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HERE . NOW

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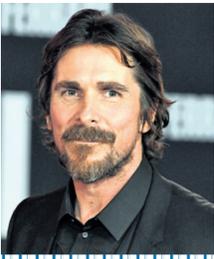


WHEN BLANCHETT WANTED TO RETIRE FROM ACTING

Hollywood star Cate Blanchett was left so drained by her latest role as obsessive Lydia Tar in *Tar* (being tipped to fetch her another Oscar), she thought about quitting acting. The portrayal also left her profoundly homesick for her Australian homeland, she said.

BALE WAS WORRIED ABOUT BEING TYPECAST AFTER PLAYING BATMAN

Hollywood star Christian Bale thought he'd never work again after portraying Batman. Warned that he'd run the risk of being typecast and damaging his career when he accepted the role of the Caped Crusader in *Batman Begins*, admitted Bale.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Today, you need to access every bit of your mental agility. Quick and spontaneous decisions are the need of the hour. But a word of caution from Ganesh: take advice, as these decisions could have long-term implications, especially if they involve money.

TAURUS
Nostalgia will paint your workplace a bright energetic red today, says Ganesh. All the problems that life throws at you will be deflected by your tough exterior and efficient capabilities. Medals and trophies beckon as you taste success and emerge a winner.

GEMINI
Emotions, not acidity, will be the cause of your uneasiness. Something important is going on in your life and you are nervous. It can be related to a matter concerning law, ethics, prejudice, education, or social customs. You are, however, likely to win admiration from all quarters for your fine taste in arts, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Ganesh predicts an excellent and exceptional day for you at work. You are likely to need all your business acumen while negotiating deals. Your leadership skills are likely to come to the fore during the final stage of a deadline, be it about completing an order or launching new products and marketing them, says Ganesh.

LEO
Today may not be the best time to mess with you, considering the aura of invincibility that you possess. Be it a game, a competition, or an argument, you will have the edge over others in every sphere, says Ganesh. Also, you may come across people with whom you will have personal differences, and those who will try to change your fortunes.

VIRGO
Ganesh feels that today may be an important turning point in your life. You will look to secure the money much required for your bright future. Relationship matters will top your priorities during the afternoon today.

LIBRA
Today is an important day for you, and you will learn a lot from your life partner. Even on the work front, business partners will extend their best possible cooperation to you. Your chances of winning in cut-throat competitions are very bright today, predicts Ganesh.

SCORPIO
There is nothing more enchanting and alluring to you than some passionate time with your love interest. The only problem that Ganesh sees here is that there may be too many love interests. Your chosen partner, though, may get to see a different side of you in the evening.

SAGITTARIUS
Unnecessary expenditure might clog your bill today, feels Ganesh. Organising and detailing will be a time-sink as you will spend hapless hours trying to discipline things. The vibrant evening will be a contrast to your hectic day as you kick back and relax while socialising.

CAPRICORN
Your grand orchestration may not come to fruition, and even your best-laid plans may go awry, says Ganesh. Squabbles with people over petty issues will add to your growing vexation; keep calm and you'll handle all of it just fine.

AQUARIUS
Finally, you've decided to clean up the mess! And you will do a fine job, whether it's your workspace, your bills, your finances, or even your closet. And now that you're inspired, you might as well sort out your mental clutter too, chuckles Ganesh.

PISCES
Financially, you have bright prospects awaiting you today. You will be able to deal with the mind-numbing financial juggling required to take stock of your monetary matters with precision. You might be dealing with people who secretly have an axe to grind against you, cautions Ganesh.



Deepika opens up about her 'favourite co-star'

Mumbai: Actress Deepika Padukone has spoken about her pairing with top star Shah Rukh Khan, whom she calls her "favourite co-star", as they are all set for the release of their upcoming film *Pathaan*.
The two stars have previously worked in films such as *Om Shanti Om*, *Happy New Year* and *Chennai Express*.
"Shah Rukh and I have been very lucky to have had the opportunity to work in some incredible movies starting with *Om Shanti Om*. I'm collaborating with my most favourite co-star Shah Rukh. We have a beautiful relationship and I think the audience always see that in the movies that we do," said Deepika.
Deepika also spoke about the secret behind their electric chemistry in *Pathaan*.
She said: "Well, he and I can both take credit for that. Again he was also on this intense diet and exercise. So, he and I can both take credit for the work we have put individually. But at the end of the day, it is the team that you work with."
Pathaan is part of Aditya Chopra's ambitious spy universe and also has John Abraham in it.

Sunny goes de-glam for Quotation Gang

Mumbai: Ditching make-up, actress Sunny Leone decided to go de-glam for her role in the upcoming crime-drama *Quotation Gang*, directed by Vivek K. She didn't want to compromise on the director's vision, said the *One Night Stand* actress.
Sunny and her make-up artist worked extensively with the director in creating basic looks for her character. After cracking the genesis of the character and her backstory, the team put together some options. It is a raw part and Sunny didn't want to compromise on the authenticity.
The actress said: "The film's DNA is such that it hinges on its authenticity. I didn't want to compromise on the director's vision. I trusted the director completely. Now when I see the love our teaser is getting, I am glad that the power of his vision is getting its due."
"Sometimes when the character has some much meat, you don't care about anything else. What matters is your performance. Once I stopped focussing on how I will look, I was able to be the character. I am grateful for the faith the director showed in me!" The film also stars Jackie Shroff and Priyamani.



Uttar Purush's 3-day drama fest concludes

Bhubaneswar: Artistes of Uttar Purush, one of the oldest theatre troupes of this city, presented Odia play *Drohi* on the third and final day of its annual drama festival Nataka Parikrama-2023 here at Rabindra Mandap, Monday.
Written by Chittaranjan Chiranjit, the drama was based on the popular proverb- He who digs a pit for others falls in himself. People, till they are alive, often hatch conspiracies to put others in trouble. But a time comes when they become the victim of their own evil designs and fail to come out of it, the play showed.
Prasanna Mishra, Nishi, Ranesh, Amit, Somu, Rakesh, Sangram, Mama & Sweta were among the actors who performed on stage. Banchhanidhi

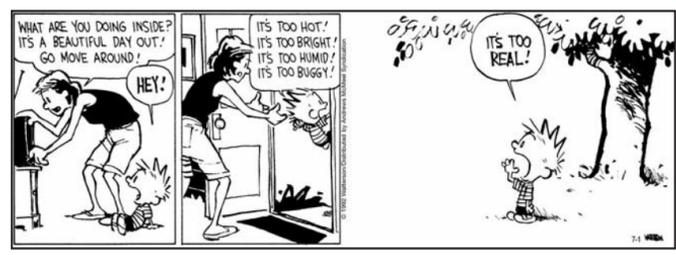


A scene from Odia play *Drohi* staged at Rabindra Mandap, Monday
Patnaik took care of make-up while the stage was designed by Bijayant Das. All three plays were enacted by the members of Uttar Purush, it was learnt. Apart from play's director Pati, dignitaries who lighted the lamps include Odisha Natya Sangh secretary Prabodh Rath, dramatist Dhira Mallick, playwright Chittaranjan Chiranjit and Uttar Purush vice-president Soumya Ranjan Mishra.

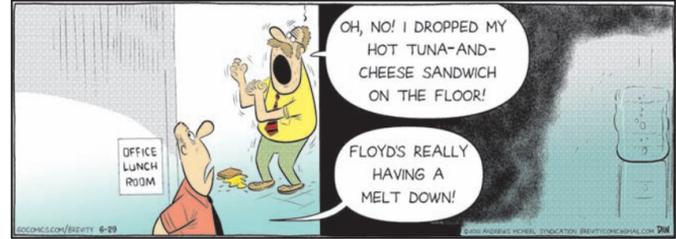
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

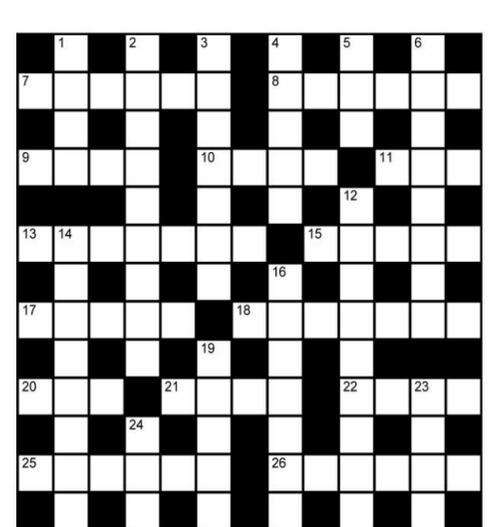


BREVITY



FUN post

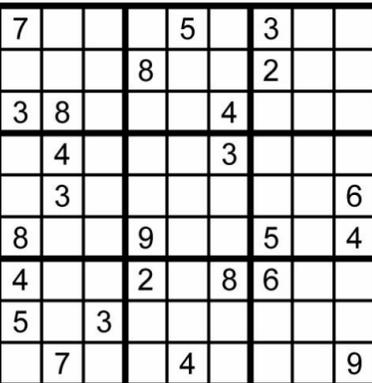
CROSSWORD



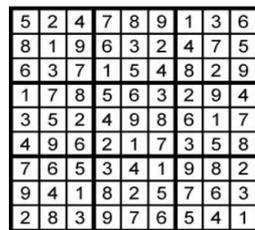
- Across**
- 7 Asian nation
 - 8 Bite off one's head, figuratively (4,2)
 - 9 Lease
 - 10 Submerged ridge
 - 11 Jewel
 - 13 Sitting room
 - 15 Slightly inebriated
 - 17 Haywire
 - 18 Draw a bead on (4,3)
 - 20 Attempt
 - 21 Small pastry
 - 22 Fill to excess (4,2)
 - 25 Cowardly
 - 26 Firearms
 - 4 Resource
 - 5 Paddle
 - 6 Trail a boat for sport (5,3)
 - 12 Branch out business-wise
 - 14 Suits, usually
 - 16 Portable light
 - 19 Emaciated
 - 23 Greek titanes, mother of Helios
 - 24 Dusk
- Down**
- 1 Equine
 - 2 Tease
 - 3 Agitates (5,2)

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



KHURDA MURDER CRACKED

Police crack the murder case of a man, whose body was found stuffed in a trolley bag in Khurda, with the arrest of 3 persons

STATE P3



MORE SANCTIONS

EU imposes sanctions on dozens of Iranian officials suspected in the security crackdown on protestors

INTERNATIONAL P8



THIRD ODI TODAY

India look for clean sweep when they take the field against New Zealand in the final ODI of the 3-match series

SPORTS P1

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BHUBANESWAR | TUESDAY, JANUARY 24 | 2023

P1

Germany, S Korea book quarterfinal berths at FIH WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: South Korea stunned 2016 Olympic champions Argentina in the penalty shootout to book a quarterfinal berth, while Germany also reached the last eight stage after an easy 5-1 win over France in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup (WC) here Monday.

