



CANDID CONFESSION

Actor Tamannaah Bhatia says men feel more awkward while shooting intimate scenes in movies

LEISURE P2



ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION RISES

Illegal immigration from India to the US has doubled in 2021-22 with a surge in the last 2 months

INTERNATIONAL P10



EASY FOR MAN UNITED

Anthony Martial and Marcus Rashford on target as Manchester United thrash Nottingham Forest 3-0 in EPL

SPORTS P12

7 TDP workers die in stampede during roadshow

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Nellore, Dec 28: At least seven people died and eight others were injured Wednesday after falling in a drainage canal in Kundukur town of Andhra Pradesh's Nellore district during a road show of TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu, police informed. They added that the incident occurred due to a stampede-like situation during the road show by the former chief minister.

The incident reminded one of the stampede that took place during a blanket distribution programmed conducted by BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari in Asansol town of West Bengal a couple of weeks back.

Naidu immediately cancelled the meeting and announced Rs 10 lakh to the kin of the deceased. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) president visited the injured at the hospital and directed party leaders to ensure best facilities to those undergoing treatment.

TDP's Andhra Pradesh unit president Kinjarapu Achchennaiidu described the death of workers as deeply disturbing. "Losing seven TDP family members at once is a tragedy beyond words. The death of activists is a great loss for the party. The party will support the families of the deceased in all ways. I pray to God that such incidents do not happen in the future," Achchennaiidu said in a statement.

Sources said that the accident occurred when a section of the crowd surged forward to get a closer view of Naidu.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We are prepared for COVID. Enough 'Thank You, Modi ji' posters are in stock. People can take care of the rest



VOICING GRIEVANCES: Anganwadi workers stage a protest in front of the Cuttack Collectorate for the fulfilment of their eight-point charter of demands, Wednesday

Pavel: Suicide or murder?

■ It has been established that rules were not followed properly regarding the arrival of foreign nationals in Rayagada



The hotel where the Russians stayed in Rayagada town; (inset): Pavel Antov

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, Dec 28: Even though the autopsy report of Russian MP and businessman Pavel Antov indicates that he died of internal injuries after a fall, doubt still lingers about the actual reason behind his death. It seems 'silence is the motto' path has been adopted by all even remotely connected with the demise of Pavel after his mysterious fall from a hotel in Rayagada district.

Pavel, 65, died December 24 after allegedly falling off the third floor of Rayagada's Hotel Sai International, where he was on holiday with three other Russians. His death came two days after his close friend, Vladimir Bidenov, 61, died. The four-member group had checked-in to the hotel December 21. It was learnt.

When asked about Pavel's death, Hotel Sai International manager

Koushik Thakre feigned ignorance. "I was not on duty when the mishap took place. Our staffers have also not seen anything," Thakre said Wednesday.

According to Registration of Foreigners Act, the SP is the reporting officer of foreigners in the district. The Act also mandates the SP to have information on foreigners within 24 hours of their arrival to the district. Besides, the District Intelligence Bureau (DIB) should also have the information about the foreigners arriving in or leaving the district.

When contacted, Rayagada SP Vivekanand Sharma said he is well aware of the rules. "Pavel initially stayed at Daringbadi in Kandhamal district before coming to Rayagada. So, Kandhamal SP may have been

informed about his arrival," Sharma said. He added that why would a tourist bother to share his/her details everywhere.

Meanwhile Sudam Mallick, an official in charge of the Rayagada DIB, said, "Hotel Sai International falls under the jurisdiction of Rayagada Town Police. They should ideally share with us the details of the group (four). However, we didn't receive any such info from them."

Mallick's statement is enough to prove that the police were lax in handling the overall situation.

On why Natalia Pansanenko, 44, and Mikhail Turov, 64, two of the group, were allowed to leave Rayagada at a time when the probe is still on, Sharma said, "There was no reason to detain them in

Rayagada. They wanted to leave the place. We allowed. Pansanenko and Turov were very cooperative during the investigation."

DIB officer Mallick, meanwhile, said that after the demise of the two Russians they got in touch with the concerned authorities. "We've already shared whatever details we had with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Home department," said Mallick.

Meanwhile, in a separate development in Bhubaneswar, officials of the Crime Branch stated that both Pansanenko and Turov were questioned Wednesday. Officials said that the two foreigners have been asked not to leave Odisha at present. The officials informed that the two rooms of the Rayagada hotel, where the Russians had stayed in, have been sealed.

The last rites of the two deceased have been completed with consent of their family members and the Russian Embassy, officials said. However, there have been doubts as to why the bodies were cremated in a hurried manner, leaving no chance for exhumation. Question also lingers why burial of the deceased were not carried out and why they were cremated.

RATNA BHANDAR KEYS

Nadda slams BJD govt

BJP chief asserts that blooming of Lotus in state will help in the development of Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: BJP National president JP Nadda strongly slammed the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD government while addressing public meetings Wednesday in Kandhamal district and Banapur in Khurda district. He asserted that for the development of Odisha, it is imperative that the Lotus should also bloom in the state under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He appealed to the people of Odisha to vote for the BJP both in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

"Why has the BJD failed to protect the valuable gems and assets of Mahaprabhu Jagannath? Where are the keys of the Ratna Bhandar of the temple? Where have the original keys of the Ratna Bhandar of Mahaprabhu disappeared? Naveen Patnaik Babu is roaming around with duplicate keys," the BJP President told the gathering in Tumudibandh in Kandhamal district.

"Is Naveen Patnaik Babu running an original or a duplicate government? Who is running the Odisha government is a big mystery. What kind of government is this? Why has Naveen ji failed to protect the Ratna Bhandar, he will have to answer this? Naveen Babu had prom-

ised to open an Odia University in four years. The fifth year of his term has started, but till today there is no development in the opening of the Odia University. What has happened to the tall promises of Naveen Babu?," Nadda asked.

Citing the NCRB report, Nadda said the cases of crime and atrocities against women have doubled in the state. He pointed out that women in Odisha are not safe at all.

"Atrocities against Dalits and tribals are increasing rapidly. Odisha Police are constantly being attacked by criminals. Such a government has no moral right to remain in power," he said. The BJP top leader also criticised the BJD government for not implementing the Ayushman Bharat Yojna which is benefitting over 55 crores population of the country.

"Our prime minister is running the world's largest health insurance scheme called the Ayushman Bharat Yojna. But, in Odisha this scheme has not been implemented by the Naveen Patnaik government. It has deprived 60 lakh poor and needy people of the benefits of the scheme. I want to ask Naveen Patnaik ji, what is the fault of the people of Odisha? Why are you not allowing benefits of the Ayushman Bharat Yojna?" Nadda thundered.

Continued on P4



BJP chief JP Nadda along with Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan at a meeting at Tumudibandh in Kandhamal district, Wednesday

Govt depts asked to work on war footing

With the general and Assembly elections just 14 months away, the BJD-led administration is making every effort to keep the people happy by completing projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: The Odisha government has asked all administrative departments to prepare a blueprint for the next 14 months in order to take governance and public outreach to a new high. Many have termed this move as beginning of the preparations by the BJD for the 2024 general and Assembly elections in the state.

Development Commissioner PK Jena has recently written a letter to additional chief secretaries (ACSS), principal secretaries and secretaries of all departments in this regard.

"All departments are required to prepare a blueprint for the next 14 months to take governance and public outreach to a new high. For this purpose, it is required to indicate major milestones, project and its implementation as well as delivery of public services so that the people get the optimum benefit from all government schemes and programmes," Jena said in his letter to all departments.

The departments have been asked to submit detailed reports indicating the status of all ongoing and completed projects. The officials have been asked to include the expected date of completion for projects still



incomplete. Sources said Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra will review the situation in the first week of January, 2023.

It is clear that the BJD wants to leave no stone unturned in its effort to retain power in the coming years. Expecting a tough competition in the next elections, the ruling BJD now wants to keep the people happy on all aspects of the administration. After the landslide victory in the recently-concluded Padampur by-poll, BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had launched a scathing attack on the BJD.

During the Foundation Day celebrations of the BJD a couple of days back, Patnaik had also asserted that the BJD is the only party which thinks about the well-being of the people of Odisha. He had also stated that his party will serve the people of Odisha for 100 years, not just 25 or 50 years with the blessings of women of the state.

SHORT TAKES

Teacher dies trying to save students

NAYAGARH: A teacher met with his watery grave Wednesday in the Mahanadi river while trying to save two of his students from drowning near 'Smashana Tutha' at Kantilo under Khandapara block in this district. The deceased has been identified as Saroj Kumar Dash (32). Sources said Saroj, a resident of Kendrapara district was a teacher at a private coaching centre. He along with his colleagues and students had gone to Nilamadhav in Kantilo Tuesday night. Some of the students went for a bath Wednesday in the Mahanadi river. However, two of the students slipped into deeper waters. Saroj jumped into the river to save them, but went missing himself. When he was finally brought ashore he was in a critical condition and breathed his last en route to the Khandapada CHC. The students however, were rescued by locals.

4 ultras killed in J&K encounter

JAMMU: Four heavily-armed terrorists, travelling in a truck to Kashmir after infiltrating from Pakistan, were killed in a 'chance encounter' with security forces here early Wednesday morning, a police officer said. He termed it as a 'major success' ahead of Republic Day. Additional DGP, Jammu zone, Mukesh Singh said the gunfight took place around 7.30am amid intense fog near Tawi Bridge in the Sidhra bypass area along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway. He informed that bodies of the four terrorists have been recovered from the truck. "Seven AK assault rifles, one M4 rifle, three pistols and a large quantity of ammunition were recovered from the slain terrorists," Singh said. "The truck was spotted moving suspiciously and when asked to stop, the terrorists started firing," he added.

Russian roulette awaits all Putin critics

■ Since the start of invasion of Ukraine, many rich Russian tycoons and corporate honchos opposed to war have died in suspicious circumstances

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: The 'mystery' surrounding the death of Pavel Antov in Rayagada should not come as a surprise to anyone. The Kremlin has for long been held responsible for many such mysterious deaths. It is a known fact that the Russian government is averse to criticism and tries to repress those who do in the most brutal manner. And call it coincidence or what... in most cases the country has been

quick to term these demises as 'unfortunate accidents'.

Purging tactics of the Russian government under present President Vladimir Putin came to light with the alleged 'poisoning' of his harshest critic Alexei Navalny. In August 2020, Navalny was hospitalised in serious condition after being poisoned with a Novichok nerve agent. The Berlin hospital where Navalny was treated confirmed that he had indeed been poisoned. Though the Russian government denied the allegations, it promptly put Navalny behind bars on his return to Russia for violating parole rules.

The death of Pavel and his friend Vladimir Bydanov bears uncanny resemblance to the demise of some more Russian individuals since the country's invasion of Ukraine.



Sergey Protosenya and Vladislav Avae

There have been cases of oligarchs dying outside the country and also instances of scientists breathing their last due to a 'heavy fall' as was the case with Pavel.

The death of 72-year-old scientist Anatoly Gerashchenko in September is one such case shrouded in mystery. Gerashchenko had been the Rector of the Moscow Aviation Institute from 2007 to 2015. His death was reported by the in-

stitute September 21. However, other than stating the scientist 'fell from a great height', officials did not provide any other details about the incident.

The death of 67-year-old Ravil Maganov, chairman of Russia's second-largest oil producer and biggest private oil company 'Lukoil' is another case shrouded by mystery. He was found dead September 1 after falling from the window of a hospital in Moscow, according to media reports.

It should however, be stated here that the Lukoil's board of directors including Maganov had taken a stance against the Russia-Ukraine war and released a statement calling for the 'soonest possible end to armed conflict through negotiations'.

Continued on P4

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	60910.28	↓ 17.15
NIFTY	18122.50	↓ 9.80
DOLLAR	82.72	↓ ₹0.07
EURO	88.04	↓ ₹0.07
GOLD	₹54,714	↓ ₹283
SILVER	₹69,176	↓ ₹625

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	32.0°C	30.6°C
TEMP. MIN	19.8°C	19.8°C
Humidity	89%	85%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Shallow to moderate fog likely	

leisure



ARIANA GRANDE SENDS PRESENTS TO KIDS IN MANCHESTER HOSPITALS

Pop star Ariana Grande has continued her tradition of sending Christmas gifts to children being treated in Manchester hospitals five years after her concert in the city was bombed. The event in the UK city in 2017 was marred by a terrorist attack which killed 22 people.

RYAN REYNOLDS LOVED FAMILY SNOWBALL FIGHTS

Deadpool actor Ryan Reynolds admitted some of his "fondest memories" are of the epic snowball fights he and his siblings used to have when the cold weather hit in Canada. He said: "I'm the youngest, so often I was more of a moving target. But I loved that."



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may want to tap your feet to a beat only you can hear. Life for you today is sunny. You're able to take quick decisions, while other major ones may be kept on hold. Dance your way home, if that's what pleases you, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
Prepare yourself to handle ordinary situations in an extraordinary way, foretells Ganesh. Today, you will get a lesson in how people work. Before arriving at any crucial decision, explore the pros and cons with a balanced mind, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
You will desire to go on a short trip to escape the drudgery of your daily routine. You will successfully schedule and execute your plans for a fun-filled and relaxing journey. In the evening you will take up some pending work projects, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You must get ready yourself to handle a few usual situations in an unusual way, foretells Ganesh. You will probably learn a few lessons in public psychology during the afternoon. Before arriving at any crucial decision, weigh the pros and cons with an unbiased mind, says Ganesh.

LEO
Today is not a very productive day for traders and businessmen, says Ganesh. Some competitors may try to slander your reputation. You need to be a little more sly in your dealings and work your way around these obstacles cleverly. If you ignore these matters now, they may become major headaches later on. A stitch in time, saves nine.

VIRGO
You will be very open-minded today, very receptive to ideas from everyone. However, when it boils down to taking decisions, it will be the stubborn ones that will prevail. Today is also a time to resolve pending issues at work. But in the evening you may enjoy a nice dinner with your beloved and summon the courage to pop that all-important question.

LIBRA
Ganesh says the first blush of love will make your mind blissful today. You will be able to gain closeness with your beloved today. The afternoon will see you try to take part in religious matters. Ganesh says that today will be a good day to listen to religious discourses and make your mind and heart follow God.

SCORPIO
Power packed day in store for you, according to Ganesh. Your flamboyant attitude at work would leave your team mates awestruck. Your energy level is at an all-time high, which would find its way to the dance floor in the evening. Groove to some foot-tapping music and dance as if there's no tomorrow.

SAGITTARIUS
Success will knock your doors today and you may be in the limelight. The experience will be full of emotions for you. Romantic developments on cards today, predicts Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Generally, you are a calm and composed person. People around you are in for a great surprise as today you will burst out with anger. It is probably just not your day, so don't enter into any kind of war of words. Think before you speak and see before you leap to avoid making any serious mistakes, advises Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
Your friends are family to you and those who are in influential position will help you climb up the ladder today. Professionally, it is a favourable day for you, foresees Ganesh. If you are a student, you can afford to bunk a couple of classes at school/college, your friends will take care of your studies.

PISCES
You will find happiness on the relationship front as you and your life partner find common ground to unite and chain your differences to provide you with marital bliss. Compromise and adjustments are mandatory in every relationship, yours will be not exception but at the end of the day what matters is what you have and not what you let go.

Men are more awkward with intimate scenes: Tamannaah

Mumbai: Tamannaah Bhatia recently opened up about shooting intimate scenes in movies. According to her, men are more uncomfortable during such scenes. In an interview with a news portal, the actress said that men are more awkward with intimate scenes because they are also worried about how the woman is going to feel. According to her, it is basi-

cally about understanding that actors are just human and it is not about men or women. Bhumi Pednekar, who was also a part of the interview, recalled that she had a 'full throttle' sex scene with Neil Bhoopalam in 'Lust Stories' and she was rather nervous about going through it. The actress addressed the sensitivity that director Zoya Akhtar showed, adding that she had a conversation with Neil about boundaries. Earlier, in another interview, the actors said that the female actors are given as low as one per cent of the fee that the hero takes home.



AGENCIES

Ranveer, Disha, K-Pop icon Shreya to perform at Hockey World Cup

Vocalists Benny Dayal, Neeti Mohan, Amit Mishra, and Shalmali Kholgade along with Namita Meleka from Odisha will also perform during 'Celebrations'



Bhubaneswar: Top movie stars like Ranveer Singh, Disha Patani and famous K-pop band BLACK-SWAN that features Odisha's Shreya Lenka and popular music composer Pritam are among the galaxy of stars who will perform January 11, 2023 at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack ahead of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023.

This apart, vocalists like Benny Dayal, Neeti Mohan, Lisa Mishra, Sreeram Chandra, Nakash Aziz and Shalmali Kholgade along with Namita Meleka from Odisha will also join in. Guru Aruna Mohanty and Shiamak Davar will choreograph the dance performances. The event will also feature many local stars and performers. Aply titled 'Celebrations', the show, with a star-studded cast lined up for all forms of entertainment featuring songs, dances, and technology and showcasing cultural aspects of Odisha, will serve as the precursor event to the opening of the tournament. Serving as the host nation of the Hockey World Cup for the second consecutive time, India, and more specifically, Odisha, has taken every measure to ensure that the guests from the 15 visiting nations will bear witness to one of the most spectacular shows ever created in the state. The show will be broadcast on all national TV channels.

