



## REEL RELATIONSHIP

Actor Shweta Tiwari talks about the bond with her on-screen daughters on the sets of *Main Hoon Aparajita*

LEISURE P2



## COP15 SUMMIT

Nearly 200 countries approve a historic Paris-style deal to protect and reverse dangerous loss to global biodiversity

INTERNATIONAL P10



## GOOGLE FOR WOMEN

CEO Sundar Pichai says Google will spend \$75 million to support women-led startups in the country

BUSINESS P11

# Farmers run tractor over cultivated cabbage crop

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, Dec 19:** Unable to bear with the distress sale of cabbage, two farmers of Bargarh district have destroyed their entire vegetable cultivation in the field itself under the wheel of a tractor. The farmers are from Ganjatiakra village in Bargarh district, which witnessed a high-voltage political drama over farmers' issues ahead of Padampur bypoll. It is wise to destroy the cabbage as the market price is too low. Destroying vegetables is more profitable than selling it in the market at low prices, said Rutuparna Pradhan and Kashinath Pradhan, the two farmers who have destroyed



**FARMER'S WOE:** Sore over distress sale, a farmer crushes his cabbage cultivation with a tractor at Ganjatiakra village in Bargarh district, Monday

## DISTRESS SALE

their crops. As per information, both had cultivated cabbage in vast areas with the hope that vegetable cultivation would be more profitable than traditional paddy in Bargarh. However, the price of vegetables suddenly plummeted forcing the two farmers to take such a harsh decision. Had the state government set up a cold storage in the district for the wellbeing of farmers, the latter would not have fallen prey to distress sale. The farmers are forced to sell at just ₹3 per cabbage to the whole sellers as the market price is down.



**HIGH ON HOCKEY:** People queue up to buy tickets for the upcoming FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, at Reserve Police Ground in Bhubaneswar, as the ticket sale kicked off Monday

# Stadium, airport ready for Men's Hockey WC 2023

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra Monday said that India's biggest hockey stadium in Rourkela and an airport in the Steel city have been completed ahead of the upcoming Men's Hockey World Cup. Mahapatra, who visited the two facilities along with Chief Minister's Secretary VK Pandian during the day, said the airport will be operationalised in a few days. Rourkela is one of the venues of the Men's Hockey World Cup, 2023 which commences January 13. "As per directions of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, we inspected the stadium as well as the airport today. The work on the airstrip and the terminal building has been completed. Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) inspection has also been done," Mahapatra told reporters. A few formalities are remaining, following which regular flight services between Bhubaneswar and Rourkela will commence, he said. The official said Alliance Air will run four daily flights between Bhubaneswar and Rourkela during the World Cup.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



This is my FIFA world cup trophy, sir. Watching each & every game multiple times has made it possible

# Bad loans over ₹10L-cr written off in last 5 yrs

The nation's largest lender, the State Bank of India tops the list of top 10 banks with the highest amount of bad loans written off in 2021-22 alone

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** Bad loans worth ₹10,09,511 crore have been written off by scheduled commercial banks in the last five fiscals (2017-22), the Parliament was told Monday.

The nation's largest lender, the State Bank of India (SBI) tops the list of top 10 banks with the highest amount of bad loans written off in 2021-22 alone, as per data provided by the Reserve Bank of India, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad told Congress member Deepak Bajj in an oral response during Question Hour in Lok Sabha.

The SBI has written off bad loans worth ₹19,666 crore in 2021-22, followed by Union Bank of India which has written off bad loans worth ₹19,484 crore, Punjab National Bank (₹18,312 crore), Bank of Baroda (₹17,967 crore), Bank of India (₹10,443 crore), ICICI Bank (₹10,148 crore), HDFC Bank (₹9,405 crore), Axis Bank (₹9,126 crore), Indian Bank (₹8,347 crore), and Canara Bank (₹8,210 crore), he said.

The maximum amount written off in a year from 2017-18 till 2021-22 was ₹2.36 lakh crore in the pre-

## NPA STATS ALARMING

Financial year	Bad loans
2017-18	₹1.63 lakh cr
2018-19	₹2.36 lakh cr
2019-20	₹2.34 lakh cr
2020-21	₹2.02 lakh cr
2021-22	₹1.74 lakh cr

Covid 2018-19 fiscal, followed by ₹2.34 lakh crore in 2019-20, ₹ 2.02 lakh crore in 2020-21 and ₹1.74 lakh crore in 2021-22.

When Bajj sought to know why names of entities or persons whose loans have been written off, are not revealed, the minister informed that it is not done as per the RBI's norms. However if, action is taken against them under various provisions of Securitisation Act or the NCLT, then their properties are auctioned and names of such entities are declared, Karad said. At the same time, the minister further informed that as per the RBI data, public sector banks have recovered an aggregate amount of ₹4,80,111 crore, including recovery of ₹1,03,045 crore from written-off loans during the last five financial years.

## NOTE IN CIRCULATION GROWS 8% ANNUALLY

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday said note in circulation (NIC) has witnessed an annual growth of 7.98 per cent to ₹31.92 lakh crore as of December 2, 2022. The demand for currency depends upon several macroeconomic factors, including economic growth and level of interest rates, she said in a reply to the Lok Sabha. The quantum of cash or banknotes in the economy depends on the requirement for meeting the demand for banknotes due to GDP growth, inflation, replacement of soiled banknotes and growth in non-cash modes of payment. She stressed that the mission of the government is to move towards a less cash economy to reduce the generation and circulation of black money and to promote the digital economy. Both the government and RBI have taken measures to promote a less cash economy and encourage digital payment, she said.

## SHORT TAKES

### G Udaygiri town shivers at 5°C

**Bhubaneswar:** The southern part of Odisha is experiencing chilly weather conditions, with G Udaygiri in Kandhamal district the coldest in the state recording 5 degrees Celsius, the IMD said Monday. Similguda in Koraput district followed G Udaygiri at 7 degrees Celsius. At least 10 places in north and north central Odisha registered temperatures below 10 degrees Celsius.

### 1 killed, 4 injured in Nayagarh firing

**Nayagarh:** One person died while four others sustained injuries when some miscreants opened fire at Krushnaprasad village in Nayagarh Monday. The deceased was identified as Anirudha Nayak, a retired army personnel. The miscreants, stated to be from the same village, opened several rounds of fire while the victims were standing on the road.

### Gehlot cuts LPG cylinder prices to ₹500

**Alwar (Raj):** Poor families covered under the Ujjwala scheme will be given 12 LPG cylinders a year for ₹500 each in Rajasthan from April 1, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot announced Monday. Gehlot made the announcement in the presence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chief Rahul Gandhi at a rally here on the sidelines of the Bharat Jodo Yatra. "I am preparing for the budget next month.... Right now, I want to say only one thing. Under the sham of the Ujjwala scheme, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided the poor with LPG connections but the cylinders are lying empty as the rates have increased from ₹400 to ₹1,040," the veteran Congress leader said.

### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	61806.19	↑ 468.38
NIFTY	18420.45	↑ 151.45
DOLLAR	82.72	↑ ₹0.20
EURO	87.53	↑ ₹0.01
GOLD	₹54,408	↑ ₹108
SILVER	₹67,832	↑ ₹182

### WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	28.7°C	27.6°C
TEMP MIN	13.0°C	13.2°C
Humidity	62%	71%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Shallow to moderate fog likely	

# Self goal: Twitteratti vote Musk out as boss

In the past, Musk has obeyed Twitter polls. He's fond of quoting the phrase "vox populi, vox dei", a Latin phrase that roughly means "the voice of the people is the voice of God"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New York, Dec 19:** Twitter users voted Monday for Elon Musk to quit as head of the social media giant in a poll the technology tycoon ran on his future and promised to abide by its results.

A total of 57.5 per cent voted 'yes' after the 51-year-old billionaire asked his 122 million followers whether he should stand down. Over 17 million votes were cast in the poll that began on Sunday evening and ended early Monday morning with most respondents voting in the affirmative, CNN reported.

Musk did not immediately react to the outcome of the vote. He tweeted Sunday, "Should I step down as head of Twitter? I will abide by the results of this poll." "As the saying goes, be careful what



you wish, as you might get it," Musk added in a later tweet. In the past, Musk has obeyed Twitter polls. He's fond of quoting the phrase "vox populi, vox dei", a Latin phrase that roughly means "the voice of the

people is the voice of God". Since buying Twitter for USD 44 billion and taking over as the CEO in late October, Musk, who also runs Tesla and SpaceX, has journeyed from one controversy to the next.

Musk also announced on Twitter that major policy changes would be voted on moving forward.

The poll comes as Twitter says it will shut down accounts solely designed to promote other social media platforms.

The measure would also affect accounts that link off to or contain user-names from platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Mastodon, Truth Social, Tribel, Nostr, and Post. The company said in a tweet, the BBC reported.

But cross-content posting from other sites will still be allowed. Twitter had already blocked users

from sharing some links to Mastodon, the platform many Twitter users moved to after Musk's takeover.

But in a series of tweets Sunday Twitter said, "We recognise that many of our users are active on other social media platforms. However, we will no longer allow free promotion of certain social media platforms on Twitter."

"Specifically, we will remove accounts created solely for the purpose of promoting other social platforms and content that contains links or user-names for the following platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Mastodon, Truth Social, Tribel, Nostr and Post."

Examples of possible violations could include tweets such as "follow me @username on Instagram" or "check out my profile on Facebook - facebook.com/username", it said in a blog setting out the details. **Continued on P4**

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# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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### ARIES

If you get a chance to display your presentation skills, don't lose it, says Ganesh. Your eloquence may receive wide acclaim. Your children too may give you reason to be proud. Do remember to take time out for the elderly in your family.

### TAURUS

Chaos will reign supreme as unexpected things occur and expected ones are missed out on, says Ganesh. Luck will favour you and nothing is powerful enough to hamper you other than you own thoughts. You will dodge any trouble that is headed your way and escape easily, much to the embarrassment of others.

### GEMINI

You will be able to put forward your proposal and explain your feelings to someone dear to you, and can expect a positive response from them. You will come across as honest and sincere and hence will be accepted. An auspicious and joy-filled day awaits, says Ganesh.

### CANCER

You will help others and be cheerful, feels Ganesh. You will inspire and encourage others. Closeness with beloved will gladden you. You will be attracted to special person, and it could benefit you.

### LEO

You will spend the day with your family and friends today and feel closer to them. You will try to help others, as always. You will like to guide someone if your own situation is comfortable today. You will be able to fulfill the expectations placed upon you by someone and will garner a lot of well-wishes, says Ganesh.

### VIRGO

Consummation of work and success will be the high points today, says Ganesh. You will gain the much needed appreciation for your dedication to work and your desire to succeed in whatever you do. A long-awaited promotion may materialise today, and there is also the bright prospect of some monetary arrears coming your way.

### LIBRA

Ganesh says those of you in the field of business will find this to be a good time for them. In any work that you undertake your vision and ability will be showcased. You will have to spend more time at your workplace. Ganesh says you should try and maintain a balance between your work and your family.

### SCORPIO

Relationships are the crux of life. It's very important how you make your near and dear ones feel when you are around. Make someone feel special today. Try to sort out misunderstandings if any. Don't dominate your friends or family members, says Ganesh.

### SAGITTARIUS

You feel like going back to carefree, childhood days. You even practice that by taking an impromptu pleasure trip, in the outskirts of the city. And bumping into an old pal, reliving your past is like an icing on the cake. As Ganesh says, golden moments are best undescribed and you too, by the end of the day, are speechless for this wonderful day!

### CAPRICORN

Normally, others, especially colleagues get jealous of one's success, but yours is a different case. They will not only motivate you, but also guide you while you take up new projects and assignments. Not everyone is blessed with such cooperative colleagues, says Ganesh.

### AQUARIUS

You will finally end today and you will enjoy the fruits of your hard-work. You are very good a considering all the pros and cons of every situation/project, drawing a plan on paper and distribution of responsibilities, however, execution of those plans is a problem area for you. Be practical to be successful, assures Ganesh.

### PISCES

You will come up trumps against your competition today. This will make you enthusiastic about your future prospects. You shy away from the spotlight usually, but today you will find yourself thrust into the role of a leader, as you take on new assignments.



## STEVEN SPIELBERG REGRETS JAWS FUELLING FRENZY OF SHARK KILLINGS

Award-winning filmmaker Steven Spielberg truly regrets making *Jaws* as he believes it drove a frenzy of shark killings. The director, 76, who made his name with the 1975 fish horror about a bloodthirsty Great White terrorizing a US resort, added he hates the idea it painted sharks as man-eaters.

## ZETA-JONES RUES MISSING OUT ON PLAYING FEMALE JAMES BOND

Actress Catherine Zeta-Jones reveals never getting to play a female James Bond is her biggest acting regret. The Oscar-winner, 53, claimed former 007 star Sean Connery backed her as a replacement for him as the spy after they became close filming the 1999 crime caper *Entrapment* together.



## Arjun talks about honing his acting skills

**Mumbai:** Actor Arjun Kapoor is excited to share the trailer of *Kuttey* that is set to be unveiled next week. He says films like these add to the learning curve for any actor as it boasts of a talented cast including names like Naseeruddin Shah and Tabu, among many others.

*Kuttey* is touted to be a dark comedy that also has other outstanding actors like Konkona Sen Sharma, Kumud Mishra and Radhika Madan in it. The film has been directed by debutant Aasmaan Bhardwaj, who is ace film-maker Vishal Bhardwaj's son.

Arjun, who is seen playing the role of a cop in the film, says: "I cannot wait for people to see the trailer of *Kuttey* and I hope they will love the freshness of the story and newness of the treatment."

Arjun feels he has sharpened his acting skills by being surrounded with such incredible performers of Indian cinema.

He says: "For me, shooting for the film was so much fun and it was also a great learning experience. Films like these add to the learning curve for any actor and I think I have honed my skills with the best of the best actors of our country I'm eagerly waiting to see the response that people have for the trailer of *Kuttey*."

*Kuttey* is set to release in cinemas January 13, 2023.

IAN S

## Kiara's excitement over working with 'Masterji'

**Mumbai:** Actress Kiara Advani will be seen teaming up with choreographer Ganesh Acharya for the second time after *Bijli* from her latest release *Govinda Naam Mera*, for the upcoming Kartik Aaryan-starrer *Satyaprem Ki Katha*.

While Kiara has time and again expressed her excitement for having collaborated with the legendary choreographer for the first time with *Bijli*, the actress is now already shooting for yet another song with him for her next film.

Kiara shared a video of herself and Ganesh dancing to Bijli celebrating the response to *Govinda Naam Mera*.

The actress said: "With The Legend! I was so excited to be choreographed by Masterji for #Bijli Just us adding some Bijli on the sets of Satya Prem ki katha as we shoot for the next song together."

Having recently wrapped the shoot of song for S Shankar's *RC-15*, Kiara has now resumed the shoot of her upcoming film *Satyaprem ki Katha*, a musical romantic drama film directed by Sameer Vidwans. The film is scheduled to be released theatrically in 2023.

IAN S



## Shweta on how she bonds with on-screen daughters

**Mumbai:** TV actress Shweta Tiwari talks about her bond with her on-screen daughters on the sets of *Main Hoon Aparajita*. She is playing the role of Aparajita, a mother of three daughters.

The role of three daughters is played by Anushka Merchande, Dhvani Gori and Shruti Choudhary. Talking about her bond with them she said:

"The mother-daughter relationship is one of the most beautiful relationships in the world. In the show, I am a mother of three daughters and all of them are adorable."

"I am more like a friend to them now. They all are very smart and curious kids, they want to learn everything about the industry. Recently during an outdoor shoot, we got the opportunity to go out together for a picnic sequence."

The actress, who is a mother of two in real life, added that she has all the fun on the sets with her on-screen daughters.

From playing football, making reels to having food together, Shweta makes sure to spend quality time with them. *Main Hoon Aparajita* airs on Zee TV. IAN S



## Fitness for me is like oxygen: NIKKI

**New Delhi:** *Bigg Boss 14* fame Nikki Tamboli is surely a fitness freak. She makes sure to involve everything as part of her lifestyle for better health and well-being, and is particular about regular exercises, yoga, and despite busy schedule, never misses the gym.

She shared: "Fitness for me is like oxygen, a necessity. It gives me mental peace. I believe that for a healthy functioning of the body one needs to take a proper balanced diet of 5 to 6 small meals rather than eating 3 big meals in a day. It's about maintaining a proper balanced nutritious diet. Being fit is not just about how the body looks but how well and healthy it is even from within."

Nikki made her acting debut with a Telugu film *Chikati Gadilo Chithakotudu*. Later she also did a Tamil film *Kanchana 3*. She made her TV debut with *Bigg Boss 14* which gave her a lot of fame and made her a place in the entertainment industry. She also took part in *Khatron Ke Khiladi 11*.

She asserted that for a healthy lifestyle, it is important to regulate eating habits. She always travels with her homemade food so as to avoid eating anything out.

