

BHUBANESWAR | TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27 | 2022

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#### SHORT TAKES

#### Srimandir 'stampede' leaves six injured

Puri: At least six girl students were hospitalised after being injured in a stampede-like situation at Srimandir here Monday said. The students, part of a 70-member group of boys and girls from Hrudananda High School in Rasgovindpur area of Mayurbhani, had come to Puri for a picnic during Christmas holidays, a police officer said. While climbing the 22 steps (Baisi Pahacha) to the temple around 8 pm, the girls were caught in a stampede-like situation and fainted, a temple office-bearer said

#### Fake GST officials held

Chhatrapur: Four persons, including three who posed as GST officials, were arrested on charges of defrauding a truck driver of Rs 1.40 lakh after assaulting him and looting pan masala worth lakhs of rupees from him in Ganjam MORE P5

#### **FM hospitalised**

New Delhi: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here Monday, sources said. The 63-year-old has been admitted in a private ward of the hospital, it was learnt. She was taken to the hospital around 12 noon. More details are awaited.



### Show me the T-shirts



CHOCK-A-BLOCK: Traffic on Vani Vihar-Acharya Vihar Road in Bhubaneswar came to a grinding halt as hundreds of members of Smart City Online Auto Association staged a demonstration near RTO-I to press for fulfilment of their demands, Monday (More P3) OP PHOTO

# Follow Cov norms, Min tells students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 26: In the wake of spurt in Covid-19 cases globally, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Das Monday urged students to wear face mask and follow Covid appropriate behavior at public places, especially in educational institutions.

When asked if the upcoming Class X and XII examinations will be cancelled fearing the rising Covid cases globally, Dash said, "Exams will be held with strict adherence to Covid protocols."

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is scheduled to review the Covid situation in Odisha Tuesday evening.

The Health Minister, depart ment secretary, chief district medical officers and medical college authorities will attend the Covid review meet. Health Secretary Shalini Pandit had earlier advised people to adhere to Covid appropriate behaviour such as use of mask, hand washing, avoiding

#### CHINA TO LOWER **GUARD FROM JAN**

Beijing: China will scrap guarantine for international travellers from January 8 next year, according to an official announcement here Monday, in a significant step for the country as it reopens its international borders and comes out of international isolation after nearly three years. China is also poised to downgrade Covid-19 from Class A to B management. These announcements come at a time when the country is grappling with a sudden spurt in coronavirus infections fuelled by the Omicron variants after the Xi Jinping regime relaxed its stringent zero-Covid policy earlier this month following a wave of anti-government protests.

spitting in public places and selfisolation, in case of showing symptoms, following an important review meeting, December 25.

#### Videocon boss arrested for **ICICI** loan fraud AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 26: The CBI Monday arrested Videocon Group chairman Venugopal Dhoot in connection with the ICICI Bank loan

fraud case, officials said. Dhoot was arrested from Mumbai after a brief questioning session Monday morning, hours before former CEO and MD of the ICICI Bank Chanda Kochhar and her husband Deepak Kochhar were to be produced before a Special Court for remand hearing.

The CBI is planning to file a charge sheet against the three and other suspects soon. The CBI had taken into custody Chanda Kochhar and her husband Deepak alleging that they were not cooperating with the investigation. Chanda Kochhar has denied knowledge of any pecuniary transactions between her husband and Dhoot, the agency had claimed during remand proceedings at a CBI Special Court in Mumbai.

# Odisha not in focus of CHINA STAGES BIG MILITARY INCURSION nat'l parties: Naveen

Addressing a gathering at BJD's silver jubilee foundation day celebration in Puri, Patnaik says the party would continue to serve the people for another 100 years if it receives the blessings of women

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 26: In an apparent dig at the opposition ahead of the 2024 assembly polls and general election, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday said his party - Biju Janata Dal (BJD)



**BJD's growth and** acceptability among the people

#### AGENCIES

Taipei (Taiwan), Dec 26: China's military sent 71 planes and seven ships toward Taiwan in a 24-hour display of force directed at the island, Taiwan's defense ministry said Monday, after China expressed anger at Taiwanrelated provisions in a US annual defense spending bill passed on Saturday.

China's military harassment of self-ruled Taiwan, which it claims is its own territory, has intensified in recent years, and the



Ministry of National Defense. Among the planes China sent towards Taiwan were 18 J-16 fighter jets, 11 J-1 fighters, 6 Su-30 fighters and drones.

the Chinese moves through its land-based missile systems, as well as on its own navv vessels.

Taiwan said it monitored



WE				
		BHUB	СТК	Carl
d M	AX	32.2°C	31.0°	Ċ
₽M	IN	17.6℃	18.2°	<b>Forecast</b>
Humic	lity	91%	96%	Shallow to
Rainfa	.11	Nil	Nil	moderate fog likely

- has a single-point agenda of development of the state, which is 'not in focus of national parties.

The BJD has no vested interests apart from the progress of Odisha, Patnaik asserted while addressing a large gathering of party leaders and office bearers at BJD's silver jubilee foundation day celebration in Puri.

The BJD was founded December 26, 1997, and named after legendary leader Biju Patnaik, the father of Naveen Patnaik.

"The interest of the state is the lone agenda of the BJD, while Odisha is not in the focus of national parties. They have national politics in their agenda. Only a regional party can develop the state,' he said, without naming any party.

Noting that the BJD is not just a political party, but a social movement, Patnaik said it has earned the trust of 4.5 crore people of Odisha.

"The BJD's growth and acceptability among the people is not dependent on one or two persons, nor will it in future," Patnaik said.

Patnaik said the party would continue to serve the people for another 100 years if it receives the blessings of

on one or two persons, nor will it in future NAVEEN PATNAIK

women, whom he called upon to assume leadership roles.

"We believe empowering women will strengthen family, state and the nation as a whole. Hence, initiative like Mission Shakti has become a people's movement." he said.

Patnaik added that under BJD's rule, all regions get equal priority, from Malkangiri to Mayurbhanj and from Bargarh to Puri. This removes the regional imbalance and ensures inclusive growth in the state. The BJD president also said his government has earned accolades from across the globe for its sound disaster management.

Highlighting the developmental activities undertaken during BJD rule, he said, "There was a day when Odisha was depending on other states for food security. Now, the state provides rice to other states. Look at our infrastruc-

The US space agency has completed

manufacturing the booster segments

and delivered the engine section to

Kennedy for the Artemis III mission,

ture and good governance - a lot of investment is coming to us - youth will get jobs....the state will witness immense development."

"It's a professionally-run government which works on the principles of 5T. It's a government sensitive to people's aspirations and needs, which has initiatives like Mo Sarkar to get citizen feedback," he further stated. The regional party, which has been in power in Odisha since 2000, could not organise its foundation day function last year due to the Covid pandemic.

The BJD had first formed government in alliance with the BJP in the state.

Meanwhile, the students' wing of the Odisha Congress staged a demonstration in the Holy City, protesting Patnaik's visit. Some of the student activists were detained as a precautionary measure, police said.

The year 2023 promises to be the final lap towards sending humans to the lunar surface in 2024

> which will be humanity's first return to the lunar surface in more than 50 vears and land the first woman on the Moon. The agency has also completed numerous key Artemis milestones that will ensure not only a human return to the lunar surface, but long-term exploration on and around the Moon in preparation for sending the first as tronauts to Mars.

> To date, the agency has identified 13 candidate landing regions near the lunar South Pole where the next American astronauts on the Moon could land during Artemis III, selected Axiom Space to provide the moonwalking system, including spacesuits, that astronauts will use during Artemis III, as well as awarded a task order to Collins Aerospace to develop new spacesuits for the International Space Station. **Continued on P5**

Communist Party's People's Liberation Army has sent planes or ships toward the island on a near-daily basis. Between 6 am Sunday and 6 a.M. Monday, 47 of the Chinese planes crossed the median of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial boundary once

"This is a firm response to the current US-Taiwan escalation and provocation,' said Shi Yi, the spokesman for the PLA's Eastern Theater Command, in a statement on Sunday night. It announced that the PLA was holding joint combat patrols and joint tacitly accepted by both sides, strike drills in the waters according to Taiwan's around Taiwan



# Moon now closer than ever

#### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 26: From a crewed NASA mission to private spacecraft roaring to explore the Moon, the year 2023 promises to be the final lap towards sending humans, including a woman and a person of colour, to the lunar surface in 2024.

On November 28, Orion spacecraft reached its maximum distance from Earth during the Artemis I mission when it was 268,563 miles away from our home planet.

Among the accomplishments for NASA's human spaceflight programmes, the agency successfully launched, for the first time, its Space Launch System

The US space agency has completed manufacturing the booster segments and delivered the engine section to Kennedy for the Artemis III mission, which will be humanity's first return to the lunar surface in more than 50 years and land the first woman on the Moon



(SLS) rocket, which put NASA's Orion spacecraft on a path that travelled fartronauts has been before.











# eisure



#### TAPE FACE TO KICKSTART 6-CITY **INDIA TOUR IN JANUARY 2023**

Comedian Tape Face, is set to embark on his first multi-city India tour which will start in January and will go on for two weeks. He will be performing his silent comedy shows starting with Pune January 25, with three shows in Mumbai and one each in Bangalore, New Delhi, Hyderabad, and Kolkata.

#### **NICOLAS CAGE'S MUSICAL DREAMS**

Shruti has no fear

**NEW YEAR** 

of missing out

Hollywood star Nicolas Cage has starred in a range of film genres throughout his career but one thing that he hasn't done so far is star in a musical. "I haven't done a musical yet and I think I'd make a good Pontius Pilate in Jesus Christ Superstar."



#### FORTUNE FORECAST



#### ARIES

If you are a gadget freak, today you will have enough opportunity to flaunt your knowledge and impress everyone else. Students with a scientific bent of mind will excel in studies. Ganesha advises housewives to experiment with their ow recipes, and not to worry about the oven - it will not burst.

#### TAURUS

You will not lose your cool today despite the overwhelming odds, feels Ganesha. Rationale and reason will be the rhyme of your attitude as you diag-nose the problems and uproot them successfully. Success beckons and you are ready to reach out and grab it by hook or by crook

#### GEMINI

You will ponder over religious and social issues and discuss and debate the issue with your family members and make your opinions known to them. This apart, you will probably discuss on issues like law, education, social obligations, and culture with those close to you, says Ganesha

#### 

You may have to give more priority to your job. You will swiftly finish the task entrusted to you with concentration. Your zeal for work will be high. You will give so much importance to friends that you will go out of way to meet them.

#### **LEO**

Be it a job or business, you will face severe competition today. You will need to be extra cautious today. You will need to be more serious about whatever it is that you are doing. You will become more influential in your social circle or amongst your colleagues as a results, says Ganesha

#### VIRGO

Today may prove to be a turning point for you. You will explore the opportunities to secure the money needed to make your future bright. Matters regarding relationships will be on the top of your priority list today. You may feel inclined towards spirituality, and Ganesha says as such you may try doing editation or yoga.



#### Kuttey puts Arjun in dilemma

Mumbai: Actor Arjun Kapoor, who is set to play a cop in the upcoming theatrical film Kuttey, feels that his role in the film brought in a sense of dichotomy as he is a law abiding citizen but his character is of a corrupt police officer in the film.

Commenting on the same, the actor said: 'For me to play a cop in *Kuttey* was a fulfilling experience, because to be a law abiding person and to try and operate out of the law was an interesting dichotomy to have to play a corrupt official. It was very exciting to wear the uniform, wear the cap, do the salute, look and feel the part.

Arjun had earlier essayed the role of a cop in the Dibakar Banerjee directorial Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar. The trailer of Kuttey has been appreciated as people have raved about the refreshing storytelling, the fantastic ensemble cast, the powerful performances that one would get to see in the film.

Kuttey, which also stars Naseeruddin Shah, Konkona Sen Sharma, Tabu, Kumud Mishra and Radhika Madan, is set to arrive in cinemas January 13 2023. AGENCIES

## Sonakshi thinks she's an instinctive actor

Mumbai: While she's been a part of commercially successful films like Dabangg, Rowdy Rathore, R ... Rajkumar, Sonakshi has never shied away from trying to do something different with films like Akira, Noor and Khandaani Shafakhana.

Her upcoming films - Kakuda and Nikita Rov and The Book of Darkness too have raised curiosity among her fans.

About her choice of films, Sonakshi says, "I think I have been an instinctive actor. If

there is a film I like to watch, I would like to be a part of it too. There has never been a strategy. I have always wanted to do the work that I wanted to do. I picked up roles that I feel would challenge me or make me try something new or different."

The actress recently teamed up with her brother Kussh S Sinha as he turned director with Nikita Roy

and The Book of Darkness. AGENCIES

Mumbai: It's holiday season and with New Year's eve just round the corner, getting 'what's your plan' questions are inevitable. Airports are flooded with paps who want to capture celebs heading to some exotic locations for that much awaited vacation. However, for those who travel extensively, staying at home is a luxury and a vacation in itself.

Actress-singer Shruti Haasan who lived out of a suitcase for the major part of the year due to her back to back professional commitments, is looking forward to a quiet and relaxing New Year's eve at home with her partner Santanu Hazarika and her pet Clara.

Talking about her easy going New Year plans, the actress said, "I have only been out of the country. I spent two months in Greece recently for the shoot of my English film. I don't have any fomo (fear of missing out). This year has been very busy with back to back shoot schedules and I'm very grateful to be working on such amazing projects. I'm looking forward to an easy going and laid

# Malavika elevates cut-out trend with flowing gown

Chennai: When it comes to refreshing our wardrobes, we could always use some assistance, and Malavika Mohanan's sense of style is the ideal source of inspiration. The most recent picture session of the actress, who received praise from critics for her outstanding performance in Majid Majidi's Beyond the Clouds in 2017, is unquestionably proof that her style is genuinely dynamic.

No matter what she is wearing, she always gets people talking, and this time, she is bringing the heat to our screens in a stunning yellow gown by Viola and Vesper. Malavika Mohanan didn't need

yellow gown did the work. There is no space for error when cut-outs and a flowing satin silhouette are combined, or at least there wasn't one when Malavika chose her ideal option. Not only did her one-shoulder dress have cut-outs at the bust and waist, but a side slit added even more drama to its lengthy trail. Her ultimate glam makeup was perfect with her red glossy lip and highlighted cheeks. Her sleek tear drop earrings and golden arm band was the only accessory that she needed to com-

plement the look. Meanwhile, on the work front, Malavika was last seen in Maaran opposite Dhanush. She will be next seen in Hindi film Yudhra opposite Siddhant

**TRAVEL PLAN** 

back New Years eve at home with Santanu and my pet Clara. New vears is best enjoyed with your near and dear ones and I'm really looking forward to spending it relaxing and chilling at home. AGENCIES

Ganesha savs your friend 'no is very influential wil be lucky for you. You will be able to start a new joint venture business with out any obstacles. Your efficiency and hard work will be appreciated.

#### **SCORPIO**

You reveal your true avatar of being adventurous today. feels Ganesha. It's a favourable day for businessmen as they would make plans that would vield them huge profits. With your great communication and convincing power, you are going to impress your superiors today.

#### **SAGITTARIUS**

Being a part of all things bright and beautiful will remain the highpoint today says Ganesha. You may don the hat of an activist and fight injustice and discrimination in the right spirits. Even if you are asked to conquer the world, you will be able to do it today, says Ganesha.

#### CAPRICORN

You may feel utterly disappointed as all of your hardwork and planning will go in vain. You will have difference of opinion with others and at times these differences may turn into heated arguments predicts Ganesha. Such disharmonious environment will add to your anxiety, but don't lose hope. There is light at the end of the tunnel and you'll surely get through these turbulent times.

#### 

You have been turning a blind eye towards the pending work you are loaded with. But, today you will take up the challenge of getting done with the pile of work. You may clean your desk at work or room, make payments and purchases, and clear the mess. It will bring clarity to your life.



finances in life, and you will devote your energies towards the same today. You might turn stingy with your money all of a sudden. An unexpected illness in the family will leave you worried.



the light to make her glow; instead, her dazzlingly stunning

FUN

Chaturvedi and Thangalaan starring AGENCIES Vikram.





#### **CALVIN AND HOBBES**

PEANUTS







#### CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



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.

	1	6	3	8		4		
	9							
			1			3		2
2, 2			÷.	7			5	
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2 2 2	2	8			5	7		4

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5 3





# downtown



#### **BLOOMING TALENT**

Children performing in a competition organised by National Education Trust at Bhanjakala Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Monday



#### **COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
orld	66,19,13,292	63,44,50,992	66,86,635
dia	4,46,77,302	4,41,43,179	5,30,695
disha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

# 6.31L got treatment under BSKY this year

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 26: The state government has spent around ₹1,389 crore towards cashless treat ment of 6.31 lakh people under its flagship health assurance scheme Biju Swasthy Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) during the current calendar year.

During a review meeting on BSKY, chief executive officer (CEO) of State Health Assurance Society, Brundha D said that about 6.31 lakh persons from the poor families having either BSKY smart card or ration card were provided high quality clinical treatment in different specialty private hospitals free of cost up to December 25, this year.

The state government has paid ₹1,389 crore to the empanelled private sector hospitals towards the cost of their treatment, she said.

All patients coming to hospitals with BSKY eligibility were counselled through telephonic call from 104. The patients were also provided handholding support by the Swasthya Mitras engaged by state

#### **'Kick the butt, stay** away from COPD'

Bhubaneswar: If you have a penchant for smoking, it's time to give up. According to the doctors at Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS-Bhubaneswar), 80-90 per cent of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) patients have had a history of smoking in developing countries such as India. COPD is usually associated with symptoms such as breathlessness which increases on exertion, cough with or without expectoration, chest tightness and wheezing. Other associated symptoms could show up in the form of fatigue, weight loss. swelling of the legs etc. "The cure lies in quitting smoking," said Dr Saswat Subhankar, assistant professor of Pulmonology

department at KIMS. COPD is seen in patients above the age of 40 years and the prevalence increases with age. It is more common in men than women though recent studies have found a similar prevalence in both sexes in m



in these hospitals, the CEO said. These patients were treated through either of the total number of 2,056 clinical packages provided through BSKY. The problems and grievances relating to use of cards, cashless treatment etc were immediately attended to and resolved in a time bound manner keeping in view emergency requirements

of the patients, she added. Chairing the meeting, Health and Family Welfare secretary Shalini Pandit has asked officials to create awareness among the people about all the facilities provided under BSKY.