The matches will be held in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela. Tickets for the 'Celebrations' are now available on Paytm Insider. It may be recalled that stars like Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Madhuri Dixit and AR Rahman were part of the last edition of Hockey World Cup held in Bhubaneswar in 2018. PNN

Sai to host show on National Geographic

Mumbai: From checking out the state's variety of cuisines to exploring its places of worship, forts, and historical monuments, the seven-part series *Postcards from Maharashtra* gave the actress and show host Sai Tamhankar new insights into the people and culture of her state.

Sai was seen most recently in Subhash Ghai's crime thriller *Black & White*. She made her Marathi cinema debut with Sanai Chaughade and appeared in the Aamir Khan-starrer *Ghajini* as well. Talking about hosting the series, she said: "Through this opportunity, I got a chance to experience and rekindle my love for the mystic beauty, palatable delicacies, and the rich Marathi culture like a traveller. Being part of the series made me feel proud to be a Marathi Mulgi and this series will always own a special place in my heart."

Through the series, Sai will be seen talking about the ancient caves of Elephanta, UNESCO heritage sites in Aurangabad, and the temples of Pune and Nashik. Apart from exploring different places, forts, and temples, the audience will also get to see the host enjoying the local food of Maharashtra. *Postcards from Maharashtra* will be starting December 29 on the National Geographic channel in India. IANS



Zee Sarthak to ring in New Year with three new shows

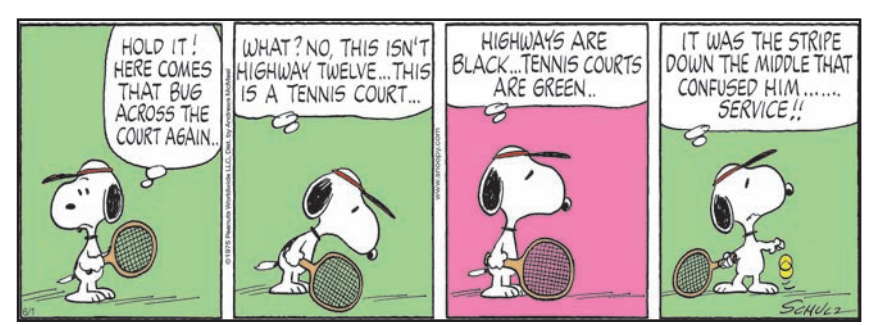
Bhubaneswar: Zee Sarthak entertainment channel will welcome New Year 2023 with three new serials titled *Mu Bi Bijayinee*, *Tu Khara Mun Chhai* and *Khusira Chhunka*. The shows will air from January 2.

"We are optimistic to get the acceptance of the viewers," said Pratik Seal, chief channel officer of Zee Sarthak. Based on three main characters, *Mu Bi Bijayinee*, to be aired at 6.30 pm, tells a story of love, trust, and revenge while *Tu Khara Mun Chhai* is a story of two different characters. One is a perfectionist while other is carefree. What happens when these two characters come together forms the crux of the story. It will

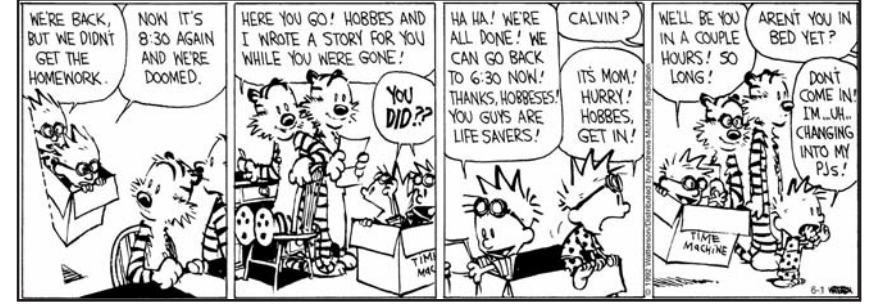
be aired at 8.30 pm. *Khusira Chhunka* is a story of Khushi who loves to cook and dreams of starting her own kitchen. In her journey she meets Karan who was an owner of a big restaurant. The story revolves around their journey together in achieving their dreams. The show will telecast at 9pm. All the three shows will be aired from Monday to Saturday. PNN



PEANUTS



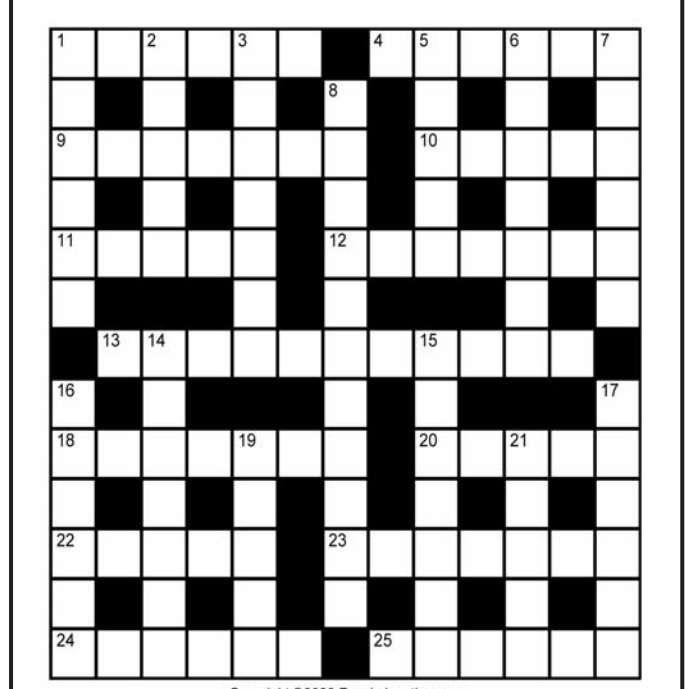
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Figure out
 - 4 In dreamland
 - 9 Guilt feelings
 - 10 Mature
 - 11 City near Düsseldorf
 - 12 On deck, nautically
 - 13 Securities exchange (5,6)
 - 18 Hunter's weapon
 - 20 Old-fashioned
 - 22 Character
 - 23 Good luck charms
 - 24 Negligence
 - 25 Subvert
 - 5 Message target
 - 6 Scholarly
 - 7 Golf course item
 - 8 Special tribute
 - 14 Mechanic's cabinet
 - 15 Ecstasy
 - 16 Beneficial
 - 17 Sanity
 - 19 Welcome
 - 21 Tiny particle
- Down**
- 1 Gabled window
 - 2 Cupolas
 - 3 Habitual, like a cough

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



BUSINESS POWER LIST 2022

THE OUTGOING YEAR WAS HIT BY MULTIPLE CRISES TRIGGERED BY RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE. SUPPLY CHAIN BOTTLENECKS, SOARING INFLATION, AND COMMODITY SHORTAGES LED TO A VOLATILE 2022 FOR THE WORLD OF BUSINESS. IN SUCH A SCENARIO, THERE WERE SOME SPIRITED ENTREPRENEURS WHO PREVAILED OVER THE CHALLENGES AND DROVE THEIR BUSINESSES TO NEWER HEIGHTS.

ORISSA POST PRESENTS THE BUSINESS POWER LIST 2022

NB: THIS LIST IS IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER



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IMFA



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Swapna Automobiles



Er. Baburam Swain
Jaya Durga Chemicals



Piyush Mohanty
Nexus Engineering



Manoj Kumar Das
Orissa Ayurveda Bhawan



Suresh Kumar Sureka
Springville Greens LLP



Aakash Kumar Agrawal
Aakash Motors Pvt Ltd



Navpreet Singh
Indira Jewellers Pvt Ltd



Harsha Vardhan Singh Deo
Som Auto



Sunil Gupta
SGBL Automobiles



Dr. Sarada Prasad Mishra
Times Scholars' Gurukul



Raman Kumar Bagaria
Bagarias Pvt Ltd



Raj Kumar Agarwalla
Siddhi Laxmi Motors



Brajendra Kumar Ray
Bharat Ply

State ready to tackle Odisha invites CMs to hockey WC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, 28: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday invited his counterparts in Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Puducherry and Uttar Pradesh to attend the Hockey Men's World Cup (WC) to be held in Odisha, beginning January 13, 2023.

On behalf of Naveen, several ministers called on the CMs and invited them to the sports extravaganza.

Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak met Tamil Nadu CM Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin and invited him to the event. Nayak also handed over a Hockey India T-shirt and a silver Ashoka Chakra to the TN CM, who conveyed his thanks and greetings to Naveen, saying he would explore the possibilities of visiting Odisha for the event.

Later in the evening, Nayak met Puducherry CM N Rangasamy and invited him to witness the grand sporting event.

While Law Minister Jagannath Saraka met Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren at Ranchi and invited him to attend the world cup, SSEPD Minister Ashok Chandra Panda met and invited Andhra Pradesh CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for the mega event.

Similarly, Steel and Mines Minister Prafulla Mallick handed over the invitation to Bihar CM Nitish Kumar at Patna, while



Steel & Mines Minister Prafulla Mallick invites Bihar CM Nitish Kumar



FS&CW Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak invites Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin



ST&S Minister Jagannath Saraka with Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren



Science & Technology Minister Ashok Panda invites Andhra Pradesh CM Jagan Mohan Reddy

Finance Minister Niranjana Pujari met Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath at Lucknow and invited him to Odisha for the grand sports event.

Tourism Minister Ashwini Kumar Patra met Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami Wednesday evening at Dehradun and handed over the invitation of CM

Naveen Patnaik. Similarly, Planning & Convergence Minister Rajendra Dholakia met Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot at Jaipur and invited him to the Hockey WC.

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: The state government is prepared to tackle any situation if there is a resurgence of coronavirus in the state, Health Minister Naba Kishore Das said Wednesday.

Talking to reporters about the preparedness of Odisha in view of Omicron sub-variant BF.7 creating havoc in certain countries, Das said he held a review meeting during the day on surveillance and testing. "If there is sudden resurgence of Covid, it is not about having Plan A or Plan B. We are already prepared under the able leadership of Naveen Patnaik... Our government was earlier praised for its handling of the pandemic and for supplying Oxygen to different states. "We have instructed all medical colleges, including MKCG, VIMSAR and SCB Medical College, regarding readiness of 15 oxygen beds and 5 ICU beds," the minister said. Mock drills were conducted in all district hospitals Tuesday.

Many hospitals across the country held mock drills Tuesday to check the readiness of health facilities in view of proper Covid-19 management.

The Centre had asked states

NO NEED TO WORRY, SAYS HEALTH SECY

Bhubaneswar: There is no need to worry about Covid-19 situation in Odisha, said Health Secretary Shalini Pandit, Wednesday. In a media briefing about the Covid-19 management in state, the Health Secretary said that the positivity rate in the state is only 0.04 per cent. The number of Covid-19 positive cases in the country is between 100 to 200 and in Odisha about 5 to 7 cases. There has been no rise in the caseload in the state. Odisha is conducting 6,000 to 7,000 Covid tests daily, she added. More than 90 per cent people in the state have already taken two doses of vaccine, she said. She further said that all curbs have been lifted in Odisha and no restrictions will be imposed at the present. However, the people are urged to wear masks while visiting crowded places, she added. Testing kits, medicines and oxygen are available in sufficient quantity in all medical centers in Odisha, she further said.

and Union territories (UTs) to conduct the drill as part of precautionary measures following an increase in Covid-19 infections in China and other countries.

Das said, "Our Commissioner-Secretary has already written a letter to the Centre on the supply of vaccines. Today I will also write a letter to the Union Health Minister for fresh supply of vaccines to the state."

The state government had December 23 written a letter to the Centre seeking Covid vaccines to start inoculation drives again.

Family Welfare Director Bijay Panigrahi, who is also the nodal officer for immunisation, had said that there was no state-sponsored vac-

ination drive after November 28 in Odisha. However, inoculation is underway in private hospitals.

"We have instructed the Odisha State Medicine Corporation Limited to facilitate the procurement of necessary drugs and equipment on priority. The Department has mooted special arrangements for health safety and prevention of the possible spread of Covid at the venues of the Hockey World Cup," Das said.

Odisha is hosting the prestigious sporting tournament for the second time in a row after 2018. The matches will be played at Kalinga Hockey Stadium here and the Birsa Munda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela from January 13 to 29.



HARVEST TIME: Farmers transporting their harvested paddy from a farmland in Satyabadi area of Puri, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

STONE FOR WORLD-CLASS RLY STATION TO BE LAID TODAY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: The foundation stone for the redevelopment of Bhubaneswar railway station that would be transformed into a world-class infrastructure will be laid December 29.

Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Education and Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Union Minister of Coal Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi will lay the foundation stone for the crucial project. They will also flag off Puri-Jaleswar Passenger train at Bhubaneswar station.

Likewise, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will launch the Angul-Balaram new railway line and express train between Sambalpur and Shalimar in presence of the Union ministers at Angul railway station.

It is pertinent to mention here that Bhubaneswar railway station is part of the vision of the Railway Minister to create modern infrastructure facilities and amenities for the railway passengers throughout India. The project involving a cost of ₹308 crore is being monitored by the Railway minister who has stressed upon early execution of the work and completion of the project. A target has been set for its completion within 24 months.

The 14 km-long Angul-Balaram railway line would provide facilities for the transportation of freight,



Bhubaneswar Railway Station

THE PROJECT INVOLVING A COST OF ₹308 CRORE IS BEING MONITORED BY THE RAILWAY MINISTER

A TARGET HAS BEEN SET FOR ITS COMPLETION WITHIN 24 MONTHS

CHIEF MINISTER NAVEEN PATNAIK WILL LAUNCH THE ANGUL-BALARAM NEW RAILWAY LINE AND EXPRESS TRAIN BETWEEN SAMBALPUR AND SHALIMAR

especially coal to different industries and power houses of the country.

Similarly, the much-awaited Puri-Jaleswar-Puri Passenger train, and Express train between Sambalpur & Shalimar via Talcher-Dhenkanal & Bhadrak will be flagged off December 29 which will fulfil the

aspirations of the public. Both the trains will provide facilities to the public of the respective regions for direct journey instead of changing transportation facilities at many intermediate places. Both the new trains will run as special trains on their inaugural day - December 29.

However, 20832/20831 Sambalpur-Shalimar-Sambalpur Tri-Weekly Express via Talcher and Bhadrak will leave Sambalpur at 19:10hrs every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday w.e.f. January 3, 2023 and will leave Shalimar at 21:25hrs every Monday, Wednesday and Friday w.e.f. January 4, 2023.

Similarly, 08416/08415 Puri-Jaleswar-Puri Passenger will leave Puri at 13:15hrs towards Jaleswar w.e.f. December 31 and will leave Jaleswar at 04:50hrs towards Puri, everyday w.e.f. January 1, 2023.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Buguda, Ganjam, that I am actually known as Golak Bihari Padhy, S/o Surendranath Padhy, Village Chidananda Bihar, Buguda, Dist.: Ganjam, Odisha as per Aadhaar card and other Government certificates / documents. I had applied a passport at Ahmedabad as name as Padhy Golak Bihari Surendranath, Village Tikarapada, Ganjam, Odisha as passport name which was expired on 21 June 2016. Now I want to change my name in the passport as per correct name as Golak Bihari Padhy, S/o Surendranath Padhy instead of Padhy Golak Bihari Surendranath and reissue the passport. That I swear this affidavit is to produce before the concerned authorities/passport authorities for the purpose of reissue of Passport. That the facts stated above are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Russian roulette awaits all...

Continued from P1

Maganov's demise is indeed similar to the death of Antov who also had allegedly fallen from the window of his hotel in Rayagada. Two persons close to Maganov had then told 'Reuters' that it is very unlikely he died by suicide. Deaths of two Russian oligarchs Sergey Protosenya and Vladislav Avaev within a time gap of 24 hours in April shocked the world. Protosenya was found hanging April 18 inside the garden of his villa in Spain while the bodies of his wife and daughter with multiple stab wound were found inside a room. A day earlier multi-millionaire Avaev was found dead in his apartment on Universitetsky Prospekt in Moscow, together with his wife and daughter.

Nadda slams BJD govt

Continued from P1

Highlighting several developmental projects and schemes of the Modi government, Nadda said with an expenditure of over ₹220 crores, a seismic survey campaign has started on the Mahanadi river basin in the state for oil and gas exploration. The Centre has allotted two new iron ore blocks which will bring growth and development in Odisha, he pointed out. In Odisha, there are 87 Eklavya Model Residential Schools which are the highest in the country. For the Jal Jeevan Mission projects, the Centre has sanctioned ₹3,323 crores to Odisha, Nadda stated.

From data protection to revised IT Rules, 2023 awaits tech guardrails

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 28: As India aspires to become a \$5 trillion digital economy, it needs sharper regulations to tame Big Tech from misusing their market dominance, while promoting local innovation and talent. Will 2023 finally deliver key bills on digital personal data protection and cryptocurrency? Amid the pending bills are revised IT Rules, 2021 to tackle internet and social media intermediaries in order to create a safer experience for Indian users while protecting their privacy in mind, and rules on the regulation of online gaming as IT Ministry has now been made the nodal agency for matters related to online gaming.

The government in August withdrew the contentious Personal Data Protection (PDP) Bill that saw 81 amendments in the past three years, aiming to introduce a

new bill that fits into the comprehensive legal framework and protects the data of billions of citizens. The new draft will allow cross-border transfer of some users' data with "certain notified countries and territories".

