



DIGNIFIED KANGANA

Actor Kangana Ranaut says she has said no to perform at weddings denying insane amount of money

LEISURE P2



TRUMP 'LIT THAT FIRE'

Congressional panel probing Capitol riots says Trump should face criminal charges of inciting rioters

INTERNATIONAL P9



INDIA IN CONTROL

Rishabh Pant and Shreyas Iyer knocks help India take 87-run first innings lead against Bangladesh in the second Test

SPORTS P12

China sees 37mn Covid cases a day

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 23: Nearly 37 million people in China may have been infected with Covid-19 on a single day this week, according to estimates from the government's top health authority, making the country's outbreak by far the world's largest, Bloomberg reported.

As many as 248 million people, or nearly 18% of the population, likely contracted the virus in the first 20 days of December, according to minutes from an internal meeting of China's National Health Commission held Wednesday, confirmed with people involved in the discussions. If accurate, the infection rate would dwarf the previous daily record of about 4 million, set in January 2022.

Beijing's swift dismantling of Covid restrictions has led to the unfettered spread of the highly contagious omicron variant in a population with low levels of natural immunity. More than half the residents of Sichuan province, in China's southwest, and the capital Beijing have been infected, according to the agency's estimates.

GENOME SEQUENCING OF ALL COVID CASES IN STATE

Bhubaneswar: The state government has decided to conduct genome sequencing of all Covid positive cases in the state. After holding a meeting to review the Covid situation in the state, Health Secretary Shalini Pandit Friday said all people should adhere to Covid-appropriate behaviour like use of mask, hand washing, avoid spitting in public places and go for self-isolation in case of development of any Covid-like symptoms. **MORE P3**

How the Chinese health regulator came up with its estimate is unclear, as the country shut down its once ubiquitous network of PCR testing booths earlier this month. Precise infection rates have been difficult to establish in other countries during the pandemic, as hard-to-get laboratory tests were supplanted by home testing with results that weren't centrally collected.



BOMB CYCLONE: Tens of millions of Americans endured bone-chilling temperatures, blizzard conditions, power outages and cancelled holiday gatherings Friday from a winter storm that forecasters said was nearly unprecedented in its scope, exposing 60 per cent of the population to some sort of winter weather advisory or warning (**Report P9**)

JEE-ADVANCED ON JUNE 4, 2023

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 23: The Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) Advanced for admission to the Indian Institutes of Technology will be conducted June 4, 2023, IIT Guwahati announced Friday.

The institute is responsible for conducting the crucial examination for 2023. The examination comprises two papers of three-hour duration each. It is compulsory for candidates to appear in both papers.

"The JEE-Advanced 2023 will be conducted by the seven zonal coordinating IITs under the guidance of the Joint Admission Board 2023. The performance of a candidate in JEE(Advanced) 2023 will form the basis for admission to Bachelors, Integrated Masters, and the Dual Degree programmes (entry at 10+2 level), mentioned in clause 2, in all the IITs in the academic year 2023-24," a senior IIT official said.

Mishap claims 16 soldiers

THE VEHICLE THEY WERE TRAVELLING IN FELL INTO A GORGE WHILE NEGOTIATING A SHARP TURN

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 23: Sixteen Indian Army personnel including three Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) were killed in a road accident when the vehicle they were travelling in fell into a gorge while negotiating a sharp turn at Zema in North Sikkim, the Army said.

It said four injured soldiers have been air evacuated. "In a tragic road accident, involving an Army truck December 23 at Zema in North Sikkim, 16 bravehearts of the Indian Army have lost their lives," the Army said in the statement.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said he is "deeply pained" over the loss of lives of the personnel. "The nation is deeply grateful for



their service and commitment. My condolences to the bereaved families. Praying for the speedy recovery of those who are injured," he said in a tweet.

Quoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the PMO tweeted, "Pained by the loss of lives of our brave army personnel due to a road mishap in Sikkim.

Condolences to the bereaved families. May the injured recover soon."

The Army said the truck was part of a three-vehicle convoy that moved from Chatten in the morning towards Thangu.

"Enroute at Zema, the vehicle skidded down a steep slope while negotiating a sharp turn. A rescue mission was immediately launched, and four injured soldiers have been air evacuated," the Army said.

"Unfortunately, three Junior Commissioned Officers and 13 soldiers succumbed to the injuries sustained in the accident. Indian Army stands firm with the bereaved families, at this hour of loss," it said.

Samanta conferred 50th honorary D.Litt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: Eminent educationist, social activist, founder of KIIT & KISS and Lok Sabha MP from Kandhamal Dr. Achyuta Samanta was conferred the honorary D.Litt degree by Utkal University in recognition of his immense contribution to the field of education and social service. This is the 50th honorary degree conferred on him.

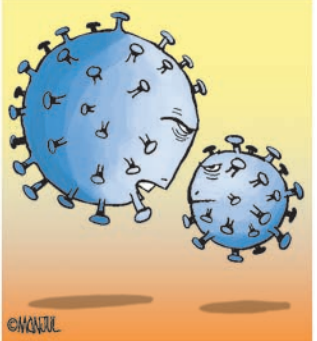
Utkal University, which is also Samanta's alma mater, presented the honour to him at its 52nd convocation, Friday. He received the degree from the University Chancellor and Governor of Odisha Ganeshi Lal in the presence of former Chief Justice of India V. Gopala Gowda, University Vice Chancellor Sabita



Acharya and Higher Education Principal Secretary, Bishnupada Sethi, among others. Addressing the gathering, the Governor described Samanta as a "leading legend of the convocation."

Samanta expressed his deepest gratitude to the Chancellor, the VC and the University Syndicate. **Continued on P4**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Spread freely in functions, rallies and gatherings. Just don't do to Bharat Jodo Yatra. Govt has its eyes on it.

Doc who treated Nehru dead

Dr Gobinda Chandra Dash had treated the former PM in 1964 during the latter's visit to Bhubaneswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Dec 23: Dr Gobinda Chandra Dash, a noted physician of Kendrapara town, who treated Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964 during his visit to Bhubaneswar, died at his residence here Friday. He was 96. He is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter.

Dash had treated the former Prime Minister when he fell ill when he was addressing the 68th session of the Indian National Congress in January, 1964.



Dr Gobinda Chandra Dash

Dash was then posted as the personal physician of the Governor of Odisha. He had conducted the medical checkup of Nehru and requested him to cancel all engagements and advised him to take complete rest for the next six days

which the then Prime Minister complied to.

Indira Gandhi was then at her father's side during most of the days of confinement.

Nehru died May 27, 1964 after suffering a stroke in New Delhi.

Dash was among the pass outs of the first batch of students of SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack in 1944. After securing his MBBS degree, he worked for eight years from 1949 in the Indian Army and was posted in Punjab, Pune and other places. In 1958 he started working in SCB Medical College and Hospital and worked as the personal physician of the Governor from 1959 to 1964.

After his retirement, Dash treated patients in his house in Kendrapara town. Kendrapara MLA Sashibhusan Behera and other personalities of the town condoled his death.

'A lot to do': Serial killer Sobhraj on way to France

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Kathmandu, Dec 23: French serial killer Charles Sobhraj told AFP Friday that he feels 'great' after being released from jail in Nepal where he served almost 20 years for murder.

"I feel great... I have a lot to do. I have to sue a lot of people. Including the State of Nepal," Sobhraj told AFP on board a plane about to take him back to France via Doha.

Asked if he thought he had been wrongly described as a serial killer, the 78-year-old said: "Yes, yes."

Sobhraj, whose life was chronicled in the Netflix series "The Serpent", was linked to more than 20 murders across Asia in the 1970s. He was arrested in India in 1976



and ultimately spent 21 years in jail. He returned to France but in 2008 travelled to Nepal where he was spotted by a journalist and arrested.

He was subsequently convicted of two murders committed in Nepal in the mid-1970s and jailed. Nepal's top court ordered him released this week on health grounds and said he should be sent back to France.

3 MINOR BOYS DROWN IN POND

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rajnagar, Dec 23: In a tragic incident, three minor boys drowned Friday while taking bath in a pond at Bagapatia village under Rajnagar police limits in Kendrapara district. A pall of gloom descended on the village after the tragedy.

The deceased were identified as Bishal Rout (12), Sandeep Sahu (12) and Briben Parida (13). They were friends studying in Class-VII at Maa Panchubarahi High School in Satabhaya.

The three had arranged a feast at home. Later, they went to a pond for bath. While drowning they screamed for help. Hearing their scream, a girl tending to cattle at a nearby field came to the pond, but she did not find anyone. However, she spotted three pairs of shoes on the banks of the pond.



Suspecting a disaster, the girl ran to the village for help. Local residents rushed to the pond and searched for the boys. They were rescued and rushed to the Rajnagar Community Health Centre where doctors declared them brought dead.

Unable to curb snacking urge? Blame it on a gene

AGENCIES

Tokyo, Dec 23: If you are unable to control your urge from snacking over chips, ice creams or chocolates, blame it on a gene. A team of Japanese researchers has identified the role a gene plays in stimulating the brain, causing people to overeat.

Recently, it became clear that a gene called CREB-Regulated Transcription Coactivator 1 (CRT1) is associated with obesity in humans. When CRT1 is deleted in mice, they become obese,



indicating that functioning CRT1 suppresses obesity. However, since CRT1 is expressed in all neurons in the brain, the specific neurons responsible for suppressing obesity and the mechanism present in those neurons remained unknown, according to the study published in the FASEB Journal.

To understand the mechanism by which CRT1 suppresses obesity, a research group led by associate professor Shigenobu Matsumura from Osaka Metropolitan University focused

on neurons expressing the melanocortin-4 receptor (MC4R). They hypothesized that CRT1 expression in MC4R-expressing neurons suppressed obesity because mutations in the MC4R gene are known to cause obesity.

When fed a standard diet, the mice without CRT1 in MC4R-expressing neurons showed no changes in body weight compared to control mice. However, when the CRT1-deficient mice were raised on a high-fat diet, they overate, then became significantly more obese than

the control mice and developed diabetes. High-calorie foods - high in fat, oil and sugar - can taste good but often cause overeating, leading to obesity and major health problems.

"This study has revealed the role that the CRT1 gene plays in the brain, and part of the mechanism that stops us from overeating high-calorie, fatty, and sugary foods," said Matsumura.

"We hope this will lead to a better understanding of what causes people to overeat," Matsumura added.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	59845.29 ↓ 980.93
NIFTY	17806.80 ↓ 320.55
DOLLAR	82.80 ↑ ₹0.12
EURO	87.90 ↑ ₹0.02
GOLD	₹54,560 ↑ ₹39
SILVER	₹68,831 ↑ ₹311

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	28.7°C	27.6°C
MIN	14.0°C	14.0°C
Humidity	76%	83%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Shallow to moderate fog likely	

leisure



SEAN PAUL TOOK INSPIRATION FROM CRICKETER FOR STAGE NAME

Jamaican rapper Sean Paul is letting his fans in on the little-known history behind his name. "There's a famous cricketer in Trinidad (named) Shivnarine Chanderpaul. Everybody was like, 'Sean da Paul,' and that name stuck," he explained in a documentary.

SHANIA TWAIN FEELS GOOD TO FLAUNT HER 'MENOPAUSAL BODY'

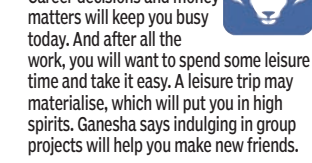
Singer Shania Twain, who stripped off on the cover of her latest single *Waking Up Dreaming* said, "I am a woman in my late 50s. I was just so unashamed of my new body, you know, as a woman that is well into my menopause."



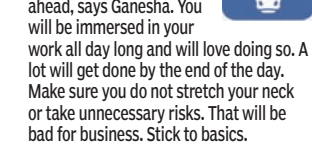
FORTUNE FORECAST

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

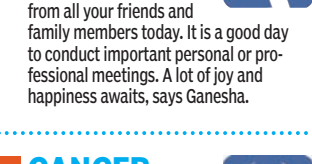
ARIES
 Career decisions and money matters will keep you busy today. And after all the work, you will want to spend some leisure time and take it easy. A leisure trip may materialise, which will put you in high spirits. Ganesh says indulging in group projects will help you make new friends.



TAURUS
 You have a hectic day ahead, says Ganesh. You will be immersed in your work all day long and will love doing so. A lot will get done by the end of the day. Make sure you do not stretch your neck or take unnecessary risks. That will be bad for business. Stick to basics.



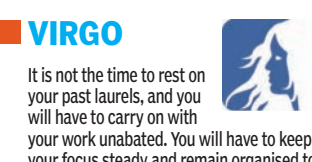
GEMINI
 You will receive unprecedented love and affection from all your friends and family members today. It is a good day to conduct important personal or professional meetings. A lot of joy and happiness awaits, says Ganesh.



CANCER
 You may donate to a charity organisation, for your mental happiness. On the job front, stick to your routine, rather than taking a new bold step, says Ganesh. A good day on the financial front.



LEO
 A fun-filled day awaits you. You will enjoy all the activities that you take up today. At the work-place too a progressive day awaits you. You will be worried about the fruits of your labour, but they are likely to be sweeter than you thought they will be, says Ganesh.



VIRGO
 It is not the time to rest on your past laurels, and you will have to carry on with your work unabated. You will have to keep your focus steady and remain organised to get the same level of success that you had in the recent past. Ganesh advises you not to neglect your relationships, as they are the cornerstones of your success and tranquility.



LIBRA
 Ganeshji says that today you shall make your competitors and enemies envious of your success in business. Beware, as they shall try to hurt or put down your reputation in varied ways. Instead of having a fight with them you should try to be politically correct and take care of matters using your intelligence.



SCORPIO
 You are in a dilemma and feel like standing at a crossroads of life. Some important decisions of life need time and that's what you want right now. However, keep personal life and work separate to avoid confusion and disturbance. As per Ganesh's advice, it's all right if decision making takes some time, but avoid taking hasty decisions.



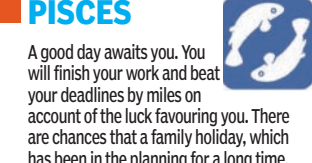
SAGITTARIUS
 The pressing needs of your loved ones call for extra attention today. You may have a few family friends over for lunch or dinner, and end up chatting a good deal with them. Ganesh says an intimate tête-à-tête with your better half would fare you well.



CAPRICORN
 The day will sail smooth, but your mind will wreak havoc by forcing you to act on the spur of the moment, says Ganesh. However, this will not ruin your reputation with bosses and peers. You may also see some of your dreams come true, but don't fly too high; you may climb up the ladder of success but with every step you leave behind there is always one more to go. Concentrate on your work a little more and the goal will certainly seem closer.



AQUARIUS
 Your dream house or car may well be on its way! The stars proclaim that it's a good time to acquire new assets. So bring out those attractive brochures and check out your loan prospects. A perfect way to end an exciting day will be an evening at a quiet temple, says Ganesh.



PISCES
 A good day awaits you. You will finish your work and beat your deadlines by miles on account of the luck favouring you. There are chances that a family holiday, which has been in the planning for a long time, will eventually come to fruition today, says Ganesh.



Have never danced at weddings: Kangana

Mumbai: Actress Kangana Ranaut has said that she has said no to the 'insane amount of money' being offered to her to perform at weddings and private parties.

Kangana took to Instagram, where she shared a video of veteran singer Asha Bhosle talking about how her sister and late legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar never performed at weddings.

In the video, Asha Bhosle is talking about how her elder sister and legendary singer was once offered a million dollars to sing at a wedding, but she refused the offer.

She was heard saying: "Kaha 2 ghante sirf aap darshan dijiye humari shadi mein (just come to our wedding for 2 hours, they had said to her)." Kangana captioned:

"Agree. Even I never danced in weddings or private parties, even though I have the most popular songs...denied insane amount of money...glad to come across this video.. Lataji truly so inspiring."

On the work front, Kangana is filming her directorial, *Emergency*, where she will be seen playing former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

AGENCIES



I am an extremely proud son: Abhishek replies to Taslima

Mumbai: Abhishek Bachchan has responded to Bangladeshi-Swedish author Taslima Nasreen's barb about how Amitabh Bachchan loves his son so much that he thinks he has 'inherited all his talents' and is 'the best'.

Replying to Nasreen on Twitter in the comments section, Abhishek said: "Absolutely correct. Ma'am. Nobody comes close to him in talent or anything else for that matter. He will always remain 'the best'! I am an extremely proud son."

Nasreen had earlier tweeted: "Amitabh Bachchan ji loves his son Abhishek Bachchan so much that he thinks his son inherited all his talents and his son is the best. Abhishek is good, but I do not think Abhishek is as talented as Amitji."

Actor Suniel Shetty shared a reaction to Abhishek's tweet and dropped a red heart emoji.

Nasreen's tweet came close on the heels of Amitabh Bachchan praising his son for getting the award for Best Actor in the Web Original Film-Male category at the Filmfare OTT Awards 2022 for his performance in *Dasvi*. AGENCIES



Bhumi to ring in the New Year in Mexico

Mumbai: Taking a break from her erratic shoot schedule, actress Bhumi Pednekar will be seen ringing in the New Year in style in Mexico with her friends.

Bhumi will be taking a break after shooting almost seven films this year. Having had to work non-stop since the pandemic related lockdowns lifted Bhumi will travel to Mexico with her friends.

The actress' slate of seven films, including *Govinda Naam Mera*, released ear-

lier this month. Her upcoming line-up includes Anubhav Sinha's *Bheed*, Ajay Bahl's *The Ladykiller*, Sudhir Mishra's *Ajwaab*, Gauri Khan-produced

Bhakhshak and several others.

Bhumi's latest release *Govinda Naam Mera* is a comedy thriller written and directed by Shashank Khaitan and produced by Karan Johar.

The film also stars Vicky Kaushal, and Kiara Advani. It was premiered

December 16, 2022 on the OTT platform. IANS



Sunny used to get hate mails from India at the age of 19-20

Mumbai: Actor Sunny Leone has always maintained an air of dignity around her and does not let her past define her in any way. The 41-year-old, who started her career in the adult film industry is now an actor, host, performer and happily married wife and mother.

However, in the initial stages of her career, Sunny, who was barely 20 and starting out, became the target of trolls all the way from India, even though she was in Canada,

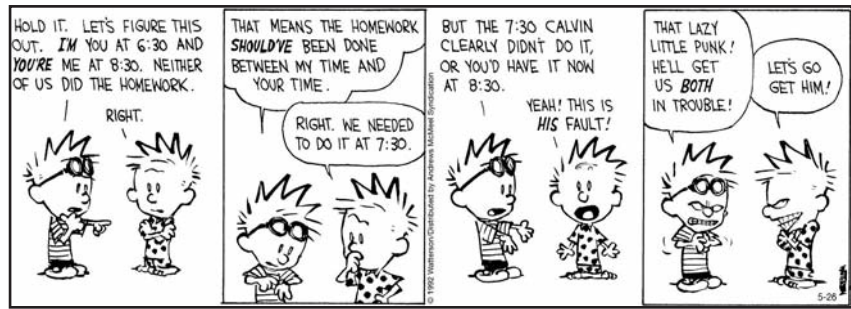
where she has been born and brought up. In an interview to Galatta Plus, the Baby Doll fame performer said that during her stint in the adult industry, she used to be get hate mail and death threats from India, that affected her deeply.

