

In its May 13 order, the apex court had asked the state government to consider the plea of a convict for pre-mature release in terms of its policy of July 9, 1992, which was applicable on the date of conviction, and decide it within a period of two months.

All the 11 convicts were granted remission by the Gujarat government and released August 15.

Bano's plea seeking review of the May 13 order came up for inchamber consideration December 13 before a bench of justices Ajay Rastogi and Vikram Nath.

"In our opinion, there appears no error apparent on the face of record, which may call for review of the judgment dated May 13, 2022 and as regards the judgments on which the reliance has been placed, none of the judgments are of any assistance to the review petitioner," the bench said in its order which was uploaded on the top court website Saturday.



FOREST WORKER SAYS HE WAS KEPT UNDER HOUSE ARREST AND THREATENED TO BE PUT BEHIND BARS IF HE DISCLOSES ABOUT POACHING OF AN ELEPHANT AND BURNING OF ITS CARCASS IN STR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Dec 17: Days after a al died bv suicide wher

Sankha Mahali, a trainer of kumki elephants, said he had informed the field director and the deputy

neck at sports meet

The Class IX student was operated open at *BBMCH* and the javelin was safely brought out

Collector has asked the officials to provide immediate assistance of ₹30,000 to the family of the student

Later, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim would go to simultaneous polls along with Lok Sabha.

Meanwhile, the astounding victory of BJP in Gujarat elections is attributed to campaign in support of UCC.

The BJP government is expected to table the Bill in Parliament in the New Year. Experts are of the opinion that the government may bring an ordinance to this effect.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



The whole project will be completed in fifteen phases so that you can inaugurate each part every year

WEATI	HER		
	BHUB	СТК	
<mark>d</mark> Max	28.8°C	28.2°(
[₽] MIN	15.2℃	14.5°(≃ Forecast
Humidity	66%	76%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	Mainly clear sky

he was pulled up by his seniors for disclosing the poaching of a tusker and the subsequent burning of the carcass inside the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj, another eyewitness Saturday made startling revela-

tions about the incident. According to sources, Sankha Mahali, a mahout, who is also a trainer of kumki elephants, alleged that he was kept under house arrest at a forest beat house and even threatened to be put behind bars if he dares to open his mouth in the case. Mahali said he first informed the field director and the deputy director of Similipal about the incident. This enraged the suspended for-

est officials (who were later arrested) as they picked him up from his house and kept him under detention at Kabatghai forest beat house for two days. Later, they shifted him to Barahakamuda where he met chief conservator of forests (CCF) Manoj V Nayar who was there for investigation. Mahali also narrated the incident in details before Nayar. However, fearing media glare, he was again detained under close watch of other



officials. Later, he managed to give them a slip and return home. He met the mediapersons and alleged that instead of employing casual employees in forest protection works, the seniors are either engaging

KUMKI ELEPHANT DIES IN SIMILIPAL

Baripada: A kumki elephant 'Shobha' died due to alleged medical negligence in STR under Jenabila forest range in Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary of Mayurbhanj district, Saturday. The animal aged 54 was ailing for a long time. Forest officials requesting anonymity said the animal died due to lack of treatment. Former honorary wildlife warden Bhanumitra Acharya confirmed stating that the animal died due to lack of medicines. MORE P5

them in road construction works inside the sanctuary or in construction works as casual labourers. This provided an opportunity for the poachers and timber mafia to enter the jungle, plunder its resources and kill the wild animals.

"The seniors never care a fig to forest protection and are always using the government schemes to their advantage," he added.

Meanwhile, 10 days have passed

to the incident but senior forest officials are yet to complete the probe and take exemplary action in this regard. The disclosure has sent chatters abuzz and raised doubts about the probe undertaken by the Forest department in the case. Family members have alleged that instead of providing protection to the junior officials, the senior forest officials are trying to intimidate them and make them work as per their whims and fancies

The incident occurred at Gurundia forest section under Jenabil forest range of STR where poachers killed a tusker and cut its ivories for smuggling. On being informed, forest officials tried to hush up the matter by burning its carcass. The case is sub judice in Orissa High Court.

Coming under fire, the department has ordered legal action against the three forest officials. The suspended forest officials identified as forester Shiba Shankar Samal, forester Chandrabhanu Behera and forest guard Binod Kumar Das were arrested and remanded to judicial custody. Continued on P4

NASA reveals stunning image of lava on Jupiter's moon

SCIENTISTS OF NASA'S JUNO MISSION ARE THRILLED TO SEE HOW WELL THE SENSORS HAVE PERFORMED IN OBSERVING JUPITER'S MOONS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Dec 17: A Class IX student sustained severe injuries after a javelin pierced his neck during the annual sports meet of a government school in this district Saturday, officials said.

The student, identified as Sadananda Meher, is now out of danger

The javelin, thrown by another student at Agalpur Boys' Panchayat High School during a practice session, struck Meher from the right side of his neck and a portion of its head came out from his left side.

The boy, along with the javelin stuck below his chin, was rushed to Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital (BBMCH) here, where he was operated open and the javelin was safely brought out. However, Meher is now admitted to the ICU of the hospital.

"There was a sports meet in the school and this unfortunate incident happened. We are relieved that the child is out of danger," Bolangir Collector Chanchal Rana said.

The district Collector has ordered officials to provide imme-



diate assistance of ₹30,000 to the family of the student.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has also directed that the boy be provided with better treatment and the funds needed for it will be met from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund

Speaking about the accident, the child's uncle, Achyutananda Meher, said, "I rushed to the hospital after the school authorities informed me about it."

The sports meet was suspended following the accident.

Man throws son off first floor after spat with wife

police officials said.

with her, they added.

senior police officer said.

said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 17: Following a spat with his wife, a 30-year-old man allegedly threw his two-year-old son from the first-floor terrace of a building in southeast Delhi's Kalkaji area under the influence of alcohol and then jumped off it, police said Saturday.

Both Man Singh and his son were injured in the incident and are undergoing treatment at a hospital here, they said.

Police said the incident took place around 10:30pm Friday.

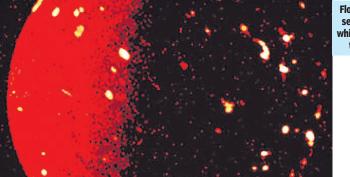
The man's wife, Pooja, has alleged that they shared a strained relationship and she was living with her grandmother along with her son,

Washington, Dec 17: NASA's Juno She said her husband arrived at spacecraft has captured the spectacular image of red-hot lava erupther residence around 7pm in an inebriated state and picked a fight ing in Jupiter's moon 'Io'. The picture was taken from a distance of Following the fight, the man took 80.000 km.

AGENCIES

Flowing lava along with lava the child to the first-floor terrace and lakes can be seen as bright red flung him to the ground from a patches in the image, which was capheight of around 21 ft. He himself jumped off the terrace after that, a tured July 5 and released by the American space agency recently. A case under Section 307 (at-

NASA had announced that its tempt to murder) of the Indian Juno mission is scheduled to obtain images of the Jovian moon Io Penal Code has been registered and a probe launched, the police December 15 as part of its continuing exploration of Jupiter's inner



moons. "The team is really excited to have Juno's extended mission include the study of Jupiter's moons.

With each close flyby, we have been able to obtain a wealth of new information," said Juno Principal

Flowing lava along with lava lakes can be seen as bright red patches in the image, which was captured July 5 and released by the American space agency recently

Investigator Scott Bolton of the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, in a press release.

He also stated that Juno sensors are designed to study Jupiter. "but we've been thrilled at how well they can perform double duty by observing Jupiter's moons.'

The mission which is called Io Volcano Observer (IVO) informed that Io is "a true volcanic wonderland with hundreds of erupting volcanoes gushing tons of molten lava" and sulfurous gases at any moment. Io is subject to harsh tides that strain and crush the moon as it travels along its elliptical course due to the immense gravitational pull of Jupiter and the passing orbital tugs of sibling moons Europa and Ganymede.

According to Science Alert, Sctt Bolton, principal investigator for NASA's Juno spacecraft, said in a press event at the American Geophysical Union's Fall Meeting You can see volcanic hotspots. We've been able to monitor over the course of the primary mission -over 30 orbits - how this changes and evolves. **Continued on P4**











eisure

HENRY CAVILL, GAL GADOT BOTH 'CUT' FROM 'THE FLASH'

Actors Henry Cavill and Gal Gadot have been unceremoniously axed from upcoming film 'The Flash'. Reports claim that both cameos have been cut from The Flash movie - which is expected to hit cinemas in June next year.

AVATAR: THE WAY OF WATER BRINGS **ON CHRISTMAS EARLY AT BOX OFFICE**

Christmas has come early for theatres across the country. The current week has allowed huge returns for theatrical business of Avatar: The Way of Water, what with Rs. 41 crores been accumulated across all languages. It will cross India's lifetime collections of Avatar today itself.



FORTUNE FORECAST



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 Ganesha, 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 Ganesha. Your loved ones will bask in your material generosity today. You will be magnanimous with the wallet to impress members of the oppo site sex. Don't forget that time is also money, advises Ganesha

GEMINI

It is better for you to swim with the current in all of today's dealings, suggests Ganesha. 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. Your performance will be satisfying at work, and more than satisfying back home



moolah, yet today you may feel stingier. And, you will rightly be so, for there may be unnecessary burdens and demands made on you be your near and dear ones. Although you will be aware of this, you will still be able to keep them happy.

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 relation ships 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. Your kids will bring home joy and pride and this will brighten the mood even more, says Ganesha

LIBRA Ganesha says that for people you may appear to be a

Taapsee Slams paparazzi Mumbai: Taapsee Pannu says she does not like to sugar-Mumbai: 'l'aapsee Pannu says she does not like to sugar. coat things or act like a 'good gin' in front of the paparazzi s ameras. Talking about paparazzi following her, Taapsee Id "It doe hother me because after a point I realized Talking about paparazzi tollowing ner, Taapsee said, "It does bother me because, after a point, I realised that they are doing it knowing they are going to ink said, "It does bother me because, atter a point, i reaused that they are doing it knowing they are going to irk me why will you hold my car'e door when they are uiat uiey are uuiis it niiuwiiis uiey are suiis it me. Why will you hold my car's door when I have often in micro intervaling neuroning to anon une. Willy will you how my car surver when they gotten in? This is intruding my private space. the odded "I walk without bedrationed inct uen III: 11115 15 IIIU uuning IIIy PI Ivale Space. She added, "I Walk Without bodyguards. Just because of that, you have the liberty to shove vecause of unar, you have the there physically, your cameras and mike into me, physically, you cameras and more new me, physican and not give me a regular human being's broching area inct because two a milities and not give me a regular numan being breathing space just because I'm a public form It circo rout the libertrite ministermy

ineauming space just vecause 1 in a public figure. It gives you the liberty to violate my usure. It sives you use user by to violate iny personal space. And then, obviously, the persultar space. And men, our ously, we icing on the cake becomes when the modio make becalines that I'm and icing on the case becomes when the media make headlines that I'm arro-needia to the arrogent to get for head incura mane nearmines way i in all' gant. If I'm arrogant to ask for basic human respect of anote the processor Ball, H I HI al IUSAIL W ask W USIC human respect of space, then please call me amogent but twill not inct two control numan respect of space, men please can me arrogant, but I will not just try to sugar cost and he this good girl he out and be this good girl be cause I'm in front of this camera. I am not that

person. You get what you Agencies

Kiara goes all praise about Sidharth's Mission Majnu

Mumbai: Sidharth Malhotra's upcoming film Mission Majnu's trailer has already created quite a lot of buzz and it seems Kiara Advani, too, is super impressed with the recently released trailer.

The actress took to her Instagram story to share her appreciation. Meanwhile, Sidharth, Kiara's rumoured boyfriend was quick respond to her post. *Mission Majnu* which will have a direct OTT release on January 20 next year has been directed by Shantanu Bagchi and it also has Rashmika Mandanna in the lead.

Sidharth took to his Instagram handle to share the teaser of *Mission Mainu* and wrote. "Iss Majnu ke kaam karne ka tarika alag hai (The way Majnu works is different from others) Presenting the Official Teaser for MISSION MAJNUOnly on Netflix, 20th Jan, 2023." To this, Kiara Advani wrote, "Salute" with a red heart emoii

Kiara took to her Instagram Stories to share Sidharth's 'Mission Majnu post' and wrote, "Outstanding". Sidharth re-shared Kiara's

story and wrote, "(Smiling face and red

Varun on *Bhediya*'s expected success

Mumbai: After completing 10 years in the industry as an actor, Varun Dhawan has a mixed result for 2022. Both his films, *Jugjugg Jeeyo* and *Bhediya*, haven't had the reception that one would expect with them before they released. But the actor insists that these are the films that fulfil him creatively nevertheless. Varun said in an interview, 'When the lockdown happened. I hit a roadblock. I was burnt out. felt my

choices have to be films that I am [creatively] satisfied with. [The reason to do them] should not be that I have dates available.

Varun added, "It has been such a strange year, trying to get people back to theatres I expected Bhediya to do [better box-office] numbers than it did. "Honestly, when I have to cut down

my price to do these films, I will do it because a film calls out to [the artiste] in you. Similarly, when I have to do a Bhediya, or movies that have a larger vision, I'll make it in a certain way. My approach is simple — we should make a good film, and the producer should not lose money. Box office is important, but sometimes, I want to do movies because they are unmissable for the actor in me, he said."

AGENCIES

Chitrangda resumes shoot for Indo-Italian

Mumbai: Actress Chitrangda Singh, who is known for films

like Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi, Yeh Saali Zindagi, Baazaar and Modern Love Mumbai, is playing the lead role in Goutam Ghose's next Indo-Italian yet-to-be-titled film, which also stars Italian actor Marco Leonardi, known for his work in the acclaimed movie Cinema Paradiso.

The film is being made in English, Hindi, and partly in Italian with its story revolving around issues of human displacement, through the story of a couple and their child. The first look of film has been released and it shows the actress in a de-glam look. Donning a plain orange saree and minimalist make-up, Chitra looks sharp and beautiful.

The film's shooting had started back in 2019 but had a major setback due to the pandemic. The team has resumed work now and a major portion of the shoot is scheduled for Mumbai and Jabalpur.

The film's script has been written by Goutam Ghose and Jagannath Guha, along with two Italian scriptwriters Amedeo Paganini and Sergio Scapagnini

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 happi ness and contentment.

SCORPIO

The day just went from bad to worse today, says Ganesha. Troubles are cor ing in faster and thicker than a locust swarm. But keep a leash on yourself, savs Ganesha, 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 Ganesha. You will spend quality time with your family member and catch with old friends.

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 Ganesha. You will not waste you 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 coordinate 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 Ganesha.





heart emoji) thanks

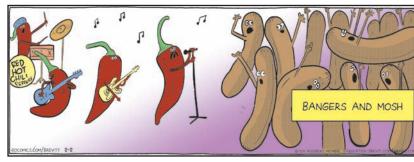
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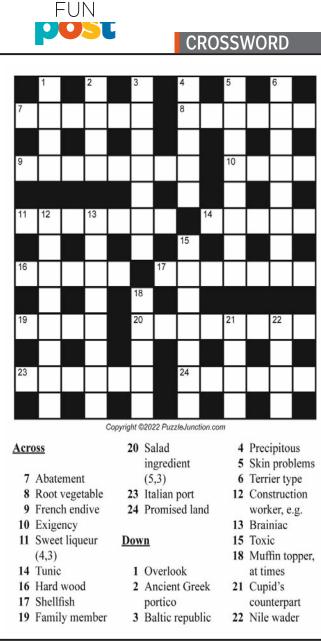
AGENCIES

CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY





CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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.

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				2	6			
	3				5	8		
		1	4		17			
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SOLUTIO	N2	S											
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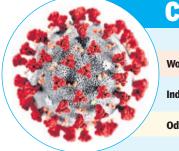


downtown



ARCHITECTS' MEET

Dignitaries during the eastern regional conference by the Indian Institute of Architects at a hotel in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
orid	65,72,75,999	63,11,48,460	66,70,502
dia	4,46,75,776	4,41,41,501	5,30,667
lisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Forest cover up by 811 sq km in 5 yrs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 17: Odisha's forest cover grew by over 811 square km during the period from 2017 to 2021, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ashwini Kumar Choubey told the Rajya Sabha recently.

Choubey said that the state government has undertaken various afforestation activities and forest protection measures to increase the green cover and for sustainable management of the forests as per approved working plans.

As per the report received from Odisha, he said, deforestation in the state has not increased in recent years, but instead due to implementation of various afforestation schemes and forest protection measures, the forest cover in the state has increased during 2017 to 2021.

Odisha had 51,345 square km of forest cover in 2017, which increased to 51,619 square km in 2019 and 52,156 square km in 2021, registering a growth of 811 square km of green cover, Choubey said.

The green coverage of the state increased by 885 square km in 2017 compared to the previous survey year. Similarly, the forest cover in-

Cuttack temple raised 4 feet above ground

AGENCIES

hired

Cuttack, Dec 17: In a fascinating development, a 45-year-old Sarpeswar Shiva temple here at the Friends Colony is being raised four feet above ground to prevent flooding in the monsoon season. According to reports, when it

rains, water from drains flood the temple premises which is situated below the road level.

Following a decision by the temple's managing committee to raise the temple to prevent flooding during monsoon which often led to disruption in the conduct of daily rituals, the services of a building lifting company of Haryana was



creased by 272 square km in 2019 and 537 square km in 2021. Now, 33.50 per cent of the total geographical area of Odisha has green coverage, he said

Choubey further informed that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is implementing various afforestation schemes to increase the forest cover in the country namely Green India Mission, Nagar Van Yojana, Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority, and under various schemes Ministries namely Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes (MGNREGS), National Bamboo

POST NEWS NETWORK

rencv notes.

Bhubaneswar, Dec 17: The special

task force (STF) of the Odisha

Police has detected an illegal busi-

ness of fake Indian currency with

the seizure of Rs 1,90,600 fake cur-

STF sources here Saturday said

on the basis of reliable information,

STF with the help of Dhenkanal po-

STF seizes fake currency notes

session.

sources said

square km of forest cover in 2017, which increased to 51,619 square km in 2019 and 52,156 square km in 2021, registering a growth of 811 square km of green cover, according to Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ashwini Kumar Choubey

Odisha had 51.34

Mission, National Agroforestry Policy and Sub-mission on Agroforestry (SMAF). These apart, the state is also im-

plementing various plan schemes to increase the forest cover. Choubey further said that aware-

ness programs were being taken up for prevention of shifting cultivation (Podu), fire protection and anti-poaching involving Vana Samrakshana Samiti Members, Panchavati Raj Institution (PRI) members and NGOs in the rural areas through pamphlets, meetings, posters and Nukkad Natak, and also through capacity building and training programs of forest staff and villagers.

lice apprehended Tushar Kumar

Biswal of Kacherisahi in Deogarh

district. During search, Fake Indian

Currency Notes (FICN) of Rs

1,90,600 and other incriminating

articles were recovered from his pos-

Dhenkanal Sadar police station

for necessary legal action, STF

A case has been registered at



IN SYNC: Artistes performed during the concluding day of National Festival of Mayurbhanj Chhau at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Saturday OP PHOTO

BJP holds closed-door meeting for 2024 polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 17: The BJP Saturday held a brainstorming session here to prepare a roadmap for the 2024 general elections in the state. The party held a closed-door

meeting attended by Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, BJP's state in-charge Sunil Bansal and other senior party functionaries.

The opposition party in Odisha defeated the BJD in the Dhamnagar byelection in November, but lost to the ruling party in the state in the Padampur bypoll held this month.