The new PDP Bill has also proposed harsh penalties of as much as ₹250 crore on people and companies that fail to prevent data breaches.

The deadline for public consultation on the PDP Bill is till January 2, according to Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Union Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology.

On cryptocurrency, the government in the last Budget had announced a 30 per cent tax on any income from the transfer of virtual digital assets, specifying that no deductions and exemptions will be allowed.

In order to capture the transac-



tion details, the Centre also levied TDS on payment made in relation to transfer of virtual digital assets at the rate of 1 per cent of such consideration above a monetary threshold.

Industry experts feel that since the taxation part is done, the upcoming Union Budget will create

a regulatory framework for digital wallet companies.

India currently has around 15 million cryptocurrency users.

According to Raj Karkara, COO, ZebPay, in 2022, the crypto industry witnessed landmark events including the Ethereum Merge Upgrade, the launch of Central

Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) as well as the government's new crypto tax policy.

"In 2023, it will be the responsibility of all players in the crypto and Web3 ecosystem to foster a sense of security among its consumers. Putting in the right protocols and practices in place to avoid the impact of black swan events will be crucial to success," said Karkara.

The year ahead will weed out businesses with weaker models and practices. Sustainability and financial inclusion will be strong themes, promoting mass adoption of the asset class, he added.

In a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha earlier in December, Chandrasekhar had said there was no proposal to enact a separate law to regulate the digital media.

"To help achieve the aim of making the internet open, safe and trusted and accountable and to regulate the intermediaries, in-

cluding social media intermediaries, and in exercise of powers conferred by the Information Technology Act, 2000, the Central government has made the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021," read the reply.

In case an intermediary is a significant social media intermediary (one having more than 50 lakh registered users in India), it needs to additionally observe diligence in terms of appointing a chief compliance officer, a nodal contact person for 24x7 coordination with law enforcement agencies and a resident grievance officer, publishing monthly compliance reports.

Chandrasekhar recently spoke about the compliance with law, rules and guardrails for all social media platforms in the country.

Those guardrails are now the need of the hour.

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downtown

CS REVIEWS DEVPT PROJECTS IN PURI

During his visit, Mahapatra took stock of the Srimandir Parikrama Project and development work at Municipal Market Complex at Bada Danda among others

at Mochisahi and Municipal Market Complex at Bada Danda, parking facility at Jail Road, Odisha University, development of Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das Birthplace, the progress of construction of Biju Patnaik Indoor Stadium and Adarsh Vidyalayas and directed the departmental officials to expedite the works.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the Jagannath Ballav parking lot under the ABADHA Yojana, the Shree Setu Project being constructed at the cost of around ₹190 crore, the two-phase expansion of Musa river at the cost of around ₹133 crore, the exhibition and parking arena under construction at a cost of ₹180 crore, Habisiali shelter-Brundavati Niwas, Shree Jagannath Stadium.

He was apprised of the progress of the projects and discussed with the officers concerned about the implementation of the work. During the Chief Secretary's visit, Puri Collector Samarth Verma and other officials were present.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra Wednesday visited Puri district to review various developmental projects.

At a meeting, the Chief Secretary discussed with the senior officials concerned about the progress of various developmental projects in the district.

During his visit, the Chief Secretary reviewed the Srimandir Parikrama Project, development of Shwetaganga, Markanda, Narendra and Indradyumna heritage shrines under ABADHA Yojana, Mahodhi Market Complex



GOLDEN YIELD: Marigold farmers plucking the golden flowers at a field near Daya river in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

ED attaches ₹1.88cr assets of ex-cleaning assistant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: Assets worth ₹1.88 crore of a former cleaning assistant working with Odisha government have been attached under the anti-money laundering law, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said Wednesday.

The properties belong to Lingaraj Jena, the former cleaning assistant, posted in the of-

office of the additional sub-collector (settlement) in Puri district.

The money laundering case of the ED stems from a case of alleged possession of disproportionate assets filed by the Odisha Vigilance Directorate against Jena.

The chargesheet filed by the Vigilance Directorate said, "Jena had 'illicitly enriched' himself and his family members by ac-

quiring assets disproportionate to his known sources of income, totalling ₹1.88 crore."

The ED probe in the case registered under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) found that Jena "acquired monetary proceeds through indulgence in criminal activities, concealed it and invested the same in the acquisition of various assets."

Ketki wins ₹50k for NCC campaign logo



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: In a nationwide competition to design a logo on Puneet Sagar Abhiyan launched by NCC, Banshi Lal Ketki of Bolangir district in Odisha won the contest winning ₹50,000 in cash.

In the competition, 4433 entrants participated from across the country. Ketki's design was selected the best and he was handed over the cash prize on behalf of DG NCC by the DDG NCC Odisha in a function organised at Bhubaneswar recently.

Within a year since its launch December 1, 2021, Puneet Sagar Abhiyan has mobilised over 1.4 million cadets, 2,000 alumni, and 15 million citizens. This has resulted

in the removal and recycling of close to 200 tons of plastic from the environment.

NCC's Puneet Sagar campaign is sustainable because it is a 'bottom-up' initiative, run throughout the year, by specific units of organised and disciplined youth, in all the 766 districts of India. It has also adopted 75 waterfronts across the country and taken ownership of their maintenance.

The abhiyan has gained so much traction that the Prime Minister mentioned it in his 'Man ki Baat'. Puneet Sagar Abhiyan has become the lingua-franca for plastic cleaning with over 2100 communities and state government bodies across India.

Sewing machines distributed to 6 urban women

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: Six members of Bhubaneswar Young Urban Women Forum residing in slum area under Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC)

were provided sewing machines. The objective was to promote self reliance as well as empowerment.

The women thanked to Center for Child and Women Development (CCWD) and

ActionAid Association for their help. In the distribution programme, the Associate Director of Action Aid Debabrat Patra, CCWD Secretary Sadasiv Swain and others attended as guests and distributed the machines.



ODISSI TREAT: Artistes of Bardhaman Pratiba Cultural Centre, West Bengal performed Odissi at International Odissi Dance Festival at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

Farm-to-plate startup launches special menu

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: In line with the Chief Minister's emphasis on millet promotion and with both the Union and state government observing 2023 as the 'Year of Millets,' the state's first farm-to-plate startup Prima Farm Foods Private Limited launched a special menu on millets/ragi from its cloud kitchen in Bhubaneswar.

The platter of delicacies includes ragi samosa, millets dosa, millets uttapam, millets upma, chapatti, paratha, cakes and momos. The menu is specially designed for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians, informed Prima Farm Foods marketing director, Kallol Saha. "The dishes are specially curated to ensure taste while providing healthy food alternatives to the people," he added.

Prima is registered as a startup under government of India and government of Odisha startup programme. Its new launch of ragi-based samosa (veg/non-veg), dosa/uttapam, upma, chapatti, paratha, cakes & momos are specially curated to give a lasting taste to the food using millets.



Customers can now have healthy Ragi alternatives to their breakfast, lunch or dinner, he said.

The dishes can be ordered through Prima Farm Foods mobile app both on android and iphone, zomato and whatsapp on 9078710590

Prima Farm Foods is also innovating in the different ways to add value to the existing system of production and sales of vegetables and fruits.

At Prima, we do not use chemical agents for ripening a fruit or enhance the colour of the vegetable as our storage time is almost negligible. Our processed foods are also without chemical preservatives, Saha added.

Environment award to Panigrahi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: Environmentalist and secretary of Orissa Environmental Society, Jayakrushna Panigrahi has been bestowed with Manmohan Mohanty Environment Award by the leading cultural organization, Nimapara Sahitya Sansad Wednesday.

In the inaugural session of its 9th Annual national literary festival, the Sansad felicitated some experts in the fields of literature, social service, environment and sculpting for their admirable contributions.

The former Professor and HoD of Geology, Utkal University, Mohanty was a well-known environmen-

talist who was involved in many conservation initiatives and was a role model for the youth. The recipient of the award instituted in his memory, Panigrahi has been working for the protection and conservation of the environment, and awareness generation among the public for the last three decades. For providing information on diverse environmental issues and

enhancing people's commitment, he has been playing his role being associated with the print and electronic media. As a member of some committees of the Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, he has also been making his contributions.



Bank of India
Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015

POSSESSION NOTICE

[Rule-8(1)] of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer of the Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Branch** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrowers/Guarantor in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **possession** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrowers/Guarantor 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 **Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Branch** for an amount mentioned below with interest & expenses thereon. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.**

BHubaneswar Branch/ Name & Address of Borrowers/Guarantor	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice/ Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Property
Borrowers: 1) Sakilur Rahaman, 2) Sabera Raheman, 3) Anisha Raheman, All are at 151, Azad Nagar, Sundarpada, Backside of Municipal High School, Kapil Prasad, Bhubaneswar, Khurda-751002 / Guarantor: Fakeha Ahesan , W/o: Syed Md Ahesan, At: Plot No.: 318, Azad Nagar, Kapil Prasad, Sundarpada, Bhubaneswar-751002	₹ 23,55,956/- + interest & expenses thereon	22.08.2021 26.12.2022	All that part and parcel of the Property of Land and structures/installations Situated over Khata No.: 884/124, Plot No.: 52, Area: Ac.0.228 Dec., KISSAM : Gharabari, at Mouza: Bhubaneswar Sahar Unit No.: 23 Kapil Prasad, PS/TS: Bhubaneswar, Dist: Khurda, Odisha, PIN-751002, Standing in the name of Sabera Raheman alias Sabera Bibi , W/o: Late Sek Latifur Raheman, Bounded (As per Sale Deed) by North: Govt. Road, South: Mofiran Bibi, East: Abjun Bibi, West: Govt. Land, Bounded (As per Physical) by North: 20' wide Road, South : Mofiran Bibi, East: Abjun Bibi, West: Govt. Land

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 29.12.2022

Authorised Officer, Bank of India

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
P.H. DIVISION, BHANJANAGAR, AT CHATRAPUR
Phone-06811 263909, FAX -06811 263950
No.C-2158: E-mail-eehpdrkl@gmail.com
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
1st Corrigendum Notice dated.27.12.2022
To Bid Identification No. 44/03 / SPH(C) / 2022-23 dt. 19.12.2022
Name of Work: 7 (Seven) Nos. of Works
Estimated Cost: 05.73 Lakh to 12.42 Lakh

Sl. No.	Description	Critical Dates
(i)	Period of availability of tender on-line	From 11.00AM of 29.12.2022 to 5.00 PM of 10.01.2023
(ii)	Last date & time of seeking clarification	Upto 5.00PM. of 08.01.2023
(iii)	Last date & time of bidding on-line	5.00PM of 10.01.2023
(iv)	Date & time of opening of Bid	11.00A.M. on dated 11.01.2023

Sd./- Superintending Engineer
P.H.Division, Bhanjanagar
at Chatrapur
OIPR-13172/11/0013/2223

WORKS DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
ROURKELA (R&B) DIVISION,
UDITNAGAR, ROURKELA
No.B-1060: E-Mail Id - eepwdrkl@gmail.com
Government of Orissa "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.: 60 / 2022-23 Dated:23.11.2022

- Number of works: 02 (Two) number of Works
- Estimated cost: Rs.11.23 Lakhs to 18.21 Lakhs
- Period of completion: 1 (One) calendar month
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal: Dt 02.01.2023 at 11.00A.M.
- Last date/ Time for receipt of bids in the portal: Dt 10.01.2023 up to 05.00 P.M.
- Date of opening of Bid: Dt.11.01.2023 at 11.00A.M.
- Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid: Superintending Engineer (R & B) Division, Rourkela, Uditnagar.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>

Sd./- Superintending Engineer
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OIPR-34068/11/0038/2223

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take Truth for your refuge.
THE MOTHER



Perilous Plastic

In late November, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution met for the first time. The INC was established by the United Nations Environment Assembly with a well-defined mission: to create the first-ever legally binding global agreement on plastic pollution. The fact that delegates and observers finally met to have this discussion is welcome. But the meeting results are just the beginning of addressing the scale or scope of the problem.

Plastic pollution threatens people's health and endangers the environment. And plastic causes harm throughout its entire lifecycle, beginning with resource extraction and continuing after disposal.

But the problem is not just plastic itself. Plastic contains over 10,000 chemicals, more than a quarter of which are toxic to humans and wildlife. In the absence of a global requirement that companies make known exactly which chemicals are in which plastic materials and goods, what we know about plastic in our lives is dictated by the whims of individual manufacturers and national legislatures. As a result, we are ignorant of the full extent of the problem. No one – from workers facing occupational hazards to parents trying to make healthy choices for their children – has all the information they could and should have.

Plastic does not affect everyone equally. Vulnerable groups like low-income families, indigenous communities, and people of colour are especially at risk. For example, the vulnerable and disadvantaged are more likely to live or work near petrochemical manufacturing facilities and refineries, exposing them to air, water, and soil pollution from the toxic chemicals used to manufacture plastic products.

This inequality exists within and between countries. Plastic products are often made in developing countries, transported to developed countries, and then returned to developing countries as waste. It is not only the last stage of plastics' lifecycle that creates pollution and endangers communities. Plastic production itself is hazardous.

Consider the textile sector, where workers create clothes from synthetic fibres made of plastics. The workers are largely unaware of the toxicity of the chemicals they are using while they assemble skirts and shirts for people an ocean away. They do not have all the information they need to understand the risks they are facing from doing their jobs. There is an obvious gendered component to this, too, given that the textile sector in developing countries is dominated by women.

But while people are unfairly and unevenly affected by plastic pollution, the reality is that no one is spared. Plastic pollution does not respect borders. Women everywhere use menstrual products containing plastics with chemicals that pose a direct risk to their health. Children all over the world, including in wealthy countries, play with cheap plastic toys containing unknown chemicals.

Given the high-stakes challenges facing the first INC, it is disappointing that delegates did not even manage to adopt procedural rules. More substantive negotiations will be delayed until they do.

There were some small successes. The presence of observers permitted corridor conversations in which they could help delegates better understand the link between plastic, chemicals, and health. This was reflected in some delegates' statements, which highlighted the need for transparency on chemicals in plastics.

That is not nothing. But it is also not enough.

In May 2023, delegates will have another chance. Representatives of governments from around the world will convene in Paris for the INC's second meeting. Their mission will once again be to work toward a legally binding agreement on plastic pollution.

Delegates cannot simply retrace the same ground as in November. Delegates will need to demonstrate their governments' commitment to reducing plastic production. Together, they will need to consider the entire plastic lifecycle and the dangers that it poses to communities, people, and the environment.

Perhaps most important, they will need to remember that the point of these meetings is to establish a global, legally binding instrument, not to shrug and sigh and let countries follow mere voluntary guidelines, effectively allowing business as usual to continue.

In Paris next year, negotiations on plastic pollution need to be both more efficient and more ambitious. Delegates must act as though they are saving the world. If they get this right, they will be.

The writers are Co-Directors of Health and Environment Justice Support.
©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Olga Speranskaya & Alexandra Caterbow

Plastic causes harm throughout its entire lifecycle, beginning with resource extraction and continuing after disposal

CREDIBLE SELECTION MUST

FOCUS NATION



Satya Narayan Misra

THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE HAS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED WITH THE BJP COMING TO POWER IN 2014

The Supreme Court, responding to a PIL, has stirred a hornet's nest by asking the government the method by which the election commissioners (ECs) are being appointed. As per Article 324 (2) of the Constitution, the ECs are to be appointed by the President subject to the "provision of law in that behalf by the Parliament." Ironically, since the beginning of appointment to the post of Chief Election Commissioner, no government has formulated a standard operating procedure for selecting them. In the absence of such a manifest SOP, the ECs are picked up by the Prime Minister from a list of IAS officers who are senior. The question which the SC will grapple with when the matter comes for the hearing is: Is it time to abdicate complete control of the executive over appointment of ECs or the government should have a broader based selection method as is practiced in countries like South Africa.

The classical understanding of modern democracy is that there are three wings of a state – legislature, executive and judiciary. However, healthy democracies have always thumb-nailed the need for a fourth branch to exercise check and balance over the executive by the judiciary and conducting free and fair elections without being purloined by the party in power by the Election Commission. The role of the ECs in the regulation of elections is of vital importance throughout the world because democratic legitimacy depends critically on election credibility. The SC in the Raj Narayan Vs Indira Gandhi case (1975) has also categorised independent conduct of election as a basic structure of the Constitution which can't be emasculated.

The ECs have generally acted in a passive way till the arrival of TN Seshan who served as the CEC from 1990 to 1996. He was instru-



Credibility in the selection process of CEC and ECs would go a long way in bolstering our credentials as a democracy wedded to multiculturalism and fairness to religious minorities

mental in redefining the status and visibility of the Election Commission. During his tenure the substantive changes that were introduced were voter ID cards, enforcement of electoral code of conduct and appointment of independent election observers to oversee the conduct of elections and potential misuse of money. JM Lyngdoh as CEC postponed the election in Gujarat by six months in 2002 since he didn't want the ruling BJP to capitalise on Hindu votes after the Hindu-Muslim riots. The 1990s witnessed a surge in voting by the under-privileged, economically and socially backward, classes as compared to the highly educated urban upper class.