Pandit has asked the officials concerned to intensify awareness

The state government has paid ₹1,389 crore to the empanelled private sector hospitals towards the cost of their treatment

All patients coming to hospitals with BSKY eligibility were counselled through telephonic call from 104

activities on BSKY in remote rural areas of Gajapati, Kandhamal, Subarnapur, Nuapada, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Koraput and Malkangiri districts so that people get required information and assistance for high quality clinical care.

Officials said that the patients or their attendants could contact on toll-free number 104 for treatment at any of the empanelled hospitals of their choice. They could get their BSKY card related problems resolved through telephonic call to 155369. People could also communicate their needs and grievances through toll free number 14545.

Sahu murder case and Mahanga

double murder case were elimi-

nated. "A five-year-old girl was mur-

dered in Nayagarh district, in

which former minister Arun

Kumar Sahoo's name surfaced but

the BJD government left no stone

unturned to shield the key accused

in the murder case," he alleged.

MLAs marched to Raj Bhawan and

submitted a memorandum to

Governor Ganeshi Lal demanding

a special session of Odisha

Assembly to discuss law and order

Meanwhile, a delegation of BJP

## **BJP** takes to streets over BJD governance

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 26: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Monday organised state-wide 'satyagraha' when the ruling BJD celebrated silver jubilee celebration of its foundation day in Puri.

BJP leaders and workers, led by the party's state unit president Samir Mohanty, staged a protest here while similar protests were organised across the state against the BJD government's alleged 'misgovernance'.

Speaking to mediapersons here, Mohanty slammed the BJD government for allegedly patronising criminals.

situation in the state. "BJD-led government's 23-year Responding to BJP's satyagraha, administration has patronised senior BJD leader Prasanna criminalisation of politics. Several Acharya said, "Those who are ruling party MLAs, ministers and doing such political drama, the leaders are involved in criminal state ruled by them, has created a activities like murder and violence record in atrocities against women and anti-farmer activities. against women." Mohanty alleged.

husband of lady blackmailer Archana Nag, before the court on the completion of remand period. Jagabandhu returned to the He alleged that prime accused in Jharpada jail after 14 days remand Mamita Meher murder case, Puri period. Zilla Parishad member Dharmendra The court had earlier allowed

ED to take Jagabandhu on remand for three days December 23.

Bhubaneswar, Dec 27: The

Enforcement Directorate Monday produced Jagabandhu Chand, the



Jagabandhu was earlier on nine day remand from December 14 till 22. Meanwhile, the State Forensic Science Laboratory Monday handed over the second forensic report of the seized digital gadgets of Arcahana to Khandagiri police.

Archana, along with her husband and associates are involved in a high profile sextortion case. The ED has probing into the money laundering angle into the sextortion racket



#### Archana's hubby **Ex-IAS Vinod Kumar, five** returns to jail others get three years RI POST NEWS NETWORK

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 26: In sixth consecutive conviction, a Vigilance court here Monday awarded three years rigorous imprisonment (RI) to former IAS officer, Vinod Kumar along with five others after finding them guilty of providing illegal loans to a real estate firm by abusing their official positions. The court also asked the convicts to pay a fine of ₹1 lakh each.

The convicts have to undergo additional RI of six months if failed to pay the fine amount.

Kumar, a dismissed bureaucrat, was the managing director of the Odisha Rural Housing and Development Corporation (ORHDC) when the corruption took place between January 4, 2000 and May 15, 2001.

The other accused convicted by the court were identified as Swasti Ranjan Mohapatra, ex-company secretary, Pradip Rout, former accounts officer, Satyaprakash Behera, junior loan officer and Jnanendra Swain, assistant system



analyst of ORHDC and Manoranjan Nayak, the executive director of M/s Rashmi Mass Construction Pvt. Ltd.

According to the sources, Kumar and other officials of the ORHDC disbursed ₹21.35 lakh loan to the real estate firm in the name of six persons producing forged documents.

The loan was sanctioned by the ORHDC to provide flats to each of the six loanees at Rashmi Villa in Nayapalli area of the City. "The above five officers of

tered into criminal conspiracy

with Manoranjan Nayak, ED,

Pvt. Ltd., Bhubaneswar and in

The court after examining statements of 18 witnesses and other ORHDC, Bhubaneswar had endocuments pronounced the judgement. The trial was conducted by special public prosecutor, M/s Rashmi Mass Construction Hemant Kumar Swain on behalf of the state.

he six were found guilty of providing loans illegally to a real estate firm by abusing their official positions ourt also asked the

cts to pay <u>a fine</u>

prosecution of the said conspiracy abusing their official position, dishonestly sanctioned house building loans in the names of 6 individuals and disbursed ₹21, 35,000/- to M/s Rashmi Mass Construction Pvt. Ltd., Bhubaneswar," Vigilance

However, the convicted firm

neither constructed Rashmi Villa

nor provided the flats to the six

sources said.

loanees.

countries.

#### Auto drivers' stir brings traffic to standstill

Bhubaneswar: The traffic came to a halt as the members of Smart City Online Auto Association Monday staged a protest rally blocking the National Highway near the Regional Transport Office at Acharya Vihar area here. The City police was caught off guard as they had no prior knowledge of the rally of auto owners and drivers. The auto asso ciation had allegedly not taken any permission from the police to hold the protest march demanding strict action against the two wheelers which are engaged in online bike taxi without have ing commercial number plate. Monday afternoon, more than 2000 drivers and owners gathered at IG Park and later marched towards the RTO-I office at Archarya Vihar. Upon informed, police rushed to the spot and placated the protestors. Police and RTO officials assured the auto drivers that the vehicles used as bike cabs plying without commercial number plates will now be seized instead of imposing fine. Meanwhile, the City police have registered a case (609/22) against the auto association for holding rally without prior permission.



GIVING A FACELIFT: Artists draw a mural near Cuttack Railway Station as part of a beautification drive, Monday

## Guv thrust on integral edu at 39th OUAT convocation



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 26: Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), Bhubaneswar, the 2nd oldest agriculture university of the country, celebrated its 39th Convocation Monday at the MS Swaminathan Hall of the varsity here. Governor and chancellor of the

university Ganeshi Lal presided over the function. Himansu Pathak, secretary department of Agricultural Research & Education, Government of India and Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi graced the occasion as the chief guest and delivered the convocation address.

Appealing to the students Pathak said, "Convocation doesn't aim at only conferring degrees and medals, but it involves handing over scholars to society to perpetuate the mission of learning. Hence, the scholars are requested to serve the society with dedication, discipline and determinations that will lead them to manifestation of perfection.'

OUAT vice-chancellor Pravat Kumar Roul presented the achievement report of the university. On the occasion, honorary doctorate degrees (Honoris Cause) were conferred to India Meteorological Department director general Mrutyunjaya Mohapatra and eminent organic farming practitioner and proponent Sushree Sabarmatee.

In the convocation, 821 graduates, 510 post-graduates and 64 PhD students were awarded with degrees in various disciplines of agriculture, allied sciences and basic sciences. Besides, 113 gold medals and six cash prizes were distributed for excellence in academic pursuit and co-curricular activities.

Addressing the students, the Governor said, "Integral education is the education of the whole being, the way you think and practice.'

Highlighting some of the key achievements of the university, Roul underscored the path of progress that OUAT has adopted in developing 171 high-yielding varieties and plant hybrids, including a little millet variety 'Kalinga Suan 18', patenting Ragi threshercum-pearlier and reviving OUAT Kalinga Pallishree synthetic poultry. "Through the network of 31 KVKs in the state, the university is facilitating GI Registration of Mayurbhanj Kai Chutney, Dhenkanal Magji, Nayagarh Kanteimundi Brinja," he said.

Participating in the convocation function, OUAT board of management member and department of Agriculture & Farmers Empowerment principal secretary-Arabinda Kumar Padhee admired the awardees for their effort.

# DIY air filter can effectively filter out viruses

n simple, easy-to-construct air filter can protect against lllness caused not only by viruses but also by chemical pollutants, according to a study.

The filter named Corsi-Rosenthal boxes, or cubes, can be constructed from materials found at hardware stores: four MERV-13 filters, duct tape, a 20-inch box fan and a cardboard box.

"The findings show that an inexpensive, easy-to-construct air filter can protect against illness caused not only by viruses but also by chemical pollutants," said study lead author Joseph Braun, an associate professor at Brown University in the US.



"This type of highly-accessible public health intervention can empower community groups to take steps to improve their air quality and therefore, their health," Braun said in a statement.

As part of a project, boxes were assembled by students and campus community members and installed in the School of Public Health as well as other buildings on the Brown University campus.

To assess the cubes' efficacy at removing chemicals from the air, Braun and his team compared a room's concentrations of semivolatile organic compounds before and during the box's operation.

The results, published in the journal Environmental Science & Technology, showed that Corsi-Rosenthal boxes significantly decreased the concentrations of several PFAS and phthalates in 17 rooms during the period they were used (February to March 2022).

PFAS, a type of synthetic chemical found in a range of products including cleaners, textiles and wire insulation, decreased by 40 to 60 per cent.

Phthalates, commonly found in building materials and personal care products, were reduced by 30 to 60 per cent, the researchers found.

PFAS and phthalates have been linked to various health problems, including asthma, reduced vaccine response, decreased birth weight, altered brain development in children, altered metabolism and some cancers, said Braun. They are also considered to be

that may mimic or interfere with the body's hormones. PFAS have been associated with reduced vaccine response in children and also may increase the severity of and susceptibility to Covid-19 in adults, according to the researchers. "The reduction of PFAS and ph-

endocrine-disrupting chemicals

thalate levels is a wonderful cobenefit to the Corsi-Rosenthal boxes," said study co-author Robin Dodson, a research scientist at USbased NGO Silent Spring Institute.

These boxes are accessible, easy to make and relatively inexpensive, and they're currently being used in universities and homes across the country," he added. PTI

An aimless life is always a

niserable life

#### FOCUS FOOD SECURITY

**SOME QUESTIONS ON FREE PDS** 

War & Peace significant development in the Russia-Ukraine war raging since 24 February 2022 is the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's recent visit to Washington. Predictably, Russia has branded the exchanges between Zelenskyy and US President Joe Biden as an exercise in perpetuating war rather than a peace initiative. Moscow has complained that no calls for peace were heard during the engagement and termed the US involvement as "a proxy war with Russia." Maria Zakharova, Russia's foreign ministry spokesperson, categorically stated that the talks in Washington showed that neither Ukraine nor the United States was seeking peace. "They are simply intent on continuing the fighting," she said.

THE MOTHER

To quote an opinion piece published in The Washington Post last week: "The US aid to Ukraine is helping to degrade an enemy military without the death of a single American in uniform."

Now the question is whether Russia has any moral authority to talk about peace when it initiated the invasion of Ukraine in a brazen manner and has been pounding cities and villages with bombs, artillery and missiles, killing thousands of innocent civilians and military personnel. According to one estimate, Ukraine and Russia have together lost over 20,000 soldiers, while the civilian casualty of Ukraine is put at about 40,000. Besides, over 14 million Ukrainians have been displaced from their homes.

The reason for Russia humming the tune of peace is the latest announcement of President Biden coinciding with Zelenskyy's visit that the US will arm Ukraine with its Patriot missiles to strengthen the latter's war efforts against Russia. This is certainly not music to Russia's ears, since the Patriot system, when made available to Ukraine, will dramatically change the complexion of the aerial conflict. The nervousness of Russia at that prospect is apparent in Putin's Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov's response, despite the bravado, that delivering Patriot missiles would not prevent Russia from "achieving its goals during the special military operation."

Zelenskyy's visit seems to have rattled Russia since this was the first time he made a foreign trip after having told the world soon after the war broke out that he would not leave his country where he was needed most by his countrymen. The fact that he was at last in a position to move out of his country shows Ukraine has effectively repulsed the advances made by Russia with the help of arms and ammunition provided by the US and its Western allies.

Zelenskyy is now scouting for larger military hardware and money to drive out the Russians from the soil of his country. For this the Russian media has been cracking jokes describing him as a beggar going to the US with a begging bowl. That itself betrays frustration and nervousness on the part of the Russian state. As if to rub salt into Russia's wounds, Biden has announced his administration would stand by Ukraine "as long as it takes." America's resolve to help Ukraine against Russia shows it has come out of the initial reluctance to provoke Russia into direct confrontation by siding with Ukraine. It appears Zelenskyy has achieved his major objective of rallying Washington behind him since his address in the US Congress drew lusty applause from majority of Democrats and Republicans, though some Republicans did refrain from clapping. Zelenskyy is hopeful that he would get American funding for the war despite the Republicans having more numbers in the Congress than the Democrats.

The US has already spent more than \$48 billion on humanitarian, financial and military support to Ukraine. Another \$2 billion in military aid was announced during the visit. The administration is also considering another aid package worth almost \$45 billion through Congress before the Republicans take over the House of Representatives in January.

Russia is readying itself for a fresh ground assault, perhaps during winter, as reports suggest. Ukraine, armed with US arsenal, is expected to launch a spirited counterattack. America's efforts seem not simply to help Ukraine, but also to have a big say in the outcome of the war between Russia and Ukraine. Some experts are comparing Zelenskyy's US visit to that of Winston Churchill to Washington after Pearl Harbor in 1941. Churchill's visit marked the US' involvement in taking charge of the Allied cause in Europe. History, according to some, is on the threshold of repeating itself.

#### WISDOM CORNER

There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow men. True nobility lies in being superior to your former self.



Ajit Ranade IF HUNGER IS NOT A BIG PROBLEM, WHY ARE WE GIVING AWAY FREE FOOD ON SUCH A MASSIVE SCALE?

hristmas brought good cheer to 81 crore Indians as the government an-' nounced that it was making all food grain distributed under the Public Distribution System (PDS) completely free for one year. Each person would get 5 kilos of rice or wheat or coarse cereal every month free. The PDS is a sixty-year-old system meant predominantly for the poor. It sells food at subsidised prices. It is understood as the network of ration shops around the country. The word "ration" means allocating a scarce commodity in small portions so that everyone gets something. India had huge shortages of food till the early 1960's and had to go with a begging bowl to Western nations. Scarcity meant that food price inflation could go sky high. Thenceforth came the PDS and ration shops. The government also introduced the concept of a minimum support price (MSP) scheme for crops, along with a big and assured procurement scheme to incentivise farmers to increase domestic production. Then came the Green Revolution, basically in the states of Punjab and Haryana. So, India became self-sufficient in food production and even started exporting wheat and rice. The PDS however continued to

expand because it caters to the poor. It was revamped in 1992 and again in 1997 for better targeting of backward districts. However, it was clear that a large amount of government procurement was not translating into better distribution (despite the PDS) and better nutrition. There were also stories of leakage as cheap food grain was stolen from ration shops and sold in the open market for a profit. The poor people who lined up at ration shops were often told that the stock is finished. Come next week. Or next month. The hapless poor who stood in long lines only to be turned away, had no legal recourse. There was no legal penalty for ration shops which were stocked out, nor was there any penalty for the government. This was the background to the National Food Security Act of 2013, also called the Right to Food. It was passed as a Constitutional guarantee, and culminated after a



It is time to think about the free food programme in a holistic and comprehensive way, taking into account all social sector budgetary priorities and affordability

decade-long movement led by activists who went to the Supreme Court The activists said that despite a mountain of food grain in government granaries, there was still widespread starvation and malnutrition. Hence the PDS mechanism was strengthened by the NFSA by placing a legal obligation on the government to provide subsidised food. Under the NFSA, three fourth of the rural families and one half of urban families would receive rice, wheat and coarse cereal at 3, 2 and 1 rupee a kilo respectively. How successful the NFSA has been is a matter of debate and separate discussion. The recent low ranking of India in the World Hunger Index led to a lot of controversy and charges of conspiring to malign India's image. Much was made about the subtle difference between hunger and malnutrition. But during COVID the Prime

Minister's Gareeb Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) was launched to give free food grains to each person who were already covered by the NFSA. So, this COVID-time scheme too reached (or is sup-

posed to have reached) 81 crore Indians. It was extended six times since May 2020, and is about to expire in December 2022. The total estimated expenditure on it has been Rs 4.5 trillion so far. This scheme has run parallel to the PDS. The government has distributed more than 55 million tonnes of free food grain in the past two years.

Now the PMGKAY has been shut down, and the PDS has been made totally free for one year. Several questions arise.

Firstly, if the PDS can be used to distribute free food, why was the PDS not used during COVID instead of launching a new scheme called PMGKAY? In fact, that same COVID-time scheme is continuing under the name of free PDS. If the PDS requires ration cards, while PMGKAY did not, surely the PDS could have been tweaked during COVID? Since a lot of the poor do not get covered under the PDS, and since their ration cards are not expected at other places, there has been talk of "one na-

tion one ration card". This is es-

pecially true for migrant workers

and their families. So, this scheme could have been rolled out during COVID, thus strengthening the effectiveness of the PDS. Of course, in the current extension the cost of free food grain will be borne by the Centre and not the states. Secondly, why is the government not unloading 4.4 million tonnes of food grain from its stocks into the private market? That has been strongly recommended by a member of the Niti Aayog. This would surely dampen food price inflation.

Cereal inflation is running at 13% and wheat inflation is 20%. When free food is given away, how will the government prevent re-sale of that same food grain by the beneficiaries for a profit? Such re-sale is entirely possible given such high inflation. Would it not be better to involve market traders? Nobel laureate Amartya Sen had famously said that market traders make available scarce food grain more efficiently and promptly than any government ever could Famines and shortages are prevented because of quick inflow facilitated by private traders into scarcity-hit regions. Thirdly, once having become used to free food, how will the government ever raise PDS prices? Unless PDS prices move closer to market prices, the subsidy will become unsustainable. Of course, the subsidised or free grain is helping curb inflationary impact, but in the long run prices have to be raised. Lastly, if 81 crore citizens need free food for 42 months, what does that imply about the official poverty ratio? If hunger is not a big problem, why are we giving away free food on such a massive scale? Are we on our way to becoming a "langar nation"? Will the budget for free food eat into the budget for health and education, on which our public spending is much below that of our peers? That scarcity simply helps private clinics and coaching classes. It is time to think about the free food programme in a holistic and comprehensive way, tak ing into account all social sector budgetary priorities and afford-

The writer is a noted economist.

ability.