Speaking ahead of the meeting. Pradhan said there are lessons to be learnt from both the Dhamnagar

SWARUP DAS I BALASORE'S BJD MLA

the 2024 elections in mind.

tion party in Odisha and people expect us to bring to the fore the incumbent government's inefficiency

for 2024. BJP general secretary It does not matter to us Prithviraj Harichandan said that issues discussed include ways to what the BJP strengthen the party's organisasays. The BJD will tion and make workers more encontinue working for ergetic. the public. Chief A blueprint has been prepared **Minister Naveen** and the party will move forward ac-**Patnaik lives in the** heart of the common people

cording to it, he said. Balasore's BJD MLA Swarup Das said development will be the party's agenda for the 2024 elections and party workers are charged up after the Padampur victory.

"It does not matter to us what the BJP says. The BJD will continue working for the public. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik lives in the heart of the common people," he said.



Interstate thieves' gang busted

The accused at the police station

The four accused

are involved in at

least 11 theft cases

stations in the twin

Bhubaneswar

muters

cities of Cuttack and

registered with police

ganisation at every level," he said,

adding that the meeting will help

the saffron party frame a roadmap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 17: The twin city Commissionerate Police Saturday claimed to have busted an interstate gang involved in stealing valuables



The BJP is the main opposition party in **Odisha and people** expect us to bring to the

fore the incumbent government's inefficiency and corrupt practices. Besides politics, we will be discussing strategies for strengthening party organisation at every level DHARMENDRA PRADHAM

I UNION MINISTER & BJP LEADER

and Padampur bypolls, keeping and corrupt practices. Besides politics, we will be discussing strate-The BJP is the main opposigies for strengthening party or-

The temple is being raised from its foundation using hydraulic screw jacks by the experts of the building lifting company.

After nearly 22 days of work the temple has been raised around 3.5 feet above the ground. Around a week's time will be required to lift the temple by another six inches.

A trench of 2-3 feet in depth was first dug around both sides of the walls and piles are installed into stable bearing soil.

Hydraulic jacks have been then used to lift the house gradually. Depending on the condition of the structure it lifted rapidly or as little as a fraction of an inch per day.

A new concrete foundation will then built underneath once the temple is raised.

Sand art at Puri beach on FIFA WC AGENCIES

Puri, Dec 17: Renowned sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik has created a sand art with an installation of 148 balls and a message 'Good Luck' at Puri beach on the occasion of the final match of FIFA World Cup.

France and Argentina will meet at the FIFA World Cup Final Match 2022 Sunday at Doha.

Pattnaik said he has created a 7 feet high sand sculpture with an installation of 148 balls and

a World Cup trophy. He has used around 5 tonnes of sand and at the backdrop erected a sand Football. Students

of his sand art institute joined hands with him in creating the sculpture.

So far, Patnaik has participated in more than 60 international sand art festivals and competitions around the world and won prizes for the country.

in Acharya Vihar area of Bhubaneswar. Saturday, ahead of Christmas

Man reunites with family after 25 yrs, thanks to social media

Azamgarh (UP), Dec 17: A 60year-old speech-impaired man was reunited with his family more than 25 years after he disappeared, thanks to social media and a tattoo on his hand that was fading away.

Chandrashekhar Maurya said Saturday his uncle Jilajeet Maurya, a resident of family was Gothaav village in overwhelmed with Azamgarh district of Uttar emotions when they Pradesh, went missing June had the first glimpse 1, 1996 when he had gone of Jilajeet in to attend a 'pooja' 25 years

The

"At that time, he was 35 years old. Our family searched for him, but he could not be traced," Chandrashekhar told PTL

With no clue about him for days, the family's hope of finding him diminished as days turned into months and months into years. But a glimmer of hope came their way three months ago.

"We got information through social media three months ago that he was living at a village in Amethi, and launched efforts to search him," Chandrashekhar said.

But the hope gave way to dismay again when they could not find him there. But all changed Tuesday.

 Jilajeet Maurya (then 35), a resident of Gothaav village in Azamgarh district of Uttar Pradesh, went missing June 1, 1996

- With no clue about him for days, the family's hope of finding him diminished as days turned into months and months into years
- But a glimmer of hope came the family's way December 13, 2022 when they learnt through social media that Jilajeet was in Rae Bareli district.
- His location was then traced to Hatwa village, and he was living in the house of village pradhan Shivendra Singh.

HE HAD A TATTOO ON HIS HAND, BUT IT WAS FADING AWAY. HIS NAME AND HE NAME OF THE VILLAGE WERE NOT VERY CLEAR. BUT WHAT HELPED THEM IDENTIFY HIM WAS HIS LAST NAME -MAURYA-- AND THE NAME OF THE DISTRICT—AZAMGARH

"On December 13, 2022, it was known to us that he was in Rae Bareli district. His location was then traced to Hatwa village, and he was living in the house of village pradhan Shivendra Singh," Chandrashekhar said, adding that his uncle had a tat-

too on his hand, but it was fading away. "His name—Jilajeet-- and the name

of the village-Gothaav-- were not very clear," Chandrashekhar said. But what helped them identify him was his last name and the name of the district

"The words Maurya and Azamgarh

were quite clear."

The family was overwhelmed with emotions when they had the first glimpse of him in 25 years. "My uncle also could not control his tears as he hugged us,' Chandrashekhar said.

Jilajeet Maurva, who has not married, was brought home from Rae Bareli in Gothaav village in Azamgarh Tuesday night.

The nephew said his family thanked Shivendra Singh profusely for keeping Jilaajeet Maurya safe.

A large number of people turned up to see him, said the nephew.

from parked vehicles, with the arrest of four persons.

The accused were identified as Suriva Mudaliar, 24, Rahul Rao, 22, Aditya Kairi, 19, and Sankar Swami, 22, of Bandal in Hooghly district of West Bengal.

The gang usually operates with four or five persons who are active across states like Odisha, West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Jharkhand and Bihar. They act in a very well organised manner in crowded places

They target parked vehicles, mostly cars. While one member of the gang breaks open the vehicle's window by catapulting iron balls to it, others steal valuables kept inside it, the Commissionerate Police said in a press statement.

They also follow another

"When the victims try to pick up the notes from the ground, the crooks would attack and rob them," the police statement said.

They usually speak in Telugu and Tamil and are vagabonds who stay in station area and cheap hotels or lodgings in targeted city.

The accused are involved in modus operandi in which they as many as 11 such theft cases throw currency notes on road in different areas of the twin to divert attention of the comcity of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar, it said.





Three arrested for 12cr subsidy fraud

The accused have managed to avail the subsidy amount using forged documents and fake email ID, the EWO official informed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 17: The economic offences wing (EOW) of Odisha crime branch has arrested three fraudsters for misappropriating government subsidy to the tune of over ₹12 crores meant for supply of agricultural equipment to farmers, a police official said on Saturday.

OrissaPOST

SUNDAY | DECEMBER 18 | 2022 | BHUBANESWAR

The arrested accused are Pradeep Kumar Acharya, the MD of Annapurna Agro International Pvt. Ltd., Prabha Ranjan Dash, proprietor Dash Traders & Agro Agency and Shaik Fayaz, proprietor of Shaik Fayaz.

They were arrested from Bhubaneswar, Daspalla in Nayagarh district and Berhampur and have been forwarded to local court in Bhubaneswar today, the EOW official said. The three accused persons

Vaishnaw seeks public opinion on Cuttack rly station design

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 17: Union Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Saturday has uploaded the design of Cuttack Railway station on Twitter and has asked for the public opinion on the proposed design.

The design is inspired on the theme of Cuttack Barabati Fort architecture. Minister has requested public to give rating on the design theme and based on the public rating, further course of action would be taken.



Earlier, Rail Minister in a review meeting of railway projects in Odisha with ECoR officials recently advised them to expedite the construction work so that the ongoing works will be completed at the earliest. He also advised railway officials to remain in constant touch and coordination with all agencies including state government officials.

ଅର୍ଥନୈତିକ ଅପରାଧଶାଖ ECONDALC CITELICES WING

have misappropriated government subsidy meant for the farmers/beneficiaries amounting to at least $\overline{\mathbf{12}}$ crores by manufacturing and using forged documents and email ID.

During investigation, it was revealed that accused Pradeep Acharya's firm is registered under direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme for supplying post- harvest machines, power driven equipment and rotavator etc.

Acharya in conspiracy with the two other accused had uploaded a series of fake documents in respect of supply/sale of 381 agro equip-

POST NEWS NETORK

Saturday.

and biomechanics.

ergy applications.

Bhubaneswar, Dec 17: An in-

ternational conference on

Advanced Materials and

Applications focused on material

science and technology and or-

ganised by the department of

Physics of the Institute of Technical

Education and Research (ITER), fac-

ulty of engineering of SOA Deemed

to be University here, concluded

The subjects covered in the con-

ference included catalysis, spin-

tronics, solar energy, magnetic

memory devices, nanopatterning

Karunakar Nanda, Direrctor of

Institute of Physics here who was

the chief guest at the inaugural pro-

gram held Thursday, spoke on the

subject 'maximising the utiliza-

tion of catalytic centres for en-

Kumar Mahapatra and Pro-Vice

Chancellor Pradipta Kumar Nanda

also addressed the inaugural pro-

SOA Vice-Chancellor Ashok

ment to equal number of farmers during the years 2016-17 to 2019-20. and grabbed the subsidy amount meant for the beneficiaries.

The accused persons fraudulently have shown to have supplied more agro equipment than they have actually supplied. In many cases, even no equipment has at all been supplied but they have managed to avail the subsidy amount using fake documents, the

EWO official informed. They used to take away major subsidy amounts from the beneficiaries by this devious means by paying some meagre amount to the farmers.

Following the irregularities, the agriculture department of Odisha has blacklisted the manufacturing accused company Annapurna Agro International Private.Limited in its DBT portal.

The subjects covered in

the conference included

catalysis, spintronics,

memory devices,

biomechanics

nanopatterning and

required in medical science.

The subject experts who ad-

dressed the different sessions in-

cluded William Holderbaum from

University of Reading, UK, SD

Mahanti from Michigan State

University, USA, VV Srinivasu

and SC Ray from UNISA, South

Africa and Archana Mishra, Mag

Top, Institute of Physics, Polish

Academy of Sciences for

Experts from UGC-DAE

NISER

Consortium for Scientific Research,

Indore, Institute of Physics,

Theoretical Research, Poland.

solar energy, magnetic

SOA holds conference

on advanced materials

POST NEWS NETWORK New Delhi, Dec17: Subhrakant

Panda, Managing Director, Indian Metals & Ferro Alloys Ltd took over as FICCI President for 2022-2023, from Sanjiv Mehta at the apex chamber's 95th Annual Convention held in New Delhi, Saturday.

Anish Shah, Managing Director and CEO of Mahindra & Mahindra Limited was elevated as senior vice president, FICCI.

Harsha Vardhan Agarwal, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, Emami Limited joined FICCI lead ership as vice president.

Subhrakant Panda is Managing Director of Indian Metals & Ferro Alloys Ltd (IMFA) which is the country's leading, fully integrated producer of ferro allovs with captive mining and power generation employing 6500 people. He has han-



Subhrakant Panda takes over as FICCI president

RAZING DOWN: An excavator engaged by BDA pulling down an illegally constructed wall at Gautam Nagar in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

dled various responsibilities in IMFA and implemented expansion plans after he was appointed managing director.

Panda is the first industrialist from Odisha to lead a national industry chamber. India has emerged

global economy is facing turbulence and with his deep understanding of the economic and industry issues, he is determined to further strengthen FICCI's position as the leading industry chamber which will contribute to the India growth story through its engagement

with various stakeholders

OP PHOTO

He has been active in FICCI for two decades and was the first Chairman of the FICCI Odisha State Council besides heading the FICCI National Manufacturing Committee. Panda is also past president of the International Chamber of Commerce (India Chapter) and the Paris-based International Chromium Development Association (ICDA).

Panda graduated with honours summa cum laude from the Questrom School of Business. Boston University in 1993 with a dual concentration in Finance and Operations Management. He has been recognized for his outstanding scholastic achievement by being named to the Beta Gamma Sigma Honour Society for Collegiate Schools of Business and Golden Key National Honour Society.

KHIMJI'S END OF

18, the sale offers up to 70 per cent off on making charges on gold iewellery, up to 20 per cent off on ediamonds, and 25 per cent off on making charges on silver jewellery across all

its stores in Odisha. Shedding SHIMJ more light

on the Jewellers since 1936 context of EOSS, Director Khimji group said, "We have always believed in offering the best value for money propositions to the customers. Keeping the trending design and demands of customers in mind, our End of Season Sale has been specially formulated with pouring discounts on jewellery."

as a bright spot at a time when the Arcelor Mittal-Nippon Steel signs MoU with NSDC

dant, and data entry operator.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 17: Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), a joint venture between Arcelor Mittal and Nippon Steel, Saturday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to provide digital skills training to more than 1600 young people across the country.

The initiative aims to motivate voung people from four states -

This is the second digital training initiative by AM/NS India in

partnership with NSDC. An initial programme, announced in August 2021, has so far seen556 out of a total of 800candidates successfully trained in a range of digital skills and will ensure at least 70% placementin this project. The success of the programme has led to its renewal, with a target to double the number of young

pleased to extend our partnership with NSDC on this important initiative to equip young people across the country with skills that will help them secure employment and a path to economic prosperity'

Ved Mani Tiwari, COO & Officiating CEO, National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) commented, "This partnership with AM/NS India will provide momentum for large-scale participation by private players in skill development. With the prom-

SEASON SALE Bhubaneswar: Welcoming the New Year, Khimji, Odisha's most preferred jewellery brand, has commenced its End of Season Sale (EOSS) on its exquisitely designed iewellery. Starting from December

CONTINUED FROM P1 NASA reveals...

Scientists have found more volcanic spots in the polar region than in the planet's equatorial region, Bolton added. NASA said that this exploration of Jupiter's moon will be the first of nine flybys - two of them from just 930 miles (1,500 km) away. "Juno scientists will use those flybys to perform the first high-resolution monitoring campaign on the magma-encrusted moon, studying Io's volcanoes and how volcanic eruptions interact with Jupiter's powerful magnetosphere and aurora," the agency said in a press release.

'Babus shielding...

When contacted, RCCF and field director of STR, T Ashok Kumar said probe is underway and soon action will be taken against other persons involved in the incident.

Earlier, Turam Purti, a member of the Tiger Protection Force in STR, consumed poison to end life December 11 night. His family members suspected that he might have consumed poison after being abused by one of the three suspended officials for revealing the truth about the poaching of the tusker and the subsequent burning of its carcass. He was undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack where he succumbed Thursday night.

gramme. S Kamilla and VRR Medicherla, convenor and co-convenor respectively of the conference, spoke on the importance of materials in day to day life including those

Bhubaneswar and Venkateswar University, Tirupati also addressed the conference. Ph.D scholars and masters students made 86 poster presentations besides four oral presentations.

Bhubaneswar.

Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra – and equip them with vocational skills that will support their ability to secure and undertake employment in roles such as IT helpdesk atten-

larger catchment areas, including Kendrapara, Sundargarh, Keonihar and Dantewada.

people who will benefit, as well as

Shingo Nakamura, Deputy Director-HR &Admin, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), said: "We are ised resources, NSDC will conduct digital learning sessions to train 1600 bright students from various backgrounds. This will enable them to become valuable members of the workforce.'

Your tendency to overindulge relates to your 'eating personality'

olidays are a time when lots of us tend to overindulge in food and drink, and many people gain weight. Once gained, weight is difficult to lose, and it is likely that much of the holiday weight gain will stay with us.

Overindulgence might happen for some people around relaxed and positive family gatherings, especially if Covid has limited travel and family occasions in recent years. For others, holiday gatherings hold the potential for conflict and emotional challenges and that can lead to having more to eat and drink. For some people it will be a sad and lonely period, without family or significant others around, and food might seem comforting.

Holiday gatherings are typically social, featuring foods that are delicious, energy-dense and plentiful. It can be challenging to resist the temptations on offer. Yet some people overindulge, but others do not. Why?

Research tells us how different 'eating personalities' influence our tendency to overdo it at the festive buffet.

Eating personalities The various combinations of our eating behaviours (our usual ways of behaving and thinking about food) interact with each other as "eating personalities".

Technically, eating personalities (or eating phenotypes) refer to habitual patterns of eating behaviours and thoughts that are the result of interactions between our genetic makeup, individual characteristics and the environment.

Eating personalities affect how we eat (such as how fast), what we eat (healthy or unhealthy foods), how much we eat in different situations, and importantly, why we overeat. Eating personalities are apparent even in infants and continue to evolve and change over our lifetime. They also inform how we select specific weight-loss strategies.

Our eating personalities could include:

How we respond to prompts for overeating, such as the presence of tempting foods or drinks at a buf-



Desearch published this year, based on a individual randomised clinical trial with 217 adults, indicates characteristics that knowing your eating personality can help and the identify strategies to manage food intakes and weight environment

fet lunch, and whether we sometimes lose control.

How desirable or appealing or rewarding we find different foods or drinks. It might be a glossy chocolate cake for one person but crispy roast potatoes for another.

Whether we notice and respond to internal signals of fullness.

Our tendency to serve large portions and eat until the plate is clean. Whether we are able to wait until we start feeling hungry again to begin eating, rather than being guided by the clock or a tempting snack. Our capacity to stick to longer-term goals in the presence of tempting foods or drinks.

How fast we eat and whether we tend to maintain this pace or slow down during the course of eating

Whether we are 'emotional eaters' who eat when we feel down or to celebrate success.

5 ideas for eating according to vour personality

Research published this year. based on a randomised clinical trial with 217 adults, indicates that knowing your eating personality can help identify strategies to manage food intakes and weight. A second recent study of 165 people supports these findings.

Matching strategies to your particular eating personality traits could help you manage or avoid overindulgence.

The overeater

If eating when you're not actually hungry is a component of your eating personality, improving awareness of hunger versus other triggers for eating when you feel full. and developing skills in responding to these cues before deciding to eat, could help.

The food admirer and impulsive eater

If high attraction to food is a factor, and you have difficulty resisting, acknowledging the attractiveness of food cues and prac-

tising using avoidance, distraction or resistance strategies may be effective.

The emotional eater

People who recognise they eat for emotional reasons might try other strategies such as mindfulness, walking or listening to music to work through their feelings.

The plate cleaner

If resisting food is hard once it's on your plate, choosing smaller portions could help, along with developing awareness of fullness cues, or selecting some food but saving some for later in a separate location. Some young children do this naturally, spreading holiday chocolates or treats over days or weeks.

The speed eater

If eating quickly means you tend to eat too much, pay greater attention to your eating speed during the meal and attempt to slow down by interspersing eating with other things like chatting or drinking water.

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state





FOOTBALL FEVER: Girls posed with a football at the annual sports meet of Child Care Centre organised by the district administration and the District Child Protection unit at VSS Stadium in Sambalpur, Saturday

34 road projects for Maoist-hit villages

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, Dec 17: Scores of remote villages in the hilly Kandhamal district are still inaccessible owing to lack of proper road connectivity.

Over years, people have been living in these villages cut off from the rest of the world and suffering due to absence of basic facilities Official sources said, as many as 334 villages still do not have road

connectivity in the district. However, these villages are soon going to see road connectivity in a couple of years, as the state government has conducted surveys for many road projects in the area. Tenders for some projects have been awarded and others will be floated soon. Crores of rupees have

been allocated for these projects. It is expected that the roadblock to basic facilities will be removed after roads are laid to these villages. Notably, Phiringia, the second largest block of the state, is remote and Maoist-affected

Surveys have been completed for 34 road projects to facilitate communication to a number of inaccessible villages under this block. In fact, the surveys had been started two years ago. But the Covid-19 pandemic threw a spanner in the survey works for two years.