While the SC has been generally supportive of the CEC in the conduct of elections and has never interfered when the election is in process; its Hindutva judgement in 1995 remains a low watermark in the credibility of the judiciary. Justice Varma and two other judges considered open appeal to Hindu religion by the Shiv Sena and the BJP in Maharashtra in 1987 does not violate Section 123 of RPA 1951, which considers use of caste, religion and race by candidates

as corrupt practice, warranting forfeiture of seat. For Justice Verma and his brother judges the appeal to Hindutva was not corrupt practice as Hindutva is a way of life.

The role of the executive has significantly increased with the BJP coming to power in 2014. There is a perception that the government has been appointing ECs who can do the bidding of the government. When Ashok Lavasa, the EC, opposed clean chits by the other ECs and the CEC against complaints against PM Modi for violation of model code of conduct in 2019, he was not allowed to put his protest note in the CEC website. He wrote "minority decisions where being suppressed in a manner contrary to well established conventions observed by multi member statutory bodies. A society that creates hurdles, paves the path for its own perdition." Lavasa's family members were hounded by the I-T authorities for the independence that he displayed.

The Dinesh Goswami committee in 1990 suggested that the CEC should be selected by a committee comprising of PM, Lok Sabha Speaker, Law Minister, Leader of Opposition and a judge of the SC.

In the famous Vineet Narayan case (1997) the SC had advised the government that the Director CBI should be selected by a committee comprising of PM, CJI and Leader of Opposition. The South African constitution which is considered a model constitution identifies nine institutions including auditor general, EC and Human Rights Commissioner as guards of democracy. They are selected by a wide array of experts including judges, members of civil society, government, opposition and independent experts. It may be recalled that in the PJ Thomas case (2011), the SC struck out the appointment of PJ Thomas as CVC, though approved by a high power committee, as he was a part of a chargesheet for corruption in importing palmolein. For the court, the CVC who will look into the integrity of civil servants should be not only a man of integrity but should be seen/perceived as one.

In the majoritarian government that we have at the Centre, it is high time that the selection of the EC must not be left to the executive alone but to a broad based committee in which apart from the PM, the CJI and Leader of Opposition and both Houses of Parliament become members. Ironically, the selection process of judges through the present opaque collegium system is under challenge and the government has been asking for its substitution by NJAC which was approved by the Parliament in 2015. Before the SC gives verdict about the selection process of the EC, it must do some soul searching and set its house in order. Credibility in the selection process of CEC and ECs would go a long way in bolstering our credentials as a democracy wedded to multiculturalism and fairness to religious minorities.

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

SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

AI in the common interest

The tech world has generated a fresh abundance of front-page news in 2022. In October, Elon Musk bought Twitter – one of the main public communication platforms used by journalists, academics, businesses, and policymakers – and proceeded to fire most of its content-moderation staff, indicating that the company would rely instead on artificial intelligence.

Then, in November, a group of Meta employees revealed that they had devised an AI programme capable of beating most humans in the strategy game Diplomacy. In Shenzhen, China, officials are using "digital twins" of thousands of 5G-connected mobile devices to monitor and manage flows of people, traffic, and energy consumption in real time. And with the latest iteration of ChatGPT's language-prediction model, many are declaring the end of the college essay.

In short, it was a year in which already serious concerns about how technologies are being designed and used deepened into even more urgent misgivings. Who is in charge here? Who should be in charge? Public policies and institutions should be designed to ensure that innovations are improving the world, yet many technologies are currently being deployed in a vacuum. We need inclusive mission-oriented governance structures that are centered around a true common good. Capable governments can shape

this technological revolution to serve the public interest.

Consider AI, which the Oxford English Dictionary defines broadly as "the theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages." AI can make our lives better in many ways. It can enhance food production and management, by making farming more efficient and improving food safety. It can help us bolster resilience against natural disasters, design energy-efficient buildings, improve power storage, and optimise renewable energy deployment. And it can enhance the accuracy of medical diagnostics when combined with doctors' own assessments.

These applications would make our lives better in many ways. But with no effective rules in place, AI is likely to create new inequalities and amplify pre-existing ones. One need not look far to find examples of AI-powered systems reproducing unfair social biases. In one recent experiment, robots powered by a machine-learning algorithm became overtly racist and sexist. Without better oversight, algorithms that are supposed to help the public sector manage welfare benefits may discriminate against families that are in real need. Equally worrying, public authorities in some countries are already using AI-powered facial-recognition tech-

nology to monitor political dissent and subject citizens to mass-surveillance regimes.

Market concentration is also a major concern. AI development – and control of the underlying data – is dominated by just a few powerful players in just a few locales. Between 2013 and 2021, China and the United States accounted for 80% of private AI investment globally. There is now a massive power imbalance between the private owners of these technologies and the rest of us.

But AI is being boosted by massive public investment as well. Such financing should be governed for the common good, not in the interest of the few. We need a digital architecture that shares the rewards of collective value creation more equitably. The era of light-touch self-regulation must end.

We need an "ethical by design" AI mission that is underpinned by sound regulation and capable governments working to shape this technological revolution in the common interest, rather than in shareholders' interest alone. With these pillars in place, the private sector can and will join the broader effort to make technologies safer and fairer.

Effective public oversight should ensure that digitalisation and AI are creating opportunities for public value creation. This principle is integral to UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, a normative framework that was adopted by 193 member states in November 2021. Moreover, key

players are now taking responsibility for reframing the debate, with US President Joe Biden's administration proposing an AI Bill of Rights, and the European Union developing a holistic framework for governing AI.

Still, we also must keep the public sector's own uses of AI on a sound ethical footing. With AI supporting more and more decision-making, it is important to ensure that AI systems are not used in ways that subvert democracy or violate human rights.

We also must address the lack of investment in the public sector's own innovative and governance capacities. COVID-19 has underscored the need for more dynamic public-sector capabilities. Without robust terms and conditions governing public-private partnerships, for example, companies can easily capture the agenda.

Our societies' future is at stake. We must not only fix the problems and control the downside risks of AI, but also shape the direction of the digital transformation and technological innovation more broadly. At the start of a new year, there is no better time to begin laying the foundation for limitless innovation in the interest of all.

Gabriela Ramos is Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences at UNESCO. Mariana Mazzucato is Professor at University College London. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Gabriela Ramos & Mariana Mazzucato

AI DEVELOPMENT IS DOMINATED BY JUST A FEW POWERFUL PLAYERS IN JUST A FEW LOCALES

WISDOM CORNER

Talent hits a target no one else can hit; Genius hits a target no one else can see.
ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

Our virtues and our failings are inseparable, like force and matter. When they separate, man is no more.
NIKOLA TESLA

Most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility, and most people are frightened of responsibility.
SIGMUND FREUD

WORDSWORTH

Eleemosynary

This strange word was introduced into English in the early part of the seventeenth century, as an adjective that pertains to alms or almsgiving or charitable actions. It derives from medieval Latin eleemosynarius, "compassion, mercy", which can be traced back to the Greek eleos, "pity". The 1911 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica used it to describe the medieval Canterbury Cathedral: *At the greatest possible distance from the church, beyond the precinct of the convent, is the eleemosynary department. The almonry for the relief of the poor, with a great hall annexed, forms the paupers' hospitiium.* Though they don't look it, eleemosynary and alms are connected. The second is the older, which arrived in Old English in a very distorted form via Old High German from a relative of the Latin original. At first it was spelt *almes*, but had been shortened to its modern form by the seventeenth century. By another route, this time through French, the Latin word turned up as *aumony*, "a place where alms were given", an office in a religious house or household of a prince or bishop; the person in charge was called the *aumoner*. By the seventeenth century these had come to be spelt in the modern way as *almony* and *almoner*, but it was only at the very end of the nineteenth century that the latter was applied to an officer in a hospital who looks after patients' welfare, a post now more commonly called a medical social worker.

Elgar case revelation

Sir, A senior police official investigating caste violence on members of the Dalit community at Bhima Koregaon on January 1, 2018, has on oath, admitted that the Elgar Parishad event, organised 30 kilometers away from Pune city, had no role in the violence. This significant revelation by Sub-Divisional Police Officer Ganesh More, made before the two-member judicial commission to investigate the violence, rips to pieces the Pune police and the National Investigation Agency's claims against the 16 human rights defenders arrested in a separate case. The NIA claims that these 16 people played an active role in provoking the gathered crowd at Bhima Koregaon with their speeches and triggering violence on the 200th anniversary celebration of the battle of Bhima Koregaon. While three persons have been released on bail, and one person died in custody, the remaining 12 continue to languish in prisons. In an ongoing deposition that began in April this year, More, who recently retired, admitted that the nine cases of atrocities filed within his jurisdiction and investigated by him did not show any role in the Elgar Parishad event. This is perhaps the first time any state representative has accepted that the Elgar Parishad event had no role to play in the violence.
Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

High flying birds

Sir, The bar-headed geese, one of the world's highest flying birds, recently visited the famous Muttukadu backwaters on the East Coast Road of Chennai. Being an avid reader of migratory birds and their behavioural patterns, this interested me much. Bar-headed geese, which belong to the Anser family, look beautiful and elegant. When flying, these birds appear to have all-grey plumage with black wingtips. Researchers say that bar-headed geese fly over the world's tallest mountain range of Himalayas at a height of 21,000 feet (6,400 meters) to reach India, and the migration takes about two months, covering a distance of around 5,000 miles (8,000 kilometers). But what is really staggering is that in the last leg of their trip, these resilient birds fly 1,000 km non-stop for eight straight hours. No other creature on earth comes anywhere close to bar-headed geese in making a similar high altitude migration. George Lowe, the New Zealand born mountaineer, who supported Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay's ascent in 1953, claimed that he had seen the geese from close range flying over the top of the Mount Everest.
Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Teacher drowns while trying to save students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Dec 28: A teacher drowned in Mahanadi while trying to save two of his students from drowning near 'Smashana Tutha' at Kantilo under Khandapara block in Nayagarh district Wednesday.

The teacher has been identified as Saroj Kumar Das (32). He hailed from Sankhapada village under Mahakalapara block in Kendrapara district.

As per reports, Saroj was a teacher at a private coaching centre. He along with his colleagues and students had gone to Nilamadhav shrine at Kantilo Tuesday night. When some of them were bathing in the Mahanadi Wednesday morning, two of the students went into deep water.

In a bid to save the students from drowning, Saroj also plunged into deep water. However, he himself drowned in deep water

The teacher and his students had gone to Nilamadhav shrine at Kantilo Tuesday night

and went missing.

Later, local people rescued him and he was rushed to the nearby hospital in critical condition. However, doctors declared him brought dead.

The accident has left the people in the area in deep shock. Upon being informed, Mahakalapara police reached the spot and started a preliminary investigation into the incident.

The family members of the deceased have been informed about the incident. "It's quite an unfortunate incident. We lost our colleague in the mishap. It's a great loss for us. All the staff and students are in shock," said a staffer of the coaching centre.



MESMERISING PERFORMANCE: Artists of Prasannakshi Kala Anusthan performed Odissi dance on the concluding day of Gopalpur beach festival, Wednesday

Doctors at PRMCH 'diverting patients' to private hospitals

The matter came to the fore after a patient Amarjit Kumar lodged a complaint with the superintendent of the PRM Medical College and Hospital demanding action

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Dec 28: Doctors at Pandit Raghunath Murmu Medical College and Hospital (PRMCH) here are allegedly coercing the patients to visit the private hospitals for treatment.

The matter came to the fore after a patient Amarjit Kumar lodged a complaint with the superintendent Dr Pratibha Panda of the PRM Medical College and Hospital demanding action.

Reports said that Amarjit, a native of Damodarpar area on Baripada outskirts visited the hospital February 15. A doctor at the hospital conducted a check-up of his health and advised him of surgery, November 16. Later, the date for surgery was shifted to December 26 and he was asked to undergo a Covid examination before the surgery.



He visited the hospital on the aforementioned date December 26 but had to return as the doctor was absent.

Amarjit again visited the hospital and met the doctor December 28 for the surgery. He was shocked when the doctor pulled him up under various pretexts. The doctor also told him not to wait to get the surgery done at the government hospital but instead told him to visit the private hospital and get the small surgery done. When he objected to such advice, the staff at the hospital asked him to leave.

Left with no option, he met the superintendent of PRMCH Dr Pratibha Panda and lodged a complaint in this regard. The incident has sparked resentment and drawn flak from the patients and their

attendants. They alleged that when the state government is providing free treatment facilities to the patients under the welfare schemes, the government doctors' love for private hospitals is affecting the successful implementation of government welfare schemes.

Chatters are abuzz that the private hospitals are luring the doctors with attractive offerings through their agents and the staff members at the government hospital are working behind the scene to send the patients to the private hospitals.

When contacted, PRMCH superintendent Dr Pratibha Panda said that the HoD of the concerned department has been asked to submit a report in this regard and action will be taken after receiving the report.

Restore normalcy in Sambalpur dist court: BJP to govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambalpur, Dec 28: A high-level BJP team has urged the state government to take steps to restore normalcy in Sambalpur district court.

The team which included Bargarh MP Suresh Pujari, Kalahandi MP Basanta Panda, Sambalpur MP Nitesh Ganga Deb, and party MLAs Subash Panigrahi, Nauri Naik, Bhawani Bhoi, Kusum Tete and Mukesh Mahaling, visited Sambalpur Tuesday and took stock of the situation following the December 12 violence in the district court complex here.

Pujari said they met the leaders of the Sambalpur District Bar Association (SDBA) in jail, the judges of the Sambalpur court, lawyers of different bar associations, citizens of Sambalpur, Revenue Divisional Commissioner, Northern Division, IGP, Sambalpur district Collector and SP during the visit and discussed on how the deadlock can end and how the bail process of the arrested lawyers can be expedited.



Stating that the litigants are facing problems as the court work has been affected due to the deadlock, Pujari said that Section 144 CrPc is still in force in the court premises. "We are hopeful that the crisis will end and normalcy will be restored. We will file a report of the visit to the BJP state leadership and central leadership," he added.

SAMBALPUR NECKLACE ROAD PROJECT

People on building spree eyeing fat compensation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Dec 28: The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has launched the process of land acquisition for construction of a necklace road around Sambalpur town.

The four lane necklace road to be constructed at an expense of ₹1,000 crore will start from Goshala, Katapali on NH-53 and end run via Maneswar, Jayantpur and Kabrapali to connect at Biju Expressway at Sasan.

The NHAI has also issued notice to the concerned landowners for acquisition of their land under Section 3(A) of the Land Acquisition Act.

As per norms, the status of land cannot be changed in the concerned area after the notification for land acquisition. The notice debar the land owners from building any new structure or further construction on their land identified for acquisition. In case of any urgency, the concerned land owner has to obtain the permission of the district Collector before carrying out any new construction.

However, the rules have been completely violated here. Some unscrupulous land owners are going against the rules and constructing houses on the identified land to grab hefty compensation. They are not alone in this move and carrying out the house construction in connivance with some unscrupulous revenue officials, land



agents and brokers. Several complaints have been lodged with the authorities but their pleas are yet to be addressed.

The concerned land owners are even threatening the people who dare to lodge complaint against them. They claim to be constructing the house after a discussion with revenue officials.

Earlier, reports of similar misappropriation in land acquisition for construction of National Highway-55 had appeared in various media following which the concerned company had to return ₹23 lakh towards compensation to the state government.

Moreover, examples of people illegally constructing houses on the land identified for acquisition and grabbing government money under various pretexts is not new.

According to reports, the Land Acquisition department has published notifications in various newspapers and issued notice to the concerned villages for construction of necklace road in the town from the month of July.

BJD slams NDA, seeks tribal status for 160 communities

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, Dec 28: Training its gun at the NDA government for 'neglecting the state', the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) raised the issue of tribal status to 160 tribal communities living in the state.

Scores of party workers took out a rally and staged a demonstration before a sit-in in front of the Sundargarh Collectorate Wednesday "Over 160 tribal communities live in different parts of the state. The Central government has neglected them. These communities should be enlisted as tribals by the Central government," they fumed.

Addressing the rally, BJD leaders including Binay Topo, Kamal Lakra, Sushila Topo, Jaynarayan Tripathy, Lalatendu Parida, Jogesh Kumar Singh, Kunti Pradhan, Benudhar Tandia, Manoj Barua, Manjulata Nayak and Jalmani Kerketa slammed the Central government and later submitted a memorandum addressed to the President through the Collector.

Titlagarh tribals stage rally over poor healthcare



POST NEWS NETWORK

Titlagarh, Dec 28: Armed with traditional weapons, hundreds of tribals including women took out a protest rally amid beating of drums and other musical instruments in Titlagarh town of Bolangir district over poor healthcare and multiple other demands, Wednesday.

Due to the rally, road traffic was out of gear for several hours in the town. The administration had to deploy police force in large numbers in the town. The tribals staged a demonstration in front of the Sub-Collector's office for hours. Later, they submitted a memorandum addressed to the Chief Minister and the Collector through the Sub-Collector.

They demanded that the state government should stop leasing out forest, hilly, riverine and pasture lands to companies as those are essentially connected with their heritage and culture.

"Several posts of doctors are lying vacant at the Titlagarh sub-divisional hospital. People from fringe villages of Nuapada and Kalahandi districts are also dependent on this hospital for healthcare. However, vacancy of doctors has paralysed the healthcare facility. At least 18 doctors are required at the hospital whereas only six doctors are managing the healthcare services. Unable to get emergency treatment, critical patients often die. The hospital lacks necessary diagnostic instruments for testing," they lamented.

