(s) of the SC/ST (POA) Act.

A bench of Justice A Badhurudeen said it was shocking that many innocent persons are victims of false implication and, therefore, courts must pay great attention to the details when it comes to cases under the SC/ST Act

The allegation against the appellant, was that when the complainant went to the bank where she was an employee, she called him

out by his caste name in public view. The appellant does not belong to any SC/ST whereas the complainant does.

Before the High Court, the appellant pointed out that the complainant's wife worked with the man against whom she had registered a police complaint for repeated sexual harassment.

The registration of the present crime was only one among many attempts they had made to force her to withdraw her sexual harassment complaint, the appellant argued.

The court opined that the case advanced by the defacto complainant was prima facie doubtful and, therefore, granted anticipatory bail. Incidentally Wednesday the high court intervened in a case where a CPI-M legislator filed a complaint under the SC/ST Act against leading industrialist Sabu M. Jacob and prevented his arrest. Likewise Thursday ruling front legislator Thomas K. Thomas and his wife came under duress when a woman party leader filed a case under these sections.

## Scenic Munroe Thuruth turns a 'sinking island'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kollam (Ker), Dec 16: Tucked away from the chaos of this nearby commercial town, there is an inland island where wooden country boats can be seen carrying tourists every now and then through tranquil canals, flanked by lush mangrove patches and shady coconut lagoons.

Visitors can be seen leisurely sitting on the boats and clicking breathtaking visuals of the greenish waterways, flocks of migratory birds and moss-infested low bridges there.

However, it may be hard for any outsider to believe that several hundreds of natives have left the scenic Munroe Thuruth, a cluster of islets located at the confluence of Ashtamudi Lake and Kallada River here, in recent years due to



hazardous living conditions caused by unusual high tides post Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004.

Abandoned houses filled with dirt and stench, partially submerged pathways, buildings with

moistened walls and crevices on structures and people doing their daily chores in ankle-high water were the common scenes in the most affected areas in this island. Though the island was once

known for its coconut lagoons, high salinity in water and water-logging have taken a dangerous toll on the coconut trees, decaying its roots and turning them into just lifeless stems, she said.

The region had been witnessing

high tides in certain months for decades and that was normal, but the issue became so severe after the tsunami in 2004, the woman, a resident of Kidapram south ward, recalled.

A sought-after cruise tourism destination, comprising eight tiny islets in an area of 13.4 sq km, Munroe Island's low-lying areas have been facing a serious threat of being submerged during high tides for quite some years, according to native people.

Houses are inundated and land is largely reclaimed by water in many islets, causing the gradual "sinking" of buildings, other constructions and flora, they said.

Though several studies have been carried out in these years seeking to find out the exact reasons for the issues in Munroe Thuruth, experts are divided in their opinion.



Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan lays a wreath at War Memorial, Pangode, on the occasion of Vijay Diwas, in Thiruvananthapuram



## of the day quote

More than 49,600 vehicles have been registered under Bharat (BH) series, with Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan emerging as the leading states

The process of Aadhaar linking with the Elector Photo Identity Card (EPIC) has begun and the concerned electors will be notified authentication result after obtaining the same from Unique Identification Authority of India

Nitish Kumar is losing grip over the administration. He is uttering irresponsible and shameful statements. Nitish Kumar ji you are nursing national ambitions but please take care of Bihar first. Bihar is slipping out of your hands

## SHORT TAKES

### Cop arrested

**Kanpur Dehat:** Special Operations Group in-charge Prashant Gautam, one of the seven accused, has been arrested for murder in connection with the custodial death of a 27-year-old trader in Kanpur Dehat district. Seven persons, including six policemen and a duty doctor of Kanpur Dehat district hospital, were booked on Wednesday in connection with the death of the trader Balwant Singh in police custody, late on Monday night. On the complaint of Angad Singh, uncle of Balwant Singh, an FIR had been registered under the relevant IPC sections. Balwant Singh, who died in police custody after he was detained in an alleged loot case, was assaulted and had more than two dozen wounds on his body, according to the autopsy report.

### Man kills child

**Bulandshahr:** A one-and-a-half-year-old child was hacked to death in Saujhana Jhaya village of this district by an alcoholic. The accused, identified as Kaju, alias Kishanpal, took the child, who was playing outside his house, to a cane field and hacked him to death. When the family members of the minor started looking for him, they found his body in the field and spotted the accused at some distance. The accused also attacked the villagers with a knife when they tried to stop him.

### 2 thieves injured

**Greater Noida:** An encounter between the police and a gang of vehicle thieves resulted in two miscreants getting injured in Greater Noida. The incident took place in Beta 2 police station area, during which two gang members were shot in the leg, while another was caught during combing. According to sources, the Anti-Auto Theft squad signalled a white Brezza car to pull over at a checkpoint on Kasna road near Pari Chowk. On receiving information about the vehicle with no number plate, the police at Honda Chowk tried to stop the car, but it sped away towards Chuharpur underpass and was chased by the police.

### Four female cops suspended

**Ayodhya:** Four female cops deployed as part of security at the 'Ram Janmabhoomi' site here, have been suspended after a video purportedly showing them dancing to Bhojpuri song 'Patli Kamariya Mori' surfaced online. The suspended constables were not in uniform in the video that is being shared widely on social media platforms.



**Bengal has been fighting for unity, humanity, diversity and integrity. This struggle will go on. Our state does not bow down to anybody, nor does it beg**

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

## AIIMS DATA RETRIEVED

More than two weeks after the AIIMS cyber attack, Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin informed the Lok Sabha Friday that all the data has been retrieved from an unaffected backup server with most of its services also being restored



# Regional parties have no national vision: Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, Dec 16:** Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi Friday said none of the regional parties can represent a vision for the country and that is what makes his party different from others.

Rahul Gandhi, however, also said the Congress must work with other opposition parties for the 2024 general election and party chief Mallikarjun Kharge would evolve a strategy in this regard.

He said despite the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) organisational and money power, the Congress fought against it and won the Himachal Pradesh polls, adding that if the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was not put up as a "proxy to target the Congress" in Gujarat, the grand old party could have defeated the saffron party there as well.

"We are different from the large number of opposition parties. We work with them, we appreciate them, we believe they are important, but we are different. The way we are different is that we represent a national ideology. We represent a vision for the country," Rahul said here.

"None of the regional parties can represent a vision for the country. They can represent a vision for a community or a vision for a state, but they cannot represent a vision for the country," he said.