Now, the effort has been resumed with renewed vigour by the Phulbani rural development (RD) division. As per official report, 112 villages in the block have no road connectivity at all. As a result, peo-



NEARLY ₹20 CRORE HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FOR FIVE ROADS AFTER THE SURVEY

prived of education, easy healthcare and a host of benefits of government's welfare schemes.

The hilly block is criss-crossed by several creeks, streams and rivers. In monsoon, when Baghanadi and Kodijodi creek are in spate, people remain indoors for days together. Life here becomes really miserable when patients and pregnant women have to be carried on cots or slings across flooded rivers up to the motorable roads, locals lamented. One can imagine that the failure in giving timely healthcare to critical patients is fraught with life risk, they added. The Phulbani RD division is in the process of floating a tenders for five road projects now. Fund worth ₹3 crore has been al-

from Banijuri to Mandibala via Tikiripada-Murja. Similarly, ₹4.21 crore

located for construction of road

OFFICIAL SOURCES SAID, 334 VILLAGES DO NOT HAVE ROAD CONNECTIVITY IN **KANDHAMAL DISTRICT**

connect Luisingh with Malakri via Kumbharu; and nearly ₹4.22 crore for a road project from Mundasahi to Katramal.

After completion of the three projects, road connectivity will be facilitated to the cut-off areas like Gochhapada, Balandapada, Luisingh, Salaguda, Krandibali and Koermandu panchayats.

Another road will be laid from Maoist-hit Kutikia to Sumerbandh via Majabali at a cost of ₹3 crore while ₹5 crore has been allocated for laying of another road from Katapanga to Sumerbandh. Tender process for the two proj ects is over.

These two road projects will pave way for communication to scores of remote villages. Surveys for 27 more road projects have been completed while tenders will be floated soon, said Sushil Kumar Mohanty, assistant executive engi-

Finish medical college works by January: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

since a long time.

lack of medicines.

Baripada, Dec 17: Yet another

kumki female elephant died due

to alleged medical negligence in

Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) under

Jenabila forest range in Similipal

Wildlife Sanctuary of Mayurbhanj

district, Saturday. Sobha, the de-

ceased kumki elephant, was kept at Jenabila forest range office in

STR. The animal aged 54 was ailing

Forest officials requesting

anonymity alleged that the ani-

mal died due to lack of treatment.

Former honorary wildlife warden

Bhanumitra Acharya confirmed

stating that the animal died due to

Notably, the then field director

Debabrata Swain had brought

three kumki elephants from

Karnataka 20 years back. The

three elephants Sobha, Bhabani

and Mahindra were jointly en-

cussion with the students and their

Later, he visited the work site of

Patana MLA and district planning

board chairman Jagannath Nayak,

Ghasipura MLA Badri Narayan Patra,

zilla parishad member Ashis

Chakraborty, chief construction en-

gineer of the Works department

Achyutananda Das and superinten-

ding engineer Santosh Behera were

present at the review meeting with

Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya at

professors.

its work soon.

the minister

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Dec 17: Establishment of a medical college in Keonjhar gathered pace as state Works, Steel and Mines Minister Prafulla Kumar Mallick visited the district and asked to complete the work of the medical college by January

The minister on a one-day visit to Keonjhar visited the work sites of medical college and Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya at Bodapalasha and reviewed the projects' progress. Later, he joined a review meeting with the officials at the Works department Dak Bungalow in Keonjhar and had threadbare discussion with them on the ongoing projects and the problems they are facing in completing the projects, Friday afternoon.

He first reviewed the Telkoi-Bimala road works and later visited the works site of the medical college. There he reviewed works of the laboratory, examination hall of the students, museum, teachers' common room, mortuary, auditorium, conference hall, academic block, 60-bed-

CIFA eyes 20cr fish seedling production in two districts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, Dec 17: Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA) has set a target for production of 10 crore fish seedlings from Nabarangpur and Kalahandi districts each in the next fiscal

on fish spawn production. Head scientist of CIFA Padmanabh Rout imparted technical knowledge on preparation of fish feeds and grooming fish spawns into seedlings.

"Next year, we have set a target to produce 10 crore fish seedlings each from Nabarangpur and Kalahandi.

said CIFA's senior scientist Naresh

Kumar Barik. Farming of fish

seedling is expected to create a scope

of earning for many local people, it

gaged in the protection of the Similipal sanctuary. Bhabani and Sobha were kept and engaged at Jenabila forest range office. However, Sobha fell sick some days back and was undergoing treatment.

The pachyderm was missing out on her doses for the last two days after medicine stocks ran out. Efforts to contact RCCF T Ashok Kumar or deputy director Samrat Gouda over phone failed to yield any result as their phones were found switched off.

Earlier, another kumki elephant Lakshmi, birthed by Sobha and engaged in Similipal protection, had died under unnatural circumstances. Lakshmi fell sick and was suffering from high fever. The then field director directed its mahout and the veterinarian to shift it to Naana Sauta from Jenabila forest range. The mahout and the veterinarian pleaded not to shift Lakshmi with such severe fever but their prayers were not heeded.

While the mahout was shifting Lakshmi, it collapsed and died after walking for five kilometre. The death of Lakshmi prompted the Forest officials to resort to lies as they submitted a report citing that the kumki died from snakebite.

Man killed in tusker attack

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Dec 17: An elderly man was killed in tusker attack near Maidankel under Sadar forest range in Keonihar, Saturday

The deceased was identified as Braja Kishore Behera of Jamnalia village under Turumunga police limits in Keonjhar district. He came face to face with a tusker while returning home from the house of a relative. The animal trampled him under its feet.

in critical condition and rushed him to the Keonjhar headquarters hospital where doctors pronounced him dead. Sadar forest ranger Bijay Mohanty said that financial assistance will be provided to the deceased's family as per government norms.

Reports said that the tusker is

RECONSTITUTION OF DEED OF PARTNERSHIP

The Parterniship Firm under name and style "M/s. LA DEVELOPERS" has been entrin the Register of Firm vide SL.No.18202101330 dated 01.12.2021 has now b

In the Register of Finit Vide Sci. Vol. 1902 to 1530 dated 01.12.2021 has now been reconstitution of Partnership No. 41132211805 dated 17.10.2022 between the followings: Sri Jasjeet Singh, S/o. Late Balwinder Kaur, aged about 54 years, resident of Plot No. 38, Flat No.402, Amrita VIP Enclave, VIP Area, Bhubaneswar-751015, Odisha (PAN No.ABVPS49896), hereinafter called the Party of the "First Part", the Existing Partner. AND Sri Dilip Kumar Motwani, S/o. Late Jumandas Motwani, aged about 61 years, Resident of Plot. No.8.10, No.3. IRC Village. Navanalli: Bubbaneswar-751015, Odisha (PAN Sci Dilip Kumar Motwani, S/o. Late Jumandas Motwani, aged about 61 years, Resident of

Plot No.B-10, N-3, IRC Village, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Odisha (PAN No.AFUPM6752Q) hereinafter called the Party of the "Second Part", the Existing eswar-751015, Odisha (PAN AND

AND M/S. Evos Buildcon (P) Ltd., a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956, CIN:U701010R2010PTC012674 (PAN No. AACCE5477G), having its registered office at Plot No. M/76, Baramunda Housing Board Colony, Baramunda, PS-Bharatpuer, Bhubaneswar-751003, Dist.-Khurda, Odisha represented through its Managing Director, Sri Kalinga Keshari Rath, S/o. Late Kaliash Chandra Rath, aged about 38 years, resident of Flat No.202, "Olive Enclave", GA Plot No.11, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar, Dist.-Khurdha, Odisha. Hereinafter called the Party of the "Third Part" the New Joining Partner.

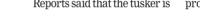
That the Terms and Conditions incorporated in this Partnership Deed dated 17.10.22 shall be abided by all the Partners hereof for all the Projects undertaken/to be undertaken by the firm M/s. LA Developers.



on a rampage at Sadar area and

had earlier attacked an elderly woman near Janghira under Harichandanpur police limits, Friday. The woman is currently undergoing treatment at Keonjhar headquarters hospital and her condition has improved after treatment.

Bodapalasha and took stock of progress on 200-bedded boy's hostel building and directed to complete





ple living in these villages are de-

sanctioned for a road project to neer of the Phulbani RD division.

Minor boy missing; parents cry kidnap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Dec 17: A 12-year-old boy, identified as Amrit Patra of of Subudhisahi in Kural village under Odagaon block in this district has reportedly gone missing from Friday morning. The boy's parents said that he had gone to attend private tuition but did not return home, following which they launched a frantic search but it was futile.

A missing complaint has been

jewellery shop

Rayagada: Officials of the State CT

off highway

Koraput: A gas tanker on its way to Raipur turned turtle after skidding about 20 feet off the highway near Padalguda village under Pottangi police limits in Koraput district, Saturday. Fire and police teams rushed to the spot as gas was leaking from the tanker. The vehicle was coming from Vishakhapatnam, sources said.

Allegedly locals had seen a pickup van moving about in the area over the past few days but has not been seen after Amrit went missing

lodged at the local police station. Police have started a search operation to trace him, sources said.

Meanwhile, it was alleged that locals had seen a pickup van moving about in the area over the past few days but it has not been seen after the boy went missing. The family is suspecting that some miscreants might have kidnapped the minor. The missing minor's bicycle has

been recovered, the police said and added that a special team has been formed to trace him. A sniffer dog has also been engaged in the investigation.

As many as 80 farmers from Nabarangpur. Umerkote. Kosagumuda, Golamunda, Junagarh, Dharmagarh and Koksara blocks took part in a training programme

Seven projects sanctioned for Khaira block

was said.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khaira, Dec 17: A number of developmental projects including construction of two roads and new office buildings for five Revenue Inspectors (RIs) will be implemented in Khaira block of Balasore

The new RI office buildings will be set up at Antara, Bartana, Kupari

Bank of

and Khaira. People of 15 panchayats will benefit from these seven projects. Foundation stones for these projects were laid by Simulia MLA Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi.

As per reports, Kaithagadia-Dungura road via Alda will be reconstructed and upgraded while another road from Ojhapokhari to Ada will be laid at a cost of ₹4.88 crore.

d: dfo.sambalpu الرز, e-mail **BID IDENTIFICATION No.** F&E/SBP/04/06/07/09/10/11/12/15 (Online)/2022-23 **E-Procurement Notice**

No. 7290 Dated: 16.12.2022 No. MM-348: The Divisional Forest Officer, Sambalpur Forest Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites Percentage Rate bids in Single Cover System in ONLINE MODE. Nature of Work Construction of Range Office Residence, Forester Quarters Forest Guard Quarters, Masonry Boundary Wall Tender Cost Rs.2000/- & Rs.6000/-"C" & "D" Class Contractors Class of Contractor 18.00 hours of 23.12.2022 to 17.00 Availability of bid document

in the website hours of 01.01.2023

Date of Opening of Tenders 11.30 hours on Dt.02.01.2023

The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Furthe details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov in only. Any Corrigendum/Addendum/Cancellation of tender will be displayed in the website said only

> Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer Sambalpur Forest Division OIPR-08104/11/0017/2223

> > EMAND

TICE

GST raid on

(Commercial Tax) and GST (Goods and Services Tax) Saturday conducted a raid on Bharat jewellery shop at the main bazaar in Rayagada town and seized some documents from the shop. Additional Commissioner of Commercial Tax, Baisagu Bahal said that following allegations, officials had been directed to conduct a raid on the jewellery shop. Action will be taken after the investigation is over, he added. It was learnt that the office of the Commercial Tax in Bhubaneswar received allegations that the jewellery shop owner was duping customers by selling sub-standard gold jewellery.

Gas tanker skids

Kantilo locals fume over bid to use fairground for oustees



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Dec 17: Local people and devotees of Khandapara block are seething with anger over alleged bid to 'sell out' the Magha Mela fairground of Lord Nilamadhab at Kantilo. Various quarters have voiced concern and opposed the alleged attempt.

Kantilo Nilamdhab peetha is considered the cradle of the Jagannath culture, and one of the major tourist draws in Nayagarh district. Over centuries, Bhouma

Ekadashi Magha Mela is organised on the nearby fairground.

Locals of Kantilo and nearby panchayats alleged that a deep conspiracy is being hatched by the administration to stop the age-old fair and rehabilitate people displaced by developmental works of Nilamadhab Peetha on the fairground.

Local people have met the Collector and urged him to stop all such activities. They warned of agitation if no step is taken in this direction.

Notably, the state government had some months back announced a ₹100-crore package for development of the Nilamadhab shrine here. Following the announcement, people of Kantilo panchayat and other panchayats like Bada Banapur, Siddhamula, Bengadia, Dhal Chakada and Kendupali were all praise for the government's initiative.

'We know a decision has been taken at the administrative level to rehabilitate the people to be affected by the developmental works for the shrine. We are really saddened by such development. The administration should think of its impact on age-old Magha Mela and the existence of the fairground," they pointed out.

A	Bank of India	D
क इंडिया BOI 🕅	Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015	

Notice under Section 13 (2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 for Enforcement of Security Interest

The Bank has granted following various credit facilities to the under mentioned Borrower & the amount outstanding dues mentioned below has not been paid in time. Therefore Demand notice under Sec. 13 (2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 was issued by the Authorized Officer against the following Borrower/Guarantor of the **Bank of India, Jayadev Vihar Branch** but the same could not be served on the below mentioned parties which was sent by Regd. Post A.D. Therefore, the contents of the same including the amount outstanding, Loan amount and details of the secured assets are herein furnished below.

JAYADEV VIHAR BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/Guarantor	Nature / Limit	Date of NPA/ Date of Demand Notice	Amount as per Notice under SARFAESI Act	Details of the mortgaged property
Borrower: M/s. Tarini Automobiles, Prop.: Mr. Laxmi Narayan Samal, At: Plot No.: 1015, NH-5, Infront of Hotel Presidency, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda-751012/ Guarantor: Mrs. Snehalata Samal, W/o: Mr. Jadunath Samal, At: Plot No.: 1015(P), NH-5, Infront of Hotel Presidency, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda-751012	₹60,00,000/- FITL/ ₹14,15,000/- GECL/ ₹10,00,000/-	15.11.2022 / 16.11.2022	+ Interest &	Equitable mortgage of Land and Building Situated at Plot No.: 1015(P), Khata No.: 157, Area: Ac.0.050 Dec., Kissam Bagayata-2, Mouza: Nayapalli, Nilakantha Nagar, Bhubaneswar in the name of Mrs. Snehalata Samal , Bounded by North Road, South: Plot No.:1015(P), East: Plot No.: 1015(P), West: Govt. Land

As the above mentioned Borrower of the Jayadev Vihar Branch have defaulted in repayment of the principal loan/ facility in installments/ interest/ both, the account has been classified as NPA, in accordance with the directions or guidelines issued by the RBI. In spite of our repeated demands you (borrower) have not paid any amount towards the amount outstanding in your account, you have not discharged your liabilities. Hence, we are now constrained to make this publication of Demand Notice, required u/s 13(2) of the said Act and Rule 3 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. You are here by called upon to pay the aforesaid amount alongwith further interest, cost, Incidental Expenses, Charges etc. within a period of 60 days from the date of Notice, failing which we will take necessary action under the provisions of sec 13(4) of the said Act. against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking possession of your secured assets and sale them. If the dues are not fully recovered in the course of these actions against secured assets, then the Bank reserves the right to take action by filing recovery action against you before DRT/Court for recovery of the same It may be noted that under the provisions of section 13(8) of the Act, right of redemption is available to you, by paying the dues of the Bank together with all cost, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank, at any time, before the date of publication of notice for public auction or inviting quotations or tender from public or private treaty for transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale of the secured assets. Please take note that as per sub section (13) of the aforesaid Act, after receipt of this notice, you are restrained from transferring or creating any encumbrances on the aforesaid secured assets whether by way of sale, lease, license, gift, mortgage or otherwise This notice is issued without prejudice to the rights of the Bank available under any other law

Place : Bhubaneswar, Date: 18.12.2022

Authorised Officer, Bank of India









power post

FOCUS NATION

POLITICS OF ECONOMICS

The whole world yearns after freedom, yet each creature is in love with his chains; this is the first paradox and inextricable knot of our nature **SRI AUROBINDO**



Hindutva & Caste

onstitutional amendment number 103, upheld by the Supreme Court recently, has been appreciated by our middle class, the core votaries of Hindutva. The opening up of reservations to all demonstrates the view that Hindutva is inclusive. Other parties are divisive because of their propensity towards casteism but, and this is the thinking, the Bharatiya Janata Party is above caste.

But is it? Does it reject caste and if not, then what sort of relationship does it have with the primary faultline in Hindu society? Hindutva like other ideologies based on nationalism and religion does not produce thinkers so much as believers and so there is a dearth of material. It is intellectually underpinned by the thinking of one man, MS Golwalkar, who led the RSS for over 30 years from 1940 and is the individual responsible for its ideology and its success. The prime minister has written a fawning biographical sketch of Golwalkar in which he compared him to Buddha, Mahavir and BR Ambedkar. If there is a Hindutva view of caste, it comes from Golwalkar and so let us examine it.

Golwalkar's main work is a book called Bunch of Thoughts. As the name suggests, it is not particularly unified and is scattered, offering his opinion on several things, mostly about how much he dislikes minorities, who are enemies of India by birth. He defines Hindus

as being those people with the "urge for realisation of God." However, this was not god in the form that most people identified with, Golwalkar wrote, but a living god and not an idol or immaterial form. "Nirakar (formless) and Nirgun (without attribute) and all that leads us nowhere." Idol worship "does not satisfy us who are full of activity." "We want a 'living' God, which will engross us in activity and invoke powers within us."

This living god was the Indian nation, but according to Golwalkar the nation-god did not include all communities but only one. In his words: "Our People Are Our God, is what our ancients told us. But not all people. Ramkrishna Paramhans and Vivekanand said 'Serve man'. But Man in the sense of humanity is too wide and cannot be grasped. It should be an Almighty with certain limitations. Man here means Hindu People. Our ancients did not use the word Hindu but they did say that the sun and moon are His eyes, the stars and skies created from his navel and that Brahmin is head King the hands, Vaishya the thighs and Shudra the feet.'

He continues: "This means that the people who have this fourfold arrange-ment i.e., the Hindu People, is our God." Service to this society is then service to God. This caste-based society should be worshipped in place of the self."

To Golwalkar social order through caste is not discrimination. The feeling of high and low in caste is of recent origin, "scheming Britisher" "divide and rule policy". The Gita says that individuals who do their assigned caste duty are worshipping god.

Indeed, he saw the caste system as beneficial to India instead of destructive. The Dalit intellectual Chandra Bhan Prasad has said that for millennia Brahmins alone were in charge of knowledge and India has the most illiterates on earth; that the Kshatriya was in charge of defence but India was one of the most invaded places on earth; and that the Vaishya were in charge of commerce and India is one of the poorest nations on earth.

Golwalkar takes the opposite view. He says the caste system is not responsible for our downfall, writing: "Prithviraj Chauhan was defeated by his own casterelation Jayachand. Rana Patap was hounded by Man Singh. The defeat of the Hindus at Poona in 1818 was under a fellow caste-man of the Peshwas, named Natu who hoisted the British flag."

Golwalkar writes that India was able to withstand the onslaught of Islam. But Afghanistan which was Buddhist and caste-free became Muslim. It is caste which has ensured the survival of Hindus. He felt that the divisions of caste kept economic power (Vaishvas) away from the hands of the state (Kshatriyas). It deprived the people producing wealth of all political power. "And above all, these two powers were subjected to the supervision of such

lfless men as had no axe to grind." These selfless men were the Brahmins.