Jagatsinghpur Dy Collector held over DA

Jagatsinghpur: Vigilance officials Wednesday arrested Deputy Collector of Jagatsinghpur Chitta Ranjan Pilla for amassing disproportionate assets up to 191% higher than his known sources of income, said an official. During house searches, the Vigilance unearthed several flats and buildings in Balasore, Sonepur districts apart from Bhubaneswar, cash ₹1.85 lakh; bank, insurance deposits and investment in mutual funds worth approximately ₹48.71 lakh; 2 four wheelers worth ₹11.40 lakh; 3 two wheelers worth over ₹3.24 lakh; gold and household articles worth over ₹13.64 lakh in the name of Pilla and his family members, the release said. Vigilance has registered a case against Pilla and his spouse in this connection. Further investigation into the case is in progress, the release said. According to the release, Pilla joined in government service as junior clerk February 10, 1993, and served at Patnagarh, Bolangir, Ranpur tehsils and DRDA, Sonepur.

Female elephant's carcass recovered

Dhenkanal: Forest officials recovered the decomposed carcass of a female elephant from Nandinia reserve forest under Hindol forest range in Dhenkanal district, Wednesday. As per sources, the carcass of the elephant aged within 10 was lying at the entrance of Nandinia forest for the last 10 days, but the forest officials' failure to get any trace of the dead animal has sparked surprise. Many tourists also visited the Nandinia jungle for picnic during the Christmas, but they also failed to know about the dead animal. On being informed, DFO Prakashchand Gogineni rushed to the spot and launched an investigation. A post-mortem was conducted on the carcass and some of its body samples were sent for examination to Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), the DFO said. However, the exact reason behind the death of the animal is yet to be ascertained.

WORLD FAMOUS 'DHANU YATRA' BEGINS IN BARGARH

The festival, which is being organised after a gap of two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will conclude January 6 next year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambalpur, Dec 28: The 'Dhanu Yatra' festival, considered to be the world's largest open-air theatre, began Tuesday in the western Odisha town of Bargarh.

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered greetings to the people of the eastern state with the commencement of the 11-day festival.

"My greetings to the people of Odisha on the beginning of Dhanuyatra, the 11-day festival of the masses. Episodes related to Bhagawan Shri Krishna will be presented through folk art forms

which touch the hearts of millions of people. I wish the festival a grand success," Murmu said on Twitter.

The 'Dhanu Yatra', which marks the victory of good over evil, came into existence in Bargarh in 1947-48 as part of the celebration of the country's Independence and is held annually.

"The vibrant Dhanu Yatra is associated with the culture of Odisha. As this Yatra begins, my greetings to everyone. May this Yatra further the spirit of harmony and happiness in our society," PM Modi said on the microblogging site.

The plays in the festival start with the dethroning of Emperor



Ugrasen of Mathura by angry Kansa over the marriage of his sister Devaki with Vasudev.

The festival will conclude with the death of demon king Kansa and restoration of the throne to

Ugrasen, said a member of the Dhanu Yatra Mahotsav Committee.

With the commencement of the festival, Bargarh becomes King Kansa's Mathura, and Amapali, located about eight kilometre away,

My greetings to the people of Odisha on the beginning of Dhanuyatra, the 11-day festival of the masses. Episodes related to Bhagawan Shri Krishna will be presented through folk art forms which touch the hearts of millions of people. I wish the festival a grand success

DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT OF INDIA

becomes Gopapura, where Lord Krishna is said to have spent his childhood. The Jeera river which flows between the two places becomes the Yamuna river.

The festival, which is being organised after a gap of two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will conclude January 6 next year.

The rule of Kansa, his death and the exploits of Lord Krishna are enacted in 14 places across the area during the open-air festival. Politicians and government officers get sucked into the show as the rule of King Kansa holds sway during the 'Dhanu Yatra'.

During his rule in Bargarh, the demon king Kansa penalises offenders on the streets and also enters the government offices and pulls up undisciplined officials. He also listens to the grievances of people at his 'darbar' and passes orders even to government officials.

"Around 3,500 artistes of 155 cultural troupes from across the country and abroad will perform at the Rajdurbar and Rangamahal during the festival this year," said Rabi Narayan Panda, the co-convenor of the publicity committee of the 'Dhanu Yatra'.

national

of the day quote

Police must not make a show of strength in the border areas but must be in constant touch with the citizens and resolve their issues

If we do not save democracy, the BJP, RSS and Prime Minister Modi will destroy the country and take it on the path of dictatorship

Kashmiri Pandits have suffered a lot during the past three decades and there should be an amendment in the J&K reorganisation commission

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | KARNATAKA CM

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

SUSHIL KUMAR MODI | BJP MP

SHORT TAKES

Two more arrested in Coimbatore blast case

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Wednesday arrested two more alleged terror operatives in connection with the car bomb blast in front of the Kottai Eswaran Temple in Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu October 23. The accused have been identified as Sheikh Hidayathullah and Sanofar Ali. Nine other accused persons were arrested in connection with the case earlier.

2nd phase of civic polls ends in Bihar

Patna: Voting for the second and last phase of civic body polls in Bihar concluded peacefully Wednesday, with only some stray incidents of violence reported. Stone-pelting occurred between supporters of two candidates in Bihar's Nalanda district, leaving several persons injured. District police carried out a baton charge to disperse the mob. Superintendent of Police Ashok Mishra said that the efforts are on to identify the accused who were involved in arson at polling booth number 29 of Bihar Sharif.

CUET-PG to be held from June 1-10: NTA

New Delhi: The Common University Entrance Test (CUET) for admission to postgraduate courses will be conducted from June 1 to June 10, 2023, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced Wednesday. "NTA will conduct CUET-PG from 1st to 10th June 2023. The application process is to start in mid-March 2023," it said.

Catholic priest sentenced to 7 yrs

Kochi: A special Pocco court in Kerala's Trissur on Wednesday sentenced Catholic priest Raju Kogan to seven years imprisonment for sexually assaulting a minor girl in his diocese. The incident occurred in 2014 and after the incident became public, Raju was on the run. However, the Kerala Police soon traced him to Tamil Nadu's Nagercoil and arrested him. The girl, hailing from an impoverished background, was lured by Raju, the parish vicar at a Trissur church on promises of new clothes and he also took pictures of the girl.

More trouble for Kochhars, Dhoot

Mumbai: A special court here Wednesday extended the CBI custody of former ICICI Bank MD and CEO Chanda Kochhar, her businessman husband Deepak Kochhar and Videocon Group head Venugopal Dhoot by a day till Thursday.



You could not double the farm income. Farmers are in trouble. Prices are spiralling, be it fertiliser, petrol, diesel or cooking gas. The Prime Minister had said 'Aachhe Din Ayenge' (Good days will come). We don't see that

SIDDARAMAIAH | CONGRESS LEADER

EAM TO VISIT CYPRUS, AUSTRIA

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will visit the Republic of Cyprus and Austria from December 29 to January 3, an official statement said Wednesday. In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the minister will be in Republic of Cyprus (RoC) from December 29 to December 31, 2022. This year marks 60 years of the diplomatic relations between India and Cyprus



Anurag Thakur unveils Centre's 2023 calendar



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: Union Minister Anurag Thakur Wednesday released the official calendar of the Union government for 2023, saying it would not just showcase the Narendra Modi dispensation's achievements and its future commitments but also serve as "a reminder of our duties". The calendar with the theme 'Naya Varsh, Naye Sankalp', to be made available across all government offices and panchayati raj institutions in the country, has "an impressive collection" of 12 images for each of 12 months depicting "a dynamically grow-

ing India", the Information and Broadcasting Minister said in his address after unveiling the 'Government of India calendar 2023' at an event here. While the collection of 12 select images in the calendar presents a glimpse into the "strenuous efforts" made by the government towards public welfare, they also reflect the prime minister's belief in 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas', he added. The Centre's official calendar has been published, both in digital and physical format, after a gap of two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the country in 2020.



Tourists do river rafting in the River Beas in Manali

PTI PHOTO

Cong alleges 'security breaches' during BJK

Asserting that the Congress has lost its leaders and former PMs --Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi-- for the country's unity, AICC general secretary K C Venugopal in a letter to Amit Shah said, "the government should not indulge in vindictive politics and ensure the safety and security of the Congress leaders"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: The Congress Wednesday wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah, alleging "security breaches" during the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' (BJY) in the national capital and demanded immediate steps to ensure the security of Rahul Gandhi and others taking part in the yatra. Asserting that the Congress has lost its leaders and former Prime Ministers --Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi-- for the country's unity, AICC general secretary K C Venugopal in a letter to Shah said, "the government should not indulge in vindictive politics and ensure the safety and security of the Congress leaders". Citing instances of "miscreants" entering the yatra camp site illegally, Venugopal alleged that they were Haryana's intelligence security

personnel, who interrogated people who took part in the yatra. "The security of the yatra was compromised on multiple occasions following its entry into Delhi on Saturday. Delhi Police completely failed to control the surging crowds and maintain a perimeter around Rahul Gandhi, who has "Z+ Security", he alleged. The situation was so severe that Congress workers and 'Bharat yatri's' walking with Rahul Gandhi had to form a security perimeter, he said and claimed that "Delhi Police remained mute spectators". "Bharat Jodo Yatra is a padyatra to bring peace and harmony to the country. The government should not indulge in vindictive politics and ensure the safety and security of the Congress leaders," Venugopal said. He sought improved security for the yatra as it is set to enter the



sensitive states of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. The yatra will resume January 3, 2023, after taking a nine-day break in Delhi. "Moving forward, 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' is slated to enter the sensitive state of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir in the next phase starting from January 3, 2022. In this regard, I request you to take immediate steps to ensure the safety and security of Shri Rahul Gandhi, a Z+ protectee, and of all the 'Bharat Yatri's' and leaders joining the

Jagan meets PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy Wednesday called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and sought his intervention in resolving several pending issues that have remained unattended for the last eight years following bifurcation of the state. In the nearly 50 minute-long meeting held at Modi's residence at Lok Kalyan Marg here, Reddy said there has been "no progress" in resolving the pending issues despite assurances given by the Centre in Parliament and several meetings held by a special committee headed by the Union finance secretary, an official statement said. The Chief Minister informed the prime minister that a huge amount of ₹32,625.25 crore, including resource funding of ₹18,330.45 crore for the 2014-15 fiscal and pension arrears payable to the state, has been pending, and appealed him to expedite it immediately. Reddy made it clear that the state would suffer a lot financially if the restrictions continue unabated, especially at a time when the country is set to fight the new variant of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister also sought early approval of the revised cost estimate of the Polavaram project pegged at ₹55,548.87 crore.

UP govt appoints panel on OBC reservation in civic body polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Dec 28: The Uttar Pradesh government Wednesday appointed a five-member commission for providing reservation to Other Backward Classes in urban local body elections. The panel will be headed by Justice (Retd) Ram Avtar Singh. The four other members are retired Indian Administrative Service officers Chaub Singh Verma and Mahendra Kumar, and former legal advisors to the state Santosh Kumar Viskarma and Brajesh Kumar Soni. The members were appointed following approval from the gover-

nor. A notification on the panel's constitution, issued by the Urban Development department, said the commission's term would be for a six-month period from the day of taking charge. The panel's constitution comes a day after the Lucknow bench of Allahabad High Court quashed the state government's draft notification on urban local body elections and ordered it to hold the polls without reservation for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The high court order came on the back of pleas challenging the preparation of the OBC reservation draft without following the triple test formula prescribed by the Supreme Court.

Over 1.5L died in 4L road mishaps in '21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: A total of 4,12,432 road accidents occurred in 2021 calendar year which claimed 1,53,972 lives while 3,84,448 people injured, according to a new report released by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH). The report titled "Road accidents in India - 2021", said major indicators related with accidents have performed better in 2021 when compared to 2019. "Road accidents decreased by 8.1 per cent and injuries decreased by 14.8 per cent in 2021 compared to 2019." "Fatalities, however, on account of road accidents increased by 1.9 per cent in 2021 correspond-



ing to the same period in 2019," it said. According to the report, in 2020, the country saw an unprecedented decrease in accidents, fatalities and injuries. "This was due to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and resultant stringent nation-wide lockdown particularly during March-April, 2020 followed by gradual unlocking and phasing out of the containment measures, it said. The report is based on the data/information received from police departments of states/Union Territories collected on calendar year basis in standardised formats as provided by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) under the Asia Pacific Road Accident Data (APRAD) base project. During the year 2021, million plus cities accounted for 16.3 per cent of the total number of accidents and 9.9 per cent of total accidents fatalities in the country.

2022: A HISTORIC YEAR FOR INDIA-US RELATIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Washington, Dec 28: The year 2022 has been a remarkable and historic year for the India-US relationship, top diplomats and experts from both sides feel and are confident that 2023 would be a momentous year for the ties between the world's largest and oldest democracies that will determine the future of technology and innovation. "2022 saw further consolidation of the India-US bilateral partnership in the direction and vision set by Prime Minister Modi and President Biden," India's Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, told PTI as the year comes to an end. The intensity of high-level engagements

continued in the form of Quad and Bilateral Summits in Tokyo, the 2+2 Ministerial Meeting in Washington DC, and visits by senior members of the Cabinet in both directions, he said. The year also saw tangible outcomes - resolution of some old market access issues, the first-ever maintenance of a US Naval Ship in India, the Quad focus on STEM, signing of an Investment Incentive Agreement, the launch of Technology Innovation Hubs as a collaboration of the respective science agencies, record level of trade and investments, etc, said Sandhu. "Our strategic convergences deepened, new initiatives like the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) were launched while others such as I2U2 were strengthened,"



During the year, President Joe Biden met Prime Minister Narendra Modi twice - first on the sidelines of the Quad summit in Tokyo in May and second on the margins of the G-20 summit in Bali, Indonesia. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar also met US Secretary of State Antony Blinken here in September and held productive discussions on the entire gamut of Indo-US relations and the way forward

Sandhu said in response to a question. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Donald Lu, concurred with Ambassador Sandhu's take on the bilateral ties,

saying that he believes that the India-US relationship is one of the most consequential relationships in the world. This relationship, he asserted, will determine whether Asia

remains free and democratic. "It will determine the future of technology and innovation. And increasingly it will determine whether we will be successful in combating climate change," he said. "This has been a remarkable and historic year for our relations," Lu told PTI in response to a question. "We have successfully worked in both countries to move beyond the acute phase of Covid-19 and supported millions of people around the world with innovative vaccines," he said. "We have worked together in the Quad to launch the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness and the Partnership for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. We launched the US-India Alliance for Women's

Economic Empowerment which is working to support entrepreneurship and mentoring of women business leaders," he said. Observing that the bedrock of this relationship has always been the people-to-people relationship, the senior American diplomat said more than 1 million people travel back and forth each year between the two nations. According to Mukesh Aghi, president, and CEO of US-India Strategic and Partnership, 2022 was "a momentous year" for US-India relations, as the two nations celebrated 75 years of diplomatic relations. These 75 years symbolized a long journey that had humble beginnings from the Cold War era, long before India's own economic growth story, he noted.

of the day quote

AAP councillors have started working even before taking oath. We visited the Okhla landfill site and inspected the progress here so far

MANISH SIOSIDA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

Security arrangement is an important aspect of G-20 conferences. The Home Department should make adequate arrangements for the security of all the delegates

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

Rahul Gandhi said our fight is against policies and programmes of RSS and BJP. It will continue. We are capable of protecting the Constitution

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

SHORT TAKES

PM's mother admitted to hosp

Ahmedabad: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother Hiraben (99) was Wednesday admitted to a super-specialty hospital here due to some health issues, and her condition is stable, hospital authorities said.

Praveen Kumar new acting CVC

New Delhi: Vigilance Commissioner Praveen Kumar Srivastava has been appointed as the acting Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC), officials said Wednesday.

28 hurt in mishap

Sultanpur (UP): Twenty-eight people were injured when a bus carrying pilgrims from Pune in Maharashtra rammed into a divider in Gosaiganj police station limits Wednesday morning, police said.

BJP MLA resigns

Agartala: BJP MLA Diba Chandra Hrangkhawli, who resigned from the Tripura Assembly Wednesday, giving another jolt to the ruling party ahead of the Assembly polls, would join the opposition Congress Thursday.



The government has totally failed to control militancy in Jammu and Kashmir and the terrorism now spreading to the Jammu region is its biggest failure

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP CHIEF

RELIEF FROM COLD FOR NOW

Days after witnessing cold wave and dense fog, Delhiites may get some relief from the chilly period from Wednesday till January 1 following western disturbance, said an India Meteorological Department (IMD) official



Rlys data hacked, being sold on dark web

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 28: Data of around three crore travellers registered with the Indian Railways has been hacked and reportedly put on sale on the Dark Web, as per reports.

had hacked the technical systems of of AIIMS, New Delhi. They had, in fact, taken the whole server into their control, but it was later taken back from their possession.

The data of Indian Railway, put on sale on a forum being run by cybercriminals, has user data, and invoices of latest month.

"The hacked data has usernames, emails, mobile numbers, gender, full address, and their language pref-



As of now, the Indian Railways has not made any official comment on the matter

This is the second time when data of Indian Railway ticket buyers have been hacked, after a similar case in 2020

erences. The data is of users who book tickets from Indian Railway portal," a source said.

