



## CHITRANGDA'S FRESH START

Post pandemic, actress Chitrangda Singh is playing the lead role in Goutam Ghose's next Indo-Italian film

LEISURE P2



## TWITTER ACCOUNTS RESTORED

Elon Musk reinstates the Twitter accounts of several journalists that were suspended for a day

INTERNATIONAL P10



## INDIA REIGN SUPREME

India win their third consecutive title in the T20 World Cup for the Blind thrashing Bangladesh by 120 runs in the final

SPORTS P12

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## GANGRAPE CASE

### SC trashes Bilkis Bano's plea for reviewing order

Bano had sought a review of the SC's May 13 order asking the Gujarat govt to consider premature release of a convict

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 17: The Supreme Court has dismissed a plea filed by Bilkis Bano seeking a review of its May 13 verdict by which it had said the state of Gujarat was the "appropriate government" competent to examine the application for the pre-mature release filed by a convict in the gangrape and murder case.

Bano's separate petition challenging the remission of the sentences of the 11 convicts by the state government is pending before the Supreme Court. She was gangraped and seven members of her family were killed during the 2002 Gujarat riots.

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 in-chamber 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.



A SIGHT TO BEHOLD: Tourists enjoy rafting at Manali, a high-altitude Himalayan resort town in Himachal Pradesh, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

### BJP's push for UCC ahead of elections

PNN/AGENCIES

New Delhi/Bangalore, Dec 17: The discussion on the Private Member's Bill on Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Parliament has brought the issue to the centre stage once again with several BJP-ruled states taking baby steps in this direction ahead of the next general elections.

Under fire over corruption issues and floundering civic infrastructure in Bangalore, the Bommai dispensation in Karnataka has been wielding the Hindutva card to fight off a determined Congress party. As part of its aggressive Hindutva stance, the BJP government in Karnataka has already introduced laws prohibiting cow slaughter, and conversion. The UCC appears to be the next arrow in the BJP's quiver.

The saffron party is pursuing this agenda as Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and J&K would go to polls in 2023. 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.

## 'Babus shielding poachers'

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

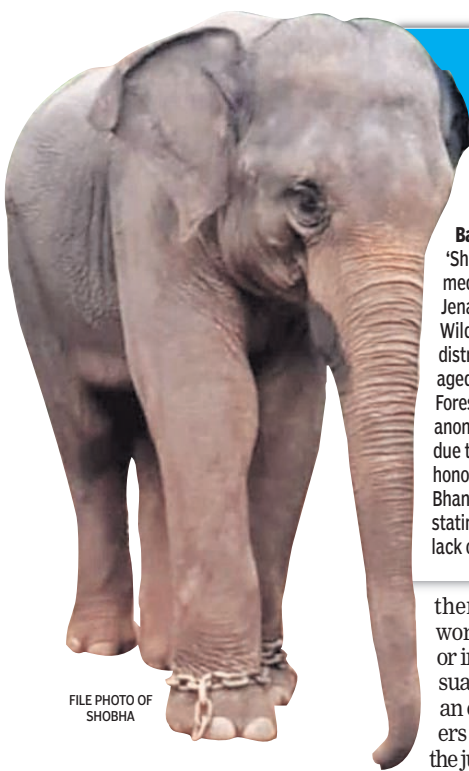
POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Dec 17: Days after a forest official died by suicide when 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 revelations 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 forest 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 Nayyar who was there for investigation.

Mahali also narrated the incident in details before Nayyar. However, fearing media glare, he was again detained under close watch of other



FILE PHOTO OF SHOBHA

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

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

### 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 ivory 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**

### Javelin pierces boy's 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

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 immediate 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.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



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

| WEATHER  |                  |
|----------|------------------|
|          | BHUB CTK         |
| MAX      | 28.8°C 28.2°C    |
| MIN      | 15.2°C 14.5°C    |
| Humidity | 66% 76%          |
| Rainfall | Nil Nil          |
| Forecast | Mainly clear sky |

### Man throws son off first floor after spat with wife

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, police officials said.