#### SPECTRUM ECONOMY

China's COVID crisis & Indian markets

- From a certain point onward there is no longer any turning back. That is the point that must be reached.
- Truth, like gold, is to be obtained not by its growth, but by washing away from it all that is not gold.

#### WORDS**WORTH**

#### Edacious

The literal sense of edacious is "relating to eating", since it comes from the Latin verb edere, to eat. But even in Latin it had a stronger sense of voracious consumption and that was carried with it into English. It was brought into the language – surprisingly recently – by classically educated writers at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It never really caught on and is now almost extinct, perhaps because voracious is a better established and more vigorous-sounding alternative. The Roman writer Ovid created a maxim in his Metamorphoses: "Tempus edax rerum", time devours everything. As a result, in its rare appearances the word is most likely to be linked with time. Thomas Carlyle used it in this way when he referred to events "swallowed in the depths of edacious time".

#### Egregious

t's the result of an odd shift of meaning in sixteenth-century England. Originally, something or someone egregious was remarkable in a good sense – distinguished, eminent or renowned – much as is implied in the Italian form of address. Both languages have taken it from Latin egregius, which actually means "standing out from the herd" (greg is an inflected form of grex, a herd or flock). But then – only 50 years after it first appeared in English – the word started to be used jokingly in reference to somebody who stood out from the crowd in a bad way, notoriously or outrageously. This quickly became established and both senses ran in parallel for some 200 years (which must have been awkward for readers). Christopher Marlowe employed it in the older sense in his Tamburlaine in 1590: "Egregious viceroys of these eastern parts", while in 1611 Shakespeare has Posthumus describe himself in Cymbeline in the newer condemnatory sense: "Egregious murderer". By the nineteenth century our modern strongly negative meaning of something outstandingly bad or shocking had triumphed.

#### LOL

# Boasting about race records

Some race horses were staying in a Sstable. One of them starts to boast about his track record. "In the last 15 races, I've won 8 of them!" Another horse breaks in, "Well in the last 27 races, I've won 19!!" "Oh that's good, but in the last 36 races, I've won 28!," says another,



flicking his tail.

At this point, they notice that a greyhound dog has been sitting there listening. "I don't mean to boast," says the greyhound, "but in my last 90 races, I've won 88 of them!" The horses are clearly amazed. "Wow!" says one, after a hushed silence, "A talking dog."



Sourajeet Pradhani 2023 WILL BE A VOLATILE YEAR WITH

INTERMITTENT CRESTS AND TROUGHS Indian benchmarks Nifty and Sensex witnessed the biggest correction last Friday owing to the reappearance of COVID cases in China and other parts of the world. As a result, close to 8 trillion of INR got depleted on a single day. The psychological barrier of 18,000point mark for Nifty and 60,000point mark for Sensex were breached. This was the steepest daily correction since September. An alarming COVID wave has re-

sulted in an exponential rise in the number of positive cases. The Chinese government had to finally succumb to the public outcry and lifted its 'Zero COVID policy'. When COVID impacts a country of 1.4 billion population, the ramifications of such an event will have spillover effects on the entire world. China is the second largest economy of the world. COVID will result in both supply chain as well as de-

mand constraints the world over. With COVID news emanating from China increasingly getting worse, there is rising concern amongst investors if this can lead to a large correction in Indian equities (10 per cent is a correction from previous peak, so large implies more than 10 per cent). This has happened simultaneously with modest

losses on indices (4 per cent) in the last few days. In this context, a few thoughts are relevant to note.

Firstly, global indices have rallied quite a lot. That was owing to elevated positioning and sentiment with all news flow indicating that markets are increasingly getting comfortable of rising interest rate expectations. US Equities are down over 6 per cent. That is not brought about or influenced by China news as Chinese stocks themselves haven't reacted much (MSCI China equity index is flat).

Secondly, one can argue that moves by the BoJ (Bank of Japan) as well as the economic data in the US, which indicated strength, are some reasons behind mild correction so far as that doesn't indicate that central bankers are going towards a 'pause' – so to that extent, good economic news isn't serving to be good for markets.

Thirdly, industrial metals remain broadly flat for the month. They are down by 5 per cent from recent peak. Copper which averaged 7,500 USD on LME (London Metal Exchange) for the part of the year when China had been following a strict lockdown policy is currently at 8,310 down only 2 per cent from recent peak. Note that cop-

per was at 10,000 levels before the
Ukraine conflict began and went
through massive price correction
post April peak. Therefore, industrial metals and copper are an important gauge to look at.

Fourthly, year-end market liquidity generally moves lower (holiday season) and therefore sentiment linked volume increase (selling) can surely have some impact. But by itself the China linked COVID news may not have large impact till the time stricter lockdowns aren't re-imposed (indicating once again fears of deteriorating supply issues) if 2020-2022 learnings are anything to go by.

Increasing COVID related adverse news is not helpful for markets generally but one needs to watch out for broader market measures including commodities to determine if this is really having any material impact. So far it doesn't seem to indicate anything like that, but one will need to be on alert. The impact will definitely be visible in the short run.

On the contrary, historical experiences have suggested that China phas always bounced back from in larger shocks rather quickly. China's economy is far from fragile and in the long run, the impact is expected

to be minimal. One of the most overlooked factors of the Chinese economy is its digital prowess. Close to 37 per cent of retail sales in China take place online. Its mobile payment system is one of the best in the world. This is a reflection of China's economic resilience when physical mobility is too much restricted.

The US GDP data in the September-December quarter has been better to the expected numbers. This has further reduced the probability of relaxation of rate hikes by the Federal Reserve of the US. The 'sell off' by FIIs (Foreign Institutional Investors) from emerging markets to safer havens like the US will continue to persist. For a country like India, it will be interesting to see whether the paucity will be compensated by contribution from DIIs (Domestic Institutional Investors) and retail investors.

Hence 2023 will be a volatile year with intermittent crests and troughs. The trajectory (upward or downward) will be steep. Such a market phenomenon will not pivot around COVID, but inflation in the Western advanced economies.

The writer is an investment banker.

# etters <sup>sin</sup>

#### TO THE EDITOR

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

OriSSaPOST B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010 Two stars, two tales

Sir, Sportspersons' careers often hang on slender threads, waltzing amidst swings in fortunes. None can be a better example to this fact than the two soccer giants - Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, whose contrasting campaigns were the highlights in the recently concluded FIFA 2022 World Cup. While Messi reached the pinnacle of glory by winning the cup, in contrast. Ronaldo's extraordinary career has undergone a sudden. undeniable and maybe irreversible shift. It is really sad that the Portugal star, post World Cup, has been relegated to a state where he has millions of die-hard fans, yet still being lonely. Imagine a football giant, who everyone came to watch, yet stuck on the bench often because of the rift in relationship between him and the coach. Hitting the football into the net with regularity was what Ronaldo had been doing for years. But when he can't do that anymore, his value plummets. Sadly, just in the space of one World Cup, Ronaldo's legacy has been battered beyond repair. As for Messi, completing the set of trophies with the summit clash of the game, is not only phenomenal, but also like cutting through the knife in the heart of Ronaldo.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, , CHENNAI

#### Trouble for BJP

Sir, This refers to "Reddy floats new party," OrissaPOST, Dec 26. The mining baron and former minister, Gali Janardhana Reddy ended months of speculations through the launch of his own political party "Kalyana Rajya Pragati Paksha" in Karnataka. With this, GJR's political incognito for over a decade followed by the continuous sidelining of him by the BJP, too, came to an end. Although, the Reddy brothers led by Janardhana Reddy were instrumental in bringing the first ever BJP government in Karnataka, BJP distanced itself from Janardhana Reddy when the cases of alleged irregularities in mining were filed against him. Also, BJP could expand its political footprint in the region from 2004, when the late Sushma Swaraj from the BJP was pitted against Sonia Gandhi in Bellary - through the organisational skills, hard work and clout of the Reddy brothers. Going forward, since the self-respect and political relevance of Janardhana Reddy have been major factors for the formation of KRPP, BJP can't dismiss the damage it may have to suffer in Kalyana Karnataka region in the upcoming Assembly elections.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE



# state



LITTLE ANGELS: Girl students of Delhi Public School, Paradip Refinery presented a cultural performance during annual sports day, Monday

POST NEWS NETWORK

ing him and looting pan masala

worth lakhs in Ganjam district.

Simanchal Panda, 58, of Minakshi

Nagar under Gosaninuagaon police

limits, Susant Kumar Dalai, 35, alias

Dipu and T Gopal Rao of Bajrangi

Nagar near Chhatrapur sub-jail under

this police limit, Debashish Pattnaik,

30, alias Jaga of Bank Colony in

Chhatrapur. This was stated here by

ASP PK Dalai in the presence of

Chhatrapur IIC Satya Ranjan Pradhan

at a press meet held at the Chhatrapur

The looted cash worth ₹1.40 lakh,

60 packets of pan masala worth

police station. Monday.

The accused were identified as

# 3 fake GST officers among 4 held over loot from truck

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, Dec 26: A girl student committed suicide by jumping on the rail track connecting Koraput with Kirandul near Chindri village under Koraput Municipality limits, late Sunday night, GRP said Monday. The deceased was identified as

College girl ends

life on rly track

Geeta Jani, 18, daughter of Budu Jani and a Plus-III student of VD College in Jeypore.

She left home Sunday night and did not return. Family members searched for her but failed to trace her. The matter came to the fore after locals spotted the body lying on the rail track near Chindri village and informed the GRP police.

Police informed her family members with the mobile phone found lying near her body. The body was sent for post-mortem after family members identified the body, SI Binayak Bhoi of GRP said

#### Chhatrapur, Dec 26: Police arrested four persons including three imposters posing as GST officers on charge of defrauding a truck driver of ₹1.40 lakh after assault-

lakhs and five mobile phones were seized from their possession. Two cars used in the crime were also seized from their possession. They were produced in the court in a case registered in the Chhatrapur police station.

The ASP said that Seemanchal Panda used to buy rice and pan masala and transport it to Nani Raju, a local trader of Andhra Pradesh. In course of their business. Seemanchal owed an outstanding loan of ₹14 lakh on Nani

minor minerals is polluting the

environment and affecting the

farmer of Bhalusahi village under

Badakumari panchavat is a case in

this point. He has alleged that dust

emanating from the road has de-

stroyed his maize plantation. He

added that he has no idea from

where he would repay the loan for

maize plantation. Saanta also said

that he had visited the Bharatmala

camp office near his village and

pleaded with the truck drivers and

The plight of Jaga Saanta, a

growth of crops.

Raju. However, Nani Raju did not clear the outstanding loan despite repeated reminders by Seemanchal.

Left with no option, Seemanchal along with Susant, Debashis and Gopal hatched a plan to teach Nani Raju a lesson. Accorddingly, Susant, Debashis and Gopal identifying themselves as GST officers waylaid a truck carrying rice and pan masala for Nai Raju near a temple under Chhatrapur police limits and demanded ₹5 lakh as bribe to cover up the fraud in transportation of the consignment.

The driver informed Nani Raju following which the latter send ₹1.30 lakh to Gopal's bank account and ₹10,000 to Debashis's account. They also looted the pan masala in the truck leaving behind the rice and fled. Later, the truck driver lodged a complaint at the Chhatrapur police station about the loot

# Utkela airstrip works hit by land acquisition delay

Kalahandi Collector P Anvesha Reddy visited the airstrip a few days ago and met with departmental officials to discuss its progress

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, Dec 26: The Central government has included the Utkela airstrip in Kalahandi district under its ambitious UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme. However, delay in land acquisition for the airstrip has held back the implementation of the UDAN scheme at the airstrip.

Regular flight services will be available from the airstrip to Bhubaneswar, Raipur, Vishakhapatnam, Chennai, New Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata after it becomes operational. However, the delay in land acquisition has halted works on the airstrip and pushed it into uncertainty.

District Collector P Anvesha Reddy visited the airstrip a few days ago and met with departmental officials to discuss its progress. She realised that land acquisition issues were delaying the construction of the airstrip and directed the officials to take immediate steps in this regard and finish the construction.

The airstrip had received ₹3 crore in aid under the UDAN scheme in 2016-17. The Works department used the available funds to expand the airstrip and build compound walls, drains, roads on both sides of the airstrip, signal room, control room, rest house, and guest house.

Meanwhile, construction of the airport apron, taxiway, barracks for police and fire person-



layed the acquisition of an addi-250 acre of land has tional 9 acre for the project at varbeen acquired for the ious places As the land acquisition is getting

Cuttack: Alumni meet of PG Department of Odia, Shailabala

department with many cultural programs. In this context, a meeting was arranged and chaired by Dr Chitta Ranjan Panda

and popular telefilm producer and magician Bapu Lenka as

in the presence of eminent satire poet Madhab Chandra Swain

guests of the occasion. Swain encouraged students to maintain

moral values and social traditions of the state through satirical

Women's Autonomous College here has been held in the

delayed, the authorities have failed to apply for the license from the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Some trees are close to the wall behind the runway, which may prevent flights from landing

This month, the airstrip authorities have launched the process to apply for the DGCA license. However, the years-long delay in land acquisition has slowed down the implementation of the UDAN scheme.

The Nabakrushna Choudhury Foundation was entrusted with the task of conducting an infrastructure survey for the project. Meanwhile, it has submitted its final report to the district administration and the Centre. It is now uncertain when the airstrip will be operational.

## <sup>•</sup>Maize plantations bite the dust in Umerkote that reckless transportation of

Severe dust pollution caused by the 500-odd vehicles engaged in construction of the Raipur-Visakhapatnam road works under the Bharatmala project are putting farmers in a fix

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Umerkote, Dec 26: A blanket of



the Bharatmala project. Farmers alleged that lack of dust control measure is polluting the surroundings. They said that even spraying of water on the road would minimise dust pollution to a great extent. Construction of the Raipur-Vishakhapatnam road passing through this town in Nabarangpur district is in full swing. As a result, over 500 trucks, tippers and heavy vehicles carrying minor minerals pass on this route daily, leaving a cloud of dust and smoke behind.

## Youth awarded life term for killing aunt

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Anandapur, Dec 26: A local court sentenced a youth to life imprisonment after convicting him for the 2019 murder of his aunt over suspected witchcraft practice under this police limit in Keonjhar district, Monday.

The convict was identified as Ankur Birua, a native of Kantala village under Anandapur police limits. The court of additional district and sessions judge Prajyoti Rout also slapped a penalty of ₹25,000 on the convict. In default, he has to undergo additional two years of imprisonment, the judge observed in the case. The judge passed the order after examining the statements recorded by the witnesses and the police chargesheet in the case, public prosecutor Aswini Mallick said. According to the case diary, Birua was suspecting his aunt Birang Purty, 55, of practicing witchcraft and sorcerv for which he hacked her to death with an axe, September 25, 2019. Police arrested him and produced him in court over a police complaint filed by the victim's kin.



poems. Lenka focused on relation between cinema and literature as well as importance of magic on society. Magical reality was also discussed in literature by speakers. Income-expenditure and activities of the association were placed in the discussions of alumni. President Priyadarshini Swain, Working President Soni Priya Palei, Secretary Dipika Sahoo, Joint Secretary Rashmirekha Das and Arati Sasmal, Treasurer Laxmi Praya Barik, cultural secretary Baishakhi Routray, cultural joint secretary Laxmi Priya Sahoo took charges as office bearers of the Odia

alumni association from the year 2023 as per a unanimous decision at a meeting of the general body. All staff of the department -- Dr Sanjita Mishra, Dr Narendra Nath Nayak, Dr Sugyani Sahu, Archanamayee Panda, Kamal Mahunta, Diptimayee Swain and a large number of old and present students actively participated in the function.

EAST COAST RAILWAY E-AUCTION OF PARKING STANDS & PAY & USE TOILET station & Location : Sl. No.1: Gangad No.5. Paradeep-2 wheeler (At Station Building side), SL, No.4. Tatcher Road (Near Circulating area), Sl. No.5. Mancheswar-2 Wheeler (Nea station building), SL, No.6. Kandarpur-2 Wheeler (Opposite Circulating area), SL, No.7. Kaluparaghat-2 Wheeler (Near OH water tank a



drinking water supply systems

As the airstrip was struggling to

take off, the Center again sanc-

tioned ₹55 crore, February 11, 2019

and ₹16.77 crore, February 16, 2019

for the airstrip. It was then told

that the funds would be used to ac-

quire 259 acre land for the expan-

Meanwhile, 250 acre of land has

Alumni meet of Shailabala Odia PG dept held  $\stackrel{\prec}{\leftarrow}$ 

been acquired for the project, but

stiff opposition by people has de-

has been completed

sion of the airstrip.

dust is always found on leaves of maize plants in acres of farmland giving them a brown look in Nabarangpur district. Farmers here have flagged concern over such a situation. They lamented that dust is impacting the growth of maize and will eventually harm the harvest. The sudden dust problem is arising due to the 500odd vehicles engaged in construction of the Raipur-Visakhapatnam road works under

Dust-induced pollution has choked the lives of people and destroyed standing maize crops, farmers alleged. They added

officials to sprinkle water on the route, but his pleas have fallen on deaf ears. Locals said that they are not opposing the construction of the road, but their problems should also be addressed.

The villagers alleged that several other crops like vegetables and paddy have also been affected due to dust pollution. They warned of agitation if the Bharatmala project officials and the district administration fail to redress the situation.

#### ACCOMMODATION WANTED

Numaligarh Refinery Limited (A Govt. of India Enterprise) is looking for a (i) 2/3 BHK flat /Independent House (ii) 2 rooms in a hotel for using as Holiday Home at Puri, Odisha on rent. Each bed room should have attached toilet with 24 hours running water. Preferred area is within heart of Puri.

Interested parties may send their "Expression of Interest" along with few photographs of the property to the following address within 10 days of this advertisement. No price bid to be submitted at this stage

Deputy General Manager (Admin) Numaligarh Refinery Limited 122A, G.S. Road, Christianbasti, Guwahati - 781005, Assam Ph.: 0361 2800160

Party is also requested to send their expression of interest at Jumani.s.nath@nrl.co.in or contact at 9435108992.

#### **Continued from P1**

#### Moon now closer...

NASA also awarded a contract modification to SpaceX to further develop its Starship human landing system to meet agency requirements for longterm human exploration of the Moon, including a second crewed landing demonstration mission during Artemis IV. and announced a call to companies to provide proposals for sustainable lunar lander development as the agency works toward a regular cadence of Moon landings beyond Artemis IV.

