



## MANUSHI'S WISHLIST

Actor Manushi Chhillar spills the beans on her dreamy wishlist of directors that she wants to work with

LEISURE P2



## KIM'S BIG THREAT

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un calls for developing new intercontinental ballistic missiles

INTERNATIONAL P10



## BCCI'S NEW PLAN

BCCI may ask some of the national cricketers not to play in the IPL to keep them injury free ahead of the ODI WC

SPORTS P12

## RUSSIANS' DEATHS

### Cops may seek Interpol's help if need arises



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 1:** Director General of Police Sunil Kumar Bansal Sunday said that the state police may seek the help of the Interpol if needed to unearth the mystery behind the deaths of Russian legislator Pavel Antov and his friend, Vladimir Bidenov at a hotel in Rayagada last month.

He also reiterated that the Crime Branch sleuths have so far not found any indication of foul play in the deaths of the Russian nationals. DGP Bansal told media persons here that the Crime Branch sleuths are investigating the matter and competent officers have been provided for the same. He also said that probe into such matters usually takes some time.

The state police are carrying out the investigation with an open mind though they are yet to find any clues suggesting foul play in the mysterious deaths. He said that the future course of action depends upon the result of the probe.

Responding to media query on seeking the assistance of Interpol, Bansal said, "What needs to be done will be decided on the basis of what comes out of the probe. We will do whatever needed."

A four-member group of Russians including the deceased duo along with their Delhi-based travel guide Jitendra Singh had checked-in to the hotel December 21, 2022. December 22 Bidenov was found dead in his room while Antov died under mysterious circumstances and his body was found in a pool of blood outside the hotel building two days later.

### Commercial LPG price hiked by ₹25

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** Dining out in 2023 would be a costlier affair, as oil marketing companies (OMCs) Sunday, the first day of the New Year, hiked the price of commercial LPG cylinder by ₹25. Rates of domestic LPG cylinders have been kept unchanged.

With the hike in commercial LPG cylinder prices, it will cost ₹1,768 per cylinder in New Delhi. In Mumbai, a commercial LPG cylinder would cost ₹1,721 per cylinder, while in Kolkata and Chennai it will cost ₹1,870 and ₹1,917 per cylinder respectively.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We take 3 weeks' year-end holiday. Two for vacation and one for replying to all Happy New Year messages

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX	29.6°C	29.6°C
	MIN	19.9°C	19.8°C
	Humidity	91%	93%
	Rainfall	Nil	Nil
	Forecast	Fog very likely	



**NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS:** People from various walks of life meet Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at his residence in Bhubaneswar, Sunday, to greet him on New Year's Day.

OP PHOTO

## Unemployment at 16-month high

Urban unemployment rate rose to 10.09 per cent in December from 8.96 per cent in the previous month, while the rural unemployment rate slipped to 7.44 per cent from 7.55 per cent

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** India's unemployment rate rose to 8.30 per cent in December, the highest in 16 months, from 8.00 per cent in the previous month, data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) showed Sunday.

The urban unemployment rate rose to 10.09 per cent in December from 8.96 per cent in the previous month, while the rural unemployment rate slipped to 7.44 per cent from 7.55 per cent, the data showed.

Mahesh Vyas, managing director of the CMIE, said the rise in the unemployment rate was "not as



bad as it may seem," as it came on top of a healthy increase in the labour participation rate, which shot up to 40.48 per cent in December, the highest in 12 months.

"Most importantly, the employment rate has increased in December to 37.1 per cent, which again is the highest since January 2022," he told Reuters.

Containing high inflation and creating jobs for millions of young people entering the job market remain the biggest challenge for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration ahead of national elections in 2024.

The main Opposition Congress launched a five-month Bharat Jodo Yatra in September from Kanyakumari to Srinagar to mobilise public opinion on issues such as high prices, unemployment and what it says are the divisive politics of Modi's BJP.

"India needs to move from a single focus on GDP growth to growth with employment, skilling of youth and creating production capacities with export prospects," Rahul Gandhi, senior Congress leader, who is leading party's 3,500 kilometre march on foot, told reporters Saturday. **Continued on P4**

## 3 murders on New Year

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Ganjam, Deogarh, Malkangiri, Jan 1:** The New Year was marked by three gruesome murders in the state. While a man indulged in New Year revelry after killing his wife, another stabbed his father to death under the influence of alcohol; and a peon hacked a teacher to death after a heated exchange.

### MAN KILLS WIFE, THEN PARTIES

People of Rambha in Ganjam district woke up to a shocking incident Sunday. A man killed his wife and indulged in revelry at the Zero Night celebration Sunday at Mayurpada under Huma outpost limits. Police arrested the accused CH Laxman Reddy and sent the body to Chhatrapur hospital for post-mortem.

Laxman, a driver, came to the village eight days ago. Since marriage, Laxman had been torturing his wife Janaki seeking dowry. Saturday night, he came home drunk and picked up a quarrel with his wife. Later, when Janaki was asleep, Laxman beat her to death with an iron rod before leaving for Zero Night celebrations, police said. In the morning, he came home and rushed Janaki to Chhatrapur hospital where doctors declared her brought dead. **Continued on P4**



Relatives of Janaki mourn her death at Mayurpada in Rambha, Sunday.

### TIPSY MAN KILLS FATHER

A man stabbed his father to death under influence of alcohol at Kaunsibahali village under Sadar police limits of Deogarh district. Police detained the accused Duryodhan Pradhan and started an investigation. The body of victim Ratnakar Pradhan was sent for post-mortem.

### PEON HACKS TEACHER TO DEATH

In the third incident, a teacher was hacked to death by a peon following a heated argument on a Saraswati Shishu Vidya Mandir premises in Malkangiri, Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Nirakar Sethi, while the accused was identified as Naresh Khatriya. Sethi visited the school on some work when he had an argument with the peon on some issues which later escalated. Naresh, under the influence of alcohol, picked up an axe and hacked the teacher.

Profusely bleeding, Sethi collapsed on the spot. Locals rushed him to the district headquarters hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. Police sent the body for post-mortem and detained the accused.

## Dalai Lama sees resurgence of Buddhism in China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

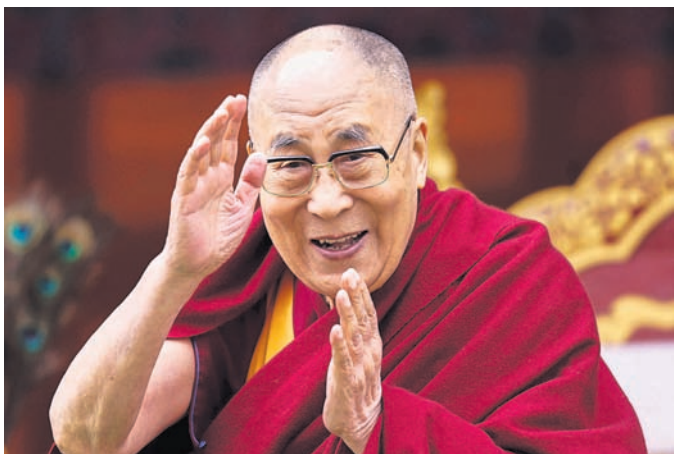
**Both Gaya, Jan 1:** The Dalai Lama Sunday flagged the "growing interest in Buddhism" in China after years of "suppression and oppression" of the faith and its followers.

His Holiness was addressing devotees in Both Gaya, the site where the Buddha had attained Enlightenment two millennia ago, after a "long life offering" ceremony, a traditional prayer made for the longevity of the 87-year-old Buddhist leader.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner said: "The Buddhist tradition of Tibet has gained lots of attention from people in the West. In the past, Buddhism was known to be

an Asian religion. But today its philosophy and concepts, particularly with regard to psychology have spread throughout the world. Many scientists are taking interest in this tradition."

"So, this is not only for Tibet....But even China. It has a direct bearing on China as well because China has been a Buddhist country but there was so much suppression and oppression of Buddhism and Buddhists in China," said the Tibetan leader, who had to flee his homeland in 1959, a decade after Mao Zedong's Communist revolution. "So, there could be much change happening in China and the world. I have always remained optimistic about the possibility of a better world," he added.



"Tibet, which is also called the land of snows, has undergone many

tragedies. But it has come as a blessing in disguise. People around

the world have now become aware of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition," said the Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama, who has since sought asylum in India and settled at Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh, which has come to be known as "mini Tibet" because of a large number of Tibetan refugees staying there, has come to this international Buddhist pilgrim town in Bihar, which he calls the 'Vajrasthan' (the pure land) after a gap of two years. "It is a coincidence that this ceremony, where prayers are made for my long life, is taking place on the first day of the Gregorian calendar. So, this is in a way an indication that we may be looking at good times ahead," added the world renowned leader.

## Three dead in terror attack

**Rajouri/Jammu:** Suspected terrorists opened fire on three houses of a particular community in a village in Jammu and Kashmir's border district of Rajouri Sunday evening, killing three civilians and injuring several others, officials said. Additional Director General of Police, Jammu Zone, Mukesh Singh said police, along with the Army and the CRPF, have launched a massive search operation to nab the two "armed men" behind the attack at Upper Dangri village. "Firing took place at three houses, separated at a distance of around 50 metres from each other. Two civilians succumbed to injuries and four others are injured," Singh said. However, officials said one more injured civilian succumbed.

# leisure



## DUA LIPA TO MAKE HER ACTING DEBUT IN ARGYLLE

Seems like songstress Dua Lipa is hanging up her microphone and putting on her finest acting face as she plans to conquer the world of moving pictures - and bag herself an Oscar. The 27-year will make her acting debut in Matthew Vaughn's upcoming spy drama *Argylle*.

## MODEST MOUSE BAND FOUNDER JEREMIAH GREEN DIES AT 45

Jeremiah Green, a co-founder and drummer for the rock band *Modest Mouse*, passed away at the age of 45. He was battling cancer. "I don't know a way to ease into this: Today we lost our dear friend Jeremiah," the band wrote on its official Facebook page shortly before midnight on New Year's Eve.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Old, fond memories will define your mood today, which will show up in the manner in which you deal with work, where your mellow side will be visible to others. You are also circumspect with money and tend towards saving it.

**TAURUS**  
You may find yourself compromising against your will today, predicts Ganesh. Stand strong despite things going awry instead of feeling disillusioned due to poor results. Ongoing negotiations might come to a logical end and a few important decisions are likely to be delayed due to lack of proper information.

**GEMINI**  
You have been ignoring a few problems that have been plaguing your family members for quite some time now. It's time you looked into the matter, says Ganesh. Irrespective of how difficult the challenges are, today you will emerge victorious.

**CANCER**  
Your strange and unconventional behaviour doesn't always go down well with many people. If you think you are different, and maybe even better than others, it is advisable that you keep it under the wraps. The reason being that most people may not be able to understand you.

**LEO**  
Some people have the world at their feet. And today, you are one of them, says Ganesh. With your gorgeous appearance and gregarious attitude, it is easy for you to open all doors with just a touch. So, you have the luxury to choose - either you entertain yourself through multiple avenues such as movies, theatre and music, or you be the entertainer with your superior performing skills.

**VIRGO**  
Financial affairs will face a major obstruction today. Ganesh advises you to allow your mind to prevail over your heart. Take extraordinary care of your precious personal possessions, apart from your legal duties and new projects keeping in view their long-term effect on your mind.

**LIBRA**  
It's a day of reaching new heights when it comes to finances. The cosmos favours moneylenders and stock marketeers. Call it the special touch that you give to all transactions monetary, but today you have the uncanny knack of raking in the moolah from all sources. Sit back and see your tenacity multiply your fortunes, says Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
Your energy levels are high as you gear up for new events. However, there are chances that these events may not meet your expectations. But, don't lose hope and get disappointed. Keep your spirits high. Implement the first lesson learnt in school: try & try till you succeed!

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Your business is all set to expand with you making the most of your overseas contacts. Effective communication skills will help you sail through your tasks. And you are making all the right moves to become the leader of your pack.

**CAPRICORN**  
Patience is tested when one is in trouble; your patience could be tried today. The trick is in keeping your composure, says Ganesh. Avoid getting into an argument or scuffle with those around you, as luck may not be on your side.

**AQUARIUS**  
Get ready for a gala evening as you will party at the smallest excuse! You may toast a friend's success, or may be ecstatic about finding your lost pet. Otherwise it's the usual, says Ganesh. You plan a bit and march ahead successfully in your business or profession.

**PISCES**  
Looking at your planetary positions for today, there is a likelihood that you will suffer from reversals in fortunes financially. Hence be wary when it comes to financial dealings.



## Manushi reveals her dream list of directors

**Mumbai:** Manushi Chhillar made her debut in 2022 in *Samrat Prithviraj*, where she essayed the role of Princess Sanjogita. Though the film didn't perform well at the box office but her performance was appreciated by the audience. Recently, in an interaction with a web portal the gorgeous actress spoke about her dream list of directors and upcoming film *Tehran*. Talking about her wish list of actors or directors she said, "We all have a list of people that we want to work with. I do add the director's name to

my wish list. I think one of the directors is someone that I will not name but I am working with him which I am really excited and happy about. So yes, mostly my wishlist is of directors. I would want to be directed by Rajamouli sir, which might sound very cliché but I absolutely loved *RRR*. I also want to again work with Arun Gopal who his directing *Tehran*." She, talking about *Tehran*, adds, "There's not much that I can really reveal about my character in *Tehran*. All I can say is that this is very new, and I guess since people have seen me as princess Sanjogita and I think this is going to be completely opposite."



## Mrunal to headline Nani's Dasara

**Hyderabad:** In the New Year gift to his fans, Tollywood's 'Natural Star' Nani Sunday unveiled his 30th movie. He has collaborated with Vyra Entertainments for the movie which will have Mrunal Thakur in the female lead. To be produced by Mohan Cherukuri (CVM), Dr Vijender Reddy Teegala, and Murthy K.S., the yet-to-be-titled movie will be directed by Shouryuv, who will make his debut. The makers announced film's main technicians including the director. Debutant Shouryuv will be wielding the

megaphone for the first time. Mrunal Thakur who made a grand debut in Telugu with *Sita Ramam* will be playing the heroine. The movie will have some young and talented technicians taking care of different crafts. Sanu John Varughese ISC will be cranking the camera and this will be his third movie with Nani, after *Jersey* and *Shyam Singha Roy*. The cinematographer captured the emotions persuasively. Popular Malayalam composer Hesham Abdul Wahab of Hridayam fame scores the music and his background score for the video is very pleasant and sets the right mood. Praveen Anthony is the editor and Jothish Shankar is the production designer; while Satish EVV is the executive producer along with creative producer Bhanu Dheeraj Rayudu.

## Films to watch out for in 2023

The 2023 film release lineup looks excellent so far! With SRK's and Salman Khan's two films each, it seems like a great year as far as Hindi film industry is concerned. There are many other films that have the audience waiting with bated breaths, let's check out the list here.



**Pathaan**  
Although the film has been embroiled in controversy, Shah Rukh Khan fans are waiting for the release of the film which also marks his comeback after a hiatus of four years. The film will hit the theatres on January 25, 2023.



**Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan**  
Salman Khan will return with an action-packed entertainer for all his fans! *Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan* is directed by Farhad Samji and also features Pooja Hegde and Venkatesh Daggubati in the lead.



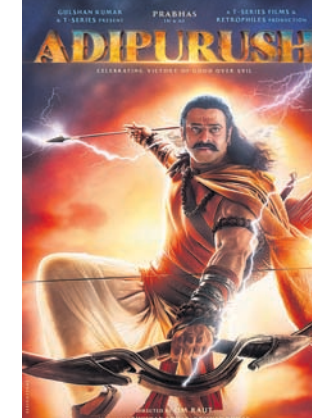
**Tu Jhoothi Main Makkar**  
Touted to be Ranbir Kapoor's last rom-com film, *Tu Jhoothi Main Makkar* will hit the theatres on the occasion of Holi - March 8, 2023. The film marks the first on-screen collaboration between Ranbir Kapoor and Shraddha Kapoor.



**Jawan**  
Touted to be a mega North-South film collaboration, the film *Jawan* will see Shah Rukh Khan in a raw, edgy look, romancing South superstar Nayanthara. The film is being directed by celebrated Tamil director Atlee. The film will hit the theatres June 2, 2023.



**Animal**  
Another Ranbir Kapoor film in the works! *Animal* is a Sandeep Reddy Vanga directorial and alongside Ranbir; Rashmika Mandanna, Anil Kapoor, and Bobby Deol are also a part of the film.



**Adipurush**  
Although the film has been receiving a lot of backlashes ever since the trailer got out, Prabhas fans are eagerly waiting for the release.