Rahul Gandhi said the Congress



**We are different from the large number of opposition parties. We work with them, we appreciate them, we believe they are important, but we are different. The way we are different is that we represent a national ideology. We represent a vision for the country**

RAHUL GANDHI | FORMER CONGRESS CHIEF

is competing with a vision that the BJP is proposing for the country. "The space for the Congress party will always be there and the people who believe in the Congress party will always be there. It is a question of getting them excited, getting them motivated and getting them to

## Gujarat woman alleges torture

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Junagadh, Dec 16:** The Junagadh police have initiated a probe after a pregnant woman accused her in-laws of subjecting her to physical and psychological torture.

In her complaint with the Junagadh Women Police Station, the aggrieved woman Surbhi Ugrajia said that her husband Krunal, and five other members of his family branding her tongue, made her wear a "shoe garland" and carry out 'Parikrama' of their 'Kuldevi' with a traditional stove (Sigr) on her head.

The torture Surbhi said, did not end here as she was forced to keep a shoe in her mouth during the entire ritual. She alleged that because of their harassment, her first pregnancy ended in a miscarriage and now, when she has conceived again, they are forcing her to abort the fetus and give consent for the divorce.

Hailing from Junagadh, the woman married Krunal in December 2021 and shifted to Ghatkopar in Mumbai where he resides with his family.

According to the complaint, the reason for harassment was her husband's alleged affair with his elder brother's wife. Till late at night, Krunal used to stay in his sister-in-law's room, she alleged. Once her in-laws assaulted the complainant's parents with footwear but they endured it for their daughter's sake.

The woman, who is into her fourth month of pregnancy, says her husband's family is pressuring her for abortion and to give consent for the divorce.

# BJP, TMC engage in political slugfest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** A political slugfest broke out between Trinamool Congress and BJP leaders over comments made by actor Amitabh Bachchan and a song by playback artiste Arijit Singh at the Kolkata International Film Festival.

The bitter war of words started with actor Amitabh Bachchan's comments that "questions being raised on freedom of expression" and struck a high note when Arijit Singh sang "Rang de tu mohe gerua" (colour be saffron), which many linked to the ongoing controversy over a saffron costume worn by Deepika Padukone in Shah Rukh Khan starrer "Pathaan". That this came after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee asked him to sing added to the debate.

"Amitabh Bachchan's words couldn't have been more prophetic since they were spoken in Kolkata, with Mamata Banerjee on the dais. It is like holding a mirror to the tyrant," said BJP IT Cell head Amit Malviya.

Actor and Trinamool MP Nusrat Jahan was quick to respond. "Signs of tyrannical rule include banning movies, detaining journalists, and punishing common people for speaking the truth", she said on Twitter.

She alleged that the BJP was "capping" freedoms "while Mr Amit Malviya is busy accusing others".

The song, "Rang de tu mohe gerua", is from Khan's another movie, Dilwale, featuring him with



**Amitabh Bachchan's words couldn't have been more prophetic since they were spoken in Kolkata, with Mamata Banerjee on the dais. It is like holding a mirror to the tyrant**

AMIT MALVIYA | BJP IT CELL HEAD

Kajol. "It was an evening of realisations. From Mr Bachchan to Arijit, who reminded Mamata Banerjee, in her backyard, that the future of Bengal is saffron..." tweeted Malviya.

He also pointed out that she had appointed Shah Rukh Khan as brand ambassador over West Bengal's own Sourav Ganguly.

The latest row, again bringing politics and Bollywood at loggerheads, began with the BJP and other Hindutva organisations calls to boycott "Pathaan", particularly highlighting their "saffron" and "green" attire in the song Besharam Rang.

In Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, ruled by the BJP, its leaders have threatened to have the movie banned.

# Shraddha murder: Aaftab seeks bail



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Aaftab Amin Poonawalla, who is accused of killing his live-in partner Walkar and then chopping her body into 35 pieces, is currently lodged in the Tihar jail**

have received the DNA test report from the CFSL and the polygraph test from the FSL, Rohini.

However, he refrained from officially announcing the death of Walkar as the third, narco test report was still awaited. The post-narco test of Poonawalla had also concluded on December 2. His test was conducted inside the Tihar prison by the FSL officials.

Poonawalla was arrested on November 12. His polygraph test report was submitted to the police by the Forensic Sciences Lab (FSL) on December 14. The Delhi Police teams investigating the case had recovered 13 bone pieces after the accused told the investigators that he chopped her body into several pieces and dumped them into the forest area.

The blood samples were also recovered, from bathroom and kitchen by the forensic officials in the Chattarpur house, where both Poonawalla and Walkar had shifted on May 15, three days before her murder.



Students visit the Techfest, at IIT Bombay in Mumbai

PTI PHOTO

# BRO built 3,097 km of roads in Arunachal in last 5 yrs: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has constructed 3,097 km of roads in Arunachal Pradesh and 3,140 km in the Union Territory of Ladakh in the last five years, the government informed Parliament Friday.

Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt told the Lok Sabha

that the Defence Ministry has entrusted the BRO with the construction of roads in border areas, according to priority fixed by the Army based on a five-year Long Term Roll over Works Plan (LTROWP).

In his written response, he also shared data on lengths of roads constructed across the country, according to which, a total of 257 roads spanning 13,525.417 km have

been built in the last five years, in 10 states and three Union Territories.

The BRO has constructed 64 roads spanning 3,097 km in Arunachal Pradesh and 43 roads spanning 3,140 km in Ladakh in the last five years, according to the information shared.

India has been bolstering the infrastructure along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) since the

eastern Ladakh standoff in 2020. The Border Roads Organisation functions under the Ministry of Defence.

The details of roads constructed in other states and Union Territories include -- 18 roads (663.535 km) in Sikkim; 22 roads (947.21 km) in Uttarakhand; 61 roads (2381.963 km) in UT of Jammu & Kashmir; 13 roads (884.309 km) in Rajasthan.

# Rajasthan may enact law to set up education regulator

**THE DRAFT LAW PROPOSES APTITUDE TESTS FOR STUDENTS BEFORE THEY JOIN A COACHING CENTRE FOR COMPETITIVE EXAMS, AND A HELPLINE IF THEY FIND THAT THEY CANNOT FACE THE STRESS**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, Dec 16:** The Rajasthan government is set to enact a law establishing a regulatory authority to keep tabs on private educational institutes including coaching centres, ensuring that they open counselling cells, end "glorification" of toppers and deal with the kind of stress that possibly led to three students committing suicide recently.