It has issued a draft request for proposals for Lunar Terrain Vehicle services to solicit companies' feedback and completed desert analog missions with

crew in a simulated lunar environment to test pressurized rover operations and moonwalks for future Artemis missions

Meanwhile, private Moon missions are also shaping up, slowly but steadily. Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa in December announced an eight-per-

son private mission around the Moon. carrying artists and creative professionals on a SpaceX flight.

The crew will have DJ Steve Aoki, musician Choi Seung Hyun, choreographer and performer Yemi A.D., photographer Rhiannon Adam, YouTuber Tim Dodd, photographer Karim Iliya, filmmaker Brendan Hall, and actor Dev D. Joshi, with snowboarder Kaitlyn Farrington and dancer Miyu as backup crew members.

"I hope each and every one will recog nise the responsibility that comes with leaving the Earth, travelling to the moon and back," Maezawa said in a video making the announcement.

In 2018, SpaceX CEO Elon Musk revealed that Maezawa Founder of Japan's largest online clothing retailer Zozotown, will be the first private customer to ride around the Moon on the company's future rocket, the Big Falcon Rocket (BFR).

According to The Verge, Maezawa plans to fly on the trip as early as 2023, with artists onboard, as part of his 'dearMoon' mission.

इंडियन बैंक 🧄



#### "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE

No.O-1520:Bid documents consisting of Work, Estimate Cost, Cost of tender Paper, EMD / BID security, Time of Completion, Class of Contractor and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. website i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

1.Name of the Work: Bridge works in the District of Nuapada as mentioned in DTCN. 2. Total No. of Works 01 No. 3 Estimated Cost: Rs. 23 95 lakh. 4 Period of Completion: 45 (Forty five) days. 5 Other Details

Procurement Officer	Bid Availability of ten Identification for biddir			Last date & time of seeking ten-		
	No.	From	То	der clarification	tender	
Superintending Engineer,	RWNPD-10/	02.01.2023	09.01.2023	07.01.2023 upto	10.01.2023	
Rural Works Division, Nuapada	2022-23 (Online)	at 10.00 A.M.	upto 5.00 PM	05.00 PM	at 11.00 AM	

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Nuapada OIPR-25050/11/0015/2223

## AM/NS India flags off ALS ambulance service

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Barbil, Dec 26: ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) has rolled out a 24x7 Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance service at Barbil in Keonjhar district. The communities residing near Thakurani mines will be benefited with this facility.

The new ALS ambulance is equipped with all modern life saving equipment like defibrillator, ventilator. suction machine. nebulizer. automatic BP apparatus,



head immobiliser, cervical

collar, and oxygen cylinder

to attend medical emergen-

cies of critical patients. The

ager, Thakurani Mines and other senior executives of AM/NS India.

'We are committed to provide the best healthcare facility to the community residing near the mines. By dedicating the ALS ambulance service, we have achieved another milestone in healthcare service under Project Arogya. With this, critical patients will be able to avail immediate medical

ambulance service was inaugurated by Dr Vikas assistance free of cost and precious human lives will Yadvendu, CSR head, AM/NS India in presence also be saved." Dr Vikas of Pramod Mishra, man-Yadvendu said.

ZONAL OFFICE: SAMBALPUR Indian Bank At: Shyam Arcade, Khetrajpur, Sambalpur - 768003

APPENDIX - IV [Rule-8(1) POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 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 Borrower/Mortgagor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the following Borrower/Mortgagor and the public in general that the undersigned has taker Symbolic Possession of the property described here-in-below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said Rules. The Borrower/Mortgagor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Indian Bank for an amount mentioned herein below with interest & other expenses thereon. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

ANGUL-1 BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/Mortgagor	Amount Payable as on specified date	Date of Demand / Possession Notice	Description of the Immovable Property		
Borrower/Mortgagor: Mr. Prakash Kumar Samal, S/o.: Manmohan Samal, At: Iswarpal, Thana: Rasol, Dist.: Dhenkanal, Odisha - 759021		21 12 2022	All that piece and parcel of property recorded in the name of <b>Mr. Prakash Kumar Samal</b> , at Khata No.: 872, Plot No.: 79, Area: Ac.0.930		
Dec., Mouza: Iswarpal, PS.: Rasol, Tahasil: Hindol, Dist.: Dhenkanal, Bounded by North: Self, South: Forest					
Place: Sambalpur, Date: 26.12.2022 Sd/- Authorised Officer, Indian Bank					

uction Start Date & Time : 06.01.2023 at 1030 uction End Date & Time : 06.01.2023 at 1100 hrs. (Sl. No. 1), at 1110 hrs. (Sl. No. 2), at 1120 hrs (Sl. No. 3), at 1130 hrs. (Sl. No. 4), at 1140 hrs. (S No.5), at 1150 hrs. (Sl. No. 6), at 1200 hrs. (Sl. No. 7), at 1210 hrs. (Sl. No. 8), at 1220 hrs. (Sl. No. 9) at 1230 hrs. (SI, No. 10), at 1240 hrs. (SI, No. 11) at 1250 hrs. (Sl. No. 12), at 1300 hrs. (Sl. No. 13) at 1310 hrs. (Sl. No. 14), at 1320 hrs. (Sl. No. 15) Note: Prospective bidders are advised to visit the website https://ireps.gov.in and check the upcoming e-auctions leasing tab to get all require information regarding this e-auction.

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager 848/N/22-23 Khurda Road PR-848/N/22-23











Auction End Date & Time: 05.01.2023 at 1030

No. 11), at 1220 hrs. (Sl. No. 12), at 1230 hrs. (S No. 13), at 1240 hrs. (Sl. No. 14), at 1250 hrs. (Sl. No. 15), at 1300 hrs. (Sl. No. 16), 06.01.2023 at

1415 hrs. (SI, No. 17), at 1425 hrs. (SI, No. 18), at

1415 hrs. (SI. No. 17), at 1425 hrs. (SI. No. 20), at 1435 hrs. (SI. No. 19), at 1445 hrs. (SI. No. 20), at 1455 hrs. (SI. No. 21), at 1505 hrs. (SI. No. 22)

No. SDCM/KUR/P & U

E-auction/Publication, Dt.: 22.12.2022

E-addition Silver and the second seco

(middle of Platform-1), <u>SI. No.5</u>: Jajpur Keonjha Road (on Platform-1, Howrah end), <u>SI. No.6</u>

Kendujhargarh (on Platform-1, Naranpur end), SI

No.7: Dhanmandal (Outside Platform-1, a

uttack end), SI. No.8: Balugaon (on Platform-

at Visakhapatnam end), Sl. No.9: Ichhapura (middle of Platform-1), <u>Sl. No.10:</u> Bhadrak (o Platform-1 & 2, Middle), <u>Sl. No. 11:</u> Bhubaneswa

outside Platform-6), <u>Sl. No. 12</u>, **Angul** (or Platform-1, Talcher Road end), <u>Sl. No. 13</u> Brahmapur (on Platform-1, Visakhapatnam end)

SI. No.14: Khallikot (in Circulating area), SI. No.



(For SI, No. 17 to 22)





he Odisha government re-L ceived 741 investment intents worth ₹10.50 lakh crore during the 'Make in Odisha' (MiO) conclave. Addressing the valedictory session. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said the conclave has generated investment intents of ₹10.50 lakh crore with potential for 10.50 lakh direct and indirect employments. "It's heartening to see the huge response we have Patnaik said. "We will walk the crore from tourism sector. The



"Never bet against America Warren Buffet had famously said. With Indian stock markets representing an oasis in a dessert it won't be wrong to say "Never bet against Indian stock markets." Having emerged as a safe haven amid this year's global equity rout, Indian stocks have turned safe haven for investors. A return of foreign investors bolstered the market, where the benchmark S&P BSE Sensex rose to an all-time high of 63,284, while the broader index Nifty hit a lifetime high of 18,604 in December: An unprecedented retail investing boom, strong domestic demand that's enabled one of the world's fastest growth rates and political stability are also tailwinds that have helped India decouple from other launch one more destination. emerging markets.



got, especially in the post-Covid talk. It will be a win-win situation." highest investment proposals scenario," he said. Assuring all the A total of 741 investment intents were received from Arcelor Mittal investors that his government worth ₹10,48,807 crore were re- Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) will walk the extra mile for them, ceived during the three-day con- and JSW Group.

F

## NEW ARRIVALS

5G: Ushering in a new technological era. India joined the elite list of countries that have launched the 5G servic-



ciency. It will offer a wide range of ben efits to the common people ranging from seamless coverage, high data rate, low latency, and highly reliable communications.

DIGITAL RUPEE: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the launch of India's much-awaited Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), a sort of official cryptocurrency, for retail users from December 1. The pilot will initially cover the four cities of Mumbai. New Delhi, Bangalore. and Bhubaneswar, where customers and merchants will be able to use the digital rupee, or erupee. Four banks will be involved in the controlled launch of the digital currency in these four cities: State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank, and IDFC First Bank.

AKASA AIR TAKES OFF: Akasa Air is finally in Indian skies as the first flight took off August 7. It is a brand of SNV Aviation Private Limited, is an Indian low-cost airline. It was founded by Vinay Dube and Aditya Ghosh with late investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala holding a 46% stake in the airline. The airline began commercial operation after receiving its first Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft. The CEO of Akasa Air,

Vinay Dube, stated that Akasa's goal is to have 18 aircraft by the end of 2022, and to add 12-14 aircraft per year. He also said Akasa Air's fleet size should be approximately 72 aircraft within 5 years. The airline currently has 11 aircraft flying to 10 destinations, with an order for additional 61 aircraft with plans to



NEW

PEAKS

As prices continue to

e United States, exclud

energy and food, raced

ped to a 41-year high

new four-decade high in

British inflation has

consumer inflation in

 $\overline{\mathbb{A}}$ 

rica reached a 13-vear tionary high in July ith a 7.8% annual rease, driven largely by fuel an od prices DIA: Retail inflation had en above the upper end 🖉 🍥 f RBI's 2%-6% tolerance nd since January. It hit an ght-year high of 7.8% in April JTH KOREA: South ea's consumer infl on sped up to a nearly -year high in July EECE: The annual infla-Æ rate in Greece reach 4% in this year's first arter – nearly 21 times

at it was two vears earlie ion rate 10.4% in ober; all-time high nce its reunification 199 ps 23% as prices surge fo venth month after Russian 🖊



After two pandemic-ravaged years, the world was expected to return to normalcy with full-scale resumption of economic activities. However, Russia's invasion of Ukraine triggered a series of crises from supply chain bottlenecks to spiralling inflation to a high interest rate regime which may well lead to recession in the developed world with its ripple effects felt across developing nations. The tech bubble burst, the crypto collapse, the global stock market rout, and the return of the coronavirus, all these made the outgoing year a gloomy one. **Orissa POST** recollects the events that shaped the world of business in the crises-hit year

# WAR'S DOMINO EFFECT

**COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS** 

#### he largest cost-of-living crisis of the twentyfirst century has come when people and countries have a limited capacity to cope. The war in Ukraine has

trapped the people of the world between a rock and a hard place. The rock is the severe price shocks in food, energy and fertilizer markets due to the war, given the centrality of both the Russian Federation and Ukraine in these markets. The hard place is the extremely fragile context in which this crisis arrived; a world facing the cascading crises of the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change. Double-digit inflation in many countries dented consumers' purchasing power and their confidence is also at or close to the gloomiest on record as soaring energy bills add to the spiralling cost of living. The economic impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine are rippling out across the globe in a cost of living crisis that's pushing millions more people into poverty. An additional 71 million people could be pushed into poverty, according to the United Nations Development Programme.

changes to the energy sector post-invasion: The IEA says high fuel costs account for 90% of the rise in average costs for electricity generation worldwide.

While many of Russia's former international partners have reduced or cut ties with the country. Russia has broadly kept its oil production and exports at close to pre-invasion levels by increasing exports elsewhere, including to China, India and Turkey. ENERGY POLICY CHANGES

The change in traditional energy trade routes means that affected countries have had to rally quickly to create new energy policies that not only prioritise long-term energy security, but also allow for existing energy demand to be met in the short term. ACTS OF THE ENERGY CRISIS

many countries seek to increase the cost of borrowing money to counter inflation, clean energy projects that require financing could get caught in the economic fallout. The world's energy problems did not start with Russia's war, but the

subsequent crisis created a number of seismic changes to the sector. Some changes will be temporary, some will be permanent.

Indian billionaire

**VISIONARIES VANISH** 

#### **CHETAK' FOUNDER** ent industrialist and former airman of the Bajaj group Rahul aiai passed away February 12 due to

ness at his home in Pune. Under his ewardship, flagship firm Bajaj Auto saw its turnover growing to ₹12,000 crore from just ₹7.2 crore with the firm's scooters becoming the mainstay. The company's Bajai Chetak scooter became an aspirational symbol

#### for the middle class Indian families.

**TATA SONS' EX-CHIEF** Cyrus Mistry, an Indian-born Irish usinessman and former chairman of Indian conglomerate Tata Sons, died ir an accident September 4 after his car crashed into a road divider in western India. He was 54. The crash occurred on a river bridge in Maharashtra's Palghar district near Mumbai. Mistry served as Tata Sons chairman for five years until he was removed by the



board in October 2016.

Suzlon Energy, died October 1 at age 64. The one-time billionaire suffered a cardiac arrest and died the same day, as per a stock exchange filing by the company. He founded Suzion in 1995 with his brothers by selling some family property to raise \$600.000 as seed capital. In 2006, Tanti broke into the billionaire ranks



14. He began investing in 1985 with a capital of ₹5,000, with his first major profit in 1986. At the time of his death he had an

estimated net worth of \$5.8 billion, making him the 438th richest person in the world.

#### WANCIAL BEHEMOTH and Asia's richest individual Gautam Adani has topped the list of people whose wealth saw the private-sector port and airport operator, city-gas distributor and coal miner **ENTERTAINMENT GIANT** September 22, Zee announced its plans to merge with Sony, and the deal was inked three months later. Sony will have a stake of 50.86% in the merged entity, and the founders of Zee, the Essel Group, will own a 3.99% stake. Punit Goenka will head the company as CEO and the MD. However, this **'CEMENTING' POSITION** is merely the beginning of what will be a long process: getting approvals at several Adani Group, which had no presence in the levels; Zee having to deal with an angry cement space became the second-largest nvesco, its largest shareholder cement maker in the country after complet ing the acquisition of cement players. Ambuia Cements and ACC from Swiss cement major Holcim. Holcim closed the deal by selling its entire stake in Ambuia Cements at ₹385 per share and in ACC at ₹2,300 per share.







#### **ZEE** MULTIPLEX MOGUL

This year saw the merger of multiplex giants PVR and INOX Leisure to become the largest entertainment company in the country. The combined entity will be named PVR INOX Limited with the branding of existing screens to continue as PVR and INOX respectively. The merger is expected to be completed by the end of this fiscal. According to reports, the combined entity will become India's largest film exhibition company - with 1546 screens across 341 properties in 109 cities. The combined entity would have 3,000 to 4,000 screens in five years. PVR currently runs 884 screens in 77 cities in India and Sri Lanka.



Higher energy costs led to rising prices of goods and services. As

Federal -1.5K -1K -500 0 100 200 300 400 Reserve raised the rate by 50bps to 4.25%-4.5% during its last monetary policy meeting of 2022, pushing borrowing costs to the highest level since 2007. It was a seventh consecutive rate hike, following four straight three-quarter point increases. For the fourth time in a row, to combat inflation, the Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy panel hiked the key lending rate by 35 basis points to 6.25%, December 7. Earlier RBI increased the repo rate by 50 basis points to 5.9% September 30, 2022. In the current fiscal year, the RBI has increased the repo rate four times. The central bank had also raised the reporte to 5.4% earlier August 5, 2022. Central banks in Britain, Norway, Switzerland, and the euro zone have all also raised interest rates in the outgoing year.

#### A YEAR OF SHORTAGES early 40 pe ent rise in lobal wheat prices in the ftermath of the Russia raine crisis, India, the world's second-largest wh producer, banned wheat exports in May, leading to ortages in many coun ABY FORMUL bbott. the of the US, recalled multipl products and halted produ ion in February at one of its cilities after bacteria was found at the site. This impa

JK is head ing for a pleak winter as prices cont ue to soar, particularly for meat, eggs, and dairy. Empt ielves in UK supern ear evidence of stretched

#### OTATO 🔜 ustralia's secnd-largest rocer, recently imposed lin ts on the sale of frozen pota

to chips due a nationwid

upply shortage. LM OIL ndonesia, the 🛛 🗱 🖉 world's top palm oil produce ounced a ban on its exp in Anril Indonesia counts fo more than half the world's

palm oil supply.



and resources on Twitter, much to the dismay of Tesla investors. He's now sold \$22.93 billion in Tesla the period. Tesla has now lost \$705 billion in market capitalization since Musk first disclosed he took a 9% stake in Twitter April 4, declining from \$1.2 trillion to \$495 billion.

Musk is worth \$174 billion making him the second-wealthiest person on the planet and his year-long reign as the world's richest person ended earlier this month following the latest decline in Tesla share prices. Musk previously became the first ever person worth more than \$300 billion after Tesla's market capitalization reached \$1 trillion in 2021. He is nearly \$12 billion less than

# **TECH BUBBLE BURSTS**

**WITTER: 5.200** 

**CISCO: 4,165** 

The net-

working com-

pany told the

Silicon Valley

Business

in digital assets that erased some \$2 trillion in total

Bitcoin hit a record high of \$69.000 in November 2021.

and now hovering at \$16,000. Ethereum, the second

largest token, was around \$4,800 at its highest late in

2021. The coin price remains well below \$1.300, marking

market value from the highs reached in November 2021

pany's economic picture was "dire," and he kept

The computer make

ment that it planned to re-

duce global headcount by

over the next few years.

about 4,000 to 6,000 peopl

The tech industry has enjoyed seemingly un- AMAZON: 10,000 **L** stoppable growth over the past five years, The online retail giant is in the process of laybut in 2022 it finally hit an immovable object: a slow- ing off about 10,000 corporate and tech employing worldwide economy. Stocks that led the mar- ees, though the total ket for much of the past decade have fallen on hard number of affected **amazon** times after surprisingly weak earnings from workers remains flui major tech companies. and the process will con-

Meta's share price has crashed by 66%, tinue into 2023. Amazon paused corporate hiring Amazon's by 49%, Alphabet's by 39%, Netflix November 3. by 52% and Apple's by 27% YTD.