### NATYADHARA: DAY 1



A scene from Odia play *Asta Suryara Smashana* staged by theatre troupe Andolan from Khurda at Bharjakala Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Sunday. Written by Kartika Chandra Rath, the drama was directed by Santosh Kumar Mohanty. Though there were several characters in the play, all were enacted by two actors - Sunil Kumar Nayak and Jasaswini Sahoo. The play was performed on the first day of Natyadhara, a monthly event jointly organised by Odisha Natya Sangh(ONS), Culture Department and Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi. The guests who were present on the occasion included ONS president Haren Sahoo, dramatists Pabitra Mohanty, Kailash Panigrahi and Satrugna Samal

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

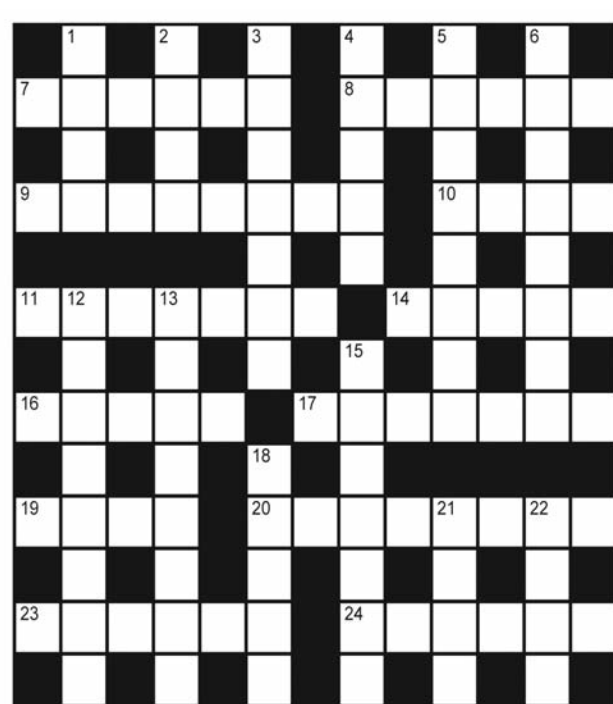


### BREVITY



### FUN post

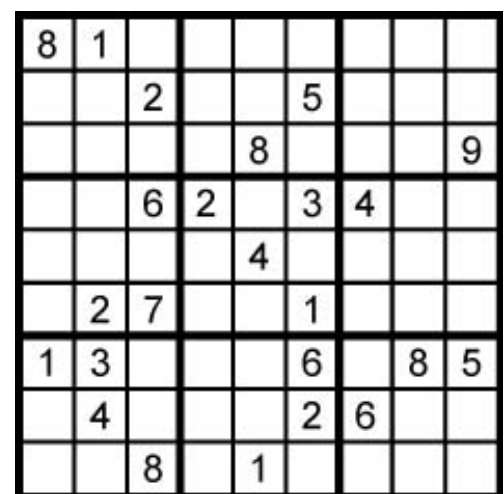
### CROSSWORD



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

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



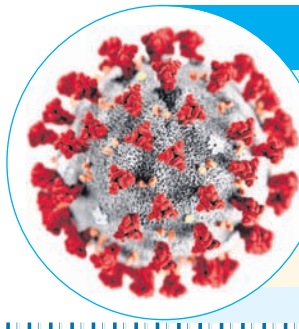
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## CITY BEAUTIFICATION

Artisans give finishing touches to a mural in Bhubaneswar, Sunday, as the state gears up to host Men's Hockey World Cup



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	66,50,02,893	63,69,22,409	66,97,442
India	4,46,78,649	4,41,45,238	5,30,705
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

# 2L pay obeisance to the Lord on New Year's Day



**Puri, Jan 1:** Around two lakh devotees from across the state and outside visited Srimandir and paid obeisance to the sibling deities on the New Year's Day, Sunday. Devotees were seen queuing outside the 12th century shrine since early morning to have a glimpse of the Holy Trinity. Devotees went through the barricades from the Municipal Market Square, entered the temple from Lions' Gate and did exit through the North Gate. Devotees waiting for hours were provided with water and other facilities by police. "We sought blessings of Lord Jagannath on the first day of the New Year. May 2023 bring happiness and prosperity to all," said a devotee, who visited the 12th century temple Sunday. According to Puri superintendent of police (SP) Kanwar Vishal Singh, police have taken special measures to ensure that senior citizens and specially-abled devotees have a smooth darshan of Lord Jagannath. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik wished people a happy New Year Sunday. Through a video message, the CM said, "I wish you all on the occasion of New Year. May the New Year be a happy, peaceful, and prosperous one for all. May it be a year of opportunities and possibilities. This is the only prayer before Mahaprabhu (Lord Jagannath)." "I wish all of you a very happy New Year," he added. Sources said anticipating a huge footfall on New Year's Day, the district administration had made elaborate security arrangements for the devotees to have a hassle-free darshan of the sibling deities.

More than 60 platoons of policemen and 200 officers were deployed in and around the Srimandir to maintain law and order in the area. As many tourists also visit the sea beach to have a bath before going to the temple, a large number of life-guards were also stationed at designated bathing points along the beach to prevent incidents of drowning, said the SP. Street vendors operating at Grand Road have been cleared, while the multi row barricades have been extended over a kilometre from the Lions' Gate of the shrine. Shoe and mobile stands were in place. Extra vehicle parking places were made. Adequate provision for drinking water alongside the barricades was also made for the devotees. On Saturday, the last day of the year, thousands had congregated at the beach and gave farewell to the setting Sun.



Khandagiri & Udayagiri caves



Ram Mandir



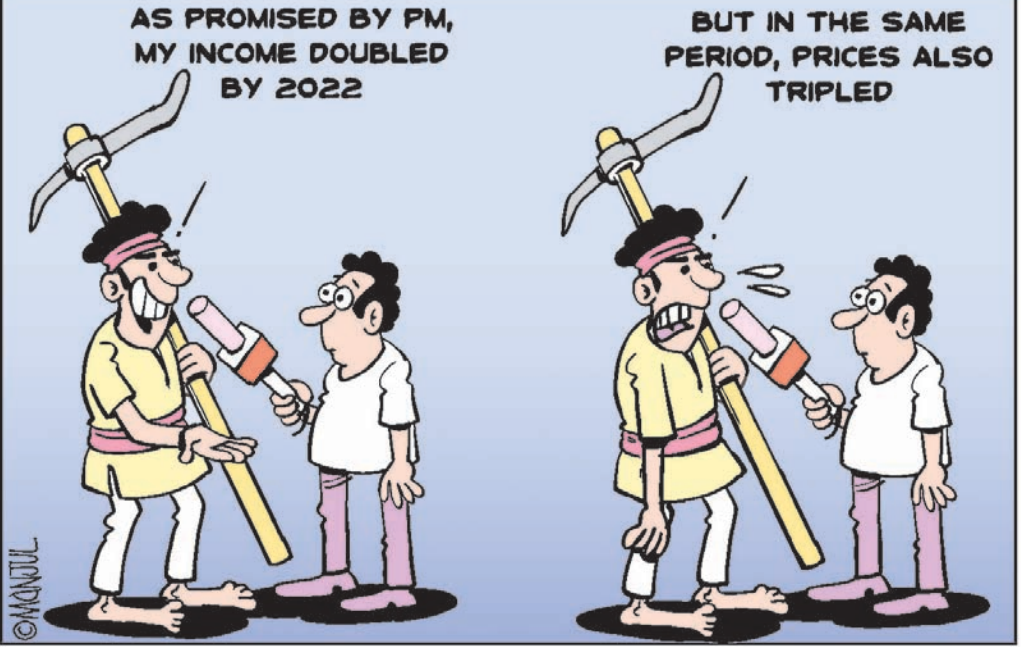
Cuttack Chandi Temple



Nandankanan

**NEW YEAR RUSH:** Khandagiri and Udayagiri caves, Nandankanan Zoological Park and Ram Mandir in Bhubaneswar, and Chandi Temple in Cuttack were among the places in the twin cities which witnessed a huge footfall on the New Year's Day, Sunday

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## RSP achieves feat in crude steel production

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 1:** The Steel Melting Shop-II of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has surpassed the historic milestone of production of 50 Million Tonne (MT) crude steel, an official said Sunday. With this journey, the Steel Melting Shop-II which had commenced in March 1996 has now entered a higher orbit. RSP sources said the 50 MT crude steel production was achieved in only 26 years. Moreover, the last 10 MT of crude steel was produced in a matter of three years and six months, while the last one year witnessed production of 2.5 MT of crude steel. RSP director-in-charge Atanu Bhowmick, who visited Steel Melting Shop-II department Saturday along with senior plant officials, congratulated the collective for the remarkable achievement. Bhowmick said, "The milestone has been crossed with the efforts put in by the employees of SMS-II as well as all the associated units."

## Using mobile phone while driving claimed 1,040 lives

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** A total of 1,997 road accidents occurred in 2021 due to the use of mobile phone by drivers while driving, which claimed 1,040 lives, according to a Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) report. The report titled 'Road accidents in India - 2021', further said 555 road accidents took place due to jumping of red light which claimed 222 lives in 2021. According to the report, total number accidents and death due to potholes in 2021 respectively stood at 3,625 and 1,481. The report noted that road accidents are multi-causal which requires multi-pronged measures to mitigate the problems through concerted efforts of all agencies of both central government and state governments. It said the road ministry has formulated a multi-pronged strategy to address the issue of road safety based on education, engineering (both of roads and vehicles), enforcement and emergency care. A total of 4,12,432 road accidents occurred in 2021, which claimed 1,53,972 lives while 3,84,448 people were injured.



IN 2021

The report 'Road accidents in India - 2021' noted that road accidents are multi-causal which requires multi-pronged measures to mitigate the problems through concerted efforts of all agencies of both central government and state governments

## Internal migration behind lower turnout: ECI

**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE**  
**New Delhi, Jan 1:** States and Union Territories in the country have shown huge variations in the voter turnout in the last two general elections. According to the Election Commission of India (ECI), there are a few states which recorded a voter turnout between 40 per cent and 50 per cent. On the other side, there are some states and UTs which recorded a voter turnout between 80 per cent and 90 per cent in the last two Lok Sabha polls. In General Election 2019, one state/UT recorded the lowest polling percentage in the range of 40 per cent to 50 per cent, two states/UTs witnessed voter turnout in the range of 50 per cent and 60 per cent and 11 states/UTs had voter turnout between 60 per cent and 70 per cent. The maximum 12 states/UTs had recorded a voting percentage between 70 per cent and 80 per cent and 10 states/UTs recorded the highest voting percentage between 80 per cent and 90 per cent. A similar trend in voter turnout was observed in General Election 2014. While there are many reasons behind voters not coming out of their homes and participating in the democratic exercise, officials said that migration of voters is one of the main reasons for lower voter turnout in many states



Although there is no central database available for migration within the country, an analysis of available data in the public domain points to work, marriage and education-related migration as important components of domestic migration. According to the Census 2011 data, the AEC said, 45.36 crore Indians (37%) are migrants. Around 75% of such migrations are on account of marriage and family related reasons. Internal migration is one of the assessed important reasons required to be addressed to improve voter turnout in low voter turnout states. This is likely because the internal migrants or broadly the voters who are absent at their home locations on the day of polling, even if they wish to vote at their home location, they are unable to travel to home location due to various reasons -- Election Commission to political parties. like Bihar; Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan. It is understood that there are multifarious reasons for a voter not opting to register in a new place of residence, thus missing out on exercising his right to vote. Inability to vote due to internal migration (domestic migrants) is one of the main reasons to be addressed to improve voter turnout and ensure participative elections, said a senior ECI official. Although there is no central database available for migration within the country, an analysis of available data in the public domain points to

work, marriage and education related migration as important components of domestic migration, added the official. "Internal migration is one of the assessed important reasons required to be addressed to improve voter turnout in low voter turnout states. This is likely because the internal migrants or broadly the voters who are absent at their home locations on the day of polling, even if they wish to vote at their home location, they are unable to travel to home location due to various reasons," said a letter issued by the Election Commission recently to the political parties in the country. The letter has been written for discussion on improving voter participation of domestic migrants using remote voting. The poll panel also cited the Census 2011 data saying 45.36 crore Indians (37%) are migrants, however, 75% of such migrations are on account of marriage and family related reasons. "It is also to be noted that internal out migration is predominant among the rural population and it is mostly intrastate (approximately 85%)," said the Commission in the letter. With a view to address the issues surrounding migrant voters, the Election Commission had formed a 'Committee of Officers on Domestic Migrants'. The committee held a meeting with the representatives of the recognised national political parties August 29, 2016 and examined the problems and measures for electoral participation of domestic migrants. The concluding recommendations of the committee were about creating a robust electoral roll so that there is only one registration per voter, developing requisite technology for two-way electronically transmitted postal ballot in a controlled environment and amendment of laws so that sufficient time is available to the election machinery for pre-registration of such electors.

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Visit us : [www.ctmaindia.com](http://www.ctmaindia.com) for more update

# Vigilance seizes assets worth ₹174 crore in '22



PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 1:** Continuing with its efforts to contain corruption, Odisha government's Vigilance Department has unearthed disproportionate assets (DA) worth ₹174.83 crore in 2022.

Odisha vigilance registered 285 cases against 544 persons, including private persons, and arrested 200 persons, including government servants, during the year, said Odisha vigilance director YK Jethwa Saturday.

"Last year (2021), the Odisha vigilance had detected and registered the highest number of DA cases in the country, and this year too, we are hopeful of a similar performance," he said.

The 285 cases included 84 DA cases, 118 trap cases and the rest other corruption cases. Of the 285 cases, 60 were registered against Class-I officers, which is the highest in the last five years, he said.

Out of the 84 cases were instituted for acquisition of disproportionate assets against 91 public servants and 56 private persons.

Jethwa said the top four cash seizures in DA searches in the history of Odisha vigilance happened in 2022 with the seizure of ₹71.01 crore.

were registered against 270 persons, including 170 public servants and 100 private persons. The public funds that were misappropriated amounted to about ₹19.50 crore.

Vigilance officials, while pursuing investigations, conducted raids at more than 600 locations against 200 corrupt public servants involved in trap/DA cases. Also, 898 bank accounts of corrupt public servants were frozen by the vigilance in the year, informed the director.

Further, 111 buildings in 62 valuation cases worth ₹24 crore were evaluated by the technical wing of Odisha vigilance.

In 2022, Jethwa said, 347 cases were disposed of after investigation as against the registration of 285 cases, taking the disposal rate to 122 per cent of registration.

As far as prosecution is concerned, the vigilance department recorded 91 convictions in 2022 at about 50 per cent conviction rate. Of the 91 convictions, 23 were against Class-I officers, 7 Class-II officers, 65 Class-III employees, 13 other public servants and 16 private persons.

The Odisha government has dismissed 30 public servants from services following their conviction in vigilance cases. During 2022, a significant number of officers with corruption charges were also given compulsory retirement by the government in pursuance of the policy of zero tolerance to corruption.

In 2022, the state vigilance received 16 cases from the Lokayukta for inquiry and submitted 23 inquiry reports after thorough probe.

"Going forward, Odisha vigilance is committed to take strong actions against corrupt practices with focus on higher ranks through enhanced application of technology in detection and investigation," said Jethwa.



HOLDING COMPASS: Police Commissioner SK Priyadarsi addresses officials in Bhubaneswar on the New Year's Day, Sunday

OP PHOTO

## Lok Seva Bhawan garden open for all

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 1:** Chief Minister's Office Sunday informed that starting from today afternoon, the Lok Seva Bhawan Flower Garden will be open for public visit on all holidays of January except the fourth Saturday. The Flower



Garden will be open from 4pm to 6pm on the holidays. According to CMO office, people can enjoy the beautiful flower garden on eight holidays including the New Year's day today, Sundays, Second Saturday and other government holidays. The garden has a wide variety of flowering plants creating a very pleasant environment.

## Who gave ganja to Russian tourists?

CRIME BRANCH TEAM CONTINUES PROBE; NHRC SEEKS REPORT FROM SP

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, Jan 1:** A Crime Branch (CB) team continued its probe into the death of two Russian tourists including Russian lawmaker Pavel Antov and his friend Vladimir Bidenov here at a hotel for the third day, Sunday.

Meanwhile, the NHRC has taken the issue seriously after a Human Rights activist of Berhampur moved the Commission in this regard. Admitting the case, the NHRC has asked Rayagada SP Vivekanand Sharma to submit an action taken report (ATR) within four weeks, it was learnt.

The team led by DSP Sarojkanta Mohanta and Inspector Mamatarani Panda summoned the hotel's owner and his staff and interrogated them separately with videography. The managing director of the hotel Arabinda Sahu, manager Kaushik Thaker, three receptionists, supervisor, restaurant



captain, hotel boy, room attendant and other staffers were questioned on various aspects regarding the death of the two tourists.

The team members also visited the Rayagada police station Sunday morning and held talks with the police officials and sought details from them. Later, DSP Mohanta, Inspector Panda and three officers returned to the hotel while the forensic team and scientific team visited elsewhere to collect more evidences regarding the two deaths.

The hotel's MD said that all employees cooperated during the probe and replied properly to the questions they were asked. He, however, did not elaborate what questions the CB

team asked them during probe. Over 20 staff members were called for questioning while the team collected records of all the guests who had visited the hotel from December 1 to 27. Meanwhile, the post-mortem report of Vladimir Bidenov has indicated presence of cannabis and opium in Bidenov's body.

As per the report, the medical team believes that Bidenov died of a cardiac arrest. The report also states that Bidenov's body was giving out smell of ganja or opium while only 100 ml of watery substances were present in his body.

The medical team suggested for viscera test in the post-mortem report which might help in ascertaining the actual reason behind his death. Meanwhile, questions such as how Bidenov got the ganja and who supplied it to him are doing the rounds. The CB team has started probing on this aspect after availability of the post-mortem report.

## Continued from P1

### SC verdict on pleas against ...

Calling the scrapping of the ₹ 500 and ₹1,000 currency notes deeply flawed, Chidambaram had argued that the government cannot on its own initiate any proposal relating to legal tender, which can only be done on the recommendation of the RBI's central board.

Resisting the apex court's attempt to revisit the 2016 demonetisation exercise, the government had said the court cannot decide a matter when no tangible relief can be granted by way of "putting the clock back" and "unscrambling a scrambled egg".

The RBI had earlier admitted in its submissions that there were "temporary hardships" and that those too are an integral part of the nation-building process, but there was a mechanism by which the problems that arose were solved.

In an affidavit, the Centre told the top court recently that the demonetisation exercise was a "well-considered" decision and part of a larger strategy to combat the menace of fake money, terror financing, black money and tax evasion.

The Supreme Court has heard a batch of 58 petitions challenging the demonetisation exercise announced by the Centre November 8, 2016.

### Unemployment at 16-month ...

The unemployment rate had declined to 7.2 per cent in the July-September quarter compared to 7.6 per cent in the previous quarter, according to separate quarterly data compiled by state run National Statistical Office (NSO) and released in November.