The South Koreans, who had finished third in Pool B, won 3-2 in the penalty shootout after the two sides were locked 5-5 in regulation time in an entertaining and high-scoring crossover match at the near-full Kalinga Stadium.

They rode on an inspired performance from their 38-year-old veteran Jang Jonghyun, who converted two penalty corners.

Veteran captain Lee Nam Yong, 39, was also among the scorers as he struck the equalising goal in the 56th minute while Kim Sunghyun (18th) and Jeong Junwoo (20th) scored the other goals for the South Koreans in the regulation time.

Nicolas Keenan (21st and 47th minutes) as well as Nicolas Della Torre (24th and 41st) struck twice each for Argentina while Maico Casella (8th minute) scored the other goal in the regulation time.

South Korea remain the only Asian country in the quarterfinals and will face Pool C toppers the Netherlands on Wednesday.



The ill-fated bus near Panchupati on National Highway-55 in Dhenkanal, Monday

TWO KILLED AS BUS FALLS OFF BRIDGE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Jan 23: At least two persons were killed and 17 others were injured when the tourist bus in which they were travelling fell off a bridge near Panchupati on National Highway-55 under Sadar police limits in the district Monday morning.

According to sources, the driver of the bus 'Nilamadhab' lost control over the vehicle following which it fell into a canal after breaking the bridge railing. The deceased were Renubala Jena and Bijaylakshmi Swain of Ichhapur in Kendrapara district.

On being informed, Sadar police, Fire Services personnel reached the spot and rushed the injured to the district headquarters hospital (DHH).

Later, many of them were shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack as their condition deteriorated.

The bus with 43 passengers on board was heading to Kendrapara from Sambalpur after visiting Harishankar and Nrusinghanath shrines and Hirakud in the western Odisha. The mishap sparked a tension in the area and traffic on NH-55 was disrupted for hours.

On being informed, Collector Saroj Kumar Sethi, ADM Ramesh Chandra Sethi, sub-collector Snigdharani Dhal, Sadar SDPO Suryamani Pradhan and Sadar IIC Pradip Kumar Pradhan rushed to the spot and placated the locals.

OP PHOTO

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



No political reason. We decided to boycott the movie after seeing the ticket price

'COPS TAKING COMMISSION'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Minister of State (MoS) for Home Tusharkanti Behera Monday said that police officials and lawyers were taking 'commission' in cases involving the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

Behera's startling statement, which he said was his personal view, came while addressing the launching ceremony of a special awareness drive for the Odisha Victim Compensation Scheme 2017 organised by the Legal Service Institute at Rotary Bhawan in Unit-IX, here.

According to Behera, around 70 per cent of cases involving the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and Dowry (Prevention) Act, 1961 are politically driven as they reach police stations mostly through sarpanchs, samiti sabhas or zilla parishad members.

"In many cases, the victims are used to implicate others," he said. Behera said, in some cases, the SC or ST victims are used for minting money as well.

"A few lawyers demand money from the victims in order to ensure them that their case is established following an inquiry by the police. Usually, the compensation is released to the victim if the allegations are found to be true after investigation by the police," Behera said, adding both lawyers and police officials take 'commission' in such cases.



Minister of State for Home Tusharkanti Behera

He said as victims are unaware of the existing scheme on compensation, they are happy even if they get Rs 50,000 out of the Rs 2 lakh assistance paid by the government.

"The remaining amount is subsequently shared between the police personnel and lawyers," Behera said, asking the gathering to raise awareness among victims of crime about government schemes and legal issues.

According to data fetched under the RTI Act, only 77 victims received financial aid under the victim compensation scheme out of the 1,832 rape cases in the state during 2013. In 2014, as many as 176 victims managed to get compensation as against 2,011 rape, 91 gang rape and nine acid attack cases.

The authorities compensated 158 victims in 2015 while there were 2,286 rapes, 109 gang rapes and seven acid attacks during the year. In 2016, compensation has been given in 373 cases out of 2,144 rapes, 93 gang rapes and 12 acid attacks. In 2017, there were 2,221 rapes, 92 gang rapes and 13 acid attack cases. Compensation was given only in 751 cases.

In 2018, compensation was given only in 721 cases out of 2,502 rapes, 97 gang rapes and 14 acid attacks. The year 2019 saw 1,356 rapes, 105 gang rapes and three acid attacks wherein only 545 victims received the compensation under the state's scheme.

As many as 424 victims received financial aid till August 31, 2020. When asked, Orissa High Court lawyer Chittaranjan Dash said the minister's statement on lawyers taking 'commission' in SC/ST atrocity cases is unfortunate.

Rijiju: Judges don't face public scrutiny

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 23: As judges are not elected, they do not face public scrutiny but people watch them and make assessment about them from the way they deliver justice, Law Minister Kiren Rijiju said Monday.

The minister's remarks at a Republic Day function organised at the Tis Hazari courts complex here came amid a tug of war between the judiciary and the executive.

Rijiju said, "Due to social media, ordinary citizens ask questions from the government and they should do so. The government is attacked and questioned and we face it," he said.

"If people elect us again, we will return to power. If they don't, we'll sit in opposition and question the government," he said.

He said on the other hand if a person becomes a judge, he does not have to face elections. "There is no public scrutiny of judges," he said.

"...As people don't elect you, they cannot replace you. But people are watching you - your judgements, the way you deliver verdict - people are watching and make assessment and form opinion," he said.

Nothing is hidden in the era of social media, he said.

Rijiju said the Chief Justice of India had requested him to do something about the attacks on judges on the social media. He wanted to know how to control the



The minister's remarks at a Republic Day function at the Tis Hazari courts complex came amid a tug of war between the judiciary and the executive

insulting language against judges. He said the judges cannot argue on a public forum as there are limitations.

"I have thought about what should be done. There is a provision of contempt. But when people comment on a mass scale, then what can be done. While we are facing public scrutiny and criticism on a daily basis, judges too are facing the same now," he said.

He claimed judges too these days are a little careful, because if they deliver a verdict which will result in a 'massive reaction' in society, then they too would be affected as they are also humans.

Pat for state in disaster mgmt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) has been selected for the prestigious Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2023 for its excellent work in disaster management, the Union Home Ministry announced Monday.

Lunglei Fire Station (LFS) in Mizoram has also been selected for the award. Both were selected under the institutional category.

The Union government has instituted Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar to recognise and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organisations in India in the field of disaster management.

The award is announced every year January 23, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The award carries a cash prize of ₹51 lakh and a certificate in case of an institution

and ₹5 lakh and a certificate in case of an individual. For the award of year 2023, nominations were solicited from July 1, 2022 onwards. The award scheme for 2023 was given wide publicity through print, electronic and social media. In response to the award scheme, 274 valid nominations were received from institutions and individuals, said the official.

The Odisha State Disaster Management Authority was established in 1999 in the aftermath of the Super Cyclone.

The OSDMA embarked on multiple initiatives including raising of the Odisha Disaster Response Action Force (ODRAF), Multi-hazard Early Warning Service (MHEWS) framework, and a cutting-edge technology-enabled web/smartphone-based platform called 'SATARK' (System for Assessing, Tracking, and Alerting Disaster Risk Information based on Dynamic Risk Knowledge).

The OSDMA provided effective response during various cyclones such as Hudhud (2014), Fani (2019), Amphan (2020) and Odisha floods (2020), the statement said.

Pakistanis coping up with power 'outrage' with memes

A NATIONWIDE POWER OUTAGE LEFT NEARLY 220MN PEOPLE WITHOUT ELECTRICITY, THREATENING TO CAUSE HAVOC IN THE SOUTH ASIAN NATION ALREADY GRAPPLING WITH FUEL SHORTAGES DURING WINTER

AGENCIES

Islamabad, Jan 23: As the country plunges into darkness, Pakistanis are coping up with the power 'outrage' in the best manner they could: with memes and rib-tickling content on the micro-blogging website, media reported.

Taking to Twitter, many users shared waking up to no electricity in their homes. Since then, #PowerOutrage has been trending on the internet.

Famous RJ and host, Anoushey Ashraf, tweeted, "While we spend billions on protecting our borders and interests (ahem) the country has officially run out of gas, dollars and now electricity. We never had education or infrastructure anyway

Pakistan's a business for a chosen few families, the rest of us are mere sheep."

Zunaira Inam Khan shared, "As we sit here with a nationwide power outage and our reserves reaching single digits, can we now accept that we're fast approaching rock bottom and our ability to hold our borders will do no good if the country is crumbling from within? We need to rethink our priorities now!" Express Tribune reported.

A countrywide power breakdown, triggered by a 'frequency variation' in the Pakistan national grid early Monday morning, has left large parts of the country including Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar and Quetta without electricity, Geo News reported.



A man sits outside his shop during a power breakdown in Karachi, Monday

Pakistan Power Minister Khurram Dastagir, while talking to Geo News, said that the power generation units are

temporarily shut down in winter at night as an economic measure to save fuel costs. "When the systems were turned

on at 7:30 a.m. this morning one by one, frequency variation was reported in the southern part of the country between Jamshoro and Dadu. There was a fluctuation in voltage and power generating units were shut down one by one due to cascading impact. This is not a major crisis," said the federal minister as the country plunged into darkness for the second time in three months, Geo News reported.

The minister said that his ministry has started restoring some grid stations in Tarbela and Warsak. "Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) and some grids of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) have already been restored," claimed the minister. Talking about the breakdown

in Karachi, the minister said that the matter in the port city is complicated as it has a complete electric supply system.

"We provide K-Electric about 1,000-1,100 megawatts routinely, however, it will be restored within a few hours. It is not certain how long it will take to sort this issue. However, my target is to restore electricity in the country in the next 12 hours," said the minister.

Before the energy ministry's announcement, different power distribution companies had confirmed the breakdown, Geo News reported.