She said her husband arrived at her residence around 7pm in an inebriated state and picked a fight with her, they added.

Following the fight, the man took the child to the first-floor terrace and flung him to the ground from a height of around 21 ft. He himself jumped off the terrace after that, a senior police officer said.

A case under Section 307 (attempt to murder) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered and a probe launched, the police said.

## NASA reveals stunning image of lava on Jupiter's moon

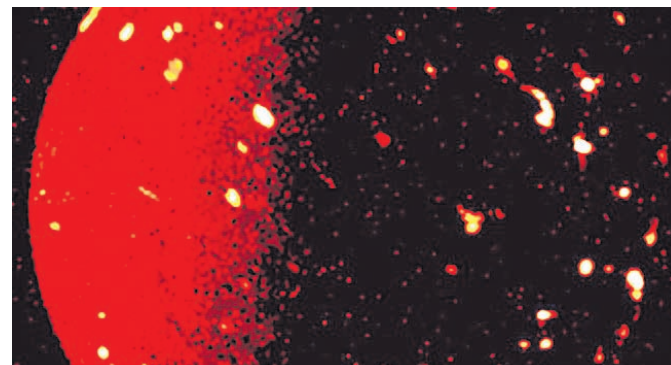
SCIENTISTS OF NASA'S JUNO MISSION ARE THRILLED TO SEE HOW WELL THE SENSORS HAVE PERFORMED IN OBSERVING JUPITER'S MOONS

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 17: NASA's Juno spacecraft has captured the spectacular image of red-hot lava erupting in Jupiter's moon 'Io'. The picture was taken from a distance of 80,000 km.

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.

NASA had announced that its Juno mission is scheduled to obtain images of the Jovian moon Io December 15 as part of its continuing exploration of Jupiter's inner



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

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 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, Scott 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**

# leisure



## 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

GaneshSpeaks.com  
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#### ARIES

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

#### TAURUS

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

#### GEMINI

It is better for you to swim with the current in all of today's dealings, suggests Ganesh. This will help you effortlessly deal with even the most morbid state of affairs. No need to be a hero, today. Pleasure is the key word for you. Your performance will be satisfying at work, and more than satisfying back home.

#### CANCER

You have always been quite prudent when it comes to spending your hard-earned moolah, yet today you may feel stingier. And, you will rightly be so, for there may be unnecessary burdens and demands made on you by your near and dear ones. Although you will be aware of this, you will still be able to keep them happy, affirms Ganesh.

#### LEO

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

#### VIRGO

The time today is ripe to venture into a new business. Projects that have been put-off will finally be completed. Looking into the week ahead, you are most likely to give yourself an energy zap. Parties will be all fun and entertainment. Your kids will bring home joy and pride and this will brighten the mood even more, says Ganesh.

#### LIBRA

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

#### SCORPIO

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

#### SAGITTARIUS

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

#### CAPRICORN

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

#### AQUARIUS

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

#### PISCES

You will find favourable conditions at work as you 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 Ganesh.

## Taapsee slams paparazzi

**Mumbai:** Taapsee Pannu says she does not like to sugar-coat things or act like a 'good girl' in front of the paparazzi's cameras. Talking about paparazzi following her, Taapsee said, "It does bother me because, after a point, I realised that they are doing it knowing they are going to irk me. Why will you hold my car's door when I have gotten in? This is intruding my private space. She added, "I walk without bodyguards. Just because of that, you have the liberty to shove your cameras and mike into me, physically, and not give me a regular human being's breathing space just because I'm a public figure. It gives you the liberty to violate my personal space. And then, obviously, the icing on the cake becomes when the media make headlines that I'm arrogant. If I'm arrogant to ask for basic human respect of space, then please call me arrogant, but I will not just try to sugar-coat and be this good girl because I'm in front of this camera. I am not that person. You get what you see." Agencies



## 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. I 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

## 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 to 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 Majnu* 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 MAJNU* Only on Netflix, 20th Jan, 2023." To this, Kiara Advani wrote, "Salute" with a red heart emoji. 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 heart emoji) thanks Ki". Agencies