Moving on, Sunny said that years later, when she decided to move to Bollywood, she was sceptical of people accepting her since in her head, she had established that no one is going to take her seriously. AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

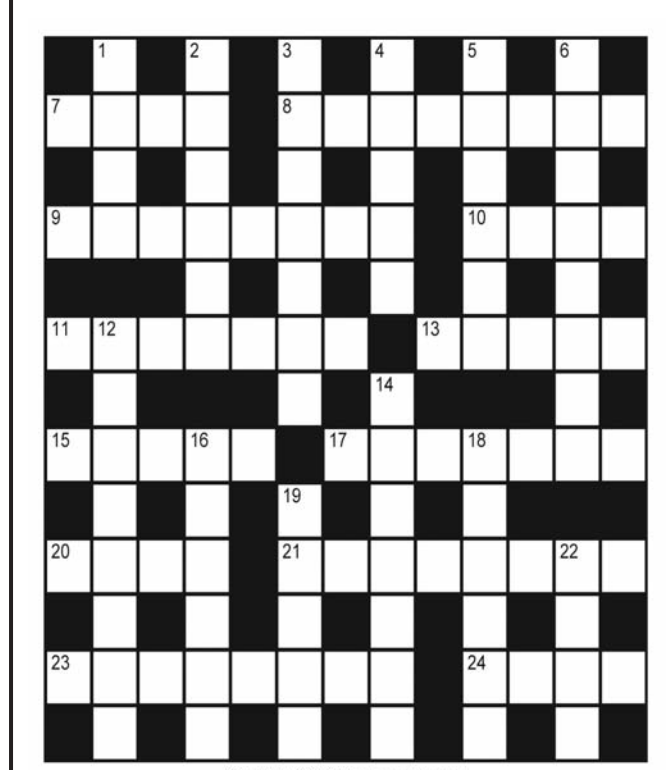


BREVITY



FUN post

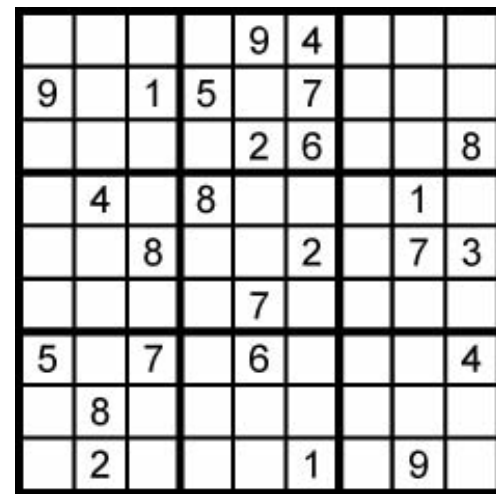
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Throne
 - 8 Storms
 - 9 End point
 - 10 Stage part
 - 11 Bonded
 - 13 Allegation
 - 15 Weeper of myth
 - 17 Brisling
 - 20 Charity
 - 21 Where to find a devil?
 - 23 Like some hotels (4-4)
 - 24 Roulette bet
- Down**
- 1 Subterfuge
 - 2 Frustrate
 - 3 Wasp, for one
 - 4 Out of whack
 - 5 Driver's need
 - 6 Adult male horse
 - 12 Carpenter's item (5,3)
 - 14 Evaluate
 - 16 Caught in the act
 - 18 Harvested
 - 19 Express in words
 - 22 March date

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

H A R M S T I R F R Y
 A E I O E E I G
 S M A G A W S E P I A
 T I T E E T S
 E F T C A R D T R I C K
 L S L E
 A N G L E R F O R E S T
 R A A S N
 C E L E B R A T E S I N O
 H L A I W N O
 E W E R S L E A S E T
 R O R G A R D E Y E E
 E N G A R D E P R O D

SUDOKU

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

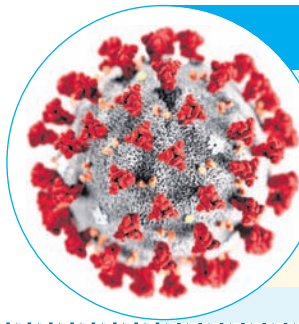
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



CULTURAL FETE

Artistes perform during Biswa Odissi Utsav organised by Samskritiki at Bhanja Kala Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	66,06,28,675	63,34,36,888	66,81,711
India	4,46,76,678	4,41,42,608	5,30,690
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

BJD-BJP tug of war in truncated Parl session

THIS IS FOR THE EIGHTH TIME THAT THE PARLIAMENT SESSION CONCLUDED AHEAD OF ITS SCHEDULED ADJOURNMENT

POST NEWS NETWORK
New Delhi, Dec 23: A truncated Winter Session of Parliament that concluded Friday, almost a week ahead of its scheduled adjournment December 29, saw a deadlock between the ruling dispensation and the Opposition over the latter's demand for a discussion on China's repeated incursion in Arunachal Pradesh.

However, the session remained quite active from Odisha's perspective as the MPs raised many state specific issues in both houses of the Parliament. The session also saw a tug of war between the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MPs from Odisha with both blaming each other for the situation that occurred due to the arrest of lawyers in Sambalpur. On the opening day of the session, December 7, the BJD demanded withdrawal of the GST on kendu leaf. BJD MP Achyuta Samanta highlighted the significance of kendu leaves for tribal communities in the state and requested the Centre for withdrawal of GST. Later, the party MPs from both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha also met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and submitted a memorandum for the same.

The ruling party of the state reiterated its long-standing demand seeking special status to Odisha and also requested the Union government to introduce and pass the Women's Reservation Bill which seeks to grant 33 per cent reservation to women in Lok Sabha and Assemblies. In Lok Sabha, BJD MPs raised farmers' concerns over crop insurance and national horticulture mission. In Rajya Sabha, the party demanded inclusion of



ODISHA IN PARLIAMENT

BJD demanded withdrawal of the GST on kendu leaf, reiterated its long-standing demand seeking special status to Odisha and passage of Women's Reservation Bill and inclusion of three tribal languages - Ho, Mundari and Bhumij - in the eighth schedule of the Constitution

BJP MPs from Odisha attacked the state government on burning issues like lawyers' agitation for Western Odisha bench and pulled up the state government alleging malpractices in the paddy procurement

three tribal languages - Ho, Mundari and Bhumij - in the eighth schedule of the Constitution.

The BJD MPs were quite active outside the Parliament as well. They met four Union ministers on the Parliament premises and submitted memorandums regarding several state issues. The MPs met Union Food and Public Distribution Minister Piyush Goyal and requested him to release the pending food subsidy of Rs 14,292.51 crore to Odisha and Union Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda seeking inclusion of over 160 tribal communities in the state ST list.

Likewise, a delegation of BJD MPs also met Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and requested him for commencing passenger train service between Visakhapatnam and Haridaspur.

Significantly, the BJD MPs from Odisha left no stone unturned in attacking the state government on burning issues like lawyers' agitation for Western Odisha bench. The saffron party criticised the BJD government in Odisha for the violent protests and arrests of lawyers in Sambalpur. It alleged that the state government let the situation escalate and did not send a composite proposal for the establishment of a High Court bench in Western Odisha as sought by the Union Law ministry. However, the BJD countered the allegations by citing Entry 78 of the Union list of the Constitution and said that the Centre can ask or can establish a bench in Western Odisha under the Orissa HC. The BJD asked the BJP MPs to talk to the Union government and ensure that the bench is established using the powers of the Indian Constitution under Entry 78 of Union list. The BJP also alleged massive corruption in mining activities in Odisha and requested the Centre to order an inquiry and seek a report from the state government on the issue. The saffron party MPs further pulled up the state government alleging malpractices in the paddy procurement. Bargarh MP Suresh Pujari raised the Archana Nag case in Lok Sabha and sought a CBI probe.

The lone Congress MP from Odisha, Saptagiri Ulaka raised issues concerning his Lok Sabha constituency, Koraput. He urged the government to initiate steps to boost transport connectivity in the region, dominated by the tribal population.



SILVER CITY BEAUTIFICATION: A mural on Mata Mutt-Bali Yatra Ground Road in Cuttack, Friday, greets commuters as state readies to host Men's Hockey World Cup in January

Govt for genome sequencing of Cov cases

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: With the surge in Covid-19 cases in some countries like China, Japan, USA and France, the state government has advised the people to follow Covid appropriate behaviour voluntarily.

After holding a meeting to review the pandemic situation in the state, Health secretary Shalini Pandit said all people should have to adhere to Covid appropriate behaviour like use of mask, hand washing, avoiding spitting in public places and self-isolation in case of development of any Covid like symptoms.

Countries like Japan, Republic of Korea, USA, France, Brazil, Germany and China are showing a surge in cases in the last two weeks. However, the situation in Odisha has remained stable with below 15 cases per day since November 2022 and on most of the days it is below 10 cases, she said.

The present testing level of 134 tests per million is much higher than the country level of 109 per million. Also, Odisha is testing 1,552 samples to get one positive against all-India figure of 589 tests for one positive, she said. Hospitalisation rate in the state has remained nil with an active case load of 54 as on date. All ex-

HEALTH DEPT ADVISES ALL TO FOLLOW COVID-19 APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Health dept has issued fresh guidelines to all DHHs, Capital Hospital Bhubaneswar and RGH, Rourkela as a measure of precaution

A mock drill will be undertaken uniformly across the state December 27 to ensure operational readiness for management of Covid with specific focus on oxygen plants, ventilators and testing

perts present in the meeting are of the opinion that the current variants circulating for the last few months in India are all sub-variants of Omicron and have not led to any rise in cases or hospitalisation, said Pandit.

They are also of the opinion that the new Omicron variants are associated with high transmissibility, but there is no evidence to suggest that it can cause disease severity or escape vaccine induced communities in our country, she stated.

However, as a measure of precaution and preparedness, the Health department has issued fresh guidelines to all district headquarter hospitals, Capital Hospital Bhubaneswar and RGH, Rourkela. A mock drill will be undertaken



uniformly across the state December 27 to ensure operational readiness for management of Covid with specific focus on oxygen plants, ventilators and testing.

The surveillance at airports and sea ports are to be guided by the advisory/ guidelines issued by the Centre from time to time.

The state government has also decided to conduct genome sequencing of all Covid-19 positive cases. At present, Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) and Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) Bhubaneswar are conducting whole genome sequencing (WGS) for the Covid positive cases.

In the meantime, a WGS facility has been set up in department of Bio Chemistry of SCBMCH. It was decided that SCB will apply for af-

filiation of their WGS laboratory with INSACOG.

No case of surgery, delivery and other essential healthcare should be denied in the name of Covid and all non-Covid activities should continue to ensure healthcare delivery, official sources said.

In view of the ensuing Hockey World Cup additional manpower will be made available for Khurda, Cuttack and Sundargarh districts in January. If required, for World Cup, surveillance will be allowed on receipt of specific proposals from the authorities concerned.

Further, it was decided that all urban PHCs and CHCs in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Rourkela will have facilities for RAT and swab collection for RT-PCR.

Currently, as the Health Ministry has ceased the public Covid vaccination programme, all the vaccines are exhausted in government hospitals and are now available at 12 private health institutions on payment. It is decided to request the Centre to re-start the public vaccination programme for precaution dose vaccination.

Sufficient kits are available for Covid testing at the current level for three months. Oxygen supply systems were reviewed and found to be adequate to handle any upsurge in case load.

ED cuffs on Archana's hubby over money laundering

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Friday arrested lady blackmailer Archana Nag's husband Jagabandhu Chand, one of the accused in high profile sextortion case, on charges of money laundering. Earlier, Archana and her business partner Khageswar Patra were also arrested by the ED in the same case.

The ED sleuths Friday produced Jagabandhu before the court following the end of his nine-day remand period.

He was on ED's remand since December 14. Sources revealed that ED has again sought court's permission to take Jagabandhu on remand for some more days for questioning in sextortion case.

ED has reportedly questioned Jagabandhu in the presence of prime accused Archana during the remand period.

Indian Navy Band Concert at KIIT

Bhubaneswar: As part of Navy Week Celebrations 2022 and Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, INS Chilka will organise an Indian Naval Band Concert at Campus 6 of the KIIT University here at 6:30pm December 24. Governor Ganeshi Lal will be gracing the occasion as the chief guest.



HOLY PROCESSION: Lord Amabasya Narayan being carried out from Srimandir on a procession on Bakul Amabasya in Puri, Friday

₹118cr diesel cost saved from Apr-Nov: ECoR

Bhubaneswar: The East Coast Railway (ECoR) has saved Rs 118.29 crore on diesel costs by using a technology called head on generation (HOG) in trains between April and November this year. In HOG, power is drawn from an overhead electric supply and the power generator cars provide a noise-free and pollution-free environment for passengers in stations. There is a sharp fall in the cost of power in trains using HOG technology than normal LHB (Linke Hofmann Busch) coaches, a statement issued by the ECoR said. The cost of power in normal LHB coaches is over Rs 36 per unit and in rakes with the HOG system, the cost comes down to Rs 6 per unit, it said.

Pradhan seeks spl package for Koraput tourism infra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Friday wrote to his colleague G Kishan Reddy, seeking his intervention for sanctioning a special package for the development of tourism infrastructure and facilities in Koraput district.

Noting that Koraput offers a fantastic opportunity for tourism development along the historic, environmental, ecological and spiritual circuits of the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, Pradhan, the Union Education Minister, said the tourism in the region has suffered recently due to cyclone Hudhud in Vizag and a special package would go a long way in resuscitating the tourist footfalls in Koraput.

"This will certainly translate into a huge economic multiplier for the people in the region and adjoining areas," he said in the letter to Reddy the Union tourism minister. "...Keeping in mind the massive untapped potential of the tourism



sector in Koraput and the welfare of the people living there, I seek your personal intervention for sanctioning a special package for the development of tourism infrastructure in the Koraput district of Odisha," Pradhan said.

While the Araku Valley tourism circuit is well-developed and now world-renowned for its coffee plantation, drawing lakhs of tourists from Vizag and nearby areas, Koraput has not been able to capitalise on the huge tourist catchment area.

In Koraput, tourists can enjoy the historical sites at the city of Jeyapore, marvel at the Duduma waterfalls, boat at the Kolab dam, trek and camp at Deomali and pay their obeisance at the Shri Jagannath Temple, Pradhan, who hails from Odisha, said.

Situated in the picturesque Eastern Ghats in Southern Odisha, Koraput has massive potential for tourism development, he said. It is located close to the well-known tourist site Araku Valley in

- ▶ While the Araku Valley tourism circuit is well-developed and now world-renowned for its coffee plantation, drawing lakhs of tourists from Vizag and nearby areas, Koraput has not been able to capitalise on the huge tourist catchment area
- ▶ In Koraput, tourists can enjoy the historical sites at the city of Jeyapore, marvel at the Duduma waterfalls, boat at the Kolab dam, trek and camp at Deomali
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Andhra Pradesh, with similar topography, natural beauty and cultural wealth.

Pradhan said Koraput has good rail connectivity and boasts of Vistadome coaches on the Koraput-Rayagada route.

He also mentioned that the Centre has undertaken massive efforts towards tourism development under 'Dekho Apna Desh'.

Jajpur youth's journey from hawker to PhD scholar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: The popular adage "Where there is nothing, there is the possibility of everything" goes well with Chandrasekhar Sahoo, a newspaper hawker from Jajpur district, who braved all odds to crack the PhD entrance in Utkal University's Public administration department.

Born in Kacharasahi under Korai block of Jajpur district to a poor family, Chandrasekhar never gave up on his dream of becoming a professor. When he was in college, his father was diagnosed with serious mental



health issues following which his family faced problems of making both ends meet. He then chose to work as a newspaper hawker. He used to drop newspapers at people's doorsteps in the

"It's really surprising. I still can't believe that I have cracked the entrance exam for pursuing PhD. This has happened only because of my hard work and sheer dedication"

CHANDRASEKHAR SAHOO

morning before setting out for the college. He was able to marry off her two sisters by using his earnings.

After cracking the PhD entrance test of Utkal University, Chandrasekhar said, "It's really sur-

prising. I still can't believe that I have cracked the entrance exam for pursuing PhD. This has happened only because of my hard work and sheer dedication. I would like to thank my parents, teachers and each and every one who have been with me throughout my journey."

Overwhelmed by her son's achievement, mother Basanti Sahoo said, "I am very happy that my son has been selected for PhD. There was a time when we struggled for a meal. But my son's dedication and hard work brought him here. I pray to Lord Jagannath for his future endeavours."

Hockey in Odisha to be included in NCERT textbooks: Pradhan



Addressing the media after attending an all-party meet, Pradhan suggested that the art, heritage and tradition of Odisha should be branded at the highest level through the Men's Hockey World Cup to be held in Odisha from January 13-29. The tournament will pan out in two venues -- Bhubaneswar's

Kalinga Stadium and Birsa Munda Stadium in Rourkela. The minister also lauded the state government's decision to invite all schools and colleges of the country for the Hockey World Cup. "We should work together to ensure that as many as 100 Olympians emerge from Odisha by 2036 when the state observes its 100th foundation day," Pradhan said Thursday. "This time 7 players from Odisha went to play in the Olympics," he said. In 2036, when the state observes its 100th foundation day, there is a possibility that the Olympics will be held in India that year, Pradhan said. This will be the 15th edition of the Men's Hockey World Cup. Hockey India hosts the mega tournament for the second time, with the first being in 2018 which was clinched by Belgium.



UP IN ARMS: Members of NPS Secondary School Teachers' Association staged a protest in front of the residence of Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Pramila Mallik seeking fulfillment of their 2-point charter of demands in Bhubaneswar, Friday

'Declare 'Ho' as second state language in Odisha'



He also said that under Multiple Language Education (MLE) (Ho) scheme, only 200 primary schools are included in the state. This is very less in compared to the total Ho language speaking students dominated primary schools in Odisha. There are more than 500 primary schools/sevashrams where more than 80 per cent Ho speaking Scheduled Tribe students are studying. He also urge the government to implement Ho' language speaking in Anganwadis otherwise the Ho' children and tribes will be neglected and pushed through margins again. Ramrai Munduiya national president of committee said that 'Ho' language is spoken by tribes and non tribes of Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam and Chatisgarh. 'Ho' speaking tribes are known as Ho, Munda, Kolha and Kol in the state of Odisha. They are residing in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Arugul, Cuttack, Deogarh, Sambalpur and Sundargarh whose approximate number would be more than 15 lakhs in Odisha. In addition, more than 40 lakh Ho tribes are using HO Bhasa all over India.