The draft law proposes aptitude

tests for students before they join a coaching centre for competitive exams, and a helpline if they find that they cannot face the stress. "The Rajasthan Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Bill - 2022", which has been in the making since 2020, is likely to be introduced in the next session of the state assembly.

It covers schools, colleges as well as centres, like in coaching hub Kota, that prepare students for competitive exams. Recently, three students studying at a Kota centre



committed suicide, allegedly because they could not cope up with the pressure of studies there.

The draft bill also seeks to regulate tuition fees, annual fee hikes, cost of study material and other charges levied by private institutions, including tuition centres.

The authority, headed by a prominent academician as chairperson, shall also make provisions to fix study hours, days off and the gap between tests to avoid stress on students.

The bill proposes hefty penalties -- up to Rs 5 crore for repeat of-

ferently-abled students, teachers and non-teaching staff in private educational institutions, it said.

The draft says there will a mandatory aptitude test for students before they join a coaching centre -- and its findings shall be shared with their parents. The Authority shall mandate setting up a 24x7 helpline for students and parents.

Private institutions would pay a maximum penalty of Rs 1 crore if they violate provisions of the proposed law. The fine could increase up to Rs 5 crore for a repeat violation. The bill seeks mandatory registration of all coaching institutes with the government and annual auditing of their accounts. Last month, the state government issued guidelines to provide mental support and security to students studying at coaching institutes.



# international



There are two possibilities. First, war will end when we win (and) at that moment. And the second possibility is that this fight will end with the end of the world  
ALEXANDER DUGIN | ALLY OF PUTIN

## HUGE BERLIN AQUARIUM BURSTS

A huge aquarium in Berlin burst early Friday, spilling 1 million litres (264,172 gallons) of water, around 1,500 exotic fish and debris onto a major road in the busy Mitte district, emergency services said



## of the day quote

The world sees Pakistan as the epicentre of terrorism and it should clean up its act and try to be a good neighbor  
S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER OF INDIA

During India's G20 presidency, ongoing challenges to food security will be addressed  
JANET YELLEN | US TREASURY SECRETARY

Solving the Ukrainian crisis through political means is in the best interest of Europe and the common interest of all countries in Eurasia  
XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

## Pacifist Japan unveils major military build-up



Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida attends a news conference addressing some topics such as National Security Strategy, political and social issues facing Japan in today's world crisis

REUTERS  
**Tokyo, Dec 16:** Japan Friday unveiled its biggest military build-up since World War Two with a \$320 billion plan that will buy missiles capable of striking China and ready it for sustained conflict, as regional tensions and Russia's Ukraine invasion stoke war fears.

The sweeping, five-year plan, once unthinkable in pacifist Japan, will make the country the world's third-biggest military spender after the United States and China, based on current budgets.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who described Japan and its people as being at a "turning point in history", said the ramp-up was "my answer to the various security challenges that we face".

His government worries that Russia has set a precedent that will encourage China to attack Taiwan, threatening nearby Japanese islands, disrupting supplies of advanced semiconductors and putting a potential stranglehold on sea lanes that supply Middle East oil.

"This is setting a new heading for Japan. If appropriately executed, the Self-Defense Forces will be a real, world-class effective force," said Yoichi Koda, a former Maritime Self Defense Force admiral, who commanded the Japanese fleet in 2008.

The government said it would also stockpile spare parts and other munitions, expand transport capacity and develop cyber warfare capabilities. In its postwar, American-authored constitution, Japan gave up the right to wage war and means to do so.

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a serious violation of laws that forbid the use of force and has shaken the foundations of the international order," the strategy paper said.

"The strategic challenge posed by China is the biggest Japan has ever faced," it added, also noting that Beijing had not ruled out using force to bring Taiwan under its control.

A separate national security strategy document that pointed to China, Russia and North Korea, promised close cooperation with the United States and other like-minded nations to deter threats to the established international order.

"The Prime Minister is making a clear, unambiguous strategic statement about Japan's role as a security provider in the Indo-Pacific," US ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel said in a statement. "He has put a capital 'D' next to Japan's deterrence," he added.

Meeting Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association Chairman Mitsuo Ohashi in Taipei Friday, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen said she expected greater defence cooperation with Japan.

"We look forward to Taiwan and Japan continuing to create new cooperation achievements in various fields such as national defence and security, the economy, trade, and industrial transformation," the presidential office cited Tsai as saying.

China accused Japan of making false claims about China's military activities in the new security strategy, according to a statement from its embassy in Japan.

## MAJOR ATTACK ON UKRAINE

Russia has rained missiles on Ukrainian energy infrastructure almost weekly since early October after several battlefield defeats, but Friday's attack seemed to have caused more damage than many others, with snow and ice now widespread

AGENCIES

**Kyiv, Dec 16:** Russia fired more than 70 missiles at Ukraine Friday in one of its biggest attacks since the start of the war, knocking out power in the second biggest city and forcing Kyiv to bring in emergency blackouts nationwide, Ukrainian officials said.

Two people were killed when an apartment block was hit in central Kryvyi Rih and another died in shelling in Kherson in the south, they said. Russian-installed officials in occupied eastern Ukraine said 12 people had died in Ukrainian shelling.

Kyiv warned late Thursday that Moscow planned a new all-out offensive early next year, around a year after its February 24 invasion, which has destroyed huge areas of Ukraine but brought lit-

## Russia fires scores of missiles



People shelter inside a metro station during massive Russia's missile attacks in Kyiv, Ukraine

tle of it under Moscow's control. Russia flew warplanes near Ukraine to try to distract its air defences, Ukraine's air force said. Its army chief said 60 of 76 Russian missiles had been shot down but Energy Minister German Galushchenko said at least nine power-generating facilities had been hit.

Moscow says the attacks are aimed at disabling Ukraine's military. Ukrainians call them a war crime. "They want to destroy us, and make us slaves. But we will not surrender. We will endure," said

Lidiya Vasilieva, 53, as she headed for shelter at a Kyiv railway station. The governor of the Dnipropetrovsk region that includes Kryvyi Rih, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's home town, said a missile had hit an apartment block there.

Ukrainian shelling Russian forces occupy around a fifth of Ukraine in its south and east and many soldiers have been reported killed and wounded on both sides in brutal fighting, although neither issues detailed reports of their own military casualties.

Russian-installed officials said the latest Ukrainian shelling had killed civilians in two places.