The tech stock collapse has drawn comparisons to the industry's last bubble, which burst in the early 2000s.

Tech companies big and small have eliminated tens of thousands of jobs this year as executives cite inflation, rising interest rates and lower sales in digital advertising as all putting pressure on their financial outlooks.

The massive layoffs by the tech companies this cutting down to 2,300 people left. year alone have surpassed the levels from the Great Recession the world went through 2008- **HEWLETT-PACKARD:** 2009 that began with the Lehman Brothers collapse. **4,000 - 6,000** At least 853 tech companies worldwide have laid off about 137,492 employees to date, and the tally said in a November 22 stateis only going north amid recession fears.

*Here's a list of the lavoffs hammering* the tech sector this vear:

The social media company — which owns Facebook and nstagram — said it cut about 13% of its workforce November 9. CEO Mark Zuckerberg Journal in a statement No. 16 that it was cutting blamed the slowing economy for hurting ad sales. about 5% of its staff.



#### Tesla takes the burn for Twitter

he bought Twitter, as he continues to focus his time

Arnault, who is worth just under \$189 billion. a more than 70% decline in value since its all-time high.

Former world's richest man, Elon Musk, completed his \$44 billion takeover of Twitter October 27. After the acquisition, Musk tweeted "the bird is freed" and later said "let the good times roll". A number of top executives, including the boss, Parag Agrawal, and half the taskforce from all divisions were fired. Musk, a self-styled "free speech absolutist", has been critical of Twitter's nanagement and its moderation policies.

Elon Musk's latest multibillion-dollar unloading of Tesla shares brings his total sales in stock of the automaker he leads as CEO to over \$20 billion since

Twitter takeover

stocks. Tesla shares have tanked. declining 59% in

#### Loses richest man tag

rench luxury conglomerate LVMH's Bernard



than 60%.

leading a rou

gas exploration company.

December 1

and iailed him in connection with multiple 🌡 fraud charges.



## **STARTUPS' SLUMP**

This year, India added fewer unicorns to its list as the number of companies that gained billion dollar valuations fell by over a half from a year earlier. While 46 firms turned unicorns last year, the number of companies that attained this much-coveted status in the startup world fell to 22 in 2022. ber of funding rounds dropped by 30% from



Jan-Nov 2021 to the same period in 2022.

#### **1st ASIAN IN TOP 3**

NDTV TAKEOVER

Gautam Adani-led Adani Group's media

arm acquired 64.71% stake in New Delhi

Television Ltd (NDTV). The firm acquired

the stake in NDTV by buying a company

founders, Radhika Roy and Prannoy Roy.

NDTV's promoters who tried to resist the bid

finally resigned from the board paving way

takeover of a media entity in recent times

backed by the television network's

for the most talked about corporate

In yet another milestone for Adani Group of Industries founder Gautam Adani, he has become the world's thirdrichest person as per the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. With \$137.4 billion of vealth, he became the first time an Asian person has broken into the top three as Adani overtook France's Bernard Arnault. He first overtook Mukesh Ambani as the richest Asian in February, and then surpassed Microsoft Corporation's Bill Gates as the world's

ourth-richest person.

#### **IPO FUNDING HALVES**

Meltdown in shares of Dalal Street debutants and volatility triggered by geopolitical tensions soured the sentiments for the primary markets, with fund mobilisation through IPOs halving to nearly ₹57,000 crore in 2022 and the New Year is expected to be even guieter. Investors remained ittery on recessionary fears and rising interest rates amid soaring inflation. As many as 36 companies have floated their IPOs to raise ₹56.940 crore in 2022. The fund mobilisation in 2022 was way lower than the ₹1.2 lakh crore raised by 63 companies in 2021, which was the best IPO year in two decades.

## **'BIG BAZAR' SHUT DOWN**

It's been over a year since Amazon and Future Group have been locked in a complex legal stand-off which has stalled Future Group's \$3.4 billion sale of assets to Reliance. In 2019, Amazon and Future had become business partners when the former invested \$200 million in a unit of Future group. But in 2020, Future, which was hit hard by the pandemic, decided to sell assets to Reliance. Then, Amazon approached Singapore arbitrators and successfully stopped the sale. In a sudden move February Reliance executed a 'de facto' takeover of some 500 Future stores.



## he Indian Rupee has depreciated nearly 10 per cent this

against the US dollar for the first time in history. The currency hit a low of 83.29 against the US dollar October 20. Several analysts believe despite the crack, the domestic currency is in a better position than foreign currencies when compared to the dollar. The rupee has been depreciating for the last five years, however, 2022 was the worst among the last five — in was down around 2 per cent each, and, in 2018, it weakened

over 8.5 per cent. it declined to \$564.07 billion. The forex reserves have been in-

A week after billionaire Elon Musk bought the microblogging site, he laid off a surging US dollar. about half of Twitter's workforce November 4. Later, Musk said the com-





#### RUPEE'S FREE FALL

year so far, breaching the key sentiment level of 82 2021 rupee slid around 1.5 per cent, while in 2020 and 2019, it

FOREX KITTY DIPS: At the start of 2022, India's overall forex reserves were at \$633.61 billion but as of December 9 termittently falling for months largely because of RBI's intervention in the market to defend the depreciating rupee against

s 2021 came to a close, cryptocurrency enthusiasts were brimming with A optimism, but they were unaware of the 'crypto winter' which was going to shake the market base. Nine of the top-10 cryptocurrencies have lost more than 90% of their value. The value of the market fell below \$1 trillion for the first time in June since January 2021, reaching as low as \$926 billion. The global cryptocurrency

#### **FTX'S FALL FROM GRACE**

Cryptocurrency exchange FTX collapse shook the volatile crypto market, which lost billions in value, dropping below \$1 trillion. Investors and customers have lost billions, and not all of it will be recovered. The company's valuation plunged from \$32 billion to bankruptcy in a matter of days, dragging down founder and CEO Sam Bankman-Fried's \$16 billion net worth to near zero. Bahamian authorities arrested Bankman













# national



We will fight even for an inch. We will do whatever we can for the justice of the Marathi-speaking population in Karnataka EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

#### **TRAGIC INCIDENT**

Nearly 90 sheep and eight vultures were killed on Sunday after being hit by two trains in Uttar Pradesh's Balrampur district. The incident took place in the Pachperwa police station area, near the Saryu bridge



# uote

unprecedented and supreme sacrifice made by the children and mother of the 10th Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, will

ever inspire humanity to fight against tyranny, oppression and injustice BHAGWANT MANN PUNJAB CM

All minority groups, including the one which Siddiqui is hinting at, are safe in the country. They are safer than anywhere else in the world. I say this with all the responsibility at my command as

the Union MoS for Home NITYANAND RAI

UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME

Today's political situation shows us the true value of Nehru. Just like Tamil Nadu needs (EVR)Perivar, Anna (CN Annadurai) and

Kalaignar (M Karunanidhi) after all these years, India needs Gandhi and Nehru to establish federalism. equality, secularism, brotherhood, equality

MK STALIN TN CM

#### SHORT TAKES

#### **Rahul visits memorials** of former PMs, Gandhi

New Delhi: Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi visited the memorials of Mahatma Gandhi and several former prime ministers, including Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and paid tributes to them here Monday. Wearing a white T-shirt on a chilling December morning, with his security staff seen wearing suits and other Congress leaders wearing jackets and mufflers, Gandhi visited Veer Bhumi. Shakti Sthal and Shanti Van. the memorials of former prime ministers Raiiv Gandhi Indira Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru respectively. The Congress leader also visited Rajghat, the memorial of Mahatma Gandhi, and Vijay Ghat, the memorial of former Prime Minister Lal

# **Mock drill across states, UTs today** Top court to deliver key verdicts on COVID PREPAREDNESS

The exercise will focus on parameters such as availability of health facilities in all districts, capacity of isolation beds, oxygen-supported beds, ICU beds and ventilator-supported beds, and optimal availability of doctors, nurses, paramedics, AYUSH doctors, and other frontline workers

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 26: A mock drill will be held Tuesday across a number of health facilities in several states and Union territories to ensure their readiness to deal with any eventuality related to Covid-19, following an advisory by the Centre. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will visit Safdarjung Hospital Tuesday to take stock of the mock drill to be conducted there. At a meeting with doctors from the Indian Medical Association (IMA) Monday, the minister said. "Based on our previous experience of managing this pandemic, we are undertaking several ex-

ercises, one such being the mock drill that will happen across the country tomorrow. Such exercises would help our operational readiness, help in filling gaps if any and will consequently strengthen our public health response.

It will also focus on human resource capacity in terms of healthcare professionals trained on Covid-19 management, healthcare professionals trained in ventila-



tory management protocol for severe cases, healthcare workers trained in operation of PSA plants, etc.

And availability of Advanced and Basic Life Support (ALS/BLS) ambulances, testing equipment and reagents and that of essential drugs among others. Referring to the surge in Covid-19 trajectory in many countries around the world, the Union Health Ministry

Saturday underlined that it was necessary that in all states and UTs requisite public health measures are put in place to meet any

#### exigencies.

"Preparedness of Covid-19 health facilities is crucial to ensure that states and districts are in a state of readiness to meet increase in clinical care needs due to any spurt in cases," Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said in a letter.

Bhushan further said follow-up on any gap assessment shall be required to be undertaken by the additional chief secretary, principal secretary, secretary (health) and or MD-NHM of states who will also be required to monitor the

Shimla, Dec 26: The Himachal

#### Mask must in K'taka

Amid a rise in Covid-19 cases globally, the Karnataka government Monday mandated the use of masks at cinema theatres and educational institutions and asked sections of population including the elders to avoid crowded gatherings. Two doses of Covid vaccination is compulsory at bars, restaurants and pubs, which will operate only up to the seating capacity for the New Year, celebrations for which should end by 1 am January 1, it said. Further, masks have been made compulsory at places where large crowds gather for New Year, which the children, pregnant women and senior citizens have been advised to avoid.

exercise personally under the overall guidance of the health minister of respective states.

Meanwhile, a British national and an Indian coming from abroad were suspected to be infected with Covid-19 following a rapid antigen test at the Netaji Subhas Chandra International Airport in Kolkata, a senior official of the West Bengal Health Department said Monday.



New Delhi: Late TV and film actress Tunisha Sharma tried to commit suicide even before she actually ended her life on December 24. And her ex-boyfriend and 'Ali Baba: Dastaan-e-Kabul' Sheezan Mohammed Khan had informed her family about it. Sheezan is now in police custody, having been accused by Tunisha's mother of causing her daughter mental trauma and driving her to commit suicide.

# noteban, CAA in '23



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 26: In the penultimate phase of 2022, many friction points emerged between the Centre and the judiciary over delay in appointment of judges to the higher courts.

Amid the ongoing feud, the Supreme Court collegium recommended the names of five high court judges for the elevation to the apex court, which is pending for clearance from the Centre.

Come 2023, the Supreme Court will deliver its judgment on a clutch of petitions challenging the Centre's 2016 decision to demonetise ₹1,000 and ₹500 notes and it will also several examine contentious issues, notably: the Delhi government-Centre row over control of services, the legal tussle between Eknath Shinde and Uddhav Thackeray factions of the Shiv Sena, petitions challenging the validity of certain provisions of Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, and more than 200 petitions against Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) etc.

In 2022, the apex court saw three Chief Justices of India (CJI). The tenure of CJI NV Ramana - who be-

came the 48th CJI in April 2021 and retired in August 2022 - saw cordial relations between the Centre and judiciary as several appointments were made to the higher judiciary.

The Centre's no-holds-barred attack prompted sharp response from the judiciary, and the apex court slammed the Centre over the delay in appointment of judges to the higher judiciary.

Earlier this month, the Supreme Court said that the scheme of the Constitution requires it to be the final arbiter of law and Parliament has the right to enact a law but the power to scrutinise it lies with the court, while hearing a contempt plea against Centre for breaching the timeline for judicial appointments.

The top court will continue to examine matters related to the Delhi-Centre row on powers, the Maharashtra political crisis, petitions challenging the validity of certain provisions of Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, more than 200 petitions against Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), petitions seeking a direction to extend the benefit of reservation to Dalits converts to Christianity

or Islam etc





New Delhi, Dec 26: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

on Monday said he held a telephonic conversation with Since the Ukraine in February, Modi Prime Minister Narendra Since the Ukraine spoke to Russian Modi and that he counted **conflict began** President Vladimir Putin as well as

the UN." the Ukrainian president said in a tweet. There were no immediate details from the Indian

side. Since the Ukraine conflict began

#### **HP govt suspends** functioning of staff selection commission

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Pradesh government Monday suspended the functioning of the state Staff Selection Commission, Hamirpur, in view the instance of leakage of question paper for the post of Junior Office Assistant (IT).

Interacting with the media, Principal Advisor (Media) to Chief Minister. Naresh Chauhan said it was also apprehended that this malpractice was going on for quite sometime and prima facie, it appears that the commission has not discharged its duties and responsibilities in a transparent manner.

Chauhan said the government led by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu was committed to en-

Bahadur Shastri.

#### Woman, toddler son charred to death

Tinsukia (Assam): A 22-yearold woman and her one-anda-half-year-old son were charred to death when a fire broke out in their house in Tinsukia district of Assam, police said Monday. The incident occurred at Betiania village under Panitola police station Sunday night. "At the time of the incident, her husband was not present at the house. Besides the two victims, her father-inlaw was there," he added.

#### on India's participation in February, for the implementation of his peace formula. Modi spoke to Zelenskyy said he also wished Modi for a suc- Russian President sation with Zelenskyy cessful G20 presidency Vladimir Putin as on October 4, Modi of India. "I had a phone Vladimir Putin as said there can be "no

call with @PMOIndia well as Zelenskyy military solution" and that India is ready to Narendra Modi and a number of contribute to any wished a successful #G20 presidency. It was on this times platform that I announced

the peace formula and now I count demn the Russian invasion of Ukraine and has been maintaining on India's participation in its implementation. I also thanked for that the crisis must be resolved humanitarian aid and support in through diplomacy and dialogue.

Putin as well as sure zero tolerance against cor-Zelenskyy a number ruption and has taken this decision of times. to ensure complete transparency In a phone conver-

in functioning of the commission. He said this would also help instilling faith of the job-seeking youth in recruitment agencies. He said on the directions of the Chief Minister, the ADG SV&ACB has constituted an SIT to look into more revelations regarding alleged malpractices in past exams conducted by the commission. He said the team would be led by DIG G Sivakumar would conduct enquiries and investigations to the allegations



Artists perform during the Mussoorie Winterline Carnival 2022 in Mussoorie

PTI PHOTO

## **CLASSIFIED**

#### **AFFIDAVI1**

I Pankaj Kumar Agrawal, Resident of C/O. Laxmi Hardware, club road, Balangir do hereby declare that in my Passport bearing No.H5446990 my father name has been mentioned as Kishore Agrawala instead of actual name Kishori Lal Agrawal. Both name Kishore Agrawala and Kishori Lal Agrawal are one and same person.

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: Breathing exercises and certain techniques can help increase lung capacity and oxygen levels in the body, some of the key benefits that one gets through a workout or exercise, according to doctors and fitness experts.

According to Dr Deepak Sharma, consultant pulmonologist at Moradabad's Ujala Cygnus Brightstar Hospital, improving breathing techniques and patterns by different exercises like incentive spirometry or deep breathing exercises oxygenates the blood more effectively and improves

lung capacity. This involves using the full depths

of the diaphragm and chest volume that are fully focused on the rhythm of the breathing cycle with inhalation and exhalation in an approximate 1:2 ratio. "More importantly, it also helps

peace efforts.

India is yet to con-

slow down the heart's overall metabolic rate and activates the body's oxygen-conserving mechanism, Sharma said.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the world understood how unpleasant the feeling of breathlessness can be when the virus affected lung capacity, he said. There is an enhanced sense of

consciousness among people to remain fit and healthy, especially after the pandemic, Sharma said. However, due to busy lifestyles,



'Breathing exercises can help increase lung capacity'

very few people manage to hit the gym or gather the courage to beat the cold or laziness and go outdoors for running, he said.

Lung capacity shows how much air one's lungs can hold. The experts have also noted that improved breathing can enhance physical endurance by boosting respiratory health

Improved breathing can perform some miracles here by boosting lung health and capacity, which is crucial for the holistic health

and wellbeing of an individual. Today, the role of smart respiratory training devices is also being explored to enhance lung capacity within a short time, the experts said.

Commenting on the evolution and role of such devices, Pankaj Balwani, founder and CEO of Xplore Lifestyle said, "Today, advanced technology is aiding improved breathing, and this can help people in taking some time out of their busy schedule to remain fit. We have come up with Airofit ACTIVE, a product that has been customized particularly for sporting performance as well as general wellbeing.'

Airofit ACTIVE is a lighter version of Airofit PRO, a smart respiratory training device. Training

with this device for four minutes a day has the same effect as a 53minute VO2 max workout twice a week would have on endurance athletes, Balwani said.

Dr Arunesh Kumar, head of department-pulmonology at Gurugram's Paras Hospitals, said anyone with a healthy respiratory system has the capacity to oxygenate the blood and eradicate carbon dioxide and carry out regular breathing procedures.

Physical exercises are a onetime solution for multiple issues in the body and to regulate breathing there is no other way than to get out early in the morning and practise breathing exercises like pranayam, belly breathing and more. he said.

#### CON SSIFIED AD OUR ISEMENTS BOOKING

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.