Aakar Patel

Hindutva wants Indians to worship caste, but it does not want them to talk about it



Satya Narayan

RAJAN'S

APPEARS TO BE MISPLACED

The fact is that



Misra

PREDILECTION **FOR FOCUSING ON SERVICES OVER** MANUFACTURING

ter's Bharat Jodo Yatra has raised many hackles. Even his most intrepid supporters seem to be weary and tad confused. Rajan is a substantive voice both in India and globally, with his astute prediction of the financial crisis in the USA in 2007 in his highly readable book 'Fault Lines'. While the Americans sneered at his prediction, Paul Krugman, the Nobel Prize winner for Economics in 2008, openly complimented him. Saving Capitalism from Capitalists, which Rajan coauthored with Zingales, is a more substantive work, where he underlined the importance of creating durable assets and ring-fencing banking from arbitrary inroads by the government. It was possibly his excessive zeal to bring to book the major defaulters in NPA and recalcitrance to go with PM Modi's intent to demonetize that cost him a second term. The same PM who waxed eloquently about Rajan after his succinct presentation to him on the shape of India in the RBI's annual day celebration in 2015 became his detractor. There was a bit of IG Patel to him -- IG as RBI Governor openly differed with

he sight of Raghuram

Rajan, water bottle in

hand, keeping pace with

Rahul Gandhi on the lat-

PM Desai in 1978 when the decided to demonetize. Professionals like IG and Rajan, unlike bureaucrats, do not pander to the populism of politicians.

A BJP spokesperson was on an overdrive to bring out how Rajan is vastly overrated as an economist. This is not borne out by facts. When he assumed charge in April 2013 and was asked what his priority would be, he famously said: "There is enough political uncertainty in the country. I do not intend to add economic uncertainty to it." He was true to his salt and made inflation targeting his thrust area. Inflation which averaged around 9% during 2006 - 2013 came down to 3.4% by 2014. When inflation was at 9.5%, he raised the repo rate from 7.25 to 8%. But nity. India's overall rating of BB+



While Rajan as a highly credible voice in the global financial community does not need approval from the BJP. Rajan the political animal is a different kettle of fish

(stable) by S&P as an investment when inflation came down, he destination is far behind the ratbrought down reporates to 6.5%. ing of RBI as a very highly stable This is what Jan Tinbergen, the first Nobel laureate in Economics institution. This was amply had suggested: one policy tool to demonstrated during the global financial crisis (2007-08) when India tackle one major economic problem! Rajan was also instrumenwas least affected. tal in ensuring a stable rupee While Rajan as a highly credithrough timely foreign exchange ble voice in the global financial release intervention. He did not give community does not need approval in to the export lobby's demand to from the BJP, Rajan the political animal is a different kettle of fish.

devalue the rupee. Rajan was also at the forefront He has been generally critical of of taking stock of bad debts in the myriad economic initiatives by the government. The latest has balance sheet of banks, with a view to bringing down rising been the PLI scheme, where Rajan NPAs. This clearly raised the believes that the government hackles of many big corporates should focus on the services secthat were close to the governtor rather than on manufacturment. The final straw in the ing. He is very critical of the excamel's back was when the govport-led growth strategy of China. ernment wanted to dip into the eq-To be fair to the government, it is uity coffer of RBI for funding the on the right track in the PLI scheme fiscal deficit. While Arvind by intending to make India a global manufacturing hub in semicon-Subramaniam as CEA supported the government, the Committee ductors. Rajan's predilection for founder Bimal Jalan went along cusing on services over manuwith Rajan's reticence in the matfacturing appears to be misplaced. ter. For Rajan what mattered the most was the credibility and ratfor a Universal Basic Income ing (A+++) of the RBI in the eyes Scheme, which was one of its elecof the global financial commution manifestos. While Abhijit Banerjee, the Nobel laureate &

left-leaning economist, has strongly supported the idea to resuscitate the poor from the throes of bankruptcy and abject poverty, very surprisingly the proposal had a strong supporter in Aravind Subramaniam, a strong votary of the market, in the Economic Survey 2017. Rajan, with his conservative economic leaning, is also a votary of the UBI scheme. There is an ironical amalgamation of left and right-leaning economists on UBL When one looks at the scheme, it is clearly a highly emotive freebie, which will have disastrous consequences on India's fiscal health. Given the high level of fiscal deficit that we are carrying (6.4% vs 3% targeted), UBI will be unstainable. More importantly, the cash transfer scheme will not only accentuate the high level of inflation but not contribute to pro ductivity improvement. The USA has learnt bitter lessons from cash transfers during the pandemic, leading to 7.1% inflation in November 2121. Quite clearly, the politician in Rajan has trumped the economist in him.

In a democracy, one has the freedom of choice of which party to vote for. Also, the Bharat Jodo Yatra of Rahul Gandhi is a healthy change from LK Advani's Rath Yatra of 1990 which was intended to divide the country on religious lines and promote Hindu majoritarianism. Modi has capitalised on it with a toxic mix of Hindutva, nationalism, and rhetoric. Rahul's Bharat Jodo Yatra is therefore timely. However, unlike JP who spearheaded a major movement in 1974 to unseat Indira Gandhi due to rampant corruption, Rahul is perceived as a perpetuating Gandhi dynasty, without adequate gravitas and clarity of thought. Against this backdrop, Rajan's open political dalliance with Rahul on the road is a troubling script.

> The writer is Professor Emeritus, KIIT University. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM DIPLOMACY

Shift in foreign policy imperative

n the wake of the recent visit of Indo-Pacific policy in order to di-role. Regardless of India's rich and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, many observers, and myself in this column, had hinted at Berlin's attempt to explore and enhance economic opportunities between the two countries. The visit came after German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's much-talked-about dash to China after Xi Jinping was re-elected with greater powers at Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Congress. Apparently, Germany is aspiring to be an interlocutor and an impactful player in world politics. Many would perceive India to be doing so, wanting to be a world power. Berlin considers Russian invasion on Ukraine as a turning point (zeitenwende) in European history. The German Chancellor made this momentous development clear, "with invasion of Ukraine, we are in a new era". Germany has taken quite a few significant steps to make its intention of playing an international role clear. The Scholz government has made a massive increase in defence spending earmarking 100 billion Euros in 2022. Germany, as the biggest economic power in Europe, is coming to terms with a growing realisation that the US may not be able to serve as a bulwark for European security. While remaining in NATO, Berlin is planning to spend more than 2 per cent of its GDP on defence from now on. Germany also has outlined its

versify its partnership away from China. There India becomes an obvious and important partner. Along with a shared stake in maintaining

unique cultural heritage, there are forces who peddle religious hatred and social schism leading to tragic polarisation of society and poli-

The Congress has been batting

the wake of Ukrainian war. Perhaps frustrated by India's u-turn as well as reluctance to speak up for a rulebased international order despite the critical realpolitik, the Western world is reviving contacts with China which emboldens the latter to pick on India again. New Delhi must realise that Russia is a concern for the Western powers as much as China is for India. New Delhi must work fast to dispel the misperception that India is not able to decouple from Russia. The second shift is to be made at home refocusing on the economic determinism of international politics. At the end of the day, even the Western powers, irrespective of their claims to foster democracy and human rights in the world, will prefer their economic interests to any other. Hence, Prime Minister Modi should be spending his energy in building the Indian economy which is the key to national growth and development, and to its international image and power. Unadvisedly, the Prime Minister seems to be investing more time in campaigning for his party than on economy. New Delhi must reciprocate the international expectation and goodwill for India's economic growth.

"It is the continuous tradition of such persons, holding the sceptre of spiritual authority, who were ever on the alert to undo any injustice perpetrated by any of these two powers, while they themselves remained above all temptations of power or riches, that formed the real breath of the glory and immortality of our ancient nation.'

Golwalkar had the same views on caste as our middle class does today. For example, he felt that using phrases like Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe produces separatism. Why shouldn't everyone just be called 'Hindu'? To Golwalkar, the problem of temple entry was not that of discrimination but of maintaining anonymity. If Dalits do not announce their background, then the priests will let them pray. To him, stories of atrocities on Dalits are exaggerated.

In UP "the papers had flashed that the Harijan community had been attacked by caste Hindus, but not a single family of caste Hindus was residing there. Obviously the attack of Muslims on the Harijans was given the perverted colour of atrocity. I have a suspicion that some foreign hand is behind this systematic and subtle propaganda. Otherwise there is no reason why such news items should be played up so prominently."

This, then, is the thinking that has produced the 103rd amendment, which is supposed to put reservations above caste. The fact is that Hindutva wants Indians to worship caste, but it does not want them to talk about it.

WISDOM CORNER

66	It does not matter	how slowly y	ou go as lon	ig as you do no	ot stop.
					CONFUCIUS

- The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting. SUN TZU
- The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

WORDS**WORTH**

Downshifter

Downshifters are the antithesis of the acquisitive yuppies of the eighties. They believe that time is more important than money and that it is better to work less and be happy and fulfilled than be well paid for struggling with jobs that are stressful or unrewarding. Though it was heralded as "a new Renaissance philosophy" by the Trends Research Institute in New York, which is credited with inventing the term in 1994, the idea is far from new and, for example, echoes the Gandhian "voluntary simplicity" of the 1930s. To downshift means to cut out unnecessary expenditure and cultivate a simpler lifestyle with time to do more of the things one wants to do, but not go to the extremes of dropping out of society or attempting self-sufficiency. Some who have gone this route say that they have been able to make savings because a substantial proportion of their income was spent coping with the emotional and social consequences of overachievement and maintaining a consumerist lifestyle. Ironically, it seems a requirement for remodelling one's life is financial independence; significantly, downshifting has been taken up principally by middle-class professionals who can afford the loss of income. The word is a figurative use of a term originally applied to changing gear in a car and which dates from the 1950s.



NEW DELHI MUST REALISE THAT RUSSIA IS A CONCERN FOR THE WESTERN POWERS AS MUCH AS CHINA IS

etters

are most welcome to contribute letters

postal address/email ID. They may also

and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

send in their valuable comments, opinion

(0)

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST

(200 words), articles and

requested to send their contact numbers and full

columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are

FOR INDIA

democracies, human rights and other international political values, a robust economic partnership is critical. Germany's economic dependence on China perhaps makes it vulnerable to occasional pressure from Beijing. Berlin would perhaps like to disengage with China if it had an equally attractive alternative.

The world including Germany is expecting India to rise economically to countervail China and to create an alternative supply chain. Many countries in the democratic world would like to reduce their trade dependence on China.

Does India have the potential to be an alternative market and economic power to China? Can India match the strategic capability economic heft and technological strength of China? Yes, it can. India has the largest segment of young population in the world, the largest size of workers between the ages of 18 to 64, a potential skill capital of the world with training in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and humanities. India enjoys the goodwill across the world historically

However, is India willing to counter China! Not really. Few in India perceive or embark this global

tics. Political leadership lending patronage to such sectarian and polarising elements in media, police, civil service and judiciary make the situation grim. At home, the macro-economic policies propup crony capitalism while marginalising vast section of people. Although a micro-economic populist approach does promise to provide the basic needs, it fails to generate

demand. The world is watching and expecting India to grow. At the same time, it is also taking a comparative look at India and China.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India should make in its foreign policy at least two changes. One. India's foreign policy should have greater clarity on the external dynamics. In the current world, Russia has 'managed' to become a minor power as USA and China dominate. China is hostile to India and wants to stunt India's strategic growth. It has been building up its military garrison along the border. At the time of writing, the PLA and Indian Army were clashing, a serious military confrontation in Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh.

India was aptly turning to USA and its allies to resist China, but has suddenly lurched back to Russia in

The writer is Professor International Relations, JIMMC.

Uncivilised outburst

Sir, This refers to "Row over Pak min's personal attack on Modi," Orissa POST, Dec 17. Indian Foreign Affairs Minister S Jaishankar raised in UN the contemporary challenge of terrorism in the country's neighbourhood and the misuse of multilateral platforms to "justify and protect" perpetrators - clearly aimed at Pakistan, which continues to be the home base for anti-India terror groups. But, Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's 'uncivilised outburst' against Prime Minister Narendra Modi triggered a strong response from India. India highlighted Pakistan's continuing mistreatment of religious minorities, its harbouring of 126 terrorists and 27 terror groups designated by the UNSC., India has rightly decried the unusually hostile and personal remarks by Bhutto Zardari. They paint a worrying picture and mark a new low in already frayed India-Pakistan ties and raise doubts whether this is mere rhetoric or a portend of instability and political pressures – especially when New Delhi is locked in an intensifying standoff with a belligerent China on its eastern border. If a besieged Pakistani government is trying to shore up its domestic standing with condemnable tactics, it will spell trouble for South Asian stability. No matter how glibly Bhutto Zardari may present the case for his country being a victim of terrorism, there is no getting away from the fact that Pakistan's military establishment has been deeply invested in the terrorist infrastructure. Only a clean break from this sordid past can lead to a fresh N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE start between New Delhi and Islamabad.

Brain drain

Sir, That the number of Indians giving up their citizenship is showing an increasing trend is a matter of serious concern. More than 16 lakh surrendered their Indian passports during the period 2011-2021. Upto October this year alone, the figure went up to more than 1.84 lakh. Indians giving up their citizenship for greener pastures abroad is not at all a healthy sign. Some Indians heading MNCs, notable among them being Leena Nair (Chanel), Satya Nadela (Microsoft), Sundar Pichai (Google), Shantanu Narayan (Adobe), Indira Noovi (Pepsico) are honourable exceptions. Experts opine that a high tax regime, limited scope for meritocracy, excessive political interference, absence of adequate research facilities, and a corrupt bureaucracy are notable reasons for the flight of brain drain. It is high time to introspect why large number of Indians are migrating to other countries and take suitable remedial measures to halt this trend.

Pratap Nayak, BHUBANESWAR

LAO TZU



national



Not even a needle used to be manufactured in India when the country got freedom, but today you see where we are standing. The Congress ruled most of the time after independence. Such a development took place. It happened while the old pension scheme was there ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

GEARING UP

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), in its meeting, has approved various proposals under its preparations for the upcoming G20 Summit in the city



uote **7**7 **Protests break out against Bhutto's comment on Modi**

The Pakistani foreign

minister made remarks

against PM Modi and

slammed the RSS after

India's External Affairs

Minister S Jaishankar

highlighted at the United

Nations Security Council

meeting Pakistan's

support to various terror

groups and described the

country as the "epicentre

of terrorism"

Narendra Modi is extremely ob-

jectionable. On behalf of the 135

crore people of India, I demand

that he withdraw the bad words

he said about our prime minister,

take back his statement, and ten-

der an apology to the people (of

the Uttar Pradesh BJP said Bhutto's

remark indicates his frustration and

that under his leadership India

has been recognised as a strong

nation on the world stage. India's

foreign policy is being appreciated

all over. India's respect has in-

creased in the entire world.

Chaudhary said, adding Bhutto

has put another stigma on Pakistan

by his indecent statement.

He also lauded PM Modi saying

mental bankruptcy.

In a statement issued in Lucknow,

India).

Facility for Biomedical Research at Genome Valley, Hyderabad. It is India's biggest dedicated institute for laboratory animal sciences

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA UNION HEALTH MINISTER

Creating

Robust Research Ecosystem! Inaugurated National Animal Resource

Every effort is being made to strengthen the PAC (Provincial Armed Constabulary) so that it can face the upcoming challenges

YOGI ADITYANATH UTTAR PRADESH CM

When Rajiv Gandhi ji was the Prime Minister, the smaller countries of the world used to scare

us. A glorious and powerful India is being built under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji. Rahul Gandhi ji, don't talk unrestrained, now no one can scare India

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN MP CM

SHORT TAKES

Bomb blast accused shifted to Bangalore

Mangalore: The prime accused in the cooker bomb blast case here, has been shifted to a hospital in Bangalore on the advice of authorities and the doctors treating him here. Mohammed Shariq was taken to Victoria hospital in the state capital at 6 am Saturday, police sources said. The accused had suffered 45 percent burns after the explosive he was carrying in a pressure cooker exploded in an auto rickshaw at Nagori on the outskirts of the city November 19. The autorickshaw driver, who was also injured in the blast, is being treated here.

Fire breaks out in Delhi hospital

New Delhi: A fire broke out at a hospital in south Delhi's Greater Kailash-I Saturday



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Lucknow, Dec 17: The BJP held protests across the country Saturday against Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto's "uncivilized and distasteful" personal attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the party sought to rally support over the issue.

BJP leaders and workers took out marches in various state capitals, burnt Bhutto's effigies, called him a "'vidwesh mantri' (hatred minister)" and demanded he apologises to the 135 crore people of India.

"India came together to condemn and protest Bhutto's uncivilized and distasteful comment on PM Modi," the party said, adding that protests were held in every given by the foreign minister of Pakistan on Prime Minister

state. The march of party workers in Lucknow was led by Uttar Pradesh BJP chief Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary, and in Patna by state BJP chief Sanjay Jaiswal.

Thousands of BJP workers marched from the Uttar Pradesh BJP office to the Atal Chowk (in Hazratganj), and raised slogans against Bilawal Bhutto. The party workers, under the leadership of state BJP chief Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary, also burnt an effigy of the Pakistani foreign minister, party spokesperson Hero Bajpai

told PTI. "Bilawal Bhutto is not a 'videsh mantri' (foreign minister), he is a 'vidwesh mantri' (hostility minister)," he said.

Speaking to reporters, Chaudhary said, "The statement Amethi, Unnao, Muzaffarangar, Baghpat, Bhadohi, Ballia, Meerut, Bulandshahr, Maharajganj and Budaun. Manupal Bansal, a BJP member of zila panchayat of Baghpat,

said he would give Rs 2-crore reward to anyone beheading the Pakistani foreign minister. In Jammu and Kashmir, the

In Uttar Pradesh, reports of

protests were also received from

BJP unit took out a march from the party's office in Jawahar Nagar, raising slogans against Bhutto and demanding an apology from him. This march is part of the coun-

try-wide protests by BJP against Bhutto's shameless comments against our beloved prime minister. This protest is against Pakistan which is a terror state," party's Kashmir media incharge, Manzoor Ahmad, told reporters.

BJP's Maharashtra chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule, several party MLAs and other leaders took part in the protest at Tilak Chowk in Pune. They burnt Pakistan's flags and also raised anti-Pakistan slogans. Protests were also held in Nashik.

BJP state women's wing head Chitra Wagh, former Pune mayor Murlidhar Mohol also took part in the protest. Protests were also reported from Gujarat's Rajkot, Vadodara, Gandhinagar, Botad, Mahisagar, Junagadh and many other places.

In Gandhinagar, a delegation led by state BJP's Yuva Morcha president Prashant Korat submitted a memorandum criticising Pakistan and the minister to Governor Acharya Devvrat at Raj Bhavan.

Among those who took part in the protest in Goa's Panaji were state BJP chief Sadanand Shet Tanavade, MLAs Daji Salkar, Sankalp Amonkar, former Lok Sabha MP Narendra Sawaikar. former legislator Damodar Naik and the party's state Yuva Morcha president Sameer Mandrekar. The protesters burnt an effigy of Bhutto near the party's head office in Panaji.

Tanavade said Bhutto's comment reflects the frustration of Pakistan at the respect PM Modi has garnered globally for his statesmanship



Cadets celebrate after the Combined Graduation Parade at Air Force Academy, Dundigal about 47kms from Hyderabad PTI PHOTO

HOOCH TRAGEDY Eight more die in two other Bihar districts

Unconfirmed reports claimed that up to 60 people died by drinking illicitly in Saran district

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Dec 17: Close on the heels of the hooch tragedy in dry Bihar that left 30 people dead in Saran district, eight more died allegedly after consuming some spurious liquor in two other districts, officials said Saturday.