IAN S

## FUN post

### PEANUTS



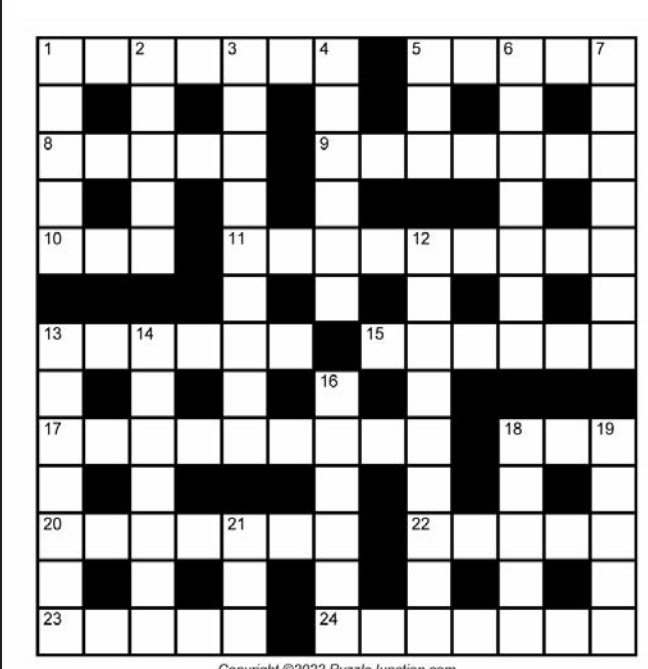
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



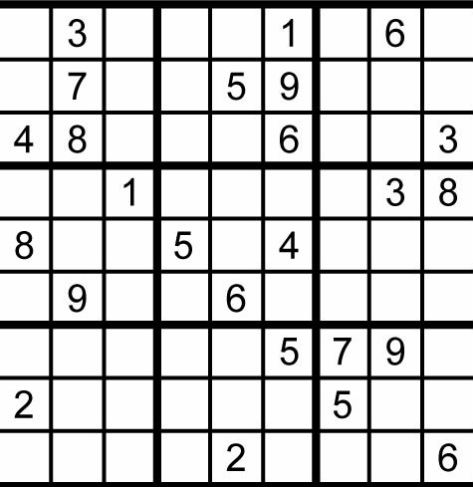
### CROSSWORD



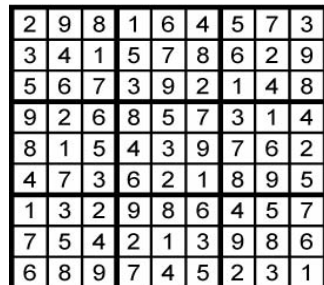
- Across**
- 1 Topiaries
  - 5 Drink holder
  - 8 Debate
  - 9 Great circle
  - 10 Colouring material
  - 11 Postiche
  - 13 Boxing units
  - 15 Venom
  - 17 Race timer
  - 18 A tiger can have one
  - 20 Personal belief
  - 22 Earth colour
- Down**
- 23 Harpoon
  - 24 Transparent gem
  - 6 Priyanka Chopra, for one
  - 7 Medical man or woman
  - 12 Where overspending will land you
  - 13 Attar (4,3)
  - 14 Perfect
  - 16 Immediately (2,4)
  - 18 Egyptian snake
  - 19 Blasé
  - 21 Frost

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

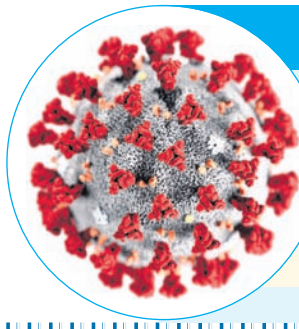


# downtown



## FASHION SHOW

Models walk the ramp at a fashion show organised by Evos Buildcon at a hotel in Bhubaneswar, Monday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	65,79,45,015	63,16,54,858	66,72,485
India	4,46,76,087	4,41,41,854	5,30,674
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

# SAP soon to curb air pollution

Under the National Clean Air Programme of the Centre, a target has been set to reduce the level of suspended particulate matter in air to 20-30% by 2024



Pollution in Keonjhar (File: OP)

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** At a time when people are gasping for breath due lack of ambient air in cities as well as rural areas, the state government has decided to prepare a state action plan (SAP) and constitute an air quality monitoring committee (AQMC) headed by the Chief Secretary that would execute the action plan.

According to sources, the decision of the state government follows an order issued by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to form AQMC so as to curb severe air pollution in seven cities - Angul, Balasore, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Kalinganagar, Rourkela and Talcher. The pollution watchdog has raised concern over the deteriorating air quality in these urban set-ups that figure in most polluted cities' list.

Air pollution has assumed alarming proportions not only in cities but also in rural areas. Experts said if urgent steps are not taken, days are not far when Odisha would experience Delhi like choking air pollution. According to a study

## Air pollution is severe in 7 cities including twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, as observed by the NGT

conducted by the IIT-Bhubaneswar and Pune's Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) in April this year, air pollution was high in Rourkela. The SPCB, Rourkela Municipal Corporation, Sundargarh, Angul and Jharsuguda Collector were told to initiate immediate measures to bring down the pollution levels.

According to National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), Air Quality Index (AQI) in 0-50 level is good for human health. The AQI of Rourkela hovered somewhere between 130 and 150. However, there has been a slight improvement in the scenario these days. Notably, the Centre has set a new target of a 40 per cent reduction in particulate matter (PM) concentration in cities covered under National Clean Air

Programme (NCAP) by 2026. However, it has updated the earlier goal of 20-30 per cent reduction by 2024, officials said.

The state-level action plans would be executed under the aegis of NCAP and the programme would be extended to rural areas too. The action plan would help control the noxious air being released from industries, automobile pollution, air pollution from construction debris, toxic smoke emerging from open burning of e-wastes and plastics, smoke from stubble burning and from households.

Execution of the SAP will be directly monitored by State Pollution Control Board (SPCB), Housing & Urban Development department, Commerce and Transport department, Agriculture department and all civic bodies. All the departments have been asked to prepare their own action plan in line with SAP. A preliminary report has been prepared by the SPCB in this regard.

Forest and Environment department secretary K Murugesan said, "A threadbare discussion was held at a recently held meeting regarding preparation of formation of the SAP which would get its final shape very soon."

Meanwhile, efforts are on to make Bhubaneswar and Rourkela pollution free ahead of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup to be held in these cities. Air pollution by Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), forest fires, road construction and poor waste management have posed a hurdle for the Hockey World Cup. Hence, construction activities have been banned in nearby areas of the stadiums.



**TAKING TO STREETS:** People under the banner of All Odisha MDM Cooks' Association stage a demonstration at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Monday, to press for fulfilment of their 10-point charter of demands

# Puri in grip of waterborne diseases

AGENCIES

**Puri, Dec 19:** The 'Sujal: Drink from Tap Mission', launched by the state government in the Pilgrim City here in July last year, has received a jolt as scores of families living close to the Srimandir here have been suffering from waterborne diseases like diarrhoea and bowel troubles, persons in know of the development said Monday.

According to sources, Puri was the fourth town in the world and first in the country to avail quality drinking water directly from tap 24x7.

Although unconfirmed reports claimed death of two, including a woman, from the affected area due to diarrhoea, the district public health authorities denied it by saying the woman had gynaecological issues while the octogenarian male died at his home.

According to additional district medical officer (ADMO) Amarendra Rath, since December 11, at least 28 diarrhoea patients from the affected area have been admitted to Infectious Disease Hospital (IDH) till Saturday.

"Twenty-seven of them were discharged after treatment. No new patient has been admitted



since Saturday," Rath said.

After reports of a breakout of diarrhoea, the District Magistrate, health authorities along with doctors visited the affected areas. Health workers visited residents at Baseli Sahi and Gochhikar Lane and enumerated the persons suffering from waterborne disease.

A medical relief centre (MRC) has been set up in the affected area where the residents with stomach trouble are being provided medical care. This apart, 50,000 halazone tablets have been distributed among the residents to purify drinking water, added Rath.

The ADMO said apart from contaminated drinking water, diar-

rhoea could be caused by the consumption of spurious food and poor hand hygiene.

The damaged drinking water pipe in the Srimandir Parikrama Project has been replaced. Of the nine water samples taken from the area for testing, seven turned negative, while two with moderate status, Rath added.

To contain the spread of the disease, overhead water tanks and domestic water storage facilities were disinfected while drinking water is being supplied by water tankers.

As per guidelines, the quality of drinking water used to be tested in the lab. The first phase water test

certified the pipe water is fit for human consumption while the second phase was scheduled for this month, he said.

The 'Drink from Tap Mission' has been launched under Sujal after a nine-month pilot project executed in the town.

According to PHD executive engineer Bhabani Mohanty, "At present, we're providing about 49 mld water to the town. This apart, 200 drinking water fountains were installed in various parts of the Holy City."

Most of the residents of 32 wards of the town were given pipe water connections, benefitting 2.5 lakh residents and visitors.

Mohanty said the PHD has a mobile water testing unit and a full-fledged modern lab for regular checks.

"As per need, we test water samples at 24, 48 and 72 hours of intervals. The recent test of the sample has been found negative," the executive engineer said.

With the launching of the 'Drink from Tap Mission', the officials had claimed that Puri became the fourth city in the globe after London, New York and Singapore to achieve this goal.



**MOMENT TO CAPTURE:** Culture Minister Aswini Patra and E&IT Minister Tusharkanti Behera with awardees, including Odissi vocalist Gopal Chandra Panda and Pala artiste Jagannath Behera, during the presentation of 'Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja Samman' and Sangeet Natak Akademi award at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Monday

## Axe falls on 96 absentee teachers

**Bhubaneswar:** The state government has launched a crackdown against the absentee primary school teachers by sacking 96 of them across the state. Strict action has been taken against the absentee teachers of different schools in the state, said the School and Mass Education department Monday. The department said in a review meeting during the state-level training programme for DEOs and BEOs recently, it was learnt that many teachers do not attend schools for a prolonged period. It said 96 primary teachers have been sacked for unauthorised absence and more such action will be taken against other truant teachers.

# City airport, 24 others to be leased out soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** The Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Bhubaneswar along with 24 other airports would be leased out for three years - from 2023 to 2025 -, Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation General VK Singh (Retired) told Rajya Sabha, Monday.

The minister informed in a written reply to a question that as per National Monetization Pipeline (NMP), 25 airports of Airports Authority of India (AAI) - Bhubaneswar, Varanasi, Amritsar, Trichy, Indore, Raipur, Calicut, Coimbatore, Nagpur, Patna, Madurai, Surat, Ranchi, Jodhpur,



## ODISHA IN PARLIAMENT

Chennai, Vijayawada, Vadodara, Bhopal, Tirupati, Huhli, Imphal, Agartala, Udaipur, Dehradun and Rajahmundry - have been earmarked for leasing for the next three years. The AAI has leased out eight of

its airports - Delhi, Mumbai, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Mangaluru, Jaipur, Guwahati and Thiruvananthapuram - under Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode for operation, management and development on a long-term lease basis, the minister said.

"Airports of AAI are leased out in public interest for their better management utilising private sector efficiency and investment. Airports have emerged as a nucleus of economic activities and have a multiplier effect on the economy of the state. The revenue received by AAI from the leased airports is also utilised in development of airport infrastructure across the country," the minister said.

## Centre sets 200 MTPA target for MCL

**New Delhi:** The Union government has set a target to achieve 200 million tonne coal production per annum from Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) in Odisha in one and half years, Union Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi said in the Rajya Sabha.

The minister said the Centre had a long discussion with the Odisha government about mining including coal mining. "We received many suggestions from them (Odisha). After receiving those suggestions and having a threadbare discussion with them, we have made changes in certain things. By that, the overall production,

which was around 60-65 million tonne in 2014, has today reached almost 170 million tonne," Joshi said, adding that the target of 200 million tonne per annum from the Mahanadi Coalfields will be achieved in one-and-a-half years.

Joshi was responding to a question posed by BJD MP Sammit Patra during the Question Hour. Patra had asked the minister about the plans and programmes that the Centre has in terms of maximising capacity, utilising capacity of coal in Odisha so that it becomes the largest coal bearing and coal-extraction state in the country.

## BJD MPs seek release of pending food subsidy

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MPs Monday met Union Food and Public Distribution Minister Piyush Goyal and requested him to release Rs 14,292.51 crore pending food subsidy to Odisha and Rs 6,187 crore towards the additional interest incurred by the state till November this year cumulatively.

**There is a pending food subsidy amounting to ₹14,292.51 crore that the Centre is to pay the state govt**

# BJD's foundation day silver jubilee function Dec 26

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Odisha will hold its foundation day silver jubilee function in a big way in Puri December 26 to strengthen the rank and file of the party for the next state Assembly and Lok Sabha election in 2024.

The regional party which is headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and is in power in Odisha since 2000 could not celebrate its foundation day function last year due to Covid pandemic, so the top leadership has decided to celebrate the silver jubilee celebration in a big way in Puri, BJD vice-president Debi Prasad Mishra said after a meeting at Naveen Niwas, the residence of Patnaik on Sunday.

"BJD could not celebrate the foundation day function properly last year due to the pandemic, so our party president has given his approval for the function to be held in Puri December 26," Mishra said.

Noting that the BJD during its 25th years of existence has become a "mass movement" instead of being just a political outfit, another party vice-president Prasanna Acharya said that all office-bearers comprising from the state to district and block units and elected representatives will participate in the function in Puri. Patnaik will address the meeting and show roadmaps for the party for the future.

He said the BJD foundation day would also be held in all Assembly constituencies in next 15 days.

The Biju Janata Dal was founded on December 26, 1997. It was named after legendary leader Biju Patnaik who is the father of Naveen Patnaik.

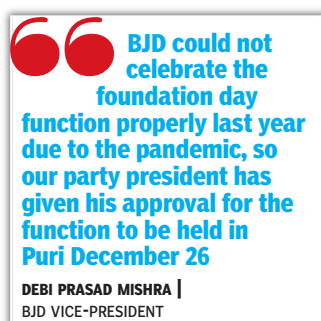
The BJD first formed the government in alliance with the BJP in the state and it continued till 2009.

"The Puri function is likely to see the launch of BJD's poll campaign for the next general elections which is due in 2024," a party insider said. Meanwhile, hit by back to back



poll debacles in the state, Opposition Congress on Sunday also announced to launch a mass contact programme titled "haat se haat milao" (join hands) from

January 26, 2023. The aim is to highlight the "failure" of the BJP led central government and BJD government in Odisha, said A Chella Kumar, AICC



**BJD could not celebrate the foundation day function properly last year due to the pandemic, so our party president has given his approval for the function to be held in Puri December 26**

DEBI PRASAD MISHRA | BJD VICE-PRESIDENT

general secretary in-charge of Odisha. He accused both the parties of misleading the people of Odisha in different ways. The Congress leader said the party will reach out to every household to with a "chargesheet" against the BJP-led central government and the BJD government in Odisha. Dubbing both the BJP and the BJD as two sides of the same coin, Chella Kumar said the aim is to rejuvenate Congress in Odisha by telling people about the reasons of

their sufferings due to "failure" of both the BJP and the BJD.

On the recently concluded Padampur Assembly bypoll where Congress candidate Satya Bhusan Sahu lost his security deposit, Chella Kumar said that people know how BJP won in Dhamnagar and BJD in Padampur. "No democratic norm was followed in both the recently concluded by-polls," he said.

The Congress leader accused the BJD of blatantly "misusing" government machinery to win elections.

He also accused the BJP led central government of not taking action against BJD leaders allegedly involved in the mining and chit fund scams in Odisha.

Leader of Opposition Jay Narayan Mishra of BJP said the saffron party has already prepared road maps to "expose" the BJD in coming days. He also alleged that Congress leaders were hand in glove with the BJD people.

A delegation of BJD MPs from Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha submitted a memorandum to the Union minister stating that Odisha is the third largest contributor of rice to the public distribution system (PDS) and in order to ensure that the farmers of Odisha do not face any difficulties, the state government signed an MoU with the Union government to be a decentralised procurement state and help the farmers by procuring foodgrains on behalf of the Centre.

"There is a total pending food subsidy amounting to Rs 14,292.51 crore that the Union government is to pay the Odisha government. Out of this, there is Rs 11,689.21 crore towards provisional food subsidy and Rs 2,603.30 crore towards advance subsidy," the BJD stated in the memorandum.

Apart from this, the BJD said, Odisha state civil supplies corporation is yet to be paid Rs 6,187 crore towards the additional interest it has incurred till November cumulatively due to delay in release and short-release of the subsidy by the Union government.



# NGT issues notice to CS over elephant corridor



is reportedly yet to officially send any proposal to the MoEFCC in this regard despite the lapse of more than one year. The state-based organization, Wildlife Society of Orissa, recently approached the NGT seeking the immediate implementation of the order of the NGT.

It also urged the tribunal to impose financial penalty of Rs 10 crore for the non-implementation of the order as per the section 26 and 28 of the NGT Act 2010 which also prescribes imprisonment of three years as well.

Notably, the state government has identified 14 corridors with a total area of 870.61 square kilometres having a length of 420.8 kilometres covering width of 0.08 kilometres to 4.6 kilometres on the basis of the feasibility report prepared by Bangalore-based Asian Nature Conservation Foundation (ANCF). The ANCF submitted its report to the state government in 2017.

Experts claimed that the issuance of notification is considered vital in view of the rising incidents of jumbo deaths in the state as it would give legal validation to the corridors prohibiting any damage to natural habitat of the elephants due to mining or other developmental activities. Elephants use these corridors seasonally to move from one habitat to another for their needs but obstructions like mining and other activities have led to the destruction of these habitats.

## The NGT had earlier directed the state government to notify the corridors within a period of two months from the issue of order Aug 17, 2021

August 17, 2021. As per the rules, a proposal of notification of these corridors prepared by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wild Life) needs to be sent to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), who could then notify it under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

However, the state government



ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE: An excavator razing down illegal shops located along Patia Square to KIIT road in Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

## Archana returns to jail

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 19: The lady blackmailer Archana Nag Monday returned to the special jail at Jharpada here after the court rejected Enforcement Directorate's plea to take her on remand for two more days. She was produced before the Additional District Judge (ADJ)-3 court here following the completion of six-day remand period.

Monday, Archana again told the media persons that she will reveal everything and will spare no one.

The ED had taken Archana on a 7-day remand for interrogation in connection with the high profile sextortion case December 6. Her husband and co-accused, Jagabandhu Chand is also on ED nine-day remand in the above case since December 14.

## Need more paediatric ICUs, say experts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 19: The 24th National Conference of the Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP) 'PEDIATRICON 2022' concluded at the KIIT Campus here Sunday. It was attended by paediatricians from across the country and abroad who made a case for establishing paediatric ICUs in all government, private hospitals, and medical colleges across the country.

The conference was organised by the IAP - Intensive Care Chapter, Odisha branch, in association with IAP Odisha and was held for the first time in the state.

IAP president-elect GV Baswaraj stressed the efforts of all stakeholders for provisions of paediatric ICUs in all private, government



hospitals and various medical colleges across the nation.

KIIT-KISS founder Achyuta Samanta, in his address, compared doctors with the almighty and pointed out that as paediatricians treat the future generations, KISS, a unit of KIIT offering education and care to tribal students free of cost, also takes care of the neglected kids and makes them self-reliant and future-ready through education.

The theme of this year's conference was "rationale, reach-

able and reasonable," said well-known pediatrician Sibabrata Patnaik. Explaining in detail, he said, "The meet sought knowledge upgradation of doctors for rational treatment and make all stakeholders including the government aware of the importance of having paediatric ICUs at the district level for quick and better treatment. The other objective was to make treatment affordable for the benefit of all classes of society."

## Continued from P1

### Twitteratti vote ...

Any attempts to bypass the restrictions would also be a breach. Musk's announcement was the latest in a series of decisions by Twitter to generate blowback, after the suspension last week of more than half a dozen journalists who report on Musk.

Musk immediately fired several top executives, including its Indian-American CEO Parag Agrawal, and laid off about half of Twitter's staff after he took over as head of the social media platform in October.

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I, Sambit Kumar Mohanty, S/o. Malaya Kumar Mohanty aged 23 years, residing at A-205, Kokila Gardens, Phase - 2, Pokhariput, Bhubaneswar have changed my name from Sambit Kumar Mohanty to Sambit Mohanty for all intents and purposes.

By virtue of affidavit No. "12AA177268", Dt.19.12.2022 before the Notary, Bhubaneswar: I, Pratyush Kumar Moharana, S/o. Pradeep Kumar Moharana, At: Madhusudan Nagar, Jatni - 752050 declare that my name is wrongly written "Pratyush Moharana" in HSC Certificate, further "Pratyush Moharana" and "Pratyush Kumar Moharana" one and same person.