According to Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), the two transmission lines have tripped leaving 22 districts of Balochistan, including Quetta without power:

Guv, CM pay tributes to Netaji, Sai on their birth anniversaries



CM paying tribute to Veer Surendra Sai in Bhubaneswar



Governor Ganeshi Lal offering homage to Netaji in Cuttack

Netaji Memorial Museum in Cuttack and offered floral tributes besides recalling his contribution towards the state and the nation.

Patnaik also visited Odisha assembly premises and offered floral tribute to Veer Surendra Sai along with ministers and others. Different political parties also observed the day and paid tributes to Netaji and Sai at various places across the state. The day was declared as a government holiday.

People from different walks of life thronged the museum to pay respect to him, garlanding his statue and raising 'Netaji Amar Rahe' slogan.

Eminent sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik created a sculpture on Netaji at Puri beach.

Senior BJP leader and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan held a rally at Kinda, the birth place of Veer Surendra Sai on the occasion.

BJP state president Samir Mohanty and Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Sarat Pattanayak also attended different programmes marking birth anniversaries of Netaji and Sai.



REMEMBERING THE HERO: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik paying tribute to Netaji Subash Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary in Cuttack Monday

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday paid rich tributes to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Veer Surendra Sai on their birth anniversaries by organising different events.

In his Twitter account Chief Minister said that "Subash Chandra Bose's immense devotion to the country, great ideology, self-confidence and strength are a source of inspiration for all."

Arriving at Netaji's birth place

museum in Cuttack city, Naveen hoisted the flag amid slogans of "Amar Rahe Netaji Subash Bose". He later took a tour of the museum after the event.

Governor Ganeshi Lal also paid rich tributes to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary today. He also garlanded Netaji statue at the Netaji Museum located at Odia Bazaar in the historic Cuttack city. He hailed Netaji as one of the greatest fighter of Indian freedom movement.

Many other dignitaries visited

Girl student found dead

Bhubaneswar: A girl student was found dead in her hostel room of a prominent private educational institution at Patia here Monday afternoon. The deceased identified as Srestha Pera, 23, was a resident of West Bengal. Sources claimed that Srestha was the final year student of BSc Nursing. The deceased who had recently gone to her native village in West Bengal came back Sunday night along with her father. Srestha's father Monday morning returned. Later in the afternoon, when the room mate of Srestha came back to the hostel room after having her launch, found her hanging from the iron railing of the wardrobe. On being informed, police reached the spot and seized the body. Her family members have been intimidated and post-mortem will be held after their arrival Tuesday.

BJP targets state govt again over PMAY list

Bhubaneswar: The state unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) once again attacked the BJD government over preparation of beneficiary list for Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). Speaking to reporters, BJP state general secretary Pritiviraj Harichandan Monday alleged that the state government excluded eligible people from beneficiaries' list while names of ruling party supporters have been included in the list through a conspiracy. He said the saffron party would launch a vigorous state-wide agitation if the state government fails to mend ways. The BJP leader said his party will not allow the state government to deprive any eligible person from getting PMAY house, demanding that names of all eligible people must be included in the list of beneficiaries. Similarly, the names of people who are not eligible must be deleted, he said. Tomorrow is the last date of filing complaints regarding the list prepared for PMAY beneficiaries in the state.

Unique fusion experience for Bhubaneswar residents at .Fest



BMC Mayor Sulochana Das with urban homeless at .FEST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: More than 15,000 people from all corners of the city converged at the IDCO Exhibition Ground on Day 9 of .FEST to witness the fusion fiesta like never before by Siddharth Mahadevan, Shivam Mahadevan, Srinidhi Ghatate and Aseema Panda. All the artistes were felicitated by Saumendra Kumar Priyadarshi, Commissioner of Police, Bhubaneswar-Cuttack.

Day 9 of .FEST started Monday morning with immersive 'Nature Trails', post which visitors got a chance to explore temple food and desserts at Old Town. The International Food Festival, which has been a big crowd-puller since the beginning saw foodies turn up in numbers to enjoy cuisines and dishes from around the world. Such has been the demand, that Sunday

- .Fest turns bigger and inclusive Monday as hundreds of urban homeless and a number of transgender communities participate in the activities
- People of Bhubaneswar dance their hearts out on fusion tracks performed by Siddharth Mahadevan, Shivam Mahadevan, Srinidhi Ghatate and Aseema Panda

.Fest turned bigger and inclusive Monday as hundreds of urban homeless and a number of transgender communities participated in the activities that were a part of the 'Bhubaneswar Live' programme. Day 10 of the .FEST will feature the final 'Bhubaneswar Live' concert, having the theme 'Non-stop Bhubaneswar'. Artists and performers for the night will include Sukhwinder Singh, Salman Yusuf Khan, Pawandeep Rajan and Arumita Kanjilal.



Mayor with transgender community at .FEST

dishes worth ₹12 lakh were sold. The Flea Market, which was set up to popularise the handicraft and textiles of Odisha, also has been a crowd-puller, offering a shopping experience for visitors with more than 120 stalls showcasing locally made goods and crafts. The Flea Market also is doing well with items worth ₹7.6 lakh being sold Sunday.

ICG rescues Myanmarese mariner

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Jan 23: In a swift and co-ordinated operation, the Indian Coast Guard evacuated an injured mariner from a tanker anchored off Sagar Island in West Bengal Monday morning.

The crew member of the Singapore-flag vessel MT GB Venture, identified as Than Htjke Lwin from Myanmar, was flown to Bhubaneswar where he has been admitted to a private hospital. His condition is stated to be stable.

At around 6:30 am, the Coast Guard's district headquarters at Haldia received an alert from the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata's vessel tracking management system (VTMS) located at Sagar about a medical emergency on board the tanker.

The tanker was anchored around 40.5 nautical miles south of Sagar due to machinery failure. Lwin apparently suffered blunt trauma to his abdominal region while tending to a hydraulic pipeline on board.

He complained of severe pain



and experienced difficulty in breathing. Realising that Lwin could not be treated on board, the master of the vessel sought assistance from the Coast Guard.

"It was ascertained that the ship was located about 80 nautical miles East North East of Paradip, Odisha. Our medical officer at Haldia immediately contacted the master and advised necessary first-aid to stabilise the patient.

"The ship's local agent was also contacted for a regular update. After realising that a medical evacuation was called for, an ALH Dhruv of the Coast Guard took off from the Force's air enclave at Bhubaneswar

and reached the ship at 10:10 am. After checking the weather and sea state, the pilot maneuvered his aircraft and airlifted Lwin. The evacuation was completed by 10:30 am and the ALH landed at Bhubaneswar

Concerns voiced over gender discrimination

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: "The advancement of a woman's sense of self-worth, decisive power and access to opportunities and resources largely depend on how much she is aware of these factors. Gender and women empowerment should go hand in hand, and women must receive handholding support to rise in society," said Sarita Barpanda, a women rights activist and senior director of Human Rights Law Network. Barpanda made the observations during the four-day training session organised here for 'URMI'-a group of grassroots women change-makers in Odisha.



The training, which was jointly organised by 'Atmashakti Trust', 'Odisha Shramajeebe Manchha', and 'Mahila Shramajeebe Manchha', focused on the need for collaborative efforts among stakeholders to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls in society, a mandate adopted by the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

The training session was attended by over 30 URMI leaders who honed their skills in human rights, various women-specific government schemes and their mechanism, laws and policies for women, use of social media and other pertinent issues regarding gender-based violence and discrimination in Odisha.

Workshop on nanomaterials organised at CSIR-IMMT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: A six-day long workshop on nanomaterials for Energy and Environment NanoMatEn2-2023 was held Sunday at CSIR-IMMT Bhubaneswar.

Inaugurating the workshop S Basu said, "Through this programme, CSIR-Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (IMMT) is looking to take up the challenge of skilling a select group of individuals in the fabrication of advanced nanomaterials using physico-chemical methods for electrochemical supercapacitors, photocatalytic dye degradation, detection of toxic gases and electronic displays.

The workshop is supported by SERB 'Accelerate Vigyan - Karyashala' scheme as well as CSIR integrated skill development initiative-IMMT.

R Sakthivel, Chief Scientist, AMT, CSIR-IMMT delivered the introductory speech on NanoMatEn2. Welcome address was delivered by Shradha Suman, Research Scholar, AMT, CSIR-IMMT while DS Rao, chief scien-

tist & Head HRD, CSIR-IMMT delivered the opening address.

The increasing of energy crisis and environmental pollution has drastically threatened the sustainable development of human being. Lots of technologies, for instance, rechargeable batteries and supercapacitors, solar photovoltaic cells, solar photocatalysis, biomass fuels, efficient adsorption technology, and so forth, have been developed in the past decades to exploit clean energies and efficiently deal with pollutants. The key is to obtain advanced nanomaterials with superior structures and functions as active electrodes or efficient catalysts and adsorbents.

The workshop will provide a vital platform for gaining knowledge based on the several materials' synthesis techniques for the development of energy and environmental devices by highly experienced speakers such as Robert Bogdanowicz, Gdansk University of Technology, Poland, Somnath C Roy, IIT-Madras, Chennai, C Jeyabharathi, CSIR-CECRI, Karaikudi and scientists from CSIR-IMMT.



Rashtriya Bal Puraskar for kid from Cuttack

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Jan 23: Sambhab Mishra, along with 10 other children, bagged the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar-2023 at an award ceremony held here in presence of President Droupadi Murmu Monday. Sambhab, who hails from Cuttack, was given the award in the field of art and culture.

Mishra, who has a keen interest in writing about Indian culture and mythology, was awarded the fellowship of the prestigious Royal Asiatic Society of London, the highest honour in South Asian Humanities, for his contribution to Indian mythology and socio-economic cultural happenings.

Sambhab, after being awarded the fellowship, became the youngest ever fellow in the 200-year history of the prestigious Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. Also he was entitled to use honorary post nominal letter

Mishra, who has a keen interest in writing about Indian culture and mythology, was the youngest to be awarded the fellowship of prestigious Royal Asiatic Society of London

FRAS (Fellow of Royal Asiatic Society) with his name. He authored his first book, 'The policy of Kalyug Brahmins,' in 2020, published by Amazon.in and KDP (Kindle direct publishing), USA. The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar are awarded to children between the ages of 5-18 years for their excellence in six categories - art and culture, bravery, innovation, scholastic, social service and sports.