The hacker, who uses the pseudonym 'Shadohacker', has also claimed that he has data of government persons having government email IDs and their cell phone numbers.

As of now, the Indian Railways has not made any official comment on the matter. This is the second time when data of Indian Railway ticket buyers have been hacked, after a similar case in 2020.

India may see Covid surge in Jan: Officials



'4th job unwarranted'

New Delhi: Several countries are administering a third and even fourth Covid booster shot but India, where many fully vaccinated individuals have not taken even one, is not there yet, say experts while stressing on the need for a structured and systematic response.

The government is likely to make it mandatory for passengers arriving from China and five other places to have negative RT-PCR reports from next week

dom coronavirus testing mandatory for two per cent of passengers arriving in each international flight from Saturday. The sources said filling up of 'air suvidha' forms and 72-hour prior RT-PCR testing

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 28: The next 40 days are going to be crucial as India may see a surge in Covid-19 cases in January, official sources said Wednesday citing the pattern of previous outbreaks.

"Previously, it has been noticed that a new wave of Covid-19 hits India around 30-35 days after it hits East Asia. This has been a trend," an official said.

The sources said 39 international passengers were found positive for Covid-19 out of the 6,000 tested on arrival in the last two days. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya to visit the airport in Delhi to take stock of testing and screening facilities there, they said.

SII to provide 2 crore Covishield doses free

New Delhi: The Serum Institute of India (SII) has offered two crore doses of Covishield vaccine to the central government free of cost amid a rise in Covid-19 cases in some countries, official sources said Wednesday.



may be made mandatory from next week for international passengers coming from China, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore. Amid a spike in Covid-19 cases in some countries, including China and South Korea, the government has sounded an alert and asked states and Union territories to prepare for any eventuality.

readiness to deal with any spurt in Covid-19 infection, with Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya saying the country has to remain alert and prepared as cases are rising in the world.

Maharashtra Assembly passes Lokayukta Bill



DEPUTY CM DEVENDRA FADNAVIS TERMED THE BILL A HISTORIC LEGISLATION, ADDING MAHARASHTRA IS THE FIRST STATE TO HAVE SUCH A LAW

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Assembly has to be obtained and the motion has to be placed before the immediate session of the House before initiating any inquiry against the chief minister.

Fadnavis said after the Centre passed a law on Lokpal, it was expected that all state governments formulate a legislation on the same lines. He said when he was the chief minister from 2014-19, he had assured anti-corruption crusader Anna Hazare that a Lokayukta law would be brought in on the lines of what was expected by him.

On the appointment of the ombudsman, the draft law states the Lokayukta shall consist of a chairperson who is or has been the Chief Justice of the High Court, a judge of the Supreme Court or a judge of the Bombay High Court.

The selection committee for the appointment of members and the chairperson will comprise the chief minister, Deputy Chief Minister, speaker of the Legislative Assembly, chairperson of the Legislative Council, the Leaders of Opposition in the Assembly and Council and the chief justice of the Bombay High Court or a judge nominated by the CJ.

CBI gives clean chit to Chandy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 28: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has submitted a report in the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court here giving clean chit to former Kerala chief minister Oommen Chandy in the sexual exploitation allegation levelled by a prime accused woman in the sensational solar scam, prompting the Congress to seek apology from Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for recommending central agency probe.

The case against Abdulla Kutty had been registered in 2014 when he was a Congress MLA from Kannur. He later joined BJP.

The CBI submitted another referral report in the court exonerating BJP leader A P Abdullakutty in the sexual exploitation complaint by the

woman. The case against Abdulla Kutty had been registered in 2014 when he was a Congress MLA from Kannur. He later joined BJP.

Anger not an instigation for suicide: MP HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jabalpur, Dec 28: The Madhya Pradesh High Court has allowed a revision petition in a case of abetment of suicide by setting aside a lower court's order while quoting an old judgement of the Supreme Court that words uttered in a fit of anger or omission without any intention cannot be termed as instigation.

The high court's single bench of Justice Sujoy Paul in an order passed December 26 set aside the lower court's order that framed charges against the applicants under IPC Sections 306 (abetment to suicide) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) after a person, Murat Singh, from Damoh district committed suicide two years ago.

The high court referred to the SC judgment which said, "The offence of abetment by instigation depends upon the intention of the person who abets and not upon the act which is done by the person who has abetted. Abetment may be by instigation, conspiracy or intentional aid as provided under Section 107 of IPC. However, the words uttered in a fit of anger or omission without any intention cannot be termed as instigation."

The MP HC in its order said, "In view of the foregoing analysis, the (lower) court has committed an error in framing charge under Section 306/34 of IPC against the applicants by impugned order dated 23.09.2021. As a consequence, the order dated 23.09.2021 is set aside. Revision petition is allowed."

Prez lays foundation stone for pilgrimage facilities in T'gana

Hyderabad: President Droupadi Murmu Wednesday laid the foundation stone for the development of pilgrimage facilities at 'Bhadrachalam Group of Temples' under 'PRASHAD' scheme in Bhadrachalam in Telangana. During her visit to the temple town, she inaugurated 'Sammakka Saralamma Janjati Pujari Sannam' organised by the Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad-Telangana and virtually inaugurated Eklavya Model Residential Schools of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs at Komaram Bheem Asifabad and Mahabubabad districts of Telangana.



Ex-Maharashtra minister Anil Deshmukh greets supporters after being released from the Arthur Road jail in Mumbai

JAMMU ENCOUNTER

Spotlight again on demand to install vehicle scanners on NHs

It is a "major challenge" for security forces which have foiled over a dozen such bids on national highways in Jammu and Kashmir by eliminating several terrorists and recovering large quantities of weapons and explosive material during the past few years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Dec 27: With yet another incident of terrorists trying to sneak into Kashmir by hiding in a

truck, security experts have batted strongly for the installation of vehicle scanners along the highways.

Four heavily-armed terrorists, travelling in a truck to Kashmir after infiltrating from Pakistan, were killed in a "chance encounter" with security forces here early Wednesday morning, a police officer said.

The gunfight took place around 7.30 am amid dense fog near Tawi Bridge in the Sidhra bypass area along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway. "There is a long pending demand of security forces to install full body vehicle scanners along the highway," security expert and retired army officer Brig Anil Gupta told PTI. He said that in the absence of such scanners, one cannot check each and every truck.



Security personnel at the spot of the encounter with terrorists

Brig Gupta, who served at the Nagrota-based 16 Corps head-

quarters, said the "loophole is being exploited" by terrorists and

their supporters. "I think the only solution to this is to have full body scanners installed at various locations along highways with checking made mandatory for vehicles," he said.

Police had November 10 busted a terror module of Jaish-e-Mohammad and arrested three operatives from the Narwal area, recovering arms and ammunition including three AK-56 rifles, one pistol, nine magazines and six grenades from a Kashmir-bound truck.

were killed and four security personnel were injured.

Four suspected Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists, who were hiding in a truck, were killed November 17, 2020 in an encounter with security forces on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway near Nagrota in the outskirts of Jammu city.

Three Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) militants were killed January 31, 2020 in a gunbattle that broke out after a group of terrorists, travelling in a truck, opened fire at a police team at a toll plaza on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway on the outskirts of Jammu city. Former director general of police S P Vaid pointed out that a whole network is involved in such activities and poses a major challenge for security agencies.

international



These unfathomable restrictions placed on women and girls will not only increase the suffering of all Afghans but, I fear, pose a risk beyond Afghanistan's borders

PRESTIGIOUS FEAT

An Indian scientist has been chosen to join the prestigious European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) Young Investigator network, recognising her as one of the top talents in biology in Europe. Dr Mahima Swamy, who hails from Bangalore, is leading a research group that investigates immune responses in the intestine



of the day quote

Taiwan will extend its compulsory military service from four months to a year starting in 2024



TAI ING-WEN | PRESIDENT, TAIWAN

We only ask that women aren't massacred because they take off their veil. We ask that young women are not condemned to death because they take part in protests, that children are not killed at roadblocks



ANTONIO TAJANI | FOREIGN MINISTER, ITALY

We have no other option but to implement the International Monetary Fund programme to revive the cash-starved economy



SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PM, PAKISTAN

SHORT TAKES

3 Indian-Americans drown in iced lake

Washington: In a tragic incident, three Indian-Americans, including a woman, have drowned after they fell through the ice while walking on a frozen lake in the US state of Arizona. The incident occurred on December 26 at 3:35 PM at Woods Canyon Lake in Coconino County, Arizona. "The missing men are located deceased and identified as Narayana Muddana, 49 and Gokul Mediseti, 47. The female victim has been identified as Haritha Muddana (age unknown). The three victims resided in Chandler, Arizona and are originally from India," Coconino County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) said in a statement.

Russia, China hold naval exercises

Moscow: Russia and China have completed naval drills in the East China Sea, after a week of joint exercises which included practising how to capture an enemy submarine with depth charges and firing artillery at a warship, Russia's defence ministry said. The December 21-27 exercises, entitled "Maritime Interaction-2022", included Russia's Pacific Fleet and were carried out in waters off Zhoushan and Taizhou in China's Zhejiang Province, China's official Xinhua news agency said.

Southwest cancels thousands of flights

Washington: Southwest Airlines came under fire from the US government Tuesday after it cancelled thousands of flights, and its boss, Bob Jordan, said the low-cost carrier needed to upgrade its legacy airline systems. US airlines have canceled thousands of flights as a massive winter storm swept over much of the country before the Christmas holiday weekend, but Southwest's woes have deepened while other airlines have largely recovered. The cancellations drew criticism from Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg for what he termed a "meltdown."

Hong Kong scraps some Covid curbs

Hong Kong: Hong Kong will scrap some of its Covid-19 restrictions, including PCR tests for inbound travellers and vaccination requirements to enter certain venues, the city's leader said Wednesday. For most of the pandemic, Hong Kong has aligned itself with China's "zero-Covid" strategy, requiring stringent Covid-19 tests and isolation for close contacts of infected cases as well as for incoming travellers.

FROM INDIA TO US

Illegal immigration doubles

THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN STRUGGLING TO COPE WITH THE SURGE OF PEOPLE TRYING TO ENTER THE US ILLEGALLY AT THE SOUTHERN BORDER RECEIVED A REPRIEVE FROM THE SUPREME COURT, EVEN THOUGH IT GLIBLY OPPOSED IT

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, Dec 28: The death of an Indian man who fell trying to climb a border wall into Texas has put a spotlight on illegal immigration from India to the US which has shown a sudden surge along the border with Mexico in the last two months.

US Border Patrol caught 4,297 Indians crossing the Mexican border in October and November, compared to 1,426 during those two months last year and 16,236 in all of the fiscal year that ended in September, according to American government data.

Overall, the number of Indians apprehended by US authorities right on the border and elsewhere has more than doubled since last year.

US authorities encountered 63,927 Indians who had entered the country illegally, during the 2021-22 fiscal year that ended in September, a 109 per cent increase from the 30,662 they found the previous fiscal year, according to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) data.

In just the last two months, a total of 13,655 illegal immigrants from India were caught compared to 6,865 during those two months in 2021, the data showed.



In the fiscal year 2019-20, the number of Indians illegally in the US who were apprehended by the CBP was only 19,883, according to the agency.

Indians are only a part of the phenomenon of illegal migration to the US that has been spiralling since the election of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, who has been tasked to stop the flow of migrants from Latin America.

Although Harris has asserted that the border is "secure", US authorities have registered 2.77 million encounters with people of dif-

ferent nationalities illegally in the US during the fiscal year that ended in September, up 41 per cent from the 1.96 million in the previous period. In 2019-20, there were only 646,822 encounters.

The illegal migration numbers are only of those caught by the CBP and several more would have successfully evaded authorities and those who entered legally but overstayed their visas making their presence in the country illegal are not included in the data.

In the 2019-20 fiscal year, the latest period for which data is avail-

US authorities encountered 63,927 Indians who had entered the country illegally; 109% rise from 2021

In last two months, 13,655 illegal immigrants were caught; compared to 6,865 in 2021 same period

In 2019-20, the number of Indians illegally in the US who were apprehended by the CBP was only 19,883

2,312 Indians were deported from the US during 2019-20, and 1,616 in 2018-19

According to data from the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), a database maintained by Syracuse University, 34,230 asylum cases of Indians were pending before Immigration courts last month. People can ask for asylum on various grounds including fear of religious or political persecution, domestic violence and threats due to sexual orientation but will have to prove it to a judge.

The deaths at the border of Indians involved families, but most of the Indians apprehended by US officials are single adults. They constituted 56,739 of those caught in 2021-22 and 11,780 in the last two months. Those who came in as families were 6,577 in the last fiscal year and 1,736 in the last two months.

Brij Kumar Yadav fell to his death December 14 while holding his three-year-old son and climbing the border wall built by the Trump administration between San Diego and Mexico. His wife also fell, but on the US side and survived and the child was reunited with her.

On the border with Canada, Jagdish Kumar Patel, 39, his wife Vaishaliben, 37, and their daughter Vihangi, 11, and son Dharmik, 3, were found frozen to death January 19.

Nepal-China trade route reopens after nearly three years

RESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Dec 28: Two-way trade from one of the key border transit routes between Nepal and China resumed formally Wednesday after being closed for almost three years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, officials said.

The reopening of the border transit route comes days after Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Centre chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda", who is known to be close to China, took the oath of office as the new Prime Minister.

A ceremony marking the official resumption of trade from the Kerung-Rasuwadaghi border port was held Wednesday, a statement issued by the Nepalese Foreign Ministry here said.

"The Rasuwa/Kerung port between Nepal and the People's Republic of China has officially resumed its operation for two-way trade from Wednesday," the statement said.

The export of goods to China had however resumed from Tuesday, The Kathmandu Post newspaper said, quoting Lhasa-based Consulate General Nawaraj Dhakal. The port came into formal operation in 1961.

The Chinese Embassy in Nepal released pictures of the ceremony and said in a statement that China looks forward to importing more goods from Nepal. The statement said that six cargo trucks full of Nepali goods passed through the port into China.

COVID SPREADS UNCHECKED

Chinese hosps, funeral homes 'extremely busy'

In a major step towards freer travel, China will stop requiring inbound travellers to go into quarantine from Jan 8

REUTERS

Chengdu, Dec 28: Chinese hospitals and funeral homes were under intense pressure Wednesday as a surging Covid-19 wave drained resources, while the scale of the outbreak and doubts over official data prompted some countries to consider new travel rules on Chinese visitors.

In an abrupt change of policy, China this month began dismantling the world's strictest Covid regime of lockdowns and extensive testing, putting its battered economy on course for a complete re-opening next year.

The lifting of restrictions, which came after widespread protests against them, means Covid is spreading largely unchecked and likely infecting millions of people a day, according to some international health experts.

The speed at which China, the last major country in the world moving towards treating the virus as endemic, has scrapped Covid rules has left its fragile health system overwhelmed.

China reported three new Covid-related deaths for Tuesday up from one for Monday - numbers that are inconsistent with what funeral

parlours are reporting, as well as with the experience of much less populous countries after they re-opened.

Staff at Huaxi, a big hospital in the southwestern city of Chengdu, said they were "extremely busy" with Covid patients.

"I've been doing this job for 30 years and this is the busiest I have ever known it," said one ambulance driver outside the hospital who declined to be identified.

There were long queues inside and outside the hospital's emergency department and at an adjacent fever clinic Tuesday evening. Most of those arriving in ambulances were given oxygen to help with their breathing.

"Almost all of the patients have Covid," one emergency department pharmacy staff member said.

Car parks around the Dongjiao funeral home, one of the biggest in Chengdu, were full. Funeral processions were constant as smoke billowed from the crematorium.

"We have to do this about 200 times a day now," said one funeral worker. "We are so busy we don't even have time to eat. This has been the case since the opening up. Before it was around 30-50 a day."



BLIZZARD BLANKET: An aerial view of the 1901 Pan-American Exposition neighborhood in Buffalo, NY, which remains coated in a blanket of snow after a blizzard. State and military police were sent to keep people off Buffalo after deadliest storm in at least two generations

PTI PHOTO

Kim unveils new military goals

REUTERS

Seoul, Dec 28: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un unveiled new goals for the country's military for 2023 at an ongoing meeting of the ruling Workers' Party, state media reported Wednesday, hinting at another year of intensive weapons tests and tension.

On the second day of the Sixth Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the party's 8th Central Committee, Kim reviewed the "newly created challenging situation" on the Korean peninsula and the broader political landscapes, the report said.

The third-generation leader set

the direction for the "anti-enemy struggle" and goals for reinforcing defence power, it added.

"He specified the principles of foreign affairs and the direction of the struggle against the enemy that our party and government must thoroughly abide by in order to protect sovereign rights and defend national interests," the official KCNA news agency said.

"New core goals for strengthening self-defensive capabilities to be strongly pursued in 2023 have been presented in preparation for diverse fluctuations in the political situation."

KCNA did not provide details



on those goals, but Kim's remarks could indicate the isolated country will continue to accelerate its military buildup.

North Korea has fired an unprecedented number of missiles this year, and many launches were

designed to develop "top priority" strategic weapons under a five-year plan laid out at a Workers' Party congress in early 2021.

The list includes tactical nuclear weapons, a new intercontinental ballistic missile, hypersonic gliding flight warheads, nuclear-powered submarines and a reconnaissance satellite.