Six people died in Siwan district adjoining Saran, while Begusarai witnessed two other deaths. Unconfirmed reports claimed that up to 60 people died by drinking illicitly brewed country liquor in Saran district. Even the official toll of 30 there is the biggest since Bihar went dry more than six years ago. About the six deaths in Bhagwanpur division of Siwan district since Thursday Sub-**Divisional Magistrate Saniav** Kumar said the administration has initiated an investigation.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Mumbai, Dec 17: Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud on Saturday said no case is small or big for any court in the country, be it the district judiciary, the High Court or the Supreme Court.

The CJTs reiteration came while asserting that the confidence of citizens in the due process of law and the protection of



liberty rests in the judiciary. "Trust us to be guardians of the liberties of our citizens.

No case is small or

big for any court: CJI

The observation also came days after Law Minister Kiren Rijiju said the Supreme Court should not be hearing "bail applications and frivolous PILs" when the pendency of cases is too high. Delivering the Ashok H Desai memorial lecture, the CJI emphasized that through the lives of the members of the bar, who fearlessly espouse those causes, "the flame of liberty burns bright even today.

There is no case which is "small enough or big enough" for any court in the nation, be it the district judiciary, the High Court, or the Supreme Court. "because it is in us that the confidence of the citizens, in the due process of law and the protection of liberty rests." he said.



"We are also carrying searches in the area to nab those who indulge in the sale and purchase of liquor.' Kumar said. On the Begusari incident, Deputy Superintendent of

Police Chandramohan Prasad told reporters that two youths died after consuming "some poisonous chemical" in Teghra division Friday. "We have sent bodies for post-

mortem examination. Investigations are on," he said. The sale and consumption of alcohol were banned in Bihar by the Nitish Kumar government in April 2016. However, the smuggling of liquor continues unabated in the state, notwithstanding the ongoing drive against bootleggers. The police on early Saturday recovered several cartons of liquor from a truck in Sadar police station area in Muzaffarpur district. The cartons were hidden

brewed country liquor



morning, Delhi Fire Services officials said. No injuries or casualties were reported, they added. Phoenix hospital in Greater Kailash I specialises in woman and child care. According to fire department, 20 fire-fighters were engaged to douse the blaze that broke out at the hospital's office located in the basement of the building. All the patients and staff members of the hospital were safe, a senior official said.

Minor raped after being drugged

Kolkata: In a shocking incident, a minor girl has accused a youth pursuing his MBA studies of raping her after being drugged by his mother. As per the statement given by the victim to the local Haridevpur Police Station, the incident took place October 24 this year. which was the occasion of Kali Puia. However, she filed a complaint with the police December 16 night, According to the police, they arrested youth, Kunal Kothari and his mother Anushree Kothari on Saturday morning and presented them at a lower court in Kolkata, which remanded them to police custody. Since the victim is a minor, police have framed charges under various sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. 2012 against the two accused persons.

Leopard captured

Hyderabad: Forest officials of Telangana Saturday captured a leopard which strayed into the premises of a pharma company, Hetero Labs, in Sangareddy district. A team of personnel from Nehru Zoological Park (NZP) captured the animal which entered the building in the early hours of Thursday.

Poonawala appears before court virtually

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 17: Aaftab Amin Poonawala, accused of strangling his live-in partner Shraddha Walkar and chopping her body into pieces, Saturday virtually appeared before a Delhi court and said he was not aware of the bail petition moved on his behalf. Poonawala, who appeared

through video conference, said though he had signed the vakalatnama, he was not aware a bail petition would be filed by his advocate.

"Let the bail application be kept pending and only after the accused meets his counsel, it be decided whether the bail application is pressed or not," Additional Sessions Judge Vrinda Kumari said.

Noting that Poonawala's recently appointed private advocate M S Khan has sought time to meet his client, the court posted the matter for further proceedings December 22. Noting that Poonawala had informed the court through an email that the bail application was moved "erroneously." the judge said the permission provided to Khan for filing the bail application stood rescinded. Poonawala's bail petition was filed before the court Thursday. On December 9, his judicial custody was extended by 14 days.



1mn winged visitors expected Amaravati farmers this season to Kolleru lake in AP take protest to Delhi

MANY MORE WINGED VISITORS ARE **EXPECTED TO MAKE THEIR WAY HERE IN KOLLERU IN THE COMING** WEEKS ESCAPING THE **COLD AND BLIZZARDS IN THEIR HOMELANDS**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Eluru (AP), Dec 17: Most part of the Kolleru lake in Andhra Pradesh is already abuzz with lakhs of migratory birds and the number is only expected to go north and touch a million, with more winged visitors all set to make the Ramsar

site their winterstay. According to forest department officials, Glossy ibis, Open billed stork, Purple moorhen and Painted stork are flocking here for the nestling season, many flying from as far as Russia and Siberia, known for their harsh winter.

Many more winged visitors are expected to make their way here in Kolleru in the coming weeks escaping the cold and blizzards in their homelands.

It is a natural phenomenon that these migratory birds fly down to this place during winters for nesting and breeding after a voyage of thousands of kilometers.

They land here from places as far as Russia, Siberia and some of the cold countries of Europe. Kolleru is the largest freshwater lake in the country, located between the deltas of Krishna and Godavari rivers. Abundant food



Migratory birds at the Kolleru lake in Andhra Pradesh

in the form of fish and suitable climatic conditions for breeding are some of the reasons attributed for the avian members making this lake their home during winters, they said.

"We have already received about six lakh birds. This number may go up to 10 lakh in the coming days. Constant efforts by the government to sensitise local people on the importance of migratory birds for ecological balance and keeping a strict vigil on poachers are now paying dividends," SVK Kumar, Forest Range Officer (wildlife), Eluru told PTI.

According to him, poachers used to kill the birds for a living. However, stringent punishment has resulted in poaching coming down significantly.

The birds use facilities created by the state forest department such as habitat centres, trees planted on artificially made mud mounds and iron stands. Kumar said. With the birds arriving in Kolleru. tourism activity also increased as several people come to the lake to watch the fowls. The lake has been declared as a wildlife sanctuary.

PTI PHOTO

After breeding is done successfully and the summer sets in, the birds fly back to their respective places

Kolleru being one of the main hotspots for a migratory route called Central Asian Flyway and also the strategic location which made it a bio-central hotspot for the migratory birds, the lake is considered more important in terms of ecological balance, a senior official of the Andhra Pradesh Forest department said.

Kolleru lake also figures in Ramsar sites. The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It was signed in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

below wooden planks.

New Delhi, Dec 17: Demanding that Amaravati be developed as the only state capital of Andhra Pradesh, farmers from the region Saturday staged protest in New Delhi.

Leaders and workers of Amaravati Parirakshana Samithi (APS), which is spearheading the movement against proposed three capitals, organised the sit-in at Jantar Mantar.

They demanded that the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government drop its move to develop three capitals and fulfill the commitments made to the people of Amaravati.

With the slogan of 'Dharani Kota to Erra Kota', the APS organised the protest to mark three years of the announcement of YSRCP government for trifurcation of the state capital.

APS president Shiva Reddy, secretary G. Tirupati Rao and other leaders staged the protest to highlight their demand in the national capital. Leaders of the Left parties and farmers' organisations participated in the protest to show

solidarity with Amaravati farmers. The APS leaders will meet lead-

ers and MPs of various political parties on Sunday and Monday to seek their support for their movement.

The Amaravati farmers will also participate in Monday's protest by Bharatiya Kisan Sangh at Ramlila Grounds in support of various demands of farmers

Bharatiya Kisan Sangh has included the movement by Amaravati farmers in the agenda for the meeting.

It was December 17, 2019 that Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy had announced in the state Assembly that three state capitals will be developed reversing the decision of the previous TDP government to develop Amaravati as the state capital.

The YSRCP government mooted Visakhapatnam as administrative capital, Kurnool as judicial capital and Amaravati as legislative capital. This triggered massive protests from farmers of Amaravati, who had given 33,000 acres of land for the capital and the previous government had also undertaken the works on some components of the mega project.







Alarm bells ringing in Punjab J&K officers, retd judges There seems to be an more than 200 received money from the banned pro-Khalistani outfit

between the present condition and the early days of Punjab terrorism of the 1980's

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 17: The recent attack on a police station in the border district of Taran Tarn was the fifth of its type in the last 12 months. As in all the earlier attacks, the targets were high profile and important police establishments like the Mohali Intelligence Headquarters, Crime Investigating Agency and Pathankot Cantt Police Post. Another serious dimension was the insidious and targeted killing of three police protectees

Just about a month ago. Bhupinder Singh was shot dead at Jalandhar, and the armed constable deployed for his protection, sustained gunshot injuries and he also succumbed to the injuries in hospital. Pradeep Singh was killed in Faridkot. Shiv Sena activist, Sudhir Suri was gunned down



in Amritsar. In the case of Bhupinder Singh, the family informed the police that the gangsters were demanding a ransom of ₹30 lakh from them

weapons, fake Indian currency, for-This is an extremely grim situeign currency, have become brazen ation and it is absolutely crystal and frequent. Drug addiction in clear that the nexus between Punjab, especially in the youth, has assumed alarming propor-Pakistan's ISI, the local gangsters of Punjab and the pro-Khalistani tions. In a confidence building elements operating from the US, measure, DGP Punjab Gaurav Canada, the UK, Hong Kong, Yadav stated that 404 gangsters Germany, among others, are workhave been apprehended in recent ing in close coordination to create months. On the face of it, this may disturbances in Punjab, using the be of some consolation as a sign of 1984 anti-Sikh riots, the Covid panproactive action-but in the light of demic, the farmers agitation and the fact that almost 4000 persons of the poor job opportunities in Punjab have been identified as being involved in radical activithe state. ties, it is also alleged that of these

This is borne out by the fact that

Sikhs for Justice (SFJ).

Although it is a matter of satisfaction that almost 1000 were shortlisted by the Punjab Police for their deradicalisation programme, with some success. But again the pro-Khalistani elements, mostly from outside India and at the behest of the ISI are hell bent on creating disturbances in Punjab.

There seems to be an eerie similarity between the present condition and the early days of Punjab terrorism of the 1980's.

In this grim situation all the intelligence agencies like the IB. Raw. Military Intelligence, BSF the Punjab Police and the Police forces from the neighbouring states, like Kashmir, Harvana, Uttar Pradesh and other sensitive states must share intelligence and ensure preemptive strikes on the terrorist hideouts and their support systems. The nexus between the gangsters and the anti-national elements has to be broken once and for all. Till now the decisive assault like action under the National Security Act, UAPA, confiscation of movable and immovable property does not seem to be happening on a war footing

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jammu, Dec 17: In a significant development, authorities in Jammu and Kashmir have withdrawn excess security from politicians, retired judges and both serving/retired IAS, IPS and J&K cadre police and civil officers.

The withdrawal was necessitated after a security audit was held during which it was pointed out that excess security needed to be withdrawn based on categorisation of protected persons, top sources said. They said that the exercise had to be undertaken because those falling in 'Y' security category had been given security cover of 'Z' category and those of 'Z' category were enjoying the cover of 'Z Plus' category.

"This disparity has now been removed," the top sources told IANS. In addition to the with drawal of personal security officers (PSOs) of 20 politicians, two excess PSOs of former DGP SP Vaid and three of former ADGP Munir Ahmad Khan have also been withdrawn. SPOs of retired police officers, who were holding excess PSOs, have now been recalled by the security head-



quarters. The retired IGPs are Mubarak Ahmad Ganie, Rouf-ul-Hassan, A.S. Bali, Mohammad Amin Anjum, Ghulam Hassan Bhat, Mohammad Amin Shah, Jagjeet Kumar, Javid Ahmad Makhdoomi and Shamas Ahmad Khan.

Excess security was also withdrawn from Muzaffar Hussain Attar, retired Judge High Court/Chairman of Committee for Fixation and Regulation of Fee of Private Schools; and Bashir Ahmad Dar, former Senior Additional Advocate General. Serving and retired IAS officers

who have lost extra security cover, include Masood Samoon (former PSC member); Athar Amir Shafi, Commissioner SMC: Fazallul Haseeb SDM Dharmari; Simrandeep Singh, on deputation to Centre; Rahul Yaday, Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation; Ghulam Nabi Naik, retired IAS; and Khurshid Ahmad Shah, retired Commissioner/ Secretary Public Works (R&B) Department. More politicians of National Conference, Congress, PDP, BJP, Democratic Azad Party (DAP), People's Conference have also lost additional security cover.

3 million people in Punjab addicted to drugs

narco terrorism is an evil that has

spread its dreaded tentacles all

across the state. Drone incursions

carrying payloads of narcotics,

THE DRUG TRADE IN PUNJAB IS ESTIMATED ANNUALLY TO THE TUNE OF ₹7,500 CRORE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 17: Once at the top of the list in the use of drugs and even termed 'Udta Punjab', drug smuggling in Punjab remains a much-debated social, criminal and political issue

Despite the Punjab government forming a Special Task Force (STF) to curb the menace, it however still manages to haunt the state.

But the state has now dropped to the third place with regards to the use and trafficking of drugs, according to the National Crime Record Bureau's (NCRB) report released this year.

The report revealed that Uttar Pradesh has now occupied the top spot with 10,432 FIRs registered under the NDPS Act, followed by Maharashtra (10,078) and Punjab (9.972)

The second edition of the book 'Roadmap for Prevention and Control of Substance Abuse in Punjab, released by the community medicine department of Chandigarh's Post Graduate

that more than 3 million people, or around 15.4 per cent of the population of Punjab, are currently consuming drugs.

The drug trade in Punjab is estimated annually to the tune of ₹7,500 crore. Several households have lost their family members to the drugs scourge. Magboolpura is known as the village of orphans and widows, as majority of drug abuse victims hail from there

Amid rising concern, the Supreme Court this month had directed the state government to keep a check and be serious about the drug menace. In August this year, after carrying out monthlong cordon and search operations in drug-affected areas besides patrolling vulnerable routes across the state, Punjab Police arrested as many as 2,205 smugglers, including 260 top criminals.

A total of 1,730 FIRs have been registered, of which 145 are related to commercial quantity. The police have also recovered 30kg heroin, 75kg opium, 9kg marijuana and 185 quintals of poppy husk 12.56 lakh tablets/capsules/injections/vials of pharma opioids from



across the state. Marijuana enters Punjab through Himachal Pradesh, while opium and poppy husk come from Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Being situated near the Golden Crescent crossroads (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran), also called the 'Triangle of Death', Punjab is a lucrative market for drug gangs.

Ironically, it doesn't produce pium. cannabis or their derivatives a synthetic heroin derivative, has upended the lives of people across class, gender, age and place. Punjab alone accounts for over one-fifth of the total recoveries of heroin in the country. Opium is smuggled into Punjab from Sri Ganganagar and Hanumangarh districts in Rajasthan and Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir.

Heroin is smuggled into India through Pakistan, More than 9.500

Act by the Punjab Police this year so far. Synthetic drugs such as amphetamine and ecstasy come from Baddi in Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, said an official.

The 'Udta Punjab' scenario is reflected in a study by the Institute Development and Communications, Chandigarh, which concluded that 75.8 per cent of the surveyed addicts lived in the border districts and were aged between 15-35 years.

For over a decade, the Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal pummeled each other on the state's drug crisis. The BSF was also dragged into the fight and 'narco politics' became a term of reference in the state's twisted drug vocabulary

In 2014, a retired IPS officer claimed that many politicians were involved in the racket either directly or through their cohorts with police backing. Nowadays, drug runners are innovating new ways to avoid detection. Narcotics are concealed in onion-laden trucks bound for Punjab from Gujarat or packed along with cumin seeds to suppress the smell

Punjab ranks 2nd in average income per farm household

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, Dec 17: Punjab ranks second in the country in average monthly income per agricultural household. This fact came to light in a data provided by Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar in the ongoing session of Rajya Sabha.

The minister was replying to a question by Aam Aadmi Party's Rajya Sabha member Sanjeev Arora. As per information. Meghalaya tops across the country with average monthly income per agricultural household (Rs 29.348)

Punjab (Rs 26,701) is followed by Haryana (Rs 22,841), Arunachal Pradesh (Rs 19,225), Jammu and Kashmir (Rs 18,918), group of Union Territories (Rs 18,511), Mizoram (Rs 17,964), Kerala (Rs 17,915), group of northeastern states (Rs 16.863). Uttarakhand (Rs 13,552), Karnataka (Rs 13.441), Gujarat (Rs 12.631), Raiasthan (Rs 12,520), Sikkim (Rs 12.447) and Himachal Pradesh (Rs 12,153). Responding to the reply, Arora told the media. "If we consider



with Meghalaya having major share of horticulture and fruits.'

He urged the Punjab farmers to go for more diversification of crops horticulture and fruits.

The prominent crops produced in Punjab include rice, wheat, maize, bajra, sugarcane, oilseeds, and cotton, but rice and wheat alone constitute 80 per cent of the total gross cropped area.

Arora said Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann is trying his best to further improve condition of peasantry in the state. Citing an example, he said in October the Chief Minister had announced to increase the price of sugarcane to ₹380 per quintal from ₹360 per quintal. This was done with a view to supplement the income of farmers.

Benji Nedou, whose son Sheikh Ahmad alias Fredi was running

Broadway Amla Hut spread over 20 kanals and 10 marlas was

allotted to Justice Shadi Lal who

no longer figures on the ground

as the place is occupied by Krishen

Hotel Hilltop owner by Aijaz

Ahmad Ganie alias Chaya is

spread over 6 kanals and 15 mar-

las while original lessee was

Imtiaz Ahmad Mattu who was al-

and 1 marla owned by Altaf

Ahmad Beigh while original the

allotment was made to Khwaja

Saifuddin to the extent of 2 kanals

only. These details are perhaps

only the tip of an iceberg which

the illegal occupiers are trying des-

Interestingly, the actual room

demand as per the tourist inflow

should be 10 times more than the

oly and self-dictated room prices

intact, the illegal occupiers would

not like the real players to jump

into the arena because the end

of their monopoly would mean

comparatively affordable rooms for all sections of tourists.

mium be charged may not be ac-

ceptable. The Central govern-

ment has formulated several

policies for monetisation of assets

and extension of leases which

are time tested and have with-

stood scrutiny of various courts,'

top official sources told IANS.

'The demand of beneficiaries that only 20 per cent additional pre-

present occupancy available. In order to keep their monop-

perately to hide.

Saifco Hut spread over 2 kanals

lotted 2 kanals and 12 marlas.

the place

Kumar Amla.

Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) this year stated nor does it manufacture psychotropic drugs. Punjab's 'chitta',

cases have been registered and 13,000 arrested under the NDPA

states dependent the maximum on cash crops. Punjab would rank first

Valley's saffron is the Kashmiri gold Would Gulmarg unshackle from fetters of its greedy sharks? INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE New Delhi, Dec 17: The recently

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Dec 17: Saffron grown in Kashmir Valley is famous all over the world and is in great demand in the global market.

An important part of the local culture in Kashmir. saffron tea is a special feast of Kashmir, and so is saffron 'harissa' during the winters. It is considered to be the most valuable spice in the world, that's why saffron is also called the 'Kashmiri Gold'. Ten grams of saffron sells for five to six thousand rupees. Tourists entering the Valley may not take anything else from Kashmir, but they do take saffron.

The farmers involved in saffron cultivation used to face a lot of loss due to the imitation of this product, but due to the introduction and measures of GI tagging, their economic interests have been protected. With the GI tag of Kashmiri saffron, India has become the only saffron producing

country to be assigned a GI and thus the importance of Kashmiri saffron in the international markets has increased

It is worth noting that the GI sign is used on products that have a specific geographical origin and have characteristics or reputation due to that origin.