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Berhampur ITI unveils Netaji's life-size statue on his birthday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, Jan 23: Students of the government-run ITI here have built a six-foot-high statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose using automobile scraps after making one of Mahatma Gandhi. The 1.5-tonne statue was installed at the campus of the institute Monday, on the occasion of 126th birth anniversary of the nationalist leader, as a tribute to him. Electric fan bearings, motorcycle chains, nuts and bolts, gears, iron rods and other scrap materials were used to make the statue, Principal Rajat Kumar Panigrahi said. "The students collected the scraps used for making the statue from electric workshops and automobile garages free of cost... Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for creating wealth out of waste. Our institute has utilised waste and discarded materials to make different



statues which dot the campus," he said. There were two purposes in choosing scrap - promoting cleanliness and developing the innovative talents of students, the principal said. Around 30 students of the fitter, welder, painter and some other wings of the institute along with some faculty members took about 15 days to build the statue under his guidance, he said. The statue will be kept in a glass box, Panigrahi said. On the occasion of

Electric fan bearings, motorcycle chains, nuts and bolts, gears, iron rods and other scrap materials were used to make the statue, the ITI's Principal Rajat Kumar Panigrahi said

Gandhi Jayanti last year, the institute's students built a six-foot-high statue of Mahatma Gandhi using automobile scrap. It won the first prize in the 'Trash to Treasure' section at the National Competition on Welded Marvels - 2022. A replica of a fish also made of scraps by them bagged the second prize in the same competition, the principal said. The prizes were given away at a function in Chennai organised by the Indian Institute of Welding (IIW) last week in association with the Association of Welding Products Manufacturers. The two works will be displayed at the IIW, he added.



REMEMBERING LEGEND: Students look at a painting of Veer Surendra Sai displayed at an exhibition organised by IIM, Sambalpur on the occasion of Parakram Diwas at Tapaswini Auditorium in the town, Monday

Marine PSs lack cops, boats

Shortage of manpower, equipment plagues 3 marine police stations in Kendrapara

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Jan 23: The state government has established three marine police stations along the 48-km-long coastline of Kendrapara district. These police stations were established long back with an aim to curb infiltration of Bengali immigrants and maintain law and order in the areas along the coastline. However, these police stations are far from achieving their goals and have failed to function properly due to manpower crunch and allied issues.



Notwithstanding presence of the police stations at Jambu, Talachua and Tantiapala in Kendrapara, infiltration by Bengali immigrants continues unabated to the district

Notwithstanding their presence, the infiltration by Bengali immigrants through the sea route continues unabated to the district. Local intelligentsia alleged that these police stations have failed to achieve their objective due to acute shortage of manpower and infrastructural facilities. Social activist Sunil Kumar Gantayat said that terrorists had come through sea route November 26, 2008 and attacked Mumbai. Later, marine police stations were established in various parts of the country to keep a watch on the sea routes and protect the residents in adjoining areas from any imminent attack by terrorists. The establishment of marine police stations at Jambu, Talachua and Tantiapala in Kendrapara was part of this plan. Despite the establishment of marine police stations, they are far from realising their objectives. These police stations except partici-

patting in mock drills twice in a year have failed to keep a watch on any suspicious activity in sea due to lack of necessary equipment, manpower and infrastructure. Among these three marine police stations, the one at Jambu situated at a distance of five km from the Jambu boat jetty is a case in this point. This police station initially started functioning from Kharinasi in 2009. Later, it was shifted to its new building at Jambu in 2012. It lacks a proper road and it is nearly impossible to reach by a two-wheeler, not to speak of four-wheelers during rainy season. This police station lacks adequate manpower and necessary speed boats to keep a close tab on sea routes through patrolling, he added. A senior resident Lakshmidhar Swain said that Kendrapara district is plagued by illegal intrusion and there is dire need to ensure proper security in Gahirmatha marine sanctuary area. As per rule, every police station needs to have a minimum of 81 employees. However, these three police stations are functioning with only a handful of staffers. All these three police stations lack a naval officer, boat drivers and necessary number of speed boats. The Forest department has

banned fishing in sea areas from November till May-2023 for mass nesting and mating of rare Olive Ridley turtles. The forest officials are conducting routine checks and patrolling for any suspicious and untoward activities as well as illegal fishing in the sea. The officials of these marine police stations have failed to be of any help in this task. On the other hand, the open and porous sea routes have proved opportune for the illegal immigrants. They travel by the sea at night and sneak into the district without the knowledge of police officials of these marine police stations. Swain demanded to upgrade the infrastructure of these three police stations and ensure proper security by checking infiltrations by the coastlines. A local resident Prabhuprasad Mohapatra said these three marine police stations have also been tasked with maintenance of law and order in some revenue villages in their respective areas. This consumes most of their time for which they fail to concentrate on checking illegal intrusion. These police stations could function properly if they are provided with more staff and equipment. When contacted, SP Madkar Sambit Sampad said that the staff strength in these three police stations has been increased in this financial year. Plans are afoot to fill up the vacant posts and supply speed boats to these police stations, he added.

IIC OF SOSO PS SHUNTED OUT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Jan 23: Days after a gangrape victim in Anandapur area of Keonjhar district was made to wait inside the police van for over 12 hours for her medical examination, the district police transferred Soso police station IIC Pradip Sethi to the district police headquarters, Monday. The actual reason behind the transfer of the IIC is yet to be known but it is apprehended that he might have been transferred for the above reason.

GANGRAPE VICTIM MADE TO WAIT 12 HOURS

Sources said, a woman was gangraped Wednesday evening. Thursday, police took her for medical examination first to Anandapur and later to Salania hospitals. The survivor was made to wait for over 12 hours in the police van reportedly due to the absence of doctors and dispute over territorial jurisdiction of the hospitals in relation to the place of occurrence of the crime. Finally, her medical examination was conducted at Anandapur hospital. However, the survivor in a state of shock due to the crime, had to bear harrowing stress due to the long hours of wait in the police van. The development drew flak from various quarters. When contacted, Sethi said he is yet to receive the transfer order. Meanwhile, Anil Samal who was posted at the district police headquarters has been appointed in place of Sethi.

BODY IN A TROLLEY BAG

Woman killed husband to rid self of his torture

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balugaon, Jan 23: The district police cracked the murder case of a man whose body was found stuffed in a trolley bag as it arrested three persons including the deceased's wife, Monday.



The accused were identified as Nili Das, 25, wife of the deceased Manoranjan Das, her cousin Mitu Das, 26, of Rajajankia village and his friend Bikram Sahu, 29, of Domani Sahi under Chandpur police limits in Khurda district. This was stated here by Khurda SP Siddharth Kataria at a press meet held at the Nachuni police premises, Monday. The SP said that the deceased's wife was the mastermind behind the murder. She committed the crime in connivance with her cousin and his friend to get rid of regular torture heaped on her by her husband. The SP said that Manoranjan, a native of Lakhapada village under Ranpur police limits in Nayagarh district is a history-sheeter with several cases related to theft and dacoity registered in his name in three districts. Various police stations had issued non-bailable warrants in his name and he was in the most wanted list in two cases of dacoity by Nayagarh police. He was married to Nili of Rajajankia eight years back. A habitual drunkard, he always used beat up his wife black and blue at slightest pretexts. Manoranjan was released on bail a month back. However, he came to stay at the house of Mitu,

his wife's cousin at Chandeswar a fortnight ago as he had perceived threat to his life from some people over past enmity. Friday was no different as he again beat up his wife in an inebriated condition. Seething in rage, Nili decided to get rid of her husband and prepared a blueprint to eliminate him with the help of Mitu and his friend Bikram. As per plan, Bikram purchased a trolley bag from Chandpur market and brought it to Mitu's house, Saturday. There Mitu and Bikram had liquor with Manoranjan and made him drink in excess till he lost his senses. Later, Nili, Mitu and Bikram strangled Manoranjan to death with a rope. Later, they stuffed the body in a trolley bag and dropped it at an isolated place in Haripur jungle about 10-km from their house, Saturday night. Police recovered the body and conducted an investigation. Police scanned the CCTV footages of luggage showroom at Chandpur market and identified Bikram. They questioned him when he broke down and revealed about the murder. Later, police arrested Nili and Mitu.

UNESCO delegation visits Gopalpur handloom cluster

Members keen to promote Gopalpur tussar clothes in international level

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rasulpur, Jan 23: Hope to take Gopalpur tussar clothes to international level soared high as a United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) delegation visited Gopalpur village under this block in Jajpur district and took a glimpse of the tussar silk weaving process at workshops of weavers. The UNESCO delegation visited the handloom textile workshop of Maa Tarini Tantubaya Sahajog Samiti, Sunday. The delegation members arrived at Gopalpur after attending a two-day International Handicrafts Conference at Jajpur Road. UNESCO's Delhi representative Chiranjit Ganguly, film maker and art designer Arun Das, culture and tourism expert Kumar Anubhav of Not on Map outfit, Handloom and Handicraft designer Gnoon Jain of Virk were part of the delegation. They were accompanied by livelihood expert of district mineral foundation (DMF) Anubhav Prasad,



project coordinator of Mission Shakti Sephali Swagatika, textile designer Nathi Singh of Tata Trust, Tyga Rajan from Chennai and Sudakshina Banerjee. The delegation members visited all units of the workshop and enquired about making of threads from tussar cocoons and later weaving them into colourful clothes. They took stock of the calendaring machine and other equipment used in processing of thread in the workshop. They also enquired about the marketing facilities available for the clothes and their prices. The members met the weaver leader Ashok Kumar Guin, Ramesh Chandra Das and technical assistant (handloom) Srikant Mishra and held discussions with them on what goes on to the making of the magical sarees and clothes. The delegation members expressed satisfaction on the quality of the clothes and the intrinsic weaving style that has kept pace with the time.

They assured to make efforts to promote the magical works of the handloom weavers and artisans in international level. UNESCO's Delhi representative Chiranjit Ganguly said that a high-level delegation will soon visit Gopalpur in coming days. He said all types of artworks are available in this village and sincere efforts will be made to promote them. The delegation members also reviewed the work and development of the artisans engaged in terrakota, bamboo crafts, and artistes of Pala, Daskathia, Sankirtan apart from practitioners of traditional agriculture, he added. He said they will prepare a report on use of resources in the respective fields and making the members of the community self-reliant by involving the youths and submit the report at their head office for action at their end. Tucked away in quaint corners of Rasulpur block lies the small village of Gopalpur in Jajpur district. This village has seen years of craft evoled on its lap. Years of legacy woven with music onto Tussar and Ghicha sarees with borders as ornate as the heritage they carry forward. The village has over 5,000 artisans and weavers.