BMC postpones eviction drive

The agitation prompted the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) to temporarily postpone the exercise, with officials assuring the protesters that the next course of action will be decided following a discussion with the vendors' representative body. "We have decided to stop the eviction drive for some days. It will be carried out after talks with the vendors' association," BMC North Zone assistant commissioner Suresh Chandra Lenka told reporters. The agitators, under the banner of All Odisha Roadside Vendors' Association, alleged that BMC conducted massive eviction without any prior notice or arrangement for rehabilitation. "The livelihoods of hundreds of vendors have been affected due



The agitators, under the banner of All Odisha Roadside Vendors' Association, alleged that BMC conducted massive eviction without any prior notice or arrangement for rehabilitation

Sahu claimed. Sahu said the affected vendors must be rehabilitated as per law before being evicted. "The BMC has violated all laws and illegally demolished the shops in Damana and Patia area in the city," he alleged. Earlier in the day, the agitators had gheroad the BMC office, leading to a minor scuffle with security personnel, officials said. "There was no planning by the BMC for the world cup... It could have given sufficient time for the traders to move to a different place," said Minati Behera, whose small shop near Patia Chak was evicted. She also claimed that the government was forcing vendors to migrate to other states. Sahu added that there are around 30,000 road-side vendors, "out of whom 15,000 traders' stalls have been demolished by the BMC". The men's Hockey World Cup will take place from January 13-29.

Hockey WC trophy to visit SOA Dec 25

Ahead of the FIH Hockey Men's World Cup, the glittering trophy for which 16 countries including hosts India will compete will be brought to the campus of Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) here on Christmas day as part of its tour through the temple City. The trophy, presently on a countrywide tour for exhibition, would reach Bhubaneswar December 25 and taken around the City. The trophy would be briefly kept in the SOA Deemed to be University's new stadium for the students, faculty members and staff members to have a glimpse of the prize and have a feel of the international event. The trophy would be received by the Vice-Chancellor Ashok Kumar Mahapatra. A large gathering of students is expected at the venue where NCC cadets would be in attendance. A cultural programme would also be staged to mark the visit of the trophy.

Naveen pledges 100 more hostels for SC, ST students

While attending the concluding day of children's festival 'Sargiful' Friday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik advised the children to live their life with a competitive attitude. On the occasion, CM said that children of the state are not any less compared to children from other states. "Go ahead with a competitive attitude and gain prestige in life. You strive for success, my blessings are with you," he said. Giving the example of prominent sportsperson Dilip Tirkey, the CM said that he is an Odia boy who with his skill and hard work became the captain of the Indian

hockey team and today has become president of Hockey India. He advised the students to make Tirkey their role model. Naveen also congratulated the children who successfully passed the matriculation examination and their teachers. The CM said that currently 5 lakh Scheduled Castes and Tribes children are studying in various government hostels of the state and announced that 100 more hostels will be built for them by December next year. ST & SC Development minister Jagannath Saraka in his speech highlighted the various initiatives taken by the department for the tribal children. The CM unveiled a souvenir named Sargiful.

Chayani conferred Ph.D by Utkal University

On 52nd Convocation of Utkal University Friday, Collector & District Magistrate, Cuttack Bhabani Shankar Chayani received Ph.D Degree (awarded earlier in Business Administration) from Governor Ganeshi Lal in the presence of Bishnupad Sethi, Principal Secretary, Higher Education Department, Sabita Acharya, Vice Chancellor of Utkal University and Justice V Gopal Gowda, former Judge of Supreme Court and former Chief Justice of Orissa High Court. Bhabani Shankar Chayani, Collector, Cuttack was awarded Ph.D. by the Department of Business Administration, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar for his doctoral thesis 'Role Study of MLAs



of Odisha'. Chayani has prepared the thesis under the supervision of Pravat Kumar Mohanty, of Department of Business Administration, Utkal University. In this context, it may be mentioned that under the subject Business Administration, a number of studies have been conducted on corporate leadership. However, the thesis of Chayani based on political leaders elected as MLAs is

considered unique and first-of-its-kind in the subject of Business Administration in the entire country. Chayani has studied nine political leaders of Odisha who were elected and functioned as MLAs during 2014-19. The study was based on analysis of responses received from 4518 voters through a structured questionnaire containing 95 questions on different leadership attributes and roles of these political leaders. Chayani, who passed B.A. (Hons) and MA from the prestigious St. Stephen's College, Delhi, acquired M.Phil. from Delhi University and MBA from XIMB. Chayani has expressed thanks to the political leaders and people who participated in this research, his wife Lina, daughters Ayesha and Anuska, friends and colleagues.

Spurious drugs worth ₹23L seized

The drugs were seized after receiving replies from the manufacturers regarding the authenticity of the medicines, sources said. These drugs had been kept separately and their sales were stopped immediately. The medicines were procured from outside Odisha, sources added. Health Secretary Shalini Pandit directed the enforcement squads to coordinate with other states to break the supply chain of such drugs, officials said.

Molnupiravir does not cut deaths in Covid patients

Using the antiviral drug molnupiravir does not decrease deaths or hospital admissions among Covid-19 patients who are vaccinated and at higher risk of mortality, according to a study published in The Lancet journal. The trial with over 25,000 participants, however, suggests that patients taking molnupiravir recovered faster -- on average 4.2 days quicker -- compared to patients in the control group. Previous studies suggested that molnupiravir is effective at reducing hospital admissions in patients with mild to moderate Covid-19 and WHO recommends its use for patients with the highest risk of hospital admission. However, studies have so far been conducted in largely unvaccinated populations and prior to the emergence of the Omicron variant. The new study was carried out



in a vaccinated population where most Covid-19 infections were the Omicron variant. Molnupiravir is one of the more expensive antivirals used to treat Covid-19, with a seven-day course costing around USD 700 in the US. Molnupiravir was sent directly

to the trial participants and was able to be taken orally at home. "Although this trial found no benefit from molnupiravir treatment on its primary outcome -- which hypothesised that treatment with molnupiravir for vaccinated, at-risk patients would reduce the like-

hood of hospitalisation or death -- the trial suggests that this treatment could have other benefits when being used to treat Covid-19, such as a faster recovery time and reduced follow up with health services," said lead author, Professor Chris Butler, from the University of Oxford, UK. The study included 25,708 participants over the age of 18 (average age 57 years) with a higher risk of death or hospitalisation from Covid-19 infection from health centres across the UK. Patients were considered at higher risk of hospitalisation or death if they were aged 50 years or older -- or aged 18 years or older with relevant underlying health conditions. Patients had a confirmed Omicron Covid-19 infection and were unwell for five days or less before beginning treatment. The results represent outcomes for patients treated between December 8, 2021 and April 27, 2022, during the

Samanta conferred... Continued from P1 "I am elated that Utkal University, my own alma mater is conferring honorary D.Litt. on me, thereby making it my 50th honorary doctorate, the highest for any Indian. I dedicate this award to my hero, my mother, and all her struggles and sacrifice. It is the Almighty's blessings and good wishes of the people that have helped me reach where I am today. Their wishes continue to give me strength to dream more for the betterment of society," Samanta said.

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SIMILIPAL TIGER RESERVE

Probe begins into RBT poaching, hide seizure

The recent spate of incidents including the poaching of elephant has raised a question mark on protection measures in the tiger habitat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Dec 23: A team led by the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) has Friday started an investigation into the alleged poaching of a Royal Bengal Tiger (RBT) in the fringe area of Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) area after recent seizure of its hide. The team is looking into different angles of the RBT skin seizure.



CRIME BRANCH STF HAD SEIZED THE HIDE OF A ROYAL BENGAL TIGER FROM THE FRINGE AREAS OF THE NATIONAL PARK IN THE WEE HOURS OF DECEMBER 14

THE SEIZURE CAME DAYS AFTER THE POACHING OF AN ELEPHANT FOLLOWED BY A SUBSEQUENT ATTEMPT BY THREE STR STAFFERS TO COVER IT UP

They have spread a dragnet to nab the poachers and people involved in the wildlife crime in and around the Similipal National Park.

Notably, the Special Task Force (STF) of the Crime Branch had seized the hide of an RBT from the fringe areas of the national park in the wee hours of December 14. The STF subsequently arrested a 21-year-old man and seized the tiger skin in Belpal under Udala police limits.

Initial investigation had suggested that the big cat was possibly shot dead by poachers. A gunshot wound was noticed on the seized hide. It has been sent to the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) in Dehradun for a detailed examination.

The seizure came days after the poaching of an elephant followed by a subsequent attempt by three Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) staffers to cover it up.

Such incidents have pointed to the fact that wildlife poaching has been going on inside the STR area.

The STF exposed the wildlife crime through a covert operation. The 21-year-old Debasish Patra was lured into a decoy operation by the STF for the sale of the hide. Well

past midnight, a team of STF nabbed Patra with the skin but two others, including the mastermind, managed to flee.

It was said that the tiger may have been poached in about a month's time as its claws were intact on the skin which had not completely dried.

Patra could possibly be a middleman who was waiting to hand over the hide to a customer when the STF conducted the raid. The STF later arrested another accused while another is absconding.

The recent spate of incidents including the poaching of elephants has raised a question mark on protection measures in the tiger habitat.

The Forest department recently arrested three of its suspended officials for allegedly covering up the poaching of a male elephant and burning its carcass to destroy evidence. Turam Purty was the eye-witness in the alleged poaching and burning of the carcass.

Purty's wife has lodged a com-

plaint at Jashipur police station against the three accused - Jenabila ranger in-charge Shiv Shankar Samal, forester Chandrabhanu Behera, and forest guard Binod Kumar Das charging them with murder in the said case.

When the forest staff had burnt the poached elephant's carcass and thrown the charred remains to a nearby stream in an attempt to destroy evidence, Purty was present there. He sent some photos of the incident to the higher authorities.

Acting on it, the Forest department conducted a probe and suspended the three accused. The three had threatened Purty with dire consequences if he opened his mouth.

Later, Purty drank poison December 11 and was admitted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack where he passed away during treatment December 16.

Various outfits and wildlife activists staged demonstrations over the growing wildlife crimes in the Similipal area. They demanded a CBI probe into the poaching of the RBT and the elephant. A local outfit Bhanja Sena has warned of agitation outside the office of the STR deputy director.



PUBLIC DEMO: Members of Sundargarh Zilla Pesa Gram Sabha Cordination Committee Friday staged a demonstration outside the sub-collector's office at Panposh in Rourkela, demanding a halt to illegal acquisition of forest land and attempt to divide the district

Vig kicks off probe into pond renovation scam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dharmasala, Dec 23: Vigilance has started an investigation into the alleged irregularities in pond renovation works in Taranja panchayat under Dharmasala block of Jajpur district. Lakhs of rupees meant for the pond renovation allegedly were misappropriated in two phases.

Vigilance DSP Sushil Lenka and inspector Anusuya Senapati examined files and documents related to the pond renovation works in the block office.

The officials inquired the BDO about the irregularities and later, they visited the pond site.

According to reports, the Minor Irrigation department had allocated ₹24.99 lakh for renovation of the pond in 2019-20 fiscal. In the same

year, the block administration also allocated ₹3.50 lakh and got the pond renovated.

RTI activist Sarbeswar Behura alleged that the pond renovation was done twice in the same fiscal year and a major portion of the fund was embezzled. He moved the Lokayukta in this regard.

Admitting the case, the Lokayukta had issued notice to an assistant engineer of the block, a junior engineer, a panchayat executive officer and a former sarpanch to clarify their stand on the irregularities in the pond renovation.

However, their replies were not satisfactory to the Lokayukta.

Sending massive irregularities in the pond renovation, the Lokayukta had then ordered a Vigilance investigation into the matter.

GOBINDA'S DEATH IN JAIL

CB takes expert help to check CCTVs in sub-jail

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Dec 23: An 11-member Crime Branch team probing the alleged suicide of Gobinda Sahu, the prime accused in Mamita Meher murder case, has started recreating the scene of his suicide on Kantabanji sub-jail premises, Friday.

Crime Branch IG Amitendranath Sinha was present on the prison premises. He also told mediapersons that some documents including his hand-written letter have been recovered. The written documents will be sent to the Handwriting Bureau to check authenticity of Sahu's handwriting.

Sinha also added that the CB team had called in two experts from Bolangir to check the footage of 16 CCTVs on the jail premises that might have captured visuals of the incident.

The 11-member team led by DSP Bijay Kumar Mallick attempted to recreate the scene of suicide.

On the other hand, the envelope found from the pocket of Gobinda Sahu was found addressed to his elder daughter Lipika Sahu, who is serving in a company outside

the state. However, the CB did not disclose what is written in the envelope. The family members who are clueless about the letter might have given clues about his suicide.

The CB officials have inquired many jail inmates about Sahu and his behaviour on the day of his suicide and before.

Notably, a photograph of the place where Gobinda allegedly committed suicide inside the jail went viral Thursday giving rise to more doubts about Gobinda's death. In the photograph, two napkins were found hanging from the railings of a window fitted with iron doors. One of the napkins was blue in colour with white prints while another was white and soiled.

It is suspected that the second white napkin was being used for mopping the kitchen in the jail. A piece of tree trunk used to cut meat is also seen under the window along with a pair of slippers lying nearby.

It is suspected that the photograph shows the window railings of the kitchen from where Gobinda committed suicide inside the Kantabanji sub-jail.

G Udayagiri shivers

G Udayagiri: Cold wave continued to sweep G Udayagiri in Gajapati district as the area recorded the minimum temperature at 5 degree Celsius, Friday. It was 6 degree Celsius, Thursday. People were seen huddling around bonfires at places. The area is shivering in cold for the last four days since Monday. Mercury plummeted to 5 Degree Celsius Monday while it was 5.5 Degree Celsius Tuesday, 6.4 degree Celsius Wednesday and 6 degrees Celsius Thursday. The biting cold wave has severely affected the normal life in the area. Meanwhile, tourist have started coming to the area while churches are witnessing increase in footfall for pre-Christmas celebrations.

Russian tourist dies

Rayagada: A Russian tourist was found dead under mysterious circumstances in Rayagada. The deceased was identified as Vladimir Vidanov (62). Vidanov along with four others tourists came from Daringbadi to Rayagada December 21. Guide Jitendra Singh said that Vidanov came to Daringbadi Thursday and felt unwell. Hotel staff brought him to the district headquarters hospital where he died during treatment. Local police was informed about the matter. Police seized the body. Post mortem of the body will be conducted Saturday after his kin reach Rayagada, police said. The guide suspected that Vidanov might have died due to excess liquor consumption. Police said that the exact cause of his death will be known after the post mortem report is available.

VEDANTA MARKS KISAN DIWAS

Jharsuguda: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, observed Kisan Diwas (National Farmer's Day) with the local farming community, which included farmers and agri-entrepreneurs enrolled with the company's Jeevika Samridhhi and Subhalaxmi co-operative projects. Jeevika Samridhhi is Vedanta Aluminium's sustainable livelihood project in agriculture and Subhalaxmi Co-operative is one of India's largest rural women's co-operatives supported by the company. As part of the program, the company conducted an extensive training program for the participants with Surendra Delki, Assistant Horticulture Officer (Kolabira Block) in the presence of Janvi Pradhan, Sarpanch, Parmanpur panchayat. He apprised the farmers on sustainable agricultural practices. Speaking about the company's endeavours to support the local farming community, CEO Sunil Gupta said, "Creating avenues for sustainable livelihood is a key focus area in Vedanta Jharsuguda's community development endeavours. Through our agricultural initiatives, we are helping farmers in the region to enhance their income through access to better resources and knowledge. On Kisan Diwas, we recommit to our role as proud partners in progress of the farming communities around us."



Padmatola lake to get new lease of life

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nilagiri, Dec 23: Padmatola lake in Narsinghpur area under Nilagiri block of Balasore district is choked with silt and soil deposits. It is now in a moribund state. As the lake used to play a crucial role in nurturing the local biodiversity, residents here have long been pressing for its renovation and revival.

Finally, their hopes have been rekindled after Nilagiri MLA Sukant Nayak and the officials of the Water Resources department visited the area.

Kansa lake is another large waterbody in Nilagiri area. It is also bunged up due to siltation.

Since erstwhile Royal regime, Padmatola lake has been a centre of attraction for tourists in Nilagiri area of Balasore district. A large number of tourists from various parts in and outside the state come to the place to witness the natural beauty of the waterbody. Thousands of domestic and migratory birds thronging the lake in



Recently, after Nilagiri MLA raised the issue in the Assembly, Water Resources Minister Tukuni Sahu took serious note of it

Hopes of revival of the lake were rekindled after Nilagiri MLA Sukant Nayak and a delegation of officials visited the area

winter add to its attraction. Every year, the Forest department carries out bird census on the lake.

The Padmatola lake is spread on an area of hundred acres. Over years, the

lake has become shallow with cumulative deposits of silt and soil sans any renovation work.

Expressing concern over the moribund state of the lake, Nilagiri MLA

Sukant Nayak has long been demanding its renovation and dredging so that the lake can be instrumental in water conservation and irrigation in the area.

In the past also, Nayak had raised the issue of renovation of the lake in the Assembly.

Recently, after Nayak raised the issue in the Assembly, Water Resources Minister Tukuni Sahu took serious note of it and later directed the officials of the department to conduct a field visit. The officials had been asked to submit a report by December 31 to the department.

Additional chief engineer of the Water Resources department Ramesh Kumar Sabat, executive engineer of Balasore division Manas Das, SDO of Nilagiri minor irrigation division Nimai Nayak, junior engineer of drainage division Ramesh Das and many people's representatives visited the site Wednesday.

The visit has ignited the hope of revival of the sprawling lake.

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Annexure-II

Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jor Bagh Road
New Delhi- 110003

ADVERTISEMENT NO. 01/01/2022-P-III

ADVERTISEMENT FOR FILLING UP OF TWENTYSEVEN (27) POSTS OF SCIENTISTS IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE INCLUDING ITS SUBORDINATE OFFICES ON DIRECT RECRUITMENT BASIS AS DETAILED BELOW:

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Sd./- (Satya Prakash)
Under Secretary to the Government of India
CBC 13101/11/0022/2223

Rail Wheel Plant/Bela
(Distt:- Saran), Bihar-841221

E-Open Tender Notice No.:- S/RWP/E/40/2022-23, dated : 22.12.2022.
Principal Chief Materials Manager (Rail Wheel Plant, Bela for and on behalf of the President of India invites online "e-Open Tender", through Indian Railways E-Procurement Website www.ireps.gov.in, for supply of following Stores Item at RWP/Bela. The closing time of all tenders is 14:00 hrs. SN 1, Tender No. : 01221029, Short Description of item : FERRO MANGANESE, Quantity : 20000 Kgs., Date of Tender Closing/Opening : 30.01.2023 at 14:00 Hrs., 1. Website address, on which full tender details can be seen and downloaded from, is www.ireps.gov.in. 2. The prospective firms/bidders submitting bid are advised to remain in touch with the above website for updates including Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation with respect to the above tender. However, this information will also be invariably published in the all concerned newspapers.