Tension remained high throughout this year amid the North's constant weapons tests, and it flared again this week after five North Korean drones crossed into South Korea, prompting Seoul to scramble fighter jets and attack helicopters, and try to shoot them down.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Floods wreak havoc in every continent in 2022

UNITED NATIONS HAS TASKED ALL NATIONS WITH IMPLEMENTING EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS BY 2027, A GOAL THAT HALF THE WORLD IS YET TO MEET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne, Dec 28: Communities are being pushed into a reckoning onset by climate change — adapt their way of living to mitigate flood damage or face a cycle of destruction.

As shell shocked Congolese sift through rubble, looking for bodies and belongings in flood-ravaged Kinshasa, it feels like an eerie repeat of the deadly floods that brought Pakistan to its knees just months ago.

The DRC is not alone in this struggle. Nigeria, Niger, Chad,

Cameroon and surrounding African states have suffered deadly floods in 2022, with a report from World Weather Attribution finding that climate change made the torrential rains and floods 80 times more likely.

Other continents are grappling with flood emergencies, too: parts of Australia are receiving summertime flood warnings, shortly after a spate of destructive rainfall in New South Wales and Victoria.

The United States is still reeling from a "summer of floods" which saw at least four flooding



events cascade across an 11-day span from late July to early August.

The New South Wales state government in Australia has unveiled an AUD\$800 million (\$534.9 million) resilience fund for the

Northern Rivers region, where more than 6,000 homes were damaged or destroyed by floods in 2022.

While the fight against climate change rages on, periods of intensified rainfall is something all

Flood warning systems are a cost-efficient way to prevent floods from destroying lives and livelihoods

LINDA SPEIGHT | HYDROMETEOROLOGIST, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

corners of the globe seem stuck contending with. Researchers have continued to develop and refine all facets of flood-related responses, devising a comprehensive suite of investments that governments can make to safeguard their nation.

From preventative measures limiting a flood's impact to educational responses to smarter rebuilding, states have options to limit the damage.

Investing in flood warning systems

Flood warning systems are tools

that can provide regions advance notice of an impending weather event. At its most effective, a flood warning system can advise users of an expected rise in river levels and the damage that might come without action. When it works effectively, a flood warning system gives communities the inside track to prepare themselves.

Linda Speight, hydrometeorologist at the University of Oxford, says flood warning systems are a "great tool to prevent disaster".

"While warnings don't prevent flooding, they give advance notice of an impending flood to allow communities to prepare: bringing in extra emergency personnel, establishing temporary flood defences, securing clean drinking water, moving valuables or — for the most extreme events — evacuating."

business

of the day quote

I believe that the civil aviation sector has rebounded and what we in economic parlance say V-shaped recovery. A very strong V-shaped recovery

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION MINISTER

Not acknowledging other alternative fuel options such as Auto LPG, which could have possibly furthered the cause of clean mobility even more effectively, is concerning

SUVASH GUPTA | DIRECTOR GENERAL, INDIAN AUTO LPG COALITION

So, even if a player wins 70 per cent of the games, the player will have to go out of pocket to pay the taxes. If the laws written keeping in mind crosswords and lotteries were to be implemented in online gaming, the implications would be disastrous

TRIVIKRAMAN THAMPY | FOUNDER, GAMES24x7

SHORT TAKES

Basmati, non-basmati rice exports up 7.37%

New Delhi: India's aromatic basmati and non-basmati rice exports rose 7.37 per cent to 126.97 lakh tonne during the April-October period of the current fiscal, despite restrictions on the shipments, according to industry data. Exports stood at 118.25 lakh tonne in the same period during the previous fiscal. Out of total exports, basmati rice exports rose to 24.97 lakh tonne during the April-October period of the 2022-23 fiscal, from 21.59 lakh tonne in the year-ago period.

Toyota launches Innova HyCross

Mumbai: Toyota Kirloskar Motor Wednesday said the new hybrid version of its multi-purpose vehicle Innova will be available at a price starting from ₹18.30 lakh (ex-showroom). The Bangalore-based auto major unveiled Innova HyCross in November and it will be available at the dealership from mid next month. The self-charging hybrid version of the vehicle has been priced between ₹24.01-28.97 lakh (depending upon the variant) while the gasoline version will come in the range of ₹18.30-19.20 lakh.

Sheela Foam to buy rival Kurlon

Bangalore: Indian mattress maker Sheela Foam Ltd will soon acquire competitor Kurlon for ₹20 billion (\$241.29 million), ET Now reported Wednesday, citing sources. If the deal goes through, Sheela Foam could command a market share of 35-40%. Sheela Foam, which sells the "Sleepwell" brand of mattresses, is the only listed mattress maker in the country.



The government should not go in for an aggressive fiscal consolidation in the upcoming budget as global risks have not abated

ASHIMA GOYAL | MPC MEMBER, RBI

AMBANI COMPLETES TWO DECADES

Mukesh Ambani, who took over the reins of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) after the sudden demise of his legendary industrialist father Dhirubhai Ambani, completes 20 years at the helm during which the company saw a 17-fold jump in revenues, 20-times surge in profit and has become a global conglomerate



RECORD DUMP IN A YEAR

FPIs turn net sellers in '22

THIS WAS THE WORST YEAR FOR FPIs IN TERMS OF FLOW AND WITHDRAWAL FROM EQUITIES COMES FOLLOWING A NET INVESTMENT IN THE PAST THREE PRECEDING YEARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: After three consecutive years of infusing huge funds, foreign portfolio investors retreated from the Indian equity markets in a big way in 2022 with the highest-ever yearly net outflow of nearly ₹1.21 lakh crore.

The huge outflow, which surpasses by a big margin the previous record of ₹53,000 crore net withdrawal in 2008, came amid aggressive rate hikes by central banks globally but 2023 is expected to be better on positivity about overall macroeconomic trends in India, experts said.

Apart from global monetary tightening, volatile crude, rising commodity prices along with Russia and Ukraine conflict led to an exodus of foreign money in 2022.

Going ahead, the quantum of FPI outflows might not be as large as that seen in the first half of 2022 as India's growth is relatively promising compared to other developed and emerging economies, said Manish Jeloka, Co-head of Products and Solutions, Sanctum Wealth.

Till December 28, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have made a net withdrawal of ₹1.21 lakh crore (nearly \$16.5 billion) from the Indian equity markets and net pull out of around ₹16,600 crore (\$2 billion) from the debt market, as per data available with the depositories.

On the domestic front too, the scenario was not encouraging. Rising inflation continued to be a cause for concern, and to tame that, RBI also



FPIs DUMP INDIAN SHARES WORTH ₹1.21L-CR THIS YEAR
NET PULL OUT OF AROUND ₹16,600CR FROM DEBT MARKET
FPIs MADE A NET INFUSION OF ₹25,752CR IN 2021, ₹1.7L-CR IN 2020, WHICH WAS THE BEST YEAR, ₹1.01L-CR IN 2019
A NET OUTFLOW WAS LAST SEEN IN 2018 (RS 33,000CR), WHILE 2022 WOULD BE ONLY THE FIFTH YEAR IN THE HISTORY OF FPIs WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN NET SELLERS OF INDIAN EQUITIES -- THE OTHER THREE BEING 2011 (₹27,000CR), 2008 (₹53,000CR) AND 1998 (₹740CR)

hiked rates, which cast a shadow on the growth prospects of the domestic economy, said Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar India. Another important aspect that led to the outflows from domestic stock markets was its high valuation, compared with other reliable markets, he added.

This has also resulted in foreign investors booking profit here and shifting focus towards other markets which are attractive on the valuation and risk-reward front. In the debt market, FPIs con-

tinued their sell-off for the third straight year with a net outflow of ₹16,600 crore in 2022. They had made a net withdrawal of ₹10,359 crore in 2021 and of ₹1.05 lakh crore in 2020.

India, on average, receives 2-3 per cent of the global cross-border portfolio equity flows. Since 2000, the current year would be only the fourth year when Indian equities would be witnessing a net outflow.

The massive selling by FPIs has been absorbed by domestic institutional investors (DIIs) including

This year, most of the major central banks started normalising the monetary policy, which resulted in the departure of hot money from emerging markets including India. This resulted in the unprecedented rise in prices (inflation) in most of the economies

SANJIV BAJAJ | JOINT CHAIRMAN & MD, BAJAJ CAPITAL

mutual funds and insurance companies. This is a reflection of the rising clout and maturity of domestic investors.

FPIs started the year 2022 on a negative note and the departure of "hot money" continued till June. In the first six months of this year, they pulled out ₹2.17 lakh crore from equities largely due to central banks globally, and particularly US Federal Reserve ending its ultra-easy pandemic-era monetary policy.

FPIs gradually started making a comeback in the Indian markets in July with a net investment of ₹4,989 crore and ₹51,204 crore in the succeeding month largely because the Indian economy as well as Indian markets have been more resilient during these testing times.

However, again they withdrew money in September and minus-cule amount in October. The change in stance from FPIs have been seen since last week of October as they started pouring money and the momentum continued in December too.

Small stocks dip as mkt seesaws this yr

Experts said small and midcap firms underperformed this year due to various factors but are hopeful that the broader market will rebound in 2023



The BSE Sensex climbed 2,673.61 points or 4.58% till Dec 27. The benchmark index reached its all-time high of 63,583.07 points Dec 1 after hitting its 52-week low of 50,921.22 points June 17

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: Small stocks of Dalal Street grappled with turbulent times in 2022 as high volatility and higher interest rate regime sapped investors' appetite for these scrips but the horizon ahead seems less cloudy for the New Year.

While the 30-share Sensex scaled multiple record peaks with bluechips glittering, small stocks underperformed and the BSE small-cap index declined more than 3 per cent this year.

In comparison, the BSE Sensex climbed 2,673.61 points or 4.58 per cent till December 27.

Braving headwinds of high inflation, the Russia-Ukraine war and higher interest rates, the Indian equity market managed to not only hold its ground but also emerge as one of the best performing equity markets.

According to analysts, the small cap index is always far more volatile than the mid and large cap indices.

The midcap index tracks companies with a market value that is, on an average, one-fifth of bluechips, while smallcap firms are almost a tenth of that universe.

Till December 27 this year, BSE smallcap gauge declined 940.72 points or 3.19 per cent. The small-cap index reached its all-time high of 31,304.44 points January 18 and later hit a 52-week low of 23,261.39 points June 20.

On the other hand, the midcap index gained 215.08 points or 0.86 per cent till December 27. It touched a 52-week low of 20,814.22 points on June 20 and one-year peak of 26,440.81 points on December 14.

According to analysts, smaller stocks are generally bought by local investors while overseas investors focus on bluechips or large firms.

In 2021, the midcap index gained 7,028.65 points or 39.17 per cent while the smallcap index zoomed 11,359.65 points or 62.76 per cent. In comparison, the Sensex jumped 10,502.49 points or 21.99 per cent last year.

Sensex had gained 15.7 per cent in 2020, where the benchmark index witnessed both heavy selling and massive buying. Small and mid-cap indices had emerged as markets' favourites in 2020. Small and mid-cap stocks had gained up to 24.30 per cent in 2020.

CURBING MALPRACTICES

Dealers to apply for cert of pre-owned vehicles



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has introduced authorization certificates for the dealers of registered vehicles to identify the authenticity of a dealer, a move that will promote ease of doing business and transparency.

MoRTH in a notification issued December 22, has amended chapter III of the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 to build a comprehensive regulatory ecosystem for the pre-owned car market.

According to the notification, the procedure for intimation of delivery of vehicle between the registered owner and the dealer has been detailed, and the powers and responsibilities of a dealer in possession of registered vehicles have also been clarified.

The pre-owned car market in India has been gradually gaining ground. In recent years, the advent of online marketplaces, which are involved in buying and selling of pre-owned vehicles has further given a boost to this market.

In the current ecosystem, many issues were being faced viz. During transfer of vehicle to subsequent transferee, disputes in regard to third-party damage liabilities, difficulty in determination of defaulter etc.

As per the notification, dealers have been empowered to apply for renewal of registration certificate/ renewal of certificate of fitness, duplicate registration certificate, NOC, transfer of ownership, of motor vehicles in their possession.

As a regulatory measure, maintenance of an electronic vehicle trip register has been mandated which would contain details of the trip undertaken viz. Trip purpose, driver, time, mileage, it said.

The notification said these rules will aid in recognizing and empowering intermediaries/dealers of registered vehicles as well as provide adequate safeguards against fraudulent activities to the selling or purchasing of such vehicles.

The new rules will come into force with effect from April 1, 2023

'Govt's mfg push not yielding results'

FDI CONTINUES TO CHASE LESS-COMPLICATED SERVICES SECTOR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 28: Despite the Narendra Modi government's high-octane push to boost manufacturing through the 'Make in India' initiative, foreign investors continue to chase bets in the services sector, a domestic rating agency said Wednesday.

India Ratings and Research also said a bulk of the foreign direct investment (FDI) in manufacturing is not greenfield or fresh investments which should otherwise be the aspirational aspect.

"Despite the government's effort to attract more investments in the manufacturing sector through 'Make in India' campaign, the FDI inflow is still tilted in favour of the services sector," the rating agency said.

"... this could be because doing business in the services sector is less complicated than doing business in the manufacturing sector in India," the agency, an arm of Fitch Ratings, said.

It said services sector FDI increased to \$153.01 billion in the services sector during April 2014 to March 2022 from \$80.51 billion during April 2000 to March 2014, while the increase in manufacturing was less fast at \$94.32 billion as against \$77.11 billion.

The agency reminded that in 2014, India launched a flagship programme called 'Make in India' to facilitate in-



vestments across sectors, but with a special focus to build a world-class manufacturing sector and followed it up with the PLI scheme across 14 rating agencies.

The services sector accounted for the highest share in FDI between 2000-2014 as well, the agency said, adding that within services, trading, telecommunications, banking/insurance, IT/business outsourcing and hotels/tourism are the favourites.

In manufacturing, the FDI has been concentrated in segments such as auto, chemicals, drugs and pharmaceuticals, metallurgical and food processing.

Computer software and hardware have done well, where the FDI increased to \$72.7 billion during April 2014 to March 2022, from

just \$12.8 billion during April 2000 to March 2014, the agency said, adding that this sector witnessed further traction after the roll out of PLI (production linked incentive) scheme with major global brands such as Apple, Samsung, Flextronics, and Nokia announcing big investments in India.

The agency said the country has done well among emerging market economies in terms of attracting FDI, with its share increasing to 6.65 per cent in 2020 and declining due to Covid impact to 2.83 per cent in 2021.

Four states - Maharashtra (27.5 per cent), Karnataka (23.9 per cent), Gujarat (19.1 per cent) and (Delhi 12.4) - collectively accounted for 83 per cent of the FDI between October 2019 and March 2022, it said.

JSW Energy acquires Ind-Barath Energy for ₹1,047 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: JSW Energy Wednesday said it has completed the acquisition of 700 MW Ind-Barath Energy (Utkal) for ₹1,047.60 crore through insolvency proceedings.

"Pursuant to the NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) approval order, the resolution plan has now been implemented and the acquisition of Ind-Barath Energy (Utkal) Ltd is complete. The resolution amount of ₹1,047.60 crore has been paid," a BSE filing said.

Now, the company holds 95 per cent equity shares of Ind-Barath Energy (Utkal) Ltd and the secured financial creditors collectively hold the balance 5 per cent, as per the terms of the resolution plan.

Consequent to this transaction, Ind-Barath Energy (Utkal) Ltd has become a subsidiary of JSW Energy.

Earlier the company had intimated on July 26, 2022, that the NCLT Hyderabad had, vide order dated July 25, 2022, (NCLT Approval Order) approved the company's resolution plan submitted October 3, 2019, under the corporate insolvency resolution process of Ind-Barath Energy, which is implementing a 700 MW (2x350 MW) thermal power plant located at Jharsuguda district in Odisha.

Indo-Aus trade pact to come into force from December 29

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: The interim free trade agreement between India and Australia will come into force Thursday, providing duty-free access to thousands of domestic goods such as textiles, and leather in the Australian market.

The agreement will help almost double the bilateral commerce to \$45-50 billion in around five years, according to exporters.

The Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), which was signed April 2, would provide duty-free access to Indian exporters of over 6,000 broad sectors, including textiles, leather, furniture, jewellery and machinery in the Australian market. Tariffs on 85 per cent of Australia's exports to India will be eliminated from Thursday.

Few hits, many misses: Do disinvestment plans need a reset?

The centre is eyeing a lower disinvestment target for the next fiscal amidst the ongoing market condition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: It was touted as a game changer but big-ticket privatisation has been a mixed bag as the government faces unanticipated challenges of lukewarm investor response, employee union agitation and legal hurdles.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's often-repeated statement 'the government has no business to be in business' guided the drawing up of an ambitious privatisation pipeline. While Air India sale succeeded,

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) divestment failed.

Tata Group acquired debt-ridden Air India last year but the government had to call off two transactions - BPCL and SAIL's Bhadravati Steel Plant - due to lack of buyer interest, and terminated the strategic sale of Central Electronics Ltd (CEL) as the successful bidder was disqualified for non-disclosure of pending legal cases.

The sale of Pawan Hans too is in limbo as the successful bidder has a pending NCLT case against it.