After Co-WIN, U-WIN to digitise India's universal immunisation programme

U-WIN HAS BEEN LAUNCHED IN A PILOT MODE IN TWO DISTRICTS OF EACH STATE AND UT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: Carrying vaccination cards of children and pregnant women, struggling to keep a tab on the next jab and other such hassles may soon become a thing of the past. After the success of the Co-WIN platform, the government has now replicated it to set up an electronic registry for routine vaccinations. Named U-WIN, the programme to digitise India's Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) has been launched in a pilot mode in two districts of each state and Union Territory. The platform will be used to register and vaccinate every pregnant woman, record her delivery outcome, register every newborn and submit the report at their head office for action at their end. Tucked away in quaint corners of Rasulpur block lies the small village of Gopalpur in Jajpur district. This village has seen years of craft evoled on its lap. Years of legacy woven with music onto Tussar and Ghicha sarees with borders as ornate as the heritage they carry forward. The village has over 5,000 artisans and weavers.



WIN, which has served as the digital backbone for India's Covid-19 vaccination programme, was launched January 11 in 65 districts. The U-WIN is going to be the single source of information for immunisation services, updating vaccination status, delivery outcome, planning of RI sessions and reports like antigen-wise coverage, etc. There will be digital registrations of all pregnant women and newborns for individualised tracking for vaccination, reminders for upcoming doses and follow-up of dropouts. Healthcare workers and pro-

gramme managers will be able to generate real-time data of routine immunisation sessions and vaccination coverage for better planning and vaccine distribution, an official explained. For pregnant women and children, vaccine acknowledgement and immunisation card linked to ABHA ID (Ayushman Bharat Health Account) will be generated and all states and districts can access a common database to track and vaccinate beneficiaries. Besides, through the platform citizens can check nearby ongo-

ing routine immunisation sessions, and book appointments, the official told PTI. All states and UTs have been sensitised on U-WIN functionalities and objectives for the pilot in 65 districts and staff and healthcare workers have been trained on all modules of U-WIN. With this the entire vaccination system including records will get digitised, easing the tracking of beneficiaries. Vaccination records under UIP are being maintained manually as of now. So this will do away with the hassle of keeping a physical record. It will enable the digitisation of session planning, and updating vaccination status on a real-time basis. Beneficiaries would be able to book slots for vaccination in advance. Also, it will allow mobility. Once the whole immunisation programme is digitised, beneficiaries will get certificates on the spot and they can also download them if they want to. These certificates will be stored in digi-lockers, an official elaborated. An effective surveillance system will help create an evidence base to enable planning and deployment of effective interventions.

FOCUS SOCIETY

INEQUALITY AFFECTS ALL



A large number of unemployed adolescents will contribute to social tension. Hence the reduction of inequality requires the same attention and focus as the reduction of pollution. Because it affects all of us, and not only the poor

On the first day of the Davos summit in Switzerland this year, Oxfam International published a report titled "Survival of the Richest." The timing of the publication is deliberate, and Oxfam does this every year in January at the inaugural of the Davos meetings. This is done to gain maximum publicity, on the sidelines of a conference where the world's elite from the business and political world congregate. Reportedly, the participation fee per person this year was more than 120,000 dollars although it is never publicised. More than three thousand paying delegates attend, and many other speakers are also invited. The conference this year was held in the shadow of a looming recession which has been forecast by both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, for developed economies. There is also the long shadow of the war in Ukraine which has lasted for a year with no end in sight. The theme this year was "Cooperation in a Fragmented World." The fragmentation refers to the de-globalisation tendency due to trade wars, and now disruption due to the Ukraine conflict, and consequent inflation and recession.



Ajit Ranade

THE GAINS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH INCREASINGLY ARE CAPTURED BY A SMALLER FRACTION OF THE POPULATION

The other big fragmentation is the growing divide between the rich and the poor. The gains of economic growth increasingly are captured by a smaller fraction of the population. The Oxfam report this year highlights the trends in inequality and poverty all around the world. This year's report shows that both poverty and inequality have worsened. These two measures are different. The former measures how many people are getting two square meals a day or can meet minimum needs. The latter measures the gap between the rich and the poor. It is theoretically possible that a society may have negligible poverty, and yet have very high inequality. For a growing economy poverty tends to subside while inequality may increase. But usually there is some correlation. This year's Oxfam re-

port says that for the past two years the wealth of the top 1 per cent has increased by 26 trillion dollars, more than twice that of the bottom 99 per cent. Most of this wealth is presumably due to rise in the stock market and in housing. Income gains are substantially going to the very top. On the other hand, nearly 1.7 billion workers have seen their wages rise slower than the rate of inflation, which means their purchasing power has eroded. Thus, poverty has increased. Even the World Bank's 2022 report says that global poverty has increased from 8.4 per cent to 9.3 per cent. The WB uses the poverty level of 2.15 dollars a day. By the end of 2020, due to the pandemic an estimated 7 crore additional people were pushed below the poverty line, of which 5.6 crore are in India alone. India was mindful of the impact of the pandemic, especially on the poor, and hence ran a free food programme for two and a half years, which covered 81 crore people. That programme has been extended by one more year, implying the continuing need to protect the poor and ensure food security, in the light of high food inflation. What about inequality? Oxfam

has published a special report focused on India. It says that during 2022 the number of billionaires rose from 102 to 166. The wealth of the richest 100 Indians is now about 660 billion dollars or about 55 lakh crores. Two third of the wealth gains in the past two years have gone to the top 1 per cent globally. A similar trend is evident in India. This means that wealth and income inequality is getting worse. If you think in terms of education access, the UNICEF last year reported that more than 600 million children remained affected by partial or full school closure, even at the end of two years of the pandemic. As late as September last year the estimate was 244 million still out of school as per UNESCO. In India too probably 100 million plus students have had a setback in their education thanks to school closure or inadequate access to online tools, bandwidth or infrastructure. To rebuild this human capital will take a lot of effort while a tiny section of Indian society will see their kids move faster ahead. So apart from income and wealth, in education access and attainment too we are seeing widening disparity. Add to that, other elements like

healthcare, safe drinking water, and other dimensions. You can see that inequality is not getting better but worse.

Society can never have complete equality. Economic growth rewards those who are more talented and more entrepreneurial. Faster growth widens that gap. But at some stage we have to pause and ask, how much inequality is acceptable to us as a society. Just like the modern industrial age will always have pollution, thanks to electricity, transportation and construction, but we also put curbs on pollution. As a society we have imposed requirements to switch to cleaner energy. New emission norms for cleaner cars. Scrubbers in factory chimneys to reduce noxious fumes. So, also at some point we must say this much inequality and no more. Otherwise, we have to contend with social instability, increasing law and order problems, investor nervousness, and eventually slowing or stagnant growth. It will be a nightmare for all of us. A large number of unemployed adolescents will contribute to social tension. Hence the reduction of inequality requires the same attention and focus as the reduction of pollution. Because it affects all of us, and not only the poor.

As we celebrate the seventy fourth Republic Day, let's remember the foundational values of fraternity, liberty and equality. That equality is in the economic, social and political sphere. As prophetically warned by Dr. Ambedkar in a historic speech on November 25, 1949, if we ignore the peril of increasing inequality in Indian society, then "those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which... (we have) ... so laboriously built up." His prophetic words were uttered twenty years before the first instance of Naxalbari violence. It is a warning we must heed today with greater urgency.

The writer is a noted economist.
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In concentration and silence we must gather strength for the right action.

THE MOTHER



BBC Vs Modi

The Indian government seems perplexed when it blocked the airing of a BBC documentary which has questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership as Chief Minister during the 2002 Gujarat riots. The step was taken only a few days before the country celebrates 26 January as Republic Day marking the triumph of democracy. It puts the country's credentials as a liberal democracy under a scanner in the comity of nations. The blocking means even sharing of any clips of the two-part series via social media is barred. Only autocratic regimes resort to such suppression of facts and journalistic probe into alleged crimes by ruling dispensations or supreme leaders.

Undoubtedly, BBC is no impartial news source but the response by the Indian government looks frantic. The main argument being put forward by the support lobby on social media for this frenzied blocking is that since the Supreme Court had given a clean chit to Modi, this documentary is motivated and ill intentioned. This same lobby, it may be reminded, constantly hammers away at the same Supreme Court of India whenever a judgement seems unfavorable to the Right wingers. To top this, a Gogoi or a Bobde type character is enough to besmirch any law Court.

The documentary is a critical appraisal of the role Narendra Modi played as Chief Minister of Gujarat in the deadly 2002 riots in his state. Multiple YouTube videos of the first episode of the BBC documentary - India: The Modi Question -, and more than 50 tweets with links to the YouTube videos were ordered to be taken down. The content was blocked using the emergency powers under the IT Rules, 2021.

The first of the two-part series documentary, aired on 17 January, traces Modi's early years as a politician and his rise through the ranks of the BJP. During Modi's Chief Ministerial tenure in 2002 Gujarat was gripped by communal riots that left more than 1,000 people dead - most of them Moslems. The violence erupted after a train - Sabarmati Express - carrying Hindu pilgrims caught fire at Godhra station, killing 59. The documentary revealed for the first time a British government report into the deadly 2002 religious riots. The UK report said the events had "all the hallmarks of an ethnic cleansing," the documentary showed.

Most prominent among those interviewed in the documentary is Jack Straw, who was the UK's foreign secretary at the time of the violence. He said during the interview the allegations against Modi undermined his reputation. "These were very serious claims - that Chief Minister Modi had played a pretty active part in pulling back the police and in tacitly encouraging the Hindu extremists. That was a particularly egregious example," Straw said. The most damning piece of disclosure, hitherto unheard of, is that the British government began an inquiry into the orgy of violence and sent a team to Gujarat to find out for themselves what had happened. According to Straw the team produced "a very thorough report."

The report also claimed there was widespread rape of Moslem women during the 2002 violence. It added that the riots' objective was to "purge Moslems from Hindu areas." The narrative is in tune with what critics of the BJP say about the saffron brigade's bigoted nationalist agenda. The British government slapped a boycott on Modi in the aftermath of the pogrom and ended it 10 years later in 2013.

The documentary was not made available in India, but it was uploaded on several YouTube channels and shared widely on Twitter. The second episode will be aired on 24 January.

In a knee-jerk reaction, India's Ministry of External Affairs dismissed the documentary as a propaganda piece.