PCMM, Rail Wheel Plant, Bela
RWP/CPRO/Adv/2022-23/95

EAST COAST RAILWAY
E-AUCTION FOR CATERING STALLS

SI.No.1: Station Name: Cuttack, Category of Reservation: SMU/SC (Women), Location of Unit: On Platform No. 4/5 Between Pole No. 18/19, Detail of Reservation: Scheduled Caste (Women).

SI.No.2: Station Name: Jajpur Keonjhar Road, Category of Reservation: SMU/SC, Location of Unit: On Platform No. 1 at Howrah end, Detail of Reservation: Scheduled Caste.

SI.No.3: Station Name: Khurda Road, Category of Reservation: SMU/BPL, Location of Unit: On Platform No. 6/7 at Bhubaneswar end, Detail of Reservation: Below Poverty Line.

Category of Station: ANSG-3 (For all Stations), Type of Unit: Catering Stall (For all Stations), Size of Unit: 8'X6' (For all Stations)

Auction Start Date & Time: 06.01.2023 at 11:30 hrs. (For all Stations) Auction Close Date & Time: 06.01.2023 at 12:00 hrs. (For all Stations)

For details please visit website <https://www.ireps.gov.in>

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, PR-840/N/22-23, Khurda Road

REGIONAL OFFICE: BALASORE
3rd Floor, Asis Plaza, OT Road, Bhaskarganj, Balasore-756001

POSSESSION NOTICE
(For Immovable Property)

[RULE 8(1) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES - 2002]

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India, Bhadrak Branch-1 under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (Second) Act, 2002 (Act. No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrowers/Guarantors in loan A/C mentioned below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers have failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules. The Borrowers/Guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the Union Bank of India, Bhadrak Branch-1 for an amount mentioned below with interest thereon. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to the Borrower to redeem the secured assets.

BHADRAK BRANCH-1/ Name and Address of Borrowers/Guarantors	Liabilities due as per Notice (in ₹)	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession	Description of Properties
1) Jyotshnarani Mitra, W/o: Late Jimut Kumar Mitra, 2) Pradeep Kumar Mitra, S/o: Late Jimut Kumar Mitra, 3) Sandeep Kumar Mitra, S/o: Late Jimut Kumar Mitra, 4) Hemdeep Kumar Mitra, S/o: Late Jimut Kumar Mitra, 5) Kuldeep Kumar Mitra, S/o: Late Jimut Kumar Mitra, 6) Chinmayee Sen, D/o: Late Jimut Kumar Mitra, 7) Purnashree Das, D/o: Late Jimut Kumar Mitra, 8) Itishree Dey, D/o: Late Jimut Kumar Mitra, All are R/O-Purusottam Vihar, PHD Colony, Vill: Samraipur, P.O./P.S./Dist.: Bhadrak	₹ 8,51,281/- as on 31.10.2009 + interest thereon	09.12.2009 / 23.12.2022	1) Em of Land and Building in Mouza: Samraipur, Khata No.: 296, Plot No.: 464, Area: Ac.0.17Dec., in the name of Jyotshnarani Mitra, 2) Em of Land and Building in Mouza: Samraipur, Khata No.: 296, Plot No.: 484 and 228, Area: Ac.0.27 Dec., in the name of Late Jimut Kumar Mitra.

Place: Balasore
Date: 23.12.2022

Sd/- Authorised Officer
Union Bank of India

FOCUS COP27

CLIMATE-FINANCE CHALLENGE



All countries are already suffering loss and damage from climate change, but the social and economic consequences can be far more devastating for developing countries, which face not only repair and reconstruction costs but also severe reductions in economic output, employment, and living standards

that rich countries allocated over the past two years to cope with COVID-19.

Finally, the World Bank and other multilateral development banks have a critical role to play in achieving the Paris targets. Their annual investments in climate action will need to triple to \$180 billion by 2025, from about \$60 billion today, to realize co-financing with the private sector on the necessary scale, combined with support for public infrastructure.

The decision at COP27 to create new loss-and-damage funding arrangements recognizes that additional investment by developed-country governments is needed to help developing countries limit the harm from more frequent and severe extreme-weather events, rising sea levels, desertification, and other climate-driven problems. All countries are already suffering loss and damage from climate change, but the social and economic consequences can be far more devastating for developing countries, which face not only repair and reconstruction costs but also severe reductions in economic output, employment, and living standards.

The 2020s are the crucial decade in the fight against climate change. Further delay would be profoundly dangerous. But all countries will need to advance the transition to carbon neutrality. The rich world must not only do much more to reduce its own emissions. It must also generate the financing needed to help others and to protect the world's poorer countries from a problem they did not create.

Vera Songwe is Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations. Amar Bhattacharya is a visiting professor in practice at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

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The dust has now settled after the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Egypt, but there are still many unanswered questions about how to finance emissions reductions and adaptation. The world will not avoid dangerous levels of climate change without a significant increase in investment in developing countries. If these countries lock in dependency on fossil fuels and dirty technologies, they will be the largest source of emissions growth in the coming decades.

Fortunately, such investment can not only reduce emissions and build resilience; it also can drive a new form of growth and development that is much more attractive than the dirty and destructive paths of the past. Helping these countries accelerate the transition to sustainable, inclusive, and resilient economies is therefore in developed countries' own interest.

We were commissioned by the Egyptian COP27 presidency and the British COP26 presidency to conduct an independent analysis of the financing that developing countries (other than China) will need by 2030 in order to realize the goals outlined in the Paris climate agreement. Our report, published during the first week of COP27, concluded that these countries' annual investment in climate action needs to increase immediately, from about \$500 billion in 2019 to \$1 trillion by 2025, and to \$2.4 trillion by 2030. That investment will not only deliver on the Paris agreement; it will also drive this new form of growth and advance progress toward achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We identified three investment priorities. First, financing should go toward accelerating the energy transformation, particularly the deployment of renewables, as this is essential to keeping the Paris agreement's targets within reach. Second, we need increased investments in resilience to protect

lives and livelihoods – particularly among the world's poorest communities – against the increasingly devastating effects of climate change, as well as effective, properly-funded mechanisms for addressing loss and damage (defined as costs that cannot be prevented by mitigation or adaptation). And, third, we urgently need to enhance biodiversity and conserve the ecosystems on which we all depend. Investments in nature represent vital contributions to both resilience-building and emissions reductions.

About half the financing for these investments could be met from domestic public and private sources in developing countries, and an additional \$1 trillion or so per year could come from outside sources. While public sources of finance, internal and external, will be essential, the largest share can come from the private sector, which will invest in order to secure attractive returns from the growing market for zero-emissions and climate-resilient goods and serv-

ices, provided that the risks can be reduced and managed.

A stronger partnership between the private and public sectors can unlock new investment opportunities, manage risk, reduce the cost of capital, and mobilize the necessary financing at a much larger scale. But this funding must come from the right kinds of sources, such as philanthropic foundations, the International Monetary Fund's special drawing rights (the IMF's reserve asset), or the sale of carbon credits.

Moreover, grants and low-interest loans by developed-country governments should increase from \$30 billion in 2019 to \$60 billion in 2025. This funding will represent only a small share of the overall sums required, and it should be carefully targeted at priorities that will not attract significant investments from the private sector. To put this in perspective, \$60 billion would represent only about 0.1% of developed countries' projected economic output in 2030, or about 0.7% of the \$9 trillion



Vera Songwe and Amar Bhattacharya

THE WORLD BANK AND OTHER MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS HAVE A CRITICAL ROLE TO PLAY IN ACHIEVING THE PARIS TARGETS

The great are strongest when they stand alone. A God-given might of being is their force.

SRI AUROBINDO



Turf War

The sudden repatriation of Punjab cadre IPS officer KS Chahal and his replacement by Haryana cadre IPS officer Manisha Chaudhary has triggered a Punjab vs Haryana turf battle. When Punjab Governor and Chandigarh administrator Banwari Lal Purohit appointed Chaudhary, objections from Punjab were expected given that in the existing administrative arrangements in Chandigarh where the posts of the home secretary and deputy commissioner were earmarked for Haryana cadre officers while finance secretary and SSP posts were allotted for Punjab cadre officers. Appointing Chaudhary to a post earmarked for Punjab naturally led to a puzzled reaction. Had Chahal been replaced by a Punjab cadre officer, perhaps it would have been seen as another regular reshuffle. But Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann jumped into the fray, accusing the action as "provocative" and breaking a decades-old arrangement between Punjab and Haryana.

Mann's accusation, sources have informed DKB, has forced the Governor to clarify that Chahal's repatriation was due to the babu's alleged misconduct and with the Punjab Chief Secretary VK Janjua well in the loop. But Mann is not letting go. Sources say that the AAP-ruled Punjab government has not only protested to the Governor but is also sending a panel of three IPS officers for the Governor to choose from for the Chandigarh SSP post. Will Mann prevail with these aggressive tactics?

Ex-Maha babu may get new role

Retired 1985-batch IAS officer and former Mumbai municipal commissioner Praveen Pardeshi, who during the worst months of the coronavirus pandemic, led the civic body's efforts to create Covid treatment facilities, is reportedly being brought back as the new CEO of the Maharashtra Institution for Transformation (MITRA), which is the state's equivalent of the NITI Aayog. The buzz is that Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his deputy Devendra Fadnis both are favouring Pardeshi's candidature. While the NITI Aayog has the prime minister as its head, MITRA will have the chief minister as its head.

Pardeshi had reportedly fallen out with his seniors during his stint as municipal commissioner and transferred abruptly as additional chief secretary (urban development) but he refused to join. Instead, the babu chose a deputation to the UN. After losing his chance to become the state chief secretary in February last year, he voluntarily resigned from the service and was then brought in as a member (administration) of the National Capacity Building Commission.

Sources say that it seems that the retired babu's rehabilitation is well underway.

Delays in PSU appointments

As reported earlier in this column, after a long delay that has not been sufficiently explained, the government recently appointed Arun Kumar Singh, the former CMD of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) as the new chairperson of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC). So far, so good. But there are still as many as 72 posts of CMD, MD and whole-time directors lying vacant in PSUs still. This is an alarming number of key vacancies that ideally should not be allowed to stay open for long.

If we accept Minister of State for Finance Dr Bhagwat Krishnarao Karao's statement in Parliament that the selection process is continuous and ongoing, it does raise questions about the efficacy of the selection process which regularly delays these appointments. Those in the know are saying that the absence of full-time leadership in key PSUs is hurting the economy.

Ironically, government ministers are often heard deploring the lack of good leadership in these companies without acknowledging that perhaps the solution lies in studying the practice of top appointments in some key sectors such as power and energy. Various ministries have different stipulations for these posts. The Finance Ministry, for one, has decided that the chairperson of a state-owned company should have a five-year tenure, extendable to 10 years, for the 12 state-owned banks. The Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry has settled for a three-year term for the companies under its purview, while the Power Ministry apparently is yet to take a call.

These fundamental decisions, besides the selection process itself, need to be sorted quickly to avoid these unwanted delays in key top PSU appointments.

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

WISDOM CORNER

- Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony. MAHATMA GANDHI
- Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or usher storm, but to add color to my sunset sky. RABINDRANATH TAGORE
- Wonder is the feeling of the philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder. PLATO

WORDSWORTH

Anadiplosis

This is yet another term from that repository of extraordinary expressions, the field of rhetoric. It refers to the trick of repeating the last word of a sentence, line, or clause, at or near the beginning of the next. An example will make the idea clearer and to give it I call upon that fortune-cookie philosopher, Yoda from Star Wars: "Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering." Understanding you are? A more sanctified appearance is at the start of the Gospel according to John in the King James Bible: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Anadiplosis derives from Greek diplous, double, from which also come diploid, diploma and diplomat (the last two from the idea of a doubled or folded paper, hence an official document). The prefix ana- is also Greek, meaning back or anew. Do not confuse this figure of speech with epanadiplosis, in which a sentence begins and ends with the same word. A famous example is in a speech by Malcolm X: "You bleed when the white man says bleed. You bite when the white man says bite, and you bark when the white man says bark." The extra prefix that appears in epanadiplosis derives from the Greek preposition epi, "upon, in addition". Likewise, don't muddle anadiplosis with the better-known anaphora, in which successive clauses or sentences begin with the same word or words. Bleak House, by Charles Dickens. Ait is another way to spell eyot, island. Another rhetorical term for a similar trick is antistrophe (which is also known as epiphora or epistrophe – there's disagreement over terms), which refers to repeating a word at the end of successive clauses or sentences ("government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth"). Both antistrophe and epistrophe derive from Greek strephein, to turn.

Wax poetic

At one time wax was the usual verb meaning to become bigger, but from the fifteenth century onwards it was progressively replaced by grow, so that it survives now only in discussions of the moon or in set phrases such as your wax poetic and similar formations – wax eloquent, wax lyrical, even wax sententious. I agree this is an idiomatic form that's not easy to understand. In everyday usage, in which such set forms are bordering on cliché, it means merely to communicate in the way described. So wax poetic means only "speak or write poetically".

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

PSUs lead capex, pvt sector lags



Shivaji Sarkar

THE NEW INDIAN ECONOMY MAY HAVE PATCHES OF PROBLEMATIC DEVELOPMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR MAY NOT REV UP THE ECONOMY

The government having fallen short of funds presents fresh demand for ₹4.4 lakh crore involving a fresh outgo of a little under ₹3.3 trillion (lakh crore) to defray high subsidy costs of fertiliser, food and fuel (FFF). Though prices slump, demand remains low, capex is led by PSUs and private remains laggard.

The Union Budget was for expenditure of ₹39,44,909 in 2022-23, an increase of 4.6 per cent over the previous year. The total expenditure for 2021-22 has been 8.2 percent over the budget estimates.

The Centre has raised revenues of ₹32,000 crore from dividends from PSUs and ₹30000 crore is acquired from disinvestments. With the shrinkage of PSUs, this income, both dividends and sales would gradually be non-existent. Private partners are also reneging as they find profits elusive. Deficits may actually go up.

Fertiliser gets the biggest chunk of ₹1.09 lakh crore – ₹23000 crore for P&K - phosphatic and potassic and over ₹86000 crore for urea. Free Food dole gets additional ₹60,000 crore for PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana until December but may be extended as 2023 holds elections to nine States. The programme is politically sensitive and may continue longer.

Another sensitive area, rural development gets ₹45000 crore with

an additional ₹28775 crore for MGNREGA.

Various infra, particularly road and rail, projects get Rs 39.4 lakh crore, largely through debts. World Bank has cautioned on debt financing the infra in difficult times if it does not boost effective demand. The exercise meant for higher GDP growth has Reserve Bank of India repeatedly cutting it to 6.3 per cent and 6.8 percent by the IMF.

There are some silver linings as retail consumer inflation falls to 5.88 percent and dramatically wholesale index falls to 5.85 percent. The WPI has been declining since August as the RBI pepped up repo rates. Deceleration in food prices is largely responsible for the lower-than-expected inflation. Food contributes 39 percent to consumer index. November was the 19th month when food at 6 percent was beyond the RBI toleration limit. Fuel, clothing and footwear are still beyond the limit.

The consumer demand has yet not risen. It eluded even the festive Dussehra and Diwali season. It led to 4 percent contraction in the Index for Industrial Production (IIP) due to 5.7 per cent contraction in manufacturing. Mining grew, mainly due to 524 million tonnes spudding of coal, by 2.5 percent and electricity 2.5 percent. Higher electricity prices hurt. Overall consumer demand is still

in a grey zone far behind the pre-Covid19 level, February 2020.

In such situation, increasing the capital expenditure may become elusive. Rightly, Chief Economic Advisor Anantha Nageswaran has called upon the private sector to play a greater role, and ensure that capital cost is not driven up too much. It is a difficult proposition. The central PSUs with annual target of ₹6.62 trillion remain the major spender that boost the economy. It has achieved 43 per cent of the target so far.

The RBI in its study on capital expenditure says a total of 361 companies, which did not avail of any financing from the banks/FIs for capex projects, raised an amount of ₹47,824 crore through ECBs/FCCBs/RDBs and 27 other companies raised ₹3,410 crore for their capex needs through domestic equity issues under the IPO route. Overall, investment plans of 791 projects were made during 2021-22 aggregating to ₹1,94,548 crore as against 576 projects in 2020-21 with investment intentions of ₹1,16,603 crore, which remained comparatively lower than the levels seen since 2016-17.

The investment climate in terms of number of new project announcements remained weak during 2019-20 and deteriorated further in 2020-21 due to Covid-19. Subsequently, with resumption of

business activities and improved demand sentiments, the new capex project announcements showed some signs of revival. During 2021-22, 28 banks and FIs, which were actively involved in project finance, reported 403 projects, significantly higher than 220 projects reported during 2020-21 as well as 320 projects reported during 2019-20, mainly due to increase in small ticket projects. Though envisaged total project cost of ₹1,43,314 crore almost doubled as compared to the record low of ₹75,558 crore in 2020-21 on the back of Covid-19 induced lockdown and related restrictions, it remained lower than the pre-Covid levels.

The new Indian economy may have patches of problematic developments and the private sector may not rev up the economy. The hurried approach at privatisation hopefully would not become a critical block for the government. Still a large chunk of public sector remains the flag bearer of the Indian economy. As their role shrinks, the country could slip into myriad problems.

Meanwhile, debts of some large houses have spiralled and RBI refuses to name them though smaller borrowers are named and shamed. The country is on an uneven patch and has to ensure how a non-PSU economy remains responsive.