In December, the unemployment rate rose to 37.4 per cent in the northern state of Haryana, followed by 28.5 per cent in Rajasthan and 20.8 per cent in Delhi, CMIE data showed.



FOR THE BOAT OF LIFE: As the Christmas holidays approach an end, people gather for boating at the Silver City Boat Club in Cuttack, Sunday

OP PHOTO

## STATE SEES FILLIP IN IRRIGATION

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 1:** The Water Resources department has made some remarkable achievements in implementation of different projects during 2022, a significant among them being the Deo medium irrigation project that was dedicated to the people of the state by the Chief Minister August 12, 2022.

The project is set to extend irrigation facilities to 9,900 hectares of land in 100 villages covering Karanjia and Sukuruli blocks of Mayurbhanj district and Sahadapada block of Keonjhar district. Similarly the remaining work of Mahanadi Chitropala Island Irrigation project has been completed and dedicated to the people May 18 and it will provide irrigation facilities to 6,000 hectares of land of 64 villages covering Marsaghai and Gardapur blocks of Kendrapada district, Tirtol block of Jagatsingpur district and Nischintakooli block of Cuttack district, informed a department official. Irrigation facility has also been

extended to 17,121 hectare area from the Subarnarekha Irrigation Project in the last year. "Chief Minister has inaugurated the canal system August 12. So far, 52,480 hectre areas have been provided irrigation out of 69,933 hectre areas taken up under Phase-I," added the official.

Further, the Gangadhar Meher Lift Canal project in Bargarh district is in the advance stage of construction. Considering the demand of the people, additional work amounting to ₹177.10 crore has been approved by the state cabinet May 18, which will extend irrigation to additional 5,750 hectre areas, increasing the command area of the project from 25,600 ha to 31,350 ha.

Rehabilitation and resettlement issues of Lower Suktal Project have been resolved and headworks is in progress to irrigate 40,000 ha. Similarly, R&R works of Kanupur have been resolved and the headworks and the canal works are in progress. 44 mega lift irrigation projects have been completed during the last year.

# Physical activity a must to reduce stress, say experts

**P**eople, especially those in the 20-50 years age group must resolve in the New Year to lead a stress-free life and do everything possible to remain active, say healthcare professionals.

Numerous studies over the past couple of decades have highlighted the fact that stressful living is a major concern among Indians. This problem is more visible in urban areas and among city dwellers, due to change in their lifestyles or due to fast-paced living.

Some estimates indicate that at least 50 per cent of the adult population are under some form of stress due to personal or professional reasons. Abhinav CEO, KIMS Hospitals, underlined the need to remain active.

"Many individuals do not believe that physical activities help in reducing mental stress. But

many scientific studies have established the fact that individuals can burn their stress out. While excessive gym might be harmful to stressful minds, moderate exercise helps reduce the mental stress and help them go longer," he said.

"Ever better is an easy jog in the morning or a brisk walk. It is important, people plan their morning routines in a manner which would include physical activities. It is also a fact that prolonged social isolation, and other factors during the pandemic had a negative impact on working professionals across India," he said.

Stress distracts people from their life, their family, and above all, from their goals, observed B Kishore Reddy, MD Amor Hospitals.

"I come across many young victims who suffer fatal accidents due to the distractions caused by stress.

**M**any studies shockingly show that a majority of Indians still do not talk about mental illness, and even if they do, they use terminology associated with stigma and prejudice

**S**ome estimates indicate that at least 50 per cent of the adult population are under some form of stress due to personal or professional reasons

**W**hile excessive gym might be harmful to stressful minds, moderate exercise helps reduce the mental stress and help them go longer



It is important, people strive to lead a stress-free life, and ensure their mind remains calm at least

while driving vehicles. At certain times, an individual's stressed behaviour might cause irretrievable

damage to another person, and that would certainly be a wrong situation to ever get into," he said.

"The stress levels for working people in India have been very different over the past three years, starting from the early days of the pandemic. Even working from home was a very big change for most people in India, while it was not such a new thing in the western world and hence not such a big transformation for them. Considering these changes, one must try to take positives out, instead of worrying over the changes," concluded Hemant Kaukuntla, CEO Century Hospital.

"Work and career matters, but what matters more is life and family. It is important people prioritise what they want from life, and must act responsibly to ensure they do not enter into the stress zone ever.

While many professions demand working at odd hours, such individuals must ensure they work on their body and mind to stay physically and mentally calm," added Gouri Shankar, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine, SLG Hospitals.

Mental health issues are a big taboo among Indians. It is unfortunate that people do not discuss stress in their mind among family members, unlike in the Western world. The stigmas attached to mental illnesses ensure that people sweep things under the carpet and suffer in silence instead of speaking out and seeking help.

Many studies shockingly show that a majority of Indians still do not talk about the problems, and even if they do, they use terminology associated with stigma and prejudice to describe mental illnesses.

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Do not pretend - be. Do not promise - act. Do not dream - realize.



## Challenges Of 2023

The world is faced with new challenges to tackle as the New Year begins. The dying days of 2022 gave ample indications of the shape of things to come. Now, the contours are being clearly drawn. Things the world thought had been safely buried during the past few decades have now come alive with greater vigour and fury. Authoritarian rule, racial hatred, communal strife, anti-Semitism, minority abuses, anti-immigration policies, upsurge of pseudo-nationalistic fervour, anti-abortion movement and anti-LGBTQ+ issues are now posing threats to liberal norms in Europe, Asia and Israel like never before. A new trend that has surfaced is the capitulation of moderate elements even within Right-wing forces to the hate-filled politics of the Far-Right which is dictating terms to coalition governments in several countries of Europe.

Last week, the Migration Minister in Sweden's new Right-wing administration unveiled the government's plan to make it easier to cancel residence permits for immigrants. Maria Malmer Stenergard belongs to the Centre-Right Moderate party, but when she announced the new policy, Henrik Vinge, the deputy leader of the Radical-Right party, Sweden Democrats, sat beside her to make sure she did not deviate from the latter's agenda against immigrants. This party sprang from neo-Nazi movements. The stark reality is that though the Sweden Democrats is not part of the governing coalition, it has the power to influence policies as the government's survival depends on its support. In the landmark election last September, this party emerged as the second largest. That changed the complexion of politics in Sweden that embraced the narrow, bigoted ideology of the Far-Right. The presence of Vinge at the announcement of the new immigration policy shows how Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson depends on the Sweden Democrats' support to stay in office. For this he is ready to allow it to exert considerable influence, especially on issues such as migration and crime.

In Rome, one would find far more dangerous Far-Right political concoctions being made. The new Prime Minister of Italy, Giorgia Meloni, is steering the country to a precipitous neo-Fascist trajectory. Four years ago, her party managed to secure only 4 per cent votes. Now, with the help of the Far-Right party of Matteo Salvini she has captured power. The new mantra she chants is "Long live the Europe of patriots." In the post-war European politics, Radical-Right parties were pushed to the margin. But, now they occupy the centre stage of mainstream politics.

In Paris, the rise of the Far-Right is remarkable, though its new leader Marine Le Pen, had to swallow defeat in the recent Presidential election. But, the way she has succeeded in increasing her support base indicates France is dangerously moving the Ultra-Right way. In fact, she prepares to contest a third presidential election when Emmanuel Macron's term would end. A poll last December showed that 48 per cent of the French populace considers Le Pen and her party represent a "patriotic Right," compared with 36 per cent who branded her as the leader of "nationalist and xenophobic Right."

Denmark's Social Democrats captured power in 2019 with the help of the anti-immigrant Danish People's party. Recently, it won a second term and immediately thereafter the new government endorsed a cap on non-Western immigration. In fact, in 2021 Denmark became the first European country to try to send refugees back to Syria.

The question that is baffling the world is how the Radical Right could rise reversing the process of history. For a student of history, however, this is not baffling at all. The rise of the Right is a mere repetition of history. Some experts hazard the guess that financial crunch, euro zone debt crisis and austerity measures of recent past turned the people increasingly against mainstream liberal parties. The Far-Right has exploited the sentiments to the hilt. The COVID-19 pandemic that wreaked havoc on global economy has only helped the Radical Right consolidate its position further.

The signs are ominous for liberal ideas to thrive in such a climate of intolerance and hatred prevailing across the globe. The New Year may, hopefully, have the key to a change of situation.

### WISDOM CORNER

- Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage. LAO TZU
- Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair. KAHLIL GIBRAN
- Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win. SUN TZU

### WORDSWORTH

#### ■ Ensorcelled

It's not too hard to guess this one, since its middle has echoes of sorcerer. That's the origin, because it comes via the Old French verb *ensorceler* from *sorcier*, a sorcerer. Both go back to Latin *sors*, the destiny, fate or fortune of an individual. Despite the ancient pedigree of the words from which it comes, the verb *ensorcell* - to bewitch or enchant - appears in English only in the sixteenth century, and that briefly. It began to be popular in the nineteenth century, the classic examples being in the Arabian Nights stories translated by Sir Richard Burton, which included The Tale of the Ensorcelled Prince among those told by Scheherazade. "She came forward swaying from side to side and coquettishly moving and indeed she ravished wits and hearts and ensorcelled all eyes with her glances." It has become more common since, though it's hardly a word you will expect to find in your daily newspaper. It's usually regarded as literary or poetic but is most frequently to be found in sword-and-sorcery fantasy novels: "The lock was ensorcelled, protected as if by some invisible, unbreakable glass" (Lois McMaster Bujold, *The Spirit Ring*, 1992); "She was an ensorcelled princess, and only the evil witches might waken her" (Vernor Vinge, *A Deepness in the Sky*, 1999); "The colossal hammer of the Berserker Khorixas was forged of the same sky metal as Etjole Ehomba's ensorcelled sword" (Alan Dean Foster, *A Triumph of Souls*, 2000).

#### ■ Enthuse

Enthuse is one of those words that once made traditionalists quiver with rage. Even now it has not been fully accepted by everyone. It's now in every dictionary. It also has a long history in the language - it was used as long ago as 1827 by a Scots traveller in North America: "My humble exertions will I trust convey and enthuse, and draw attention to the beautifully varied verdure of N.W. America". Grammarians disliked it at the time because it's a back-formation. If a word looks as though it might be a derivative, sometimes people will take the ending off, thereby accidentally creating a word that didn't previously exist. In the case of enthusiasm, it looks as though it might derive from a verb *enthuse*, though it doesn't. To experts in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the process looked like an ignorant mistake. These days it is recognised as a common and legitimate method of word formation (verbs like *classify*, *commentate* and *edit* were formed from nouns in this way). Even now, nearly two centuries after *enthuse* was created, the usual advice in style guides is to be careful about using it, because an aura of non-respectability still hangs about it and it is regarded in some quarters as a brash and gushy informal word. However, it is much more accepted now than it was even a few years ago, and is in fairly common use - even, for example, in the more staid American newspapers, usually as the adjective *enthused* rather than the verb itself. It is still avoided in formal prose, but then an emotion like *enthuse* is hardly likely to appear in formal writing anyway.

# PUTIN & CO IN THE DOCK

FOCUS WAR CRIMES

Russian President Vladimir Putin has decided to wage a winter war of attrition against Ukraine, targeting its civilian population in an attempt to starve and freeze the country into submission. In light of this dangerous escalation, the West must heed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's urgent plea for additional support.

To be sure, supplying the Ukrainian military with weapons beyond anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles walks the fine line that US President Joe Biden and NATO drew between defensive assistance and active involvement. But the United Kingdom and the United States could help to pressure Russia by joining those countries who are calling for a special international tribunal to investigate and indict Putin and his entire Security Council for their war of aggression, as Ukraine has requested.

International human-rights lawyers have been pressing for a special tribunal to be established since the outset of the war in Ukraine. But the Dutch government's recent announcement that it supports the creation of an interim prosecutor's office and would be willing to host the tribunal, together with the European Union's support for a specialised court to investigate and prosecute Russia's invasion, represents a breakthrough. With the process of gathering evidence well underway, the US and the UK must back the effort to prosecute Putin and his accomplices for their crime of aggression.

But taking Putin to court is not some bureaucratic manoeuvre leading to years of wrangling over the finer points of international law. Rather, it could be a major turning point. The United Nations defines an act of aggression as the "invasion or attack by the armed forces of a state of the territory of another state, or any military occupation." It is a clear violation of the UN Charter, which prohibits the unprovoked use of force against the territorial integrity of another state. If a trial were to move forward, not just



Setting up an internationalised court drawing on the domestic laws of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia is the very least that Western powers can do to help Ukraine's people

Putin but his entire inner circle would be in the dock.

Because Ukraine recognises the crime of aggression in its legislation, a special international tribunal could try Putin under Ukrainian law without creating a precedent that could worry the US and other major powers. To that end, the Ukrainian parliament recently approved a resolution calling on the UN, the EU, and the Council of Europe to establish such a tribunal.

While European parliaments, the Council of Europe, and NATO have long supported the proposed investigation, they were recently joined by the foreign ministers of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Following Zelenskyy's efforts to prepare the ground for a tribunal, international organisations have meticulously documented tens of thousands of criminal charges related to Russian military actions during the war.

The EU should be praised for leading the G7. Late last month, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen outlined the case for establishing a new UN-backed court, saying that "Russia must pay for its horrific crimes, including for its crime of aggression against a sovereign state." She added that the EU is "ready to start

working with the international community to get the broadest international support possible for this specialised court." Last month, the European Council invited other EU bodies to advance the investigation process, "stressing that the prosecution of the crime of aggression is of concern to the international community as a whole."

As Karim Khan, the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor, recently pointed out, establishing a special court for Putin's war crimes creates a risk of fragmentation, given that the ICC is already investigating Russia's offences against Ukraine. But while the ICC can investigate and prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as genocide, it would likely need a long time to gather the evidence necessary to establish a direct legal connection between Russian leadership and atrocities on the ground.

But an even bigger issue is the ICC's lack of jurisdiction. Ukraine and Russia have not ratified the ICC's founding Rome Statute or the Kampala Amendments, which added the crime of aggression to the original treaty. Only a mandate from the UN Security Council could change this, but Russia's veto power rules this out. As Khan noted, the ICC could adjudicate

Russia's crimes of aggression only if member states could fix "gaps that are said to exist." That will not happen soon.

But Putin's crime of aggression can and must be tried sooner rather than later. Setting up an internationalised court drawing on the domestic laws of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia is the very least that Western powers can do to help Ukraine's people. The international community should send brutal Russian aggressors a clear message: There will be no safe haven and no hiding place for anyone guilty of war crimes.

Now is the time for action. The world was slow to respond to Serbia's aggression against Bosnia in the 1990s, enabling Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic to think that he could rape, ravage, mutilate, torture, and execute people with impunity. Eventually, the courts caught up with Milosevic, and he died in a prison cell while on trial. But it took over a decade and thousands of lost lives to hold him accountable.

This time, we must heed the lessons of history. If the UN General Assembly cannot support a special tribunal on Russia's aggression, the EU and the Council of Europe should do so. And if prosecutors investigate Putin and his cabal over the next year, they could pursue indictments in absentia. This would guarantee an end to Russian officials' ability to travel overseas without fearing arrest, likely trimming Putin's circle of sycophantic yes-men. It might also create an incentive for Putin's close advisers to abandon him.

Whatever the outcome, it is high time that the world took the fight to Putin and his enablers. The UK and the US must act quickly, both for Ukraine's sake and to honour the legacy of the post-World War II Nuremberg trials, when the free world stood its ground and ensured that war criminals were held accountable.

The writer is a former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

### SPECTRUM ECONOMY

## Industry must help cut govt debt



Shivaji Sarkar

INAPPROPRIATE PRIORITIES CAN LAND THE COUNTRY IN AN UNDESIRABLE TRACT

The year 2023 ushers in the most eventful year with one-third of the country seeking new governments in states amid a budget that would be the virtual last full annual budget of the Modi government getting many colourful touches ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. In February 2024, it would be only a partial budget. A massive public spending programme was announced last year with a spending of ₹5.5 lakh crore and by the close of the year it has taken additional sanctions to spend ₹7.5 lakh crore - an increase of ₹35.4%. Over ₹2 lakh crore goes into free food dole. Inflation index has stabilised but the prices are zooming. It is politically and economically tightrope walking through international uncertainties fuelled by the Russia-Ukraine war, global, particularly European, energy crisis and projected slowdown.

Budget making is not easy as the nation moves on to election mode with the Tripura polls in February and people across the country facing difficult job scenario, not so comfortable consumer demand hitting manufacturing and core sector growth. Industry bodies like CII are demanding raising the income-tax threshold to ₹5 lakh, cut in GST for most items to less than 28% and thrust rural infrastructure for fa-

cilitating employment generation. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is likely to agree to some of these demands. The industry is not worried about the government finances. Each of the above suggestions has bearing on revenue collection. The deficit is about 6% says the government, but the IMF finds it at 10%. Market borrowings projected at ₹11.6 lakh crore, about one-third of the budgetary expenses, is likely to shoot up as till September itself it reached ₹8.45 lakh crore. The IMF is concerned that 84.16% of Indian GDP comprises borrowings. Life for a finance minister is not a bed of roses as current account deficit and external borrowings are increasing with an unstable dollar.

These acute problems are apparently not the priority of the industry. That the industry has not moved out of the 1950s mindset is evident with their suggestions to cut employer contribution to National Pension Scheme to 10% from 14%, a move that hits the workers hard. And from an unhappy worker they want higher productivity and better market! Indian industry with its high profit motive wants the government to bear the expenses that they should have done themselves. Infrastructure needs investment and also provisioning at a high

level for refurbishing and replacement. Industry bodies professing infrastructure investment want that the concessions bolster their companies through government efforts that may not be sustainable for long.