Its spokesperson Arindam Bagchi even wondered what purpose it would serve and imputed some hidden agenda to the broadcaster. The government appears to have been rattled by the thoroughness of the reportage as it eventually banned it after having pompously said that it did not "wish to dignify such efforts."

The BBC in turn stuck to its claim that the documentary was rigorously researched according to the highest editorial standards. "We offered the Indian Government a right to reply to the matters raised in the series - it declined to respond," a statement issued by the broadcaster said.

The question is if the government is so sure of what it claims falsehood dished out in the documentary, why did it not let the people see the video and decide for themselves. This is how democracy functions. Some government apologists have argued the Opposition and government critics are betraying a colonial mindset by putting more faith in a foreign media than in the country's apex court which has exonerated Modi of the charges.

The fact is people's faith in the judiciary has taken a beating in recent times for controversial pro-government judgements. Shackling the media that the government cannot make pliant does not help the cause of democracy. Also, the same brigade was observed dancing on the streets when Rishi Sunak became Prime Minister of UK. Wonder if they would do the same now!

WISDOM CORNER

Who are we? We find that we live on an insignificant planet of a humdrum star lost in a galaxy tucked away in some forgotten corner of a universe in which there are far more galaxies than people. CARL SAGAN

By three methods we may learn wisdom: first, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest. CONFUCIUS

When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive - to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love. MARCUS AURELIUS

WORDSWORTH

Feghoot

A feghoot is a brief story, usually in a science-fiction setting, whose punchline is an elaborate pun. The canonical feghoots feature the eponymous Ferdinand Feghoot, a member of the Society for the Aesthetic Re-Arrangement of History. Beginning in 1956, a Russian-born American author, Reginald Bretnor, created more than eighty of them under the anagrammatic pseudonym of Grendel Briarton. They are collectively known as Through Time and Space with Ferdinand Feghoot and always end with Feghoot solving some tricky problem by way of some of the most atrocious puns ever committed to paper. The late Anthony Boucher remarked: A true Feghoot not only culminates in a pun of singular beauty and terror; it is, even before that point, an entertainingly absurd episode of a possible history (Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Apr. 1973). One concerned poaching of cock pheasants at Balmoral. Gillie John Brown discovered they were being shot by the Lord Chief Justice of Scotland, who would hide them in a hole in the wall before coming up to the house to pay his respects to Queen Victoria. Clearly, it was impossible to treat him as a common criminal and drag him to court for poaching, so Feghoot suggested that he be charged instead with male pheasants in orifice. The stories appeared in several science-fiction magazines and are famous in SF circles. They have been affectionately imitated by other writers, including Spider Robinson. Many feghoot-like tall tales were created by Frank Muir and Denis Norden in the BBC radio programme My Word; my favourite punchline of theirs (I think it's theirs) is "The squaw on the hippopotamus equals the sons of the squaws on the other two hides."

SPECTRUM HIGHER EDUCATION

The crisis in our universities

The recent decision of the Indian government to allow the operation of foreign university campuses in India has been heralded as nothing less than revolutionary and game-changing by supporters. The Prime Minister himself has claimed that this step is bound to stop "brain drain" as it will allow students to pursue higher education of international standards while raising the competitiveness of Indian educational institutions.



Anwesh Satpathy

INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON ATTRACTING FOREIGN INSTITUTES, WE MUST IMPROVE OUR OWN

A cursory look at the state of educational institutions around the world disproves this claim conclusively. Why is it, for instance, that Harvard or Brown University do not have any overseas campuses of note? The question here is not whether a university has resources or the permissibility to set up an institution abroad but whether it wants to. The government seems to think universities can be replicated in a franchise model a la McDonalds. Let us assume for a moment, against all available evidence, that this is possible. What incentives will the government of India provide to such private foreign universities? To maintain the same standard of research as its original campus, a foreign university will have to be considerably expensive. By its very nature, a university of highest stature has

to focus on both research as well as teaching. This necessarily requires surplus. Will the government be ridiculous enough to subsidise foreign universities as opposed to Indian ones in order to make them more affordable? In that case, we will see education become even more exclusive.

There is no reason why top academics who could get a job at Oxbridge will move to India. What is India offering that Cambridge isn't? Certainly not better living standards, salary or academic freedom. A plausible reason, apart from sentimentality in exceptional cases, could be that the said academic's work and research focuses on India. This seems to hold true for the Belgian-born developmental economist Jean Dreze. Does this not limit the international exposure and scope that students applying to abroad might expect?

The diagnosis of the problem by the government is fairly accurate. We have too few quality universities and too many students. As Pratap Bhanu Mehta recently pointed out, UGC's solution to this is not only untenable but is grossly discriminatory against Indian institutes, both public and private. Not long ago, we were promised considerable improvement of higher education vis a vis the Institute of Eminence (IoE) tag.

Years later, it remains only a means of fake braggadocio.

In the last two decades, many promising private universities including Ashoka, Jindal and Krea, have cropped up offering liberal arts education. While they're yet to compete with top international universities in terms of research, their achievements in a short span of time have been impressive. Nevertheless, they remain islands of exclusivity accessible only to middle class and elites for the most part. The same can be said for many private engineering and medical colleges.

This is especially glaring because the National Education Policy (NEP) explicitly seeks to provide "premium education" at "affordable costs" while proposing a solution that exacerbates the problem manifold. Education at premium foreign institutes is fifty times more costly than Indian private ones. Instead of focusing on attracting foreign institutes, we must improve our own.

First, academic freedom in both public and private institutions is limited and highly regulated. A more liberal approach is bound to produce diverse modes of learning as well as teaching. Innovative research can only be produced when academics are incentivised, not punished and often literally jailed, for treading on unpopular grounds.

Second, incentives must be provided for private initiatives to create good universities while the quality as well as quantity of public universities needs to be drastically increased. The problem we face is not the complete lack of quality institutes but its scarcity. That public institutes like IITs, IIMs and JNU are quite good is not in dispute. However, we have too few of them. Equitable education, which the NEP emphasises upon, means making good higher education accessible to the marginalised. Everyone may not deserve the same grades but everyone deserves top quality education. This will ensure that we equip a large number of people with useful skills and thus maximise our human potential.

India has the potential to become a hub of higher education for developing countries with affordable budget. We have the ability to attract foreign students and produce original research of considerable value. Indeed, organisations like ISRO have already paved the path for conducting research of value without high budget. However, we can only resolve the crisis in education when we focus and work on improving our own institutes.

The writer is an author, blogger and a student at Jindal School of International Affairs.

Gun culture

Sir, The killing of 10 people by a trigger-happy gunman at a Chinese lunar new year celebration in Southern California's Monterey Park is alarming. This crime is the fifth mass killing incident in the US this month. Police are hot on the heels of the killer on the run and are probing whether it was a hate crime. The gunman, who shot indiscriminately with a semiautomatic weapon, injured ten others, some of them critically. The Monterey Park killings also marked the deadliest since May 24, 2022, when 21 people perished in a school shooting in Uvalde. US authorities would do well to re-vamp the archaic gun laws to prevent such incidents. NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Annoying habits

Sir, The Indian Railways sets certain guidelines for train passengers. Speaking in a loud and irritable voice when others are ready to sleep is one annoying habit of some people. A few travellers revel in keeping the lights glowing as long as they wish. After 10 pm, main lights, except the room lamps, are expected to be shut off. However, no amount of protests by fellow passengers can dissuade the trouble mongers. Another huge roadblock to a deep sleep are transit passengers many of who barge into the bogies with all types of noise. While the Railways has recently come out with stringent steps to end the loud voice and late-night light menace, it is silent on the nuisance value of passengers boarding the trains in between. Strict implementation of the Section 145(6) of the Indian Railway Act, 1989 that deals with annoying or irritating passengers should do a world of good to travellers. The Railways should ask its staff on duty to swiftly act on oral complaints of the passengers regarding the unruly co-passengers. A spot fine is not a bad idea. Similarly, the staff members should be strictly told to go about their task in a peaceful way without disturbing the passengers. Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Writing pleasure

Sir, Francis Bacon said: "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man." When writing you hold the thought in your mind for a longer time than typing on a computer or mobile phone. Writing with pen is meditation in itself and therapeutic. Hand written letters are a treasure like the one from Mahatma Gandhi to Hitler. TS Karthik, CHENNAI

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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national

of the day quote

Rahulji, what has happened to you? You want to gain power by creating hatred. Power cannot be achieved by creating hatred, it can be done only by earning the public's trust and love

First of all, we condemn the terror attacks in Dhangri in Rajouri and Narwal in Jammu. The situation in J&K is not what is being propagated after the abrogation of Article 370. Targeted and selective killings and bomb blasts have started once again

The events arranged for 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence will remain etched in the minds of people, as the country keeps marching ahead towards the centenary year of its freedom

SHORT TAKES

SpiceJet offloads unruly passenger

New Delhi: SpiceJet Monday offloaded a passenger from a Hyderabad-bound aircraft for unruly behaviour at the Delhi airport. The incident happened onboard a SpiceJet wet-leased Corendon aircraft that was scheduled to operate SG-8133 flight from Delhi to Hyderabad. "During boarding at Delhi, one passenger behaved in an unruly and inappropriate manner, harassing and causing disturbance to cabin crew. The crew informed PIC (Pilot in Command) and security staff of the same. The said passenger and a co-passenger, who were travelling together, were offloaded and handed over to the security team," the airline said in a statement.

Tribal woman beaten up

Modasa (Gujarat): A tribal woman was allegedly beaten up after being forced to undress by her family members who branded her as a 'witch'. A video of the incident has surfaced in areas of Aravalli district and North Gujarat. According to locals, this video clip is of Gadhia Village, the woman is pulled out of her house by some women and men from her family who force her to undress and then beat her. In the video, they call the victim a 'witch' and ask her to leave the house and village.

NCP MLA joins Congress

Shillong: In the run up to the February 27 Assembly elections, shifting of loyalty of MLAs continued in Meghalaya with lone Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) legislator on Monday quitting the Assembly and the party before joining opposition Congress. So far, 19 Meghalaya MLAs have resigned from the Assembly and their respective parties and joined different other parties in around two months.

SC junks plea against UP CM

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Monday dismissed a plea seeking direction for registering of a case against Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for an alleged objectionable speech during an election campaign in Rajasthan's Alwar in 2018. A bench of Justices B R Gavai and Vikram Nath said it was not inclined to interfere in the matter. "Such litigations are only for page 1 (of newspapers). Dismissed," the bench said.