## Naveen wishes Messi, Argentina for WC win

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 19: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday congratulated Argentina for becoming the new FIFA World Cup champions. Taking to Twitter, Naveen said "Congratulations #Argentina on becoming FIFA World Cup champions with magical Lionel Messi shining at the biggest stage and leaving a stellar legacy. Qatar2022 will remain one of the most memorable, with France team going down fighting powered by best efforts from Kylian Mbappe."

Similarly, many football and Messi fans in Bhubaneswar came into street late Sunday night to celebrate the win. This was Messi's last World Cup and we are happy that he finally achieved his dream of winning the World Cup and finally



coming out of the shadow of another great footballer from Argentina the Late Diego Maradona, with whom Messi was so often compared and who had won the last world cup for Argentina in 1986, said Amrit Pattojoshi a football fan from city.

In an unforgettable World Cup final match, Messi scored two goals and then another in a shootout as Argentina beat France 4-2 on penalties Sunday to claim a third World Cup title despite Kylian Mbappé scoring the first hat trick in a final in 56 years.

## Groundnut a boon for Sundargarh tribals

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Sundargarh, Dec 19: The 'Mission Jeevika' programme is presently underway in Sundargarh district with the objective of creating substantial livelihood opportunities for the tribal population.

Under the programme of the 'ST & SC Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare Department', tribal families are specially benefitted by cultivating groundnut and other cash crops.

During FY 2022-23, groundnut is being cultivated across 13 villages under Rajgangpur and Kutra blocks of Sundargarh district. A total of 852 farmers belonging to various tribal communities are growing the cash crop on over 600 acres of farmland. The Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Sundargarh is providing all necessary assistance to the beneficiaries.



"Thirteen different crops, including groundnut and a variety of vegetables are being cultivated under the 'Mission Jeevika' programme of ITDA. Farmers are provided with various input assistance for the purpose. It is helping them get additional profit by

growing groundnut. This, in turn, is resulting in the economic empowerment of the tribal families," said PA ITDA, Sundargarh Shri Ramkrushna Gond.

While farmers are getting good returns by selling their produce in nearby markets following har-

vest, the ITDA has also made provisions to buy groundnut from farmers through Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO).

"I have been growing groundnut for the last three years. This year too, I grew the crop on one and half acres. The harvest is good. Due to good farm returns, my house is better taken care of now," said Johani Mahanand, a woman farmer from Dhauraadha village under Kukuda GP of Rajgangpur block.

"Earlier, we used to grow paddy. The profits were less. Since last one year, we are cultivating groundnut, and we are getting better returns. We are able to save some money in the bank after taking care of household expenses and our children's education," said Arabinda Minz, a young farmer from Dhauraadha village under Kukuda GP in Rajgangpur block of Sundargarh district.



FOR LIVELIHOOD: Members of North Bhubaneswar Street Vendors' Association staging a protest in front of BMC office seeking fulfillment of their various demands in the City, Monday

OP PHOTO

## G Udaygiri shivers at 5 degree Celsius

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 19: The southern part of Odisha is experiencing chilly weather conditions, with G Udaygiri in Kandhamal district the coldest in the state recording 5 degree Celsius, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Monday.

Similiguda in Koraput district fol-

lowed G Udaygiri at 7 degree Celsius. At least ten places in north and north central Odisha registered temperatures below 10 degrees Celsius.

The state Capital recorded a minimum temperature of 13 degree Celsius, 2.2 degree Celsius lower than normal, while the mercury level touched 13.2 degree Celsius in Cuttack, 1.1 degree

Celsius lower than normal.

"Dry weather conditions prevailed in Odisha. Dense fog occurred in one or two places in Kandhamal district. Shallow to moderate fog occurred in one or two places in Cuttack and Kalahandi districts," the IMD said in a statement.

The weatherman forecast no major change in minimum temperature over the next 4-5 days.

## Mandi Chala Abhiyan from Dec 22

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 19: Alleging irregularities in paddy procurement process, the BJP has decided to launch Mandi Chala Abhiyan from December 22.

In a press conference here, Monday, state BJP general secretary Prithviraj Harichandan said, "BJP leader will submit memorandums to all sub-collectors December 21 and make field visit to various mandis between December 22 and 28 to look after whether farmers are getting MSP or not, what facilities are being provided to them, and whether karni chatni has been stopped or not."

He alleged that the entire paddy procurement system in the state is being handled by the millers and the state government has turned a mute spectator as it does not have any sympathy for the farmers.

Though the farmers are staging protests over the same issue every year, the BJD government has not taken any step till now, Harichandan said.

"Due to delay in opening of mandis, the farmers of western Odisha have been forced to sell their paddy to the middlemen from Chhattisgarh at a price much lower



than the MSP fixed by the Modi government," he alleged.

As per the state government's decision, paddy procurement centres in coastal Odisha will be opened after a month. Paddy procurement centres are supposed to be opened on December 1. The government, meanwhile, has informed cooperative societies to open mandis on December 30, he stated.

"Farmers work day and night throughout the year with an aim to procure paddy at the right time and eke out a living for a year. It is the moral duty of the state government to open paddy procurement centres timely. However, the government seems to have little interest in procuring paddy from

farmers. That exposed the state government's nexus with mill owners," alleged the BJP leader.

Reacting to BJP's allegations, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak said that paddy procurement process is smoothly going in different districts including in those of western Odisha. So far, more than Rs 1,100 crore has been transferred to the bank accounts of 1.24 lakh farmers, who sold paddy to the government.

Mandi has been opened in almost all places and the decision to open mandi is being taken by the district-level committee. "Mandis in remaining places will also be opened within a week," he added.

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# Lack of approach roads stalls bridge projects in Jajpur dist

People suffer due to apathy of concerned officials and contractors



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, Dec 19:** The Odisha government has implemented the 'Biju Setu Yojana' as a part of its public welfare initiative to make commuting easy for the common people and usher in development in various parts of the state. Several bridges have been built under this scheme in Jajpur district that have helped connecting areas with one another. However, four projects under the scheme have been lying incomplete in the district due to lack of approach roads and land acquisition issues. In the process, price escalation of the projects has also increased manifold.

Officials said that the Jaraka Rural Works department was entrusted with the responsibility of

constructing nine bridges under the scheme at an expense of ₹40 crore in Jajpur district. Among the nine, construction of five bridges has been completed. However, the remaining four in Dharmasala Assembly segment have remained incomplete even though work to build them started in 2017. Naturally questions have been raised about the efficiency of the officials of the Rural Works department. Locals blamed the apathy of department officials and the contractors entrusted with the construction work for the incomplete projects.

Sources said that construction of a bridge under the 'Biju Setu Yojana' was taken up over Sagadia nulla connecting Pipalidha with Narsingpur under Dharmasala Assembly segment in 2017. It was scheduled for

completion September 12, 2019. So far over ₹91.32 lakh has been spent on the project, but it is lying incomplete due to lack of approach roads which have not been made due to land acquisition disputes.

Construction of another bridge was taken up under 'Biju Setu Yojana' on Sanagenguti river adjoining Bhubanpur and Jagannathpur in 2019. So far, over ₹3 crore has been spent on the project, but it has not been completed. Similar is the case with the bridge being built over Sagadia nullah near Sanka village in Patunia panchayat in 2018. Here also more than ₹3 crore has been spent, but the bridge remains non-functional. Construction of another bridge was taken up on the Brahmani river near Routarapur-Kundapatna road in 2019. So far ₹16.60 crore has been spent on the project. However, land acquisition problems have hindered its completion.

Despite, incomplete projects, the department is planning to construct two more bridges in the Barchana Assembly segment. However, locals have expressed apprehension about the future of the projects. Superintendent engineer Pradyumna Kumar Sethi in his report has said that since 2020 no bridge has been built in the constituency under 'Biju Setu Yojana'.



**GUNNING FOR GLORY:** Girls participate in a race at the Inter-College Sports meet held at the Sundargarh Government College play ground. Over 1,600 students representing various colleges in Sundargarh sub-division participated in the event

OP PHOTO

## Panchayat samiti official held for rape

POST NEWS NETWORK

**G Udayagiri, Dec 19:** The vice-chairman of G Udayagiri panchayat samiti found himself on the wrong side of the law after a woman accused him of rape and mental torture, police said Monday.

The accused identified as N Luk, has been detained by the police who are probing the incident. The victim has filed her complaint at the Tikabali police station.



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

A case (No 108/22) under Sections-376, 417(2) (N) of ST Atrocity Act has been registered in this connection, SDPO D Tirupati Rao Patnaik informed Monday. He added that police are looking into all the angles due to which the victim filed the complaint. The SDPO informed that the police are waiting for the medical report of the victim.

## 2 dead in Kandhamal road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Phulbani, Dec 19:** Two persons were killed after their bike collided head-on with a truck near Surubadi village under Balliguda police station in Kandhamal district, police said Monday. The ac-

cident took place late Sunday night police informed. The deceased were identified as Rakesh Mallick (35) and Achyutananda Nayak (38) who were friends and residents of Badagam village.

The accident could be due to poor visibility owing to dense fog, po-

lice said. After the accident, an irate mob blocked National Highway-59, demanding immediate compensation for the families of the deceased.

The blockade was called off after local authorities promised to fulfil their demand.

# Missing Nayagarh minor rescued 500 metres from house after 5 days



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, Dec 19:** A 12-year old boy who was allegedly kidnapped while returning home from tuition, was rescued Monday from a house situated about 500 metres from his residence in Pandit Sahi locality of Kural village under Odagaon police limits in Nayagarh district.

The boy was identified as Amrit Patra, 12, a student of Class-VII and son of Purna Chandra Patra, a resident of the village. The victim had gone missing for the last five days. It is suspected that the abductors abandoned the boy after failing to take him out of

the village.

A woman, who had gone to fetch water noticed the victim frantically waving at her from a room. She first opened the door of the room to free Amrit and then informed the local sarpanch who in turn alerted the boy's family members and other villagers. Cops also arrived at the village shortly and took the victim and his parents to the Odagaon police station for questioning. Later, the boy was taken for a medical check-up before being handed over to his family. Currently Amrit is in the hospital.

However, police are yet to find out the circumstances leading to the mysterious disappearance of Amrit. He had gone for tuition Wednesday at 5.00pm and was supposed to return home by 7.30pm. When he did not return, the family members initially thought he might be at one of his friend's house. When it got too late at night, the family suspected that Amrit had been kidnapped.

When contacted, Nayagarh SP Alekh Chandra Pahi stated that the boy had not been given food for five days for which he has developed weakness and nausea. "Currently he is being treated at a hospital. Amrit will be questioned once he recovers and his health improves," the SP added.

However, police are still clueless regarding the persons involved in the abduction of the minor. Though police suspected it to be a case of kidnapping, they are surprised as there was no ransom call to Amrit's family. Now, the sudden reappearance of Amrit has added mystery to the case.

Meanwhile, the village sarpanch asserted Monday that Amrit had been kidnapped and kept in the room with his limbs tied. However, other residents of the village failed to throw any light behind the entire incident. Amrit's family also informed that they do not have enmity with anyone in the village. So they are also clueless as to who could have kidnapped Amrit and kept him confined in a room.

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## 256-metre tall chimney demolished

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, Dec 19:** A 256 metres tall chimney was demolished Monday at Kurunti village under Motanga police limits of Odapada block in Dhenkanal district. A total of 750 kilograms of explosives were used to demolish the chimney in just seven seconds. The chimney had been built by Lanco Infratech, which was declared insolvent in 2017.

Officials of the district administration and a 20-member team of explosive experts from a Rajasthan-based company led by Anand Sharma jointly carried out the demolition work. Reports said that Lanco Infratech

had shut down its plant here due to financial problems. The company managed to sell off most of its stuff as scrap, but the chimney remained. With the huge structure suffering damages, locals residing close to the chimney had been demanding its demolition.

Earlier, the administration with the help of experts had tried twice to demolish the chimney, but failed. This sparked resentment among the locals as they intensified their demands to pull down the chimney.

They also said that even though the chimney was constructed in 2010, it has not been put to use. Officials said that when it was built, the chimney was one of the tallest in India.



## Vax drive against LSD stepped up in Dhusuri

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Aradi, Dec 19:** The lumpy skin disease (LSD) among cattle is spreading very fast in Aradi, Sundarpur, Nandapur and Olaga



panchayats under Dhusuri police limits of Bhadrak district. Following media reports about the spread of the disease among cattle, officials of the Animal Husbandry department have been on their toes. They have stepped up preventive vaccination drive in all the four panchayats.

Chief District Veterinary Officer (CDVO) Subhendu Mishra announced Monday that large quantities of vaccines to prevent the spread of the disease have been sent to the four panchayats. The vaccination drive will be carried on for five to seven days in the four panchayats, livestock inspector Akshay Kumar Nayak, informed.

**Registered Office Address:** Unit No.601, 6th Floor Piramal Amiti Building, Piramal Agastya Corporate Park, Kaman Junction, Opp Fire Station, LBS Marg, Kurla (West), Mumbai- 400 070. CIN: L65910M11884PLC032639, Website: www.piramalfinance.com  
**Branch Address:** Dhiraj Baug, Building "A" Ground & 1st Floor, Beside Axis Bank, Opp. Monalisa Building, Agra Road, Hari Niwas Circle, Naupada, Thane (West) - 400 602.

**DEMAND NOTICE**

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitization And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (DHFL)] under Securitization And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to PCHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to PCHFL as the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount with NPA date	Property address
(LC No.: 05900001729 of Bhubaneswar Branch) Ashok Pal (Borrower) Usharani Pal (Co Borrower)	08-11-2022 / ₹ 1850766 / ₹ Eighteen lakh Fifty Thousand Seven Hundred Sixty Six Only) NPA (09-09-2022)	Plot No-732, Khata No-159 Mouza-Gurujanga, Ps-Khorda Odisha Bhubaneswar Khurda Orissa - 752055
(LC No.: 05900002020 of Bhubaneswar Branch) Ramesh Chandra Baral (Borrower) Sukanti Das (Co Borrower)	08-11-2022 / ₹ 2074042 / ₹ Twenty lakh Seventy Four Thousand Forty Two Only) NPA (10-07-2022)	Plotno-135/931/933, Khata-369/171 Mouza-Bayanpada, Balakati Pauranpradhan, Bhubaneswar Khurda Orissa - 752100
(LC No.: 05900001984 of Bhubaneswar Branch) Rajakishore Jena (Borrower) Pratima Manjari Jena (Co Borrower)	08-11-2022 / ₹ 681162 / ₹ Six lakh Eighty One Thousand One Hundred Sixty Two Only) NPA (12-11-2021)	Plot No-625/2014, mouza-mouza.satapada Khata No-376/7211, P.s. Jharsuli-Bramagiri Near Odisha Gramya Bank Satapada Puri Orissa - 752011

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to PCHFL as aforesaid, PCHFL shall proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of PCHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Date : 20-12-2022  
Place: Orissa

Sd/-  
(Authorised Officer)  
Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR TIE-UP OF DENTAL HOSPITALS / CLINIC**

No. ECoR/MD/CH/BBS/Tie-up Dental Hospitals/Adv. Date : 16.12.2022

Central Hospital/ East Coast Railway / Bhubaneswar is planning to tie-up different Dental Hospital/ Clinic in Bhubaneswar for engaging to provide service against the referral treatment facilities to the Railway beneficiaries for a period of 03 (three) years as per CGHS terms.

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) IS INVITED IN SEALED ENVELOPE WITH THE PRESCRIBED APPLICATION PROFORMA AVAILABLE IN WEBSITE AND RELEVANT DOCUMENT TO THE OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR, CENTRAL HOSPITAL - EAST COAST RAILWAY, MANCHESWAR, BHUBANESWAR-751017 ON OR BEFORE 15-01-2023.**

**Eligibility Criteria :-** 1. The Dental Hospital / Clinic must be located in Bhubaneswar city. 2. The Centre should have qualified Dental Doctors (Bio-data of them to be submitted). 3. The rates to be paid by Railway to the firms shall be as per CGHS rates or lower. In case CGHS for any kind of referral is not available, AIMS / Bhubaneswar rate or any other govt. rate shall be applicable. In case, govt. hospital rate is not available for particular referral, then reasonable rate as per mutual agreement between Railway and the Centre shall be payable. 4. Centre should be willing to accept cashless services on bill payment on monthly basis. 5. A committee of Doctors from Central Hospital will visit the Diagnostic centre / hospital after receiving EOI for confirmation of eligibility criteria and facilities available. 6. The Dental clinic / Hospital must have internal as well as external Quality control system and they should submit documentary proof. Website for full details : www.indianrailways.gov.in, www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in → Tenders → Expression of Interest and http://tenders.gov.in.

For clarification - please contact the Medical Director / Central Hospital / Bhubaneswar / East Coast Railway, Bhubaneswar-751017, Tel. No. 0674-2748895, E-Mail: medicaldirector8@gmail.com.

PR-821/N/22-23 Medical Director / Central Hospital / Bhubaneswar

**HANDICRAFTS EXHIBITION**

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Sponsored by: Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India, New Delhi

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**Indian Bank** ZONAL OFFICE: SAMBALPUR, 2ND FLOOR, SHYAM ARCADE, KHETRAJAPUR, SAMBALPUR - 768003, e-mail: zosambalpur@indianbank.co.in

**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE**

**Sale of Immovable property/ies mortgaged to Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002)**

Whereas, the Authorized Officer of Indian Bank had taken possession of the following property/ies pursuant to the notice issued under Sec 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS", "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WITHOUT ANY RECOURSE BASIS" for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under section 13(4) of the said Act proposes to realize the Bank's dues by sale of the said property/ies. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp>.

BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrowers / Mortgagors	Description of the Immovable Property	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession/Outstanding dues (As per 13(2) notice)	Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increment Amount	Date & Time of E-Auction
<b>NUAPADA BRANCH / Borrower/Mortgagor: Sri Ganesh Sharma, S/o.: Sri Mulchand Sharma, At: Bazarpada, Ward No.4, P.O.: Khariar Road, Dist.: Nuapada, PIN: 766104</b>	All that piece and parcel of land and building recorded in the name of Sri Ganesh Sharma, S/o.: Sri Mulchand Sharma, bearing Khata No.: 167/35, Plot No.: 233, measuring Area: Ac.0.047 Dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, Mouza: Khariar Road, Unit No.: 5, SRO: Nuapada, Tahasil: Nuapada, PS: Jonk, Dist.: Nuapada, Bounded by North: Plot of Sudha Sharma, South: Plot of Nanak Ram Sahu, East: Road, West: Plot of Nanda Kishore Soni.	13.07.2022 14.09.2022/ ₹22,74,445.69 as on 07.12.2022 + further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon	₹40.25 Lacs / ₹4.03 Lacs / ₹0.10 Lacs	24.01.2023 between 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM
<b>SUNDARGARH BRANCH / Borrower: Mr. Indramani Khuntia, S/o.: Labanya Khuntia, At: Krushna Nagar, Dengibhadi, P.O./Dist.: Sundargarh - 770001 / Guarantor: Mrs. Rukmani Khuntia, W/o.: Mr. Indramani Khuntia, S/o.: Labanya Khuntia, At: Krushna Nagar, Dengibhadi, P.O./Dist.: Sundargarh - 770001</b>	All part and parcel of land and building in name of Smt. Rukmani Khuntia in Khata No.: 516/1882, Plot No.: 77/6397, Area: Ac.0.050dec., situated at Mouza: Talsankara, Dist.: Sundargarh, Odisha, Bounded by East: Own Plot, Krishna Nagar, Dengibhadi, P.O./Dist.: Sundargarh - 770001	18.09.2018 27.02.2019/ ₹12,87,908.64 as on 08.12.2022 + further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon	₹31.95 Lacs / ₹3.20 Lacs / ₹0.10 Lacs	24.01.2023 between 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM

**DATE AND TIME OF E-AUCTION: 24.01.2023 from 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM with unlimited extension of 10 Minutes duration**

**LAST DATE AND TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF EMD AND DOCUMENTS ON OR BEFORE 21.01.2023 upto 05.30 PM by online**

**Date & Time of Inspection of Properties: 06.01.2023 to 21.01.2023 between 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM (with prior appointment from bank)**

**TERMS & CONDITIONS:** 1) For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer to the link: <https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp> and <https://ibapi.in>. prospective bidders may also contact the Authorised Officers / Branch no. as mentioned in above list., 2) This is a 30 days' notice to the Borrowers / Guarantors / Mortgagors of the above said loan about holding of this sale on the above mentioned date., 3) All expenses relating the stamp duty and registration of Sale Certificate/ conveyance, if any, shall be borne by the successful bidder. 4) The Authorized Officer will not be held responsible for any charge, lien, encumbrance, property tax or any other dues to the Government or anybody in respect of the property under sale. 5) The Authorized Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or adjourn/postpone/cancel the sale without assigning any reason thereof. It may be noted that nothing in this notice constitute or deemed to constitute any commitment or representation on the part of the bank to sell the property.

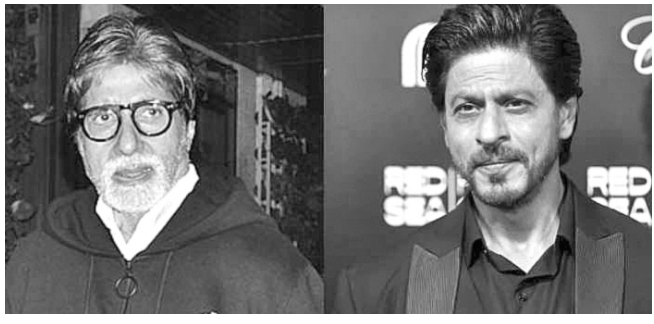
**STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.** Borrower/Mortgagor are hereby notified to pay the total dues along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of E-Auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/ sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest & cost.

Place: Sambalpur, Date: 19.12.2022 Sd/-Authorised Officer, Indian Bank



FOCUS SOCIETY

# LEAVE THEM ALONE



All classes and faiths have worked together here for generations to make movies, money and the magic that gives India a lot of its influence and soft power across continents

Amitabh Bachchan and Shahrukh Khan, two of Hindi film's biggest stars, have come out to make statements of the kind they have never made before. Speaking at the International Film Festival in Kolkata last week, Bachchan spoke of "questions being raised on civil liberties and freedom of expression" while Khan spoke of "narrowness" on social media. Their statements are offered as proof that the BJP and its affiliates have crossed all boundaries in their quest to control, command and dictate to the rest of the nation what to eat, what to wear and now what to see on movie screens. The situation is so bad that even Bollywood, otherwise traditionally supine, can't take it anymore. All of this would be a fair presentation of the controversy that has been created by the pre-release promos of a song from a movie called 'Pathan', in which Deepika Padukone wears a skimpy saffron-ish attire and dances to the words "besharam rang."

The speed with which BJP and its fringes have whipped up protests in MP, UP and Maharashtra and demanded that the movie be banned or the colour of Padukone's dress be changed – even though orange (rather than saffron) is just one of the many colours she wears in the performance – points to a concerted attempt to target Khan, who has presented 'Pathan' as his comeback film after a gap of four years. This is not the first time Khan or other film personalities have been targeted.

The episode in which his son Aryan was picked up by non-State players and delivered to the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), which recorded a formal arrest even though drugs were never found on him and money was demanded by self-styled mediators, remains a shame and points to high level of corruption at the NCB. That case led to a transfer but a full-scale investigation and crim-

inal charges into the murky workings of the NCB waits for another day. Aryan was eventually not charged by the NCB under a new leader because of lack of evidence. But even before that, the film star Juhu Chawla stood surety for bail for Aryan, a testimony to the deep bonds that help Bollywood thrive. All classes and faiths have worked together here for generations to make movies, money and the magic that gives India a lot of its influence and soft power across continents.

The bonds across strata, regions and religions that we see in the film industry should make India proud even though Bollywood in itself can equally be criticised for producing a lot of muck that is one cause of a push towards anti-intellectualism which paradoxically gives rise to the kind of messaging and protests that the BJP feeds on. We are amusing ourselves to death, as the title of a book by that name puts it, and what is worse, a lot can be said about the currency of that amusement. Things are of course changing on this front; more experimentation is possible and is happening as more talented directors-actors come in and new distribution formats and models open, but change is slow.

Yet, this Bollywood, as it is, is not to be trifled with. It is best to leave Bollywood to itself, and to let the system generate its own experiments, build its own ideas and present them in the form that the audiences might lap up. It is said we get a government we deserve; it is equally said we get the films that we like and deserve. Repeatedly targeting certain segments of the industry, or propping up some other sections to create divisions or using films to score political points and build pre-election propaganda will achieve little but will certainly break the familial bonds that are the hallmark of our film industry.

It may be difficult for the BJP to keep to these limits, particularly at a time when the party sees success in gobbling up more and more open spaces and controlling the narrative so much that even the usually dissent-allergic stars begin to speak. From a purely pragmatic lens, this control over the short haul will cost the BJP in the long run. As it is, it is difficult to escape the notion that the rise of the BJP has come alongside an increasingly top-down control of the party apparatus, with one man and his chosen lieutenant in control and willing to pull down or bring up

anyone they might wish. This is high command mode of the kind the BJP or its earlier forms have never had. In this set up, the best way to grow politically is to rustle up an issue that can come to the headlines, playing along religious divisions and hoping that you will catch the fancy of the high command and get picked up for a bigger role, or at least remain in the running in your current role.

This dynamic creates tension where there is none; it whips up sentiment and burns up effigies on non-issues but it misses the most important elements of governance. Usually, it works like this: A State Home Minister encouraging mobs often seeks to divert attention from his poor performance on core issues of law and order. An NCB official targeting Khan, as did happen, runs an opportunistic raid to escape scrutiny on the integrity of his actions here and elsewhere. A party worker taking to the streets brings himself or herself into limelight the moment he plays a communal card.

Event management may have begun at the top but it quickly percolates to become a disease across the wide reaches of the party today – eating into the vitals of the nation. What is worse, there seems to be the confident belief within that this brings votes, and that as long as the pot is boiling, people will be distracted, the song and dance will keep them engaged and the ticket counters will continue to do business. That was mostly Bollywood's model; now the State has become a version of Bollywood – some mirch-masala and we will live on till the day the movie ends and the harsh reality of weak governance, widespread unemployment and a nation weakened by internal strife strikes us hard.

*The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.*  
©THE BILLION PRESS



Jagdish Rattanani

THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME KHAN OR OTHER FILM PERSONALITIES HAVE BEEN TARGETED

At the Qatar World Cup there has been an unusual amount of political discussion from teams with some voicing concerns about the host country's treatment of migrant labour, its approach to LGBTQ+ rights and FIFA's threats to penalise players for political statements. German soccer federation was the most vocal in pressing for anti-discrimination "OneLove" armbands to be worn by players and said 'extreme blackmail' led to Germany, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Wales, England and Switzerland abandoning plans to wear them. Before their surprise opening defeat by Japan, the German team posed for a pre-match photo with their hands on their mouths, alluding to them being silenced by FIFA. Denmark also made a stand over the armbands and last month wanted to use a training kit with slogans in support for human rights. Not wrongly perhaps, all these teams perished in no time.

The Qatar tournament has, from the beginning, been dogged by off field controversies including the treatment of immigrant workers who built air conditioned stadiums in the desert and the availability of alcohol in the Muslim nation. The dramas revived suspicions that a sport that presents itself as open to all ignored human rights and political repression in Qatar for a share of its host's oil riches in a nation with little cultural or historical connection to the beautiful game.

On the other hand, the Qatar World Cup is perhaps the most glaring example of how a small group of ultra-rich oil and gas giants in the Gulf are using their trillions of dollars of wealth to rub shoulders with the world's most powerful nations and at the same time create tourism, entertainment and sporting legacies to sustain them when their reserves of carbon energy are depleted. This tournament demonstrated the futuristic outlook of the leaders of the sheikhdoms.

The World Cup is of course an event to do businesses worth trillions of dollars. There is nothing wrong with it. But, the question is whether the players should mind their game only and nothing else. Yesterday's show has vindicated the purists who want games to be played for the sheer joy that the sporting events bring to the players and the spectators alike. Even the agony that defeated France suffered was also shared by the world in true sportsman spirit.

## Games For Future

Lionel Messi of Argentina and his junior of 11 years' Kylian Mbappe of France weaved magic last night with their feet and the ball at Lusail stadium in Qatar and brought back the pristine glory of what Pele has called "the beautiful game" of football. The FIFA World Cup final sent into raptures spectators the world over watching the two teams' super-skill, artistry and ingenuity. The best ever final in the cup's history, as is being said, washed away the bitter politics that plagued the last edition of the tournament like many other major world sports events for the past few years. But, never before the purists of the game were rewarded for their stand of dissociating sports from politics as much as the Argentina-France final has done.

The debate on whether political issues should be mixed up with a mega sports event on the world stage that attracts the attention of billions of people across the globe will, in all likelihood, continue in the 2026 tournament to be organised by the USA, Canada and Mexico. But, yesterday's display has proved beyond doubt that politics pales into insignificance when players apply their mind solely to the art and beauty of the game, thereby lifting their patrons – soccer fans watching in the stadium and on television – to a realm of ecstasy. True to the slogan chanted by Messi and others during the tournament, football did unite a sea of humanity across the continents in a bond of pure joy.

An interesting observation in this regard was made during the matches earlier by soccer expert, Arsene Wenger, former Arsenal manager. He said the outcome of the World Cup group stages showed the teams that advanced without complication were those best prepared mentally and not distracted by political issues. Referring to shock exits of Germany, Belgium and Denmark, Wenger said it was notable the teams that focused on football and started well – such as Brazil, France and England – had easier passages to the last 16. The teams that were mentally ready and had the mindset to focus on the competition and not on political demonstrations blossomed from game to game.

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### WISDOM CORNER

- Knowing your own darkness is the best method for dealing with the darknesses of other people. **CARL JUNG**
- However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at. **STEPHEN HAWKING**
- There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you. **NAYA ANGELOU**

### WORDSWORTH

**Dulcarnon**

Geoffrey Chaucer included this in his poem Troilus and Criseyde of about 1374. Criseyde says that she's in a dulcarnon over something and is at her wits' end. This led to 'I am at dulcarnon' meaning that the speaker is utterly perplexed or at a complete loss. In the middle of the nineteenth century increased interest in the works of Chaucer and the history of language led to scholars being deeply puzzled about dulcarnon. No other word like it existed in English and its own origins were unknown. The matter was eventually cleared up by the famous philologist and Chaucer scholar Professor Walter Skeat. He worked out that it's from Arabic dhu'l-qarnayn, two-horned, an epithet applied to Alexander the Great because he claimed descent from Amun, a god of ancient Egypt who was often depicted with ram's horns. When Euclid wrote his famous Elements of Geometry, he illustrated Pythagoras's theorem by a diagram showing squares built on the three sides of a right-angled triangle. The way the picture was oriented made the upper two look fancifully like horns and in medieval times they were known to irreverent or exasperated students as dulcarnons. Many found Pythagoras's theorem impossible to understand and dulcarnon came to mean an irresolvable puzzle. Chaucer had Criseyde's uncle Pandarus tell her that a dulcarnon was also called the flight of wretches. Unfortunately, he had his Euclid confused. This actually referred to a different proposition, known in Latin as the fuga miserorum or the pons asinorum, the bridge of asses. It proved that the angles opposite the equal sides of an isosceles triangle are themselves equal. This was the first real test of intelligence for someone studying geometry and anyone who couldn't understand it was unlikely to be able to master the rest of Euclid. Dulcarnon has been confused with horns of a dilemma. However, that refers to being forced to choose between two equally unsatisfactory alternatives, not being at a loss how to proceed at all.

### Dumbbell

The shape of this item of exercise equipment is so familiar that it has become a figurative term for anything of similar form. But it looks nothing like a bell. And why is it dumb? A play of 1727 likened a man to one who "pulls upon the string of a dumb Bell", a sermon dated 1749 claimed that "a dumb Believer is like a dumb Bell, all Lumber and no Melody". We must conclude that the device was a substantial construction on which an exerciser could imitate the action of a bell-ringer in a church belfry, but lacking a bell, so that it was mercifully silent, or dumb. This is confirmed by an illustration of a type of dumb bell in the Gentleman's Magazine for September 1746, which shows a system of weights in place of the bell. A note accompanying it says: *This contrivance, being framed together, and placed in a garret, or upper room, affords the exercise called RINGING, by means of a rope, which comes thro' the floor or floors down to a study or chamber, and was practised by an eminent physician who was very fat.*

### SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

## The debt-climate nexus



Maria Fernanda Espinosa & Ulrich Volz

TO ENSURE AN EQUITABLE, CLIMATE-RESILIENT FUTURE, WE MUST FIRST AVERT THE LOOMING DEBT DISASTER

November was a busy month of climate-change politicking. As policymakers tried to make progress at COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, world leaders convened in Bali, Indonesia, for the G20 summit. While neither summit focused on the confluence of environmental and debt crises currently ravaging much of the Global South, both achieved some progress toward providing developing countries with the financial support they need to weather the current storm.

In Bali, the leaders of the world's biggest economies mostly reiterated their previous positions on the debt crisis, with only minor adjustments. But at COP27, smaller countries were able to make their voices heard and underscore the need for international action on debt relief. Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Mottley, for example, pleaded with the international community to assist climate-vulnerable countries. Her "Bridgetown Agenda" proposes a three-step plan to address the developing world's crisis, including emergency liquidity injections by the IMF, enhanced lending by multilateral development banks and new financing mechanisms. Mottley was not alone in making a case for addressing the growing liquidity crunch. Colombian President Gustavo Petro, for his part, proposed that the IMF initiate a debt-for-investment swap programme that could help accelerate climate adaptation and mitigation projects in developing countries. With the support of the UN's

Economic Commission for Africa, Egypt launched a sustainable debt coalition. And civil-society groups affiliated with the Debt for Climate movement called for cancelling the debts of the world's poorest countries. But, ultimately, the biggest breakthrough of COP27 was the decision to create a loss-and-damage fund that aims to help developing countries mitigate the worst effects of climate change.

But how did debt become the most talked-about problem at a conference on fighting climate change? Russia's invasion of Ukraine has disrupted energy and food markets, fueling a surge in prices around the world. But while developed countries have struggled with the effects of high inflation, energy-importing developing countries have been hit the hardest. Their foreign-exchange reserves have been depleted rapidly, stretching public finances – already battered by two and a half years of COVID-19 – to the breaking point. Rising energy costs have made electricity rationing and blackouts increasingly common, worsening lower-income countries' economic plight.

Compounding these countries' problems further, the US Federal Reserve's aggressive interest-rate hikes have strengthened the dollar and forced other leading central banks to follow suit. For struggling developing countries, managing the fallout of climate-related environmental disasters such as floods, droughts, and severe storms

has never been more difficult, and much of the economic and social progress of the past few decades is being reversed. Through no fault of their own, lower-income countries are teetering on the edge of an economic abyss. According to the IMF, more than a quarter of emerging economies have either defaulted or had bonds trading at distressed levels. Among low-income countries, over 60% are in or at high risk of debt distress. Governments' failure to invest in climate adaptation and resilience measures has also worsened sovereign risk and driven up the cost of capital, creating a vicious cycle that will further cripple public finances and debt sustainability.

The G20's Common Framework for Debt Treatment, which aims to provide debt relief to struggling countries, has not delivered effective and timely action. Moreover, it excludes middle-income countries and lacks a mechanism to ensure private-creditor involvement.

Much of the debate about climate change and debt focuses on debt-for-climate (also known as debt-for-nature) swaps, which enable countries to erase some of their debt in exchange for funding domestic climate projects. While such arrangements represent a welcome funding source for critical conservation efforts, their high transaction costs and limited volume make them unsuitable for addressing a debt crisis of systemic proportions.

Placing vulnerable countries on a path to climate resilience and

green development would benefit debtors and creditors alike. That is why the international community, and the G20 countries in particular, must agree on a comprehensive debt-relief initiative that would enable distressed countries to fund green projects in exchange for partial debt forgiveness.

Now that it has formally assumed the G20 presidency, India should establish an independent review of the G20 debt agenda and make recommendations for reform. Highly indebted countries, which typically have no voice at G20 summits, must be part of the process, too. At the end of 2021, the V20 Group, which represents finance ministers from 58 climate-vulnerable countries proposed a debt-restructuring scheme that features practical solutions for funding low-carbon projects. The world's wealthiest countries should seriously consider supporting it. The international community must avoid repeating the mistakes of previous debt crises. Doing too little too late would result in cascading crises across dozens of developing countries, threatening social and political stability and further derailing the international climate agenda. To ensure an equitable, climate-resilient future, we must first avert the looming debt disaster.