Inappropriate priorities can land the country, fewest in the world that still is on a growth trajectory, in an undesirable tract. High speed trains should better not be a fad. Better management with least investment can speed up many trains. Abandoning of stations and creating new ones can be avoided. The country needs to rethink on building massive rail stations with fences and security. The richest countries try to keep the rail stations simple, with adequate facilities but keep their expenses low.

The industry did not even suggest replacing loss-making metros in smaller towns like Jaipur or Lucknow with simple but efficient trams. It would not as many of them are beneficiaries of ill-placed priorities.

The burgeoning public debt has gone up to 89.1%. This cannot be the normal prescription. The industry has to share the infrastructure and other expenses and can't allow the country to slide on heavy repayments. Total debt is estimated at ₹152 lakh crore in March 2023, ₹17 lakh crore rise in a year. Industry

should have suggested the government how to keep the debt low. Instead, it wants the government to borrow more to bolster their profits. It has to take a call to resist pressure on increasing capital expenditure. Let the private sector mull how it should help in keeping the fiscal deficit low to match a low revenue growth.

The government is not in a position to raise tax rates. For fiscal prudence it has to give up a bit. It is a tough year and such innovation away from extravagance would help the nation. The industry cannot expect the government to burden the people particularly in a year when world growth as per IMF, UNCTAD and World Bank would be slower. The IT majors are under pressure from global economic troubles and would be squeezing more.

The IMF sees India growing at 6.1% in 2023-24, a little less than 6.8% estimates of the RBI. It's indeed challenging for the government to give more jobs, manage finances, and be the world engine of growth. The RBI finds India capable but prudence, sagacity and tough steps are needed to sail through in a stormier world in 2023-24.

The writer is Professor, Indian Institute of Mass Communication. @INFA

### Women show the way

Sir, Ancient India would pleasantly surprise you with terms such as 'pooling of resources' in the writings of Manu (Manusmriti), Kautilya (Arthashastra), and Yagnavalkya (Dharmashastra). These resources, in fact, had to be distributed in times of calamity. This may be assumed as a modality of modern-day insurance. However, the role of England and maritime trade had an influence on modern insurance in India. The Oriental Life Insurance Company in India (1818, Kolkata) was the pioneer. The Indian Life Assurance Companies Act of 1912 established the first statutory body to oversee the life insurance industry. Crisscrossing many upheavals, the life insurance sector came into existence in 1956. Upon the recommendation of the Malhotra Committee, IRDA was formed, giving shape to the present-day insurance industry. Every life is important. And therefore, as a security bond, life insurance is significant. However, in India, factors such as poverty, insufficient income, and ignorance of financial management, discourage people from opting for insurance. The latest Economic Survey by Ministry of Finance has revealed that only three out of every 100 Indians have their own individual life insurance policy. One out of every three insurers is a woman. In the post-pandemic era, the number of women insurers has increased. According to the data, women insurers accounted for 93 lakh of the 2.81 million life insurance policies sold in 2021-22. Women from the states of Karnataka, Kerala, Sikkim, Goa, and Arunachal Pradesh dominate the increasing trend of policyholders in 2021-22. The share of women among total policyholders rising from 32.2% in 2019-20 to 34.07% 2020-21 is really encouraging. Increased awareness of insurance and its benefits could accelerate the trend.

Santosh Kumar Satapathy, PARALAKHEMUNDI

### Shah's poll bugle

Sir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah sounded the bugle for the 2023 Karnataka Assembly polls by urging the people to vote for the BJP for the state's development. Addressing a massive Jana Sankalpa rally in Mandya, Shah tore into the Congress and JD(S) and termed them dynastic parties. He accused them of looting the state resources for years and serving as ATMs for their party leadership. Shah also accused the two parties of being communal and sheltering criminals. Then, making a big Vokkaliga pitch, Shah directed BJP leaders from old Mysuru to focus on winning at least 35 seats in the region.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**  
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# national

of the day quote

As many as 50 to 60 per cent of the people of the country are dependent on agriculture. If we get favourable rainfall in the country, it will be a great year for all of us. The purchasing power of people will rise if agriculture flourishes

SHARAD PAWAR | NCP PRESIDENT

The Delhi government wishes to expand its Specialised Excellence schools in all zones of the capital, however, there is an issue of space

MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

Kashmir has so many special things and qualities that it does not need any special position under the law

ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN | KERALA GOVERNOR

## SHORT TAKES

### Mishap claims 5

**Jaipur:** Five people were killed and another injured after a car collided with a truck carrying bricks in Rajasthan's Hanumangarh district, police said Sunday. The accident occurred late Saturday night near Birsasar village on the Rawatsar-Sardarsahar highway.

### Two dead

**New Delhi:** Two people were killed in a fire on Sunday that broke out at an Old Age nursing home in south Delhi's Greater Kailash area, officials said. Authorities got the information about a fire at Antara Care for Seniors at 5.14 am. Five fire tenders and a few ambulances were rushed to the spot, and the fire was brought under control by 6.50 am, the fire department said.

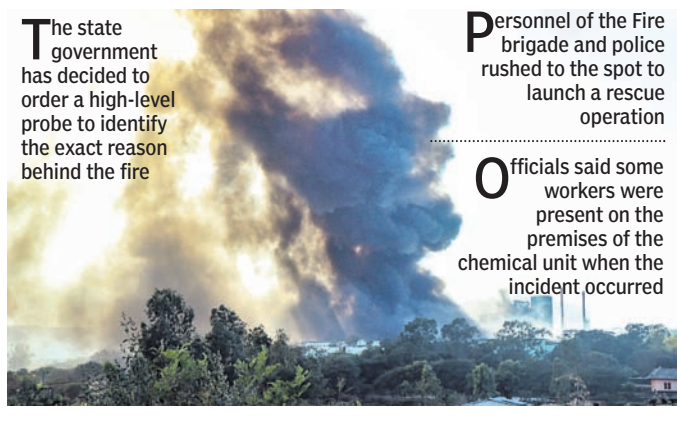
### Man killed

**Gorakhpur:** A man was allegedly beaten to death following a clash during New Year celebrations here, police said Sunday. The incident happened in Machlgaon village on Saturday night, they said. The deceased has been identified as Sonu (25), they said. According to police, during a New Year's party at the accused Ranju's house, an argument broke out between her family members and Sonu after he started dancing near the stage. Following this, the woman's family members started thrashing Sonu and he fainted, they said.

### Leopard rescued

**Jammu:** A fully-grown leopard was rescued Sunday by the wildlife department in a village in Doda district, an official said. The leopard was found on a roadside in Malwas village in an injured condition, apparently hit by some passing vehicle, the official said.

## 2 killed, 17 hurt in Nashik fire



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nashik, Jan 1:** Two persons were killed and 17 others injured Sunday when a massive fire was triggered after a blast in a boiler of a chemical factory in Maharashtra's Nashik district, officials said citing preliminary information as the blaze raged on for hours. The state government has decided to order a high-level probe to identify the exact reason behind the fire

Personnel of the Fire brigade and police rushed to the spot to launch a rescue operation. Officials said some workers were present on the premises of the chemical unit when the incident occurred

The state government has decided to order a high-level probe to identify the exact reason behind the fire. The blast in the Jindal Poly Films factory, located in Mundhegaon along the Mumbai-Agra highway in Igatpuri taluka, was so powerful that it was heard in nearby villages. The fire and smoke could be seen from a distance. The incident occurred around 11.30 am, officials said. Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde visited the accident site, located about 30 km from Nashik and 130 km from Mumbai. He also met the injured persons admitted to a hospital in Nashik. Even after nine hours, the fire is still raging on. At least 20-22 fire tenders are at the spot, a Nashik Police official said at around 9 PM.

"The fire in Jindal company was huge. The reason behind it is not known yet. A high-level inquiry into the incident will be conducted. 19 employees were injured in the in-

cident and two of them lost their lives," the chief minister said. He said the next of kin of each deceased will get Rs 5 lakh aid from the state government and the injured will get free medical treatment. Sources said both the deceased were women. Earlier in the day, CM Shinde said the Air Force Station at Deolali (in Nashik district) will make a helicopter available for the rescue operation. Later, a helicopter and Army personnel reached the spot. A police official said the rescue was not conducted using the chopper as "the situation changed" but didn't elaborate. Personnel of the Fire brigade and police rushed to the spot to launch a rescue operation. They were joined by State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams. Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said 19 persons were rescued and 17 of them were admitted to a private hospital for treatment. A senior official said it was the first day of the New Year, the number of workers present at the factory was less. Officials said some workers were present on the premises of the chemical unit when the incident occurred. Earlier in the day, Divisional Revenue Commissioner Radhakrishna Game told reporters a blast led to the fire at the chemical plant.



Devotees offer prayers to Lord Ganesha at Ganesh Tekdi temple in Nagpur



The state government may bring in a legislation to deal with superstition and black magic that is being practised by dark forces to make society regressive

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CM

## DELHI SHIVERS

With the onset of New Year on Sunday, the minimum temperature in the national capital dipped to 5.5 degree Celsius, two notches below the season's average, the India Meteorological Department said



Indian Coast Guard personnel seized 300 kg sea cucumber in an anti-poaching operation in Mandapam

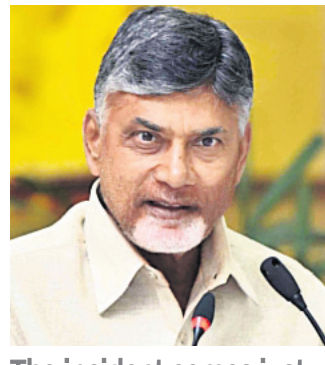
## Ten dead in Raj mishap

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sikar, Jan 1:** Ten people were killed after a speeding SUV hit a motorcycle before ramming into a truck in Rajasthan's Sikar district, police said. The incident occurred near the Maji Sahab Ki Dhani on Palsana-Khandela road when the driver of the SUV lost control of the vehicle and fatally hit Birbal (50) and his wife Janaki Devi (45) who were on the two-wheeler, police said. The SUV then collided with an oncoming truck which was carrying a drilling rig machine, leading to the death of eight occupants of the four-wheeler who were going to Ganesh Dham in Khandela, the police said. The deceased were residents of Samod in Chomu town. The accident led to a heavy traffic jam on the road which was cleared by the police. Khandela Station House Officer Sohan Lal said, "10 people were killed and several got injured in the accident between an SUV and a truck. The SUV also hit a bike."

## 3 dead in stampede at Naidu's rally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**Amaravati, Jan 1:** Three women were killed and several others were injured Sunday near here when people rushed to receive gifts leading to a stampede at a Telugu Desam Party programme following a public meeting, the government said. The incident comes just three days after the death of eight people during a similar event in Nellore in southern Andhra Pradesh. Health Minister V Rajani said a woman died on the spot while two others succumbed to injuries while being shifted to a hospital. A police official said that as soon as the organisers started distributing gifts, including sarees, the crowd swelled and they pushed the barricades away leading to a stampede. The gift distribution began after TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu left the venue upon addressing the public meeting at

ilies of the victims. In a statement, he ordered swift medical treatment to the injured. Health Minister V Rajani alleged that the TDP campaigned for the past 10 days to woo people, assuring distribution of gifts. "Three lives have been sacrificed for Naidu's publicity mania," she told reporters at the hospital where the injured are being treated in Guntur. Though this was a private programme, the state government has provided enough security. "Chandrababu Naidu should own up the responsibility for the deaths," Rajani said. A woman who has been admitted to hospital said that they were given a token-like slip earlier in the day and they went to the venue of TDP's meeting to collect gifts. Suddenly there was lot of rush and in the melee, people fell on the ground leading to deaths. Guntur East MLA Mohammad Mustafa squarely blamed Naidu for the incident.

## Woman dies after car drags her for 4 km

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** In a shocking incident, a 20-year-old woman died after her scooter was hit by a car and her body was dragged for around four kilometres in outer Delhi's Sultanpuri on Sunday, police said. Five men travelling in the Maruti Baleno have been arrested, they said. Meanwhile, a purported video of the woman's body without clothes and broken legs made rounds on social media. PTI could not independently verify the veracity of the video. The footage also led to claims that the victim was raped and murdered, but the police called it an accident. The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) has also issued a notice to police in the matter. According to police, an information was received at 3.24 am in Kanjhawala police station (Rohini district) that a body was tied to a car going towards Qutubgarh area. The body was sent to Sanjay Gandhi Memorial hospital, Mangolpuri for post-mortem, they said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (outer) Harendra Kumar Singh said the victim's leg got entangled in one of the wheels of the car and she was dragged for around four kilometres. "A case under IPC sections 279 (rash driving) and 304-A (causing death by negligence) has been registered in the matter. Deepak Khanna (26), Amit Khanna (26), Krishan (27), Mithun (25) and Manoj Mittal have been arrested," he said. "While Deepak is a driver, Amit deals with SBI cards in Uttam Nagar, Krishan works at Connaught Place, Mithun works as a hair dresser in Naraina and Mittal works as a food dealer in Sultanpuri," he said. Police said blood sample of the car driver has been preserved to examine whether he was under the influence of alcohol or not. The victim used to work in marriages and other functions as part time. When the incident happened, she was returning home from one such function, they added.

## Man arrested for killing wife, friend

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** Solving a double murder case within six hours of the incident, the Delhi Police on Sunday said that they have arrested a man for allegedly killing his wife and his childhood friend after discovering they were having an affair. DCP Southwest, Manoj C. said that the accused was identified as Gandharv alias Sunny, 22. "The deceased was accused's wife and childhood friend. His wife was having affair with his childhood friend and it led to the double murder," he said. The DCP said that



on December 30, the duty constable at Safdarjung Hospital received information that a youth and a woman are lying in a pool of blood on a footpath near the hospital's gate no 2 on Aurobindo Marg. Both of them were admitted to the hospital with critical injuries from a sharp-edged weapon. The youth was identified as Sagar while the identity of the woman, who had a deep sharp injury on right cheek, was withheld. Sagar succumbed during the course of treatment, and shortly after, so did the woman. During investigation, it came to be known that the woman and Sunny had a love marriage around one and a half year back. After their marriage they started living together in Noida and worked in a local hospital. Meanwhile, the woman came in contact with Sunny's childhood friend Sagar and she started having an affair with him. The police learnt that Sunny was making threats to Sagar for many weeks. Teams conducted raids at Sunny's possible hideouts at Noida, Gokulpuri, Kusumpur Pahari, Karkardooma and other adjoining areas and succeeded in nabbing the accused from Karkardooma. During interrogation, Sunny disclosed that Sagar was his childhood friend and residing in same locality.

# COUNTRY USHERS IN NEW YEAR SANS COVID CURBS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** Large crowds thronged popular boulevards, tourist hubs and entertainment centres across India and many joined special prayers at places of worship on Sunday as people stepped out to celebrate the New Year without COVID restrictions. With no major pandemic-related curbs by authorities except advisories to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, revellers marked the beginning of 2023 with gusto, while police kept a tight vigil and hundreds of people faced action for traffic violations like drunk driving. There were massive traffic snarls across the national capital, especially near the India Gate and Connaught Place, while metro stations were teeming with people as

many preferred to enjoy outdoors on a sunny Sunday after muted New Year celebrations for two years due to COVID-19. In Jammu and Kashmir, devotees lined up to pay obeisance at the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in the Reasi district. Similar scenes were seen elsewhere including the ghats of Varanasi and the shores of Kanyakumari and Puri. According to data shared by Delhi police, as many as 1,329 motorists were prosecuted for committing various violations, which included 318 for drunk driving and 175 for dangerous driving. Also, 53 vehicles were impounded on the spot. Special pickets were set up at major points like Connaught Place, Mehrauli, Saket, Nehru Place, Vasant Vihar and South-Extension. The cases of drunken driving in the na-



tional capital on New Year's eve were over 12 times compared to the previous year, officials said on Sunday. Mumbai Police took action against 2,465 people for traffic violations, including drunk driving, during the New Year celebrations, officials said. The Gujarat police

cracked down on people found consuming liquor, drinking and driving and violating traffic rules during New Year celebrations in the dry state. In Vadodara city alone, at least 3,000 suspects were intercepted and checked, and 89 cases of liquor consumption were registered in 24 hours till Sunday morning, an official said. In Kolkata, people of all ages were seen enjoying picnics and flocking to cinema halls and restaurants. Restaurants in Kolkata and the nearby towns saw long queues outside, while many swarmed Alipore Zoo, Victoria Memorial Hall, Eco Park and Nicco Park. Thousands of people gathered at the Kashiipur Udyanbati in north Kolkata for the annual 'Kalpataru Utsav'. It is believed that on this day in 1886, Ramakrishna

Paramahansa was blessed with the inner vision ('Chaitanya') at this house. A large number of people also visited the Kalighat temple and Dakshineswar temple. Temples witnessed arrangements for special 'poojas' and 'abishekams' from early morning, midnight masses were held in churches and chapels and a large number of people visited gurdwaras and other shrines to seek divine blessings for the new year. Popular tourist destinations were chock-a-bloc, with people making the most of the winter holidays by heading to hill stations and seaside resorts. Roads leading to various beaches in Goa witnessed massive traffic jams after midnight on Sunday as lakhs of people turned up on the state's seashore to welcome the New Year



## JMM on a strong wicket in J'khand despite hurdles

CM Hemant Soren maintained his political front despite the adversaries and is expected to face more legal problems, with respect to the existing cases in 2023



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ranchi, Jan 1:** The JMM-led government in Jharkhand completed three years in office in December, 2022. The party, which originated from the struggle for the rights of tribals and issues related to water, forest and land, is on a strong wicket despite challenges.

Chief Minister and the party's working president, Hemant Soren put up a tough fight against all the odds and challenges faced by the party in the past several months.

Maintaining its position in 2023 would be crucial for the party with regard to the preparations of the upcoming Assembly and Lok Sabha elections.