Netaji had constituted the Planning Commission to outline the future of the country. But today it's our ill luck that we have no planning. The Planning Commission has been scrapped. Can you tell me why? If someone has any idea, I will request him/her to explain the reason to me as I am not that intelligent

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

DRONES BANNED

Ahead of the Republic Day, the Delhi police Monday banned the flying of sub-conventional aerial vehicles over the national capital for security and safety reasons



Maha Governor Koshyari offers to quit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 23: Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, who has been in the line of Opposition fire over his remarks on Chhatrapati Shivaji, Monday said he has expressed desire before Prime minister Narendra Modi to quit the post.

The former Uttarakhand chief minister said he would like to spend the remainder of his life in reading, writing and other activities. "During the recent visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister to Mumbai, I have conveyed to him my desire to be discharged of all political responsibilities and to spend the remainder of my life in reading, writing and other activities.

"I have always received the love and affection from the Hon'ble Prime Minister and I hope to receive the same in this regard," a statement from the Raj Bhavan said. PM Modi was in Mumbai on January 19 to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for several infrastructure projects.

"It was an absolute honour and



It was an absolute honour and privilege for me to serve as the Raja Sevak or Rajyapal of a great state like Maharashtra, the land of saints, social reformers and valiant fighters

BHAGAT SINGH KOSHYARI | MAHARASHTRA GOVERNOR

privilege for me to serve as the Raja Sevak or Rajyapal of a great state like Maharashtra, the land of saints, social reformers and valiant fighters," Koshyari added. Koshyari, 81, took charge as the Maharashtra governor in September 2019.

When the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi was in power, he had several run-ins with the government on a range of issues including the appointment of 12 members to the state legislative council from the gubernatorial

quota, which he never approved. The MVA had accused him of acting in a partisan manner.

The latest controversy surrounding Koshyari was about his remarks on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj whom he described as the "icon of olden times". The remarks triggered protests from the Opposition parties demanding that he be sacked.

Following the row, Koshyari wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah stating he would never

LG owes KPs an apology: Rahul



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi offers prayers at the Raghunath temple, during the party's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', in Jammu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Jan 23: Alleging that Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) are facing injustice at the hands of the government, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Monday asked Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to apologise to the community for telling the prime minister's package employees that they should not seek alms.

Rahul Gandhi made the statement shortly after a Kashmiri Pandit delegation called on him during his Bharat Jodo Yatra in Samba district earlier in the day and briefed him about their various issues including "targeted killings" by terrorists and the resultant protest by those employed under the prime minister's package.

"Injustice is being meted to Kashmir Pandits by this government...This morning, a delegation of Kashmiri Pandits met me and briefed me about their issues. I was surprised to know that their delegation was told by the lieutenant governor that they should not seek alms," Gandhi told a gathering at the end of the day's yatra at Satwari here.

Rahul Gandhi said he wants to tell the Lieutenant Governor that they are not demanding alms but are seeking their rights. "You (LG) should seek forgiveness from them

(Pandits)," he said. Earlier, social activist Amit Koul, who was part of the delegation, said they have invited Rahul Gandhi to their Jagti township along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway and that he is likely to visit the community on his way to Kashmir.

"We had a very good interaction with Rahul Gandhi and we briefed him about the issues of the community, especially the prime minister's package employees who were provided jobs by the previous UPA government led by Manmohan Singh. They are on protest over the past six months in Jammu and their salaries have been withheld," Koul said after meeting Rahul Gandhi.

Nearly 4,000 Kashmiri Pandits are working in different departments in Kashmir Valley after their selection under the prime minister's employment package announced in 2008. The package has two major components - 6,000 jobs for the youth from the community and building as many accommodation units for the recruited employees. However, many of the employees fled to Jammu after one of their colleagues, Rahul Bhat, was shot dead by terrorists inside his office in Budgam district on May 12 last year in what was described as a case of targeted killing.

All not well in Ladakh: Wangchuk

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Jan 23: The man who inspired Bollywood's super hit movie, '3 Idiots' that motivated millions of his fellow countrymen to think positive and say 'All is Well', is distraught with the damage being caused to the fragile environment of his native place, Ladakh. Sonam Wangchuk, Magsaysay award winner, motivational speaker, engineer, innovator and education reformist recently posted a video message to Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying 'All is not well with Ladakh'.

In the video clip, Wangchuk makes a strong case for inclusion of Ladakh in the 6th schedule urging Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah to take part in the talks regarding the union territory's future.

He also said that he would hold a symbolic fast from January 26, Republic Day, for five days to raise the issue further and "not from the comfort of a shelter but out in the winter chills". Wangchuk praised PM Modi for banning 'single use



plastic'. The motivational speaker supports the protests for inclusion of the region in the 6th schedule saying, "Ladakh has nearly 95 per cent of tribal population while the Constitution seeks 50 per cent of tribal population in an area for applicability of 6th Schedule. Anticipations were being made that Ladakh would soon be included. Minister Arjun Munda had also given assurances." He calls the desire of the people of Ladakh to be included in the 6th schedule as "Ladakh ke Mann ki Baat".

In the video clip, he also talks about the 2020 Ladakh Hill Council polls that were won by the BJP

In the video clip, Wangchuk makes a strong case for inclusion of Ladakh in the 6th schedule urging Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah to take part in the talks regarding the Union Territory's future

and the scrapping of Article 370 in 2019, which led to the formation of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir as two separate union territories. "People of Ladakh are stunned that the government that answered its 70-year-old demand for a union territory has not been heeding this demand," he says, adding his concerns about the likelihood of businesses expanding in the union territory which is set to further increase burden on limited resources, including water.

Assam invokes POCSO for marrying under-14 girls



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Jan 23: The Assam Cabinet Monday decided to book men who marry girls below 14 years in the state under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

Assam has a "high" rate of maternal and infant mortality and the primary cause for that is child marriage, the CM said. "We have decided to make the campaign against child marriage a priority in governance and we hope to end it in the next five years", Sarma said at a press conference after the Cabinet meeting. "The state has an average of 31 per cent marriages in the "prohibited age", Sarma said.

POCSO Act of 2012 defines a child as an individual under the age of 18 and it criminalises sex between an under-age child and an adult. A husband cannot "touch" his wife if she is below the age of 14 as this amounts to sexual offence and the male partner is liable to be sentenced to life imprisonment under POCSO Act in Assam, Sarma said.

Asked about the legal action if both partners are below the age of 14, the chief minister said that in that case the marriage will be declared illegal and the boy will be sent to a juvenile home as minors cannot be tried in court.

Those marrying girls in the age group of 14-18, will be tried under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, and necessary steps will be taken against them under this law, he said. The police have been directed to conduct a massive crackdown against child marriage, carry out an awareness campaign against the problem, and take legal action against those who are violating norms in this regard, the Chief Minister said.



Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar during the commissioning ceremony of the fifth Kalvari-class submarine 'INS Vagir' into the Indian Navy, at the Naval dockyard in Mumbai

PM names 21 islands in Andamans after PVC awardees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Port Blair, Jan 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday virtually unveiled the model of a proposed memorial dedicated to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, to be set up in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and said it will infuse feelings of patriotism among people.

Modi, on the occasion of Netaji's 126th birth anniversary, also named 21 islands of the Union Territory after Param Vir Chakra (PVC) awardees. "Today, it is a proud moment for me as I address the people of Andamans because this is the land, where Subhas Chandra Bose unfurled the national flag for the first time in 1943," the prime minister said.

The freedom fighter had hoisted the Tricolour in the archipelago on



December 30, 1943. PM Modi noted that the islands, named after famous soldiers, including Major Somnath Sharma, Lt. Colonel (then Major) Dhan Singh Thapa, Subedar Joginder Singh, Major Shaitan Singh, Company Quartermaster Havildar Abdul Hamid, 2nd Lt. Arun Khetrapal and Flying Officer

Nirmaljit Singh Sekhon, will be a source of inspiration for generations to come.

"It gives me immense pleasure to announce the naming of 21 islands after Param Vir Chakra awardees and to inaugurate the model of a proposed memorial at Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Island

(previously known as Ross Island). "One should see the naming of 21 islands as 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' and the memorial will infuse feelings of patriotism in the hearts of people," he said.

Modi also mentioned that islands named earlier in the day after Param Vir Chakra awardees "will be the land of inspiration for generations to come". The prime minister said that attempts were made to "downplay" Netaji's contribution to the freedom movement, but the entire country, right from Delhi and Bengal to Andaman and Nicobar Islands, is paying tribute to the great hero today, preserving history and heritage associated with him.

"Attempt was made to suppress Netaji's contribution towards freedom struggle, but the entire na-

tion is remembering him today. Netaji will be remembered for his fierce resistance to the colonial rule. I am deeply influenced by his thoughts," PM Modi said. He also pointed out that demands to make Netaji's files public were made by many for long, and it was his government which eventually declassified the files. "There were demands to make Netaji's secret files public and we did so while respecting his sacrifice for the country," PM Modi said.

The proposed memorial whose model the prime minister inaugurated during the day will be set up on Ross Island, which had been renamed as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep in 2018. Neil Island and Havelock Island were also rechristened as Shaheed Dweep and Swaraj Dweep.

Informed consent must for Aadhaar authentication

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: Entities are required to obtain residents' informed consent either on paper or electronically before carrying out Aadhaar authentications, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) said in its new guidelines for Requesting Entities (REs).

UIDAI has urged Requesting Entities, which carry out online authentications, to ensure that residents understand the type of data being collected and the purpose of Aadhaar authentications, according to a release.

UIDAI, as part of these norms, has outlined that REs are required to obtain residents' informed consent before conducting Aadhaar authentication. Further, it has pointed out that logs of authentication transactions including the consent taken, have to be kept only for the period as prescribed in the regulations.

"And purging of such logs after expiry of the said time period shall also be done as per the Aadhaar Act and its regulations," the UIDAI release added. Requesting Entities are engaged in providing Aadhaar authentication services to residents. They are responsible for submitting the Aadhaar number and demographic/ biometric OTP information to the Central Identities Data Repository for the purpose of authentication.

UIDAI also said REs should be courteous to residents and assure them about the security and confidentiality of the Aadhaar numbers, which are being used for authentication transactions. It has also urged such entities to immediately report to the UIDAI any suspicious activity around authentications like suspected impersonation by residents, or any compromise or fraud by any authentication operator.