The writer is Professor at IIMC

Pull up the socks

Sir, The detection of cases of the highly transmissible BF.7 Omicron variant in the country should alert the government as well as the people. There is no need to panic. Variants driving surges in China, the US, and Japan were found in India before. People of different regions are genetically different and they deal with the variants differently. There was a surge due to BA.4 and BA.5 in Europe in July. However, in India, the variants didn't cause much damage in India. People should take adequate preventive measures and raise awareness. I also urge everyone to realise the necessity of strictly adhering to hygiene practices such as washing hands frequently, maintaining distance during public interaction and masking, sanitising, etc., which will help contain the virus. Now, it's time for all states to strengthen their surveillance. They should keep all systems on alert for a rapid, scaled-up public health response, enforcing Covid-appropriate behaviour attuned to the changing levels of threat. Health departments of all the states should also have access to global intelligence on the patterns of infectivity, immune evasion and virulence of circulating variants. Vishal Mayur, TUMKUR (KARNATAKA)

Artificial supply crunch

Sir, After the recent surge of Covid cases in China the fear of disruption in the supply of active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) looms in the pharmaceutical industries of India. It is feared that the pharmaceutical industry of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Haryana may have to face shortage. And certainly when auxiliary materials used in medicines are imported from other countries becomes expensive, the heat of price-rise will have to be borne by the people already suffering from various diseases. Presently nearly 65 per cent of the critical raw material components of medicines are imported from China. Two-year-long pandemic and the on-going war between Russia and Ukraine have already disrupted global supplies. Thus the skyrocketing price-rise of every commodity has affected the common man's budget. In fact, an artificial supply crunch is created whenever a pandemic or other natural disaster occurs. Even now, many industrial units have started buying in bulk. Undoubtedly, this would lead to hoarding. People looking for opportunities in trouble were exposed in the second wave of the Corona crisis. Then a few manufacturers and middlemen had seized the opportunity. Even the lifesaving injections were put on the market as counterfeit. Hence, there is a need to keep a tab on such practices. Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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national

of the day quote

Actions taken to control Covid are based on scientific evidence, not political reasons

DR. K. SUDHAKAR | KARNATAKA HEALTH MINISTER



The government is focussing on health as well as wellness, by eliminating the factors responsible for illness and making treatment of diseases inclusive. The amount of work which has been done in the health sector in India in the last 7-8 years has not been done in the last 70 years

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION CIVIL AVIATION AND STEEL MINISTER



The decision to end the session early was taken with the consent of all parties

OM BIRLA | LOK SABHA SPEAKER



SHORT TAKES

Venugopal gets clean chit

Thiruvananthapuram: Congress General Secretary K.C. Venugopal Friday got a clean chit from the CBI when it filed its report in the CBI court here that there is no merit in the sexual abuse allegations levelled against him by the prime accused in the solar scam case. It was in August last year that the CBI registered cases against two-time former Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, Venugopal, Congress MPs Hibi Eden and Adoor Prakash, Congress legislator A.P. Anilkumar and BJP national Vice President A.P. Abdulla Kutty. The cases were registered on a complaint filed by the solar scam accused, alleging that she was sexually exploited by these leaders.

HC summons Bear Grylls

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court issued summons to British adventurer and television presenter Bear Grylls and others on Friday on a suit filed by an Indian script writer claiming his copyright in the original literary work was infringed by the show 'Get Out Alive with Bear Grylls'. The suit sought a permanent injunction restraining the defendants from infringing upon the Indian writer's copyright and also sought damages. Justice Amit Bansal issued summons to other defendants -- NBC Universal Inc and its Vice President Tom Shelly, Warner brothers Discovery, OTT platform Hotstar, The Walt Disney and Net Geo India.

BSF foils smuggling bid

Chandigarh: The Border Security Force (BSF) in Punjab Friday foiled Pakistan's attempt of smuggling drugs and weapons across the border through a drone. The BSF said its personnel deployed at the border heard the buzzing sound of a flying object from Pakistan entering Indian territory near Mullakot village in Amritsar district. As per the drill, the troops tried to intercept the drone by firing. The area was cordoned off and police and other security agencies were informed.

Hizbul module busted, five held

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Police along with the security forces has arrested five terrorist associates of proscribed terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen in the forest area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district and recovered huge cache of arms and ammunition from their possession, police said.



Due to ease-of-doing business policies, an investment of ₹30,000 crore has been firm up in the last nine months, which will create new employment opportunities for thousands of youngsters

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

RAHUL ATTACKS BJP

Mounting his attack on the BJP, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Friday said the ruling party can hold as many public meetings as it wants in the rest of India but sees Covid only where his Bharat Jodo Yatra is passing through



CENTRE'S FRESH DIRECTIVE TO STATES AMID COVID SCARE



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 23: Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Friday advised states and union territories to undertake a mock drill across all health facilities on December 27 to ensure readiness of infrastructure with a specific focus on oxygen plants, ventilators, logistics and human resources. During a virtual meeting with health ministers and senior officials of states in view of the recent surge in coronavirus cases in some parts of the world, he said, "The Centre and states need to work in tandem and in a collaborative spirit as was done during the previous surges for Covid prevention and management." The meeting reviewed the public health system's preparedness for containment and management of Covid and progress of the vaccination campaign.

Principal secretaries, additional chief secretaries and information commissioners of states also attended the meet, besides the ministers. Referring to the high-level review meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, Mandaviya also advised states to be on alert, keep all preparedness for Covid management and continue their pre-emptive and proactive approach, the health ministry said in a statement. He asked states to strengthen the surveillance system for whole genome sequencing of positive case samples to track variants through the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) network. This will ensure timely detection of newer variants, if any, circulating in the country, Mandaviya said. "Focus is to be given to health

India okays nasal Covid vax

Bharat Biotech's intranasal Covid vaccine has been approved by the Union Health Ministry as a booster dose for those aged 18 years and above and is likely to be introduced on the Co-WIN platform Friday evening, official sources said. The needle-free vaccine will be available at private hospitals as of now and can be administered as a precaution dose to adults who have been vaccinated with two doses of either Covishield or Covaxin. It is likely to be rolled out in the national Covid vaccination programme soon, they said. The ministry's approval for the intranasal vaccine as a booster comes amid a spurt in Covid cases in China and some other countries.

facility-based sentinel surveillance, pan-respiratory virus surveillance, community-based surveillance, and sewage or wastewater surveillance. (There is a) Need to collectively reinvent the system and remove any sense of complacency and fatigue," he said. In view of the upcoming festive season, the Union minister stressed on the importance of public awareness campaigns regarding adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour. He requested the health ministers of states to personally monitor and review preparedness of all infrastructure and ensure there is adequate stock of essential medicines.

5 cops among 17 held for drug smuggling

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Dec 23: In a major success in its anti-narcotic campaign, the J&K police Friday busted a big drug smuggling and peddling racket in Kupwara and Baramulla districts. Police said 17 persons, including five policemen, a political activist, a contractor and a local shopkeeper have been arrested from Kupwara and Baramulla districts in this narcotics smuggling racket that had its origin in Pakistan. "Muhammad Waseem Najar, a poultry shop owner belonging to Darzipura village of Kupwara district, was arrested after recovery of some narcotic quantity from his house." After investigation, Waseem admitted to be part of a big group of drug peddlers and disclosed names of some of his associates belonging to Kupwara district and Uri area of district Baramulla. "In subsequent raids, 16 more persons were arrested, including five policemen, a political activist, a contractor and others. Policemen arrested were working as SPOs in the department. "Ongoing investigation has exposed the direct involvement of Pakistan-based terrorist handlers in pumping narcotics into the Valley with the objective to destroy the local youth and their future. "Shakir Ali Khan, a Pakistan-based terrorist handler originally belonging to Keran in Kupwara district has surfaced to be the main supplier of narcotics to his son Tahmeed Khan on this



Police said 17 persons have been arrested from Kupwara and Baramulla districts in this narcotics smuggling racket that had its origin in Pakistan

side of the Line of Control (LoC). "On Tahmeed's confession and disclosure, two packets weighing close to 2 kgs of heroin-like narcotic substance have been recovered. Tahmeed used to transport it to Kupwara to sell it among his other arrested associates to earn huge amounts of money. "Tahmeed's father Shakir Ali Khan first crossed the LoC in early 1990s to join terrorist ranks. After obtaining training in illegal arms and ammunition, Shakir infiltrated back and remained one of the top active terrorists of the Hizbul outfit in the Keran area. "Shakir then again crossed over to Pakistan occupied Kashmir. "He is presently working as a top terrorist handler involved in pushing arms, ammunition and narcotics into Kashmir Valley," police said.

Ex-ICICI Bank CEO Chanda Kochhar, husband arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: The CBI Friday arrested former ICICI Bank CEO and MD Chanda Kochhar and her husband Deepak Kochhar in connection with alleged cheating and irregularities in loans sanctioned by the bank to Videocon Group companies, officials said. They said the Kochhars were called to the agency headquarters and arrested after a brief questioning session. The CBI has alleged that they were evasive in their responses and did not cooperate in the investigation. The Kochhars will be produced before a special CBI court on Saturday. They are likely to be kept in separate lockups on the ground floor of the 11-storeyed agency headquarters after their medical examination. Sources said that agency is likely to move at a swift pace to file the first charge sheet in the case in which the Kochhars could be named along with Venugopal Dhoot of Videocon Group. The CBI had named the Kochhars and Dhoot, along with companies Nupower Renewables (NRL) managed by Deepak Kochhar, Supreme Energy, Videocon International Electronics Ltd and Videocon Industries Limited, as accused in the FIR registered under IPC sections related to criminal conspiracy and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act in 2019, they said.

Kappan gets bail after two years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Dec 23: The Allahabad High Court granted bail to Kerala-based journalist Siddique Kappan Friday in a money laundering case. Justice Dinesh Kumar Singh of the Lucknow bench of the high court passed the order on Kappan's bail application. His lawyer Mohamed Dhanish KS said the grant of bail has paved the way for his release from jail after completion of formalities. Kappan, currently lodged in the Lucknow district jail, was arrested two years back while he was on his way to Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, where a Dalit woman had died after allegedly being raped. He and three others were accused of having links with the Popular Front of India and being a part of conspiracy to instigate violence. In September, the Supreme Court granted him bail in connection with that case. But he continued to be in jail because of the money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate.

Shelly Oberoi is AAP's Delhi mayor candidate

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 23: Weeks after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) election, the party Friday announced candidates for the mayor and deputy mayor posts. Shelly Oberoi, councillor from ward No. 86 of Patel Nagar constituency, has been named as the mayoral candidate, and Aale Mohammad Iqbal has been named for the post of deputy mayor. Shelly Oberoi is a former Delhi University professor and a first-time councillor who won the Delhi civic body election from the BJP stronghold. Aale Mohammad Iqbal is the son of MLA and AAP leader Shoab Iqbal from Matia Mahal constituency. He won by the biggest margin of over 17,000 votes.



The party has named four persons as candidates for the election of the standing committee members -- Mohammad Aamil Malik from Sri Ram Colony, Raminder Kaur from Fateh Nagar, Mohini Jeenwal from Sunder Nagri, and Sarika Chaudhary from Daryaganj. At the first MCD meeting to be held January 6, the 250 municipal councillors will take oath and elect the mayor and deputy mayor besides six members of the standing committee.



Tourists in large numbers flock the Ridge ahead of Christmas in Shimla

PTI PHOTO

Free foodgrain scheme extended by a year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: In a major decision, the government Friday decided to provide free ration to 81.35 crore poor people under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) for one year. Under NFSA, also called the food law, the government currently provides 5 kilogram of food grains per person per month at Rs 2-3 per kg. The families covered under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) get 35 kg of food grains per month. Rice is given to poor persons under NFSA at Rs 3 per kg and wheat at Rs 2 per kg. Briefing reporters about the decision taken by the Union Cabinet, Food Minister Piyush Goyal said the Centre will bear the entire burden of providing free foodgrains under NFSA. The annual cost to the exchequer is estimated at Rs 2 lakh crore. Meanwhile, the government decided not to extend the free ration scheme Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), which ends on December 31.

OROP revision approved

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: The government Friday approved revision of pension of armed forces personnel under 'One Rank One Pension' scheme with retrospective effect from July 1, 2019 and the decision will benefit around 25 lakh pensioners. The decision taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet presided over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi will result in an additional annual expenditure of Rs 8,450 crore,

according to the defence ministry. It said Rs 23,638 crore will be paid as arrears to the pensioners from July 2019 to June 2022. "The Union Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved revision of pension of armed forces pensioners/family pensioners under One Rank One Pension (OROP) with effect from July 1, 2019," the ministry said. It said the pension of the past pensioners would be re-fixed on the basis of average of minimum

and maximum pension of defence forces retirees of calendar year 2018 in the same rank with the same length of service. The armed forces personnel retired up to June 30, 2019 (excluding those retired pre-maturely (PMR) with effect from July 1, 2014 will be covered under this revision, according to the ministry. More than 25.13 lakh (including over 4.52 lakh new beneficiaries) pensioners and family pensioners will be benefited from the decision, it said.

Kota coaching: Chorus grows for weekend offs amid suicides

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kota (Rajasthan), Dec 23: Classes for five days a week, weekend offs and not more than two internal tests in a week — chorus for these demands is growing among JEE and NEET aspirants here after three students died by suicide this month allegedly due to academic stress. For a student preparing for competitive exams here, the academic schedule would typically include classes for seven or eight hours from Monday to Saturday with a brief interval for refreshment, sometimes doubt sessions and remedial classes on Sundays, at least three internal tests during a week and one major test on the last Sunday of a month. Often bogged down with the fast

paced curriculum and the programme structure, students say they are always racing against time and even a day's break can push them behind thousands of other students. However, the recent cases of student suicides has brought back the focus on fixing the schedule to make it more student friendly. "Majority of students coming here begin to live away from their families for the first time. Having just one day off on Sunday is not enough to even adjust to that setting. At times, the day does not even give us the window to grasp what all was taught throughout the week," said Varsha B, a NEET aspirant from Maharashtra. Nishant Yadav from Haryana's Jhajjar district feels there should be at least two offs in a week to



not only help them relax but also keep pace with curriculum. "Life in Kota is like running on a treadmill. You can either get off or keep running but cannot slow down. There should be at least be two offs. Even adults need Saturday and Sunday offs, we are still

teenagers who are seeing the outside world for the first time and then the constant pressure that each of the six days of classes and the internal tests through the week, one has to be on top of his or her game," he said. In 2015, the Rajasthan gov-

Another student dies by suicide

Kota: In yet another case of suicide in Rajasthan's Kota city, a 16-year-old coaching student ended his life by hanging himself from a ceiling fan in his hostel room, taking the total number of such cases to 15 this year. The incident was reported in the Indira Vihar area under the Jawahar Nagar police station on Friday. Police identified the deceased as Aniket Kumar (18), a resident of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh. Kumar had passed Class 12 and was preparing to crack the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Under Graduate (NEET-UG) for the last three years, police said. A suicide note was recovered from his hostel room, however, it is yet to be examined, Circle Officer (CO), Jawahar Nagar police station area, DSP Amar Singh said.

ernment had formulated guidelines for coaching centres which required them to keep the environment "stress free", make room for recreational activities for students at the centre and ensure that students get at least one day off in a week. The government had also told institutes to limit class sizes to a maximum of 80 students instead of the 200 students, which was the practice in most institutes then. After the cases of three students dying by suicide last week came to light, the district administration issued fresh directions to ensure that there is stress-free environment for students and at least one weekly off is granted to them. Students, however, feel that it isn't enough.

JEE ASPIRANTS IN A SPOT

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Dec 23: With no marks to show in their 10th-class examination, several students from Tamil Nadu are facing a tough situation while applying for Joint Entrance Examination (JEE). The students don't have 10th marks to produce as they were all passed by the Tamil Nadu Board due to Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-21.

Sujith Somanathan, a 12th standard student from a government school of Madurai, said, "I am worried as I don't have any 10th marks to show which is mandatory for applying in JEE. The state government officials have told us that the matter has been taken up with the National Testing Agency (NTA) and that it would be resolved soon. I am really worried."

He further said, "After entering the personal details, the marks of Class 10 are mandatory and we are not able to further proceed in the application and hence we are really worried."

It is to be noted that around 40,000 students appear for JEE from Tamil Nadu and the students



who have taken the Tamil Nadu state board exams for the 10th standard don't have any marks for the tenth exam which is a mandatory criterion for applying in JEE. The registration for JEE commenced on December 12 and would continue till January 12.

Ramkumar T, a Physics teacher in a Government higher secondary school at Vadapalani, said, "We had then requested the government to award marks to students based on their performance in 9th standard but they did not award any marks. This is creating a problem now for the students

applying for JEE." Tamil Nadu School Education Minister, Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi told IANS that Tamil Nadu Government has already taken up the matter with the Union government and the issue would be sorted out.

School Education Commissioner of Tamil Nadu, K. Nanthakumar while speaking to media persons, said that the state government has already approached the Union Government and the National Testing Agency (NTA) - which conducts the test paper, and added that the issue would be sorted out soon.

Man sets bakery on fire

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Dec 23: A man has set a bakery on fire as its owner allegedly misbehaved with his minor daughter when she went there for purchase at Vishnupuram in Cheranalloor here, police said Friday.

The incident happened on Wednesday and both the man and the bakery owner were arrested and remanded based in separate cases with regard to the incident. According to police, the bakery owner Baburaj (52) allegedly misbehaved with the girl when she came to the bakery to buy articles on Wednesday evening.

When the girl informed his father about the incident, the enraged man rushed to the shop and set it on fire in the night, police said, adding that the shop suffered damage in the fire. Baburaj's wife, who was at the shop when the man poured petrol at the small shop and set it on fire, suffered minor burn injuries.

The shop-owner was arrested under sections of POCSO Act. The father of the girl was also arrested based on the complaint by the bakery owner's wife. Both of them were remanded by a local court, police added.

TN gearing up to tackle Covid

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Dec 23: The Tamil Nadu health department is readying itself for any surge in Covid-19 cases after the new variant, Omicron BF7 was detected in the country.

There is a surge in Covid cases in China and Japan and more than 480 people have died in China due to this new variant. More than one lakh people are detected positive in that country and after the variant was detected in India, the Government of India sent guidelines to the states.

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin in a high-level meeting of bureaucrats said that the state should be prepared for any eventuality even though the possibility of a surge like during the presence of the Delta variant was less. Tamil Nadu has inoculated 97 per cent of its population with the first dose of vaccine and 92 per cent with the second dose of vaccine and hence the immunity in society is high.

However, the state health department has directed people to wear masks and to ensure safe distancing with the festive season of



Christmas and New Year celebrations on the anvil. The state Public health department has already sent a request letter to the Union Health Ministry to conduct checking of passengers arriving from China and Hong Kong for Covid-19.

The Chief Minister in the high-level meeting has directed officials to test all symptomatic passengers arriving on international flights according to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and to make sure that they are provided treatment.

A statement from the Chief Minister's office on Thursday said

that the government was prepared with beds, drugs, testing, and oxygen facilities being made available adequately in all hospitals.

The state government has also directed the officials to conduct whole genome sequencing of Covid-19 samples to detect new variants.

It is to be noted that the Omicron BF-7 which is the new causative variant for Covid-19 surge in China and other countries is a subvariant of Omicron BA-5 which was detected in Tamil Nadu during genome sequencing conducted in June, July and August.



Devotees take part in a chariot procession with the 'Thanga Anki' to be placed on the Ayyappa idol for Mandala Pooja at Sabarimala, leaving the Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple, in Pathanamthitta. The procession will reach the Sabarimala temple on December 26

Search engines can't claim to be 'content-blind': HC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kochi, Dec 23: The Kerala High Court has held that search engines like Google cannot claim to be mere intermediaries with no control over the content that appears in search results.

This came in a judgment by a division bench of Justices Muahmed Mustaque and Shoba Annamma Eapen on the right to be forgotten and the manner in which it applies to publication of court judgments and proceedings, in the absence of any specific legislation. The bench observed that even though making court judgments available in search results cannot be faulted, it cannot be said that Google has no control over the information that gets thrown up in search results.



Moreover, it also opined that in the era of Artificial

Intelligence (AI), it is quite possible for Google to identify the nature

of the content and remove the same.