## New EU sanctions

The European Union said Friday its latest round of sanctions will hit Russia's military-industrial complex, as well as people and groups that are attacking Ukrainian civilians or kidnapping children. Valdis Dombrovskis, a European Commission vice-president, said the package will deal a blow to 168 "entities" — companies or state organisations — linked to the arms industry. "This will ensure that key chemicals, nerve agents, night-vision and radio-navigation equipment, electronics and IT components that could be used by the Russian war machine cannot be freely traded," said the EU Council, which represents member states.



Eleven people were killed, 20 wounded and another 20 were unaccounted for in the village of Lantrativka near the border with Russia in the Russian-controlled Luhansk region of Ukraine, Russia's TASS news agency said, citing emergency services.

## SHORT TAKES

### Landslide at camp ground kills 18

**Batang Kali:** A thunderous crush of soil and debris killed 18 people at a campground in Malaysia Friday, and rescuers dug through the dirt for another 15 who were feared buried in the landslide. Two of the dead were found locked in an embrace, according to the state fire department chief. More than 90 people were sleeping on an organic farm when the soil tumbled from a road about 30 meters (100 feet) above the site and covered about 1 hectare (3 acres).

### Crush at UK concert venue, three critical

**London:** Three people remained hospitalised in critical condition Friday after hundreds of people forced their way into a London concert venue during a performance by Nigerian Afrobeats star Asake. Police said eight people were taken to hospitals after being caught in a crowd trying to get into the O2 Brixton Academy. Initially four were listed in critical condition. Two less seriously injured people were treated at the scene.

### Jolie leaves role as UN refugee envoy

**United Nations:** Angelina Jolie and the United Nations' refugee agency are parting ways after more than two decades. In a joint statement issued Friday, the actress and the agency announced she was "moving on" from her role as the agency's special envoy "to engage on a broader set of humanitarian and human rights issues." Jolie first started working with the UN refugee agency in 2001 and was appointed its special envoy in 2012.

### Turkey: Bomb attack targets police van

**Ankara:** A remote-controlled bomb exploded on a highway in Turkey as an armoured police van carrying officers drove past Friday, injuring all nine occupants, government officials said. Five people were detained in connection with the attack, which occurred near the predominantly Kurdish-populated city of Diyarbakir in southeast Turkey, Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said.

### Israel's inflation hits 14-year high

**Tel Aviv:** Israel's year-on-year inflation rose to 5.3 per cent in November, the highest since October 2008, according to figures issued by the Central Bureau of Statistics. The 12-month inflation figure continued to go over the upper limit of the government range of 1 to 3 per cent, Xinhua news agency report said.

## India, Nepal joint military exercise begins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kathmandu, Dec 16:** India and Nepal Friday began the 16th edition of the annual joint military training exercise aimed at enhancing cooperation and interoperability between the two armies for counter-insurgency and disaster relief operations.

The 'Surya Kiran' exercise commenced at Nepal Army Battle School in Saljhandi in the Rupandehi district of Lumbini Zone near the Nepal-India border.

"Joint India-Nepal Military Exercise SURYAKIRAN-XVI commenced at Saljhandi today. The current edition aims at enhancing cooperation & interoperability between the two armies for Counter Insurgency & Disaster Relief ops," the Indian embassy here tweeted. The exercise commenced with the unfurling of the national flags



and both armies marching in harmony on the Indian and Nepalese military tunes.

"During the two weeks of arduous exercise, an Infantry Battalion each from the Indian Army and the Nepalese Army will be training together to enhance interoperability and share experience



Visitors take a selfie in the snow at the Gyeongbok Palace, the main royal palace during the Joseon Dynasty, and one of South Korea's well known landmarks in Seoul, South Korea

## PIO nurse, 2 kids found dead in UK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Dec 16:** An Indian-origin nurse from Kerala and her two young children have died after being found with serious injuries at their home in the Northampton region of eastern England, local police said as they launched a murder investigation Friday.

Northamptonshire Police said that formal identification is yet to take place, but the woman is believed to be 35-year-old Anju Asok and the two children have been named as Jeeva Saju, aged 6, and Janvi Saju, aged 4.

They were discovered with serious injuries at their home in Kettering Thursday after police were alerted by friends and family. A 52-year-old man, not identified by the police, has since been arrested on suspicion of



murder in connection with the incident and remains in police custody for questioning.

"We continue to work around the clock in order to progress this investigation and establish the timeline of events which led to these tragic deaths," said Detective Inspector Simon Barnes, Senior Investigating Officer with Northamptonshire Police.

## 10 DEAD IN FRANCE APARTMENT FIRE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Vaulx-en-Velin, Dec 16:** Ten people, including five children died after a nighttime fire ravaged an eight-story apartment building Friday in one of the city of Lyon's poorest suburbs, French authorities said.

The cause of the blaze — the country's deadliest in years — is under investigation, including to establish whether it had a criminal origin. Fourteen people were injured in the tragedy in the small suburban town of Vaulx-en-Velin, four of them seriously, according to the



prefecture for the Rhone region. Some 170 firefighters were mobilized after flames tore through the centre of the modern apartment block shortly after 3 a.m. The fire has since been extinguished.

Witness reports carried on French media describe scenes of horror, including residents smashing windows to try to climb out of the building, and one mother throwing her child out of the window to be safely caught by a person on the ground.

An Associated Press reporter at the scene saw several fire trucks and a security perimeter set up around the area, and residents and traumatised neighbours with their children assembling in a car park opposite the building.

Vaulx-en-Velin, a small town of 43,000 inhabitants, is among the most impoverished areas in the Rhone region.

## Reporters covering Musk are suspended from Twitter

All the suspended reporters have in recent months written about Twitter's owner, billionaire Elon Musk, and changes at the platform since he bought it

AGENCIES

**San Francisco, Dec 16:** Twitter has abruptly suspended the accounts of several high-profile journalists who cover the social media platform and Elon Musk, who acquired the company in October.

The accounts of Ryan Mac of The New York Times, Donie O'Sullivan of CNN, Drew Harwell of The Washington Post, Matt Binder of Mashable, Micah Lee of The Intercept, Steve Herman of

Voice of America, and independent journalists Aaron Rupa, Keith Olbermann as well as Tony Webster had all been suspended as of Thursday evening, CNN reported.

The journalists, however, found a backdoor way onto the platform through the website's audio function, and hours later of suspension faced off with Musk in a Twitter Space audio discussion before an audience of more than 30,000 listeners. "You doxx, you get suspended."



End of story. That's it," Musk said to one of the suspended journalists, explaining his latest policy to the group before he left minutes after

having joined the discussion.

Musk was referring to Twitter's latest rule change about accounts that track private jets, including one owned by Musk himself, which was put in place on Wednesday.