The possibilities of a win cannot be denied, based on its current standing, but any political lapse in the leadership could ruin JMM's chances of forming the government again.

Union Home Minister and opposition party's top strategist, Amit Shah will be in Jharkhand January 7 for BJP's organisational work. He will be addressing a public meeting organised by the BJP in Chaibasa and hold a meeting with the Lok Sabha MPs and party leaders.

Earlier, BJP National General Secretary Sunil Bansal toured the state and held discussions with the party leaders. He assessed the state's political atmosphere by visiting several areas.

BJP's preparations for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections may increase challenges for the JMM.

However, JMM Central Committee General Secretary and Spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya expressed confidence in his party and said that JMM would win even if Shah visited every district of the state.

He added that Shah would be unable to revive his party in the state, despite efforts.

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) will complete 50 years of its establishment in February 2023. Out of its three founding members and prominent leaders, Shibu Soren is the only one alive and has been the party's President since the last several decades, but the de facto command, at present, in the hands of his son, Hemant Soren.

The party contested in the 2019 Assembly elections under the leadership of Hemant Soren and won 30 out of the 81 seats, and formed a coalition government with a total

## 'Shikari' on the trail of a 'man-eater' leopard

THE LEOPARD HAS STRUCK TERROR IN MORE THAN 50 VILLAGES WHERE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ASKED BY THE FOREST DEPARTMENT NOT TO VENTURE OUT AFTER SUNSET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ranchi, Jan 1:** The Jharkhand forest department has deployed over 50 trap cameras, one drone and a large number of officials to trace a 'man-eater' leopard, which killed four children since December 10 in Palamu division, an official said Sunday.

The department has now roped in celebrated Hyderabad-based hunter Nawab Shafath Ali Khan to bag the big cat by tranquillising him.

It is suspected that all four children including three in Garhwa and one in Latehar district were killed by the same leopard. The victims were in the age group of six and 12 years.

The leopard has struck terror in more than 50 villages in three blocks — Ramkanda, Ranka and Bhandariya — of the district where people have been asked by the forest department not to venture out after sunset.

"We are spending sleepless nights

in fear of the leopard. Women and children are scared. It appears to be a curfew-like situation in the evening," said Ravindra Prasad, a farmer from Ramkanda block.

The Garhwa forest division had submitted a proposal to state Chief Wildlife Warden Thursday to declare the big cat a man-eater and it had also suggested names of three hunters including Nawab Shafath Ali Khan and former legislator Girinath Singh.

State Chief Wildlife Warden Sasikar Samanta told PTI, "There are some official formalities to declare an animal man-eater. Our first priority is to capture the leopard through tranquillisation, which is possible only by experts. Therefore, we have consulted Nawab Shafath Ali Khan to help in our effort. He is not only an expert but also equipped with latest equipment to identify and control an animal."



REPRESENTATIVE PIC

Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife), said that Khan is expected to arrive in first week of January. "If capturing was not possible, then we may think of killing the leopard as last option," Samanta said.

Speaking to PTI, Khan confirmed that he was approached by state forest officials. "I was told to visit

Jharkhand and help in monitoring and tranquillizing the leopard. However, I am yet to receive any official letter in this regard," he said.

More than 50 trap cameras have been put up in possible route of the big cat in and around Kushwaha village where a 12-year-old boy was killed by the animal December 28.

The trap cameras have captured various animals in the region but leopard has not been traced yet. "Besides trap cameras, we are also using drone cameras but it has also not found any trace of the leopard," Garhwa Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Shashi Kumar told PTI.

He said that they would change the locations of the cameras Sunday and make another effort to trace it. "We have also ordered three cages from Meerut, which is likely to arrive by Sunday evening," he said.

On December 10, the leopard reportedly killed its first victim, a 12-year-old girl, in Chipadohar area in the nearby Barwadih block of Latehar district. Then, a six-year-old child was killed in Rodo village in Bhandariya block December 14 in Garhwa district, while another six-year-old girl was mauled to death by the leopard in Sevadih village in Ranka block December 19 in the same district.

**But I am not afraid of such conspiracies as they will not succeed. When the BJP cannot fight us politically, they use the ED-CBI. We will continue our work and have already marginalised the BJP in the state**

HEMANT SOREN | CHIEF MINISTER, JHARKHAND

of 47 seats, along with the Congress and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The state, ever since its separation in 2000, has been led five times by the Soren family.

Shibu Soren became the CM in 2005, 2008 and 2009, while in 2013-14 Hemant Soren assumed the position for the first time.

All the past four JMM-led governments were short-lived, some remained in power for 14 months, some for six months, some only for a few days.

The party formed a government for the fifth time in 2019, and has been in its longest session so far.

Hemant Soren, undeniably went through what can be called the most difficult, political phase of his life last year.

He was caught between the ED's hearings in the illegal mining scam, EC's hearings in the case of mining lease, crisis on his Assembly membership among other hurdles.

Soren maintained his political front despite the adversaries and is expected to face more legal problems, with respect to the existing cases in 2023.

Talking to reporters December 28, he said that he would not be surprised if the ED arrested him in the coming days.

"But I am not afraid of such conspiracies as they will not succeed. When the BJP cannot fight us politically, they use the ED-CBI. We will continue our work and have already marginalised the BJP in the state," he said.

The JMM has gained a comfortable political edge in the state due to the decisions taken by Soren's government in the last few months, including Domicile policy based on Khatian (Land Survey) of 1932, increase in percentage of OBC-ST-SC reservation, Old Pension Scheme for state employees, salary of 13 months every year to policemen, stabilisation of service for para teachers on contract basis, etc.

## Consenting adults free to live together, rules Allahabad HC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Prayagraj, Jan 1:** The Allahabad High Court (HC) has held that two adults are at liberty to live together and no person should be permitted to interfere in their peaceful 'live-in relationship'.

In this major judgment, the court quashed the first information report, which was lodged by the father of a girl in Uttar Pradesh's Jaunpur district.

A division bench of Allahabad HC comprising Justice Suneet Kumar and Justice Syed Waiz Mian relied upon a judgment of the apex court which provided that live-in relationship between the consenting adults is legal if the requirements of marriage, such as legal age of marriage, consent and soundness of mind, are met.

No rule permits or bans such connections, the apex court had added.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

In the landmark case of S Khushboo Vs Kanniammal, the apex court held that a live-in relationship comes within the ambit of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, which provides that no person can be deprived of his life and personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.

The court also held that live-in relationships are permissible, and the act of two adults living together cannot be considered "unlawful" or "illegal".



FRESH START: People enjoying a boat ride on the first day of New Year 2023 in Mathura, Sunday

IANS

## Wife's nudge prompts Cong leader to carry on despite suffering muscle tear

The Congress leader from Lucknow is one of the 'Bharat Yatris' who will walk the entire distance of the Kanyakumari-to-Kashmir yatra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, Jan 1:** Uttar Pradesh Congress leader Shahnawaz Mangal Azmi had thought about dropping out of the Bharat Jodo Yatra after suffering a muscle tear in the first week itself, but a phone call to his wife changed his course.

"I called my wife for her opinion, knowing well that she will be sympathetic to my situation. But her response was blunt, 'Do not return home until the yatra is over.' Though it came as a shock to me initially,

her response strengthened my resolve to carry on despite difficulties," Azmi told PTI.

And what was more intriguing, Azmi said, was that his wife had initially opposed the idea of him participating in the Bharat Jodo Yatra, citing the impact his absence will have on his business and education of their children.

"She even cried to stop me from joining the yatra. Finally, I was able to convince her though," he said.

The Congress leader from Lucknow is one of the 'Bharat Yatris' who will walk the entire distance of the Kanyakumari-to-Kashmir yatra. There are 16 other 'Bharat Yatris' from Uttar Pradesh.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra, led by Rahul Gandhi, is currently on winter break and will resume January 3. The foot march, which began in Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu



September 7, has so far traversed more than 2,800 km through 10 states and will conclude in Kashmir this month.

The yatra will enter Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad January 3 afternoon and make a night halt in Mavikala village in Baghpat. It will pass through Shamli in Uttar Pradesh January 4 and enter Haryana though Sanauli in Panipat in the evening of January 5.

Narrating his experience, Azmi said after he suffered a muscle tear, his speed slowed.

"I would trail 3-4 km behind the main yatra, but would join other yatris by evening. Many local people would extend me help as I was walking with an injured leg with a temporary bandage," he said.

Azmi, a secretary of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee, said he also faced problem with food in the southern states as they primarily use coconut oil. However, it improved once the yatra entered Telangana, he adds.

He described his experience as a "new discovery of India". "Earlier, I used to think that I have travelled across India by visiting Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Hyderabad. But, after undertaking the yatra, I realised that our country is literally equivalent to the world," he said.

## Tourists make a beeline at Netarhat's monument of love

Magnolia, a British governor's daughter, fell in love with a tribal shepherd here after she heard the mesmerising sound of his flute. Their love story has resonated in the plains for years in Magnolia Point

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ranchi, Jan 1:** Watching the rising and setting sun at the monument of love in Netarhat, Jharkhand is a serene experience for the tourists visiting the place, which is surrounded by beautiful lush green hills, waterfalls and tall pine trees that led to it being known by the Britishers as Nature's Heart.

Over time, Nature's Heart came to be known as 'Netarhat'.

This New Year the monument has seen a beeline of tourists. Many Indians and foreigners reached the spot to mark the beginning of their new year with a calming sunrise. All the hotels and guesthouses in the area are completely booked due to the rush of tourists.

The tourists find their way back

to the monument not only because of its ethereal scenery but also because of the love story that has resonated in the plains for years in Magnolia Point. Located at an altitude of 3,761 feet above sea level, the place holds a statue of a tribal boy and a British girl, whose love story has been narrated over the years.

It is believed that during British rule, an English governor along with his family visited Netarhat due to its natural beauty and built a residence there.

Magnolia, the governor's daughter, fell in love with a tribal shepherd after she heard the mesmerising sound of his flute.

Their love blossomed, but the Governor raised his objections when he came to know about it and asked Magnolia to stay away



from the shepherd.

When she did not agree to his demand, her father got the shepherd killed and asked his men to throw his dead body in the valley. Devastated by the news, it is said

that Magnolia rode her horse to the huge rock where her lover played his flute, and jumped to her death.

The place came to be known as Magnolia Point and is regarded as a memorial of their love.

Spread over 2,489 square metres, in Latehar district, about 150km from Ranchi, Netarhat enjoys a pleasant climate throughout the year and is also known as "Queen of Chhotanagpur".

Senior journalist Shahroz Qamar said that although there is no written account of the love story, it is certain that tourists are enchanted by the area, surrounded by rivers, waterfalls and mountains.

The best way to reach the destination is by road which offers a splendid view. Tourists also visit a place called Koyal ViewPoint to watch the sunrise.

The mountains and waterfalls located nearby attract a lot of people here. These waterfalls are known as Lower and Upper Ghaghri Falls.

Loth Falls, also known as Buddha Ghaghri Falls, is located at a distance of 61km from Netarhat and is the highest waterfall of Jharkhand. Water falling from such a great height creates an illusion of it falling directly from the clouds.

## Yogi's love for animals makes him a social media favourite

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, Jan 1:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's love for animals has turned him into a social media favourite.

Yogi Adityanath's picture that shows him sitting with a cat on his lap in Gorakhpur is now top trending on social media.

The chief minister shared the endearing picture with the caption 'Hit Anhit Pashuo Panchiyo Jana' which means even birds and animals can differentiate between friends and foes.

During his visits to Gorakhpur, the chief minister can often be seen interacting with his pets.

He makes sure to spend time with the cattle at the temple cowshed. He showers love on them, feeds the animals jaggery-gram, fodder with his hands.

He also plays with his pet dogs — Kalu and Gullu.

Earlier, a picture of the chief minister feeding and caressing leopard cubs at the Gorakhpur Zoo



also created a buzz on Twitter. Yogi Adityanath, who has established the state as an example in development, law and order and implementation of public welfare schemes, is also known for showing compassion and affection towards animals, said the government spokesman.





It's a well known fact that they (BJP leaders) were subservient to the British...and now they want to change history. We, socialist leaders, and also the grand alliance government in the state will not allow any attempt by the Centre to rewrite history for the sake of defending a particular ideology

TEJASHWI YADAV | BIHAR DEPUTY CM

RISE IN CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

Nearly 31,000 complaints of crimes committed against women were received by the National Commission for Women in 2022, the highest since 2014. In 2021, the NCW had received 30,864 complaints while in 2022, the number slightly increased to 30,957



of the day quote

Today Pakistan and China are together and this is not a simple thing. This is a very serious thing and it is very dangerous. This has happened because our government mishandled foreign policy as it has not understood the broad structure of our foreign policy

Narendra Modi will return to power for a third consecutive term after the 2024 general election, even though there could be many candidates for the post

I have 'no problems' with the Congress pitching for Rahul Gandhi as the 'opposition's PM face'

4,716 cell phones seized from prisoners in Punjab

Chandigarh, Jan 1: Prisons in Punjab, with a dubious history of gangsters, murderers, rapists, and terrorists posting pictures on social media, issuing extortion threats and hatching criminal conspiracies, are infamous for a storehouse of illegal drugs, mobile phones and prohibited items. In almost one year, 4,716 mobile phones, the highest number in the recent years, have been seized from prisons, said the government. A cell phone is one of the most treasured items in most of the jails of Punjab where a prisoner using a mobile phone is not a cognizable offence.

Probes conducted by the Jail Department have exposed a nexus between criminals and jail staff to supply phones, right from making video calls to family and friends to making ransom and threat calls. Also, as per estimates of the department, close to 45 per cent of the 30,000 prisoners are addicted to drugs and they use mobile phone not only for procuring drugs, liquor and cigarettes from outside the jail premises but also a status symbol. Taking a step to turn jails into reform houses, the AAP government, in a first-of-its-kind initiative, has started screening all prisoners for drug abuse. In order to design and implement better de-



addiction strategy, a survey of all addict prisoners has been conducted. The survey comprised 86 questions, prepared by a com-

mittee of senior educationists and its report of the survey is being prepared, officials said. This initiative comes in the wake of several instances of mobile phones and drugs seizures from the prisons and including the arrest of an additional superintendent posted of the Central Jail in Ferozpur in November on charges of supplying phones and drugs to prisoners. As per police records, 10-odd jail officials, comprising two medical officers, were booked or arrested recently on charges of supplying mobile phones and drugs to prisoners. After the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government led by Bhagwant Mann took the helm

in March, it assured to free all jails of mobile phones in next six to eight months, making Punjab the first state in the country to achieve the milestone. Minister Harjot Singh Bains, who did a surprise inspection of several prisons, blamed the previous governments in the state for the mess in the jails. As per him, the modus operandi is that aides of inmates used to throw the mobile phones, wrapped in paper, in the jail complex over the compound wall. To prevent use of mobile phones, he said that the government is installing jammers and CCTV cameras in the jails with advanced technology.

Haryana minister quits over sexual harassment case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Jan 1: Haryana minister Sandeep Singh, who has been booked in a sexual harassment case, on Sunday gave up his Sports portfolio, saying he has taken this step on moral grounds.

The development came a day after Chandigarh police registered an FIR against the 36-year-old BJP leader on charges of sexual harassment and wrongful confinement on a complaint of a woman junior athletics coach from the state. Singh, however, has dismissed the accusations as baseless and called for an independent probe.

Meanwhile, the woman coach met Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij, who said justice will be done. Singh said he has given up the Sports portfolio. A former Olympian and first-time MLA from Pehowa in Kurukshetra, Singh also holds the Printing and Stationery Department. He, however, has not resigned from the Cabinet.

On Saturday, the Haryana Director General of Police set up a committee after Singh lodged a complaint against the coach, claiming she had tarnished his image. Till the committee gives its report, Singh said, he is handing over his Sports portfolio to the chief minister on moral grounds.

He reiterated that the allegations levelled against him by the woman coach are baseless. "In the matter of complaint made by a



lady coach of Haryana against Sports Minister Haryana, a case FIR dated 31.12.2022... Has been registered at police station Sector 26, Chandigarh and is being investigated," a Chandigarh police spokesperson said. Singh has been booked under sections 354 (assault or use of criminal force against a woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 354 A (sexual harassment), 354 B (compelling her to be naked), 342 (wrongful confinement) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), he said.

He added police are conducting a "fair investigation" in the case. The woman coach met Home Minister Vij at his residence in Ambala and said she hoped to get justice. "I am hopeful of getting justice in the case," she told reporters after the meeting.

On the allegations levelled against Singh, the woman said, "There is a limit to how long you

can tolerate something." "He tried to create such an atmosphere that I was forced to go to him for department work as being an employee of the sports department, I am under him," she said.

Asked if other women officials in the sports department could have faced a similar plight, the woman said, "I am being told so but this fight is mine. There are many but maybe they are scared of coming forward. But I am sure that they will come forward once this man is put behind bars."

Vij said he would speak to Singh and Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar regarding the matter. "I listened to what she (woman coach) had to say. I will speak to the minister and chief minister. Justice will be done in this case," he told reporters.

The junior athletics coach levelled the sexual harassment allegations against Singh on Thursday and filed a police complaint a day later. After receiving a complaint from the woman coach, Chandigarh police had earlier said an inquiry would be conducted into the allegations against the minister.

"I have given a complaint to SSP madam here. I am hopeful that I will get justice and Chandigarh police will investigate my complaint," the woman said Friday. She has alleged that Singh contacted her on Instagram after seeing her at a gym and kept insisting that they meet.

Brawl at party after women forced for selfies

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Greater Noida, Jan 1: A major ruckus took place in a housing society in Greater Noida during a New Year eve party when some men tried to force women for selfies.

Two men have been arrested, while a search is on to trace the remaining accused, officials said. According to reports, a group of men were trying to take selfies with two women at the new year bash in Gaur City First Avenue Society on Saturday night, which led to a heated argument between their husbands and the accused. The accused then dragged the two men and thrashed them. Some other residents and security guards, who tried to intervene, also sustained injuries.