The court pointed out these on a batch of pleas moved by certain litigants seeking erasure of their personal details that were appearing on Google search.

It also clarified that it is not looking at the responsibility or liability of Google for publishing judgments online, and rather, the court is concerned with the eternal nature of information online, which goes against the right to be forgotten.

Therefore, it said that in the absence of legislation, litigants may have to approach the court and it may have to recognise their right and direct removal of such content available online on a case-to-case basis.

TN farmers seek distribution of sugarcane through ration shops

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Dec 23: Sugarcane farmers of Tamil Nadu have demanded that the state government procure sugarcane directly from the farmers and distribute it through ration shops during Pongal.

They said that the government had distributed sugarcane through ration shops during the previous years and if it is distributed this season, it would be of huge benefit to the farmers.

The farmers have announced to stage a major protest in front of the secretariat on December 27 to press for their demand. Notably, Pongal, the biggest harvest festival of the state, is being held between January 15 and 18.

R. Shanmugasundaram, President, Tamil Nadu Farmers Protection Association told media persons that the government procured sugarcane in bulk quantity during the previous year for distribution through ration shops for the Pongal festival.

He said that this has helped the farmers much as the livelihood of the farmers was safeguarded.

The government, he added, is yet to announce whether the sugarcane would be procured for distribution through Pongal gift packets this year.

The farmer association leader



The farmers have announced to stage a major protest in front of the secretariat on December 27 to press for their demand

Notably, Pongal, the biggest harvest festival of the state, is being held between January 15 and 18

said that farmers have spent around Rs 2 lakh per acre to raise cane and that if the government was not procuring it would put the farmers in a bad state of affairs as debts would start mounting.

The sugarcane farmers also demanded the state government procure the product from across the state and not confine it to certain areas only as it would benefit farmers in that area only.

2024 LS POLLS Kerala CPI(M) to hit the road from Jan 1

The road map for the 2024 polls has now been prepared by the CPI(M) and as the first step towards it, the entire top brass of the party will now be seen knocking on the doors of homes in the state starting from January 1 - 21

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 23: The Kerala unit of the CPI(M) is presently the flag-bearer of the party as their units in West Bengal and Tripura have decimated, and hence it has decided to hit the road for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls aiming a target of 10 out of the 20 seats in the state.

The road map for the 2024 polls has now been prepared by the CPI(M) and as the first step towards it, the entire top brass of the party will now be seen knocking on the doors of homes in the state starting from January 1 - 21.

At the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, even though the CPI(M) was exuding confidence that they would win 19 seats, when votes were counted it was the Congress-led UDF which



won 19 seats, leaving the Left party shell-shocked.

The single biggest reason why they ended in such a state was the way the Pinarayi Vijayan-led government handled the issue of opening the famed Sabarimala temple to women of all age groups breaking the tradition of not allowing any female in the 10 - 50 age group. Another reason was the decision of former Congress president Rahul Gandhi to contest from the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat.

But Vijayan, one known for his stern positions and not the one who wilts under pressure, came trumps up first in the 2020 local body polls and wrote into history books when

he for the first time led the 2021 Assembly polls and retained office, a first in the history of the state.

Incidentally, the way to 2024 polls has been a key point of discussion at all recent CPI(M) party meetings and in the present three-day meeting that began here on Tuesday, this was the key issue and the door-to-door campaign was also cleared.

Besides the door-to-door campaign, instructions will soon be given to its cadres at all levels to ensure that each and every party worker should get involved in all issues in their locality and the key instruction is to behave well and give a patient hearing to the grievances of each and every voter.

Kerala to usher in New Year with political fireworks

Interestingly, the decisions have to be taken at a time when the relations between the two leaders have hit the rock bottom

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 23: Given the ongoing tussle between Governor Arif Mohammad Khan and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Kerala is likely to ring in the New Year with a plenty of political fireworks with many crucial decisions, including the Bill removing the former as Chancellor.

Interestingly the decisions have to be taken at a time when the re-



lations between the two leaders have hit the rock bottom. Khan, who is travelling, is expected to be back in the New Year and the first file that he will be looking into is the Bill that has been passed by

the Kerala Assembly removing him as the chancellor of 14 universities in the state.

The Bill became a necessity for the Vijayan government after Khan started throwing spanners in the

functioning of the government, which was running the higher education system in the state as a department of the CPI-M, as per Khan. Vice-Chancellors, teaching and administrative jobs was being given to the party cadres, in violation of all norms.

With the Bill now before Khan, he may look into it but not sit in judgement as it is an issue concerning him. The Governor has been reiterating that he will stay away from judging matters if he is the subject.

Hence in all likelihood, if the Governor does not sign the Bill, he will lay it before the President. However, Vijayan had dropped enough hints contradicting the media speculation that the cus-

tomary Governor's address might not happen on the first day of the Assembly session in a new calendar year. To a question, he replied that the government has not decided to skip the governor's address and that a speech is being prepared.

Many are seeing it as a climb down as the Congress-led Opposition in Kerala has always been wary of the standoff between the two as they see it as nothing but a "match fixing". Hence all eyes are fixed now on how Khan deals with the Bill as he has to make the first move. If he reads out the customary Governor's address, then the Congress's assumption that the entire standoff being "stage-managed" will turn out to be true.



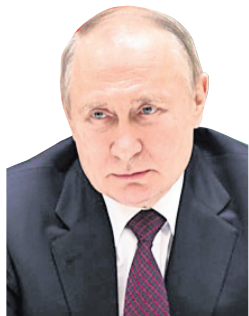
Authority responded to the directions issued by this Court. The writ petition is disposed of permitting the petitioner to donate a portion of her liver for conducting her father's transplantation surgery, subject to the other requirements of the Act and the Rules," the order said. The petitioner's father is critical and doctors had advised a liver transplant to save his life.

The plea moved by the minor petitioner submitted that she is ready and willing to donate a portion of her liver to her father and that there are no medical impediments to her donating her organs.

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The plea moved by the minor petitioner submitted that she is ready and willing to donate a portion of her liver to her father and that there are no medical impediments to her donating her organs.

international



Our goal is not to spin the flywheel of military conflict, but, on the contrary, to end this war
VLADIMIR PUTIN | RUSSIA PRESIDENT

INDIA SUPPLIES 124 SUVs TO SL POLICE

India has handed over 125 SUVs, as part of planned supply of 500 vehicles for Sri Lankan law enforcement agencies and armed forces under an on-going Line of Credit of US \$100 million



of the day quote

First, we don't want to see people anywhere suffering from Covid. Whether it's illness, whether it's death, we want to see that come to an end wherever it's happening, including in China
ANTONY BLINKEN | US SECRETARY OF STATE

We can confirm that North Korea has completed an initial arms delivery to Wagner, which paid for that equipment
JOHN KIRBY | US NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL SPOKESPERSON

The central government fully supports the chief executive and the Hong Kong government to govern in accordance with the law, to promote international cooperation and better integrate into the national development plans
XI JINPING | CHINESE PRESIDENT

Zelenskyy back in Kyiv

Zelenskyy's return comes amid relentless Russian artillery, rocket and mortar fire as well as airstrikes on the eastern and southern fronts and elsewhere in Ukraine



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, Dec 23: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy sounded another defiant note on his return to his nation's capital Friday following his wartime visit to the United States, saying his forces are "working toward victory" even as Russia warned that there would be no end to the war until it achieved its military aims.

Zelenskyy posted on his Telegram account that he's in his Kyiv office following his US trip that secured a new \$1.8 billion military aid package, and pledged that "we'll overcome everything."
The Ukrainian President also

thanked the Netherlands for pledging up to 2.5 billion euros (USD 2.65 billion) for 2023, to help pay for military equipment and rebuild critical infrastructure.
Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the war would end at the negotiating table once the "special military operation" achieves "the goals that the Russian Federation has set," adding that "a significant headway has been made on demilitarisation of Ukraine."
The Kremlin spokesman said no reported Ukrainian peace plan can succeed without taking into account "the realities of today that can't be ignored" — a reference to Moscow's demand that Ukraine recognise Russia's sovereignty over the Crimean Peninsula, which was annexed in 2014, as well as other territorial gains.
At least six civilians were killed and 18 others were wounded in Russian attacks on eight regions in Ukraine's south and east in the past 24 hours, according to Ukrainian officials.



A man spreads cracked corn for ducks in Walla Walla, Washington

PTI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

Three dead in Paris shooting

Paris: A shooting targeting a Kurdish cultural center in a bustling Paris neighbourhood Friday left three people dead and three others wounded, authorities said. A 69-year-old suspect was wounded and arrested. The Paris prosecutor's office opened a probe for murder and attempted murder.

Cop, 2 ultras killed in Pak suicide attack

Islamabad: One police officer and two suspected militants, including a woman of the dreaded Pakistani Taliban outfit, were killed in a suicide attack here Friday, prompting authorities here to issue a "red alert" across the federal capital. The incident took place in Sector I-10/4 in Islamabad's upscale residential area, located barely 15km away from the garrison city of Rawalpindi, where Pakistan's powerful military establishment is located.

Thai PM joins new party

Bangkok: Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha announced Friday that he intends to join the recently formed United Thai Sang Chart Party (United Thai Nation Party) after the party agreed to nominate him as its candidate for Prime Minister, adding that he would register for the party's membership.

China sanctions 2 US individuals

Beijing: China decided to take countermeasures and sanction two US individuals in response to the US sanctions against two Chinese officials December 9 over alleged human rights issues related to Tibet. In accordance with China's Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law, the Chinese side has decided to take reciprocal sanctions against Miles Maochun Yu and Todd Stein, according to the Foreign Ministry Friday.

Tibet to build 3 waste-free cities

Lhasa: China's Tibet Autonomous Region will strive to build three cities, including the regional capital Lhasa, into waste-free cities by 2025, according to regional authorities. Lhasa, Xigaze, and Shannan of this southwestern region are included in a national drive to build around 100 waste-free cities in the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025), which is led by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and 17 other ministerial-level bodies.

JANUARY 6 REPORT

Trump 'lit that fire' of Capitol insurrection

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 23: The House January 6 committee's final report asserts that Donald Trump criminally engaged in a "multi-part conspiracy" to overturn the lawful results of the 2020 Presidential election and failed to act to stop his supporters from attacking the Capitol, concluding an extraordinary 18-month investigation into the former president and the violent insurrection two years ago.

Trump "lit that fire," the committee's chairman, Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson, writes.
The 814-page report released Thursday comes after the panel interviewed more than 1,000 witnesses, held 10 hearings and obtained millions of pages of documents. The witnesses — ranging from many of Trump's closest aides to law enforcement to some of the rioters themselves — detailed Trump's "premeditated" actions in the weeks ahead of the insurrection and how his wide-ranging pressure campaign to overturn his defeat directly influenced those who brutally pushed past the police and smashed through the windows and doors of the Capitol January 6, 2021. The central cause was "one man," the

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE IS RUNNING ITS OWN PROBE INTO THE CAPITOL RIOT, WHICH BROKE OUT JANUARY 6, 2021, WHEN TRUMP'S SUPPORTERS DISRUPTED A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS TO AFFIRM BIDEN'S VICTORY

TRUMP, WHO LAUNCHED A THIRD BID FOR THE WHITE HOUSE LAST MONTH, HAS REPEATEDLY LASHED OUT AT THE JANUARY 6 COMMITTEE AND DESCRIBED THE INVESTIGATION AND OTHER INQUIRIES RELATED TO HIM AS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED



A mob of supporters of US President Donald Trump fight with members of law enforcement at a door they broke open as they storm the US Capitol Building in Washington, US, January 6, 2021

REUTERS

report says: Trump.

The insurrection gravely threatened democracy and "put the lives of American lawmakers at risk," the nine-member panel concluded, offering by far the most definitive account of a dark chapter in modern American history. It functions not only as a compendium of the most dramatic moments of testimony from months of hearings, but also as a document meant to be preserved for future generations.

In a foreword to the report, outgoing House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

says the findings should be a "clarion call to all Americans: to vigilantly guard our Democracy and to give our vote only to those dutiful in their defense of our Constitution."

The report's eight chapters tell the story largely as the panel's hearings did this summer — describing the many facets of the remarkable plan that Trump and his advisers devised to try and void President Joe Biden's victory. The lawmakers describe the former president's pressure on states, fed-

eral officials, lawmakers and Vice President Mike Pence to game the system or break the law. In the two months between the election and the insurrection, the report says, "President Trump or his inner circle engaged in at least 200 apparent acts of public or private outreach, pressure, or condemnation, targeting either State legislators or State or local election administrators, to overturn State election results." Trump's repeated, false claims of widespread voter fraud resonated with his supporters, the

committee said, and were amplified on social media, building on the distrust of government he had fostered for his four years in office. And he did little to stop them when they resorted to violence and stormed the Capitol.

The massive, damning report comes as Trump is running again for the presidency and also facing multiple federal investigations, including probes of his role in the insurrection and the presence of classified documents at his Florida estate. This week is particularly fraught for him, as a House committee is expected to release his tax returns after he has fought for years to keep them private. And Trump has been blamed by Republicans for a worse-than-expected showing in the midterm elections, leaving him in his most politically vulnerable state since he won the 2016 election.

Along with other recommendations, the seven Democrats and two Republicans on the committee suggest that Trump should be barred from future office, noting that the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution holds that anyone who has taken an oath to uphold the Constitution can be barred from office for engaging in insurrection or rebellion.

FTX founder released on \$250 million bail

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, Dec 23: Beleaguered crypto exchange FTX Co-founder Sam Bankman-Fried has been released on a \$250 million bond in the US, "the largest-ever pretrial bond," amid his trial for committing fraud and other criminal charges.

A federal judge in the US District Court in Manhattan also barred the former FTX CEO from opening any new lines of credit of more than \$1,000 while awaiting trial, CNBC reported late Thursday.



He will face his next hearing in New York City January 3. The bond has been secured by equity in his family home, and by the signatures of his parents and two other individuals with "considerable" assets.

As part of the bond agreement, Bankman-Fried will wear an "electronic monitoring bracelet" and submit to "mental health counselling" amid restrictions on travelling out of the city. Bankman-Fried was charged by the US Attorney for the Southern District with eight counts including securities fraud and money laundering.

CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA DATA BREACH LAWSUIT

Meta agrees to pay \$725 million



REUTERS

Washington, Dec 23: Facebook owner Meta Platforms Inc (META.O) has agreed to pay \$725 million to resolve a class-action lawsuit accusing the social media giant of allowing third parties, in-

cluding Cambridge Analytica, to access users' personal information. The proposed settlement, which was disclosed in a court filing late Thursday, would resolve a long-running lawsuit prompted by revelations in 2018 that Facebook had allowed the British political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica to access data of as many as 87 million users.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs called the proposed settlement the largest to ever be achieved in a US data privacy class action and the most that Meta has ever paid to resolve a class action lawsuit.

NK fires ballistic missiles after US, SK drills

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, Dec 23: North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles toward its eastern waters Friday, its latest weapons demonstration that came days after US and South Korean warplanes conducted joint drills that North Korea views as an invasion rehearsal.

Recently, the North also claimed to have performed major tests needed to acquire its first spy satellite and a more mobile intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the US mainland.

South Korea's military detected the two missile launches from

North Korea's capital region at around 4:32 pm on Friday. Japan said it also confirmed at least one missile launch by North Korea.

It wasn't immediately clear exactly what kinds of missiles North Korea fired. South Korea's military said the missiles travelled about 250 kilometres (155 miles) and 350 kilometres (220 miles) respectively before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

Japanese Vice Defence Minister Toshiro Ino said that one missile

detected by Japan flew as far as 300 kilometres (180 miles) at a maximum altitude of 50 kilometres (30 miles). He said that missile might have shown an "irregular" trajectory, a possible reference to North Korea's highly maneuverable, nuclear-capable KN-23 missile, which was modeled on Russia's Iskander missile.

South Korea's military called the launches "a grave provocation" that hurts international peace. It said South Korea will maintain a firm readiness and

closely monitor North Korean moves in coordination with the United States.

Ino also accused North Korea of significantly raising tensions with repeated weapons tests.

The launches could be a response to the US-South Korean aerial military exercises near the Korean Peninsula Tuesday, as North Korea has said its torrid run of testing activities in past months were meant as a warning over its rivals' previous combined drills.

Washington and Seoul have said their drills are defensive in nature, but North Korea calls them practice for an invasion.

70% OF US UNDER WINTER STORM WARNING

Heavy snow and howling winds upended holiday plans for millions at one of the busiest times of the year, just days before Christmas, as a huge cold front swept down from the Arctic and took freezing hold of much of the nation

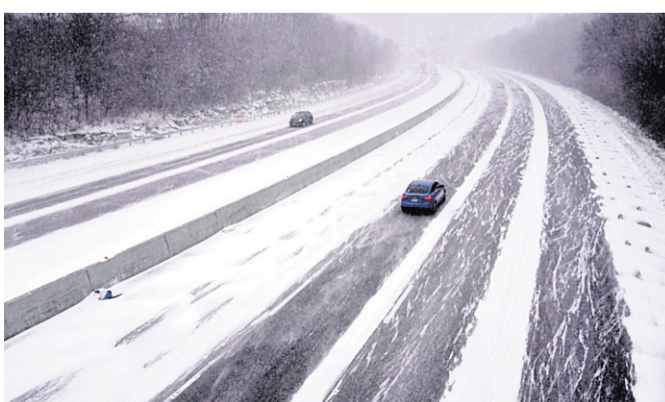
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

United States, Dec 23: A historic and brutal winter storm put some 240 million Americans under severe weather warnings Friday as the United States faced holiday travel chaos, with thousands of flights cancelled and major highways closed.

Heavy snow and howling winds upended holiday plans for millions at one of the busiest times of the year, just days before Christmas, as

a huge cold front swept down from the Arctic and took freezing hold of much of the nation, including normally temperate southern states.

Temperatures plunged below -40 degrees Fahrenheit (-40 Celsius) in some locations, with a staggering 240 million people - some 72 percent of the US population - under winter weather warnings or advisories, according to the National Weather Service.



"Winter weather hazards remain in effect from the Canadian border south to the Rio Grande (border river with Mexico), Gulf Coast and central Florida Peninsula while spanning from

the Pacific Northwest to the Eastern Seaboard," the NWS said in a report early Friday.

The warnings appear to be one of the most sweeping sets of US winter weather advisories ever.

Meteorologists said it was so cold in places - 10 degrees Fahrenheit was recorded Friday in normally mild Dallas, Texas - that anyone venturing outside risked frostbite within minutes.

The biting cold is an immediate concern for more than one million customers, mainly in the US south and east, who were without power as of Friday morning, according to electricity tracker poweroutage.us.

Road conditions remained treacherous, even as 100 million people were expected to take to the roads, according to the American Automobile Association.

Transportation departments in North and South Dakota, Oklahoma, Iowa and elsewhere reported near-zero visibility, ice-

covered roads and blizzard conditions, and strongly urged residents to stay home.