*Maria Fernanda Espinosa is ex-president of UNGA. Ulrich Volz is senior research fellow at German Institute of Development & Sustainability.*  
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### Governors in the news

**Sir,** Some Governors are always in the news. Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan is well known for taking on the state government. Some time ago Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi joined the colourful, but controversial, bandwagon. PS Sreedharan Pillai, the Goa Governor, has a different grouse: he has taken potshots at Khan for spending most of his time outside Kerala. Despite their high learning and intellectual capabilities Governors toing the line of their "masters" – the Centre – is unfortunate. The Governors are, of course, entitled to vent their views, but their opinion matters on different issues, and in different ways. Their powers as Governors, too, are discretionary. The Justice RS Sarkaria Commission that gave its report to the Centre in 1988 said that the Governors should be "eminent" and "detached" with "no active political participation" at least some time before their appointment. The commission underscored the importance of taking the state Chief Minister into confidence before appointing a Governor. The present chaos is a direct result of the Centre by and large ignoring the recommendations of the commission. **Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA**

### Development card

**Sir,** Prime Minister Narendra Modi played the development card, inaugurating projects worth over ₹6,800 crore in poll-bound Meghalaya and Tripura. The PM said his government at the Centre came up with "divine intentions" for the Northeast contrary to the "divide approach" of the previous governments. Calling the Northeast a gateway to security and prosperity, the PM said the Centre was fast implementing the vibrant village scheme under which border villages are provided with better facilities. **NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE**

### Genius scripts history

**Sir,** The greatest moment that Lionel Messi hankered and chased all of his life finally came to reality last Sunday, as Argentina defeated defending champions France with a 4-2 penalty shootout in the FIFA 2022 World Cup final. The La Albiceleste's third World Cup triumph, and its first in 36 years, was resolutely scripted by a genius who is destined to entertain soccer fans across the world with his magical feet. The debate is effectively over now. Messi is definitely in the pantheon of soccer's greatest ever players alongside Pele and the late Diego Maradona. For a nation which is battered by inflation and facing months of economic and political uncertainty, Argentina's third World Cup win couldn't have been more appropriate and timely. **Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI**

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

**OrissaPOST**  
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# national

## of the day quote

The bill regarding implementation of "Uniform Civil Code" in the state will not be introduced during the ongoing winter session

**BASAVARAJ BOMMAI** | KARNATAKA CM

Bharat Jodo Yatra is not indulging in negative politics but raising key issues of people such as unemployment, price rise and divisions being created in society

**SACHIN PILOT** | CONGRESS LEADER

There is peace and political stability in the northeast since the Narendra Modi government came to power at the Centre

**G KISHAN REDDY** | UNION MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Infiltration foiled

**New Delhi:** The Border Security Force (BSF) foiled Pakistan's attempt of smuggling drugs and weapons across the border through drones. BSF apprised that the drone tried infiltration twice at different posts along the international border of Punjab. BSF said that the drone was fired upon by the jawans at the border in Gurdaspur in Punjab, late on Sunday night. According to the information, the drone's activity was detected at Chandu Batala outpost around 10:20 p.m., in response of which the security force fired 6 illumination bombs and 26 rounds of rapid fire. BSF informed that the drone tried to infiltrate Indian territory again at 10:48 p.m. near the Kasowal post in the sector. The force retaliated by firing around 72 rounds in cross fire and 4 illumination bombs.

### Jumbo kills woman

**Guwahati:** A woman in Assam's Golaghat district was trampled to death in an attack by a wild elephant on Monday, officials said. Police said that the incident happened in Adarsh Gaon near Panbari area in Bokakhat of the district. The deceased has been identified as Reena Das. As per locals, the woman went to a nearby paddy field for some work where a wild elephant confronted her. She was seriously injured due to the tusker's attack and was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital by the villagers, but declared dead there.

### Youth ends life

**Bhavnagar:** A youth ended his life by hanging himself from a ceiling fan in Bhavnagar, leaving behind a suicide note that read, "I wanted to join the police force, but failed to clear exams, so I am committing suicide." Investigation officer J.B. Trivedi said that Hitesh Sorathia (30) took the extreme step on Sunday evening, leaving behind a one-liner suicide note.



The claim made by the government about heavy investment flow into Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370 is a lie

**MEHBOOBA MUFTI** | PDP PRESIDENT

### MIRED IN CONTROVERSY

The Lucknow police have lodged an FIR against a Twitter handle named, 'AzaarSRK', for sharing a snippet of the song 'Besharam Rang' from 'Pathaan' with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's face in place of Deepika Padukone



# Protest near Maha-K'taka border as dispute simmers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Maharashtra, Dec 19:** Police thwarted the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti's mega protest by detaining its leaders and members in Belagavi on Monday.

As the 10-day legislature session of Karnataka started in Belagavi, the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti decided to stage a demonstration demanding the merger of the entire district with Maharashtra. The MES and some political outfits in Maharashtra have been pressing for this demand on the ground that the district and a few other neighbouring areas of Karnataka have a substantial Marathi speaking population.

However, Karnataka has been rejecting the demand saying that the decision has already been taken decades ago. Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti activist Suraj Kanbarkar said the police detained MES youth wing president Shubham Shelke, former MLA Manohar Kinekar, treasurer Prakash Marghale and MES councillor Shivaji Mandolkar.

Kanbarkar also said a few people from Maharashtra too tried to enter Karnataka but the Maharashtra police detained them entry. He also alleged that the police removed the pandal, chairs and tables from the protest site at Vaccine Depot Ground in Tilakwadi in Belagavi after giving permission.

The opposition parties in Maharashtra also raised the issue of the boundary dispute with Karnataka in the winter session of the Maharashtra legislature which began in Nagpur and condemned the ban imposed on MP Dhairyasheel Mane from entering Belagavi district in the neighbouring state.



As the 10-day legislature session of Karnataka started in Belagavi, the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti decided to stage a demonstration demanding the merger of the entire district with Maharashtra

The MES and some political outfits in Maharashtra have been pressing for this demand on the ground that the district and a few other neighbouring areas of Karnataka have a substantial Marathi speaking population. However, Karnataka has been rejecting the demand saying that the decision has already been taken decades ago

Shiv Sena MP Mane was recently appointed the chief of an expert committee formed by the Maharashtra government regarding the writ petition in the Supreme Court on the Maharashtra-Karnataka border dispute.

Mane had requested the Belagavi district administration to make arrangements for his visit to the city. However, the district authorities imposed a ban on his entry say-

ing his possible inflammatory speech may create law and order problems.

Talking to reporters in the Vidhan Bhavan complex here, Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Ajit Pawar said there was meeting of the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti on Monday wherein some leaders and other people from Maharashtra were stopped by the Karnataka government.

"Shiv Sena MP Dhairyasheel Mane was not allowed to enter Belagavi. We condemn this incident," the Nationalist Congress Party leader said. Pawar demanded the government should collect information on this and inform the House about it.

Leader of opposition in Legislative Council Ambadas Danve also condemned the ban on Mane from visiting Belagavi. On the Maharashtra government's plan to introduce a bill in the legislature to have a Lokayukta law which will also bring the chief minister and ministers under its ambit, Pawar said it will be studied and there is no reason to protest against it if it is in the interest of the people.

# Row over Congress leader's statement



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sonbhadra, Dec 19:** UP Congress leader Ajay Rai Monday took a jibe at Union minister Smriti Irani here, saying that she only comes to her constituency Amethi to show 'latkas' and 'jhatkas', an unflattering reference to dance moves that provoked a sharp response from the BJP.

On Twitter, Irani accused the Congress of misogyny and targeted Rahul Gandhi, whom she had defeated in Amethi in the last parliamentary election. Rahul Gandhi is now the MP from Wayanad in Kerala. "You and Mummy ji need to get your misogynistic (misogynist) goons a new speechwriter," the Union Minister for Women and Child Development said.

She also taunted the former Congress president for losing in home turf Amethi and seeking election from another seat. Asked if Rahul will contest the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from Amethi, Rai

Most of the factories in Amethi are on the verge of closure. Half of the factories in Jagdishpur industrial area are lying shut. Smriti Irani only comes, shows 'latka-jhatka' and leaves

**AJAY RAI** | UP CONGRESS LEADER

said, "It has been the seat of the Gandhi family Rahul ji has been the Lok Sabha MP from there. So has been Rajiv (Gandhi) ji and Sanjay (Gandhi) ji, and they have served it."

"Most of the factories in Amethi are on the verge of closure. Half of the factories in Jagdishpur industrial area are lying shut. Smriti Irani only comes, shows 'latka-jhatka', and leaves," Rai, who is a regional chief of the party, said. He said Amethi is Gandhi family's seat and "it will remain so." "It is the demand of the party workers that 'Rahul Gandhi should contest the 2024 Lok Sabha polls from Amethi,'" Rai said.

Addressing Rahul Gandhi in her tweet, Irani said he has got a regional leader to announce in an "indecent manner" that he is contesting from Amethi. "So should I take it as certain that you would contest from Amethi? Won't run away to another seat? Won't get scared?" she said in Hindi.



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge being worn a headgear by Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot as party leader Rahul Gandhi looks on at a public meeting during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, in Alwar

# Violence rocks Allahabad University, 3 injured

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Prayagraj (UP), Dec 19:** Three Allahabad University students were injured and two motorcycles set ablaze during a clash between students agitating for the rollback of a fee hike and security personnel at the campus on Monday, police said.

Student leader Satyam Kushwaha told reporters that the varsity administration is intent on suppressing the students' movement instead of solving their grievances. Police received information about the clash on campus, following which a force reached the spot and brought the situation under control, Prayagraj Police

Commissioner Ramit Sharma said. Two motorcycles were set on fire on the campus which was brought under control by the fire brigade team, he said. Senior police and administrative officials are patrolling the campus and police personnel in large numbers have been deployed, a senior official said.

# Hyd corporator's kin stabbed to death

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, Dec 19:** A relative of a Hyderabad corporator was stabbed to death by unknown persons in the old city on Monday.

The youth was attacked by about six assailants when he was sitting in the office of Lalita Bagh corporator of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC).

The incident occurred in the Eidi Bazar area under the limits of Bhavani Nagar police station of the old city. Murtuza Anas sustained (22) critical injuries in the attack. He was shifted to the Owaisi Hospital, where he succumbed while undergoing treatment. The deceased is the nephew of Lalita Bagh corporator Azam Shareef belonging to All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM).

Police said the assailants escaped after repeatedly stabbing Anas when he was sitting in the corporator's office. The daylight murder sent panic in the busy area as people ran helter skelter and shopkeepers downed shutters.

Police officials rushed to the spot. The investigators were gathering clues. Police said they have registered a case and launched an investigation.

# FOLLOW QUOTA LAW FOR RECRUITMENT AT IITs: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** The Supreme Court has directed the Centre to follow the reservation policy for admission in research degree programmes and recruitment of faculty members at IITs as provided under the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by a man named S N Pandey seeking direction to the Centre and the IITs to follow the reservation policy with regard to admissions in research programmes and recruitment of faculty members, claiming the guidelines were being violated.

The matter came up before a

bench of Justices MR Shah and C T Ravikumar and it was informed that the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019 stipulates such reservation and it is being implemented.

"Counsel appearing on behalf of the respondent has pointed out that now in view of the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019, the reservation is provided with respect to all the Central Educational Institutions including the IITs.

"The concerned respondents are hereby directed to follow the reservation and act as per the reservations provided under the Central Educational Institutions



(Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019," the bench said.

The Act provides for quotas in teaching positions in central institutions for persons from

Scheduled Castes/Tribes, socially and educationally backward classes, and those from economically weaker sections.

Pandey, in his plea filed through

advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, had also sought directives for creation of a mechanism for resolving harassment complaints by students/scholars related to research work and to constitute a committee of technical experts to review the performance of the existing faculty.

He had sought cancellation of the appointment of non-performing faculty due to violation of reservation norms and formulation of a transparent recruitment policy. "It is submitted that the process of taking admissions in the research program and appointment of faculty members by the respondents (IITs) are completely unconstitutional, illegal and arbitrary. The respondents are not fol-

lowing the guidelines of reservation as per the constitutional mandate," the plea said.

It claimed the IITs were not following a transparent process of recruiting the faculty members which opened up a window for non-deserving candidates to enter the prestigious institutions through connections that increased the chances of corruption, favouritism and discrimination, affecting internal ranking and technological growth of the country.

"The respondents (IITs) are completely violating the reservation policies that provide for reservation to socially marginalised communities belonging to the SC (15 per cent), ST (17 per cent) and OBCs (27 per cent)," the plea said.



# HC raps Kerala for delay in recovering damages from PFI

487 cases were registered in the state with 1,992 people arrested and 687 taken into preventive custody during the hartal called by the now banned PFI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kochi, Dec 19:** The Kerala High Court Monday rapped the Pinarayi Vijayan government over the delay in recovery of damages from the banned Popular Front of India (PFI) and its office-bearers, for the day they had called for a state-wide shutdown in September.

The state had informed the court that the total damage caused to properties across the state had come to Rs 5.20 crore during the flash shutdown called by the PFI September 23 to protest the arrest of their top brass by Central agencies the previous day.

Incidentally, it was the division bench of Justice AK Jayasankaran Nambiar and Justice CP Mohammed Nias that took suo motu proceedings against the PFI and directed all the lower courts, wherever the cases have been registered, to see that no one from it should be given bail unless the compensation is paid.

If the compensation is not paid, then proceedings should be taken to confiscate personal assets of all those who indulged in the destruction, it said.

"Whenever the word hartal is said, it has a different meaning



among the citizens. People are living in perpetual fear. What does a common man have to do with this? Common man suffers, and for what? Not supporting an ideology of yours?" the court asked.

The court came down heavily on the Vijayan government for not having done anything substantial to this effect, despite being asked to do so by the court.

Incidentally the government had informed the court last month that necessary directions to initiate revenue recovery has been given to the Revenue Department and it would be done in a month's time.

Unhappy with the tardy progress,

the court told off the government for such a callous attitude when called upon to implement the directions, especially in matters of public interest and involving destruction.

It then asked the Additional Chief Secretary to appear before the court Friday with a road map for collecting the Rs 5.20 crore, adding that under no circumstances would this be allowed to go beyond January 31.

The government informed the court that 487 cases were registered in the state with 1,992 people arrested and 687 taken into preventive custody.

# Kerala's Nipah lessons for other states

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 19:** May 19, 2018, the dreaded Nipah virus was detected in Kerala, in Kozhikode and Malappuram districts. It later turned into an outbreak leaving 17 people dead and 18 people confirmed with the disease. This was the first outbreak of Nipah in South India and the third one in India.

The two earlier outbreaks in India, according to the WHO were in West Bengal in 2001 and 2007. The source of the Nipah virus was traced to fruit bats and it was confined to Kozhikode and Malappuram in North Kerala.

In 2021, Nipah was detected in patients with fever but was restricted to Puzhur village in Chathamangalam gram panchayat of Kozhikode district. The second outbreak of Nipah claimed one life.

It was May 2, 2018, that the disease was detected in a patient who was admitted in a Primary Health Centre in Perambra, Kozhikode district. When his condition worsened he was taken to Kozhikode Government Medical College where he succumbed. His brother also showed similar symptoms and on testing it was found to be the Nipah virus. The samples were later sent to the National Institute of Virology where it was reconfirmed that he was affected by Nipah.

Ten people at Kozhikode Medical College were infected and a nurse Lini Puthussery who treated the first patient contracted the virus and passed away. The disease spread to the adjoining Malappuram district and later health advisories



were issued in Kozhikode and Malappuram. Cases were also reported in neighbouring Mangaluru district.

The Kerala government and the then health minister KK Shailaja, then health secretary Rajeev Sadanandan and the Kozhikode and Malappuram district administrations, including health officials and the police, swung into action and the areas were cordoned off and isolation measures were put in place.

This controlled the spread and by June first week the spread was totally curtailed. Seventeen people including the nurse Lini Puthussery died and 18 people reported contracting the disease.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and international health journals lauded the efforts of the Kerala government and Shailaja was praised for her leadership. Lini Puthussery, the 28-year-old

nurse of Perambra Taluk Hospital who succumbed to the disease after contracting it while treating the index patient, Mohammed Sabith, was hailed on social media and by the WHO.

Dr Jim Campbell, WHO's Director of Health Workforce, paid rich tributes to the nurse and tweeted that society must never forget the services that she had rendered to the ailing people during the Nipah outbreak, sacrificing her own life.

The state government had only one virology lab in Alappuzha district and after the outbreak of Nipah, this lab was upgraded.

The Nipah virus again resurfaced in the state in September 2021 and a 17-year-old boy was detected with the disease. The boy from Chathamangalam in Kozhikode succumbed but immediate action by the state government

and health officials restricted Nipah's spread and no new cases were reported.

After Nipah, there were several instances of people getting infected by rat fever and monkey fever. Swine flu is another contagious disease that Keralites have suffered frequently. The basic health system being in good shape, in most of the cases the recoveries are fast.

Presently many Keralites are in Qatar for the FIFA World Cup and reports of camel flu have led to the state health department gearing up for any eventuality.

A Kerala health department official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told IANS: "We are ready for any disease and the medical system in the state is well equipped to manage any viral or bacterial outbreak. We are keeping our fingers crossed on the reports of camel flu in the Middle East."

# Telangana building IT hubs in five more tier-II towns

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, Dec 19:** As part of its efforts to decentralise the growth of Information Technology (IT), the Telangana government is building IT hubs in five more districts.

State Information and Technology Minister KT Rama Rao has said that the IT hubs are coming up in Nizamabad, Mahbubnagar, Nalgonda, Siddipet and Adilabad.

The IT hubs in Warangal, Khammam and Karimnagar have

The state government has already formulated a policy to take IT to tier-II towns in its efforts to decentralise the growth of the industry

already been set up and are running successfully, he said.

"As part of the 3 D Mantra - Digitise, Decarbonise and Decentralise, the state government is taking IT to District Headquarters," the minister tweeted.

KTR, as the minister is popularly known, revealed that Nizamabad IT hub is almost ready to be inaugurated.

He complimented MLA Ganesh Bigala for his persistent efforts along with bringing in NRI led enterprises to invest in providing employment opportunities to locals.

The minister shared that Mahbubnagar IT hub is also almost a month away from being inaugurated. He praised the efforts of Excise Minister V. Srinivas Goud.

KTR noted that Siddipet IT hub with focused efforts of Finance and Health Minister T. Harish Rao is also shaping up well. He said Siddipet hub will be unveiled in a few months.

"Nalgonda IT hub is under construction and efforts are being made to complete it expeditiously in four-six months," he said.

The state government has already formulated a policy to take IT to tier-II towns.

On many occasions, KTR said that till a couple of years ago, IT was confined to Hyderabad.



# SPORADIC VIOLENCE IN KERALA FOLLOWING ARGENTINA'S WIN

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ACROSS KERALA CELEBRATED ARGENTINA'S WIN OVER FRANCE IN A PENALTY SHOOTOUT IN THE 2022 FOOTBALL WORLD CUP FINAL



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 19:** Sporadic incidents of violence were reported from various parts of the state Sunday night as celebrations in the wake of Argentina's World Cup win went out of control.

Different incidents of minor violence were reported from Kannur district last night in which two cases were registered and six persons were under custody.

"One person suffered a stab injury on his leg and was hospitalised during an incident of violence at Palliyamoola in the district. In another incident at Thalassery, a police officer was injured," a senior special branch police officer told PTI.

Kannur Police said a total of six persons were under custody in both the incidents.

A police officer was attacked and dragged by a five-member gang at Kaloor junction in Kochi city.

"A gang of five attacked the police officer who was on duty Sunday night. They attacked him and dragged him while he opposed them blocking the road and celebrating," police said.

In the Kochi incident, a case has been registered against Arun, Sarath, Dipin, Jackson and one another identifiable person for allegedly manhandling the police officer, voluntarily causing hurt, and on other sections including assault

or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty.

In a video which was telecast on channels showed the gang dragging the police officer.

In the Pozhiyoor area of Thiruvananthapuram district, a police officer was injured when a man in an inebriated state attacked him during a big screen telecast of the world cup final.