# national



Until the apex court takes decision in the matter, the areas of Belagavi (Belgaum), Karwar, Nippani should be declared as a UT. This point must be included in the resolution that is passed in the legislature

#### UDDHAV THACKERAY | FORMER MAHA CM

#### TN REMEMBERS TSUNAMI VICTIMS

Mourners lit candles and silent processions were taken out Monday in remembrance of the victims of the 2004 tsunami that caused massive destruction in the coastal parts of Tamil Nadu 18 years ago. Fishermen kept off the sea as a mark of respect to the departed





# **Cold wave sweeps North India**

#### government has never announced the release of Rs 15 crore to the municipal bodies and Panchayati Raj institutions but if any

institutions needed financially help, the state government provided all possible help to them MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR HARYANA CM

The guidelines which will be formulated to manage the evolving Covid situation in the state won't impact day-to-today life and business of the people

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI K'TAKA CHIFF MINISTER

A decision has to be taken as per the situation. When the situation improves. they (KP employees) should come back. But

currently, there is fear in the minds of these employees. For the time being, they should be transferred to Jammu so that their lives can be saved. Why should they be killed

GHULAM NABI AZAD FORMER J&K CM

#### SHORT TAKES

#### Major terror plan averted

Udhampur: Police Monday averted a major terror plan after recovering an improvised explosive device (IED) in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district, officials said. IED-like material weighing around 15 kilogram and stored in a cylindrical object and 300-400 grams of RDX, seven 7.62mm cartridges, and five detonators were recovered in the Basantgarh area of the district, they said.

#### Four killed in car accident

Thrissur (Kerala): Four persons died in a road accident at Eravu area of Thrissur district in Kerala Monday when the car they were travelling in collided with a private bus. The incident occurred at 12.45 pm when the car collided

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: Dense to very dense fog swept over parts of the country's north and northwest on Monday with the Met department predicting the conditions to persist over the next few days.

A severe cold wave gripped the region with temperatures plummeting in several towns and cities. In Delhi, dense fog lowered visibility to 50 metres in some areas, affecting road and rail traffic. Ten trains were reported running late by 1.45 to 3.30 hours, a Railway

spokesperson said. The mercury dropped to 3 degrees Celsius in the Ridge area, 4.9 degrees below normal, making it the coldest place in the national capital. The Ridge and the Ayanagar weather stations recorded a min-

imum temperature of 4 degrees Celsius and 4.1 degrees Celsius, respectively The Safdarjung observatory,

Delhi's primary weather station, logged a minimum temperature of 5 degrees Celsius - three notches below normal. Biting cold conditions and dense

fog were reported in several parts of Punjab and Harvana, with Narnaul being the coldest in the region at 2.4 degrees Celsius. In Harvana, Hisar recorded a piercing cold as the minimum tem-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: Twenty cars

were gutted at a multi-level park-

ing facility in west Delhi's Subhash

Nagar Monday morning following

a blaze that started allegedly after

a 23-year-old man set afire one of

the vehicles to take revenge on its



People sit around a bonfire to warm themselves on a cold winter day in New Delhi

perature plunged to 2.5 Dense degrees Celsius. to very dense fog Ambala recorded a low of 7.7 degrees was witnessed in some Celsius, Karnal 6.8 parts of the National degrees Celsius, Rohtak 6.6 de-Capital Region, Harvana. grees Celsius, Punjab, west Uttar Bhiwani 5.5 degrees Celsius and **Pradesh and north** Širsa 5.2 degrees Rajasthan Celsius.

Chandigarh, the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana, recorded a minimum temperature of 7.4 degrees Celsius. Punjab Amritsar recorded a low of 6.5 degrees Celsius.

> Ludhiana 6 degrees Celsius, Pathankot 8.8 degrees Celsius, Bathinda 3.6 degrees Celsius,

Faridkot 6 degrees Celsius and Gurdaspur 4.5 degrees Celsius.

Intense cold conditions and fog affected normal life in parts of Rajasthan, with sub-zero temperatures being recorded in Sikar's Fatehpur: During the last 24 hours, cold wave to severe cold wave conditions were observed at isolated places in northern parts of the state, the weather office said. Very dense fog also occurred at isolated areas

Bathinda in Punjab and Bikaner in Rajasthan reported zero visibility, while it dropped to 50 metres and below at Ambala, Hisar, Amritsar, Patiala, Ganganagar, Churu and Bareilly.

Foggy conditions will persist in these areas over the next few days, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

According to the IMD, 'very dense' fog is when visibility is between 0 and 50 metres, 51 and 200 metres is 'dense'. 201 and 500 'moderate', and 501 and 1,000 'shallow'.

In the plains, the IMD declares a cold wave if the minimum temperature dips to 4 degrees Celsius. A cold wave is also declared when the minimum temperature is 10 degrees Celsius or below and is 4.5 notches below normal.

A 'severe' cold wave is when the minimum temperature dips to two degrees Celsius or the departure from normal is more than 6.4 degrees Celsius.

## **UPROAR IN MAHA ASSEMBLY** Opposition seeks Sattar's resignation



*In what is alleged as* another land scam, the Maharashtra Opposition Monday vociferously

demanded the resignation of Agriculture Minister Abdul Sattar - recently in the limelight for the slur on NCP MP Supriya Sule

#### AGENCIES

Nagpur, Dec 26: Both the Houses of Maharashtra legislature were adjourned for the day Monday after the opposition stalled the proceedings demanding Agriculture Minister Abdul Sattar's resignation over a land 'regularisation' order passed by him when he was a minister in the previous MVA government.

The Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court last week issued a notice to Sattar who had ordered 'regularisation' of the possession of land reserved for public 'gairan' (grazing) in favour of a private person in the face of a civil court order. In the Council. Nationalist Congress Party's Eknath Khadse alleged officials of the Agriculture department were asked to collect Rs 15 crore. He showed "coupons" of various amounts and claimed officials were given "targets" to sell these coupons to agriculture stores across the state.

Khadse demanded an inquiry alleging the "illegal collection". The issue was also raised outside

the Houses with members of NCP, Congress, and Shiv Sena (UBT) staging a protest demanding Sattar's removal. In the Assembly, Opposition MLAs trooped into the Well, raised slogans, disrupted proceedings and sought Sattar's resignation alleging irregularities in ordering the 'regularisation' of the possession of the said land. Sattar passed the order in June 2022 when he was the Minister of State for Revenue in the previous Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Ajit Pawar alleged there were irregularities worth Rs 150 crore and Sattar's land regularisation order was in clear violation of a court order. "The minister misused the post. He should immediately resign. If he doesn't resign, then he should be sacked," Pawar said.

The House was adjourned twice over the issue after an uproar from the opposition members. Finally, at around 2 pm, the House was adjourned for the day. In the Legislative Council, Leader of Opposition Ambadas Danve of the Shiv Sena (UBT) faction raised the land allotment by Sattar.

"The 37-acre 'gairan' land was regularised and allotted to a person by minister Sattar on June 17, 2022, overruling the orders of the district court and the district collector," Danve said. "Sattar illegally allotted plots, sand contracts, APMCs at Ratnagiri, Aurangabad, and Nagpur overruling orders of the district court. He should be immediately sacked for the illegal al-\_ lotment," Danve said.

#### Pak drone recovered near border in Punjab

Border Security Force (BSF) has

along the international border in

Puniab, an official spokesperson

around 7:40 pm Sunday in an area

falling under the territorial limits

of Rajatal village in Amritsar, they

border fence and a search is on to

consignment in the area, the BSF

spokesperson said. It was not

clear if the China-made drone

was downed by the firing or if it

discharge, officials said. At least

three such Pakistani drones were

shot down by the border force

flew into India from Pakistan

said Monday. The unmanned

and fired upon by the troops

said. The quadcopter was "recovered" from a field near the

check if it dropped any

crashed due to a battery

last week in Puniab.

РТІ РНОТО

aerial vehicle was intercepted

New Delhi/Chandigarh: The

recovered a drone that

#### Pak boat's infiltration bid fails 20 CARS GUTTED

some arms, ammunition, and approx 40 kg of narcotics, valued at about Rs 300 crore,

Okha (Gujarat), Dec 26: The Indian Coast Guard and the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS), in a joint operation early Monday, apprehended a Pakistani boat with 10 crew members from Indian waters and found 40 kg narcotics on board it, an official statement said. "During intervening night of

December 25/26, on a specific intelligence input, ICG strategically

owner, police said. Fire officials said a call was received about the fire in the basement of the four-level MCD parking facility around 4 am and seven fire tenders were rushed to the spot. The blaze was brought under control by 6:10 am, a senior fire official said. adding that no casualties were reported. With the help of CCTV footage, the culprit identified as Yash Arora, a resident of Subhash Nagar, was arrested. "During interrogation, he told the police that he had personal enmity with the owner of an Ertiga car and to take revenge on him, Arora burnt the car which was parked at the MCD parking facility," a police officer said, adding further investigation is underway. A case was registered under sections 436 (Mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house, etc) and 427 (Mischief causing damage to the amount of fifty rupees) of the Indian Penal Code and that of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property in connection with the incident, the police official said.

After search of the boat, were found concealed

#### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



deployed its Fast Patrol class ship ICGS Arinjay for patrolling in area close to notional International Maritime Border Line (IMBL). During early hours of Monday, Pakistani fishing boat Al Soheli was observed moving suspiciously in Indian waters. On being challenged by the ICG ship, the Pakistani boat

did not stop even on firing of warning shots. ICG ship in pitch darkness manoeuvred and stopped the boat," a Coast Guard statement said.

It said that after an extensive search of the boat, some arms, ammunition, and approx 40 kg of narcotics, valued at about Rs 300 crore,

brought to Okha for further investigation.

This is the seventh joint operation by the Indian Coast Guard and ATS, Gujarat in last 18 months and first wherein arms and ammunitions were being infiltrated, along with the drugs

started evasive manoeuvring and

were found concealed.

The boat, along with its crew, has been apprehended and is being

head-on with the bus coming from the opposite side.

#### 40 fall sick after eating leftover food

Korba: Forty people fell sick after eating leftover food which was prepared for a post-death ritual at a village in Chhattisgarh's Suraipur district, officials said Monday. The victims, who suffered from food poisoning-like symptoms, consumed the food Sunday morning in Vishunpur village under Ramanuinagar development block, Surajpur Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO) Dr RS Singh said.

#### **BRS** leader found dead

Hyderabad: A leader of Telangana's ruling party Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) was found dead under suspicious circumstances in Siddipet district Monday. Mallesham, a member of Zilla Parishad Territorial Committee (ZPTC) from Cheriyal, had gone for morning walk. He was later found injured near Gurijakunta village. Villagers rushed him to a nearby hospital and was later shifted to Hyderabad but he succumbed on the way.

#### Temple sealed

Chennai: Revenue officials sealed the Sakthi Mariamman Temple at Virudasampatti in Tamil Nadu's Salem district after caste Hindus prevented the entry of Dalits into the temple. Police said that the temple, under the control of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment (HR&CE) Department, was recently renovated and consecration was conducted by the caste Hindus.



Labourers wrapped in woolens walk down the Kartavya Path during a cold and foggy morning in New Delhi

# **FALKING LIONS, CHASING CHEETAI**

hat happened to the Asiatic lions for whom a second home at Kuno Palpur was in the making for over two decades? How did a second home for the original lions transform into a cradle for 'alien' cheetahs?

As the country's media went ecstatic trumping up the cheetah chapter, lost in the hype and hoopla was the fact that the Prime Minister's own state, under his own 13 year old rule as Chief Minister kept dragging it's feet to give its neighbour Madhya Pradesh ruled by their very own party, the promised lions.

Does this imply that the second home for the lions stands effectively scuttled despite roof-top warnings that a virus had wiped out 30% of the lion population in Serengeti forest of East Africa in the early nineties?. Is it that parochial considerations piloted by the powers- that- be, have taken precedence over national concerns even international wildlife imperatives? Gujarat's own Sasan Gir. the lone abode of the Asiatic lion in the world has also had its

share of the virus scare.

Twenty four asiatic lions had died in as many days ending October 15, 2018, prompting a massive preventive operation to ensure that the infection does not spread.

The Gujarat government attributed the deaths to infighting but was subsequently forced to admit that it was caused by canine distemper and babesiosis infection.

The fact is that Gujarat has been dragging its feet in handing over a handful of lions to neighbouring Madhya Pradesh. Warnings by lion conservationists have been to no avail leading to devastating deaths of these prized lions in the only habitat for them in the world.

Now for the official records, Gujarat's Forest Minister, Ganpat Vasava, admitted in the State Assembly March 3, 2018, that 184 lions of the total of 523 in Gir forest had died between 2016 and 2017.

The state forest department carries out a Lion Census every five years. The 2005 survey had counted 359 lions and this grew to 411 in 2010. The 2015 census found 523 lions and the 2020 census has put it at 674 terming it a 28 per cent rise in population.



Meanwhile an international study has made the alarming finding of how less the genetic diversity is among the Asiatic lions. The Supreme Court in its April 15,2013 ,order directed the Union ministry of environment and forests to take urgent steps for reintroduction and carry out its order

in 'letter and spirit' within six months. The International Union for Conservation of Nature also advised for a second home for the species. India's National Wildlife Action Plan 2017-31, the official document that guides conservation of wildlife too advised 'suitable, alternative homes for single, isolated population of species such as Asiatic lion"

Gujarat government, then filed a review petition against the apex court order which was dismissed in October 2013. In February 2014, Gujarat then filed a curative petition in the Supreme Court which was dismissed in August 2014. It mentioned the same grounds as in the previous petitions.

The key points it raised was the threat of poaching and the gun culture prevalent in the region besides the issue of prey base.

Now when the cheetah is being introduced into the very same sanctuary have all these factors disappeared?

With all judicial options exhausted the state government then took the plea of completing a variety of studies before

#### initiating translocation of the lions. Things continued to move at a snail's pace. With virtually no movement. Bhopal based environmentalist Ajay Dubey filed a contempt plea in the supreme court against the Centre and Gujarat for nonimplementation of its 2013 order.

Dubey had highlighted willful noncompliance of the apex court order and raising of technical objections. Gujarat had, in a letter to the technical committee even highlighted the presence of tigers in Kuno as an obstacle.

The contempt plea was discharged in March 2018. Tigers were an obstacle in the re-location of lions but don't seem to be so in the case of cheetahs!

The entire litigation process by the Gujarat government right up to the filing of the curative petition in the Supreme Court took place during Narendra Modi's tenure as chief minister. Now with Modi as Prime Minister there is a veil of silence. The official answer is that preparatory studies are underway.



international



Good governance can be ensured if the Inter-**Services Intelligence is** used against high-level corruption, money laundering, occupation groups and smuggling IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PAKISTAN PM

#### **REMEMBERING THE DEVASTATION**

Sri Lanka Monday observed a two-minute silence to remember the victims of the devastating 2004 tsunami. Traffic movement came to a standstill while employees at public and private institutions stood in silence to commemorate the victims

**FRESH TENSION** 

**SK scrambles jets as NK sends drones** 



#### THIRD TIME PM

#### The coalition agreements do not permit discrimination against LGBTs or to harm their rights to receive services as any other citizen in Israel

uote

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU ISRAEL'S PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE

With regard to the Ukraine crisis, we have consistently upheld the fundamental principles of objectivity and

impartiality, without favouring one side or the other, or adding fuel to the fire, still less seeking selfish gains from the situation

WANG YI CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER

Moscow would pursue its war in Ukraine until the disgusting, almost fascist regime in Kyiv is removed and the country is totally demilitarized

DMITRY MEDVEDEV DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF RUSSIA'S SECURITY COUNCIL

#### SHORT TAKES

#### 17 dead, many hurt

Tokyo: Heavy snow in large swaths of Japan has killed 17 and injured more than 90 people and left hundreds of homes without power, disaster management officials said Monday. Powerful winter fronts have dumped heavy snow in northern regions since last week, stranding hundreds of vehicles on highways, delaying delivery services and causing 11 deaths by Saturday.

#### Gotabaya, family leave for Dubai

Madrid: Rescuers Sunday recovered the victims from a bus that ran off a bridge and plunged into a river on Christmas Eve, killing six passengers and injuring the driver and another passenger, Spanish authorities said. The blue roof of the half-sunk vehicle could be seen in the Lérez river about 30 metres (100 feet) below the bridge.

# Prachanda takes oath

Nepal's newly appointed Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, interacts with President Bidhya Devi Bhandari, after he was sworn in during a ceremony at the President House in Kathmandu, Nepal

Warmest

of Nepal. The unique

with you to further

NARENDRA MODI INDIA PM

congratulations

elected as the Prime Minister

relationship between India

and Nepal is based on deep

cultural connect and warm

people-to-people ties. I look

forward to working together

lower house within 30 days. If he

fails to win the confidence of the

House, then a new process for gov-

ernment formation will begin.

viously over territorial issues.

his advantage.

oath ceremony.

disputes.

strengthen this friendship

@cmprachanda on being

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Dec 26: Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" was Monday sworn-in as the Prime Minister of Nepal for a third time, a day after the former guerrilla leader dramatically walked out of the prepoll alliance led by the Nepali Congress and joined hands with opposition leader K P Sharma Oli.

The 68-year-old CPN-Maoist Centre chairman was appointed as the country's new Prime Minister Sunday after he submitted a letter to President Bidya Devi Bhandari showing the support of 169 members in the 275-member House of Representatives.

Prachanda took the oath of office and secrecy from President Bhandari at an official ceremony at Shital Niwas Monday. President Bhandari also administered the oath to other cabinet members of the new coalition government. The new cabinet has three deputy prime ministers - Bishnu Paudel from Oli's CPN-UML, Narayan Kaji Shrestha from CPN-Maoist Centre and Rabi Lamichhane from Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP).

Paudel has been assigned Finance ministry while Shrestha got Physical Infrastructure and Transport and Lamichhane home ministry. Jwala Kumari Sah, Damodar Bhandari and Rajendra Kumar Rai - all three from Oli's CPN-UML - have been made ministers. Janamat Party's Abdul Khan was also appointed as a minister.

Despite getting appointed prime minister with an overwhelming majority. Prachanda will now have to win a vote of trust from the

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

mother nature.

New York, Dec 26: US emergency

crews counted the grim costs of

a colossal winter storm that

brought Christmas chaos to mil-

lions, especially in hard-hit west-

ern New York, where the death toll

reached 25 Monday in what au-

thorities described as a "war with

Blizzard conditions continue

to prevail in parts of the US

Northeast, the stubborn rem-

nants of a massive sprawl of ex-

#### itary fired warning shots, scrambled fighter jets and flew surveillance assets across the heavily fortified border with North Korea Monday, after North Korean drones violated its airspace for the first time in five years, officials said.

South Korea's military detected five drones from North Korea crossing the border, and one travelled as far as the northern part of the South Korean capital region, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

Seoul, Dec 26: South Korea's mil-

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The military responded by firing warning shots and launching fighter jets and attack helicopters to shoot down the North Korean drones. The attack helicopters fired a combined 100 rounds but it wasn't immediately known if the North Korean drones were shot down. There were no immediate reports of civilian damage on the ground in South Korea, according to the Defence Ministry.