The Twitter account for Mastodon, a platform billed as a Twitter alternative, was also suspended early on Thursday evening.

Twitter accounts operated by NBC News journalists were unable to tweet any links to Mastodon pages. Mastodon was, however, trending on Twitter.

According to NBC News, Musk said the suspensions stemmed from the platform's new rules banning private jet trackers, re-

sponding to a tweet from Mike Solana, a vice president of the venture capital firm Founders Fund, who noted that the suspended accounts had posted links to jet trackers on other websites.

Musk tweeted that the accounts banned on Thursday posted "my exact real-time location, basically assassination coordinates, in (obvious) direct violation of Twitter terms of service". Musk later added that the suspensions would last seven days.

In early November, shortly after having taken control of Twitter, Musk tweeted that he would not ban the account that tracked his jet.



## of the day quote

Government departments and the RBI are taking coordinated steps to check Chinese mobile apps offering easy loans and cheating people

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN** | FINANCE MINISTER

Looking for the next few decades, India presents a major growth opportunity. At the same time, it is important to remember the scope of reforms India has undertaken in the last few years

**N CHANDRASEKHARAN** | CHAIRMAN, TATA SONS

Scaling up innovation, more collaboration across businesses, larger firms, MSMEs and innovators are critical for India to become the core in the global supply chain instead of just being in the periphery

**ANISH SHAH** | MD AND CEO, MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA

## SHORT TAKES

### Air India's Boeing order revealed

**London:** Air India is close to a deal to order more than 200 Boeing jets including 190 narrowbody 737 MAX and 30 widebody 787s - part of an historic fleet shake-up roughly split with Boeing's European rival Airbus, sources said. The deal is also expected to include an unspecified number of Boeing 777 long-range jets, they added. Airbus is separately moving towards a deal with Air India including at least 200 of its A320-family narrowbody jets as well as dozens of larger A350s. Reports said Sunday that Air India was close to placing orders approaching 500 jets - including 400 narrowbody models - worth tens of billions of dollars from Airbus and Boeing as it seeks a renaissance under the Tata Group.

### Honda to hike prices from Jan

**New Delhi:** Japanese car maker Honda Friday said it is planning to increase prices of its entire model range by up to ₹30,000 from January to partially offset the impact of rising input costs and prepare products in compliance with upcoming stricter emission norms. The company, which is present in the country through a wholly-owned subsidiary, joins the likes of market leader Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors, Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Renault, Kia India and MG Motor, who have also made the year-end announcements to hike prices from the next month.

### PE/VC investments drop 42% in Nov

**Mumbai:** Investments by private equity and venture capital funds have declined by 42 per cent year-on-year to \$4 billion in November. However, compared to the preceding month of October, investments have increased by 18 per cent. By the number of deals, November's 88 transactions were 15 per cent lower than the year-ago period and 13 per cent higher than the preceding October. November 2022 recorded 29 exits worth \$1.8 billion compared to \$3.1 billion in November 2021 across 21 deals and \$1.6 billion through 15 such deals in October 2022.

### IRM Energy eyes ₹700cr via IPO

**New Delhi:** City gas distribution company IRM Energy Ltd has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise up to ₹700 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). The IPO is a fresh issue of up to 1.01 crore equity shares by existing shareholders, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).



**Countries across the world are looking at India as a trusted partner and want to sign free trade agreements with it after its emergence as a strong force in the world**  
**PIYUSH GOVAL** | TEXTILE MINISTER

## INDIGO'S 1ST WIDE-BODY PLANES

India's largest airline IndiGo today said it has sought aviation regulator DGCA's approval to wet lease Boeing 777 aircraft, which will be utilised for operating flights on the Delhi-Istanbul route. This will be the first time that the carrier will be inducting wide-body planes into its fleet



# World coal use creeps to new high

*Despite heavy investments in green energy, the coal grip is tightening around the world. The use of coal and other fossil fuels needs to be drastically cut to cap global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) this century*

REUTERS

**London, Dec 16:** Global coal consumption is set to rise to an all-time high in 2022 and remain at similar levels in the next few years if stronger efforts are not made to move to a low-carbon economy, a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA) said Friday. High gas prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and consequent disruptions to supply have led some countries to turn to relatively cheaper coal this year. Heatwaves and droughts in some regions have also driven up electricity demand and reduced hy-



dropower, while nuclear generation has also been very weak, especially in Europe, where France had to shut down nuclear reactors for maintenance. The IEA's annual report on coal forecasts global coal use is set to rise by 1.2% this year, exceeding 8 billion tonne in a single year for the first time and a previous record set in 2013. It also predicts that coal consumption will remain flat at that level to 2025 as falls in mature markets are offset by continued strong demand in emerging Asian economies. This means coal will continue to be the global energy system's largest

**The world is close to a peak in fossil fuel use, with coal set to be the first to decline, but we are not there yet**

**KEISUKE SADAMORI** | DIRECTOR OF ENERGY MARKETS AND SECURITY, IEA

single source of carbon dioxide emissions by far. The largest increase in coal demand is expected to be in India at 7%, followed by the European Union at 6% and China at 0.4%. Europe's coal demand has risen due to more switching from gas to coal due to high gas prices and as Russian gas has reduced to a trickle. However, by 2025 European coal demand is expected to decline below 2022 levels, the report said. Global coal-fired power generation is set to rise to a new record of around 10.3 terawatt hours this year, while coal production is forecast to rise by 5.4% to around 8.3 billion tonnes, also an all-time high.

Global coal use is set to rise by 1.2% this year, exceeding 8 billion tonne in a single year for the first time and a previous record set in 2013

The three largest coal producers - China, India and Indonesia - will all hit production records this year

The largest increase in coal demand is expected to be in India at 7%, followed by the European Union at 6% and China at 0.4%

Europe's coal demand has risen due to more switching from gas to coal due to high gas prices and as Russian gas has reduced to a trickle

Production is expected to reach a peak next year but by 2025 should fall to below 2022 levels.

The three largest coal producers - China, India and Indonesia - will all hit production records this year but despite high prices and comfortable margins for coal producers, there is no sign of surging investment in export-driven coal projects. This reflects caution among investors and mining companies about the medium- and longer-term prospects for coal, the report said.