## Chitrangda resumes shoot for Indo-Italian

**Mumbai:** Actress Chitrangda Singh, who is known for films like *Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi*, *Yeh Saali Zindagi*, *Bazaar* 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. IANS

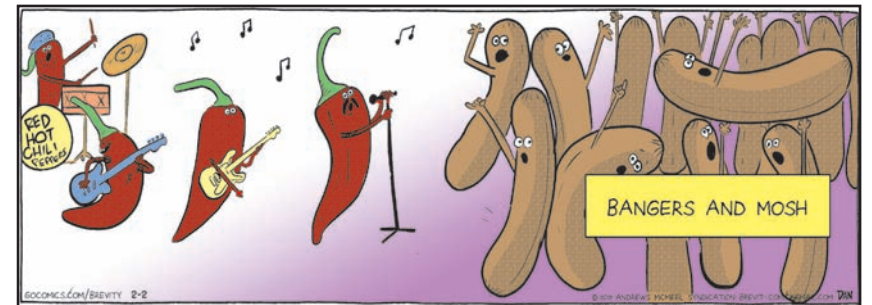
### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

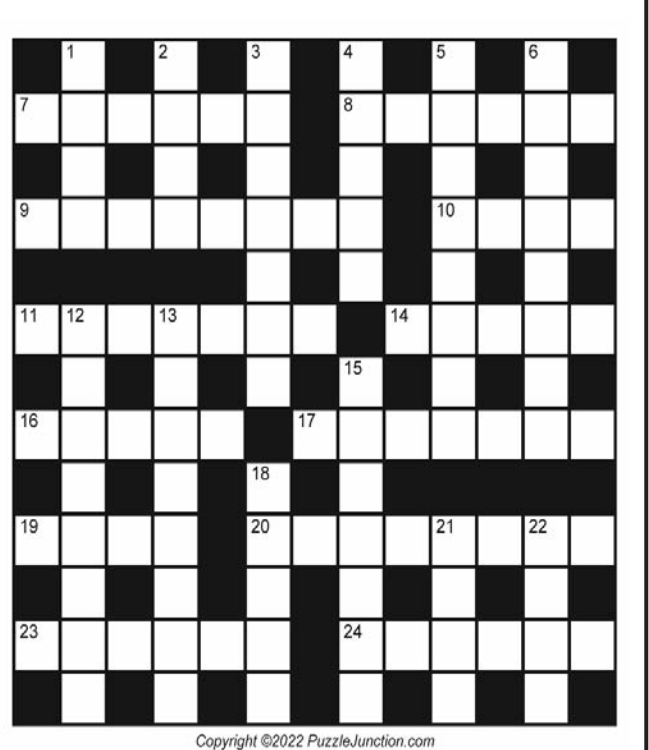


### BREVITY



### FUN post

### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 7 Abatement
  - 8 Root vegetable
  - 9 French endive
  - 10 Exigency
  - 11 Sweet liqueur (4,3)
  - 14 Tunic
  - 16 Hard wood
  - 17 Shellfish
  - 19 Family member
  - 20 Salad ingredient (5,3)
  - 23 Italian port
  - 24 Promised land
- Down
- 4 Precipitous
  - 5 Skin problems
  - 6 Terrier type
  - 12 Construction worker, e.g.
  - 13 Brainiac
  - 15 Toxic
  - 18 Muffin topper, at times
  - 21 Cupid's counterpart
  - 22 Nile wader

### 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.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 |   | 3 |   |   |   | 8 | 2 |
|   |   |   |   |   |   | 7 | 9 |
|   |   |   | 2 | 6 |   |   |   |
| 3 |   |   |   | 5 | 8 |   |   |
|   | 1 | 4 |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 2 |   | 6 |   | 7 |   |   |
|   | 5 |   |   | 4 |   |   |   |
|   | 9 | 2 |   | 3 |   |   | 4 |
| 8 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

### SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | I | S | O | M | A | R | A | T | H | O | N |
| A | A | N | S | L | A | R | E |   |   |   |   |
| R | A | L | E | I | G | H | A | R | R | O | W |
| K | S | C | S | V | S |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| S | W | A | S | H | B | U | C | K | L | E | R |
| M | E | N | A | S | S |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| A | W | L | P | I | E | T | O | P |   |   |   |
| N | A | A | O | S | A |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| W | R | I | T | I | N | G | P | A | P | E | R |
| S | C | H | A | R | O | K |   |   |   |   |   |
| T | H | E | M | E | S | U | R | R | E | A | L |
| E | N | F | U | E | T | E |   |   |   |   |   |
| W | A | Y | F | A | R | E | R |   |   |   |   |

SUDOKU

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 4 |
| 2 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 7 |
| 4 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 8 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| 8 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| 5 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| 6 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 1 |

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

















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'?

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



of the day quote

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



KIREN RIJU | LAW MINISTER

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

MVA, allies flex political muscles

In a show of strength, the opposition MVA constituents took out a 'Halla Bol' protest march against the Shinde-BJP government, and emphatically demanded removal of Governor B S Koshiyari for passing "insulting" remarks against iconic personalities



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.

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 Koshiyari from Raj Bhavan and later BJP 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 Koshiyari 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-

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Dec 17: The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), like-minded 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 ouster of the state governor, here Saturday.

The procession, with estimates ranging between 2.5-3 lakh participants, started from Byculla and terminated after around 5 km near Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, where it converted into a public rally that was addressed by top leaders.

Amid tight police bandobast en route, the processionists marched peacefully with their respective party or group flags, plus banners, posters, and placards condemning the non-stop vilification of eminent historical personalities by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders.

HDK's son Nikhil to contest 2023 polls from Ramanagara

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 constituency, for the 2023 Assembly polls.

Anitha Kumaraswamy, who is the wife of Kumaraswamy, currently represents Ramanagara segment as MLA. 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.

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 killed and at least 12 others were injured in a fire that erupted due to suspected short-circuit in the meter-room 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 ground 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 17-year-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 Raghujai Nagar police quarters at 9:45am, he said.

In a scathing attack, Shiv Sena (UBT) President and former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that "this Governor is unacceptable" to the people for his slurs on idols of the state whom the masses revere.

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



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

PTI PHOTO

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 Macherai 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 Shantiah (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.

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.

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 Rajnath 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 eye. 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 responsibility of states with BSF

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 Banerjee, 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 JJ 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, Mumirka 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 sup-

plying 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

## of the day quote

Food prices in Poland will not fall next year, the goal of the government is not to let them increase too quickly

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 still 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 injured in Mali

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 state-owned devices or IT infrastructure.

## NEW PROJECTIONS

# China may see over 1mn Covid deaths



REUTERS

Chicago, Dec 17: China's abrupt lifting of stringent Covid-19 restrictions could result in an explosion of cases and over a million deaths through 2023, according to new projections from the US-based Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). According to the group's projections, 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 Christopher Murray said. China's national health authority has not reported any official Covid deaths since the lifting of COVID restrictions. The last official deaths were reported on December 3. Total pandemic

deaths stand at 5,235. 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 respond as infection rates increase. 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 greatest risk of severe disease.

## Varadkar returns as Ireland PM



ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Dec 17: Leo Varadkar returned for a second term as Ireland's 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 first half of a five-year term, before the men switched posts.

## RUSSIAN STRIKES CONTINUE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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 Kryvyi 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. Gov. Valentyn 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 and houses in the cities and towns of Nikopol, Marhanets and



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



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

## 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.

# Toddler's body recovered



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv came under fire from about 40 missiles Friday, authorities said, nearly all intercepted by air defences. 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 pummeled many

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 Syniehubov said Saturday that electricity had been restored to the entire region, including Kharkiv city, the country's second-largest 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.

## Malaysia landslide: Toll rises, 9 missing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Batang Kali (Malaysia), 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. The body of a little girl was discovered later. He said there was hope of finding survivors if they clung on to poles 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 year-end 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 toddler 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 treating 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 year-end monsoon rains made the soil unstable. Survivors recounting their ordeal told local media they heard a thunderous noise and felt the earth move before soil collapsed on their tents.