A resident of the society said that the men were trying to forcibly take selfies with his wife and his friend's wife.

After they objected to this, the men hit him and his friend. "Some other people were also injured when they intervened and tried to rescue us," he added.

The police spokesman said that four people have been admitted to a hospital. A case has been registered and investigation is underway.

MEA asks Pakistan to free over 600 prisoners

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: India Sunday called on Pakistan to release and repatriate 631 Indian fishermen and two civilian prisoners who have completed their jail-term and whose nationality has been confirmed.

In addition, Islamabad has also been urged to provide immediate consular access to the remaining 30 fishermen and 22 civilian prisoners who have been in Pakistan's custody and are believed to be Indian, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

India made the request in the context of the exchange of the lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen by both the countries as part of a practice to do so on January 1 and July 1 of every calendar year under the framework of a 2008 pact.

The MEA said Pakistan has been requested to ensure the "safety, security and welfare of all Indian and believed-to-be Indian civilian prisoners and fishermen, pending their release and repatriation to India".

The MEA said India shared lists of 339 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 95 Pakistani fishermen currently in Indian custody. Similarly, Pakistan has shared lists of 51 civilian prisoners and 654 fishermen in its custody, who are Indians or are believed to be Indians, it added.

"India and Pakistan today exchanged, through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad, the lists of civilian



India made the request in the context of the exchange of the lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen by both the countries as part of a practice to do so on January 1 and July 1 of every calendar year under the framework of a 2008 pact

prisoners and fishermen in their custody," the MEA said in a statement. It said the government has called for early release and repatriation of civilian prisoners, missing Indian defence personnel, and fishermen along with their boats, from Pakistan's custody. "In this context, Pakistan was asked to expedite the release and repatriation of 631 Indian fishermen and two Indian civilian prisoners, who have completed their sentence and whose nationality has been confirmed and conveyed to Pakistan," the MEA said.

SHORT TAKES

One dead, 43 hurt

Idukki (Kerala): One student died and 43 others, including 40 students, were injured on Sunday when a tourist bus they were travelling in fell around 100 feet down from the road into a cardamom plantation in Adimaly area of this high-range district in Kerala. The incident occurred between 1.30 AM and 2 AM when the bus was on its way from Kodaikanal, a hill station in Tamil Nadu, where the students had gone for a trip on December 29, an officer of Vellathooval police station said.

Cop arrested

Golaghat (Assam): A sub-inspector of Assam Police was arrested for alleged sexual harassment of a woman accused inside Sivasagar police station, a senior officer said Sunday. According to the senior police officer, a woman was picked up on Friday night upon receipt of a complaint from a local businessman that she was allegedly trying to extort money. "While she was in custody at Sivasagar police station, the investigating officer, who was the sub-inspector concerned, went to interrogate her after midnight. She then filed a complaint alleging that the officer tried to sexually harass her," he added.

High alert in TN

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Police are on a high alert after notorious underworld don and drug peddler from Sri Lanka, Mohammed Najim Mohammed Imran sneaked into Rameswaram, sources have said. Police sources said that the don, who got bail from a Sri Lankan court after he was deported from Dubai in 2019 to the island nation, has reached the Rameswaram area.

Civilian injured

Srinagar: A civilian was injured here Sunday when militants hurled a grenade towards a CRPF bunker and it exploded on the roadside, officials said. The incident occurred in Halwal area, they said. At about 7:45 pm, militants hurled a grenade towards a bunker of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) near Mirza Kamil Chowk which exploded on the roadside.

12 rescued

Ahmedabad: The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) rescued 12 crew members of a sinking supply vessel in the Arabian sea off the Gujarat coast, it said Sunday. The operation was carried out on Saturday after a distress message was received by the Mumbai-based ICG Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) at around 11 am, a Defence release said.



People belonging to Jain community take part in a protest for sanctity of pilgrimage site 'Sammed Shikharji', at India Gate in New Delhi

2023 to witness series of Assembly polls

The northeastern states of Nagaland, Tripura and Meghalaya will be the first to have Assembly polls, most likely in February-March

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: A series of assembly polls this year are being considered as semi-finals to the Lok Sabha election slated to be held in the summer of 2024.

Key states of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana would go for polls



this year, besides states from the North-East.

The northeastern states of Nagaland, Tripura and Meghalaya will be the first to have assembly polls, most likely in February-March. The terms of their respective legislative assemblies is ending on different dates in March. While Tripura has a BJP government, in Nagaland, the Nationalist

Democratic Progressive Party is in power. National People's Party, the only party from the North-East to have a national party recognition, runs the government in Meghalaya. Sources in the Election Commission had indicated in December that the elections in the three states will be held together, followed by polls in Karnataka later.

The term of the 224-member Karnataka legislative assembly ends on May 24. Polls in the BJP-ruled state to form a new assembly could be held in late April or early May. The last part of 2023 would witness a series of assembly polls with terms of legislative assemblies of Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana ending on different dates in December this year and January 2024.



a Cabinet meeting, ministers have to undergo Covid test. There is a drill in this regard which has to be followed by all. At least two Cabinet Ministers were found to be Covid positive on two different occasions when they were about to meet the PM.

BJP's dilemma

The BJP leadership is under considerable pressure from many state units insisting that January National Executive be held in their state. The Karnataka unit is insisting that it should be held there as the state is going to polls in April-May. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is also pleading with the party high command to hold the event in the state as it will also go to polls in November-December 2023. The Delhi unit wants the event to be held here as the party needs a booster dose to defeat the AAP. The BJP leadership has been

maintaining a studied silence over the venue. The dates are likely to be announced soon.

Rahul's T-shirt: A political message

Rahul Gandhi's T-shirt hogged more limelight than his Bharat Jodo Yatra in the recent past. Though Rahul Gandhi has been walking throughout his Bharat Jodo Yatra in his white T-shirt, but it was Rahul's visit to the Samadhis of Atal Behari Vajpayee and other former Prime Ministers on December 26 in the bitter cold in early hours of the day that became an instant hit. When people were shivering on one side, Rahul was seen walking barefoot in white T-shirt forcing the people to turn their eyes and think. No doubt, clothes and body language always carry a political message.

CCI chairman selection in limbo

The selection of the new Chairman of the Competition Commission of India (CCI) is in limbo as the government cancelled the interviews held for the post of the chairperson. If some well-placed sources are to be believed 57 candidates have been shortlisted for the interview for the post of chairperson, CCI on Sunday. All candidates are expected to be interviewed on the same day. The post was advertised on July 26, 2022.

Govt-SC confrontation: Who will blink?

The country is waiting with bated breath an unprecedented dual between the government and judiciary in public. The Modi government wants an effective say in

the appointments and transfers of judges in the higher judiciary. Union Law Minister Kiren Rijju recently blasted the Collegium system saying nowhere in the world judges appoint judges. He did so while sharing dais with Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud at a Law Day function in November 2022. Rijju went on to say that the Collegium system is against the very spirit of the Constitution. But the SC warned against 'derailing the Collegium system' a day later. Not to be cowed down, Rijju reiterated his stand in a TV show and took the battle inside the Parliament as well. As if this was not enough, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar also echoed the same sentiments in Rajya Sabha. But the Supreme Court did not take it lying down and went on to say, "Speeches made by the high constitutional functionaries in public on the SC Collegium are not very well taken. The Collegium system is the 'law of the land' which should be 'followed to the teeth'.

# international

## of the day quote

Pakistan is passing through one of her most critical junctures and this requires development of national consensus by all stakeholders to sail through the confronted challenges of economy and terrorism

SYED ASIM MUNIR | PAKISTAN CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF (COAS) GENERAL

Delighted to see my good friend Alexander Schallenberg in Vienna. My first diplomatic engagement in 2023. Thank him for inviting us to join the traditional New Year's concert in Vienna

S JAISHANKAR | EAM OF INDIA

In a sluggish world economy, our exports remain strong, trading has started showing good signs, investment has become even more prominent and tourism is recovering strongly

PRAYUT CHAN-O-CHA | THAI PRIME MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Stray bullets hit two jets at Beirut airport

Beirut: Stray bullets from gunfire celebrations for the new year hit two Middle East Airlines jets parked at Beirut's international airport causing minor damage to the planes without hurting anyone, an airline official said. Intense shooting in the air occurred around midnight Saturday in Beirut and other parts of Lebanon to celebrate the new year despite repeated warnings by officials for residents not to do so. The two jets are now being fixed at the Rafik Hariri International Airport, according to the official who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations. The official said the bullets hit the jets after midnight Saturday.

### Kabul bomb blast kills, wounds many

Kabul: A bomb exploded near a checkpoint at Kabul's military airport Sunday morning killing and wounding "several" people, a Taliban official said, the first deadly blast of 2023 in Afghanistan. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but the regional affiliate of the Islamic State group — known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province — has increased its attacks since the Taliban takeover in 2021.

### Indian national dies in S'pore fire mishap

Singapore: A 38-year-old Indian national died on the spot after a fire broke out in Singapore, making him the 46th workplace casualty of 2022, a media report said. The Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) said it was alerted to the fire at 21 Tuas Avenue 3, located west of Singapore, at about 9.05 a.m. Friday and put out the blaze using a water jet. The Straits Times reported.

### Manila airport resumes operation

Manila: Manila's international airport resumed limited operation following the partial restoration of the technical glitch that resulted in the diversion, cancellations and delays of over 280 flights starting Sunday noon. "The system has been partially restored, thereby allowing limited flight operations," the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) said. The MIAA said at least 282 international and domestic flights were either delayed, canceled, or diverted to other regional airports, affecting around 56,000 passengers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA). Xinhua news agency reported.



All this war that you are waging, you - Russia, it is not the war with NATO, as your propagandists lie

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE

## CELEBRATION TURNS FATAL

A stampede during New Year's celebrations at a popular mall in Uganda's capital, Kampala, left at least nine people dead, including children, police said Sunday



# Kim orders 'exponential' expansion of nuke arsenal

Kim Jong Un called for developing new intercontinental ballistic missiles and a larger nuclear arsenal to counter US-led threats amid flaring tension between the rival Koreas

AGENCIES

Seoul, Jan 1: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered the "exponential" expansion of his country's nuclear arsenal, the development of a more powerful intercontinental ballistic missile and the launch of its first spy satellite, state media reported Sunday, after he entered 2023 with another weapons firing following a record number of testing activities last year.

Kim's moves are in line with the broad direction of his nuclear weapons development programme as he has repeatedly vowed to boost both the quality and quantity of his arsenal to cope with what he calls US hostility.

Some experts say Kim's push to produce more nukes and new weapons systems reflects his hopes to solidify his future negotiating power as he heads into prolonged tensions with the US and its allies.

Kim accused South Korea of being "hell-bent on imprudent and dangerous arms build-up" and openly trumpeting its preparations for war with North Korea. That, Kim said, highlights the need to mass-produce battlefield tactical nuclear weapons and push for "an exponential increase of the country's nuclear arsenal," KCNA said.

Kim also set forth a task to develop another ICBM system "whose main mission is quick nuclear counterstrike," KCNA said.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attends the 12th Meeting of the Political Bureau of the 8th Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), in Pyongyang, North Korea

It said Kim accused the United States of frequently deploying nuclear strike means in South Korea and pushing to establish a NATO-like regional military bloc.

Kim said North Korea will also launch its first military reconnaissance satellite "at the earliest date possible," saying related preparations are in their final stages.

Tactical nuclear weapons and a military reconnaissance satellite are among Kim's long wish list of new weaponry. Other weapons he wants include a multi-warhead missile, a more agile solid-fuelled ICBM, an underwater-launched nuclear missile and a hypersonic weapon.

Last month, North Korea claimed to have performed key tests needed for the development of a new strategic weapon, a likely reference to a solid-fuelled ICBM, and a spy satellite. Kim's identification of South Korea as an enemy and the mentioning of hostile US and South Korean policies is "a reliable pretext for the

regime to produce more missiles and weapons to solidify Kim's negotiating position and concretize North Korea's status as a nuclear weapons power," Soo Kim said.

Some observers say North Korea wants to become a legitimate nuclear power state as a way to win the lifting of UN and other international sanctions and force the end of the regular US-South Korean military drills that the North views as an invasion rehearsal.

The North's increasing nuclear threats have prompted the United States and South Korea to expand their military exercises and strengthen a trilateral security cooperation involving Japan.

The US military has warned any nuclear attack by North Korea against the United States or its allies and partners "will result in the end of that regime." Earlier Sunday, South Korea's military detected the missile launch from the North's capital region.

South Korean defence ministry warned that any attempt by North Korea to use nuclear weapons would lead to the "end" of its regime

## Twitter sued for not paying office rent

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

San Francisco, Jan 1: Twitter Inc. has reportedly been sued as it failed to pay \$136,250 rent for its office space in San Francisco.

The landlord, Columbia Reit - 650 California LLC, said that it had notified the company on December 16 of last year that it would go into default on its lease for the Hartford Building's 30th floor in five days if the rent was not paid, reports

Bloomberg. In the complaint that Columbia Reit filed last week in San Francisco's state court, it claimed that the tenant failed to comply.

The company was also sued in December 2022 for refusing to pay for two charter flights, the report said. Another report also mentioned that Twitter has not made a rent payment for its headquarters or any of its other global offices in weeks.



A grey heron stands on the frozen Han river on a cold winter day in Seoul, South Korea

REUTERS

# Time zone by time zone, another new year sweeps into view

The world welcomed the new year with a packed party in Times Square and fireworks soaring above European capitals, while hoping for an end to the war in Ukraine and a return to post-Covid normality in Asia

AGENCIES

New York, Jan 1: New Year's celebrations swept across the globe, ushering in 2023 with countdowns and fireworks — and marking an end to a year that brought war in Europe, a new chapter in the British monarchy and global worries over inflation.

The New Year began in the tiny atoll nation of Kiribati in the central Pacific, then moved across Russia and New Zealand before heading deeper, time zone by time zone, through Asia and Europe and into the Americas.

The ball dropped on New York's iconic Times Square as huge crowds

counted down the seconds into 2023, culminating in raucous cheers and a deluge of confetti glittering amid the jumbo screens, neon, pulsing lights and soggy streets. Two New York City officers were rushed to a hospital after an altercation with a man wielding a machete just a block from the throng of revellers.

In Paris, thousands celebrated on the Champs Elysees, while French President Emmanuel Macron pledged continuing support for Ukraine in a televised New Year's address. Big Ben chimed as more than 100,000 revellers gathered along the River Thames to watch a spectacular fireworks show around the London Eye. The display



Fireworks explode over the London Eye ferris wheel

REUTERS

featured a drone light display of a crown and Queen Elizabeth II's portrait on a coin hovering in the sky, paying tribute to Britain's

longest-serving monarch who died in September. The Brazilian capital's New Year's bash usually drew more than 2 million people to

# Ukraine hit by fresh Russian missile strikes



Women hold Bengal fires next to a Christmas tree during the celebration for New Year's eve in front of the St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv

AGENCIES

Kyiv, Jan 1: Ukrainians had a grim start to 2023 Sunday, with yet more sirens and fresh missile attacks on their territory, as the death toll from Russia's massive New Year Eve assault across the country climbed to at least three.

Night-time shelling that battered parts of the southern city of Kherson killed one person, wounded another and blew out hundreds of windows in a children's hospital, according to deputy presidential chief of staff Kyrylo Tymoshenko.

Meanwhile, a 22-year-old woman injured in a rocket attack in eastern Khmelnytskyi later died of her wounds, the city's mayor Oleksandr Symchysyn said.

Multiple blasts rocked Kyiv and other areas of Ukraine Saturday and through the night, injuring dozens, a sign that the pace of Russia attacks had picked up. Ukrainian officials claimed Russia was now deliberately targeting civilians, seeking to create a climate of fear and demoralise.

The blasts came just 36 hours after Russia launched a barrage of

UKRAINE'S AIR FORCE COMMAND SAID IT HAD DESTROYED 45 IRANIAN-MADE SHAHED DRONES OVERNIGHT -- 32 OF THEM SUNDAY AFTER MIDNIGHT AND 13 LATE SATURDAY

THAT WAS ON TOP OF 31 MISSILE ATTACKS AND 12 AIR STRIKES ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN THE PAST 24 HOURS

missiles Thursday to damage energy infrastructure facilities, an unusually quickened rhythm that alarmed Ukrainian officials.

First lady Olena Zelenska expressed outrage that such massive missile attacks could come just before New Year's Eve celebrations.

"Ruining lives of others is a disgusting habit of our neighbors," she said. On Saturday in Kyiv, an AP photographer at the scene of the explosions saw the body of a woman as her husband and son stood nearby. Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said two schools were also damaged, including a kindergarten.

Some Ukrainians defied the danger, however, to return to the country to reunite with families for the holidays.

# Meta to take decision on Trump's return to FB

THE SOCIAL MEDIA GIANT HAD PREVIOUSLY SAID IT WILL DECIDE BY JAN 7 WHETHER TO ALLOW THE FORMER PREZ'S COMEBACK

REUTERS

New York, Jan 1: Facebook owner Meta Inc is preparing to announce whether it will allow former US President Donald Trump back on to Facebook and Instagram, the Financial Times reported Sunday

The social media giant had previously said it will decide by Jan 7 whether to allow the former president to return. However, that decision is now expected to be announced later in the month, the newspaper said, citing a person familiar with the matter.

Meta has set up a working group to focus on the matter, according to people with knowledge of its operations, the report said, adding that the group includes staffers from the public policy and communications teams, as well as from the content policy team.

Meta did not immediately respond to a request by Reuters for comment.

The development comes after Elon Musk, Twitter's new owner, revoked a permanent ban on Trump in November last year on the social



media platform after polling users.