## Razorpay, Cashfree to halt onboarding of new customers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** The Reserve Bank of India has asked Razorpay and Cashfree to temporarily stop the onboarding of new customers for their payment processing business, according to a source. On the banking regulator's order, Razorpay said it is a temporary move and has no impact on Razorpay's existing business operations and current merchants. RBI has issued an order a few days back asking Razorpay and Cashfree to stop customer onboarding, a source told PTI. No immediate comments were received from Cashfree. When contacted, Razorpay said it received in-principle approval from the RBI in July for a payment aggregator and payment gateway licence and the company is now required to share additional details with the RBI to aid in the final licence process. As part of this process, the RBI has requested us to temporarily withhold onboarding new online merchants till such details are submitted. As a responsible corporate that operates under the ambit of RBI, Razorpay has abided by the regulatory requirement. We would like to emphasize that this directive of the RBI has no impact on Razorpay's existing business operations and current merchants, Razorpay spokesperson said. RBI issues payment aggregator licence to entities involved in on-line payment processing while payment gateway permit is meant for entities providing technology for payment processing. The spokesperson said that Razorpay continues to onboard new businesses on other Razorpay services - RazorpayX, Corporate Card, and Offline payments via Ezetap. Razorpay's operations are fully compliant with all regulatory guidelines and the company continues to be in touch with RBI for the next steps, Razorpay spokesperson said.

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## India ₹ settlement system draws interest from more nations

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** India's rupee trade settlement mechanism, a means of using rupees instead of dollars and other big currencies for international transactions, is attracting interest from more countries. Tajikistan, Cuba, Luxembourg and Sudan have begun talking to India about using the mechanism, according to two sources and an of-

## Forex kitty swells by \$2.91bn to \$564.06bn

THIS IS THE FIFTH CONSECUTIVE WEEK OF AN INCREASE IN THE RESERVES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 16:** India's forex reserves rose by \$2.908 billion to \$564.06 billion for the week ended December 9, according to the Reserve Bank data released Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had soared by \$11 billion to \$561.16 billion. In October 2021, the country's foreign exchange kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion. The reserves had been declining as the central bank deployed the reserved to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments. Foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, increased by \$3.141 billion to \$500.125 billion during the week



to December 9, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves decreased

by \$296 million to \$40.729 billion. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) jumped by \$61 million to \$18.106 billion, the apex bank said. The country's reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was also up by \$2 million to \$5.11 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

## Investors lose ₹5.78L-cr in two days of mkt fall

*Amid the weak trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by*  
**Rs 5,78,648.39 crore to**  
**Rs 2,85,46,359.06 crore**  
*in two days*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** Investors wealth tumbled over ₹5.78 lakh crore in two days of market fall amid a weak trend in global markets after a host of central banks hiked interest rates and gave hawkish commentary. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 461.22 points or 0.75 per cent to settle at 61,337.81 on Friday. In the previous trade, the BSE benchmark had tanked 878.88 points or 1.40 per cent to settle at 61,799.03. In two days, the benchmark has fallen by 1,340.1 points or 2.13 per cent.



On Friday, in the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 1.44 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.96 per cent. All sectoral indices ended lower, with realty falling 1.57 per cent, followed by consumer discretionary (1.36 per cent), industrials (1.32 per cent), capital goods (1.26 per cent), teck (1.25 per cent), IT (1.24 per cent) and auto (1.13 per cent). Dr Reddy's emerged as biggest laggard in the Sensex pack, declining 3.62 per cent, followed by M&M, Asian Paints, TCS, SBI and Titan. HDFC Bank, HUL, Nestle and Tata Steel ended with gains.

## India's growth expected to slow in 2023-24: JP Morgan

*Inflation is expected to remain sticky in the coming months before gradually rolling off in 2023-24 as growth slows and input price pressure abates*

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** India's GDP growth is on course to print close to 7 per cent this year in 2022-23, foreign brokerage, JP Morgan said in a report. While buoyant, it would still leave output about 7 per cent below its pre-pandemic potential trend, reflective of impact of the pandemic and adverse terms of trade shock from higher commodity prices in 2022. Growth is expected to slow in 2023-24, on the back of a sharp global slowdown, which is weighing on exports, and the progressive fiscal and monetary policy normalization at home, JP Morgan said. That said, corporate and bank balance sheets appear in much



better shape than in recent years. Corporate debt/GDP is at its lowest since 2006 and banks are far more inclined to lend. But a broader private investment cycle will take time to fructify amidst elevated global uncertainty, slowing growth, tightening monetary conditions, manufacturing utilization rates still less than 80 per cent, the report added.

The Current Account Deficit (CAD) is on track to print above 3 per cent of GDP this year as exports have slowed and imports remain very sticky; bringing the CAD back to sustainable levels will have to be a key policy imperative in 2023. In turn, key to CAD compression is continued fiscal consolidation off still-elevated levels; we expect the Center to achieve the budgeted fiscal deficit of 6.4 per cent of GDP this year and target a consolidation of 0.5 per cent of GDP next year; the fiscal balancing act will involve reducing the deficit while sustaining strong capex. With the RBI raising rates by about 300 bps in 2022 and tightening liquidity, we expect the MPC is getting close to a pause, with the risk of a final 25 bps hike at the February review, the report added.

cial document reviewed by Reuters. It has already been used by Russia following the imposition of sanctions on Moscow over the Ukraine war. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) set up the mechanism in July. The government is looking to bring countries that are short of dollars into the mechanism, said a government official and an industry source aware of the devel-

opment. The sources declined to be named, as the matter is confidential. The four countries have shown interest in opening special rupee



accounts, called vostro accounts, but partner banks in India have not yet provided those facilities, documents showed. Opening of these

accounts needs approval from the Reserve Bank of India. Mauritius and Sri Lanka have also shown interest, and have seen their special vostro accounts approved by the RBI, documents showed. India's central bank has given approval to banks to open 12 vostro for trade in rupees with Russia, according to the document. Six other accounts, including five for trade with Sri Lanka and one for trade with Mauritius have been authorised, the same document showed. TALKS WITH GULF NATIONS India continues to discuss denomination of trade in rupees with larger trading partners, including key oil suppliers Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

Details of potential rupee-dirham trade mechanism are being firmed up by the central banks of India and UAE, a second government official said, requesting anonymity. Talks with Saudi Arabia on a rupee-riyal trade mechanism also continued, the government official added. The UAE and Saudi Arabia are talking through ways to invest Indian rupees they earn as part of these transactions, as the gulf nation's exports to India exceed imports from it. "We have presented the option of investing additional rupees in Indian markets," the official said. As part of the rules issued earlier this year, the Indian central bank has allowed for any rupee holdings to be invested in government securities.