Farmers in Kashmir Valley are now hopeful that they will get a better price for their produce. He welcomed this decision of the government. "This is a very good step. We are hopeful that our financial situation will improve now," a farmer said.

Kashmiri saffron is grown at an altitude of 1,600 meters to 1.800 meters above the sea level, which adds to its uniqueness. The saffron is considered superior to other types available worldwide.

The cultivation is done extensively in Pulwama, Budgam, Kishtwar and Srinagar districts of the Kashmir Valley.



notified Land Grants Rules 2022 in Jammu and Kashmir once implemented are set to open a can of worms exposing the plunder of

the world famous Gulmarg tourist resort by the rich, influential and powerful sharks. The land allotted and occupied

by various businessmen/hoteliers and other influential people are all forest land recorded as 'Gair Mumkin Jangal' (Non-cultivable forest land owned by the state).

These lands were allotted to the rich and powerful without any public auction or reference. In many cases, the actual lessees are not in occupation of the lands over which business establishments including hotels/resorts etc have come up those are owned

by big business houses. The worst part of these illegal allotments includes felling of forest and establishment of business empires while the government got just nominal revenue as greedy businessmen made tens of millions each year.

The tourist season in Gulmarg extends from spring, summer, autumn to winter as the mountains overlooking this resort offer some of the best ski slopes in the World.

The room rent at most of these hotels and resorts ranges from ₹15,000 to ₹50,000 per night.

Ironically, the list of lands occupied in Gulmarg reads like the who-is-who of the local business community and none of the allottees/occupiers is a middle class businessman of the union territory

A cursory look at the beneficiaries of forest lands in Gulmarg



gives a clear idea as to why the influential people have pitched against the land Grants Rules 2022

For example, Hotel Mumtaz owned by Mushtaq Ahmad Ganie alias Mushtaq Chaya, is constructed on forest land allotted originally to one Bodh Raj Sahab, but is now occupied by Mushtaq Chaya. The area originally allotted was 4 kanals, while now 7 kanals and 18 marlas are under illegal possession of the hotelier. The Gulmarg Resort owned by Manzoor Ahmad Burza is spread over 4 kanals and 19 marlas while the original lessee, Bodh Raj Sahab was allotted 4 kanals who has since parted with the possession.

The Heaven Resort owned by another member of the Burza family, Mushtaq Ahmad Burza is spread over 5 kanals and 3 marlas while the original lease stood in the name of Bodh Raj Sahab who was allotted 4 kanals.

The Khyber Resort owned by Pinekel resorts Ltd belonging to Tramboo family is spread over

61 kanals while the original allotment of 51 kanals. 14 marlas was made to Amar Jeet Singh and Parab Jeet Singh who no longer figure anywhere now.

Hotel Nedous is spread over 103 kanals and 6 marlas while actually just 2 kanals and 13 marlas were allotted to Gulam Qadir alias Harry Nedou whose son, Omar Khalil is now the occupier. Hotel Highland Park is spread

over 68 kanals and 9 marlas while 67 kanals and 19 marlas were allotted to Sheikh Shamsuddin alias

'Transparent revenue gener-empowerment of the common man in J&K," the sources added.



Chinese build-up in Doklam up to 'Jampheri **Ridge' is threatening India's strategic 'Siliguri** Corridor' - the gateway to Northeastern States! This is of utmost concern for our National Security! @narendramodi ji, When will the nation have 'CHINA PE CHARCHA'? MALLIKARJUN KHARGE CONGRESS PRESIDENT

MATTER OF CONCERN

Several congested pockets in Kolkata are virtually sitting over mini-volcanoes as around 600 small factories and warehouses operate without requisite clearances from the West Bengal fire services department, as per a recent fire safety audit report



Rahul Gandhi is not only insulting the Indian Army but also damaging the country's image KIREN RIJIJU

Moral policing is on the rise in Mangalore city and its outskirts because Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai is encouraging such acts by right wing activists

SIDDARAMAIAH CONGRESS LEADER

No matter what kind of dirty politics Rahul Gandhi and his party may do, the entire country stands with its army under a strong leadership and is always proud of their bravery MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR HARYANA CM

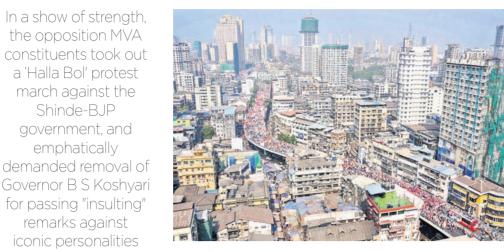
SHORT TAKES

3 fresh FIRs filed against Choksi

New Delhi: Three fresh FIRs have been filed by the CBI against absconding diamantaire Mehul Choksi on the basis of a complaint from the Punjab National Bank (PNB), bringing to light an additional loss of Rs 6,746 crore incurred by it and other banks of a consortium, officials said. Four years after Choksi's dramatic escape and the failure of the state-run PNB to detect the scam between 2010 and 2018, the bank submitted three complaints to the CBI on March 21, reporting the additional loss caused by the diamantaire and his firm Gitanjali Gems Limited, Nakshatra Brands Limited and Gili India Limited. The PNB and the other members of the consortium had extended credit facilities to these companies.

1 killed, 12 hurt in pizza outlet fire

Mumbai: One person was



Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) President Sharad Pawar said that the turnout should serve as a warning to the government that if they still don't heed the peoples' sentiments, then the people will teach them a lesson and overthrow them

in a democratic manner. Attacking Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Pawar said people like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, ouster of the state governor, here Mahatma Jyotirao and Savitri The procession, with estimates Phule, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, ranging between 2.5-3 lakh par-Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. ticipants, started from Byculla and Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil enjoy terminated after around 5 km near the highest honour and respect of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj the masses

Terminus, where it converted into In a scathing attack, Shiv Sena a public rally that was addressed (UBT) President and former Chief Minister Uddhay Thackeray said Amid tight police bandobast en that "this Governor is unacceptable" route, the processionists marched to the people for his slurs on idols of peacefully with their respective the state whom the masses revere. party or group flags, plus banners,

Targeting the ruling Bahasahebanchi Shiv Sena (BSS)-BJP, he said that all the groups, parties and people of the state who adore the icons have turned up for the 'halla-bol' processions barring the 'traitors' (referring to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his supporters).

Slamming the BSS-BJP regime Congress state President Nana Patole said that after the Shinde-Fadnavis took over the border issue has cropped up and villages are clamouring to merge with Karnataka

Taking on the Governor, Patole said that the scheme to insult the idols of Maharashtra started with Bhagat Singh Koshvari and later B.IP leaders continued the same work which is highly condemnable and people will not forgive them.

Nana Patole further said that the work of insulting the gods of Maharashtra started with Koshyari from Raj Bhavan and later BJP leaders continued the same work and don't deserve to remain in office.

Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar pointed out how ever since the Shinde-Fadnavis government took power, they have sowed treason and disunity in the state, but this mega-march has showed that when

ever there is a crisis, the entire population will arise to protect the dignity of the state.

He said that when a person errs, it's the culture of the state to apologise and forgive, but it is not happening with the current rulers, who have forgotten the laws and Constitutional niceties, and demanded the removal of Koshyari.

Ajit Pawar also took objections to allowing the payment of government staffers salaries through the Karnataka Bank when the neighbouring state is needling Maharashtra continuously.

Other prominent speakers included Leader of Opposition (Council) Ambadas Danve, Samaiwadi Party state President Abu Asim Azmi, Amita A. Chavan, NCP state President Jayant Patil, Supriya Sule, Balasaheb Thorat, Aditya Thackeray, Sanjay Raut, Vidya Chavan, Vinayak Raut, Chhagan Bhujbal, PWP President Javant Patil, Sunil Tatkare Chandrakant Khaire, Bhai Jagtap, Kapil Patil and others.

Among important leaders joining the march included the Thackerays, Arif Naseem Khan, ex-CM Prithviraj Chavan, Manikrao Thakre, Jitendra Awhad, Dilip Walse-Patil, Varsha Gaikwad, Aslam Shaikh, Raghunath Kuchik, Atul Londhe, Sambhaji Brigade and other Shiv Premi organisations, the Mumbai Dabbawalas, etc.

As the processions wended its way through the Muslim-dominated, some Muslim families showered flower petals on the marchers and thousands stood in verandahs. building terraces or rooftops and on the Sir JJ Flyover to view the multi-party marchers going briskly to their destination.

MVA, allies flex political muscles Rajnath lauds forces in Galwan, Tawang

The Indian and Chinese troops were engaged in a fresh clash in Yangtse area of Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang sector December 9, in first such major flare-up after the deadly hand-to-hand combat in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious

military conflict between the two sides in decades



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 17: Defence Minister Rainath Singh Saturday commended the Indian Army for showing unmatched bravery during the Galwan and Tawang incidents.

Addressing the 95th Annual Convention of Federation of Indian Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in New Delhi, Singh asserted that India has no intention to capture the land of other countries, but will always be ready if anyone tries to cast an evil eve. India aims to become a superpower which works for the welfare of the world, he said

He stated that India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is touching newer heights of success and has entered the category of 'fabulous five' from 'fragile five', coined by investment firm Morgan Stanley, in 2014. "India is now among the top five economies of the world. It took us 31 years from 1991 to become a three trillion USD economy, I am confident that the next three trillion dollars are going to be added in the next seven years," he said.

India has now become an agenda setter on the world stage due to the Prime Minister's credibility and decision making, he said, adding that India's G-20 presidency is proof of India's growing stature. The theme of G-20 is 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' through which an inclusive and decisive road map of development will be decided. Inspired by the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam and world welfare, our Prime Minister has decided to share India's resolve for economic and human development with countries that have not yet recovered from COVID-19." he said

Singh highlighted the procedural and structural reforms made by the Government which has prepared ground for a big leap towards a strong, prosperous & a self-reliant 'New India'. He made special mention of the creation of a digital financial infrastructure, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. Direct Benefit Transfer & Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, which have proved to be a boon for the people, especially the poor.

BORDER SECURITY

Amit Shah stresses on equal $\stackrel{\scriptstyle \leftarrow}{}$ responsibility of states with BSF



AGENCIES Mumbai, Dec 17: The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), likeminded parties and other organisations and groups took out a huge 'halla-bol' procession in south Mumbai to protest the repeated insults to icons and demanded the

Saturday.

by top leaders

leaders

posters, and placards condemning

the non-stop vilification of emi-

nent historical personalities by

the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

HDK's son Nikhil to

contest 2023 polls

from Ramanagara

Ramanagara (K'taka), Dec 17:

JD(S) leadership Saturday named

former Chief Minister H D

Kumaraswamy's son and party's

youth wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy as candidate from

its bastion of Ramanagara con-

stituency, for the 2023

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Assembly polls.

In a show of strength

the opposition MVA

a 'Halla Bol' protest

march against the

Shinde-BJP

government, and

emphatically

for passing "insulting"

remarks against

iconic personalities

were injured in a fire that erupted due to suspected short-circuit in the meterroom of a pizzeria here Saturday afternoon, the **BMC Disaster Control** authorities said. The fire, which emanated from Juno's Pizza outlet, quickly spread on the around floor of the eatery and the adjacent residential premises of Vishwas Building in Ghatkopar, an east Mumbai suburb, sparking huge panic At least 10 fire-tenders were rushed to the site which managed to douse the flames in a couple of hours.

Acid attack: Accused sent to judicial custody

New Delhi: A Delhi court Saturday sent three accused allegedly involved in an acid attack Wednesday on a 17year-old school girl to 14 days of judicial custody. The three individuals were presented in the court after their police custody ended Saturday. They were arrested on December 14 after the incident had taken place earlier in the day. They were presented before a Metropolitan Magistrate in Dwarka court, who had sent Sachin Arora, Harshit Aggarwal a.k.a. Honey and Virender Singh a.k.a. Sonu to two days' police remand.

Cop ends life

Nagpur: A police constable allegedly committed suicide in Nagpur in Maharashtra Saturday as he was apparently depressed due to the untimely death of his wife, an official said. Santosh Wankhede (44) of Beltarodi police station hanged himself in his house in Raghuji Nagar police quarters at 9:45am, he said.

rently represents Ramanagara segment as MLA.

Anitha Kumaraswamy, who is the wife of Kumaraswamy, cur-

The announcement makes JD(S) the first political party in the State to formally name a candidate for the polls, which is likely by April-May. Kumaraswamy, earlier in July, had said Nikhil would not be contesting the Assembly polls, noting that the 32-year-old actor-turned politician, who is the grandson of former prime minister H D Deve Gowda, would instead work for the party's victory in a number of other constituencies

At the regional party's 'Pancha Ratna Yatre' (Statewide tour) led by Kumaraswamy in Ramanagara. Anitha announced Nikhil as her successor in the constituency, and said she would give up her constituency for Nikhil.

"Nikhil will be contesting from Ramanagara. I trust the people of this constituency that they would extend their love and support to him," she said.

A woman with her pet during Pet festival at NSIC, Okhla in New Delhi

Six members of a family charred to death

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, Dec 17: Six members of a family were charred to death when their house in Telangana's Macherial district caught fire, police said Saturday. The tragedy occurred in

Venkatapur village of Mandamarri mandal past midnight.

The fire broke out in the house of Shivaiah when all the victims were asleep, the police said.Shivaiah (50), his wife Padma (45), Padma's nephew Mounika (23), her two daughters and another relative Shantaiah (52), an employee of Singareni Collieries, were burnt alive. On receiving of the information,

fire fighting personnel rushed to the scene and doused the fire.

PTI PHOTO

The house was completely gutted. Deputy Commissioner of Police Akhil Mahajan said that a short circuit is suspected to have resulted in the fire. He said the exact cause will be known after a thorough investigation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 17: Union Home Minister Amit Shah, at a meeting of the Eastern Zonal Council (EZC) on Saturday, indicated to chief ministers that the states too share responsibility along with the BSF for security in India's border areas, officials said

Illegal infiltration, trans-border smuggling and the vulnerable India-Bangladesh boundary were among subjects deliberated upon at the 25th EZC meeting, chaired by Shah, at the West Bengal secretariat near

here, a senior official said. Issues such as water-sharing among states were also discussed at the meeting, which was attended by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Baneriee, her Jharkhand counterpart Hemant Soren, Bihar deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav and Odisha minister Pradeep Amat, an official said. The role of the Border Security Force (BSF) was discussed, in light of the increase

in the operational area of the border force earlier this year. In response, according to sources, Shah is believed to have indicated that the state governments too have a role to play in border security. The BSF is not the only one responsible for stopping smuggling across the international border. The state governments also have the responsibility to prevent crime along the border. Under any circumstance, infiltration will have to be stopped, Shah is believed to have said at the meeting.

Shah instructed the BSF to be "flexible" and cooperate with the states, when the West Bengal chief minister complained that the security forces wanted excessive land for fencing and setting up sector offices along the boundaries of different states, the official said.

The meeting also discussed the resurgence of Maoist activities in Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.

After Punjab, it's now the turn of 'Udta Delhi'

Easily available at various hotspots, which include II clusters and parks, at prices ranging from Rs 100 to Rs 5,000, anyone can get ganja in the quantities that they require

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 17: Cannabis or ganja, 'babaji ki booti' or 'maal' (what peddlers call it) has spread its roots across the national capital, which is evident as it is being openly sold at some places across the city.

Easily available at various hotspots, which include JJ clusters and parks, at prices ranging from Rs 100 to Rs 5,000, anyone can get ganja in the quantities that they require. An IANS team visited several places across the city, in-

cluding JJ clusters and found that these drugs and illicit liquor are sold openly in these colonies without any fear of authorities.

Madan Giri, Subhash Nagar, RK Puram, INA, Khirki Extension, Malviya Nagar, Munirka and JJ clusters in Jahangirpuri, Dwarka, Uttam Nagar and Rohini are also the hotspots for drug peddlers and distributors

Most peddlers and distributors also operate in areas close to North Campus such as Majnu Ka Tila, Kashmere Gate, Indra Vikas opposite Nirankari colony and Shastri



Park. According to a senior police official, interrogation reports of the arrested men indicate that a majority of the drug users are school and college students, apart from

criminals, who are into smack and other cheap stuff.

"Most of the robbers and snatchers caught by Delhi Police are addicted to drugs and are youngsters.

Just to fulfil the need for drugs, these youngsters commit crimes. They stole items and sold them at throwaway rates to people," said the senior police official.

On December 5, Delhi Police said that they have arrested two drug peddlers and recovered over 100 kgs of cannabis from their possession. On interrogation of the accused, it was revealed that the said consignment was procured from Tripura, a North East state.

The accused used to procure consignment from Tripura at a cost of Rs 5,000-6,000 per kg and supplied it at a cost of Rs 10,000-12,000 per kg in Delhi and its peripherals," said the official.

On December 12, with the arrest of three people, the Delhi Police claimed to have busted an interstate drug syndicate involved in supplying narcotics contrabands in Delhi and its peripherals. A total of 22.400 kg of cannabis was recovered from them.

The accused were identified as Veer Singh, a resident of Bharatpur in Rajasthan; Rajendra and Rajkumar-both residents of Bhim Basti in South Delhi.

"Rajkumar after getting influenced by one of the drug peddlers active in South Delhi along with his brother-in-law of Veer did drug peddling from Orissa and Andhra Pradesh," said the official.

On September 8, the South Delhi Police arrested two drug peddlers and recovered 259.607 kg ganja from their possession.

The accused said that they were handed over ganja in-Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) to supply in the NCR.











international



Turkey is working toward becoming a global energy hub, which sets the benchmark price of natural gas RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN TURKEY PRESIDENT

THAILAND'S KING, QUEEN TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID

Thailand's king and queen have tested positive for Covid and so far have only mild symptoms, the royal palace said Saturday







HENRYK KOWALCZYK DEPUTY PM OF POLAND

Pakistan could reconsider its strategy for dealing with Afghanistan's Taliban rulers BILAWAL BHUTTO-ZARDARI

PAKISTAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Mexico's relations with Spain are stil on pause ANDRÉS MANUEL LÓPEZ MEXICO'S PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Woman dies

London: A woman injured in a crush outside a London concert venue has died, police said Saturday. London resident Rebecca Ikumelo, 33, was one of eight people hospitalised after being caught in mayhem outside the O2 Brixton Academy on Thursday night, where Nigerian singer Asake was due to perform. The Metropolitan Police force said she died on Saturday morning.

Plane missing

Hana: A medical transport plane with three crew members on board has gone missing on a flight between Maui and the Big Island, according to a statement from the company. "Global Medical Response can confirm that one of our Hawaii Life Flight emergency fixed wing airplanes based in Maui, went off radar while en route to pick up a patient in Waimea, Big Island," the company statement issued Friday said. The patient was not on the plane, which lost radar contact about 9:30 p.m. Thursday, it said.

Two killed, four iniured in Mali

NEW PROJECTIONS

China may see over 1mn Covid deaths

China lifted some of the world's toughest Covid restrictions in December after unprecedented public protests and is now experiencing a spike in infections

Other experts expect some 60% of China's population will eventually be infected, with a peak expected in January, hitting vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions, the hardest

throughout the pandemic, drew on provincial data and information from a recent Omicron outbreak in Hong Kong.

"China has since the original Wuhan outbreak barely reported any deaths. That is why we looked to Hong Kong to get an idea of the infection fatality rate," Murray said. For its forecasts, IHME also uses information on vaccination rates provided by the Chinese government as well as assumptions on how various provinces will re-

Other experts expect some 60% of China's population will eventually be infected, with a peak expected in January, hitting vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions, the hardest. Key concerns include China's large pool of susceptible individuals, the use of less effective vaccines and low vaccine coverage among those 80 and older, who are at great



Trees are covered in snow in front of The Elizabeth Tower, more commonly known as Big Ben, as cold weather continues, in London, Britain

SUSPENSIONS DRAW BACKLASH

Musk restores Twitter accounts of journalists

A Twitter poll that Musk conducted later also showed that a majority of the respondents wanted the accounts restored immediately

REUTERS

San Francisco, Dec 17: Elon Musk reinstated the Twitter accounts of several journalists that were suspended for a day over a controversy on publishing public data about the billionaire's plane.