Trump maintained that he had no interest in returning to Twitter. "I don't see any reason for it," the former president had said via video when asked whether he planned to return to Twitter by a panel at the Republican Jewish Coalition's annual leadership meeting.

Trump has mounted relentless attacks on the integrity of US voting since his 2020 election defeat and launched a bid in November to regain the presidency in 2024, aiming to pre-empt potential Republican rivals.

## of the day quote

The 700 million tonne aim itself is challenging and ambitious. So far we are ahead of the progressive target. In December, we achieved 101 per cent of the year-on-date target. Our coal companies are pushing hard

**PRAMOD AGRAWAL** | CHAIRMAN, COAL INDIA

In the near future, the last Budget before the 2024 election, Q4 earnings, and the monthly auto sales number will be the key events that the market will be looking for in January 2023

**PRAVESH GOUR** | SENIOR TECHNICAL ANALYST, SWASTIKA INVESTMART

Till now the supply chain (from China) is fine and not impacted. Our suppliers are assuring us about delivering on time but we are keeping our fingers crossed and putting everything under the lens

**ATUL LALL** | VC AND MD, DIXON TECHNOLOGIES

## SHORT TAKES

### Petrol, diesel sales surge in December

**New Delhi:** India's petrol and diesel demand soared in December as increased consumption in agriculture sector helped build on the momentum generated by the festive season, preliminary industry data showed Sunday. Petrol sales soared 8.6 per cent to 2.76 million tonne in December, as compared to 2.54 million tonne of consumption in the same month last year. Sales were 13.3 per cent higher than in Covid-marred December 2020 and 23.2 per cent more than in pre-pandemic December 2019. Month-on-month, the demand was up 3.7 per cent on the high base festive season created since October. Diesel, the most used fuel in the country, posted a 13 per cent rise in sales in December to 7.3 million tonne, as compared to the same month last year.

### Coal production likely at 997 MT

**New Delhi:** The country is expected to produce 997.14 million tonne (MT) of coal in the coming financial year. Of the projected figure, state-owned CIL's output is likely to be 760 MT, followed by Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL) at 75 MT, and captive and others at 162.14 MT, according to government data. During 2024-25, the country is expected to produce 1,111.60 MT of coal, which includes 850 MT by Coal India Ltd (CIL), 181.60 MT by captive and others and 80 MT by SCCL, as per the data. While in FY'26 India's production is expected at 1,288.39 MT, in FY'27 the figure is likely to reach 1,342.80 MT.

### JSW Group mulls foray into EVs

**New Delhi:** Sajjan Jindal-led conglomerate JSW Group is considering a foray into the manufacturing of electric vehicles, according to a top official of the group. "The group had examined EV manufacturing plans earlier also but now it is becoming attractive," JSW Group Chief Financing Officer Seshagiri Rao told PTI. The manufacturing of EVs is being discussed actively at the group level, he said while divulging JSW Group's plan to expand its presence into more sectors. The group is looking to manufacture four-wheelers, Rao said. When asked about details of the manufacturing location, he said it is yet to be decided.



India's digital prowess will grow in 2023 and over the next five years, driven by technology, startups, semiconductors, electronics and computing

**RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR** | IT MINISTER

## ELECTRIC 2-W SALES TO MISS TARGET

Electric two-wheeler sales could miss the target of 10 lakh units in fiscal 2022-23 by 20 per cent, mainly due to withholding of around Rs 1,100 crore subsidy by the government. In 2022, sales of electric two-wheelers stood at around 6 lakh units, with three major electric two-wheeler (E2W) makers -- Hero Electric, Ola and Okinawa - crossing the 1 lakh annual sales mark for the first time



## BLEEDING CURRENCY

# ₹ falls over 11% in '22; worst since '13

A HAWKISH US FEDERAL RESERVE STARTED RAISING RATES TO REIN IN INFLATION JUST AS SEVERE GEOPOLITICAL CRISES BESIEGED THE GLOBAL ECONOMY. IT MADE THE DOLLAR A SAFE HAVEN CURRENCY, CAUSING HUGE INVESTMENT OUTFLOWS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

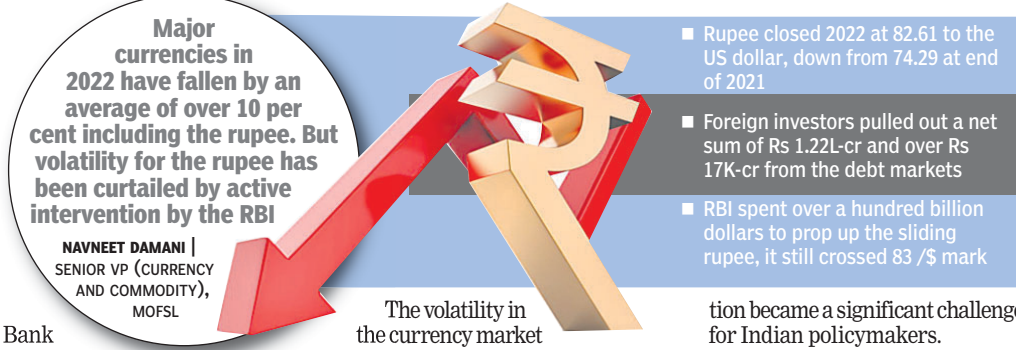
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** The Indian rupee depreciated over 11 per cent in 2022 against the dollar - its poorest performance since 2013 and the worst drubbing among Asian currencies - as the US Federal Reserve's aggressive monetary policy propelled the greenback.

The rupee closed 2022 at 82.61 to the US dollar, down from 74.29 at end of 2021 as the US currency headed for its biggest yearly gain since 2015.

The Indian unit, however, fared better than some other global currencies like the Turkish Lira and British Pound.

The volatility in the forex market, prompted by a rally in global oil prices following Russia's war in Ukraine, meant the Reserve



**NAVNEET DAMANI** | SENIOR VP (CURRENCY AND COMMODITY), MOFSL

Bank had to frequently dip into its reserves as imported inflation became a challenge for policymakers. Since mid-October, the rupee recovered from the bouts of volatility experienced in the earlier part of the year and has been trading close to its long term trend, as per the RBI's Financial Stability Report.

The volatility in the currency market during the year was triggered by the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war in February as it disrupted the global supply chains, fuelling inflation as well as inflationary expectations across the world.

High crude oil prices in the international market too weighed on the rupee. As a strong dollar weighed on India's trade, imported inflation became a significant challenge for Indian policymakers.

Yet, there is hope for the rupee in the New Year. There are indications that the US Fed will further reduce the intensity of rate hikes in the coming year. Also, the global investors have not lost confidence in Indian markets, and FII inflows have begun to improve.

In addition, declining global energy prices, strong fundamentals

of the Indian economy and inflation coming back to the Reserve Bank's comfort level will help the rupee regain some strength against the greenback.

Falling value of the rupee has also created concerns on the Current Account Deficit (CAD) front, which coupled with widening trade deficit could put further pressure on the Indian currency going forward.

On January 3 (the first trading day of 2022), the rupee closed almost flat at 74.28. It slumped 98 paise on February 24, the day the Russia-Ukraine war started and since then it has been on a downslide. On October 19, the rupee breached the 83 mark for the first time amid unabated foreign capital outflows, a strong dollar in the overseas markets, rising crude prices and risk-averse sentiment among investors.

# Record PV sales in 2022

Despite strong headwinds like pandemic and semiconductor crunch, the automobile industry has continued to challenge existing boundaries and establish new benchmarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** Domestic passenger vehicles sales rose by 23 per cent to a record of 37.93 lakh units in 2022 led by the likes of Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai and Tata Motors as the companies rode on easing of pandemic related challenges and semiconductor shortages to cash in on pent up demand, specially for SUVs.

Other manufacturers like Toyota Kirloskar Motor and Skoda India also reported record sales in 2022.

"The industry wholesales in January to December 2022 were just short of 38 lakh units. It was 37.93 lakh units against 30.82 lakh in 2021, which is a growth of 23 per cent," Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer, Marketing & Sales Shashank Srivastava told reporters in a virtual conference.

He further said the 2022 wholesales are "the highest ever in the industry for a calendar year" and the last highest was in 2018 which was 33.3 lakh units. "So, this is about 14 per cent higher than the highest ever," he added. He said demand for SUVs continued to grow and stood at around 42.3 per cent of the total PV sales.

In terms of product mix on the basis of price, he said, "It appears that about 40 per cent of the vehicles sold in the industry were in the bracket of Rs 10 lakh or above."

For Maruti Suzuki, sales in the calendar year 2022 were at 15.76 lakh units against 13.64 lakh units in 2021, a growth of almost 16 per cent, he added.

In December, Maruti Suzuki's domestic wholesales were at 1,13,535



I believe this resurgence to the highest ever level is partly because of the better availability of semiconductors because last year was badly affected by the semiconductor issue. Also, there were less challenges of Covid-19 pandemic and an element of pent up demand

**SHASHANK SRIVASTAVA** | SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER (MARKETING & SALES), MARUTI SUZUKI

- Domestic passenger vehicles sales jump 23%
- Total PVs sold 37.93L units; last record was 33.3L units
- Hyundai reported its highest-ever domestic sales
- Tata Motors breaches milestone of 5 lakh units
- Toyota Kirloskar sales highest in last 10 years
- SKODA sees "biggest year" with over two-fold jump

units last month as against 1,26,031 units in December 2021, down 9.91 per cent as the company adjusted production to reduce dealer inventory.

Hyundai Motor India Ltd also reported its highest-ever domestic sales at 5,52,511 units in 2022 with a growth of 9.4 per cent over 5,05,033 units posted in 2021. HMIL Director (Sales, Marketing & Service) Tarun Garg a strong product portfolio aligned with consumer trends has led to HMIL recording its highest-ever domestic sales in 2022.

On the other hand, Hyundai Motor India reported 20.2 per cent growth last month at 38,831 units as compared to 32,312 units in the year-ago month.

Similarly, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd Managing Director Shailesh Chandra said for the passenger vehicles division "calendar year 2022 has been a momentous year as we outpaced industry growth and crossed the distinctive milestone of 5 lakh units comfortably to post wholesale of

5,26,798 units."

Tata Motors also reported a growth of 13.4 per cent in its domestic passenger vehicle sales at 40,043 units last month as against 35,299 units in December 2021.

Another manufacturer, Toyota Kirloskar Motor reported a total wholesales of 1,60,357 units in 2022 as against 1,30,768 units in 2021, a growth of 23 per cent. The company said the 2022 sales were the highest wholesales in the last 10 years beating the previous record of 1,72,241 units posted in 2012.

However, Toyota Kirloskar Motor posted a 3.8 per cent decline in its dispatches to dealers at 10,421 units in December 2022 as against 10,834 units in December 2021.

Similarly, SKODA AUTO India said it had the "biggest year" in 2022 with over two-fold jump in sales at 53,721 units as against 23,858 units sold in 2021. SKODA AUTO India also reported a 48 per cent rise in sales at 4,788 units in December 2022 as compared to 3,234 units in December 2021.

# GST collections at ₹1.49L-crore in Dec

Robust GST collections indicate improved manufacturing output and consumption demand, besides better compliance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** The collections from Goods and Services Tax (GST) grew by 15 per cent to over Rs 1.49 lakh crore in December 2022.

This is the 10th month in a row that the revenues have remained above the Rs 1.4 lakh crore mark. The collection in November was about Rs 1.46 lakh crore.

"The gross GST revenue collected during December 2022 is Rs 1,49,507 crore, of which CGST is Rs 26,711 crore, SGST is Rs 33,357 crore, IGST is Rs 78,434 crore (including Rs 40,263 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is Rs 11,005 crore (including Rs 850 crore collected on import of goods)," the ministry said in a statement.

The revenues for December 2022 are 15 per cent higher than the GST collection in the same month last year, which itself was close to Rs 1.30 lakh crore.

During the month, revenues from the import of goods were 8 per cent higher, and the revenues from the domestic transaction (including the import of services) are 18 per cent more than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year.

In November 2022, 7.9 crore e-way bills were generated, which was significantly higher than the 7.6 crore e-way bill issued in October 2022.

Deloitte India Partner MS Mani said, "An 18 per cent increase in the GST revenues from domestic trans-



**₹1.5 lakh crore monthly collection seems to be the new normal even after peak festive sales are over**

**ABHISHEK JAIN** | KPMG PARTNER INDIRECT TAX

GST REVENUES SURGE 15% YOY

NOV COLLECTION WAS AT ₹1.46L-CR

10TH MONTH IN A ROW THAT THE REVENUES HAVE REMAINED ABOVE THE ₹1.4L-CR MARK

actions viewed with the increase in e-way bill issuance and the significant increase in GST collections by key manufacturer and consuming states, would be indicative of a sustained manufacturing and consumption cycle across recent months".

NA Shah Associates Partner Parag Mehta said the tax authorities have been able to track down tax evaders/non-compliers with the assistance of a strong GSTN platform.

"Normally, even the trend shows more collections in the last 3-4 months due to the department becoming more aggressive and the business trying to achieve their budgeted targets," Mehta added.

Revenues from GST touched a record of about Rs 1.68 lakh crore in April. In May, the collection was about Rs 1.41 lakh crore, June (Rs 1.45 lakh crore), July (Rs 1.49 lakh crore), August (Rs 1.44 lakh crore), September (Rs 1.48 lakh crore), October (Rs 1.52 lakh crore), November (Rs 1.46 lakh crore) and December (Rs 1.49 lakh crore).

# FPI inflow continues in Dec

EQUITIES CORNER ₹11,119CR FOREIGN INVESTMENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** Foreign investors pumped in Rs 11,119 crore in the Indian equities in December, making it the second consecutive monthly inflow, despite increasing concerns over the re-emergence of Covid-19 cases in some parts of the world.

However, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have turned cautious in recent days.

The inflow in December was much lower compared to Rs 36,239 crore invested by FPIs in the month of November, data with the depositors showed.

Also, in the midst of the ongoing uncertainty, many investors would have also chosen to book profits with Indian markets touching all-time high recently.

Overall, FPIs have made a net withdrawal of Rs 1.21 lakh crore from the Indian equity markets in 2022 on aggressive rate hikes by the central banks globally, particularly the US Federal Reserve, volatile crude, rising commodity prices along with the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

This was the worst year for FPIs

# M-cap of eight of top-10 cos jumps ₹1.35 lakh crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** Eight of the 10 most valued firms together added Rs 1,35,794.06 crore in market valuation last week, with State Bank of India and Reliance Industries Limited emerging as the biggest winners.

Last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark climbed 995.45 points or 1.66 per cent.

Hindustan Unilever Limited and Bharti Airtel were the laggards from the top-10 pack.

The market valuation of State Bank of India jumped ₹35,029.1 crore to ₹5,47,257.19 crore.

The market capitalisation (m-cap) of Reliance Industries climbed ₹31,568.08 crore to ₹17,23,979.45 crore.

Adani Enterprises valuation-rallied ₹24,898.33 crore to ₹4,39,966.33 crore and that of HDFC Bank advanced ₹16,535.08 crore to ₹9,07,505.41 crore.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) m-cap went higher by ₹11,690.67 crore to ₹11,92,576.32 crore and that of ICICI Bank gained ₹8,221.94 crore to ₹6,21,588.34 crore.

The valuation of Infosys climbed ₹4,692.01 crore to ₹6,34,873.16 crore and that of HDFC surged ₹3,158.85 crore to Rs 4,81,437.47 crore.

The m-cap of Hindustan Unilever declined by Rs 14,121.05 crore to Rs 6,01,436.62 crore and that of Bharti Airtel dipped Rs 890.49 crore to Rs 4,48,977.72 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, State Bank of India, HDFC, Bharti Airtel and Adani Enterprises.

# Power deficit rises moderately to 0.6%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** Power deficit in the country rose slightly to 0.6 per cent in April-November this fiscal year, while electricity demand has witnessed around 11 per cent jump in the said period, indicating buoyancy in the economy.

The latest government data available showed that the power deficit in the country stood at 5,691 million units (MU) in April to November 2022, while it was 4,058 MU in the same period a year ago.

Experts are of the view that power deficit happens mainly because of technical reasons. They opined that India is a power surplus state but sometimes discoms don't have funds to afford round-the-clock supply of electricity.

The power producers supplied 10,12,249 MU in April-November 2022, against the demand of 10,17,940 MU, which resulted in a power deficit of 0.6 per cent.

Similarly, power producers had supplied 916,529 MU in April-November 2021, against the demand of 920,587 MU, which had resulted in a power deficit of 0.4 per cent.

## INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS

# Govt lines up millet-centric activities

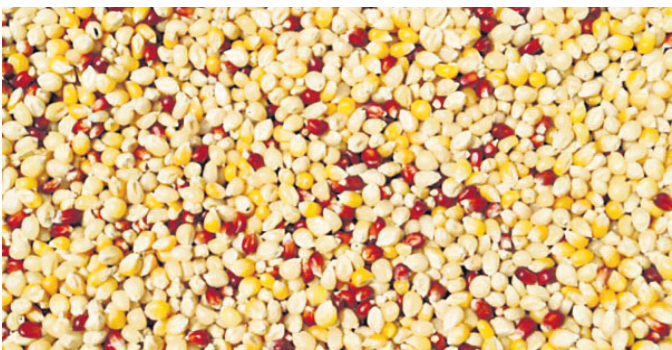
GLOBAL MILLETS MARKET IS PROJECTED TO REGISTER A COMPOUND ANNUAL GROWTH RATE OF 4.5% BETWEEN 2021-2026

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** The government Sunday announced it has lined up a series of millet-centric promotional activities across the country as the International Year of Millets (IYM) kicks in, while noting that millets are also integral part of the G-20 meetings.

The centre ministries, state governments and Indian embassies have been allocated a focussed month in 2023 to carry out various activities for the promotion of IYM and increase awareness about benefits of millets, the nodal agriculture ministry said in a statement.