# Why Japan is boosting its arms capability, budget

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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 its 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 surface-to-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 interoperability is difficult to achieve," according to the five-year 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 environment 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.

of the day quote

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 November

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, BCCL

SHORT TAKES

Yes Bank transfers NPAs of ₹48K-cr

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...

IDFC First Bank's lucrative offer

New Delhi: Private sector IDFC First Bank has announced waiver of charges on a number of customer-centric services such as cash deposits, withdrawals, demand drafts, IMPS and SMS alerts...

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...

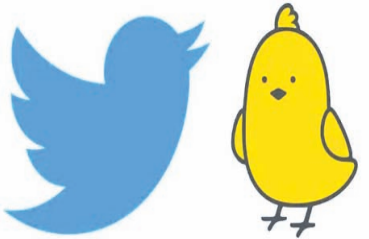


Tesla is executing better than ever. We don't control the Federal Reserve. That is the real problem here

ELON MUSK | TESLA BOSS

TWITTER HITS RIVAL KOO'S HANDLE

Elon Musk-owned Twitter has suspended the official user queries account of the homegrown microblogging platform Koo, @kooeminence.



48TH 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.

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 17: The GST Council Saturday agreed to decriminalise certain offences and doubled the threshold for launching prosecution under the tax law to ₹2 crore...



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 failure to supply information

SANJAY MALHOTRA | REVENUE SECRETARY

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.

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 SUVs (multi utility vehicles).

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.

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. Malhotra said the amendments in GST law to give effect to the Council's decision on decriminalisation of GST offences would be brought in the Finance Bill, 2023.

CCI raids steel companies for price collusion

REUTERS

Mumbai, Dec 17: India's antitrust watchdog is raiding offices of small-scale steel companies for alleged price collusion of steel products used in construction, two sources with direct knowledge told Reuters.



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 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.

Edelweiss set to acquire L&T Infra Development Projects for ₹6K-crore

Edelweiss Alternatives pioneered private debt in the country with the launch of the \$230mn fund in 2010 and has since then grown to be one of the largest alternative fund management platforms with an asset under management of \$5.5bn now



960 circuit kilometres, respectively. Following this acquisition, the infrastructure platform will scale up to 26 assets with cumulative annual revenue of nearly Rs 2,700 crore.

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.

Sreekumar Chatra, managing director of the infrastructure yield 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."

\$448mn block on Xiaomi's deposits quashed

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.



The investigation concerned allegations that the Chinese company purchased smartphones from its contract manufacturers at inflated costs in India, allowing it to record a smaller profit by selling them to customers and evading corporate income taxes.

India's e-bus ambition hits speed bump

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. As of now, 6,740 e-buses have received the green light



New Delhi, Dec 17: Indian banks are reluctant to lend to electric-bus 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.

Each electric bus costs Rs 12.5 million (\$151,138), about five times that of a diesel one. Financing diesel buses is safer because in the case of any default, banks can repossess the asset and easily redeploy it. E-buses, however, need charging and other infrastructure that may not be available everywhere, said a banker.

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.

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

THE EDTECH MAJOR WHICH Clocked GROSS 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

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 \$1.2 billion loan.

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.



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 7,000 layoffs across companies including BYJU's, Unacademy, Vedantu, Lido Learning, FrontRow, Brainly and more.

FALL FROM GRACE

The edtech unicorn reported a loss of Rs 4,588 crore for the fiscal year that ended March 31, 2021. 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.

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.

# '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**



## Croatia beat Morocco for 3rd-position finish

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 third-place 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 in 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 lacked motivation in a fiercely

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 way into the net.



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 is looking to emulate Pelé by being a champion at his first two World

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-year-old 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, looking to become the first to win

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 seeking 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 — 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 Griezmann, reinvented over the

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 delivering.

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.

## 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 190 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 bowlers 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 per-

formance 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 Yadav. 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 five-match 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 power-play and did not return to bat. In Healy's absence, Tahliia 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 Nations 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 trot.

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 due 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.