# Gill, Pujara tons prop India

# India set up summit battle against Spain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chattogram, Dec 16:** Shubman Gill (110, 152b, 10x4, 3x6) scored his maiden Test century while Cheteshwar Pujara (102 n o, 130b, 13x4) finally ended a four-year wait for his 19th hundred as India set Bangladesh a stiff victory target of 513 runs on the third day of the series-opener Friday.

For the second day in succession, Bangladesh were completely outplayed as Kuldeep Yadav's career-best 5/40 helped India dismiss the hosts for a paltry 150 in just 55.5 overs.

With nearly three days at their disposal and a lead of 254, India captain KL Rahul decided against enforcing the follow-on as Gill and Pujara took full advantage of a toothless Bangladesh attack that also missed their lead pacer Ebadot Hossain due to a back-injury.

The moment Pujara exorcised the ghosts of the last four years with the completion of his fastest Test hundred, skipper Rahul declared the Indian second innings closed at 258/2.

At stumps, Bangladesh were 42 for no loss on a track where a lot of balls are indeed keeping low but the pitch hasn't shown considerable wear and tear. The hosts still require 471 runs to win the match.

However to bat for 180 overs over two days will be an improbable task for the Bangladesh batting line-up against the Indian bowling line-up.

Stand-in skipper Rahul, who holed out at the fine leg boundary off a well-laid short ball trap by Khaled Ahmed (1/52), would rue that he missed a chance to get a big score under his belt.

However Gill, blessed with gift of exquisite timing, pounced on a depleted Bangladesh attack. Gill's attacking batting also allowed Pujara to take his time at the beginning. He accelerated towards the back-end of the Indian innings.

But there could be no debate about which innings would be rated



**MEMORABLE OUTING:** Shubman Gill celebrates his maiden Test century, while the other centurion on the day Cheteshwar Pujara applauds his feat, Friday

higher in terms of aesthetics. It certainly would be 23-year-old Punjab man, who at times would give a languid vibe in his effortless

strokeplay. He used the sweep to good effect against the off-spin of Miraz and the reverse sweep against left-

arm spin of Taijul. He repeatedly came down the track to loft the spinners and disturb their length. He converted a lot of good length

balls into half-volleys while any width from pacers or deliveries drifting down the leg-side were also met with utter disdain.

Gill however would consider himself lucky as he was twice adjudged leg-before by the on-field umpires but DRS ruled it not out. Another time when Bangladesh went for review, the DRS didn't work.

Buoyed by his 90 in the first innings, Pujara was a picture of supreme confidence and this Bangladesh attack never had the wherewithal to dismiss him with literally no scoreboard pressure on India.

While his first fifty came off 87 balls, he raced to his next 50 in just 43 balls, answering anyone and everyone who keep on questioning his intent. If the first 50 runs had five fours, the second was laced with eight boundaries as he added 113 runs for the second wicket with Gill.

The relief was palpable when he hit Taijul Islam for a boundary and got a warm hug from Virat Kohli (19 n o) at the other end.

With a lot of deliveries starting to keep low, the spin trio of R Ashwin, Kuldeep and Axar Patel will be eager to come out on fourth and fifth day to ensure full 12 World Test Championship points for the team.

Najmul Hossain Shanto (25 batting) and Zakir Hasan (17 batting) have given an improved account of themselves in Bangladesh's second essay.

At the start of the day, Kuldeep completed his third five-wicket haul when Ebadot's (17) 37-ball vigil ended. It was Mehidy (25 batting), who fought doggedly and played the maximum number of balls (82) but had little support at other end before he became Patel's only victim of the innings.

**BRIEF SCORES**

India 404 & 258/2d (Shubman Gill 110, Cheteshwar Pujara 102 n o); Bangladesh 150 & 42/0 (Najmul Hossain Shanto 25 batting). Match to continue.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Valencia, Dec 16:** Skipper Savita Punia produced an excellent performance under the bar as India defeated Ireland 2-1 in the shootout to set up a final clash against Spain in the FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup here Friday.

In the regulation time, both teams were locked 1-1 after India bounced back through Udit's 45th minute penalty corner conversion to cancel out Naomi Carroll's 13th minute strike.

In the shootout, India struck through Lalremsiami and Sonika in their second and third attempts. Ireland managed a solitary strike in the shootout from their third attempt through Hannah McLoughlin.

Savita stood tall under the bar and foiled Ellen Curran's strike with her resolute defence as it went down the wire with Kathryn Mullan needing to score from Ireland's last attempt to keep them alive. But Mullan shot wide as India sealed another shootout win to make the final.

The Indian women's team had beaten New Zealand by an identical margin in the shootout to win the Commonwealth Games bronze

earlier this year.

Earlier in the day, Spain rode on Sara Barrios' 14th minute field goal to defeat Japan 1-0 and seal their final berth.

The lower-ranked Ireland team (No-13) drew first blood with a brilliant counter-attacking run from the right flank as Carroll took the possession before slotting it past Savita with a powerful strike.

Trailing by one goal at the half-time, India failed to create any clear cut chance, while their penalty corner conversions continued to elude them with Gurjit Kaur and Navneet wasting chances.

They had a golden chance to equalise with Deep Grace Ekka taking the strike from close range as the ball took a deflection from Vandana Katariya but only to ricochet off the crossbar in the second quarter.

However, Udit slammed the ball from a low strike just five seconds before the third quarter to bring up the equaliser.

Having missed a flurry of attempts, world number eight India finally managed to score from a penalty and breach Irish goalkeeper Elizabeth Murphy's defence seconds before the end of third quarter.

# Neeraj dislodges Bolt as world's most visible track & field athlete



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra has dislodged the iconic Usain Bolt as the "most visible" athlete in the world after winning a historic gold medal in the Tokyo Games, claimed a World Athletics study. The 24-year-old Indian further enhanced his superstar status by winning a silver at the World Championships.

Chopra led a star-studded field in terms of media coverage with 812 articles published in his name, followed by Jamaican sprint trio of Elaine Thompson-Herah (751), Shelley-Ann Fraser-Pryce (698) and Shericka Jackson (679).

The charismatic Bolt, also a Jamaican, was in the fifth spot with 574 articles in his name, according to the statistics released by World Athletics during President Sebastian Coe's year-end interaction with a select group of Asian journalists, including from PTI.

The data was provided by Germany-based media monitoring firm Unicepta. This is the first time that Bolt, who retired in 2017 and who still holds the world record in 100m and 200m, has not led the list.