One of the aircraft, a KA-1 light attack plane, crashed during takeoff but its two pilots both ejected safely, defense officials said. They said they also requested civilian airports in and near Seoul to halt takeoffs temporarily. South Korea also sent surveil-

Korea's military detected five drones South Korea also sent Surveillance assets t's the first from North Korea crossing time for North the border, and one travelled Korean drones near and across the as far as the northern part o to enter South border to photograph the South Korean capital Korean airspace key military facilities in region, South Korea's since 2017, when a North Korea as oint Chiefs of Staff suspected North corresponding measures against the North Korean Korean drone was drone flights, the Joint Chiefs said found crashed in South Korea

lance assets near and across the border to photograph key military facilities in North Korea as corresponding measures against the North Korean drone flights, the Joint Chiefs said. It didn't elaborate. but some observers say that South Korea likely flew unmanned drones inside North Korean territory.



Asylum-seeking migrants stand covered with blankets during a day of high winds and low temperatures at a makeshift encampment near the border between the US and Mexico, after the US Supreme Court allowed Title 42 to remain in place temporarily, in Matamoros, Mexico REUTERS

sis. "In addition to the 13 con-

firmed deaths yesterday, the Erie

County Department of Health

#### President Yoon Suk Yeol to get tough on North Korean provocations. North Korea could respond with more fiery rhetoric or weapons tests or other provocation, some observers say.

On Friday, South Korea detected two short-range ballistic missile launches by North Korea, the latest in the country's torrid run of weapons tests this year. Friday's launches were seen as a protest of the South Korean-U.S. Joint air drills that North Korea views as an invasion rehearsal.

It's the first time for North Korean drones to enter South Korean airspace since 2017, when a suspected North Korean drone was found crashed in South Korea. South Korean military officials said at the time that the drone with a Sony-made camera photographed a U.S. Missile defense system in South Korea.

North Korea has previously touted its drone program, and South Korean officials said the North has about 300 drones. In 2014, several suspected North Korean drones equipped with Japanese-made cameras were found south of the border. Experts said they were low-tech but could be considered a potential security threat.

#### Russia shoots down **Ukrainian drone**

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, Dec 26: The Russian military reported Monday that it shot down a Ukrainian drone approaching an airbase deep inside Russia, the second time the airbase has been targeted this month, raising questions about the effectiveness of Russia's air defenses if drones can fly that far into the country.

Russia's Defense Ministry said the incident took place in the early hours of Monday, and three servicemen were killed by debris at the Engels airbase that houses the Tu-95 and Tu-160 nuclear-capable strategic bombers that have been involved in launching strikes on Ukraine.

Engels is located in Russia's Saratov region on the Volga river, more than 600 kilometers (more

and resolutely respond to this kind

"Our military will thoroughly

#### Woes from deadly storm continue EXTREME COLD, **TRAVEL CHAOS**

#### **US embassy in Pak** sounds red alert

Islamabad: The US embassy in Pakistan has warned about a possible terrorist attack against American citizens at the Marriott Hotel here in the country's capital and prohibited American staff from visiting the five-star facility, an official statement said. The statement was issued by the embassy Sunday, two days after a suicide bombing in Islamabad killed a policeman.

#### UK not to publish Covid-19 data

London: The UK health authorities said Monday that they will stop publishing their regular COVID-19 infections modelling data in the new year because it is seen as "no longer necessary" as the country moves to a phase of living with the virus with the help of vaccines and medicines. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said that it will continue to monitor COVID like other common viral illnesses such as seasonal flu

#### 6 fighters killed in IS attack

Qamishli (Syria): An attack by Islamic State militants in the city of Raqqa Monday killed six members of the Kurdishled Syrian Democratic Forces, which has played a prominent role in the fight against the group, SDF officials said. SDF commander Mazloum Abdi said that an IS cell had targeted security and military buildings in the city, killing six fighters and wounding an unspecified number of others.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

#### Beijing, Dec 26: Chinese authorities are going door to door and paying people older than 60 to get vaccinated against COVID-19. But even as cases surge, 64-year-old Li Liansheng said his friends are alarmed by stories of fevers, blood clots and other side effects.

'When people hear about such incidents, they may not be willing to take the vaccines," said Li, who had been vaccinated before he caught COVID-19. A few days after his 10-day bout with the virus, Li is nursing a sore throat and cough.

at least 47 deaths nationwide. The extreme weather forced the cancellation of more than 15,000 flights in recent days including more than 1,700 on Monday, according to tracking site Flightaware.com. Buffalo -a US city that is no stranger to foul winter weather -- has been buried under staggering amounts of snow, with the National Weather Service forecasting up to 14 inches (0.35 meters) Monday in addition to the several feet that have already left the city

ing Kalapani and Susta border

marooned, with a virtual coltreme weather including severe lapse of emergency services. cold that gripped the country over several days, causing widespread The blizzard has stubbornly power outages, travel delays and refused to release its grip on west-



ern New York's Erie County, where Buffalo is located and which has become the epicenter of the cri-

medical examiner's office has confirmed an additional 12 deaths, bringing the total for the blizzard to 25 deaths county-wide," Erie County executive Mark Poloncarz said in a press briefing.

of North Korean provocation,"

Maj. Gen. Lee Seung-o, director of

operations at the South Korean

Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters.

South Korea's public confirmation

of any reconnaissance activities in-

side North Korea is highly unusual

and likely reflects a resolve by the

conservative government led by

The ferocious weather makes this "the worst storm probably in our lifetime, and the history of the city," Poloncarz said, noting the death toll in Erie will likely surpass that of Buffalo's infamous blizzard of 1977, when nearly 30 people died. With more snow in the forecast and most of Buffalo "impassable," he warned residents to bunker down and stay in place. "This is not the end yet, we are not there," he said.

than 370 miles) east of the border with Ukraine. No damage was inflicted on Russian aircraft, the ministry said.

Ukrainian Air Force spokesperson Yurii Ihnat, speaking to Ukrainian television on Monday did not directly acknowledge his country's involvement in Monday's incident, but said: "These are the consequences of Russian aggression." He added: "If the Russians thought that the war would not affect them in the deep rear, they were deeply mistaken.'



#### **VIRUS PANIC**

# China races to vaccinate elderly, but many are reluctant

China has joined other countries in treating cases instead of trying to stamp out virus transmission by dropping or easing rules on testing, quarantines and movement as it tries to reverse an economic slump

> He said it was like a "normal cold" with a mild fever.

China has joined other countries in treating cases instead of trving to stamp out virus transmission by dropping or easing rules on testing, quarantines and movement as it tries to reverse an economic slump. But the shift has flooded hospitals with feverish, wheezing

> patients. The National Health Commission announced a campaign Nov. 29 to raise the vaccination rate among older Chinese, which health experts say is crucial to avoiding a health care crisis. It's also the



biggest hurdle before the ruling Communist Party can lift the last of the world's most stringent antivirus restrictions.

China kept case numbers low for two years with a "zero-COVID" strategy that isolated cities and confined millions of people to their homes. Now, as it backs off that approach, it is facing the widespread outbreaks that other countries have already gone through.

The health commission has recorded only six COVID-19 fatal-

ities this month, bringing the country's official toll to 5,241. That is despite multiple reports by families of relatives dying. China only counts deaths from pneumonia or respiratory failure in its official COVID-19 toll, a health official said last week. That unusually narrow definition excludes many deaths other countries would attribute to COVID-19

Experts have forecast 1 to 2 million deaths in China through the end of 2023. Li, who was exercising at the leafy grounds of central Beijing's Temple of Heaven, said he is considering getting a second booster due to the publicity campaign: "As long as we know the vaccine won't cause big side effects, we should take it.'

Neighborhood committees that form the lowest level of government have been ordered to find

everyone 65 and older and keep track of their health. They are doing what state media call the "ideological work" of lobbying residents to persuade elderly relatives to get vaccinated.

In Beijing, the Chinese capital, the Liulidun neighborhood is promising people over 60 up to 500 yuan (\$70) to get a two-dose vaccination course and one booster. The National Health Commission announced Dec. 23 the number of people being vaccinated daily had more than doubled to 3.5 million nationwide. But that still is a small fraction of the tens of millions of shots that were being administered every day in early 2021. Older people are put off by potential side effects of Chinese-made vaccines, for which the government hasn't an-nounced results of testing on people in their 60s and older.



# business



By the end of 2023, 75-80 per cent of the new smartphone launches will be 5G-enabled PANKAJ MOHINDROO | CHAIRMAN, ICEA

#### **ELECTRIC VERSION OF LUNA SOON**

The Kinetic Group will be launching the electric version of its once popular moped Luna, according to a regulatory filing by Kinetic Engineering. The E-Luna will be launched shortly by sister company Kinetic Green Energy & Power Solutions, the company said





It should be very clear that unfunded pension schemes are ultimately attacks on future generations. Therefore, one

should be very, very careful to reverse pension reforms that have been done with great difficulty over the last couple of decades

SANJEEV SANYAL EAC-PM MEMBER

Offering more flexibility and control over employees' work-life is worth considering as they have endured immense pressure during the pandemic and have proved to be important assets through their continuous

performance RAHUL GOYAL MD (SOUTH FAST ASIA & INDIA), ADP

We are thrilled to have Apis Partners ioin us in our journey and with their support, we look forward to becoming India's leading online credit platform with innovative and holistic financial solutions

PUNEET AGARWAL CEO, MONEY VIEW

#### SHORT TAKES

#### **Financial frauds**

New Delhi: The CBI has registered 102 cases in the last four years, between 2019 and 2022 (up to November 30. 2022), against 135 private companies and individuals for trapping people on the pretext of doubling or increasing their money. Among all the states, the maximum number of 88 cases have been registered in West Bengal alone, according to Finance Ministry sources. Sources also said that enforcement action against 44 private companies across the country for defrauding aullible investors on the pretext of doubling or increasing their money, has been reported by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. Apart from this, the number of complaints examined by markets regulator SEBI during

#### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 26: Jobs posted by small and midsize businesses (SMBs) clocked a 60 per cent (year-on-year) surge, with emerging small businesses from tier 1 and 2 cities posting more than 2.1 million jobs in 2022 alone, a new report showed Monday.

According to a report by a professional networking and jobs platform, Apna, these emerging small businesses have been from across tier 1 and 2 cities like Delhi-NCR, Mumbai and Bangalore and also

Bhubaneswar is among the tier 2 cities which witnessed maximum job applications

from Pune, Ahmedabad and Jaipur. The tier 2 cities that saw the maximum job applications were Bhopal, Indore, Bhubaneswar, Ranchi and Kanpur, these cities had 40 per cent of the total jobs posted by SMBs

throughout the year. "The emergence of tier-II cities becoming epicentres for opportunities has also been phenomenal. We believe that the evolving ecosystem of the rising workforce led by SMBs and MSMEs will become an integral contributor to the growth of the Indian economy," Manas Singh, Chief Business Officer, apna.co, said.

Moreover, the company said that this year more than 12 million professionals registered on the platform, leading to a 67 per cent (yearon-year) user growth in 2022.

The report says that despite markets opening up, professionals are still preferring work-from-home job opportunities for better flexibility and work-life balance.

The report also mentioned that with organisations embracing the new normalcy post covid, professionals continue to consider flexibility, work-life balance and upskilling as the key focus areas, even more so at present.



# SMBs emerge as top job creators Funds through equity, debt routes drop 20%

driven by global macro

a rally in global markets in

which would aid investor

sentiment and the Indian

VISHAL CHANDIRAMANI | MANAGING

PARTNER PRODUCTS AND COO,

markets as well

TRUSTPLUTUS WEALTH

and R&D purposes.

the second half of next year,

This has increased the cost of bor-

rowing and pushed up yields, re-

sulting in one of the worst years for

global bond markets in decades.

panies for debt payment, to fund cap-

ital expenditure for new projects,

support inorganic growth like ac-

quisitions and also for marketing

through debt in 2022, ₹6.84 lakh

crore came from private placement

and ₹7,921 crore via public issuance.

base of the interest rate cycle ini-

tially made debt routes cheaper

for companies raising funds, said

Vinod Nair, Head of Research,

A paucity of liquidity and low

Of the total ₹6.92 lakh crore raised

Fresh capital was raised by com-

developments. If the

The year 2021 was extraordinary for fundraising from the equity and debt routes, while 2022 has seen a slowdown in capital raising owing to elevated volatility provoked by unprecedented inflation globally and the Russia-Ukraine war

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: Fund mobilisation by companies through equity and debt routes has dropped 20 per cent in 2022 to nearly ₹11 lakh crore, as exuberance dwindled this year due to expensive credit avenues and volatile markets. The first half of 2023 could continue to remain challenging.

In the year passing by, mobilisation from debt markets has inched up, while fresh capital mop-up through equity instruments has sharply fallen as volatile stock markets triggered by geopolitical tensions resulted in IPO fundraising halving in 2022. Debt market mobilisation continued to contribute

a lion's share to the overall fundraising activity this year. Out of the cumulative ₹11 lakh crore garnered till mid-December

this year, funds totalling ₹6.92 lakh crore were mopped up from the debt market, ₹1.62 crore came from the equity market and ₹2.52 lakh crore via the overseas route, data compiled by analytics major Prime Database showed.

lakh crore, including ₹6.8 lakh crore through debt and ₹2.85 lakh crore through equity, which constituted a record ₹1.2 lakh crore from initial public offerings (IPOs). These figures suggest that the climate in 2021 was highly attractive for fundraising activities and the 2022 environment

Out of the cumulative ₹11 lakh crore garnered till mid-December this year, funds totalling ₹6.92 lakh crore were mopped up from the debt market, ₹1.62 crore came from the equity market and ₹2.52 lakh crore via the overseas route

undraising through initial share sales halved from ₹1.2 lakh crore in 2021, which was the best IPO year in two decades



The first half of 2023 In the equity market, funds could continue to be mostly came via preferential issue challenging, largely of equity shares, which is one of the fastest mechanisms for companies to rake in funds slowdown/recession in the US is mild, then we could see

However, fundraising through other equity avenues such as Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP), rights issue and IPO saw a drastic decline.

Going into 2023, Nikhil Kamath, co-founder of Zerodha, said debt is looking extremely enticing and it will grow significantly -- corporate and government debt will have higher coupons, giving higher yields.

One can get an FD rate of as high as 7.5 per cent and stock markets have traditionally returned around 8 per cent a year (with risk). If risk-free investment -- debt -- can generate a yield close to that, the arbitrage between the two is get ting smaller, he added.

On the impact of the new Covid variant on fundraising, Upside AI's Agarrwal said, the markets now know how to react to variants. This looks like a "known" risk which is probably getting factored in.

However, the Chinese government has been very opaque in its policy response so the lack of transparency may add a layer of risk if it causes further supply chain disruptions, she added

# Sensex, Nifty jump more than 1% after four days of decline

Sensex lost 1,960 points or 3.29% while Nifty tanked 613 points or 3.99% in the four-day sell off to Friday



#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 26: Benchmark BSE Sensex and Nifty rallied more than 1 per cent Monday on heavy buying in financials, IT and oil stocks after a four-day losing run.

The 30-share BSE index rallied 721.13 points or 1.20 per cent to settle at 60,566.42 as 25 of its constituents ended in the green. During the day, it jumped 988.49 points or 1.65 per cent to 60,833.78.

The broader NSE Nifty advanced 207.80 points or 1.17 per cent to settle above the 18,000 level at 18,014.60. As many as 40 of Nifty stocks advanced while 10 declined.

From the Sensex pack, IndusInd Bank spurted the most by 3.99 per cent, followed by State Bank of India (3.97 per cent), Tata Steel (2.74 per cent), Bajaj Finserv (2.53 per cent), ITC (2.51 per cent), Axis Bank (2.44 per cent), HDFC Bank (1.91 per cent), UltraTech Cement (1.98 per cent), NTPC (1.87 per cent) and Tata Motors (1.73 per cent). ICICI Bank rose by 1.5 per cent while Reliance Industries rose nearly 1 per

cent, boosting the rally in the index. On the other hand. Nestle fell the most by 1.24 per cent. Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel,

HCL Technologies and Hindustan Unilever also declined. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge jumped 3.13 per cent and midcap index climbed 2.31 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, utilities jumped 3.40 per cent, power climbed 3.18 per cent, realty (2.41 per cent), commodities (2.35 per cent), financial services (2.18 per cent), telecommunication (2.08 per cent) and bankex (2.04 per cent). Healthcare was the only laggard. Meanwhile, stock markets in

Asia advanced in restricted trading after Christmas while markets in Europe, the US, and some Asian cities are closed for year-end holidays. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index rose by 0.7 per cent, and the Kospi in Seoul advanced 0.2 per cent and the Shanghai Composite index rose by 0.7 per cent Monday after the US markets ended in positive terri-

tory Friday. The rupee appreciated 17 paise to close at 82.65 against the US dollar. International oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 3.63 per cent

to \$83.92 per barrel. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded shares worth a net of Rs 706.84 crore Friday, according to exchange data.

#### India's agri & allied commodities export rises 12% in April-Oct

#### Tax mop-up zooms by Textiles PLI attracts ₹1,536cr 30% in current fiscal PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Geojit Financial Services.

In 2021, firms had raised ₹13.6 exhibited a stark difference.

131 in 2020-21, 68 in 2021-22, and 135 in 2022-23 (till November 2022).

#### Adda247 grants **Rs 150cr ESOPs**

New Delhi: Google-backed government job preparation platform Adda247 Monday said it has granted stock options worth Rs 150 crore under its employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) programme to its workers. The ESOP policy currently has a vesting period of four years and aims to reward exceptional talent while continuously valuing employees, the company said in a statement.

**DIRECT TAX COLLECTED IN THE CURRENT** FISCAL TILL NOV 30 WAS ₹8,77,470 CRORE

#### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

cent at Rs 10,93,385

crore, which was

over Rs 8,43,301

crore collected dur-

ing the correspon-

ding period of last

year.

New Delhi, Dec 26: Gross direct

tax collections for 2022-23 (up to

November 30) are up by 29.66 per

sources said. The Central government has set a target of Rs 14.20.000 crore for collection of direct taxes as per budget estimates for 2022-23. Meanwhile,



The growth has been achieved due to the performance of econwere Rs 14,12,422 crore. In 2020-21, omy, administration and implethey stood at Rs 9,47,176 crore mentation of the provisions of the and in 2019-20 they were Rs direct tax laws, finance ministry 10,50,681 crore.