Two traffic fatalities were reported in Oklahoma Thursday, while the Weather Channel quoted the Kansas Highway Patrol saying three people died in road accidents in that Midwestern state, with weather considered a contributing factor.

Air ravel Chaos
More than 3,520 US flights were already cancelled Friday and another 1,900 delayed, according to tracking website Flight Aware, many at international hubs New York, Seattle and Chicago's O'Hare. US Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg warned that holiday travel was being severely impacted.



NEW ABNORMAL

HOTTER TEMPERATURES

Nearly all land areas are seeing more hot days and heat waves; 2022 was one of the hottest years on record. Higher temperatures increase heat-related illnesses and can make it more difficult to work and move around. Wildfires start more easily and spread more rapidly when conditions are hotter.

LOSS OF SPECIES

Climate change poses risks to the survival of species on land and in the ocean. These risks increase as temperatures climb. Exacerbated by climate change, the world is losing species at a rate 1,000 times greater than at any other time in recorded human history. One million species are at risk of become extinct within the next few decades.

POVERTY & DISPLACEMENT

Climate change increases the factors that put and keep people in poverty. Floods may sweep away urban slums, destroying homes and livelihoods. Heat can make it difficult to work in outdoor jobs. Weather-related disasters displace 2.3 crore people a year, leaving many more vulnerable to poverty.

NEW SEA ROUTES

The melting of the Arctic will open up a new shipping route which will have an impact on the Indian Ocean traffic, an Indian academician said. He also added the shipping route will also have its impact on the traffic in the Indian Ocean. "There could also be a circular route for the shipping lines", he added.

WORSE THAN PANDEMIC

Pollution by states and companies is contributing to more deaths globally than Covid-19, as per a UN environmental report, calling for "immediate and ambitious action" to ban some toxic chemicals. The report said pollution from pesticides, plastics and electronic waste is causing widespread human rights violations as well as at least 9 million premature deaths a year, and that the issue is largely being overlooked.

LIFELONG HEALTH HARM

A child born today faces multiple and life-long health harms from climate change - growing up in a warmer world with risks of food shortages, infectious diseases, floods and extreme heat, a major global study has found. Climate change is already harming people's health by increasing the number of extreme weather events and exacerbating air pollution, according to the study published in *The Lancet* medical journal. If nothing is done to mitigate it, its impacts could burden an entire generation with disease and illness throughout their lives.

THREAT TO MARINE LIFE

The effects of human activity from climate change to pollution are "devastating" marine life, with nearly a tenth of underwater plants and animals assessed so far threatened with extinction, the latest *Red List of Threatened Species* showed. More than 1,550 of some 17,903 marine plants and animals assessed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature are at risk of extinction, according to the latest report.

Pollution is making our life worse than hell. Every year the average global temperature rises by a certain degree and this causes the polar ice to melt. Life on this planet will be gravely affected unless we embrace new practices, ethics, and values to guide our lives. The impacts of climate change may be far worse than what we assume. Orissa POST takes a close look at the ongoing worldwide issue

Climate Chaos



TIME TO ACT

Our Challenge

The planet is already experiencing unprecedented fires, droughts, floods and other extreme weather. Research shows that the world needs to cut its emissions at least in half by 2030 and reach net-zero by mid-century to prevent the worst effects of climate change.



COP27

COP27 ends with announcement of historic loss and damage fund. In negotiations that went down to the wire over the weekend, countries reached a historic decision to establish and operationalize a loss and damage fund, particularly for nations most vulnerable to the climate crisis. The deal for a loss and damage fund marked a diplomatic coup for small islands and other vulnerable nations in winning over the 27-nation European Union and the United States, which had long resisted the idea for fear that such a fund could open them to legal liability for historic emissions.

NOW OR NEVER

The goal of the Paris Agreement is to keep warming well below 2 degrees Celsius. But current global government pledges commit us to 2.9 degrees Celsius by 2100. But even if we meet the Paris target, we are already committed to sea-level rise from the Antarctic ice sheet, as well as from Greenland and mountain glaciers around the world for centuries or millennia to come.

HARD TO BREATHE

Exposure to high level of air pollution significantly raises the risks of breathing difficulties, cough, lower respiratory tract infections, as well as depression and other health conditions. Children under five years, elderly, and people with comorbidities such as diabetes, heart or respiratory conditions, are most vulnerable, as per World Bank report

The rapidly expanding city is losing the few patches of Oxygen-producing forest it had around it and illegal miners are grinding down a range of nearby hills to feed the construction industry with gravel, and removing a natural barrier to dust from the Thar Desert. When the smog gets too bad, authorities ban construction work and close schools to protect children but they acknowledge they just don't have the resources to clamp down effectively on illegal industries and to enforce emission rules.

The Supreme Court has rebuked officials for their failure to clear the air and has asked the Delhi government, its neighbouring states and the central government to work together to improve it. Matters are further worsened by the lack of cooperation between Prime Minister Modi's central government and the Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party. It's nature that brings some improvement with warmer weather ending the atmospheric conditions that trap the smog before the return of the rains in around June.

A smoky haze hangs over the northern plains and New Delhi, every year as winter sets in, raising fears for the health of many millions of people as the government orders fixes that do little to clear the air. In recent days, the Air Quality Index in the capital with a population of 20 million people, where few use air purifiers, has risen above 350 on a scale of 500, near "very poor" levels, according to the SAFAR monitoring agency. Anything above 60 is considered unhealthy. The index measures levels of airborne PM2.5 particles that can be carried deep into the lungs, causing deadly diseases including cancer and cardiac problems. The rainy season usually ends in September and come October, the air quality starts deteriorating as cooler temperatures and a drop in the wind trap pollutants in the atmosphere for longer. The pollution gets worse in November, exacerbated by the burning of crop stubble in Punjab and Haryana. Farmers in these bread-basket states are at the forefront of the adoption of mechanised farm-

ing, and are increasingly using harvesters to bring in the rice crop. But unlike with manual harvesting, the machines leave stubble and paddy straw in the field. Farmers, with only a short window to prepare their fields for winter crops, burn off the stubble and straw, sending sooty smoke drifting from the land and accounting for about a quarter of north India's air pollution, experts say. New Delhi generates much of its own pollution, so things get no better in December, when the stubble burning is largely over. The capital's nearly 10 million vehicles, more than the those of Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata combined, churn out exhaust fumes while industrial emissions, dust from construction sites and smoke from household fires adds to the murky mix.



Why we need to wake up the snake

According to the United Nations secretary-general, Antonio Guterres, the world is "on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator." Indigenous leaders across the planet recognise First Australians as the oldest living culture on the planet. First Australians say to address climate, we must return to a system that has stood the test of time, some 60,000 years or more: a bioregional governance model. Biocultural rights are grounded in a moral law of obligation. They demand



ethics of care and love for everyone and every- thing around us as understood by an Indigenous

world view. The indigenous leaders rely on trust, reciprocity and a lifelong practice of stewardship. This role reflects a way of life where a community's identity, its culture, spirituality and system of governance are inseparable from its lands, living waters and people. Biocultural rights are not 'ownership' in the Western legal sense but rather a duty of care and protection. Corporate governance pioneer Shann Turnbull, explains these rights and responsibilities as "ownership" rather than "ownership".



A tale of too much

THIS YEAR GAVE A GLIMPSE OF OUR NEAR FUTURE, AS THE EXTREME CLIMATE EVENTS BECAME MORE FREQUENT

Wildfires that scorched across Europe this year burned a record land area and stoked carbon emissions, according to an update released recently by Europe's forest fire and satellite monitors. The year 2022 will be remembered across the US for its devastating flooding and storms - and also for its extreme heat waves and droughts, including one so severe it briefly shut down traffic on the Mississippi River. During a period of five weeks over the summer, five 1,000-year rainfall events occurred in St. Louis, eastern Kentucky, southern Illinois, California's Death Valley and Dallas, causing devastating and sometimes deadly flash floods. Severe flooding in Mississippi knocked out Jackson's troubled water supply for weeks. A historic flood in Montana, brought on by heavy rain and melting snow, forced large areas of Yellowstone National Park to be evacuated. In the fall, hurricanes Ian and Fiona deluged Florida and Puerto Rico with over 2 feet of rain in areas and deadly destructive storm surge. Ian became one of the most expensive hurricanes in US history. In Pakistan, record monsoon rains inundated more than one-third of the country, killing over 1,500 people. In India and China, prolonged heat waves and droughts dried up rivers, disrupted power grids and threatened food security for billions of people. Widespread flooding and mudslides brought on by torrential rains also killed hundreds of people in South Africa, Brazil and Nigeria.

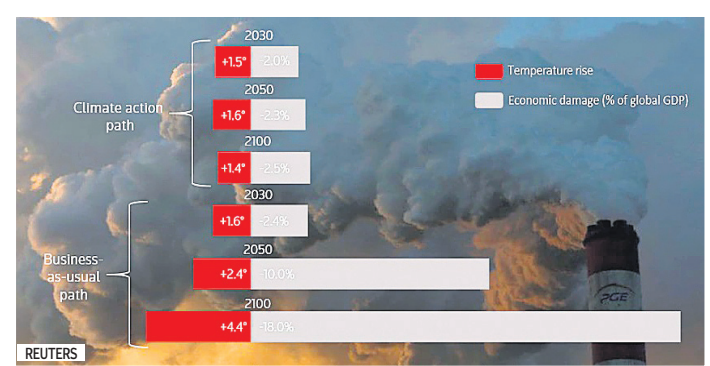
Rising climate costs to challenge countries in 2023

WHY IT MATTERS

As watchdog groups called out companies for failing to disclose how climate change might threaten them financially, investors faced increasing pressure both for going too far to address climate risks and for not going far enough. Scientists and economists are making further advances in calculating exactly how much a country's activity may have contributed to climate change - and to specific disasters. This line of argument, referred to as "climate attribution science," made its way into more courtrooms.



In a year marked by yet more climate-linked floods, hurricanes and droughts, governments and companies were forced to look more closely at the financial risks and their exposure to liability. Nowhere was this more apparent than at the UN climate conference in Egypt, where countries reached a landmark agreement to set up a fund to help poor countries cope with climate-fueled disaster costs. Egypt's COP27 talks did little, however, to address the cause of those disasters - the ever-rising levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. That kind of slow progress in tackling climate change made vulnerable countries determined to get the so-called Loss and Damage fund approved - after yet another year of extreme weather disasters including record heatwaves from the United States to China, glaciers collapsing in India and Europe, and unending drought pushing millions toward famine in East Africa. Insurers were feeling the pain, as the year delivered three of the decade's



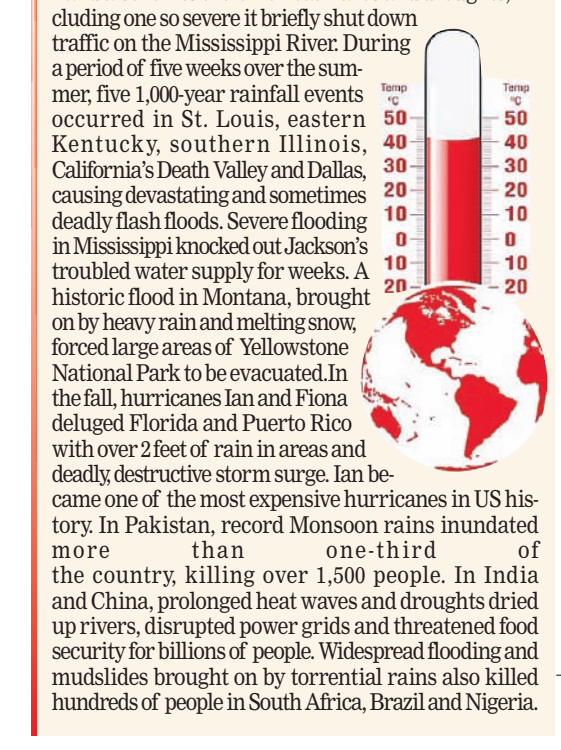
With the New Year approaching, public anxiety is expected to grow as the rising climate costs may prove to be a major challenge for countries and companies

costliest disasters - "dystopian" flooding that delivered \$40 billion in damages to Pakistan, a series of deadly summer heatwaves that collectively caused more than \$10 billion in losses for Europe, and Hurricane Ian tearing across Florida and South Carolina to the cost of \$100 billion, according to risk modeling firm RMS.

The Loss and Damage fund also marked a diplomatic coup by poor nations, after decades of US and European resistance over fears it could open them to legal liability for their historical emissions. But countries agreed the fund would pull from existing financial institutions rather than rich nations, assuaging those liability concerns - for now.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR NEXT YR?

Climate change will accelerate humanitarian crises around the world in 2023, adding to the issues created by armed conflict and economic downturns, according to a study by the NGO International Rescue Committee (IRC). Companies and investors will face pressure to climate-proof their supply chains and operations. At the end of the year, countries will meet again at the next UN climate summit, COP28, in Dubai. And they will be under extra pressure to see that emissions are cut in half by 2030 and to net-zero by 2050 - the only path to holding global warming to within 1.5 degrees Celsius.



business

of the day quote

India's economic growth is now extremely fragile and needs all the support that it can get, as private consumption and capital investment are yet to pick up

JAYANTH R VARMA | MPC MEMBER, RBI

India received foreign direct investment worth \$3.21 billion in defence industries during April-September period this fiscal year

SOM PARKASH | MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Sweden will enter a recession in 2023 that is expected to last until 2025. The economy and households will be under pressure in the coming years

ELISABETH SVANTESSON | FM, SWEDEN

SHORT TAKES

India exports \$1.5bn wheat

New Delhi: India exported 46.56 lakh tonne of wheat worth \$1.5 billion during April-October this fiscal year as against \$2.12 billion in 2021-22, Parliament was informed Friday. Exports of basmati rice during the first seven months of 2022-23 stood at \$2.54 billion (24.10 lakh tonne), according to data provided by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel. Though the government banned wheat exports in May, some shipments are allowed to meet food security needs of the countries that request for it.

Google goes to NCLAT over fine

New Delhi: Google Friday said it has approached the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) to appeal the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) decision to penalise the tech giant ₹1,338 crore for abusing its dominant position in multiple markets in the Android mobile device ecosystem. In a statement, Google said it has decided to appeal the CCI's decision on Android as "we believe it presents a major setback for our Indian users and businesses who trust Android's security features, and potentially raising the cost of mobile devices".

Retail space sees 19% rise in sales

New Delhi: India's retail industry saw a 19 per cent rise in sales over pre-pandemic levels during the April-November 2022 period riding on the back of strong performance of segments such as quick service restaurant and footwear, Retailers Association of India (RAI) said Friday. Region wise, the eastern part clocked the highest growth at 21 per cent as compared to the same period in 2019, RAI said in a statement. North India followed with a 19 per cent growth while both western and southern parts witnessed an 18 per cent rise each, it added.

Weak debut for Landmark Cars

New Delhi: Shares of automobile dealership chain Landmark Cars made a weak market debut Friday and ended nearly 10 per cent lower against the issue price of ₹506. The stock listed at ₹471.30, a discount of 6.85 per cent on the BSE. During the day, it dipped 11.76 per cent to ₹446.45. The stock ended at ₹456.45 apiece, registering a decline of 9.79 per cent. On the NSE, the stock made its debut at ₹471, lower by 6.91 per cent. It ended at ₹456.15 per share, lower by 9.85 per cent.



E20 (petrol mixed with 20 per cent ethanol) will come in select markets on a pilot basis in a day or two

HARDEEP SINGH PURI | OIL MINISTER

CANARA HITS BIZ MILESTONE

Canara Bank Friday said it has crossed the business milestone of ₹20 lakh crore. "Canara Bank has achieved a milestone of crossing the total global business of ₹20,00,000 crore as on 22nd December, 2022," the bank said. Stock of Canara Bank closed at ₹291.45 apiece on BSE, down by 6.54%



GLOBAL ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTIES

Dark clouds loom over exports

Taking note of worsening geopolitical situation, the World Trade Organization has projected that the global trade would grow by only 1% in 2023



The slowdown of global trade to 1% in 2023 may have an adverse impact on Indian exports also. However, we are conscious of the fact that our share in global trade is still less than 2% and therefore, the global trade graph should not affect us more. Moreover, certain positive developments will also help India in 2023

AJAY SAHAI | DIRECTOR GENERAL, FIEO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: India's exports may have touched an all-time high of \$422 billion in 2021-22 but recession in key western markets and geo-political crisis due to the Russia-Ukraine war are expected to impact the growth of the country's outbound shipments in 2023. All the global trade promoting factors like political stability, movement of goods, adequate availability of containers and shipping lines, demand, stable currency and smooth banking systems are in disarray. Adding to the woes, Covid cases have again started rising in countries like China, Japan, South Korea and the US. Before the Covid-hit global economies could come out of the woods, the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war in February severely disrupted the supply chains worldwide and hardened the global commodities prices. The war has also impacted the movement of goods through the important black sea route. The Geneva-based multilateral

trade body World Trade Organization (WTO) has said the world trade is expected to lose momentum in the second half of 2022 and remain subdued in 2023, as multiple shocks weigh on the global economy. "WTO economists now predict global merchandise trade volumes will grow by 3.5 per cent in 2022 — slightly better than the 3 per cent forecast in April. For 2023, however, they foresee a 1 per cent increase — down sharply from the previous estimate of 3.4 per cent," it has said. According to experts, amid these developments it would be difficult for India to insulate itself from

the dark clouds. However, they added that India has managed the growth rate in exports so far and healthy growth in services exports too would help the country's overall outbound shipments in 2023. According to the ministry, the reasons for the decline in merchandise exports include slowdown in some developed economies due to Covid and Russia-Ukraine conflict and the consequential slowdown in demands and certain measures to contain domestic inflation. The bigger problem for India would be the widening trade deficit (difference between imports and exports), which has implications on

Forex reserves decline \$571mn to \$563.5 billion



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 23: After rising for five consecutive weeks, India's forex kitty dropped \$571 million to \$563.499 billion for the week ended December 16, according to RBI data released Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had swelled \$2.91 billion to \$564.06 billion, making it the fifth straight week of an increase in the kitty after a protracted decline. In October 2021, the country's foreign exchange kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion. The reserves had been declining as the central bank deployed the reserve to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments.

Foreign Currency Assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, decreased \$500 million to \$499.624 billion during the week to December 16, as per the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Gold reserves decreased \$150 million to \$40.579 billion, it said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) jumped \$75 million to \$18.181 billion. The country's reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) also rose \$4 million to \$5.114 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

PhonePe splits from parent firm Flipkart

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: Flipkart and PhonePe have completed their separation and both entities will continue to operate under US-based retail giant Walmart, a joint statement said Friday. PhonePe was acquired by Flipkart Group in 2016. "As part of this transaction, existing Flipkart Singapore and PhonePe Singapore shareholders, led by Walmart, have purchased shares directly in PhonePe India. This completes the move to make PhonePe a fully India domiciled

company, a process that started earlier this year," the statement said. Walmart will remain the majority shareholder of both business groups. "Flipkart and PhonePe are proud, homegrown Indian brands with a user base upwards of 400 million each. We are looking forward to the next phase of our growth as we invest in new businesses — like in-

urance, wealth management and lending, while also enabling the next wave of growth for UPI payments in India. This will help propel our vision to provide billions of Indians with financial inclusion," PhonePe Founder and CEO Sameer Nigam said. This year, PhonePe changed its domicile from Singapore to India. Since its launch, PhonePe has successfully digitized more than 35 million offline merchants spread across tier 2, 3, 4 cities and beyond, covering 99 per cent of pin codes in the country, the statement said.