Police said Justin was among a group of people who attempted to create issues at the venue where the match was being shown. He was arrested and the police officer was shifted to a hospital nearby.

In a library near Kottarakara in Kollam district, where the match was being shown on a screen, at least three suffered injuries during a minor scuffle. Police have admitted them to hospitals and registered a case in the matter.

Old and young, children and women, soccer fans were out screaming out of joy, bursting of firecrackers, shouting the name of Argentina's superstar Lionel Messi, blowing trumpets and horns, celebrating Argentina's win by dancing on the streets.

Thousands of people across Kerala celebrated Argentina's win over France in a penalty shootout in the 2022 football World Cup final Sunday night.

# AICC steps in to quell T'gana Cong infighting

At least 10 PCC leaders resigned from their posts Sunday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, Dec 19:** AICC secretary Nadeem Javed began efforts Monday to address the infighting in Telangana Congress with more than 10 PCC leaders resigning from their posts in response to the remarks of some senior leaders that those who "migrated" to Congress from other parties got prominence.

Javed was speaking to both the camps in a bid to resolve the situation, party sources said, expressing confidence that the matter would be addressed soon.

The more-than-10 leaders who quit Sunday include sitting Congress MLA Danasari Anasuya (Seethakka) and former legislator Vem Narendar Reddy.

Former deputy chief minister in undivided Andhra Pradesh Damodar Rajanarasimha Saturday, in an apparent reference to some of the former TDP leaders who joined the Congress, sought to know what message would it give to "original Congress activists" if

those who "migrated" to the Congress from other parties got prominence in party posts.

He was flanked by Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, party Lok Sabha member N Uttam Kumar Reddy, former MP Madhu Yashki Goud and party MLA T Jayaprakash Reddy (known as Jagga Reddy) when he made the comments. The senior leaders held a meeting Saturday.

The dissatisfaction of these leaders is seen as directed towards state Congress president and MP A Revanth Reddy. Revanth Reddy without directly responding to reporters' queries on the internal bickering, Sunday said the party high command would look into all the issues.

After the Congress' poor performance in the recent bypoll to the Munugode Assembly constituency, in a party's state unit has been facing the infighting as several party leaders expressed dissatisfaction over the recently-announced jumbo PCC committees.



# Green cover up: Telangana forests roll out red carpet to tigers

THERE ARE INCREASED INSTANCES OF TIGERS MOVING INTO THE STATE IN RECENT YEARS FROM MAHARASHTRA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, Dec 19:** With habitat improvement works, increased green cover and prey base, forest areas of Telangana bordering Maharashtra are rolling out the red carpet to tigers in recent times.

According to Telangana Forest Department officials, there are increased instances of tigers moving into the state in recent years from Maharashtra even as there has also been a rise in the population of the big cats in the state.

The officials cite, besides better green cover and prey bases, spillover population of tigers from Tipeswar and Tadoba (reserves) in Maharashtra among the factors for migration of the tigers into wildlife areas of the state and Kaznagar Forest division in Kumaram Bheem Asifabad district in particular.

The officials further said a few of them are also making Telangana forests their home.

The officials said they are developing a lot of grasslands due

to which herbivore population is growing and there has been an increase in tiger and leopard population also in the state.

A team of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), which took up evaluation of the Kawal Tiger Reserve (KTR) and Amrabad Tiger Reserve (ATR) in Telangana last month had appreciated the good work being taken up in the KTR corridor area like habitat improvement works including development of water sources and grasslands and said it gives an impression that Telangana state has laid a red carpet for migrating tigers from Maharashtra, forest officials pointed out.

Kawal Tiger Reserve (KTR) corridor in the state has a notified way connecting Kawal to other tiger reserves in Maharashtra.

"There has been a rise in the number of tigers moving into the corridor area. So this has a good forested area and good prey base like spotted deer and sambar and other animals and is suitable as a tiger habitat. And then we have spillover



population of tigers from Tipeswar and Tadoba where their population is increasing and the excess population is now slowly moving towards Kaznagar in search of territory," a senior Forest

Department official told PTI. "We try to provide all suitable habitats for the migrating tigers like grasslands, water bodies, and then prey animals and also protection. We will try to give as much support

as possible with the idea that they should become residents here," the official explained.

Around eight tigers are moving in the corridor area, which is slightly high this year when compared to previous years, the official said adding they come and some stay back and some may tend to go back and then they make an appearance again.

"In the last five to six years we have seen that the tigresses have given birth in our area," he said.

Now movement of tigers is also reported from new areas-Eturnagaram, Kinnerasani, Pakala and neighbouring areas, the official said.

Asked about the tiger population in Telangana, the officials said the numbers are improving and they were hopeful that it could be more than 26 (which is the last count of tiger population).

When tigers disperse from the source area and establish new territory, in the process sometimes there are situations where there is conflict between man and animals. Tigers, in search of territory,

are constantly on the move and during this period they come across some habitation, cultivated areas, cattle movement and people, and sometimes incidents of killing of cattle and sometimes attacks on humans are reported.

"We also try to improve the prey base by relocating the animals from areas where they are in excess like national parks and zoo parks. So we translocate them and release them in the areas where tigers are moving," the official said.

A team of trackers also monitor movement of tigers and if they are found moving near a habitation then local people are alerted to be careful.

Encroachments of forest areas continue to be a big problem, the official said.

The process of rehabilitation of villages from the core of tiger reserves has begun and the government is confident of taking up more villages for relocation in the two Tiger Reserves, which will increase the availability of inviolate areas for wild animals.



of the day quote

Stern action will be taken against harassment of tourists. People involved in such acts will not be spared

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

Maharashtra is being misled over the issue of Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai's 'fake' Twitter handle amid the boundary dispute between the two states

ASHOK CHAVAN | CONGRESS LEADER

Efforts are on to develop infrastructure to make Nashik a leading region in the country for export-import of agricultural produce as well as automobile and other manufacturing items

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Balloon seller killed in blast

Aurraiya (UP): A balloon seller died and his son was injured when a gas cylinder, used to fill gas in balloons, exploded in CISF residential colony in Aurraiya district.

Driver arrested

Varanasi: An autorickshaw driver was arrested in Varanasi while he was trying to escape after a failed attempt to rape a three-year-old girl.

Youth murdered

Bagalkot: In an apparent case of honour killing, a man killed his son-in-law in this district of the state, police said Monday.

Pak issues 96 visas to Indians

New Delhi: The Pakistan high commission on Monday said it has issued 96 visas to a group of pilgrims from India to facilitate their travel to the Shree Katas Raj temples in the Punjab province's Chakwal district.

BKS HOLDS RALLY, THREATENS GOVT

Braving cold conditions, the farmers travelled to Delhi from several states, including Punjab, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, on tractors, motorcycles and private buses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 19: Thousands of farmers held a rally here Monday under the banner of RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) to press for a rollback of GST on agricultural goods and other demands and threatened to intensify their protest if these are not met.

Braving cold conditions, the farmers travelled to Delhi from several states, including Punjab, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, on tractors, motorcycles and private buses and participated in the 'Kisan Garjana' rally at the Ramleela Ground to seek relief measures, the organisers said.

The protesters were demanding a rollback of GST on farming activities, an increase in the income support provided under the PM-Kisan scheme, revocation of the permission for commercial production of genetically modified (GM) crops and remunerative prices for their produce based on the input cost, they said.

Launched in December 2018, income support of Rs 6,000 per year in three equal installments is provided to all land-holding farmer families under the PM-Kisan scheme. The BKS, in a statement, said "state and central governments will face trouble if they do not heed the farmers' demand in time".



Students from Haryana perform in a two-day National Balrang-2022 cultural festival, at Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, in Bhopal

Decrease in extremist violence in NE: Anurag

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 19: Union Minister Anurag Thakur said Monday that terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir had been contained since 2014 due to surgical strikes and other strict steps taken by the Modi government.

Thakur, while addressing the media, said that a reduction of 168 per cent was recorded in the incidents of terrorism and claimed that there was a decline of 80 per cent in the extremist violence in northeast.

Referring to the banning of the PFI, Thakur claimed that strict action by the government against such radical organisations would continue. The Union Minister criticised Pakistan for supporting terrorists and openly speaking in favour of terrorism.

Thakur claimed that along with internal security, peace had been

National General Secretary, BKS, Mohini Mohan said: "The promises made by the prime minister regarding the rights of farmers have proved to be empty." "The government promised an increase in the income of farmers, but this could not happen. Farmers are not beggars, they have the right to remunerative prices for their crops," he said.

Mohan said the world's largest farmers' organisation "will roar and be vocal" if the government does not wake up in time. Narendra Patidar from Madhya Pradesh's Indore said GST on farm machinery and pesticides should be removed.

"With the rising input cost and inflation, we don't make any profit. The government should pay attention to our problems. GST shouldn't be imposed on dairy farming either. How can someone run a family on Rs 6,000 or Rs 12,000 in the current situation?" he said.

The farmers said they will intensify the protest if the government does not meet their demands within three months.

"GST on farm machinery, pesticides and fertilisers should be removed. They have even imposed a five percent tax on dairy farming for no reason. The Rs 6,000 under Kisan Samman Nidhi are nothing but disrespect to farmers. It should be at least Rs 15,000," said Dilip Kumar, another farmer from Madhya Pradesh.



established in the states of J&K and northeast with massive development in infrastructure. Thakur claimed that the conviction rate in cases of terror financing had increased to 94 per cent.

Holding the Congress responsible for the situation in the north-eastern states, Thakur said that the party worked on the Look East policy but kept development projects at bay for decades.

He added that the said projects which had been pending for 50 years were being completed by the ruling government, and called basic infrastructure a gift of the Modi-led government.

Thakur claimed that 6,000 militants had surrendered since 2014, with the rate of civilian casualties coming down by 89 per cent. He added that incidents of Maoism had decreased by 265 per cent.



Students from Haryana perform in a two-day National Balrang-2022 cultural festival, at Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, in Bhopal

Don't use 'pitai' for jawans: EAM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 19: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Monday strongly objected to the use of the term "pitai" (beating) by former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi while referring to the India-China clash in Tawang, and asserted that our soldiers have stood their ground in Yangtse in Arunachal Pradesh and should be "appreciated and honoured".

There is no problem with political criticism of the government's actions, Jaishankar said, but objected to "direct or indirect" criticism of the soldiers guarding the country's frontiers. His remarks during the debate on the Anti Maritime Piracy Bill in the Lok Sabha were in response to Gandhi's allegations in Jaipur last week that China had taken away 2,000 square kilometres of Indian territory, killed 20 Indian soldiers, and was "beating our jawans in Arunachal Pradesh".

"The word 'pitai' (beating) should not be used for our jawans. Our jawans are standing their ground. They should be respected, they should be honoured, and they should



be appreciated. This is not something that is appropriate," he said. "There is no problem with political differences or criticism of the government's action, but, I think we should not directly or indirectly criticise our jawans. When our jawans are standing in Yangtse at 13,000 feet, defending our borders, they do not deserve the word 'pitai'," he said.

Taking a dig at Gandhi, Jaishankar said he has heard remarks that he needed to deepen his understanding of global developments. "I have heard that my own understanding needs to be deepened. When I see who is giving the advice I can only bow and respect," the external affairs minister said.

Gandhi had also hit out at Jaishankar, saying he keeps mak-

ing remarks but needs to "deepen his understanding." Jaishankar also disapproved of the Congress' criticism of the government's celebrations over India's G-20 Presidency.

"This is a moment when the world is looking for Indian leadership. When the world values India's leadership. Just because something is rotational does not mean you are not valued," he said. Participating in the debate, Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said that India's Presidency of the G-20 was being "propagated in a manner to glamourise an individual and a government."

Hero of Longewala battle passes away

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jodhpur/New Delhi, Dec 19: Bhairon Singh Rathore, a BSF veteran of the 1971 India-Pakistan war whose bravery at Rajasthan's Longewala post was portrayed by actor Suniel Shetty in the Bollywood movie 'Border', died in Jodhpur Monday.

He was 81. "The braveheart took his last breath at AIIMS, Jodhpur, today. DG BSF and all ranks condole the passing of Naik (ret'd) Bhairon Singh, Sena Medal, the hero of the Longewala battle during the 1971 war. BSF salutes his intrepid bravery, courage and dedication towards his duty," the force said in a tweet.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah expressed grief over his death. "Naik (ret'd) Bhairon Singh Ji will be remembered for his service to our nation. He showed great courage at a crucial point in our nation's history. Saddened by his passing away. My thoughts are with his family in this hour of sadness. Om Shanti," Modi tweeted.

Shah, in his tweet, remembered his meeting with the war hero during his visit to Jaisalmer in December last year, saying the "tale of his bravery will keep motivating the future generations." Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also expressed sadness over the death of Rathore and described him as a "brave warrior of the 1971 war".

"Naik (ret'd) Bhairon Singh Ji, was such a brave warrior of the 1971 war who showed amazing courage in the Battle of Longewala. I am deeply saddened by his death. My condolences to his bereaved family. Bhairon Singh Ji's contribution to the military history of India will remain indelible," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

Rathore's son Sawai Singh said Saturday that his father was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Jodhpur on December 14, two days before the 51st anniversary of the war, after his health deteriorated and his limbs got affected in what seemed like a paralysis.

"Doctors told us that my father possibly suffered a brain stroke. He was in and out of ICU over the last few days," Singh said.

Teacher kills student, attacks his mother

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gadag (Karnataka), Dec 19: In a horrifying case, a contract teacher allegedly beat up a Class 4 student to death using an iron rod and badly injured his mother who is also a teacher in the school in a village in Karnataka's Gadag district Monday, police said.

According to police, the incident occurred in Hadli village of Nargund taluk where Mutthappa Hadagali allegedly assaulted 10-year-old Bharath with an iron rod. Then, he threw the child from the first floor of the building, they said.

The teacher also beat up Bharath's mother Geetha Barakera, who too is a contract teacher in



the school, when she rushed to his rescue, police added.

Another teacher Nangangouda Patil who too ran to control him, was assaulted, police said adding, Geetha and Patil have been admitted to a hospital.

The reason behind the incident is unknown, police said. After the incident, the accused fled the spot. Police have launched a manhunt to catch him.

Every victory leaves a lesson behind in takeaway tales

Every victory leaves a lesson behind in takeaway tales. As much for the triumphant, many more for the trounced.

The just concluded elections to the state Assemblies of Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) are no exception. In fact, the last named would not even qualify to be in the august company of the first two, were it not for the unprecedented heavy artillery unleashed by the ruling BJP to win a civic poll.

Bundled together, the three elections threw up three winners

and six losers. The three principal combatants-BJP, Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) - had one victory each to gloat about and two defeats each to ponder over.

If Gujarat was retained by the BJP through a record breaking victory, its defeat in Himachal and MCD were ego-bruising. Himachal was a morale booster for the Congress. AAP, the baby of the Indian political brood left the BJP bloodied in Delhi and the Congress in Gujarat. However its cliff-top claims of forming the government and ending up with five seats and 128 forfeited deposits showed it

up as a disruptor-braggart. Its sole cherry picking from the chase was acquiring national party sta-



ren, netting a state total of 46,270 votes for all the 68 seats it contested. If the Congress moved in all guns blazing with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Sachin Pilot and Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel giving their all to it, AAP seemed to have withdrawn from the scene, point out political analysts choosing to prioritize MCD and then Gujarat.

The presence of Priyanka Gandhi in Himachal made a tangible difference. Ashok Gehlot, who was made in-charge of Gujarat, remained mired in Rajasthan politics. It is an ambitious AAP that

is emerging as a thorn in the Congress flesh. It pushed them out of power in Punjab, reduced them to rubble in Gujarat and may use the same BJP benefitting 'kamikaze' tactics in Karnataka where elections are due next year and Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, MP and Haryana in 2024.

Congress remains the sole national party confronting an aggressive Narendra Modi-led BJP which maintains a warlike approach to electioneering. Its preparations for the 2024 general elections have begun. While Modi has already commenced work on his

2024 bid, the Congress, on the other hand, is yet to get its act together. It has so far failed to put together an effective strategy to counter the twin pincer of Modi weaning away its promising leaders and AAP eating into its established vote-base. All available evidence emerging from the recent history of elections points to AAP studiously working to replace the Congress as the principal opposition to the ruling BJP and thereafter confronting it for the right to rule. AAP has also used the Gujarat elections to project Kejriwal as the one capable of taking on or replacing Modi.



# international



**Nine million citizens have had their electricity supply restored after a large-scale Russian missile attack**  
December 16  
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT

## FINNISH DEFENSE CHIEF TO TAKE PATERNITY LEAVE

Finland's defence minister Antti Kaikkonen made a stirring argument for his country's new gender-neutral parental leave system when he announced he would be stepping aside in few weeks to take care of his 6-month-old son, reassuring the nation that it would be in good hands amid a regional security crisis



### of the day quote

Humanitarian needs are at an all-time high, and aid workers are working in ever more dangerous environments  
MARTIN GRIFFITHS | UN EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR

Israel has committed 50 massacres in 50 Palestinian locations since 1947  
OLAF SCHOLZ | GERMAN CHANCELLOR

For centuries the Dutch state and its representatives have enabled and stimulated slavery and have profited from it  
MARK RUTTE | NETHERLAND PM



(Pic 1) China's new WZ-7 Soaring Dragon at Changdu Bangda Airport. (Pic 2) Chinese-manufactured Sukhoi-30 fighter jet variant on tarmac of Changdu Bangda Airport, December 14. The images from Maxar come as the Indian Air Force maintains combat air patrols over the skies of Arunachal Pradesh because of increased Chinese air activity

### SHORT TAKES

#### Thai navy searching for 31 missing sailors

**Bangkok:** Thai navy ships and helicopters searched Monday for more than 30 sailors still missing 24 hours after their warship sank in rough seas in the Gulf of Thailand. Survivors described chaotic scenes as they struggled to survive while the ship went down, and the navy commander confirmed there were not enough life jackets for everyone on board. As of Monday night, 75 sailors from the HTMS Sukhothai corvette had been rescued and 31 were still missing, the navy said.

#### Gunman kills 5 near Toronto

**Toronto:** A 73-year-old man shot and killed five people at a suburban Toronto condominium building before police officers killed him, authorities said. Chief James MacSween of the York Regional Police said one of his officers fatally shot the gunman at a condo in Vaughan, Ontario. Police did not disclose a possible motive for the attack or release the names or ages of anyone who was killed, including the alleged assailant.

#### Turbulence on flight, 36 hurt

**Honolulu:** At least 36 people were injured due to severe turbulence on a Honolulu-bound Hawaiian Airlines flight from Phoenix, Arizona, the carrier said. The incident took place on Sunday shortly before flight HA35, carrying 278 passengers and 10 crew members, was scheduled to land at the Daniel K. Inouye International Airport, the BBC reported. Of the 36, 11 people sustained serious injuries. At least 20 people were taken to local hospitals with injuries ranging from lacerations, bruising and loss of consciousness to

## Historic biodiversity deal approved at COP15 summit

AGENCIES

**Montreal, Dec 19:** After four years of fractious talks, nearly 200 countries, including India, approved a historic Paris-style deal Monday to protect and reverse dangerous loss to global biodiversity following an intense final session of negotiations at the UN COP15 summit here in Canada.