The reinstatements came after the unprecedented suspensions evoked stinging criticism from government officials, advocacy groups and journalism organiza-



tions from several parts of the globe Friday, with some saying the microblogging platform was jeopardizing press freedom.

A Twitter poll that Musk conducted later also showed that a majority of the respondents wanted the accounts restored immediately. "The people have spoken. Accounts

who doxxed my location will have their suspension lifted now," Musk said in a tweet Saturday.

Twitter did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. A Reuters check showed the suspended accounts, which included journalists from the New York Times, CNN and the Washington Post, have been reinstated.

Officials from France, Germany, Britain and the European Union earlier condemned the suspensions. The episode, which one well known security researcher labeled the "Thursday Night Massacre", is being regarded by critics as fresh evidence of Musk, who considers himself a "free speech absolutist," eliminating speech and users he personally dislikes.

Varadkar returns as Ireland PM

REUTERS

Chicago. Dec 17: China's abrupt

lifting of stringent Covid-19 re-

strictions could result in an ex-

plosion of cases and over a mil-

lion deaths through 2023, according

to new projections from the US-

based Institute of Health Metrics

jections, cases in China would peak

around April 1, when deaths would

reach 322,000. About a third of

China's population will have been

infected by then, IHME Director

China's national health au-

thority has not reported any of-

ficial Covid deaths since the lift-

ing of COVID restrictions. The

last official deaths were reported

on December 3. Total pandemic

According to the group's pro-

and Evaluation (IHME).

Christopher Murray said



ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Dec 17: Leo Varadkar reecond term as Ireland's

RUSSIAN STRIKES CONTINUE Toddler's body recovered

ASSOCIATED PRESS

deaths stand at 5,235.

China lifted some of the world's

toughest COVID restrictions in

December after unprecedented

public protests and is now experi-

encing a spike in infections, with

fears COVID could sweep across its

1.4 billion population during next

month's Lunar New Year holiday.

stick to zero-COVID as long as they

did," Murray said Friday when the

IHME projections were released

online. China's zero-COVID policy

may have been effective at keeping

earlier variants of the virus at bay,

but the high transmissibility of

Omicron variants made it impos-

The independent modeling group

at the University of Washington in

Seattle, which has been relied on

by governments and companies

sible to sustain, he said.

"Nobody thought they would

Kyiv, Dec 17: Emergency crews pulled the body of a toddler from the rubble in a pre-dawn search for survivors on Saturday of a Russian missile strike that tore through an apartment building in the central Ukrainian city of Krvvvi Rih.

The missile was one of what Ukrainian authorities said were 16 that eluded air defences among the 76 missiles fired Friday in the latest Russian attack targeting Ukrainian energy infrastructure, part of Moscow's strategy to leave Ukrainian civilians and soldiers in the dark and cold this winter.



ported on Saturday that two-thirds of homes had been reconnected to electricity and all had regained access to water. The subway system also resumed service, after serving as a shelter the day before.

The head of Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv province Oleh Syniehuboy said Saturday that electricity had been restored to the entire region, including Kharkiv city, the country's second-largest

Malaysia landslide: Toll rises, 9 missing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Batang Kali (Malavsia), Dec 17: Rescuers Saturday found the bodies of a woman and two children, raising the death toll from a landslide on an unlicensed campground in Malaysia to 24 with nine others still missing.

Selangor state fire chief Norazam Khamis said the bodies of a mother and son were found buried under

a meter (3 feet) of mud and debris.

spond as infection rates increase.

est risk of severe disease.

United Nations: Two UN peacekeepers from Nigeria were killed and four others wounded in an attack Friday on a peace patrol in the town of Timbuktu in northern Mali. the United Nations said. The UN Security Council said a member of Mali's security forces was also killed in the attack. UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said one of the peacekeepers killed was a woman, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the Security Council strongly condemned the attack.

Quake jolts West Texas

Midland: One of the strongest earthquakes in Texas history struck Friday evening in a western region of the state that's home to oil and fracking activity. There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries. The U.S. Geological Survey said the temblor had a magnitude of 5.4 and struck at 5:35 p.M., local time. It was centered about 14 miles (22 kilometers) north-northwest of Midland, with a depth of about 5.6 miles (9 kilometers).

Virginia Governor bans TikTok

Richmond: Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin banned the use of several Chinese owned apps, including TikTok and WeChat, on state government devices and wireless networks on Friday, calling them a threat to national security. Youngkin's executive order covers apps developed by ByteDance and Tencent. Businesses that contract with Virginia must also prohibit their use on stateowned devices or IT infrastructure.

Prime Minister Saturday as part of a job-sharing deal made by the country's centrist coalition government.

Lawmakers voted to approve Varadkar's nomination to replace Micheal Martin during a special session of the Dail, the lower house of Ireland's parliament. His appointment was confirmed when he received the seal of office from President Michael D. Higgins, Ireland's head of state. Martin has served as Ireland's leader, or taoiseach, since an election in 2020 that produced a historic coalition agreement between his Fianna Fail party and Varadkar's Fine Gael. Forming a government along with the smaller Greens, the parties agreed Martin would hold the top job with Varadkar as his deputy for the

Gov. Valentvn Reznichenko of the Dnipropetrovsk region, where Kryvyi Rih is located, wrote on the Telegram social media app that "rescuers retrieved the body of a 1-1/2-year-old boy from under the rubble of a house destroyed by a Russian rocket."In all, four people were killed in the strike, and 13 injured - four of them children authorities said.

Reznichenko said the pounding from Russian forces continued overnight, damaging power lines first half of a five-year term, before and houses in the cities and towns of Nikopol, Marhanets and



he missile was one of what Ukrainian authorities said were 16 that eluded air defences among the 76 missiles fired Friday in the latest Russian attack targeting Ukrainian energy infrastructure

Chervonohryhorivka, which are across the Dnieper River from the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. By Saturday morning, Ukraine's military leadership said Russian forces had fired more than a score of other missiles since the barrage a day earlier.

It did not say how many of those might have been stopped by the air defences. Friday's onslaught, which pummelled many

parts of central, eastern and southern Ukraine, constituted one of the biggest assaults on the capital, Kyiv, since Russia began the war by attacking Ukraine on February 24.

air defences

yiv came under fire

from about 40 missiles

Friday, authorities said,

nearly all intercepted by

Kyiv came under fire from about 40 missiles Friday, authorities said, nearly all intercepted by air defences. Utility crews scrambled to patch up damaged power and water systems. Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko re-

metropolis.

The power had been knocked out on Friday in attacks involving 10 S-300 missiles

In Kryvyi Rih, 596 miners were stuck underground because of missile strikes, but all were eventually rescued, Mayor Oleksandr Vilkul said late on Friday. Installation of a protective dome has begun at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, an official from the Moscow-installed authorities of Ukraine's southeastern Zaporizhzhia province said on Saturday.

Vladimir Rogov said the dome would protect against fragments of shells and improvised explosive devices carried by drones. The Russian-held plant, Europe's biggest nuclear power station, has been repeatedly shelled.

The body of a little girl was discovered later. He said there was hope of finding survivors if they clung on to piles or branches or rocks with pockets of air but that chances were slim.

Authorities said 94 people were sleeping at the camp site on an organic farm early Friday when the dirt tumbled from a road about 30 meters (100 feet) above them and covered about 1 hectare (3 acres). Most were families enjoying a short vacation during the vearend school break

The 24 victims included seven children and 13 women. Authorities were still carrying out autopsies and waiting for next of kin to identify the victims. A mother and her tod dler daughter were found Friday hugging each other in a heart-rending scene, rescuers said. Seven people were hospitalized and dozens more, including three Singaporeans, were rescued unharmed.

Wearing helmets and carrying shovels and other equipment, rescuers worked in teams Saturday to comb through debris as deep as 8 meters (26 feet). Excavators were deployed to clear mud and fallen trees and rescue dogs were sent to sniff out possible signs of life and cadavers. Officials said an estimated 450,000 cubic meters (nearly 16 million cubic feet) of debris — enough to fill 180 Olympic-sized swimming pools — hit the campsite.

Norazam said rescuers were treading carefully as underground water streams may trigger further landslides. Authorities have said the landowners did not have a license to run a campground. Officials are unable to pinpoint the exact cause of the landslide, which came without warning, but believed it could be due to underground water movement while the yearend monsoon rains made the soil unstable.

Survivors recounting their ordeal told local media they heard a thunderous noise and felt theearth move before soil collapsed on their tents.

Why Japan is boosting its arms capability, budget

ASSOCIATED PRESS

the men switched posts.

Tokyo, Dec 17: Japan this week adopted a new national security strategy that includes determination to possess "counterstrike" capability to preempt enemy attacks and double it's spending to gain a more offensive footing and improve its resilience to protect itself from growing risks from China, North Korea and Russia.

The new strategy marks a historic change to Japan's exclusively self-defence policy since the end of World War II. Here is a look at Japan's new security and defence strategies and how they will change the country's defence posture. **COUNTERSTRIKE CAPABILITY**

The biggest change in the National Security Strategy is possession of "counterstrike capability" that Japan calls "indispensable." Japan aims to achieve capabilities"to disrupt and defeat invasions against its nation much earlier and at a further distance" within about 10



years. This puts an end to the 1956 government policy that shelved capability to strike enemy targets and only recognised the idea as a constitutional last-ditch defence. Japan says missile attacks against it have become "a palpable threat" and its current interceptor-reliant missile defence system is insufficient. **DOUBLING DEFENCE SPENDING** Japan aims to double its defence

spending to about 2 per cent of its GDP to a total of about 43 trillion yen (USD 320 billion) through 2027. The new spending target follows the NATO standard and will eventually push Japan's annual budget to about 10 trillion yen (USD 73 billion), the world's third biggest after the United States and China. Kishida said his government will need an extra 4 trillion yen (USD 30 billion) annually and proposed tax

increases to fund a quarter of it. LONG-RANGE MISSILES

Over the next five years, Japan will spend about 5 trillion yen (USD 37 billion) on long-range missiles, whose planned deployment begins in 2026. Japan will purchase US-made Tomahawks and Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles, while Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industry will improve and mass-produce a Type-12 surfaceto-ship guided missile.

CYBERSECURITY

Japan, lacking sufficient cyber security and intelligence capability, will have to heavily rely on the United States in those areas in launching long-range cruise missiles at intended targets, experts say.

Without cybersecurity, Self-Defense Force superiority or Japan-US interoperatibility is difficult to achieve," according to the fiveyear defence program also adopted Friday, acknowledging the need to ensure cybersecurity at the SDF and Japanese defence industry. This is a welcome development for the

United States as the Japanese government's weak cybersecurity has been "a critical impediment to deeper alliance cooperation and expanded information-sharing," according to Christopher Johnstone, senior advisor and Japan Chair at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies CHINA AS GREATEST STRATEGIC

CHALLENGE Fear of a regional security en-

vironment described as "the severest and most complicated" in the postwar era has been a driving force behind the revision to Japan's strategy. China, with its rapid arms buildup, increasingly assertive military activity and rivalry with the US, presents "an unprecedented and the greatest strategic challenge" to the peace and security of Japan and the international community, the strategy states. Russia's war on Ukraine sparked fears of a Taiwan emergency, accelerating the move to bolster Japan's deterrence within the next five years.







business

AGENCIES

at ₹1 crore for fake invoicing.



ABTH GST COUNCIL MEET No tax increase on any item

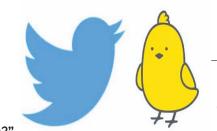
CENTRE AND STATES WOULD ATTEMPT TO WIDEN THE GST BASE AT EVERY LEVEL TO INCREASE THE

TAX MOP-UP WHICH IS AVERAGING ABOUT ₹1.4 LAKH CRORE EVERY MONTH. CURRENTLY, THERE

ARE 1.4 CRORE BUSINESSES REGISTERED UNDER GST, WHICH WAS LAUNCHED JULY 1, 2017

TWITTER HITS RIVAL KOO'S HANDLE

Elon Musk-owned Twitter has suspended the official user queries account of the homegrown microblogging platform Koo, @kooeminence. Reacting to the ban, the co-founder and CEO of Koo, Aprameya Radhakrishna, tweeted: "One of the Koo handles on Twitter just got banned. For what? Because we compete with Twitter? How is this free speech and what world are we living in?'



CCI raids steel

companies for

price collusion

Mumbai, Dec 17: India's antitrust

watchdog is raiding offices of small-

scale steel companies for alleged

REUTERS

uote

Infrastructure construction alone has the potential to contribute 25 per cent of incremental growth in non-farm jobs by 2030

NITIN GADKARI UNION ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAY MINISTER

I am confident that knitwear exports would achieve positive growth, following the growth recorded in Novembe

KM SUBRAMANIAN PRESIDENT, TEA

As India's leading almond hair oil brand with nearly 10% market share, it has always been our endeavor to position ourselves responsibly and with integrity and Kiara mirrors those aspirations like no other JAIDEEP NANDI MD. BCCI

Yes Bank transfers

New Delhi: Yes Bank has concluded assignment of the Rs 48,000-crore stressed asset loan portfolio of the bank to JC Flowers Asset Reconstruction company. The bank had earlier declared JC Flowers Asset **Reconstruction Private** Limited (JC Flowers ARC) as the winner of the Swiss Challenge process for sale of its identified portfolio of stressed assets. "The bank has now concluded assignment of identified stressed loan portfolio of the bank aggregating to up to Rs 48,000 crore as on March 31, 2022 under 15:85 structure, after adjusting recoveries between 1st April 2022 to 30th November 2022," Yes Bank said in a regulatory filing Saturday.

IDFC First Bank's lucrative offer

New Delhi: Private sector IDFC



The Council took a path breaking decision with regard to decriminalising three types of GST offences -- obstruction or preventing any officer in discharge of his duties; deliberate tampering of material evidence; and

information SANJAY MALHOTRA | REVENUE SECRETARY

failure to supply

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Chairman Vivek Johri said currently under the GST law offences exceeding ₹1 crore are considered for criminal prosecution. "What was proposed in Council and what came

- GST Council agreed to decriminalise certain offences and doubled the threshold for launching prosecution to ₹2 crore
- Issue of mechanism to curb tax evasion in pan masala and gutkha biz was exempted
- GST on husk of pulses was reduced to nil from 5%
- GST on biofuel down to 5% from 18%

Council clarifies SUVs for 22% cess

The GST Council also clarified on the definition of SUVs (sports utility vehicles) for the levy of 22 per cent compensation cess over the 28 per cent GST and decided to come out with parameters to define MUVs (multi utility vehicles). Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in case of SUVs, the clarification that has been given is that the higher rate of compensation cess of 22 per cent is applicable to a motor vehicle fulfilling all four conditions -- it is popularly known as SUV; has engine capacity exceeding 1,500cc; length exceeding 4,000 mm; has ground clearance of 170 mm and above. "So this clarification is not new tax, it's more to sav what defines that commodity which is under taxation as SUV." the minister said. She said the discussion on MUVs began when some states asked whether sedans should be included in the SUV category. The states also suggested bringing in a definition for MUVs.

out of the discussion was that the limit would be enhanced from ₹1 crore to ₹2 crore now. So cases involving tax amount of up to ₹2 crore will go out of the purview of criminal action, except cases of fake invoicing," Johri said.

He said the current threshold of ₹1 crore for launching criminal prosecution will continue in fake invoicing cases which continue despite many measures taken by the tax authorities

The Centre had in September

issued directions to Central GST officers to launch prosecution in offences exceeding ₹5 crore. That direction was given through a circular, but the GST law currently sets the limit at ₹1 crore.

in GST law to give effect to the Council's decision on decriminalisation of GST offences would be brought in the Finance Bill, 2023. After that, the state legislatures too would have to pass the amend-

ments and pave the way for making the changes effective. The GST Council also decided to lower tax rates on husk of pulses

to nil from 5 per cent. Tax on ethyl alcohol supplied to refineries for blending with motor spirit (petrol) was reduced to 5 per cent, from 18 per cent. These changes in GST rates were

aimed at "facilitation of trade and measures for streamlining compliances in GST", as per an official statement.

The Council also clarified that Rab (a type of jaggery) and fryums manufactured using the process of extrusion attract 18 per cent GST.

The GST council further clarified that incentives paid to banks by the Central government under the scheme for promotion of RuPay Debit Cards and low value BHIM-UPI transactions are in the nature of subsidy and thus not taxable.

price collusion of steel products used in construction, two sources with direct knowledge told Reuters. Among those raided were Rungta Steel and Shyam Steel, the sources said, as officials from the Malhotra said the amendments Competition Commission of India (CCI) conducted searches in states

of West Bengal, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Indian capital New Delhi Saturday.

The companies and the CCI did not immediately respond to Reuters'

requests for comment. In all around eight to nine offices of steel companies were searched, though names of other firms raided were not immediately clear. The CCI does not disclose any details publicly of its raid operations or cases related to alleged

> price collusion. The raids started Friday and were continuing Saturday, one of the sources said.

The CCI's raid operations typically see federal agents collecting documents and data for further investigation into antitrust cases.

According to their websites. Rungta has been operating since 1962 and currently has steel plants in states of Jharkhand and Odisha. Shvam Steel is a Rs 30 billion (\$362.73 million) group which manufactures several steel products.

\$448mn block on Xiaomi's deposits guashed **Edelweiss set to acquire** L&T Infra Development REUTERS

New Delhi, Dec 17: An Indian court has quashed the income tax department's block on China-based Xiaomi Corp's fixed deposits worth Rs 37 billion (\$447.65 million), two people familiar with court proceedings said Friday.

Indian tax officials froze the funds in February as part of an investi-



gation into alleged tax evasion.

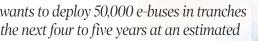
pany purchased smartphones from its contract manufacturers at in-

flated costs in India, allowing it to record a smaller profit by selling them to customers and evading corporate income taxes.

The fund freeze by income tax authorities was on top of another legal tussle Xiaomi faces where it has challenged a block on \$666 million of its funds by India's federal financial crime fighting agency for alleged illegal foreign remittances.

India's e-bus ambition hits speed bump Following this acquisition, the infrastructure platform will scale up to 26 assets with cumulative annual revenue of nearly Rs 2.700

> India wants to deploy 50,000 e-buses in tranches over the next four to five years at an estimated



ion (\$151.138), about five times hat of a diesel one

The investigation concerned allegations that the Chinese com-

Minister Conrad Sangma, on GST



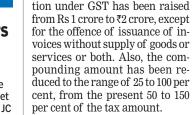
levy on online gaming, casinos and horse racing was also not part of the agenda for Saturday's meeting.

SHORT TAKES

NPAs of ₹48K-cr

Projects for ₹6K-crore the country with the launch of the \$230mn fund in 2010 and one of the largest alternative

First Bank has announced



The minimum threshold of tax

amount for launching prosecu-

Edelweiss Alternatives

pioneered private debt in

has since then grown to be

fund management platforms

with an asset under

management of \$5.5bn now

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

out of the 15 agenda items due to paucity of time, but added that no new taxes have been brought in. The agenda items which could not be considered included taxation for pan masala and gutkha firms and a report by a Group of Ministers (GoM) on setting up of appellate tribunals. The report of another GoM, chaired by Meghalaya Chief

waiver of charges on a number of customer-centric services such as cash deposits, withdrawals, demand drafts, IMPS and SMS alerts, among others ahead of its Foundation Day Sunday. On the occasion of its Foundation Day on 18th December, IDFC First Bank has announced 'Zero-fee banking' on savings accounts, the bank said in a release Saturday. The lender said it has waived fees on 25 commonly used banking services related to savings accounts such as cash deposit and withdrawal at branches. third party cash transactions. demand drafts, IMPS, NEFT, RTGS, cheque book. SMS alerts, interest certificates. insufficient balance for ATM transactions, international ATM usage and so on. Customers maintaining as low as Rs 10,000 average monthly balance and Rs 25,000 AMB in savings accounts will be offered these services free of cost.