CHRISTMAS CARNAGE

SENSEX CRASHES 981 PTS, NIFTY FINISHES BELOW 18K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 23: The SENSEX plunged 981 points to end below the 60,000-mark following across-the-board selling Friday, marking its fourth straight day of losses during which investors have lost over ₹15 lakh crore. Surging Covid cases in China and a few other nations have fanned fears of another global pandemic wave, while stronger US growth data has cemented expectations of the Federal Reserve continuing with its hawkish stance, experts said. The 30-share BSE SENSEX slumped 980.93 points or 1.61 per cent to settle at 59,845.29 — closing below the psychologically key 60,000-mark after October 28 this year. On similar lines, the broader NSE

Equities tumble nearly 2%



ON A WEEKLY BASIS, THE SENSEX HAS TUMBLED 1,492.52 POINTS OR 2.43%, WHILE THE NIFTY TANKED 462.20 POINTS OR 2.52%

INVESTORS HAVE NOW LOST ₹15.78 LAKH CRORE IN FOUR SESSIONS, WITH THE MARKET CAPITALISATION OF BSE-LISTED FIRMS STANDING AT ₹2,72,12,860.03 CRORE

Brent crude climbed 1.89 per cent to \$82.51 per barrel. The rupee declined by 7 paise to close at 82.86 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday due to firm crude oil prices and steep losses in domestic stocks. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) bought shares worth a net ₹928.63 crore Thursday Elsewhere in Asia, equity markets in Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong posted losses. Equity exchanges in Europe were trading in the positive territory in mid-session deals. The US markets had ended sharply lower Thursday.

PRICE CAP

Russia may cut oil output up to 7%

AGENCIES

Moscow, Dec 23: Russia may cut oil output by 5%-7% in early 2023, as it responds to price caps on its crude and refined products, and halt sales to the countries that support them, Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak told state television Friday. Detailing for the first time the Russian response to the price caps introduced by the West over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, Novak said the cuts could reach 500,000-700,000 barrels per day (bpd). He also said that despite Europe's efforts to cut reliance on Russian oil and gas, energy exports from Russia are in demand worldwide and Moscow has been diversifying its buyers. Novak said it would be difficult to provide for global economic development without Russian energy, and predicted possible gas shortages in Europe, which has introduced restrictions on gas prices, as well as on oil. On oil, the European Union, G7 nations and Australia introduced a \$60 per barrel price cap from December 5, in addition to the European Union's embargo on imports of Russian crude by sea and similar pledges by Britain, Canada, Japan and the United States. "We believe that in the current situation, it is even possible to take risks of lower production rather than be guided by the selling policy regarding the price caps. Today it is \$60, tomorrow it can be anything, and getting dependent on some decisions made by unfriendly countries is unacceptable for us," Novak said.

FOUNDERS SELL STAKE Adani to control nearly 65% of NDTV

ROYS, WHO FOUNDED NDTV AS INDIA'S FIRST AND LARGEST PRIVATE PRODUCER OF NEWS CURRENT AFFAIRS AND ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION, LOST THEIR STATUS OF BEING THE COMPANY'S LARGEST SHAREHOLDER TO ADANI

AGENCIES

Bangalore, Dec 23: New Delhi Television Ltd's (NDTV) founders said Friday they have decided to transfer most of their shares in the company to billionaire Gautam Adani, giving his conglomerate control over nearly 65% of the news network. Radhika and Prannoy Roy will sell a 27.26% stake in NDTV to an

entity owned by Adani, giving it 64.71% of NDTV, regulatory filings by NDTV showed. Adani already held more than 37% in NDTV after an open offer and an earlier acquisition of a company owned by the founders. "The AMG Media Network, after the recent open offer, is now the single largest shareholder in NDTV. Consequently, with mutual agreement we have decided to divest



most of our shares in NDTV to the AMG Media Network," the founders said in a statement. "Since the open offer was launched, our discussions with Gautam Adani have been con-

structive; all the suggestions we made were accepted by him positively and with openness," they added. Radhika and Prannoy Roy will retain a combined 5% stake in NDTV. NDTV is home to the some

of the best known reporters, anchors and producers. Its 23 offices and studios across the country host India's most modern and sophisticated production and news gathering facilities. "We started NDTV in 1988 in the belief that journalism in India was world-class but needed a strong and effective broadcast platform that would allow it to grow and shine. After 34 years, we believe that NDTV is an institution that has met so many of our hopes and ideals; we are so proud and grateful that across the globe, NDTV is recognised as 'India's and Asia's Most-Trusted News Broadcaster,'" the founders said in the statement.



Pant, Iyer propel India

FOUR ALL-ROUNDERS GO FOR ₹58 Cr AT AUCTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mirpur, Dec 23: Rishabh Pant enhanced his reputation of being team's biggest game-changer with a scintillating 93 (104b, 7x4, 5x6) that put India in a commanding position for a series clean sweep against Bangladesh, here Friday. Pant, who got out in the 90s for the sixth time in his Test career, again brought his 'A' game to the fore with a counter-attacking knock that formed the cornerstone of India's first innings score of 314 on the second day of the second Test.

Between the lunch and the tea, the match which seemed to be hanging in balance was single-handedly changed by Pant. Shreyas Iyer, who has been consistent since his Test debut last year, also batted with a lot of intent but missed his second hundred of the series, getting out for 87 (105b, 10x4, 2x6).

Riding on the 159-run fifth wicket stand between Pant and Iyer, India, who were tottering at 94/4, will fancy their chances for a fourth-day finish and consolidate their position in the World Test Championship table.

Trailing by 87 runs, Bangladesh were seven for no loss at stumps on Day 2. The batting will only get difficult on the third day and playing Ravichandran Ashwin and Axar Patel on this track will be a Herculean task.

The morning session belonged to Bangladesh's left-arm spinner Taijul Islam (4/74), who rocked the top-order by dismissing skipper KL Rahul (10), Shubman Gill (20) and Cheteshwar Pujara (24) but by the end of afternoon session, Pant had blown the hosts away.



Crucial stand: Rishabh Pant (L) and Shreyas Iyer share a moment during their partnership against Bangladesh, Friday

It only helped Iyer at the other end, who was equally aggressive and a surface that looked difficult to bat on suddenly appear to be a willow wielder's paradise.

Pant literally manhandled the Bangladeshi spin trio with smashing five sixes – two off Taijul, a couple off Mehidy Hasan Miraz and one off skipper Shakib Al Hasan (4/79).

The visitors were in trouble at 94/4 when Virat Kohli (24) once again nicked one off Taskin Ahmed (1/58) outside the off-stump channel before Pant propelled the Indian innings.

But Taijul was made to look pedestrian by the maverick keeper-batter from Rourkee. Pant hammered Taijul into submission by repeatedly dancing down the track and

carting him either in the arc between the mid-wicket and long-on or by lofting him down the ground.

The most exhilarating one was a one-handed down-the-ground shot off rival captain Shakib. And it was not at all surprising when he repeated the stuff off Miraz over long-on for a 100-metre long maximum.

The Bangladeshi bowlers, who

were pumped up at the lunch break, had drooped shoulders by the time tea was called. Pant's beast mode did rub off on Iyer as he also lofted Miraz for his first six and duly completed his second half-century of the series with a single.

By the time, Pant nicked one to Nurul Hasan behind the stumps, missing out on yet another Test hundred, he was completely done and didn't come out to keep after experiencing cramps.

Earlier, having misread the track on day one, Rahul paid the price for his ultra defensive mindset on a pitch that offered fair bit of turn on the opening day itself. Not for once during his 45-ball stay did he look comfortable, save the cover driven boundary off a seamer at the start of the day.

Gill, on the other end, looked more assured even as Taijul kept his deliveries on good length and bowled a nice trajectory. The delivery that got Rahul, seemed like an armer that came in with the angle and then straightened enough to trap him in-front of the wickets. Umpire had dismissed the LBW plea but Bangladesh got the decision in their favour after taking DRS review.

In case of Gill, it was more of a straightforward decision where he was caught plumb as he missed a straighter one while attempting a sweep shot. Pujara looked assured till the time he was at the crease but with the deliveries stopping and turning, there was always the danger of negotiating that ball which would send him back.

BRIEF SCORES: Bangladesh 227 & 7/0; India 314 (Rishabh Pant 93, Shreyas Iyer 87; Taijul Islam 4/74, Shakib Al Hasan 4/79). Match to continue.

TOP 5 DEALS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Dec 23: England all-rounder Sam Curran Friday became the most expensive player in the history of IPL auctions after fetching a whopping Rs 18.5 crore bid from Punjab Kings here.

An intense bidding followed for Curran with Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore, Rajasthan Royals, Chennai Super Kings, Lucknow Super Giants and Punjab Kings raising their paddles frenetically to secure the services of T20 World Cup player-of-the-tournament.

In the end, it was Punjab Kings (PBKS) that broke the bank to get Curran, who drew highest-ever bid that bettered the previous best buy of Rs 16.25 crore that Rajasthan Royals had shelled out to grab South African all-rounder Chris Morris in 2021.

Australia all-rounder Cameron Green was second-highest earner, fetching Rs 17.5 crore bid from Mumbai Indians. England Test skipper Ben Stokes was the third-highest gainer, fetching Rs 16.25 crore from CSK who pipped Kolkata Knight Riders in another intense bidding war.

England players were in demand as batter Harry Brook earned a Rs 13.25 crore winning from Sunrisers Hyderabad. Brook, who struck three hundreds in as many games and set new record for most runs by an England batter in a Test series in Pakistan, started at a base price of Rs 1.5 crore. The bidding for Brook was mainly between SRH and Rajasthan Royals.

India international Mayank Agarwal was also bought by Sunrisers Hyderabad for Rs 8.25 crore. His base price was set at Rs 1 crore. New Zealand stalwart Kane Williamson was sold at his base price at Rs 2 crore to Gujarat Titans.

Out-of-favour India batter Ajinkya Rahane was sold at his base price of Rs 50 lakh to Chennai Supper Kings, the only bidder for the player. South Africa batter Rilee Rossouw and Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib-Al-Hasan went unsold. West Indies all-rounder Jason Holder was sold to Rajasthan Royals for Rs 5.75 crore.

Haaland strike helps City edge past Liverpool



JUST THE USUAL: Erling Haaland reacts after scoring against Liverpool, Thursday night

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, Dec 23: Erling Haaland scored his 24th goal of the season but it was Nathan Ake's first that clinched Manchester City's 3-2 win over Liverpool in the English League Cup.

Kevin De Bruyne, one of six City starters coming off World Cup duty, set up both goals and Riyad Mahrez scored just after halftime to help City reach the quarterfinals.

De Bruyne, part of Belgium's squad that failed to advance from the group stage in Qatar, crossed to Haaland to open the scoring in the 10th minute and later sent a cross to the far post, where Ake headed home in the 58th at the Etihad Stadium.

Liverpool twice fought back to equalize on goals by Fabio Carvalho and Mohamed Salah, respectively, but its title defense is over after Darwin Nunez missed several good chances in front of the net. The victory keeps Pep Guardiola's team on course for a fifth cup title in six seasons.

Haaland showed signs of rustiness when he fired an early chance over the bar, but the Norwegian quickly made amends with a 10th-minute volley to make it two-dozen goals in 19 appearances overall.

An unmarked Carvalho made it 1-1 in the 20th after a pass from James Milner, who left the game with an injury before halftime. The teams traded goals early in the second half. Mahrez curled home a left-footed shot before Nunez set up Salah's equaliser.

Roberto Firmino was unavailable for Liverpool after picking up what manager Jurgen Klopp described as a minor injury in training earlier this week. City will face Southampton next month for a spot in the semifinals. The other quarterfinal matchups are third-division Charlton at Manchester United, Wolverhampton at Nottingham Forest, and Leicester at Newcastle.

The Premier League resumes Monday, when Liverpool visit Aston Villa. Leeds play hosts to Man City Wednesday.

ROHIDAS NAMED VICE-CAPTAIN, WHILE NILAM FINDS PLACE IN THE 18-MEMBER SQUAD FOR QUADRENNIAL HOCKEY EVENT

Harmanpreet to lead India at WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: Defender Harmanpreet Singh was Friday named the captain of the 18-member Indian squad which will compete at the FIH men's Hockey World Cup, commencing January 13 in Odisha. Defender Amit Rohidas will serve as Harmanpreet's deputy. Harmanpreet had also captained the side in the recent series against Australia, where the side fought hard before losing the five-match rubber 1-4.

Mid-fielder Manpreet Singh had led the team at the Tokyo Olympics where India won a historic bronze medal but he will feature in the team as a player this time as coach Graham Reid has handed the captain's band to different players over a period of time. Reid's endeavour has been to create leaders from the senior group. In the past Rohidas has also led India.

The World Cup squad was selected after two-day trials in SAI Centre in Bangalore where 33 players were put to test. It features a good mix of experienced and young players who will strive to end India's wait for a podium finish at the prestigious event.

Gurjant Singh and Dilpreet Singh, who were part of the Tokyo Olympic squad, are not part of the main team but will be there with World Cup team as standbys.

"The team is purely picked on the basis of current form and performance of players. There was no other criteria," a Hockey India selector told this agency.

Krishan B Pathak and PR Sreejesh, who will be playing his fourth World Cup – his third on home soil, have been chosen as goalkeepers.

Captain Harmanpreet will spearhead the team's defence along with vice-captain Rohidas, Surender Kumar, Varun Kumar, Harmanpreet Singh and Nilam Sanjeev Xess.

The midfield will see the return of young prodigy Vivek Sagar Prasad, who missed the recent tour of Australia as well as the FIH Hockey Pro League due to an ankle injury. He will be joined by Manpreet, Hardik Singh, Nilakanta Sharma, Shamsheer Singh and the experienced Akashdeep Singh.

The forward line will feature Mandeep Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay and youngsters Abhishek and Sukhjeet Singh who have been impressive since making their debuts earlier this year. The two alternate players chosen are

THE SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS: Krishan Bahadur Pathak and Sreejesh Parattu Ravendran;
DEFENDERS: Harmanpreet Singh, Surender Kumar, Harmanpreet Singh (C), Varun Kumar, Amit Rohidas (vc), Nilam Sanjeev Xess;
MIDFIELDERS: Manpreet Singh, Hardik Singh, Nilakanta Sharma, Shamsheer Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Akashdeep Singh;
FORWARDS: Mandeep Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Abhishek and Sukhjeet Singh.
ALTERNATE PLAYERS: Rajkumar Pal and Jugraj Singh.

Rajkumar Pal and Jugraj Singh. India will begin their World Cup campaign against Spain January 13 at the newly-built Birsra Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela followed by their second pool D match against England. They will move to Bhubaneswar to play their third

A home World Cup puts extra importance and extra pressure on this event like no other. Every country chooses the best team they believe is available to them at the time and tries to provide their team with the best preparation they can. We have also tried to do both with the selection of our team, choosing a mixture of experienced and younger exciting players who can provide something special

GRAHAM REID, INDIA COACH

pool match against Wales. The knockout stage will begin with crossover matches January 22 and 23. The quarterfinals will take place January 25 and the semifinals January 27. The bronze medal match and the final will be held January 29.



ODISHA SUFFER INNINGS DEFEAT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: Odisha were completely outplayed by Uttarakhand in their Ranji Trophy Elite Group A match in Dehradun as they lost by an innings and 99 runs, Friday.

Uttarakhand had scored 477 runs in their first innings after bowling Odisha out for 213. After conceding a massive 264-run first innings lead, Odisha were always in threat of an innings defeat. And they failed to cause any trouble for the hosts as they were bundled out for 165 in the second essay.

Resuming the final day's play at 97/4, Odisha lost Kartik Biswal in the fourth over of the day. The other overnight batter – Anurag Sarangi (93) – tried his best to give his side's total some respectability. However, he got out as the seventh wicket, missing out on a well-deserved century. Abhay Negi (5/33) bagged a five-wicket haul for Uttarakhand.

Asian football panel approves strategic reforms

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kuala Lumpur, Dec 23: The Competitions Committee of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Friday approved several game-changing reforms for club competitions with an increased foreign players' quota, financial regulations and a new three-tier format for competitions that will include relegation and promotion.

"In perhaps the most significant reforms to be introduced since the enhancements to the AFC Champions League in 2009, amongst the recommendations include the introduction of new competition formats, lifting the foreign player quota and increasing the financial distribution for participating clubs," the AFC said in a release Friday.

Clubs across the region can now recruit five foreign players of any nationality and one from an AFC

country (5+1) instead of the three of any nationality and one from the AFC region that was allowed earlier. The new quota will come into effect after the 2023-24 season.

"In another breakthrough decision aimed at enhancing the quality and stature of the AFC Club Competitions, the Committee also agreed to recognise each MA's domestic regulations on the foreign player registration and remove the foreign player registration quota from the 2024/25 season onwards," the AFC informed.

As per the current rules, all decisions by the Competitions Committee will have to be ratified by the AFC Executive Committee before taking effect.

The AFC panel has also approved a three-tier competition for the Continent's 76 participating clubs. The clubs will be classified under two heads – West and East – in-

stead of the five zones earlier. "The top tier will comprise 24 participating clubs in total, divided into 12 teams across the West and East regions competing in a league format. Each club will play four home and four away matches against eight different clubs within its region, with the top eight sides from both regions – 16 in total – advancing to the Round of 16 stages, which will be played in a home and away format," the AFC said.

The second tier of Asian club football will see 32 participating clubs divided into eight groups of four teams each. The clubs will face off home and away in a round-robin format in the Group Stage, with the top two sides advancing to the Round of 16 and the subsequent rounds of quarterfinals, semifinals and final.

Tier 3 will comprise 20 participating clubs divided into five groups.

The clubs will compete in single-leg ties to be played in a centralised format with the top eight sides qualifying for the Quarter Finals.

"The strategic reforms also pave the way for more opportunities for participating clubs from different zones to compete against each other as the competitions transition from its current five zone format to the East and West regions," said the release.

The losing teams from the Preliminary and Playoff stages of the top tier will be allowed to participate in the second tier, and likewise, the losing teams from the Preliminary and Playoff stages of the second tier competition will participate in the third tier.

The AFC also introduced a new calculation methodology for club competition ranking and slot allocation. The rankings will be calculated based on all results of the clubs over an eight-year period.