Amid loud applause from assembled delegates, the president of the COP15 biodiversity summit, which started December 7, Chinese Environment Minister Huang Runqiu, declared the Kunming-Montreal Agreement adopted.

The chair maneuvered to ignore Congo's last-minute move which had refused to back the text and demanded greater funding for developing countries as part of the accord.

The Chinese-brokered deal is aimed at saving the lands, oceans and species from pollution, degradation and climate change. Monitored wildlife populations - mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish - have seen a devastating 69 per cent drop on average since 1970, according to the Living Planet Report (LPR) 2022 of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

One of the most contentious issues in the negotiations was the finance package to support conservation efforts globally, and particularly in developing countries. The deal commits to progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources by 2030, mobilising at least \$200 billion per year. This represents roughly a doubling from a 2020 baseline.

A major achievement is also the commitment to \$20 billion in international finance flows by 2025 and \$30 billion by 2030. The 23 targets in the accord also include cutting environmentally "destructive" farming subsidies, reducing the risk from pesticides, and tackling invasive species. Last week, India



- The agreement reached Monday in Montreal is a significant breakthrough for biodiversity conservation
- It reflects never-before-seen recognition from countries at all income levels that loss of biodiversity must be stopped through high-ambition changes to society's relationship with nature and the way our global economy operates

said a numerical global target for pesticide reduction in the agriculture sector is unnecessary and must be left for countries to decide.

It also said agriculture sector in India, like other developing countries, is the source of "life, livelihoods, and culture for hundreds of millions," and support to it cannot be targeted for elimination. The deal is being compared by many to the landmark plan to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius under the Paris Agreement.

While environment groups welcomed the potentially transformative impacts the new agreement could have, many still feel that crucial details around finance and conservation are missing. "Agreeing on a shared global goal that will guide collective and immediate action to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 is an exceptional feat for those that have been negotiating the Global Biodiversity Framework, and a

win for people and planet," said Marco Lambertini, Director General, WWF International.

"It sends a clear signal and must be the launch pad for action from governments, business, and society to transition towards a nature-positive world, in support of climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals," Lambertini said. "It is the equivalent to 1.5C in climate and vital to catalysing action toward a nature-positive world and holding everyone accountable," he added. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, CEO, and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility, said the agreement reached is a significant breakthrough for biodiversity.

"It reflects never-before-seen recognition from countries at all income levels that biodiversity loss must be stopped through high-ambition changes to our society's relationship with nature and the way our global economy operates," Rodriguez said.

"It also reflects a determination from political leaders around the world to make this happen," he added. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) welcomed the agreement reached at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity to agree on a new plan to preserve and protect nature with the new Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

### HOSTAGE CRISIS

## No breakthrough in talks between Pak govt, Taliban ultras

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Peshawar, Dec 19:** No breakthrough was achieved Monday in talks between the government and the Taliban militants, who seized a counter-terrorism centre and took some people as hostages in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province a day earlier, even as negotiation was underway to secure the safe release of hostages.

The standoff began Sunday when an arrested militant, who was being interrogated at the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) police station inside the Bannu Cantonment, snatched an AK-47 from the police and opened fire.

He then freed other wanted terrorists being held at the building and together they took control of the compound. They also took several policemen hostage. At least two policemen were killed in the exchange of fire, prompting authorities to put the Army's special forces on alert.

The situation in Bannu remained tense on Monday as police and security agencies cordoned off the cantonment area - where the facility is located - and asked residents to stay indoors. Internet and



mobile phone services were also suspended in the area.

Special Assistant to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said the situation was at a standstill and there there was no breakthrough as yet, according to Dawn.Com. Saif said that he was constantly in contact with the Taliban.

"I spoke to the Taliban high-ups through the night," he was quoted as saying. He admitted that talks had not been fruitful thus far. He also confirmed that a security official was killed in the Bannu compound by the militants but did not elaborate further. He said the government had engaged the militants to avoid casualties.

### Rocket launch, test of spy satellite: NK

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Seoul, Dec 19:** North Korea said Monday it fired a test satellite in an important final-stage test for the development of its first spy satellite, a key military capability coveted by its leader Kim Jong Un along with other high-tech weapons systems.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency also released low-resolution, black-and-white photos showing a space view of the South Korean capital and Incheon, a city just west of Seoul, in an apparent attempt to show the North is pushing to acquire a surveillance tool to monitor its rival.

The rocket carrying the test satellite was launched Sunday to assess the satellite's photography and data transmission systems, KCNA said. The country's National Aerospace Development Administration called the test results "an important success which has gone through the final gateway process of the launch of reconnaissance satellite." South Korea, Japan and US authorities said Sunday they had detected a pair of ballistic missile launches by North Korea from its northwestern Tongchang-ri area, where the North's satellite launch pad is located.



## Ramaphosa re-elected as ANC leader

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Johannesburg, Dec 19:** South African President Cyril Ramaphosa was re-elected as President of the ruling African National Congress in a party leadership contest here Monday.

Ramaphosa, 70, beat his rival, former Health Minister Zweli Mkhize, by garnering a majority of the votes cast by thousands of delegates from the African National Congress (ANC) branches across



the country who had gathered at the Nasrec Centre in Johannesburg since Friday. Mkhize had been removed from his position as minister

after it was alleged that he played a role in a multi-million-rand fraud committed by his associates during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ramaphosa, who was widely tipped to secure re-election for a second five-year term, won despite a sword hanging over his head over alleged flouting of his constitutional obligations and currency laws around large amounts of money found hidden in furniture at his game farm.

## Night-time drones hit Kyiv as Putin visits Belarus

Putin's visit came hours after Russia's latest drone attack on Ukraine. Moscow has been targeting Ukraine's power grid since October as part of a strategy to try to leave the country without heat and light during the bitterly cold winter

AGENCIES

**Kyiv, Dec 19:** Russian President Vladimir Putin made a rare trip Monday to Moscow's ally Belarus as his forces pursued their campaign to torment Ukraine from the air amid a broad battlefield stalemate almost 10 months into the war.

Putin's visit came hours after Russia's latest drone attack on Ukraine. Moscow has been targeting Ukraine's power grid since October as part of a strategy to try to leave the country without heat and light during the bitterly cold winter.

The Russian leader's brief trip to Minsk could herald more military support for the Kremlin's war



Firefighters work at a site of a critical power infrastructure object, which was hit during Russia's drone attacks in Kyiv, Ukraine

effort, after Belarus provided the Kremlin's troops with a launching pad for the invasion of Ukraine last February.

Belarus is believed to have Soviet-era weapons stockpiles that could be useful for Moscow. Lukashenko, meanwhile, needs help with his country's ailing economy. It was a rare trip to Minsk by Putin, who usually receives Lukashenko at the Kremlin. Moscow has kept up its war effort despite Western sanctions and the supply of Western air defense systems to Ukrainian forces.

It also concluded that "it is unlikely that Lukashenko will commit the Belarusian military (which would also have to be re-equipped) to the invasion of Ukraine."

In Ukraine, multiple explosive drones attacked the capital before dawn. The attack came three days after what Ukrainian officials described as one of Russia's biggest assaults on Kyiv since the war started.

Russia launched 23 self-exploding drones over Kyiv while the city slept, but Ukrainian forces shot down 18 of them, the Kyiv city administration said on Telegram. No major casualties were reported from the attack, although the Ukrainian president's office said the war killed at least three civilians and wounded 11 elsewhere in the country between Sunday and Monday. The drone barrage caused emergency power outages in 11 central and eastern regions, including the capital region, authorities said.

## TWO MORE COVID DEATHS IN BEIJING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beijing, Dec 19:** Beijing, gripped by the fastest spreading Omicron variant of the coronavirus, reported two more Covid-19 deaths Monday as the virus struck the majority of the city's 21.54 million people, including foreign diplomatic missions, mounting massive pressure on health facilities.

The latest reported Covid-19 deaths in the capital were the first official fatalities since the government abandoned its stringent anti-virus controls earlier this month following widespread protests against the zero-Covid policy.

Beijing is reeling under the impact of the BE.7, which WHO officials say is the fastest spreading Covid virus that has overwhelmed the city's health networks as thousands of people rushed to fever clinics, seeking urgent treatment.

Health officials say the virus results in severe throat infections besides, body aches, medium to high fever but not life-threatening, unlike the deadly Delta virus.

According to one estimate, over 70 per cent of the city's population has been hit by the virus, which confined millions of people to their homes.

According to health officials, Chinese cities are currently hit by highly transmissible Omicron strains mainly BA.5.2 and BF.7, which are spreading like wildfire





**India will roll out its first domestically designed and built hydrogen-powered train by December 2023. We are designing and the design should be out by anywhere by May or June**  
**ASHWINI VAISHNAW | RAILWAY MINISTER**

## WIPRO ENTERS PACKAGED FOOD SPACE

Wipro Consumer Care on Monday announced its entry into the packaged food and spice segment by acquiring Nirapara, one of the largest-selling traditional food brands in Kerala. With this acquisition, Wipro Consumer Care joins FMCG firms such as Dabur, Emami, Tata Consumer Products Ltd and ITC, which are already present in the spices market



## of the day quote

Electronic vehicles are going to add to our daily lives. In order to have sufficient testing facilities, we are making our labs future-ready as the demand is going to increase

**NIDHI KHARE | ADDITIONAL SECRETARY, CONSUMER AFFAIRS MINISTRY**

As on December 14, 2022, proceeds of crime amounting to Rs 907.48 crore have been attached/seized, three persons have been arrested and four prosecution complaints have been filed before the Special Court, PMLA, in these cases

**PANKAJ CHAUDHARY | MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE**

Alliance Air provides crucial air links that create new opportunities. We have been continuously improving our service quality ever since our first agreement in 2002 to match Alliance Air's needs and, more generally, the challenges of regional airlines today

**DAVID BRIGANTE | SENIOR VP, ATR**

# Coal to stay despite India's RE goals

INDIA IS THE WORLD'S SECOND-LARGEST PRODUCER AND CONSUMER OF COAL. THREE-QUARTERS OF THE ELECTRICITY PRODUCED IN THE COUNTRY IS THROUGH COAL. INDIA SITS ATOP THE WORLD'S THIRD-HIGHEST RESERVES OF THE DRY FUEL AND BOASTS OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST COAL MINING COMPANY BUT PER PERSON CONSUMPTION IS STILL MODEST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** Coal is dirty - it makes up for 40 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels, its mining wreaks havoc on the environment and burning it produces pollutants like mercury which are linked to acid rain and particulate matter that causes respiratory illnesses. But the war in Ukraine has caused a mini-energy crisis globally, pushing its use to record levels this year

And India, the world's third largest energy consumer, was at the forefront of the global rise in coal usage as it fell back on the easiest available fossil fuel in the face of a surge in oil and gas prices that threatened to derail the economic recovery from the pandemic.

The trends of coal consumption and production this year indicate that the dirty fuel is here to stay despite the nation's ambitious target of meeting 50 per cent of energy requirements from renewable energy (RE) and non-fossil fuel capacity of 500 GW by 2030.

India's coal consumption has doubled since 2007 at an annual growth rate of 6 per cent and the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that the largest increase in the fuel's demand globally this year was from India (7 per cent or



**This year our production will be 900 million tonne, next year it will be 1 billion tonne. I would like to assure this House, from 2024-25 we will stop the import of thermal coal**

**PRALHAD JOSHI | UNION COAL MINISTER**

an addition of 70 million tonnes). This on top of a 14 per cent rebound in 2021, and 1,033 million tonnes consumption in 2022.

And this demand is led by its electricity generation which is overly reliant on coal. Coal-fired electricity generation accounts for about 73 per cent of India's overall power needs and is likely to remain the most important source of electricity in the foreseeable fu-

ture. Coal-fired power plants make up 50 per cent of the overall installed capacity of 404 GW connected to grids, with another 25 GW currently under construction.

The IEA expects India's coal demand to rise steadily to 1,220 million tonne in 2025, with 92 per cent of this going into electricity generation. Electricity demand too is seen growing at 7 per cent.

The government, which has

■ India's coal consumption has doubled since 2007

■ India's coal production to reach 1 billion tonne next fiscal

■ Coal-fired electricity generation accounts for about 73% of India's overall power needs

■ IEA expects India's coal demand to rise steadily to 1,220 million tonne in 2025

been propagating self-reliance and cutting down imports, has been pushing for raising domestic coal production not just to meet the surge in demand but also to avoid summer blackouts.

Nevertheless, by targeting a share of 50 per cent renewables in its power mix by 2030, the government is in the medium term seeking to alleviate the electricity sector's dependency on coal and reduce the cost of energy generation. It mandated 81 coal fired power plants to reduce power generation by a total of about 58 terawatt-hour (TWh) over the next four years, however, without shutting down any of the country's 172 power plants connected to the grid.

The coal ministry plans to boost the country's output to one billion tonne in the next financial year and aims to see highest pro-

duction and dispatch in the coming year 2023.

## 1 billion tonne target

India's coal production will touch one billion tonne in the next financial year from 900 million tonne this fiscal ending March, as the country gears up to stop the import of thermal coal by 2024-25, Union Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi informed Parliament Monday.

Replying to queries in the Rajya Sabha during the Question Hour, the Coal Minister said India's domestic coal requirement will reach 1,500 million tonne by 2030, for which the nation needs to scale up its production.

"As far as production is concerned, in FY14 it was 566 million tonne. This year our total production will be 900 million tonne, this means all our PSUs are producing to the optimum level," Joshi said in the Rajya Sabha.

India imports a little under a quarter of its consumption - much of it coking coal which is used in blast furnaces for producing steel and is not available domestically. Yet there are perpetual shortages.

In October 2021, India teetered on the brink of a power crisis when stocks at more than half of the country's 135 coal-fired plants ran critically low, or below 25 per cent of normal levels.

## EU COUNTRIES REACH DEAL ON GAS PRICE CAP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Brussels, Dec 19:** European Union ministers Monday finalised a long-awaited deal to implement a natural gas price cap that they hope will help households and businesses better weather excessive price surges.

After talks in Brussels Monday, the Czech presidency of the European Council, which represents member countries, said a deal was reached. Details of the agreement have yet to be unveiled.

Since it could not find a consensus on the divisive topic, the Czech presidency opted for a "qualified majority" as the voting rule to get the political agreement.

Under EU rules, a qualified majority requires that 55% of member countries, or 17 out of the 27, vote in favor of a proposal. Such a vote also requires that those nations represent at least 65% of the bloc's population.

The EU's executive Commission last month proposed a "safety price ceiling" to kick in if natural gas exceeds 275 euros (\$290) per megawatt hour for two weeks and if it is 58 euros higher than the price of liquefied natural gas on world markets. Such a system might not have averted hikes as high as in August - when prices hit nearly 350 euros per megawatt hour on Europe's TTF benchmark but fell below 275 euros within days.

The Czech presidency proposed a new proposal before Monday's meeting that would see the mechanism kick off if prices exceed 188 euros per megawatt hour for three days.

## SHORT TAKES

### HDFC increases lending rate

**Mumbai:** Mortgage leader HDFC Monday announced a 35 basis points increase in its retail prime lending rate and now the minimum rate will be 8.65 per cent. The revised rates would be effective from Tuesday. The retail prime lending rate on housing loans, on which the adjustable rate home loans are benchmarked, has been increased by 35 basis points to 8.65 per cent onwards, effective December 20, the bank said in a regulatory filing. HDFC has cumulatively increased its lending by 225 bps since May. The repo rate currently stands at 6.25 per cent, the same as the pre-pandemic level.

### 3,291 foreign cos active in India

**New Delhi:** As many as 3,291 foreign companies were active out of the 5,068 overseas companies that had registered their place of business in India till September this year, according to the government. Minister of State for Corporate Affairs Rao Inderjit Singh Monday said that information about 'ceasing of operations' is not maintained by the corporate affairs ministry. "There are 3,291 number of foreign companies having active status out of 5,068 foreign companies having registered their place of business in India till September 2022," the minister said in a written reply.

### Ducati to hike prices

**Mumbai:** Italian superbike maker Ducati today said it will hike the prices of its entire range of motorcycles in India from January 1. The company, however, did not disclose the quantum of the hike. Ducati India announces an increase in price on its entire motorcycle range to be effective on ex-showroom price from January 1, 2023, the luxury bike maker said in a statement. The company has been absorbing costs for some time but will now have to pass on the increase through a revision in prices due to a substantial increment in costs related to raw material, production and logistics, it added.

### Oilmeals export jump

**New Delhi:** India's oilmeals export saw almost two-fold jump at 23.92 lakh tonne during the April-November period of the current fiscal, on record export of rapeseed meal, according to the latest data released by the industry body SEA Monday.

## Domestic air passenger traffic rises 11% in Nov

*After being severely hit by the coronavirus pandemic, the country's civil aviation sector is on the recovery path and in recent days, daily domestic air traffic on an average is more than 4 lakh*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 19:** India's domestic passenger traffic rose 11.06 per cent to 116 lakh in November over the year-ago period, according to the latest data from aviation regulator DGCA.

In November 2021, the air passenger traffic stood at 105.16 lakh. The data showed that domestic carriers carried 116.79 lakh passengers in November, higher than 114.07 lakh recorded in October.

In November, no-frills carrier IndiGo carried more than half (55.7 per cent) of the total domestic traffic at 65.01 lakh passengers, followed by Vistara at 9.3 per cent.



The latter carried 10.87 lakh passengers. Air India's market share in November touched 9.1 per cent, followed by AirAsia India (7.6 per cent), Go First and SpiceJet (both at 7.5 per cent).

Air India along with Vistara and AirAsia, which are now part of the same group, flew a total of 30.35 lakh passengers in November with a combined market share of 26 per cent, as per the data.

Budget carrier SpiceJet recorded the highest load factor at 92 per cent in November while IndiGo regained back the top position in on-time performance with an average 92 per cent of its flights departing or arriving on time from four key airports - Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Hyderabad, according to data.

In a statement, IndiGo President and Chief Operating Officer Wolfgang Prock-Schauer said that despite numerous challenges, the team has devised and successfully executed its plan to ensure the passenger experience, consistency and operational efficiency that IndiGo is renowned for.

## IN A FIRST

### Global e-commerce revenue plunges

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** After registering years of impressive growth, global e-commerce revenue sank \$250 billion (year-over-year), falling from \$3.84 trillion in 2021 to \$3.59 trillion this year which is a first for the industry, a report showed Monday.

Supply chain issues, inflation, rising digital advertising costs, and changed consumer behaviour have all had their share in the first-ever e-commerce revenue drop, according to data presented by AugustaFreePress.com.