Mumbai, Dec 17: Edelweiss Alternatives Saturday entered into an agreement with Larsen & Toubro and Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board to pick up their 100 per cent stakes in L&T Infrastructure Development Projects at an enterprise value of Rs 6.000 crore

Edelweiss Alternatives -- an alternative ivestment fund management platform -- in a statement said that the transaction is being executed by a fund managed by Edelweiss Alternatives and it also involves absorbing the operating team.

The portfolio of the target company comprises eight roads and one power transmission asset. spanning 4,900 lane kilometres and

Sreekumar Chatra, managing director of the infrastructure vield strategy fund, said these assets have a proven track record of operations, are geographically dispersed and have long residual life, which is "consistent with our investment strategy'

highway assets.

960 circuit kilometres, respectively.

crore. The platform will be a di-

verse mix of power transmission

and substations, renewables and

Subahoo Chordia, head of infra funds at Edelweiss Alternatives, said on completion of this acquisition, "there will be a high-quality diversified infrastructure portfolio of 26 assets across 13 states, making us a leading infrastructure investor in the country"

Edelweiss Alternatives' infra fund, which the company calls yield plus strategy, has Rs 9,500 crore of infrastructure assets under its domain.

cost of one trillion rupees. As of now, 6,740 e-buses have received the green light

REUTERS

New Delhi, Dec 17: Indian banks are reluctant to lend to electricbus makers for supply to ailing state transport operators over concerns on recovery of dues, hurting the country's goal of curbing vehicle emissions, said banking, industry and government sources.

The lack of funding is limiting the ability of e-bus makers to participate in federal government tenders to supply to states, the sources told Reuters, threatening to slow the electrification of major public transport now reliant on diesel. India wants to deploy 50,000 e-



buses in tranches over the next four to five years at an estimated cost of one trillion rupees (\$12 billion).

As of now, 6,740 e-buses have been approved by the federal government that provides incentives for related infrastructure, of which nearly a third have been deployed in states. A senior bank official said it

was risky to lend to manufacturers to build buses for the so-called state

transport undertakings (STUs), as many are in bad financial condition because they are often forced to keep fares low.

Mahesh Babu, CEO of e-bus maker Switch Mobility, said that "most of the contracts related to STUs are seen by banks as high risk" and called for payment security for bus makers

'There have been no instances

sset and easily redeploy it e-buses, however, need charging and other infrastructure that ma ot be available everywhere, said a

cause in the case of any

fault, banks can repossess th

of default in India though there are delays," said a STU official, but added that "a payment security mechanism may instill confidence among lenders"

The road transport sector accounts for 13% of carbon emissions in India. Buses are one of the most significant modes of public transport in India and STUs own and operate 150,000 buses that carry 70 million passengers daily

Musk looking for more investors

San Francisco: Elon Musk is aiming to get more investors for Twitter at the original \$54.20 per share price, at which he acquired the company for \$44 billion. According to news portal Semafor, Musk's money manager Jared Birchall has reached out to potential investors, "offering shares of Twitter at the same price, \$54.20, that Musk paid to take the company private in October". "Over recent weeks we've received numerous inbound requests to invest in Twitter," Birchall wrote to investors in an email seen by Semafor. "Accordingly, we are pleased to announce a followon equity offering for common shares at the original price and terms, targeting a yearend close," the email read.

REVENUES OF NEARLY RS 10,000 CRORE IN FY22 IS FACING ANOTHER LITMUS TEST IN 2023 AS THE EDTECH BUBBLE HAS FINALLY **BURST IN THE COUNTRY**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

\$1.2 billion loan.

New Delhi, Dec 17: As the year comes to a close, edtech platforms have hogged headlines for all the wrong reasons -- from leading layoffs in the Indian startup ecosystem to shuttering several verticals -- and top on the list is BYJU's, be it sacking employees, alleged harsh and "abusive" work culture and now a reportedly "working capital crisis" as lenders ask the edtech unicorn to repay part of a

THE EDTECH MAJOR WHICH CLOCKED GROSS

since March and there is trouble with their clearance. In the eight months to October 2022, cumulative dues to vendors have crossed ₹90 crore'

Some employees at the edtech major also reportedly complained about harsh work conditions and "mistreatment" by managers at the company, apart from several complaints from parents and customers making rounds on social media platforms and online consumer forums about being exploited and deceived by its sales teams.

Such complaints against BYJU's have been there in the past too, as India reopened amid 'hybrid normal' and schools and colleges return to normal earlier this year and edtech platforms see a significant dip in the demand for online learning.



Another worst year on cards for BYJU's as problems swell

The edtech unicorn reported a loss of Rs 4.588 crore for the fiscal year that ended

- The losses in the 2020-21 fiscal widened from Rs 231.69 crore in 2019-20 while revenue during FY21 dropped to Rs 2,428 crore from Rs 2,511 crore in FY20
- According to the company, the losses widened in FY21 mainly on account of deferment of some revenue and losses incurred from WhiteHat Jr

in any term loan issue.

"Moreover the originally agreed loan repayment terms will be met, according to a person close to the edtech major.

Last month, global investment group Prosus put the fair value of its 9.67 per cent stake in BYJU'S at \$578 million, which technically puts the current valuation of the edtech major at nearly \$6 billion -

- last valued at \$22 billion. In its September quarter results,

Prosus classified BYJU's as a noncontrolling financial investment rather than an associate, as its shareholding dropped below 10 per cent.

After six "stressful and tough learning months" as it delayed the audited FY21 financial reports for nearly 18 months, inviting government scrutiny and serious questions from the public, Byju Raveendran finally told IANS in September that "the worst is finally over" and there is only "growth ahead" as seen in the company's FY22 financial results.

Last year, he went on an acquisition spree. The edtech unicorn made at least 10 acquisitions for a cumulative transaction value of about \$2.5 billion -- including Delhi-based offline test preparatory services provider Aakash for over \$950 million.

Raveendran said that loss-making acquisitions like WhiteHat Jr, the beleaguered coding platform -BYJU's acquired for \$300 million, are now being consolidated.

7,000 layoffs across companies including BYJU's, Unacademy, Vedantu, Lido Learning, FrontRow, Brainly and more. In seemingly fresh trouble for

BYJU's, some lenders have now asked the edtech unicorn to repay part of a \$1.2 billion loan they recently bought into as they renegotiate terms of the debt.

BYJU's decided to lay off as

many as 2,500 employees or 5 per

cent of its workforce in order to

achieve profitability by March 2023.

Estimates suggest that the

edtech sector has seen more than

Renegotiating the terms of the

debt, including faster repayment are unlikely to be accepted since these lenders make up a minority and can't sway the previously agreed terms, sources told IANS.

The demand from creditors comes at a time when BYJU's is in the process to restructure the loan, amid mounting losses

repayment.

a large loan issue cannot be rewritten and this is the standard clause

March 31, 2021

New reports have emerged that

BYJU's, which may have seen a

definite erosion in its last market

value at \$22 billion, hasn't paid sev-

According to Morning Context,

"some of the payments are due

eral of its vendors for months.





Sources told IANS that at least

51 per cent of the lenders have to agree with the new terms and conditions of the loan, including

If this condition is not met, such



'DREAM GLORY' ON THE LINE

MBAPPE, FRANCE STAND IN WAY OF MESSI'S DREAM OF WINNING THE WORLD CUP AS THE DEFENDING **CHAMPIONS FACE ARGENTINA IN THE FINAL TODAY**

for 3rd-position finish

Croatia beat Morocco

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Al Rayyan, Dec 17: Luka Modric led Croatia to third place in what was likely the midfield great's last appearance at the World Cup. The runners-up from four years ago secured another medal by beating Morocco 2-1 in the thirdplace match Saturday.

Mislav Orsic scored the decisive goal shortly before halftime at Khalifa International Stadium to ensure Modric finished on a winning note, if this does turn out to be his last World Cup match.

At the age of 37, that seems likely, even if there are hopes he will lead his country at the 2024 European Championship. Josko Gvardiol put Croatia ahead in the seventh minute, but Achraf Dari evened the score in the ninth.

It is the second time Croatia have taken third place. The team also achieved that feat in their first World Cup as an independent nation 1998.

After becoming the first African team to reach the World Cup semifinals, Morocco's tournament ended in two losses. But the team's achievements in Qatar will be remembered for the outpouring of pride among Arab nations.

The third-place match is considered by some to be a meaningless exhibition. Even Morocco coach Walid Regragui described it as a "booby prize' in the buildup. But neither team

contested game between two nations that few expected to go so far

That was underlined by a host of players needing to be substituted because of injury in the second half as Morocco pushed for an equaliser.

The teams had already played out 0.0 draw in the group stage and had made to the semifinals on the back of tough defenses, with a combined six shutouts. Goals weren't a problem this time.

Perhaps that was because of the relative freedom of playing in a game with supposedly little at stake. Another factor for Morocco, at least, was the absence of three key defenders, Romain Saiss, Nayef Aguerd and Noussair Mazraoui.

The impact of those absences was felt when Croatia took the lead off Gvardiol's diving header. In a slick move, Ivan Perisic flicked a free kick into the middle of the penalty box and the center back did the rest.

Morocco responded two minutes later when Lovro Majer inadvertently helped on Hakim Ziyech's free-kick and Dari headed in to even the score. Croatia, however, was back in front three minutes before halftime.

Orsic picked up the ball on the left of the box and curled a shot toward the top corner. Morocco goalkeeper Yassine Bounou got a touch on the ball, but could only push it onto the post on its



Croatia players and coach celebrate on the podium after winning bronze medal at FIFA World Cup. Saturday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Doha, Dec 17: It is now or never for Lionel Messi. The Argentina superstar's once-in-a-generation career will be defined — for many by whether he leads his country to the World Cup title Sunday.

Can he finally, at the age of 35, win football's biggest prize to secure his place alongside Pelé and Diego Maradona in the pantheon of the game's greatest ever players?

Standing in his way is France, the defending champion, and Kylian Mbappe, the player best positioned to take over from Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo as football's marquee name. That's if he hasn't already.

Mbappe also is standing on the cusp of history heading into the match at the 80,000-seat Lusail Stadium, a title decider that is filled with storylines.

The 23-year-old France forward s looking to emulate Pelé by being

Cups and set up the prospect of a third title, a feat only ever achieved by the Brazil great who has been hospitalized during this year's tournament because of a respiratory infection.

Mbappe was 19 when he led France to their second World Cup title in 2018, becoming the youngest scorer in a final since a 17-yearold Pelé did so in 1958. While Pelé ended up being a peripheral figure in Brazil's 1962 triumph — he didn't play in the knockout stage because of injury — Mbappe has been France's go-to player in the team's bid to repeat.

Indeed, Mbappe enters the final tied as the tournament's leading scorer with five goals. The player alongside him? Messi, of course. Who wins the Golden Boot — the award for the top scorer — is just one of the many other narratives around the final.

There's France, the dominant national team of this generation.

back-to-back World Cups since Brazil in 1962. The country that produced Michel Platini, Zinedine Zidane, Thierry Henry and now Mbappe will be playing in the final for the fourth time in the last seven World Cups, more than anyone else.

Then there's Didier Deschamps, a World Cup winner as a player in 1998 and now bidding to win it two times as a coach. Vittorio Pozzo was the only other man to coach two World Champion teams, with Italy in 1934 and 1938. Like France, Argentina is seek-

ing a third World Cup title — after 1978 and 1986 — to move into outright fourth place in the all-time list. It would end a 36-year wait for football's biggest prize, since Maradona's string of virtuoso performances in Mexico in 1986.

That made Maradona forever a hero in Argentina, and an icon around the football world. Messi now appears to be at that level looking to become the first to win win or lose Sunday when he'll play in a record 26th World Cup match. Messi has evoked comparisons with Maradona in the way he has

pushed Argentina to the final, scoring five goals, setting up three more and thrilling his team's legion of fans, who have poured into Qatar throughout the World Cup in numbers only really matched by those from Morocco.

In that sense, it will seem like a home game for Argentina, with France's supporters sure to be heavily outnumbered amid a sea of blue-and-white jerseys — many of which will have "MESSI 10" written on them. It is hard to pick a winner.

France are a hardened tournament team with plenty of experience and the quality to eke out wins when not playing at their best. The French are the masters of being pragmatic, defending compactly and breaking at pace, typically through Mbappe down the left and through Antoine

past month as a midfield playmaker.

Indeed, expect to see Mbappe and Messi walking around a lot during the game, not bothering to defend or press. That is in the script, rather than them being lazy.

As for Argentina, the team is largely set up simply to get the best out of Messi, with Lionel Scaloni likely to select a quartet of central midfielders like in the 3-0 win over Croatia in the semifinals.

Similarly, the tens of thousands of spectators inside the stadiums in Qatar, and the millions watching on television around the world. have continued to be amazed at the magic Messi keeps on deliver-

Eight years ago, Messi walked away from the 0-1 loss to Germany in the 2014 final with the Golden Ball award for the tournament's best player. This time, he'll want instead to be lifting another trophy, made of 18-carat solid gold, to cap a career like no other.

a champion at his first two World

Griezmann, reinvented over the

India claim 3rd consecutive World T20 title



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Dec 17: Riding on brilliant centuries from captain Ajay Kumar Reddy and Sunil

Ramesh, India thrashed Bangladesh by 120 runs in the final to win their third consecutive title in the T20 World Cup for the Blind here Saturday.

Ramesh smashed 136 off 63 balls with the help of 24 boundaries and one six, while Reddy struck 100 off 50 balls (18x4). The duo put on a 248-run unbeaten partnership

for the third wicket to take them to a mammoth 277/2 in 20 overs after opting to bat.

Chasing the huge target, Bangladesh could only score 157/3 in 20 overs. Salman top-scored for Bangladesh with an unbeaten 77. Champions India, who remained unbeaten in the tournament, got Rs 3 lakh for the title, while Bangladesh received Rs 1.5 lakh.

Bangladesh rocked India top order with Salman giving a double blow in the fourth over. He removed Venkareswara with the score reading just 28. India suffered another blow in the same over as Salman castled Lalit Meena's to reduce India to 29/2. Thereafter it was all about Ramesh and Reddy's show as they took on the Bangladesh bowling attack.

Reddy got a reprieve while batting at 40 when he was dropped in the deep. Ramesh got to his hundred, his third of the tournament, with a boundary while Reddy reached his milestone in the final over of the innings

Axar puts India in control in first Test



Indian players congratulate Axar Patel after falling of a wicket, Saturday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chattogram, Dec 17: Seasoned Axar Patel (3/50) upped the ante with a triple strike just when it mattered as Indian bowlers compensated for an insipid first session by reducing Bangladesh to 272/6, closing in on a big victory, on the fourth day of the opening Test here Saturday. Debutant Zakir Hasan (100, 224b,

13x4, 1x6) showed a lot of character, scoring a patient hundred but saving the Test match by batting out for nearly 180 overs in two days was always going to be an uphill task, as also chasing a target of 513. Bangladesh need another 241 runs on the final day Sunday but skipper Shakib Al Hasan (40 batting) could be more keen on delaying the inevitable.

While Zakir and his young opening partner Najmul Hossain Shanto (67, 156b, 7x4) frustrated the Indian bowers for an entire session and added a record 124 for the first wicket, the visitors pulled back things in the second session to regain control of the proceedings. Axar perhaps had his best performance in a short career in the longest format, considering that the fourth day wicket didn't have a lot of help for spinners.

The track didn't show considerable wear and tear and surviving wasn't difficult with only a few deliveries turning appreciably. Three batters - Yasir Ali (5), Mushfiqur Rahim (23) and Nurul Hasan (3) actually preempted Axar's deliveries and made a fatal mistake.

R Ashwin (1/76) wasn't at his best in this game but he would certainly feel happy to see the back of Zakir, caught by a diving Virat Kohli at first slip. Kuldeep Yadav (1/69) also did his bit by prodding a fidgety Litton Das to try and loft him over mid-on but the batter couldn't check his half-scoop and half-drive, offering an easy catch to Umesh Yaday. In fact, Umesh also had a hand in drawing the first blood ending Shanto's resilience. BRIEF SCORES: India 404 & 258/2d; Bangladesh 150 & 272/6 (Zakir Hasan 100, Najmul Hossain Shanto 67, Shakib Al Hasan 40 batting; Axar Patel 3/50). Match to continue.

India women lose 3rd T20I, concede series to Australia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 17: Harmanpreet Kaur (46, 30b, 6x4, 1x6) and Richa Ghosh's (40 n o, 19b, 4x4, 2x6) late power hitting proved not enough as Australia rode on Ellyse Perry's masterclass half century (72 n o, 42b, 7x4, 4x6) to secure a series-clinching seven-run win in the fourth women's T20I here Saturday.

Continuing her dream comeback, Perry powered Australia to 188/3 after being invited to bat. The visiting side's captain Alyssa Healy retired hurt after scoring 30 due to a calf injury. In reply, India managed 181/5 in their 20 overs.

Australia thus clinched the fivematch series as they have taken an unassailable 3-1 lead going into the final T20I here Tuesday.

India were down 49/3 inside seven overs and they needed 105 from 54 balls when Harmanpreet stepped it up against Megan Schutt. But Harmanpreet fell four runs shy of her half century as India still needed 68 runs from 34 deliveries when Richa took over.

Needing 38 runs from the last two overs, Richa smashed Heather Graham for two successive sixes and followed it up with a boundary. Defending 20 runs from the last over, the experience of Schutt came handy as she conceded just 12 runs.

Australia suffered a big blow when their skipper Healy strained her calf muscle while batting. She limped off the field after the powerplay and did not return to bat. In Healy's absence, Tahlia McGrath led the side, while Beth Mooney donned the wicket-keeping gloves.

Healy's absence was hardly felt as Perry continued her dream run with a second successive half century.

EVES WIN NATIONS CUP, SEAL PRO LEAGUE BERTH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Valencia, Dec 17: India clinched the inaugural FIH Women's Nation's Cup title with a 1-0 win over Spain in the summit clash here Saturday. The win confirmed India's berth in the 2023-24 Pro League.

Gurjit Kaur scored the all-important goal in the sixth minute from the penalty corner as the Commonwealth Games bronze medalists ended the eight-nation tournament with five wins on the

The Janneke Schopman-coached side had beaten Ireland 2-1 via shootout in the semifinals here Friday. India were ranked a spot

below Spain (seventh) in the FIH chart.

By virtue of winning the Nations Cup, the Indian team has been promoted to the 2023-24 FIH Hockey Women's Pro League, a key event ahead of next year's Asian Games and 2024 Paris Olympics.

India and Spain had played in the FIH women's Hockey Pro League 2021-22 season as replacement teams after pull-outs by Australia and New Zealand sue to COVID-19 related issues.

India had finished a creditable third in the 2021-22 FIH Pro League. The country has not qualified for the ongoing 2022-23 Pro League season



Printed and published by Tathagata Satpathy on behalf of Navajat Printers and Media Pvt. Ltd. and printed at Navajat Printers, B-15 Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar -751010, Odisha; Phone: 7894447142 (Marketing). Editor: Tathagata Satpathy, RNI No. ORIENG/2011/37159