The government in the current fiscal (April-December) has raised about ₹31,100 crore from CPSE (Central Public Sector Enterprise) disinvestments as against the full-year budget target of ₹65,000 crore. In the last four years, the govern-



ment has missed the disinvestment target set in the budget by a wide margin.

More than half of the proceeds raised so far from disinvestment came from the Initial Public Offering (IPO) of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC). The government sold a 3.5 per cent stake at

₹949 per share, helping the government raise ₹21,000 crore. The scrip, however, got listed at ₹872. Since the listing, LIC share price has remained lower than the IPO issue price and is currently trading at around ₹659 apiece.

Considering the fact that there is little scope for further minority

Finance Ministry sources say the government may target disinvestment revenue of around ₹30,000 to ₹35,000 crore in 2023-24 versus ₹65,000 crore in the current year

Currently, the centre's disinvestment stand at ₹24,544 crore. It is just 38 per cent of the annual target presented in the Budget for 2022-23

stake sales in bluechip PSUs (Public Sector Undertakings) and the problems in executing strategic sale transactions, the government needs to set realistic disinvestment targets in budgets, sources said.

The biggest test in 2023 would be the strategic sale of IDBI Bank where the government and LIC together are selling about 61 per cent stake, out of the current holding of 95 per cent. The sale would fetch around ₹30,000 crore to the exchequer at the current market price.

Next year, one of the challenges before the government would be to go ahead with the strategic sale of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL) or Vizag Steel, where the privatisation move is being vehemently opposed by employee unions.

Although the government has been narrating the turnaround success story of NINL, which was bought by Tata Steel Long Products for ₹12,100 crore earlier this year, RINL privatisation still remains a challenge as employees demand it be given to a PSU company.

The sources said that in case the government fails to privatise RINL, it may have to be closed down in a couple of years because of mounting losses.

In 2023, the government is likely to conclude the strategic sales of Shipping Corporation, Concor, BEMIL, NMDC Steel and HLL Lifecare.

The major ones like SCI, Concor and BEMIL are in the process of demerging their non-core businesses following which financial bids would be invited from interested buyers.

NO CR7, NO PROBLEM



MAKING OPPORTUNITY COUNT: Anthony Martial (L) and Marcus Rashford celebrate a goal against Nottingham Forest, Tuesday

Manchester United are in search of a new striker following the departure of Ronaldo, says Ten Hag after the Red Devils' 3-0 win over Nottingham Forest

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, Dec 28: As Erik ten Hag confirmed Manchester United's ongoing search for a new striker, his existing ones made up for Cristiano Ronaldo's departure in a 3-0 win against Nottingham Forest.

Marcus Rashford and Anthony Martial struck first-half goals in the game at Old Trafford as United moved to within a point of fourth-place Tottenham.

However, if United's manager is to guide his team to a top-four finish in his first season at the club, he is likely to need more firepower to cover the exit of Ronaldo, who had his contract terminated last month.

Substitute Fred completed the scoring in the 87th minute — but Ten Hag was frustrated by a host of missed opportunities. "We have to score more goals," he said. "We created so many chances and it

takes us just before the end to score the third goal. We need to take this moment earlier."

Rashford struck his 10th goal of the season and Martial scored his fifth in only five starts to highlight their potential as a partnership. But Ronaldo's exit following his explosive interview with Piers Morgan has left Ten Hag with limited options in attack.

United was linked with a move for Netherlands international Cody Gakpo, who was one of the standout performers at the World Cup. However, PSV Eindhoven announced it had agreed to sell the forward to United's top-four rival Liverpool.

"I don't talk about individual cases. We are looking for offensive players, we are looking for a striker," Ten Hag said. "It would be good because of all the games coming, we are playing every third day and it is tough. I think we are always in the market, but it has to match

the sporting criteria, but also the financial criteria. We do what we can to bring in any player we can."

United's attempts to bring in a top quality forward in January could be hindered by the potential sale of the club after owners, the Glazers, confirmed their willingness to consider giving up control. It is possible Ten Hag could have to explore a loan move to help bolster his forward line.

"For the progress of the team we need to be more clinical, our players can score, you can see that," he said. "Martial is a goalscorer, Rashford is a goalscorer, Bruno (Fernandes) will score goals. We have a lot of players who can score goals but we have got to be ruthless."

Rashford's form is one source of encouragement. He has now doubled his total of five goals from last season. His most prolific campaign came in 2019-20 when he hit 22 goals for United.

Martial has failed to live up to the expectations he arrived with since signing from Monaco in 2015, with fitness issues hampering his progress.

Ten Hag will have to hope both players can maintain their fitness and form in the second half of the campaign if United is to secure a Champions League finish.

Chelsea is also hoping to break into the top four and ended a three-game losing streak by beating Bournemouth 2-0 Tuesday. Chelsea had lost four of their previous five games in all competitions before the World Cup and had been winless in its previous five Premier League games.

Kai Havertz and Mason Mount struck in the first half, but an injury to Reece James just after halftime marred the win. The England right back, who missed the World Cup because of a knee injury, sparked fears of a recurrence of the problem.

EMERGING CRICKETER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Arshdeep, Renuka, Yastika nominated for ICC honour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Dec 28: India left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh was Wednesday nominated for the ICC Emerging Cricketer of the Year honour alongside Marco Jansen, Finn Allen and Ibrahim Zadran. Voting for the award will begin in January, said the ICC in a release.

In the women's category, pace bowler Renuka Singh and batter Yastika Bhatia were nominated for the award alongside Australia's Darcie Brown and England's Alice Capsey.

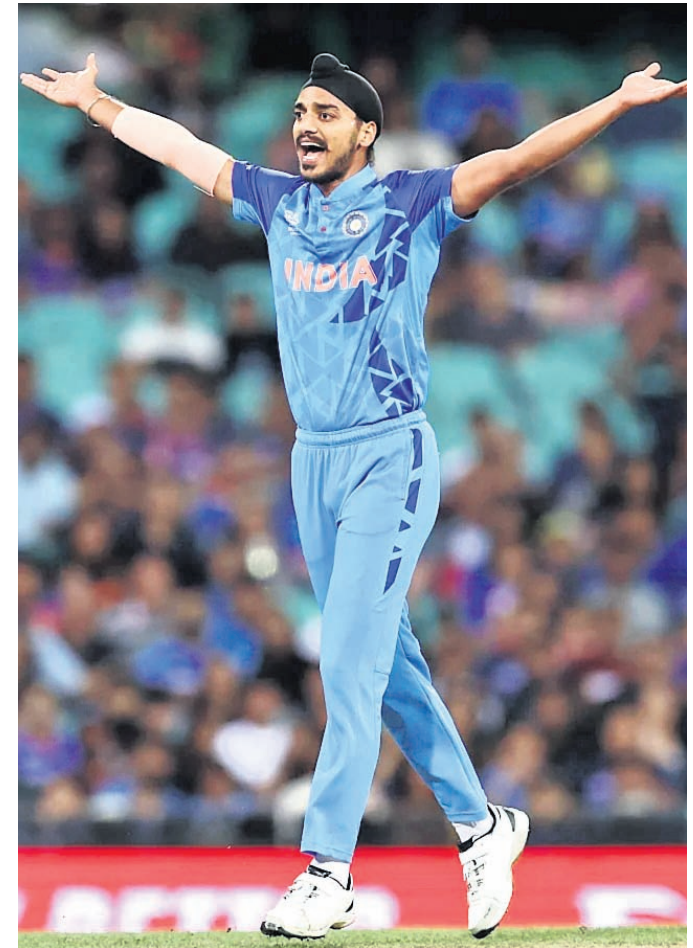
Arshdeep has made the short-list less than six months after making his international debut. In 21 T20Is, the lanky pacer took 33 wickets at an average of 18.12, providing breakthroughs both with the new and old ball.

Building on a strong IPL career, India's national setup included the left-arm quick, and he made the most of the opportunity with the team bouncing back after a disappointing 2021 T20 World Cup.

Arshdeep was also handed an ODI cap on India's recent tour of New Zealand, and the future is bright for the 23-year-old. In a short span of time, Arshdeep came up with memorable performances, including in the high-pressure T20 World Cup game against Pakistan at the MCG.

Arshdeep is in contention for the award alongside another left-arm quick, Jansen from South Africa, New Zealand opener Allen and Afghanistan batter Zadran.

Renuka has been nominated for the prestigious award after the right-arm bowler claimed 40 wickets this year in just 29 matches across the two white-ball formats, thus emerging as a frontrunner to step into Jhulan Goswami's shoes.



The 26-year-old Renuka was especially potent in ODIs, claiming 18 wickets at an average of 14.88. She troubled the strong Australian line-up in the seven T20I meetings this year, taking eight wickets, while her showing in the Commonwealth Games and the Asia Cup in Dhaka — 17 wickets in 11 games — shows she has big-match temperament.

Yastika, with her composed demeanour, performed remarkably in India's middle order throughout the year. She scored 41 and 31 in the lead-up to the 50-over World Cup in New Zealand before going on to score half-centuries against Australia and Bangladesh. The 22-year-old scored 376 ODI runs at an average of 25.06 and had a healthy strike rate of 73.29.

ASHWIN JOINT 4TH, IYER MOVES TO 16TH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Dec 28: R Ashwin and Shreyas Iyer Wednesday made significant gains in the ICC rankings, which is led by his compatriot Ravindra Jadeja. Jadeja is currently on 369 rating points while Ashwin is on 343.

Iyer has attained a career-best 16th position. Iyer's scores of 87 and 29 not out have helped him

wickets in the match. He has also inched up three places to 84th among batters.

Ashwin has also earned seven rating points in the all-rounders' rankings, which is led by his compatriot Ravindra Jadeja. Jadeja is currently on 369 rating points while Ashwin is on 343.

Iyer has attained a career-best 16th position. Iyer's scores of 87 and 29 not out have helped him

progress from 26th position, his previous best in the rankings.

Despite his player of the series performance in Bangladesh, Cheteshwar Pujara before going on to score half-centuries against Australia and Bangladesh. The 22-year-old scored 376 ODI runs at an average of 25.06 and had a healthy strike rate of 73.29.

Rishabh Pant remains the top-ranked Indian batter in sixth position.

CAREY TON LEAVES SA IN DIRE STRAITS



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Dec 28: Dean Elgar's weary South Africa side faces a difficult task to avoid a big defeat in the second test against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground with two days of play remaining.

South Africa reached 15-1 in its second innings at stumps Wednesday, still requiring 371 more runs to make Australia bat again. Given that South Africa has failed to score 200 in its previous three innings in this series, and its leading batsman and captain Elgar is already back in the sheds, the odds are against the touring team.

Only seven overs were bowled in the evening session before rain interrupted play, sparing South Africa further misery on day three.

South Africa had lost Elgar for a duck in the second over as rival captain Pat Cummins struck a key blow, removing the left-hander caught behind off the glove. Theunis de Bruyn, dropped at slip on three, is not out on six with Sarel Erwee on seven.

Resuming Wednesday on 386/3, Australia declared at tea on 575/8 in reply to South Africa's first innings of 189. Wicketkeeper Alex Carey (111, 149b, 13x4) scored his maiden Test century for Australia. Carey and Cameron Green (51 n o, 177b, 5x4),

who showed admirable composure against the short ball despite nursing a broken finger, shared a century stand for the eighth wicket.

Earlier, South Africa started strongly as Nortje struck twice in the third over of the day, bowling Travis Head (51) and David Warner (200) in consecutive deliveries.

Warner, who had retired hurt with leg cramps Tuesday, returned at the fall of the fourth wicket but lasted only one delivery, playing all around a full toss which crashed onto his stumps via his back pad at 395/5. In the following over, Rabada dismissed Cummins caught behind for four.

Nathan Lyon (25) was out hooking at 440/7, before Carey and Green piled it on against the South Africa's bowlers. Opener Warner dominated day two by scoring his 25th Test century, reaching 200 in 37 degrees Celsius (99 Fahrenheit) heat.

Warner, who had not scored a century since January 2020, returned to form in typically aggressive style, becoming the second player in Test cricket to reach 200 in his 100th Test match.

BRIEF SCORES: South Africa 189 & 151 (Pat Cummins 1/0); Australia 575/8d (Alex Carey 111, Cameron Green 51 n o; Anrich Nortje 3/92). Match to continue.

Odisha batters impress after Suryakant's six-fer

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 28: Odisha batters ably complemented Suryakant Pradhan's impressive spell (6/93) in their Ranji Trophy Elite Group A match against Haryana at the DRIEMS Ground in Tangi, Wednesday.

Odisha wrapped up the Haryana innings in 10 overs on the second day of the multi-day match as the visitors could add only 32 runs to their overnight total of 306/5, losing the remaining five wickets in the process. Prayash Singh finished with figures of 3/66, getting all his wickets Wednesday.

In response, Odisha reached 204/3 before the umpires call off play for the day. Opener Anurag Sarangi (63, 123b, 10x4) and Shantanu Mishra (60, 172b, 4x4, 1x6) provided the hosts a strong start before skipper



Suryakant Pradhan

Subhanshu Senapati (42 batting, 112b, 1x4, 2x6) and Kartik Biswal (29 batting, 50b, 4x4) played cautiously to keep Odisha out of trouble.

Anurag and Shantanu put up a



Anurag Sarangi

98-run opening stand. Anurag played with more fluency, while Shantanu opted for defensive approach. Haryana skipper Yuzvendra Chahal (2/55) broke the stand when



Shantanu Mishra

the leg-spinner trapped Anurag in front.

The India international then dismissed the No.3 batter — Swastik Samal — to leave Odisha at 104/2.

However, Shantanu, with his skipper Subhanshu, guided the team past 150. The duo were playing comfortably until Haryana's first innings centurion Nishant Sindhu (1/19) gave Odisha another hiccup as the all-rounder breached the defence of Shantanu to leave Odisha at 156/3.

Kartik then joined his captain in the middle and the duo ensured Odisha of no further hiccups for the day. They took their team past 200, giving the hosts enough time to take a first innings lead.

BRIEF SCORES

Haryana 338 (Nishant Sindhu 142, Jayant Yadav 41; Suryakant Pradhan 6/93, Prayash Singh 3/66); Odisha 204/3 (Anurag Sarangi 63, Shantanu Mishra 60, Subhanshu Senapati 42 batting; Yuzvendra Chahal 2/55, Nishant Sindhu 1/19). Match to continue.

Shikha returns for T20 World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: Veteran pacer Shikha Pandey Wednesday made a surprise return to India's 15-member squad for the Women's 2023 T20 World Cup in South Africa. The ICC event will be played February 10-26.

Shikha last played for India in October 2021 before being controversially dropped from the team. Her inclusion also shows the lack of depth in the pace bowling department. The 33-year-old, whose strength is to swing the ball, has featured in three Tests, 55 ODIs and 56 T20s.

Harmanpreet Kaur will lead the side with Smriti Mandhana being her deputy. Jimimah Rodrigues has managed to retain her place in the team despite low returns in India's 1-4 series loss to the mighty Australia.

Left-arm pacer Anjali Sarvani is also part of the team following her debut series against Australia. The other pace bowling options include Renuka Thakur and Pooja



Vastrakar, whose inclusion in the squad is subject to fitness.

The Australia series exposed India's frailties in the bowling department and team has a lot of work to do before the ICC event. The spinners in the team include all-rounders Deepti Sharma and

Devika Vaidya besides Radha Yadav and Rajeshwari Gayakwad.

Shafali Verma and Richa Ghosh are already in South Africa with the U-19 team. India had lost to Australia in the 2020 T20 World Cup final at the MCG.

The World Cup reserves — Sneha Rana, S Meghana and Meghna Singh — are part of the tri-series squad. The tri-series involving India, South Africa and West Indies begins January 19.

Sushma Verma, who last played for India in March 2021, has made a comeback for the tri-series. Uncaptioned all-rounder Amanjot Kaur is the lone fresh face in the squad.

THE SQUAD

Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Shafali Verma, Yastika Bhatia (wk), Richa Ghosh (wk), Jimimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Deepti Sharma, Devika Vaidya, Radha Yadav, Renuka Thakur, Anjali Sarvani, Pooja Vastrakar, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Shikha Pandey.

HI announces cash prize for men's squad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: Hockey India (HI) Wednesday announced cash prizes for the Indian team and support staff ahead of next month's FIH men's World Cup in Bhubaneswar-Rourkela.

India will begin their campaign against Spain from January 13 and HI decided to reward the team members with Rs 25 lakh each and the support staff with Rs 5 lakh each for a gold medal-winning feat at the prestigious quadrennial event.

A silver medal would see the players walk away with Rs 15 lakh and the support staff would be awarded Rs 3 lakh, while a bronze medal will see them being awarded with Rs 10 lakh each, while the support staff would be entitled to a prize of Rs 2 lakh. The decision was made by Hockey India

Executive Board in a virtual meeting December 24.

"Finishing on the podium at a Senior Men's World Cup is not an easy task, and we hope this announcement will further increase the motivation levels of the already glory-hungry Indian Men's Hockey Team," said HI president Dilip Tirkey in a release.

India last stood on the World Cup podium in 1975 where they lifted the coveted title, beating Pakistan in the final held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

India have previously won three medals at this prestigious event. The team registered a bronze medal at the first edition in 1971, followed by a silver medal in Amstelveen in 1973, apart from the title win in 1975.

The Indian team is in pool D with England, Spain, and Wales.