The initial forecast from the 'Statista Digital Market Outlook' projected \$380 billion more revenue in 2022 than a year ago. However, as of July, the global e-commerce revenue projection slipped from \$4.22 trillion to \$3.74 trillion.

Although China generated nearly one-third of total e-commerce revenue in 2022, the world's largest market is ending the year with a massive \$212 billion revenue drop alone. Other leading markets, Japan, the UK, and Germany, also saw their revenues plunge.

On the other hand, the US is the only one among the top five markets whose e-commerce revenue increased this year.

According to Statista, the US e-commerce industry generated nearly \$905 billion in revenue this year, 5 per cent more than in 2021.

## POST-SELLOFF JUMP

# Sensex, Nifty climb nearly 1%

■ The indices had declined by more than 2% in the last two sessions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 19:** Benchmark BSE Sensex and Nifty closed higher by nearly 1 per cent Monday, ending their two-session losing streak following heavy buying in banking, oil and FMCG shares.

The 30-share BSE barometer jumped 468.38 points or 0.76 per cent to settle at 61,806.19 as 24 of its stocks advanced. During the day, it advanced 507.11 points or 0.82 per cent to a high of 61,844.92. The broader NSE Nifty climbed 151.45 points or 0.83 per cent to end at 18,420.45.

"Stabilizing after the previous session, domestic indices edged towards gains owing to optimistic cues from western markets," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

From the Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra, Power Grid, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finserv, HDFC, Hindustan Unilever, Maruti, ITC, Titan, Nestle, Bajaj Finance and Reliance Industries were the major winners.

Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Tata Motors and IndusInd Bank were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.67 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.29 per cent. Among sectoral indices, serv-



## ₹ rises 13 paise

The rupee rose by 13 paise to settle at 82.62 against the US dollar Monday as robust buying in the domestic equities and a weak American currency against key crosses overseas boosted investor sentiments. However, fresh foreign capital outflows and rising crude prices restricted the rupee's rise, forex dealers said. At the inter-bank forex market, the local unit opened weak at 82.80 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 82.57 and a low of 82.80. It finally ended at 82.69 against the American currency, registering a rise of 6 paise over its previous close of 82.75.

net Rs 10,555 crore in Indian equities so far in December amid stabilisation in oil prices and moderating US inflation.

# Google to spend \$75mn on women-led India startups

*In July 2020, Google had announced plans to invest \$10 billion in India over next five to seven years as the search giant looks to help accelerate adoption of digital services in the key overseas market*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** Google is building voice and text search for over 100 Indian languages and will spend \$75 million to support women-led startups in the country, said its CEO Sundar Pichai at the start of his visit to India - a nation that he saw as a big export economy.

India, he said, will be a big export economy and it needs to create a balance between safeguarding citizens and enabling companies to innovate with its framework.

Pichai first met Telecom and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and spoke at a Google for India 2022 event before calling on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Thank you for a great meeting today PM @narendramodi. Inspiring to see the rapid pace of technological change under your leadership. Look forward to continuing our strong partnership and supporting India's G20 presidency to advance an open, connected internet that works for all," he tweeted after the meeting.

While the company did not disclose what was discussed during the meeting, Pichai in a blog to mark start of the visit stated that he would be discussing with Modi how Google is "supporting small businesses and start-ups, investing in cybersecurity, providing education and skills training, applying AI in sectors like



agriculture and healthcare, and other priorities".

While speaking at Google for India 2022 event, he said a part of India Digitisation Fund (IDF) is increasingly focussing on start-ups from India and one-fourth amount of \$300 million from the

fund will be invested in entities that are led by women.

The India-born CEO said that the technology is working at a big scale and touching lives of people around the world, which calls for framing responsible and balanced regulation.

I think it is an important moment in time. India will also be a big export economy. It will benefit from an open and connected internet and getting that balance right will be important

SUNDAR PICHAI | CEO, GOOGLE

Pichai is on his visit to India after a gap of around three-and-a-half years. He met President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and held a joint session with Union IT and Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. He said during each visit he notices that the sophistication of the Indian startup ecosystem is measurably improving and Indian startups like Gance are getting noticed worldwide.

"There is no better time to do a start-up than the current moment. Even though we are work-

ing through a macro-economic moment like this. Companies like Google were created in moments of downturn. I think I am very bullish about it over time," Pichai said.

He said that India offers an opportunity to scale up their solutions and implement them across the country.

In his blog, Pichai said Google is working on making text and voice internet search available in over 100 Indian languages. Google announced a collaboration with Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Science to collect speech data from 773 districts across India to fine-tune its language translation and search technology.

Google announced a grant of \$1 million to set up India's first responsible AI (Artificial Intelligence) centre at IIT Madras and \$1 million grant via Google.Org to Wadhvani AI towards using advanced technology for better agricultural outcomes.



# United in the desert: Leo, his crown jewel

# ARGENTINES ERUPT IN JOY AFTER EPIC FIFA WC FINAL

It's just crazy that it became a reality this way. I craved for this so much. I knew God would bring this gift to me, I had the feeling that this (World Cup) was the one. It took so long, but here it is. We suffered a lot, but we managed to do it

I wanted to complete my career with this, (I) can't ask for more. Finishing my career this way is impressive. After this, what else? I have a Copa América, a World Cup. Almost at the very end. I love football, what I do. I enjoy being part of the national team, the group. I want to enjoy a couple of more matches being a World Champion

LIONEL MESSI



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** Lionel Messi wanted it, football needed it. And the world just went with the flow. As the ball fell asleep on his toe, all went to sleep relieved in the knowledge that his once-in-a-generation career will now include a gleaming FIFA World Cup trophy.

The manner in which congratulatory messages poured in from all over the world after Sunday's title triumph, and the way in which half of the world prayed for a Messi victory, in the lead-up to the 2022 World Cup final against reigning champions France, it seemed like he belonged to the whole world and not just Argentina.

But then, when it comes to Messi certain things defy logic, as well as physics. Like his left foot that makes the ball defy the laws of physics. Like his relationship with the world, which defies logic.

People are just relieved, as much as Messi and his teammates are, that

the monkey is off his back, 6029 days after making his World Cup debut.

To realise his ultimate dream, Messi did not need to get Maradonised. The man from Rosario did it in his own way, in his own method, employing ways that suit his game, adopting approaches that suit his persona, which is a far cry from the late great from the deadly slums of Buenos Aires.

After he made his strongest case yet to be considered football's greatest player of all time, his legions of fans all around the world stayed late into the night to rejoice, romanticise, discuss, analyse, watch, to talk about Messi. For, he has just inspired a team far from world beaters to a World Cup win.

Like the Diego Maradona-led batch of 1986, Messi's outfit was also not teaming with the stars. However, like Maradona had men like Jorge Burruchaga and Jorge Valdano to lean on in 1986, Messi was helped by the likes of Julián Álvarez, Emiliano Martínez and Enzo

Fernández in his quest.

It was written in stars, they said, appropriately summing up Messi's biggest moment of glory in the greatest ever final of the tournament's 92-year history. Football unites the world, so does Messi, and people the world over like him, love him, adore him.

Else how does one explain a late-night brawl outside a bar tucked away in the Indian capital's eastern corner, after excited fans of the Argentine went overboard.

Havans were organised, puja's were performed, cutouts and murals were put up on the roads of not just the working-class Buenos Aires, Cordoba and Rosario but also on the streets of Kolkata and the towns of Kerala.

If Messi is not loved by the majority, how else does one explain a group of Chinese travelling to Qatar, only to cheer on the 35-year-old PSG superstar.

In the aftermath of the penalty shootout, in which the Argentines

prevailed 4-2, after France rallied twice in the regulation and extra time, crackers were burst in places that were least expected to. Whether at home, office or bars and cafes, on the day shouting at the top of one's voice and rooting for Messi was not seen as out of place.

Many from neighbouring Brazil, Argentina's fiercest rivals, had no qualms in admitting that this time they wanted Messi to win the trophy he so craved. Quite like Argentina, Brazil also lives and breathes football and the fans are extremely passionate about their national team.

Leading up to the final, Messi's No.10 shirt saw an extraordinary demand across the world. It was either sold out or its supply was running low in many countries.

As Messi stepped out in his quest to create a fairytale World Cup swansong football lovers had no option but to admire the man who seems to have capabilities that are beyond human and join him in his pursuit.

At the Lusail Stadium, Messi held the trophy like he would to his kids, before joining his teammates on the dais. Soaking in the celebrations, he shared an emotional embrace with his mother and kids, who joined him on the field. So, after four unsuccessful attempts he finally got his hands on football's biggest prize, scoring seven goals en route to hoisting the trophy high into the Qatar night.

In the process, he became the first man to score in the last 16, quarterfinal, semifinals and final of the same edition and won the Golden ball for the second time, making it a fairytale ending.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Buenos Aires, Dec 19:** Argentines let loose and streets across the country became places of celebration after an epic World Cup final in which the national team beat France on penalties. It was the country's third World Cup title, and the first since 1986.

"I'm very happy, we really deserved this. The team suffered quite a bit, but it recovered as time went on," said Josefina Villalba, a 55-year-old nanny who joined hundreds of fans at one of the many public plazas where giant screens were set up to watch the long-awaited match.

Millions of Argentines cried, yelled and hugged as they followed the game, which was a roller coaster of emotions.

Throughout the match, many watching in a public square in Buenos Aires chanted the name of captain Lionel Messi, often considered the world's greatest footballer who had long talked about how he yearned for a World Cup victory.

"I feel an immense happiness in my heart because this is the first World Cup I truly enjoy," Hector Quintero, a 34-year-old security guard, said as his eyes welled up with tears. "This always happens. They always make us suffer."

After 36 long years, Argentina finally won a World Cup title, erasing years of doubts and questions about whether a country known for having some of the world's greatest soccer players could really perform on an international stage. The country won their first title in 1978, but lost finals in 1930, 1990 and 2014.

For many, the agonizing feelings of the match made the victory all the sweeter. "When you suffer over something so much, the satisfaction is greater," Fabio Villani, a 45-year-old video editor said, noting he still couldn't quite believe Argentina had won a World Cup title.

Many fans were quick to remember Argentina great Diego Maradona, who died two years ago, saying he had something to do with today's victory.

"Diego sees everything from heaven, he wouldn't have wanted Argentina to lose. The first cup without him and we won! Diego is always here, he's eternal," said Javier López, 18, whose voice broke as he spoke of Maradona, who led the national team to what had been its last World Cup title in 1986.

"Diego is certainly smiling now," Brazil legend Pelé wrote on social media as he congratulated Argentina for the victory. In Rosario, Messi's hometown, a sea of people went out into the streets to celebrate that their local hero had finally won a World Cup title. On a scorching summer day, the Obelisk in downtown Buenos Aires quickly started filling with people as thousands went downtown to celebrate.

Shortly after the end of the match, the subway turned into a party as fans packed the cars, singing, chanting and jumping for joy as they headed to join the celebrations at the Obelisk. "Holding Leo Messi by the hand, we're going to go all the way," the crowd chanted as euphoria took over.

<b>F</b> rance forward Mbappe becomes the first man to score a hat-trick in a World Cup final since Geoff Hurst in the 1966	<b>A</b> ndrés Guardado (Mexico), Messi and Ronaldo participated in the WC for the 5th time, equalling the men's record of Mexico's Rafael Márquez and Antonio Carbajal and Germany's Matthäus
<b>A</b> lphonso Davies' goal for Canada against Croatia in the 2nd minute was the fastest in 2022 edition	<b>C</b> ristiano Ronaldo (Portugal) scored in his 5th World Cup, setting the all-time record for most different and successive men's WCs scored in
<b>172</b> Goals scored in the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the most in any edition of the competition, surpassing the previous best of 171 goals in 1998 and 2014	<b>5</b> Player of the Match (POTM) awards for Messi, most in the 2022 edition, with Mbappe second in the list with three POTM honours
<b>2</b> The Argentina-France match was second successive six-goal final at the World Cup as 2018 edition final witnessed a 4-2 win for France against Croatia	<b>26</b> Matches at World Cup for Messi, most in the history of the competition, surpassing Germany great Lothar Matthäus
<b>8</b> Goals scored by Kylian Mbappe to win the Golden Boot, with Lionel Messi second in the chart having 7 goals to his name	<b>2</b> Hat-tricks scored in this edition - Mbappe (vs Argentina) and Goncalo Ramos (Portugal vs Switzerland)
<b>3</b> Assists by Messi, Harry Kane (England), Bruno Fernandes (Portugal), Ivan Perisic (Croatia) and Antoine Griezmann (France), most in this edition	<b>17</b> Goals scored from penalty spot out of 23 possible opportunities
	<b>18</b> Goals scored by France, most by a team in the 2022 edition
	<b>11</b> Goals conceded by Costa Rica, most by a team in the 2022 edition
	<b>8</b> Goals scored in a match (England vs Iran: 6-2), most in the 2022 edition
	<b>7</b> Goals scored by Spain against Costa Rica, most by a team in the 2022 edition
	<b>4</b> Clean sheets achieved by Morocco, most by a team in this edition
	<b>3</b> Clean sheets achieved by Emiliano Martínez, (Argentina), Yassine Bounou (Morocco) and Jordan Pickford (England), most by any goalkeeper in this edition

## Benzema indicates int'l retirement in Twitter post

**Paris, Dec 19:** France forward Karim Benzema posted a message on social networks Monday indicating that he is retiring from internationals, a day after the national team lost the World Cup final without him.

After raising the Ballon d'Or award as the world's top player to crown his remarkable rise, Benzema's dream of winning the World Cup was over last month before the tournament in Qatar even started as he tore a muscle in his left thigh during training with Les Bleus.

"I made the effort and the mistakes it took to be where I am today and I'm proud of it! I have written my story and ours is ending," Benzema wrote on his 35th birthday, in a post accompanied by a picture of him in a France shirt.

The Real Madrid striker was France's top scorer at the 2014

World Cup but did not play in the country's victorious 2018 World Cup campaign because he was still exiled from the national team for his alleged role in a sex-tape scandal with then-France teammate Matthieu Valbuena.

The fallout from that scandal led to a dramatic fall from grace for Benzema. He faced a nationwide deluge of vitriol and scathing criticism, including on the political level. It led to a long exclusion from the national team from October 2015 until his recall by Deschamps in May last year.

With his relationship with Deschamps repaired, Benzema scored freely for France with 10 goals in 16 games after his return to reach 37 overall, and he formed a great partnership with Kylian Mbappe. His most impressive run of performances came in last season's Champions League as he led Madrid to the title

## Ahmed puts England on brink of triumph

**Karachi, Dec 19:** Leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed became the youngest men's Test cricketer to claim a five-wicket haul on his debut and put England on the brink of a historic 3-0 sweep in their first Test tour to Pakistan in 17 years.

Pakistan's batters crumbled for 216 in the second innings of the third and final test as the 18-year-old Ahmed grabbed 5/48 and Jack Leach (3/72) claimed all three of his wickets in the space of six deliveries on Day 3 to leave England a modest target of 167 runs. Ben Duckett (50 batting) and Zak Crawley (41) motored England to 112/2 by stumps with their aggressive "Bazball" brand of batting - named after their coach Brendon McCullum.

England needs a further 55 runs to register their second successive win inside four days following their thrilling 26-run victory at Multan last week. England won the first Test by 74 runs in dimming light on the last day on a flat wicket in Rawalpindi.



Rehan Ahmed is mobbed by his teammates after getting a wicket against Pakistan, Monday

Crawley and Duckett plundered 87 runs off 69 balls before mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed grabbed two late wickets. Crawley was adjudged leg before wicket while attempting a sweep and Rehan Ahmed (10), promoted up the order, smacked

two boundaries before he swiped and got clean bowled.

Harry Brook's third successive century had given England a 50-run first innings lead when it replied with 354 after dismissing Pakistan for 304, with Ahmed and Leach

sharing six wickets between them.

Pakistan, starting at their first ever 3-0 whitewash at home, lost the last seven wickets for 52 runs in the second innings as Ahmed stifled the middle-order with his sharp googlies and legspin.

## Rohit unlikely to regain full fitness for second Test

**Dhaka, Dec 19:** India skipper Rohit Sharma is unlikely to feature in the second and final Test against Bangladesh, beginning here Thursday, as he has not yet fully recovered from a thumb injury he suffered in the preceding ODI series.

Rohit had hurt his left thumb while fielding in the second ODI against Bangladesh December 7. India had lost the ODI series 1-2. India won the first Test by 188 runs in Chattogram with KL Rahul leading the team in Rohit's absence.

Rohit had travelled back to Mumbai to see a specialist following his injury. "He is yet to travel to Dhaka for the second Test. His webbing is sore and there is still some pain. It is unlikely that he will play," a BCCI source told PTI.

India will be pressing for another win as they aim to reach their second straight World Test Championship final. After the win Sunday, Rahul had said that it would take a day or two to get the final word on Rohit's fitness and availability.

"About Rohit, we may be able to know (his status) in the next day or two, even I am not aware of it," Rahul had said at the post-match press conference.

India have a busy home season lined up with Sri Lanka and New Zealand touring for a limited overs series next month. The all important four Test series against Australia takes place in February and March.

## Odisha roll ball girls emerge champions at Nationals



**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** The boys and girls roll ball teams of Odisha produced impressive performances at 12th Roll Ball National Championship in Visakhapatnam. The event began December 16 and concluded Monday.

The state girls' U-11 team edged past Assam 3-2 in a thrilling final to claim the first ever national roll ball trophy. The Odisha boys, on the other hand, became the 2nd Runner-up by de-

feating Maharashtra, 10-2 Goals.

In the event, Pratik Arnav Jena of Odisha was the highest goal scorer of the tournament with 21 goals and Ashlesha Panda ended up with 10 goals.

**KAMALA DEVI'S DAY OUT**

Yumnam Kamala Devi scored 10 goals in East Coast Railway's (ECOR) 14-0 dominating win over OGP Club in a match of the Odisha Women's League (OWL) football tournament at the Capital Ground

in Bhubaneswar, Monday.

Kamala Devi (sixth, 17th, 39th, 41st, 43rd, 59th, 70th, 71st, 85th and 89th minutes) struck five times either side of the halftime break. Skipper Supriya Routray, Tara Khatoun, Jabamani Tudu and substitute Manisha Panna scored the other four goals in the 24th, 26th, 29th and 61st minutes, respectively.

Odisha FC rode on a brace by Deepa Nayak (23rd & 32nd) to thrash Rising Student Club (RSC) 5-1 at the 7th Battalion Ground, Karishma

Oram (fourth), Malati Munda (fifth) and Karthika Angamuthu (53rd) scored once each for Odisha FC. Ambruta Nayak scored the consolation goal for RSC in the 63rd minute.

Sports Odisha defeated Odisha Police 3-1 in an entertaining match at the Kalinga Stadium here. Manisha Naik (25th) and Suhasini Mahakul (54th) were on target for the winners, while their second goal came via an own-goal by Jharana Mallik (46th). Jasmani Samad (71st) scored for Odisha Police.