"I am not being dismissive of Usain Bolt. He is an icon of our sport. But this (Chopra leading the list) shows we are broadening our horizon, we are now not talking about only one athlete, we have many," Coe said.

Chopra continued his meteoric rise this year after his Tokyo Olympics gold, winning silver in the world championships in Eugene, USA, and then became the first Indian to win the Diamond League final title.

Chopra's success has put Indian athletics on the global stage, but the country is also in the top bracket of producing dope offenders with several top performers, including the likes of Olympians Kamalpreet Kaur, Shivpal Singh and MR Poovamma testing positive for banned drugs recently.

Asked if his organisation is concerned of this kind of development, Coe said World Athletics remained "vigilant" regarding countries like India not as "infringers" but on the basis of producing a large number of elite athletes.

"We are vigilant particularly around countries which have a lot of elite level athletes and India falls in that bracket. Countries like Ethiopia, UK, USA, Germany, all these countries have big contingents of elite athletes and therefore identifies not necessary as culprits or infringers but it does identify the level of risk simply based on the number of elite athletes.

"I know the Indian federation is very keen to do everything it possibly can alongside every other federation out there to minimise the chance of athletes of falling foul of performance enhancing drugs."

# Croatia, Morocco vie for podium finish

AGENCIES

**Al Rayyan, Dec 16:** A World Cup podium finish – a third-place finish – is on the line between Croatia and Morocco in Saturday's third-place playoff at the Khalifa International Stadium here, and neither side should turn their noses up to a podium finish on the grandest stage.

Zlatko Dalic's side were comfortably seen off 0-3 by Argentina in their semifinal, while the Atlas Lions fought valiantly against France but were put to the sword by two goals to nil.

Very few attackers have come face to face with the masked warrior that is Josko Gvardiol and got the better of the RB Leipzig youngster, but even one of the most in-

demand defenders in Europe was no match for a 35-year-old Lionel Messi.

Prior to his downright humiliation of a man 15 years his junior, Messi crashed home the opening goal of Argentina's semifinal with Croatia from the penalty spot before Julian Alvarez's solo run brought Albiceleste their second, albeit with some slices of good fortune after a couple of ricochets.

There was nothing for-

tunate about Argentina's third, as Messi rolled back the years on the right-hand side before picking out Alvarez to tap home

Argentina's third and deny Croatia a second successive ap-

pearance at a World Cup final – against 2018 foes France, no less.

Dalic's side remarkably reached the 2018 final and the semifinals of the 2022 edition without winning a knockout game in normal time, and they are not complete novices in bronze medal matches, having beaten the Netherlands 2-1 in the 1998 third-placed playoff during their inaugural World Cup campaign.

For a side who have consistently proven their prowess in extra-time periods and penalty shootouts, Croatia will not be relieved to hear that the third-placed playoff has never been decided on spot-kicks, and the uninhibited Morocco fan-base will no doubt continue to bang their drums to the maximum for one last time.

Had it not been for a lack of killer instinct in the final third, Morocco – the first-ever African nation to reach a World Cup semifinal – could have cemented themselves into even greater footballing folklore by becoming the first team from the continent to make it all the way to the final.

Walid Regragui's side certainly gave

France a scare or two in Wednesday's semifinal, but Theo Hernandez's acrobatic effort and Randal Kolo Muani's tap-in 44 seconds after coming onto the pitch ended the Atlas Lions' dreams of Qatar supremacy.

Morocco's current crop will no doubt return to their homeland as national heroes and could yet be wearing the bronze medals around their necks on the flight back.

Regragui's side had not conceded to an opposing player in Qatar before Hernandez breached their backline with only five minutes on the clock Wednesday, but they could still become the first nation since Spain's triumphant team of 2010 to keep as many as five clean sheets at a single World Cup.

Croatia and Morocco are renewing hostilities just a few weeks on from their goalless draw in Group F, where the Checkered Ones were restricted to just five attempts against Regragui's backline, and a similarly steadfast defensive showing could set the Africans on their way to a groundbreaking World Cup honour.

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Morocco's Hakim Ziyech (in red-green) and Croatia's Luka Modric in action during their group stage match earlier in the World Cup

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** Odisha bowlers failed to trouble Baroda in their Ranji Trophy Elite Group A match at the Vikas Cricket Ground here Friday as the visitors' first innings lead helped them bag three points, while the hosts got one point.

Replying to Odisha's first innings total of 457, Baroda piled up 624/8 before declaring their essay on the fourth and final day of the match. Both the captains then decided to settle for a draw with no time left to get any result.

Resuming the play from an overnight total of 416/5, Baroda batters continued to score without much difficulty. Overnight batters Ninad Rathva (19) and Priyanshu Moliya (118) got out one after the other inside opening six overs of the day. Suryakant Pradhan (2/116) dismissed Rathva before Debabrata Pradhan (1/151) got rid of Moliya.

However, Abhimanyusingh Rajput (102 n o, 194b, 12x4) and Bhargav Bhatt (87, 125b, 4x4, 6x6) stitched together a 184-run partnership for the eighth wicket. Subham Nayak (2/122) broke the stand dismissing Bhatt. Baroda wanted for Rajput to complete his century before declaring their innings.

**BRIEF SCORES**

Odisha 457; Baroda 624/8d (Priyanshu Moliya 118, Abhimanyusingh Rajput 102 n o, Bhargav Bhatt 87; Basant Mohanty 2/31). Match drawn.

# UNWANTED FEAT: 30-MINUTE MISERY FOR SYDNEY THUNDER



Adelaide Strikers players celebrate the wicket of Daniel Sams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Melbourne, Dec 16:** Sydney Thunder Friday suffered the humiliation of crashing to the lowest-ever total in the history of T20 cricket after being dismissed for just 15 runs by Adelaide Strikers in a Big Bash match.

Defending 139, Henry Thornton and Wes Agar breathed fire as Thunder's innings collapsed in just 5.5 overs – the shortest completed innings in men's T20 history, as Adelaide scripted a 124-run win.

While Thornton ran through the top-order en route his five-

wicket haul for just three runs, Agar claimed four wickets and Matthew Short snapped one in 30 minutes of mindboggling cricket.

There were five ducks with number 10 batter Brendan Doggett managing four runs, the highest individual score for his team.

Before this match, the infamous record of lowest total in professional T20 cricket was held by Turkey, who were dismissed for 21 by Czech Republic in August 2019 during their 257-run win in Continental Cup.

Earlier, Chris Lynn (36) and Colin de Grandhomme (33) helped Adelaide post 139/9 in their 20 overs.



Henry Thornton