January is the focussed month for the Union Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs as well as state governments of Chhattisgarh, Mizoram



and Rajasthan for conducting activities, it said.

The ministry also urged international organizations, academia, hotel industry, media, Indian Diaspora, start-up communities, civil society, and all others in the millets value-chain to come forward and join hands to revive the forgotten glory of 'Miracle Millets' through the grand celebration of IYM.

Millets are also an integral part of the G-20 meetings and delegates will be given a true millet experience through tasting, meeting farmers and interactive sessions with startups and FPOs, it added.

Till January 15, the Sports and

Youth Affairs Ministry has planned 15 activities which include engaging sports persons, nutritionists and fitness experts through video messages, conducting webinars on millets with leading nutritionists, dieticians and elite athletes, promotion amplification through Fit India App, etc.

The Food Processing Industries ministry too will be organizing millet fair-cum-exhibitions in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, while food safety regulator FSSAI will organize 'Eat Right Melas' in Punjab, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Rajasthan will carry out specific

activities for sensitization and promotion of IYM.

The states will be conducting millet-centric activities including mahotsava/ melas and food festivals, training of farmers, awareness campaigns, workshops/ seminars, placement of hoardings and distribution of promotional material at various key locations in the state, etc.

Other states that are organizing similar activities in the month of January include Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Punjab, the statement said.

Millets were among the first crops to be domesticated in India with several evidence of its consumption during the Indus valley civilization. Being grown in more than 130 countries at present, millets are considered traditional food for more than half a billion people across Asia and Africa.

In India, millets are primarily a kharif crop, requiring less water and agricultural inputs than other similar staples. Millets are important by virtue of its mammoth potential to generate livelihoods, increase farmers' income and ensure food and nutritional security all over the world.

# Some stars may skip IPL

BOARD WANTS TOP CRICKETERS TO REMAIN INJURY FREE AHEAD OF THE 50 OVERS WORLD CUP IN INDIA

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Jan 1:** With an eye on the 2023 ODI World Cup in India, the BCCI has shortlisted a pool of 20 players, sources stated here Sunday. They added some of the top players could also be asked to skip the IPL to avoid injury issues. With the 50 overs World Cup being played in India only, the BCCI is determined to have the best possible team ready for the meet and also have the players at the peak of their physical conditioning.

The meeting was held here to review the performance of the Indian cricket team in 2022. Among those who attended the meeting were head coach Rahul Dravid, captain Rohit Sharma, NCA chairman VVS Laxman, ex-chief selector Chetan Sharma and board secretary Jay Shah. BCCI president Roger Binny joined through video conferencing. India failed to win both the T20 World Cup and the Asia Cup in 2022.

Team India will play 35 ODIs in 2023, starting with an upcoming three-match series against Sri Lanka on home soil. With focus on the workload management of the players, the NCA will work in tandem with the 10 IPL franchises, in order to keep a track of the fitness of the players.

"The roadmap for the upcoming ODI World Cup in India was discussed at the meeting, along with issues related to player availability and their workload management," the BCCI said in an official statement.

The 'Yo-Yo' fitness test was Sunday reintroduced in the eligibility criteria for selection in the Indian team. Besides the 'Yo-Yo' test, Dexa (bone scan test) has also been made part of the selection criteria. It was also decided that emerging players, who tend to prioritise white ball cricket for IPL riches



Players like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli may not be a part of IPL-2023

over red ball, will be required to play a 'substantial domestic season' to be eligible for national selection.

"The emerging players will have to play a substantial domestic season to be eligible for selection to the national team. The 'Yo-Yo' test and 'Dexa' will now be part of selection criteria and implemented in the

PASSING YO YO TEST A MUST FOR SELECTION TO THE INDIAN TEAM

customized roadmaps of the central pool of players," Shah said in the BCCI statement.

The 'Yo-Yo' test is an aerobic

NCA to work with IPL franchises to monitor the fitness of players

INDIA TO PLAY 35 ODIs BEFORE 50 OVERS WORLD CUP

endurance fitness test which involves running between markers placed 20 metres apart at increasing speeds. The test was introduced

## BCCI to stick with Rohit as captain

**New Delhi:** There is no imminent threat to Rohit Sharma's ODI and Test captaincy as the BCCI brass hasn't found anything unsatisfactory about his leadership in the traditional formats, according to sources. "Rohit is leading India in Tests and ODIs and there were no such discussions about his future as leader in these two formats. Look at his captaincy record in Tests and ODIs and it is more than impressive," a BCCI source, privy to the development said Sunday after the meeting. Rohit was a part of the meeting along with head coach Rahul Dravid

during Virat Kohli's tenure as India captain and the passing score initially was 16.1 before it was increased to 16.5. However, since certain players had objected to it, the test was done away with after Kohli relinquished captaincy.

The fitness of Indian cricketers has been a matter of great concern with the likes of Deepak Chahar breaking down regularly. Premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah, too, has been out of action for a long time due to a back injury. Current T20I captain Hardik Pandya was also out for a lengthy period due to a stress fracture.

The BCCI also informed that the 20 names will be announced shortly and their workload management will be closely monitored. The board also said that the names of the members of the new senior selection panel would be announced by next week. From the East Zone, it is expected that Odisha's Shiv Sundar Das will be included.

# No practice games for Aussies in India

MENTAL FRESHNESS MORE IMPORTANT FOR ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN INDIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sydney, Jan 1:** Australia head coach Andrew McDonald is confident that their 'no tour game' policy on overseas tours will serve them well in the four match Test series in India in February-March. Australia are unlikely to play any tour matches ahead of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and would arrive in India just a week before the first Test, beginning February 9 in Nagpur.

The stress would be on preserving mental and physical freshness rather than arriving much early to play a warm-up game and acclimatise to the conditions, said McDonald. Australia are aiming for their first series win in India in 19 years. "No tour game is something we've done in the last few series, before embarking on overseas tours," McDonald was quoted as saying by the 'Sydney Morning Herald'. "We feel as though we don't need that match practice as such. We're going to go to India about a week out from the first game. We didn't want to press for too much longer, in terms of the preparation," McDonald added.

A similar approach was successful when Australia won a three-match series in Pakistan with a 1-0 margin in March last year. During then, Australia batters prepared on scuffed pitches during a camp in Melbourne and arrived just a week before the first Test in Rawalpindi.

"We feel as though seven days is ample time to get ready and to make sure we maintain freshness throughout the whole four-Test series," McDonald said. "We had



Age wise, our team may look a bit old, but then we have experience in the ranks and that certainly helps during a tour to India

ANDREW McDONALD

some success doing that, going to Pakistan, so we will adopt the same policy," the Australian coach added. This time, Cricket Australia have planned a three-day camp here for all players not involved in the 'Big Bash League' before embarking on the gruelling tour.

"We can be creative in our own conditions. We've done it before with the Pakistan build-up in Melbourne like dusting up wickets. Working with the local groundsmen who really help us in and around the country, we feel as though we can get as close to that as possible without necessarily having a practice game," McDonald pointed out.

The Aussies had last won the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in India under Adam Gilchrist in 2004-05.

Australia head coach further hinted at having a large squad in India with concerns over pace spearhead Mitchell Starc and all-rounder Cameron Green's fitness. "Yeah, I am confident he (Green) will be fit with the time frames I've been given... The challenge will be making sure we can be creative in the way he trains to make sure his body is in order," McDonald said.

## Messi turns emotional

**New Delhi:** Lionel Messi ended 2022 on an emotional note, thanking his 'wonderful family' and friends for supporting him as he achieved his dream of clinching the FIFA World Cup at the 2022 Qatar event. It completed Messi's trophy cabinet. He inspired Argentina to overcome France 4-2 on penalties after the game had ended in a 3-3 draw. "Ends a year I will never forget. The dream I always chased finally came true. But that wouldn't be worth anything either if it wasn't because I can share it with a wonderful family, the best one can have, and friends who always supported me and didn't let me stay on the floor every time I fell," 35-year-old Messi wrote on Instagram.

## Mixed fortunes

**Pune:** Indian tennis player Ramkumar Ramanathan sailed into the main draw of the Tata Open Maharashtra but compatriot Yuki Bhambhani failed to advance after losing his final qualifying match here Sunday. Ramkumar, who entered the draw as a wildcard, got the better of Italian Mattia Bellucci 6-3, 7-5 in 90 minutes. Yuki, on the other hand, was defeated by Sweden's Elias Ymer, 1-6, 4-6 in 72 minutes.

## Fantastic feat

**San Antonio:** Dallas superstar Luka Doncic capped off a historic five-game run with 51 points and the Mavericks needed all of it to beat the San Antonio Spurs in an NBA encounter. Doncic had two rebounds and two free throws in the final 4.5 seconds, helping Dallas escape with a 126-125 victory over San Antonio Saturday night for their sixth straight victory. It was the third 50-point outing in the past five games for Doncic, including 60 points, 21 rebounds and 10 assists Tuesday night in an overtime victory over New York. He's the first player in NBA history with 250 points, 50 rebounds and 50 assists over a five-game span.

## Amir may return

**Islamabad:** Pakistan pacer Mohammad Amir has expressed his excitement at the opportunity to potentially represent Pakistan again. Notably, Amir had called time on his international career in 2020 in protest over the 'shabby' treatment he said he received from the then management. Recently, fellow pacer Wahab Riaz had hinted that Amir could be back in Pakistan's squad. "If Allah wills, I will play for Pakistan again. But I would like to play and perform well in PSL," Amir told reporters at the National High-Performance Centre (NHPC) in Lahore. "I want to be selected on merit," he added.

# Saina opts out of trials for Asian championships

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 1:** Two-time Commonwealth Games champion Saina Nehwal is among the two shuttlers who will be skipping the national badminton trials for the Asian Mixed Team Championships, to be played in Dubai from February 14 to 19.

Former World No.1 Saina was named along with Aakarshi Kashyap and Malvika Bansod for the trials. The senior selection committee named them to pick the second women's singles player who will join double Olympic medalist PV Sindhu in the squad for the Asian meet. However, Saina and Malvika both have decided to skip the trials.

"Saina and Malvika have informed BAI about their unavailability for the trials. Hence, Ashmita Chahina has been invited for the trials. There are few other pull outs as well," a Badminton Association of India (BAI) source informed Sunday. With both Saina and Malvika not available, it will be a fight between Aakarshi and Ashmita for the second spot.

Saina endured a tough 2022, battling multiple injuries and a lack of form that saw her slump to World No. 31. The 32-year-old had skipped the selection trials for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in



Saina Nehwal

April last year to manage her workload after returning from three weeks of European events.

The selection committee has decided to give singles players Lakshya Sen, HS Prannoy, Sindhu and men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Ranikreddy and Chirag Shetty direct entry into the squad based on their superior world rankings.

It is also learnt that MR Arjun has suffered an injury and will not be available for the trials, making the race for the men's doubles spot a knockout contest between Krishna Prasad Garga-Vishnuvardhan Goud P and Ishaan Bhatnagar-Sai Patheek K.

## Easy victories for fancied pugilists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hisar, Jan 1:** Gaurav Solanki, Mohammad Hussamuddin and Biswamitra Chongtham recorded comprehensive wins on the second day of the Vith Elite Men's National Boxing Championships here Sunday.

Haryana's Solanki (60kg), the 2018 Commonwealth Games champion, was competing against Navraj Chauhan of Himachal Pradesh. In what was a hard-fought contest, Solanki showcased tremendous grit and vigour to defeat his opponent 5-2 after the bout was reviewed. He will now be in a round of 16 action against Harendra Singh of Madhya Pradesh. Representing Services Sports Control Board (SSCB), two-time CWG bronze medallist Hussamuddin (57kg) was always in control against Bulen Buragohain of Assam. He won 5-0 in a unanimous decision. He will now face Lallawmawma of Mizoram in his next bout.

Hussamuddin's SSCB teammate, Biswamitra (51kg) also put up a sensational attacking display against N Madhaba of Orissa. His superior technical ability allowed Biswamitra to dictate the bout from the start and triumph over his opponent. In another match Varinder Singh (60kg) representing Railway Sports Control Board (RSCB) prevailed against Rahul of Chandigarh 5-0.

# Bianca scripts thrilling comeback

Canadian defeats former World No. 1 Muguruza in miraculous fashion

AGENCIES

**Adelaide, Jan 1:** Bianca Andreescu staged a dramatic comeback Sunday to topple Garbine Muguruza in a battle of former Grand Slam champions on day one of the Adelaide International tennis tournament. The Canadian, who won the 2019 US Open, was crushed in the first set and slipped 2-5 behind in the second before surging home 0-6, 7-6 (7/3), 6-1 to get her 2023 season off to a winning start. It maintained her perfect record against two-time Grand Slam winner and former World No. 1 Muguruza, improving to 3-0.

"In the second set I really had to change my game plan," said the 22-year-old, who has slipped to No. 46 in the world. "I told myself to go for it irrespective of whatever happens. I put more returns in the court, more serves in the court. I'm so glad I pulled through to win, I have no idea how," Andreescu said after the victory.

Spain's Muguruza, who won the French Open in 2016 and Wimbledon a year later, claimed the first set in commanding fashion, out-numbering Andreescu in winners eight to two, not facing a single breakpoint.

Andreescu started the second



Bianca Andreescu chases down a ball during her match against Garbine Muguruza at Adelaide, Sunday

## RUUD VICTORY GOES IN VAIN

**Sydney:** World No.3 Casper Ruud cruised past Thiago Monteiro in straight sets but it was in vain as Norway crashed in their mixed teams United Cup tie against Brazil in Brisbane on Sunday. After the Brazilians won both the opening singles rubbers Saturday, Ruud's 6-3, 6-2 victory brought his country back into contention. But the comeback was short-lived with the South Americans taking the tie when Laura Pigossi outlasted Ulrikke Eikeri 6-3, 6-4 in two hours at Pat Rafter Arena here.

set more strongly, only for Muguruza to break for 4-2 then consolidate for 5-2 with serve. But she couldn't close out the victory and Andreescu took it to a tie-break where a sizzling backhand winner gave her pivotal 4-2 lead.

A demoralised Muguruza had no answers as the Canadian swept her aside in the third set to set up a second-round clash against either fourth seed Veronika Kudermetova or Amanda Anisimova. In other singles

action, Estonian veteran Kaia Kanepi also came from behind to outlast Belarusian Aliaksandra Sasnovich 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 and will next meet either Ekaterina Alexandrova or Marketa Vondrousova.

Top-ranked Novak Djokovic headlines the men's field and is set to play France's Constant Lestienne Monday in his first match in Australia since being deported last year over his Covid-19 vaccination stance

# Villa overcome insipid Spurs

ARSENAL CONSOLIDATE POSITION AT THE TOP WITH 7-POINT LEAD OVER CITY

AGENCIES

**London, Jan 1:** Aston Villa made it a very bad start for Tottenham Hotspur in 2023 with a 2-0 win Sunday. It was the fourth loss for the hosts in six games. The goals for Villa were scored by Emiliano Buendia and Douglas Luiz.

Spurs, needing to win to jump back above Manchester United into fourth place, produced another listless first half display and fell behind for a 10th consecutive game when Buendia pounced on an error from the returning Hugo Lloris shortly after the break. They doubled their advantage when Luiz finished off a slick team goal from John McGinn's pass.

Earlier Arsenal headed into 2023 with a formidable seven-point lead at the top of the Premier League after a 4-2 win Saturday at Brighton. Mikel Arteta's side powered to a fifth successive league victory thanks to



Arsenal players celebrate after their win against Brighton in a Premier League match played Saturday

goals from Bukayo Saka, Martin Odegaard, Eddie Nketiah and Gabriel Martinelli on New Year's Eve at the Amex Stadium. The Gunners stormed into the lead after just two minutes when Martinelli's deflected effort reached England forward Saka, who took

a deft touch before slotting past Brighton keeper Robert Sanchez. Arsenal were in complete control and Odegaard netted with a thumping 39th minute strike after a corner was cleared to the edge of the Brighton area. Nketiah scored Arsenal's third in the 47th minute.

## Bowlers script facile triumph for U-15 squad

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 1:** Odisha eves defeated hosts Chandigarh by five wickets in a match of the Women's U-15 ODI tournament played Sunday

After being put into bat, Chandigarh could only score 102 all out in 34.5 overs. Except for Talisha Manchanda (41), none of the other Chandigarh batters were able to get going against Odisha's Jahnavi Sarangi (4/10) and Bijaya Behera (3/14). In the 13.5 overs, these two bowlers bowled in tandem, Chandigarh could only manage to score 24 runs and lost seven wickets in the process.

Even though Odisha lost some early wickets, Bijaya (55 n o, 73b, 9x4) held one end up with a fine batting display to take her team over the line. She defended, but when the scoring opportunities came, she was quick to pounce on those.

# Odisha FC keen to maintain home form

Close contest on cards, feels MCFC coach

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 1:** Odisha FC (OFC) head coach Josep Gombau (in pic) has urged his players to exploit their opponent's weaknesses as his side face Mumbai City FC (MCFC) in an ISL 2022-23 match at the Kalinga Stadium, here Monday. OFC have remained unbeaten at home this season having won four out of their five games while drawing the other.

However, Gombau's men have been lacking the final touch when it comes to finishing their goal-scoring chances. Out of the top six teams in the league standings, his side has scored the least amount of goals (15) in the season so far.

"As (the) head coach of Odisha FC, we need to find a way to match Mumbai City FC and improve on



our chances to get a result in this game. We are working and everybody wants to continue with the good results we have at home. Our job is to try to win, and this is our mentality. I expect it to be an equal game, we will have our chances and moments against them," Gombau pointed out.

Meanwhile MCFC head coach Des Buckingham asserted his players need to continue the way they want to play regardless of the threat posed by Odisha FC.