#### crore production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for India's textiles sector attracted investments of Rs 1,536 crore as approval letters were issued to 56 applicants who met the eligibility criteria, the government said Monday

New Delhi, Dec 26: The Rs 10.683

Applications under the PLI Scheme for textiles were received through a web portal from January 1, 2022, to February 28, 2022.

The Centre launched the PLI Scheme with an approved outlay of Rs 10.683 crore to promote the production of MMF apparel, MMF fabrics and Products of Technical Textiles in the country to enable the textiles industry to achieve size and scale and to become competitive. "Selection Committee chaired by Secretary (Textiles) has selected



64 applicants under the scheme. 56 applicants have completed the mandatory criteria for the formation of a new company and approval letters have been issued to them. Investment to the tune of Rs 1,536 crore has been made so far," an official statement said.

The ministry said that domestic cotton cultivation has increased by 5 per cent to 125.02 lakh hectares as against 119.10 lakh hectares during last year, and a brand named

#### 'Kasturi Cotton India' for Indian cotton has been launched to encourage mechanized harvesting of cotton, improving its quality of cotton and reduce labour cost

Besides, 74 research proposals amounting to Rs 232 crore have been approved under National Technical Textile Mission (NTTM) for speciality fibre and technical textiles, the Textiles Ministry stated in the year-end review for the segment.

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New Delhi, Dec 26: India's export of agriculture and allied commodities rose 11.97 per cent to \$30.21 billion during April-October period of current fiscal year, the agriculture ministry said Monday.

The exports stood at \$26.98 billion in the same period of 2021-22, it said in a statement.

Wheat, basmati rice, raw cotton, castor oil, coffee, and fresh fruits were major commodities exported from India.

The overall export of agri and allied commodities rose 20 per cent to \$50.24 billion in 2021-22, when compared with \$41.86 billion in the previous year, it added.

The ministry said there was improvement in the farm produce logistics with the introduction of 'Kisan Rail' service in July 2020. Till December this year, Kisan rails were operated on 167 routes in the country.

Around 1,260 wholesale mandis in 22 states and three union territories have been integrated with the electronic-National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) with 1.72 crore farmers and 2.13 lakh traders registered on the platform till the current month, it said.

Also, 4,015 farmer producer organisations (FPOs) have been registered under a new scheme, it added.



# Missed inflation target, digital currency pilot mark RBI's 2022 map

The Indian situation on inflation was not as bad as many other countries experiencing record price rise, which served as a consolation

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 26: The Reserve Bank of India failed to deliver on its contracted inflation target for the first time, started fiat digital currency pilot and finally saw its efforts to improve bank balance sheets see fruition in 2022, making it a mixed year for the central bank. With inflation ebbing into the target band, focus is likely to shift to helping economic growth in the new year, especially given the lagged impact of 2.25 per cent in rate hikes since May 2022, is likely to hamper GDP expansion.

The big story of 2022 happened October 12, when official data

showed that headline inflation was above the 6 per cent mark -- the upper end of the tolerance band set for the central bank -- for nine consecutive months. It triggered a letter from RBI to the government enumerating the reasons for the miss and also when it sees the price rise coming to the 4 per cent mark. A bulk of the blame for persistent inflation was placed on the de-

teriorating global situation following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in late February, which led to a huge spike in the commodity prices, especially crude which India imports.

The year started off with RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) going for a prolonged status quo, till it delivered the surprise after an unscheduled meeting on May 4, by hiking the reporte by 0.40 per cent.

Many blamed RBI for being behind the curve and acting late, but the central bank defended the actions by asserting that it was not behind the curve. They followed it with three consecutive hikes of



0.50 per cent and another of 0.35 per cent in December.

For some, reducing the quantum of the rate hike to 0.35 per cent means that RBI will not be reverting to the 0.50 per cent hikes even as the world is bracing for more central banks to hike rates by 0.75 per cent.

Headline inflation cooling off to 5.8 per cent in November has led more analysts to believe it will lead RBI to pause its rate hikes,

and the divergent views coming out in the latest minutes of the six-member MPC only enhances the likelihood of a pause.

Helping the growth momentum in the economy will be a prime motive for a move like rate hike pause, as analysts already are pegging FY24 growth to slip to under 6 per cent

Even RBI has revised down its GDP growth estimate to 6.8 per cent for FY23 though it is yet to come up with an estimate for FY24. Some analysts are even buildingin the possibility of a rate cut as early as 2023 to help.

The currency depreciation aggravated the inflation situation as much of the commodities are imported. Unsurprisingly, it attracted a lot of RBI attention, with the overall reserves -- compared to an umbrella to protect on a rainy day -- declining by over \$100 billion as RBI defended the rupee.

Still, the rupee touched a lifetime low of 83.29 against the dollar and the official line continued to be that market interventions are done to do away with volatilities. RBI also introduced a slew of new measures, including settling bilateral trade in rupee and incentivising diaspora deposits for banks.

The current credit growth at multi-year highs of over 17 per cent is something the central bank can take solace in as growth assumes greater significance. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has asserted that the rise in credit is not exorbitant, attributing the high number to low base and pent-up demand of the pandemic.

On cryptocurrencies, the government moved to tax gains and also every transaction, a move which was celebrated by the industry as one giving it legitimacy. However, there is no final word yet on it, and Das delivered a fresh salvo in late December, warning that such speculative instruments will cause the next financial crisis.

The Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), which runs on the same technology, is a step closer to reality with pilots on both wholesale and retail CBDCs kicking-off during the year. Some questions, including ensuring anonymity, are yet unanswered.

Health of banks improved considerably in 2022, with expectations of dud loans declining to decadal lows, which can be seen as RBI's actions over the last five-six years starting with the asset quality review, reaping its benefits.









# **STOKES HITS OUT AT ICC** Unhappy Ashwin takes dig at critics



Ben Stokes and England coach Brendon McCullum had something to ponder about during England's practice session

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Dec 26: England Test captain Ben Stokes has hit out at the International Cricket Council (ICC) for not paying enough attention to scheduling, adding that the rising popularity of domestic T20 leagues across the world is threatening the existence of the longest format of the game.

Stokes, who led his side to a 3-0 Test whitewash of Pakistan recently, added that the way Test cricket was being handled and spoken about these days, especially in the backdrop of the growing popularity of league cricket, was hurting him.

'The scheduling doesn't get enough attention that it should. A great example is England's one-day

series against Australia after the T20 World Cup. That was shoving three games in there. It made sense to someone to schedule a series which meant nothing." said Stokes in an interaction with the legendary Ian Botham on BBC Monday.

'Test cricket has been spoken about in a way I don't like. It is losing the attention of the fans with all the new formats and franchise competitions. We understand there are so many opportunities for players away from Test cricket. But for me it is so important for the game," added Stokes.

Hinting that Test-playing nations should follow England's footsteps of playing ultra-attacking cricket, Stoke said "entertainment", more than "result", will

go a long way in popularise the five-day format.

"Taking the result away from the mindset is a great starting point. Putting focus on making every day entertaining. Not allowing people to know what is going to happen. If people turn up excited about what they are going to watch you've already won before a ball has been bowled,' said Stokes

He urged the ICC to do "something different" to popularise Test cricket. "I love playing Test cricket and felt we could do something different," added Stokes, who has guided England to nine Test wins in 10 games after taking over captaincy from Joe Root.

The 31-year-old all-rounder is also not happy with a lot of different squads being selected and players being rested because of the abundance of cricket being played and the commitment of cricketers to their franchises

'Some people say 'you are playing for England, that should be enough'. But there is a lot more to factor in. You want international cricket to be the highest standard But we have seen a lot of different squads being picked and players being rested, and that's not the way international cricket should go," opined Stokes.

Botham, while agreeing that franchise cricket was a good idea. called for a balance between domestic leagues and the longest format of the game.

'Test match cricket is called that for a very good reason, because it tests all the faculties of a player. The emphasis is too much towards white ball. In England we currently have a few first-class games in early April and it disappears until end of season. It should be balanced better. You have to make room for it all," said Botham.

"The idea of franchises is a solid, good idea. I just hope we can maintain a balance. And if franchises can maintain that balance then let's have a look at it.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: Ravichandran Ashwin has taken a slight dig at people who perceive him as an "overthinker" of the game following his match-winning performance against Bangladesh in the second Test in Mirpur.

Batting alongside Shreyas Iyer, Ashwin played one of the best Test innings of his career to steer India to a famous three-wicket win from an improbable situation. His 42 not out came after a match haul of six wickets, making him the player of the match.

"Overthinking is a perception that has followed me ever since I wore the Indian jersev with pride. I have pondered about it for a while now and believe I should have seriously considered a PR exercise to erase that word out of people's minds," Ashwin tweeted.

Besides his exploits on the field.

Ashwin is one of the best thinkers in the modern game and also has his youtube channel.

"Every person's journey is special and unique, while some journeys require them to overthink it others can afford to keep it simple. The moment someone says I am an over thinker from the inside walls, I have always thought to myself that's the way I play my cricket and not the way I recommend others to play.

"Finally, I think deeply about the game and share my views because I believe when ideas are shared they can multiply into miraculous achievements. The fact that it may not be popular won't deter me because my goal is not to win the war of words, it is to learn at the end of it," he added.

The 36-year-old has already attained greatness with 449 wickets in 88 Tests. He has also taken 151 ODI and 72 T20 International scalps.

# All 'Green' for Aussies against Proteas Surya focuses on putting up

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Dec 26: Riding a wave of emotion provided by a festive crowd at Melbourne Cricket Ground, Cameron Green claimed the best bowling figures of his Test career as Australia bowled South Africa out for 189 on the opening day of the second Test.

Pace bowler Green (5/27) gave the enthusiastic fans something to cheer about by triggering a late order collapse of five wickets for 10 runs as the 23-vear-old claimed his first five-wicket haul in Tests Monday. Leading the three-match series one-nil. Australia reached 45/1 at stumps. David Warner was unbeaten on 32 with Marnus Labuschagne on five, leaving the home side 144 runs behind with nine wickets in hand, after Usman Khawaja fell caught behind for one to Kagiso Rabada. Choosing to bowl first, Australia was on top shortly after lunch with South Africa struggling at 67/5 before Kyle Verreynne (52, 99b, 3x4) and Marco Jansen (59, 136b, 10x4) added 112 for the sixth wicket. It was South Africa's seventh consecutive test total under 200.



middle finger.

Green dismissed Verreynne caught at first slip at 179/6. Green struck twice in his next over, removing Jansen caught behind for 59 and Rabada bowled for four. Striking again in his third successive over, Green forced his way through Lungi Ngidi's defences to end the innings in the 69th over.

Apart from cheering Green off the field, fans also paid tribute Monday to Test cricket's secondleading wicket-taker Shane Warne, who died aged 52 in March 2022. The Great Southern Stand at Melbourne Cricket Ground was renamed The Shane Warne Stand March 31. Fans were encouraged to wear floppy hats to honour the champion spin bowler. Warne reached the milestone of 700 wickets on his home ground in Melbourne in December 2006. Both teams wore white floppy hats when walking out onto the field for the national anthems Monday.





On a green-tinged pitch, South Africa's batsmen had edged cautiously to 58 shortly before lunch for the loss of Sarel Erwee (18) and Theunis de Bruyn (12). Captain

Dean Elgar (26) attempted a risky single to mid-off in the penultimate over before the interval and was run out by a direct hit from Marnus Labuschagne.

Mitchell Starc removed Temba Bavuma caught behind for one off the next delivery to leave the tourists teetering at lunch. In the fifth over after lunch, Khaya Zondo on five aimed a powerful drive to mid-off where Labuschagne held a superb

diving catch at 67/5, as Starc (2/39) claimed his second wicket of the innings. South Africa had lost four wickets for 11 runs.

Dropped at short leg on 22 and on the leg-side boundary on 37, Jansen helped steady South Africa's innings, reaching his maiden halfcentury with a lofted boundary to long-on, after Starc failed to hold a difficult catch. Starc briefly left the field for treatment on a sore

A huge sign saying 'Warnie 350' was painted on the outfield to mark Warne's Test-cap number. Play was stopped briefly at 3.50pm, prompt-

ing applause from fans and players. BRIEF SCORES: South Africa 189 (Marco Jansen 59, Kyle Verrevnne 52; Cameron Green 5/27, Mitchell Starc 2/39): Australia 45/1 (David Warner 32 batting; Kagiso Rabada 1/24). Match to continue.

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: Suryakumar Yadav has been a trailblazer who has taken cricket's shortest format by storm. Inarguably, India's first true-blue T20 superstar, Surya has now trained his eyes on being successful in longer formats but without changing the essence of his batsmanship.

In an exclusive interview with this agency, 'SKY' spoke about his journey to the top of T20 rankings, his focus on ODI World Cup this year, ambitions to wear the India whites and how wife Devisha became the force behind the cricketer and the person that he is today.

Surya said that being the World No.1 T20 batter is like a dream for him. "It still feels like a dream. To be seen and called as world's No.1 T20 batter, if someone would have told me one year back, I don't know how I would have reacted. When I started playing this format, I wanted to be the best and I worked hard for it." said the Mumbai cricketer.

When asked whether he would change his game keeping any on the 2023 ODI World Cup, he said that he will stick to his philosophy.

"I don't like to think too much when I am playing any format. Because I enjoy this game, whenever I go into bat, I put up a show. What I always dream and visualise is that whenever I go in, I want to be the game-changer. I have always loved batting whether it is T20Is, ODIs or Ranji Trophy," he stated. Surya also said that it is difficult,

but not impossible, to train one's mind to cope with pressures at the highest level. "I would say it was never impossible but certainly it was difficult. It needed a smart approach. Instead of doing a lot of quantity, I did a lot of quality practice. There were lot of sacrifices made by me and my family. Before making my India debut, I had played 10 years of first-class cricket. "Grinding it out at first-class

level, you learn a lot of tricks of the trade. So when you graduate to international level and play different bowlers, all you need to do is express yourself," said the 32-year-old.

"But let me tell you this. If you have gone through domestic grind in India, you are ready for international cricket and when you start that level, you are not carrying any baggage. Just execute what you did at the domestic level," he added.

Speaking on the time when he was struggling to find a place in the Indian team, Surya said he remained optimistic and was always thinking of improving his game. He also shared a story of his 360-degree technique. "In my school and college days, I played a lot of rubber ball cricket. On hard cement tracks and on rainy days, those would bowl would come from 15 yards and most of them chucked (threw) really hard," said the Mumbaikar. "Now rubber ball from 15 yards

will come at 140 plus clicks and if the leg side the boundary would be 95 vards, the off-side would be only 25-30 vards. So in order to prevent off-side boundaries, most of them would bowl into my body in order to prevent me from getting easy boundaries on off-side.

'So manoeuvring my wrists, playing those pick-up pulls and upper cuts have come from those matches. I never try those in the nets. In the nets, I like practising normally and hearing the sound of the bat hitting the ball. If I feel good I come out," he said further. He termed Mumbai Indians and

wife Devisha as two pillars of his career. "In my life and in this cricketing journey, there are two pillars - Mumbai Indians and my wife Devisha," said Surya.

"Let me elaborate about MI's contribution first. When I came back here from KKR in 2018, I was looking for an opportunity to bat higher up the order and even without me asking, the management entrusted me with that responsibility. I grabbed that opportunity, kept performing and never looked back. MI provided me with all the facilities I required to move up the ladder," he said.

"In 2016, I got married to Devisha and when I joined MI in 2018, we (me and Devisha) as a unit started thinking, what do we need to do to make the next grade. It was a dream we both nurtured together and she is always been around when I 🛁 needed her. Even if she doesn't want to travel, I drag her around.

"She brings in the balance that I need as a sportsman. She doesn't let me get complacent after a good day in office and at the same time, doesn't allow my shoulders to drop after a poor day," Surya signed off.

# Reid advises team to raise game

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Dec 26: Indian men's hockev team coach Graham Reid has warned his players against getting caught up in the moment and advised them to raise their game to the next level if they concede a goal in next month's FIH World Cup.

Reid believes a positive mindset is necessary while playing in a major tournament like the World Cup. India will open their World Cup campaign against Spain in Rourkela January 13, the first day of the tournament.

"You (Indian players) sort of get caught up in the moment when you play an event of this magnitude (World Cup). Don't let yourself get caught up in the moment. It could get quite daunting when you lose the ball, or concede a goal," said Reid, who was part of the Australian side during the 1990 World Cup in Lahore

"It is important to develop 'the next thing' mentality. You can't



change what happened so you just move on to the next task at hand. stay focused on what's to be done,' he added.

Describing how the Australian team prepared for the World Cup in 1990, Reid said shutting the mind to the "raucous spectators" and 'playing silently" had done the Kookaburras a world of good during his playing days.

'In the lead up (to the 1990 World Cup), we played smaller games, and played silently – we were not allowed to talk. A recording of the crowd on loudspeakers would play in the background and we learnt not to rely on calling out but had to get used to turning around and looking," he said in a release issued by Hockey India.

'We had to learn to blanket out the sound. And this time in Odisha, it will be just as important for us to be prepared for the crowd.'

Reid admitted that due to the highly-competitive nature of modern hockey, it was very difficult to pick the favourites for the megaevent, which will be staged jointly by Bhbaneswar and Rourkela.

"It is so difficult to pick a team. If I think about it today, I could pick Australia, Belgium and India; and tomorrow I could come back with Netherlands, Germany and India," he said.

"Of course, I would put India in the top three because if we play well, we have a good opportunity to get there. Any of these top eight can win this World Cup. It is both daunting and exciting at the same time.

for head coach job INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE Rid de Janeiro, Dec 26: Zinedine

trunner to assume Brazil's vacant head coaching job, according to media reports in the South American country.

Zidane has been linked with the France managerial role but could make Brazil a priority if Didier Deschamps remains in charge of the Les Bleus, the newspaper 'O Globo' reported Sunday.

Brazil's head coaching position became vacant earlier this month when Tite stepped down following the team's World Cup quarterfinal defeat to Croatia.

the job include current Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti, Portuguese Jose Mourinho, Thomas Tuchel and Abel Ferreira. Brazil has never had a foreigner as coach of its football team.

## **Brazil reportedly** pursuing Zidane

Zidane has emerged as a fron-

Others to have been linked to

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