CLIMATE CHANGE THREAT

'Punjab's cotton, maize yield to dip by 11-13% by 2050'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: Climate change is predicted to reduce maize and cotton yield in Punjab by 13 per cent and 11 per cent by 2050, according to a new study conducted by agriculture economists and scientists at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU).

The study published in the Mousam journal of the India Meteorological Department earlier this month used rainfall and temperature data collected between 1986 and 2020 to project the impact of climate change on five major crops - rice, maize, cotton, wheat, and potato - in the agrarian state.

The researchers collected climate data from five weather observatories of Punjab Agricultural University ie Ludhiana, Patiala, Faridkot, Bathinda, and SBS Nagar. The researchers - agricultural economist Sunny Kumar, scientist Baljinder Kaur Sidana and PhD scholar Smily Thakur - said that long-term changes in climatic variables show that the rise in temperature is driving most of the changes, rather than the change in rainfall pattern.

"One of the most intriguing findings is that changes in minimum temperature have resulted in changes in mean temperature throughout all growing seasons.

It means that the minimum temperature has shown a rising trend," the report said. A rise in minimum temperature is harmful to the yield of rice, maize, and cotton. On the contrary, excess minimum temperature is beneficial for potato and wheat yield, it noted.

"The climate impacts on crops will vary widely in kharif and rabi seasons. Among the kharif crops, maize yield is the most responsive to temperature and rainfall than rice and cotton. By the year 2050, maize yield would reduce by 13 per cent followed by cotton (about 11 per cent) and rice (about 1 per cent)," the report read. The negative impact would accumulate by 2080. The yield loss will increase from 13 to 24 per cent for maize, from 11 per cent to 24 per cent for cotton, and from 1 per cent to 2 per cent for rice, respectively.

"The yield response of wheat and potato would be pretty much the same for the year 2050. By the year 2080, with a significant change in climate, the yield of wheat and potato will be higher by around 1 per cent each," it said. "Our results indicate that productivity decreases with an increase in average temperature in most of the crops. The adverse impact of climate change on agricultural production indicates a food security threat to the farming community," the researchers said.

Punjab accounts for around 12 per cent of the total cereals produced in the country



A Siberian Weasel is seen standing on a meadow in Poonch, Jammu and Kashmir

PTI PHOTO

TABLEAU ROW

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Jan 23: Punjab's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and opposition Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) Monday targeted the BJP-led central government for "rejecting" the state's tableau for the Republic Day parade.

Punjab's Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema, who is a senior AAP leader, said that Punjab's tableau always finds a place in events like the Republic Day parade, through which the state presents its rich history and culture and the development it has made over the years.

He said, this time Punjab through its tableau, was to present the history related to sacrifices made by Punjabis in the country's freedom struggle. "But Centre deliberately stopped (the state) from presenting this (at the R-Day parade)," he said when asked about Punjab's tableau not finding a place in the parade this year.

"Centre is discriminating with Punjab and with AAP governments

AAP, SAD target Centre



in Punjab and Delhi." Cheema told reporters in Mohali. SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal also targeted the Centre over the matter.

"Shocked to learn GOI has rejected Punjab's tableau for 74th R-Day Parade. That means we aren't

allowed to showcase our culture & contribution to the freedom struggle! Urging GOI to review its decision, I also appeal to Pb CM @BhagwantMann to wake up & take up this forcefully with GOI," Badal tweeted.

Shocked to learn GOI has rejected Punjab's tableau for 74th R-Day Parade. That means we aren't allowed to showcase our culture & contribution to the freedom struggle! Urging GOI to review its decision, I also appeal to Pb CM @BhagwantMann to wake up & take up this forcefully with GOI

SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL | SAD PRESIDENT

Senior SAD leader Daljit Singh Cheema said that Punjab's tableau not being included in the Republic Day parade is totally unjustified and needs to be reviewed.

Cheema also tweeted on the issue, saying "Punjab is the sword arm of the country. It has a rich heritage, culture and great history. It has immense contributions towards the food needs of the country."

J&K launches ₹879 crore Food Processing Project

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jammu, Jan 23: The Jammu and Kashmir government has launched an ambitious project targeted to revolutionise the food processing sector and transform the lives of farmers in the UT.

The "UT Level Food Processing Programme for Development of Clusters for Specific Products of J&K" is a Rs 879.75 crore initiative that aims to maximise farmer income and minimise post-harvest losses, an official statement said Sunday.

"This comprehensive project has been designed to increase the competitiveness of seven identified products across categories in terms of cost, quality, branding, and sustainability within five years. The government is investing in value addition, logistics, marketing and branding of various agricultural, horticultural and livestock products to achieve this goal," it said.

The project will focus on developing 17 districts in J&K with establishment of processing and marketing infrastructure, providing growth and development opportunities to stakeholders, and facilitating suitable economies of scale in production and post-harvest activities.



The government has allocated a budget of Rs 879.75 crore for the project including a grant-in-aid of Rs 293.25 crore (33.33 per cent) and a debt-equity of Rs 586.50 crore to be raised by entrepreneurs.

The project shall create 7030 direct jobs and lead to establishment of 34 enterprises with expected revenue generation to the tune of Rs 1,436.04 crore every year.

"UT Level Food Processing Programme for Development of Clusters for Specific Products of J&K" is one among the 29 projects, which were approved by the Jammu and Kashmir administration after being recommended by the UT Level Apex Committee for holistic development of Agriculture and allied sectors in UT of J&K.



Mann to dedicate 400 Aam Aadmi Clinics on Jan 27

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, Jan 23: With an aim to provide free and top-class treatment to people of Punjab, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will dedicate 400 Aam Aadmi Clinics (Mohalla Clinics) to the people January 27.

Earlier, he had inaugurated 100 Aam Aadmi clinics built in the first phase on August 15. Now after the completion of 400 new clinics, the total number of Aam Aadmi clinics in Punjab will be 500.

Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema and Health Minister Balbir Singh said the inauguration program would be held in Amritsar January 27. The Chief Minister will inaugurate the clinics, while AAP convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will attend the programme as the chief guest.

Cheema told the media it is a matter of great pride that the health revolution has started in Punjab within just a year of formation of the Aam Aadmi Party government.

Before the elections, Kejriwal had given a guarantee to the people of Punjab that to provide free treatment, Mohalla Clinics would be set up in Punjab if the government was formed. "Now our Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann is fulfilling all his promises and working assiduously to fulfill his dream of making the state again as Rangla Punjab," he said.



Tourists make beeline for snow-capped Gulmarg

AGENCIES

Gulmarg (J&K), Jan 23: A white carpet of otherwise green meadows greets tourists in Jammu and Kashmir's "mini Switzerland". The recent spells of snowfall in the Union Territory have brought the resort - at an altitude of 8,000 feet, 50 km north of the summer capital Srinagar - to life with the place brimming with visitors.

Soumya Srivastava, a tourist from Australia, could not resist but marvel, "I feel like I am in heaven. It is so awesome here."

The famous ski-resort here is a top draw for tourists from across the country and abroad with over 6,000 visiting on a daily basis. Srivastava said, "I am basically from Kathmandu, married to a Kashmiri man and currently living in Australia." The snow-capped mountains and white-carpet meadows form quite the backdrop for the resort, which also offers a wide range of winter activities such as skiing.

The last few years have been



good for the tourism sector in Kashmir - often poetically referred to as "paradise on Earth". The region witnessed booming tourism seasons, especially after countries reopened their borders in the aftermath of Covid-19.

According to the Union Territory government, last year was one of the best seasons for the tourism industry as the Valley witnessed a

record number of tourist arrivals. Gulmarg, especially in winter, is the most popular among the many places on Kashmir's tourist map. Tourist arrivals have spiked after the recent snowfall.

Mesmerised by the beauty of the resort, many tourists want to return. Srivastava, the tourist from Australia, said, "I would love for my friends to come here and see this

Cold wave intensifies

Srinagar: The minimum temperature dipped further across Kashmir due to clear skies with Gulmarg skiing resort recording a bone-chilling minus 9 degrees Celsius, officials said. The Sun has been playing hide and seek in Kashmir since Sunday afternoon following four days of rain and snow. In Srinagar, the minimum temperature settled at a low of minus 3.4 degrees Celsius, down from 1.0 degrees Saturday night. Qazigund, the gateway to the Valley, registered a low of minus 1.0 degrees Celsius.

snow. I am in love with Kashmir and would love to be back very soon." Gulmarg is the only place in the country where one can see so much snow, said another tourist.

The snowfall brings cheer and joy to the place and, as far as the economics is concerned, it brings good activity, said Arif Ahmad, another tourism sector player.

Crackdown on synthetic kite strings

AGENCIES

Chandigarh, Jan 23: The Punjab Police is cracking down on the sale of banned 'Chinese manjha' following a spate of unfortunate incidents during kite flying competitions in the state that left people especially children grievously injured.

A few days back, a four-year-old boy received more than 100 stitches on his face after 'China dor', as it is popularly known in Punjab, got entangled around his neck and caused deep cuts near Samrala, in Ludhiana district.

It happened as the kid rolled down the window pane of the car he was travelling in and stuck his head out to see kites being flown. He had to be hospitalised in Ludhiana.

An Amritsar-based activist, Kirpal Singh Pali, who is among the prominent voices against "China dor" or "Chinese manjha", claimed it is supplied to the state from Noida and then distributed from Ludhiana and Jalandhar. In Amritsar, a 28-year-old man suf-

255 ARRESTED

Punjab police have arrested 255 people in the last one month for allegedly selling banned "Chinese manjha" or synthetic kite strings. The state police is cracking down on the sale of banned 'Chinese manjha' following a spate of unfortunate incidents during kite flying competitions. Giving details on action taken during past one month against sellers trading in the banned "Chinese manjha", Inspector General of Police (Headquarters) Sukhchain Singh Gill said

Monday that police teams have recovered 11,364 "Chinese dor bundles (kite strings)" after registering 234 First Information Reports (FIRs) and arresting 255 people who indulged in selling this fatal kite flying string.

ferred a deep cut around his neck four days ago because of Chinese string and had to get 20 stitches.

Rahul's look-alike becomes attraction of BJY in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Jan 23: Donning a white T-shirt, Rahul Gandhi's look-alike Faisal Chaudhary has become an attraction of the Bharat Jodo Yatra with people eager to get themselves clicked with him.

Faisal, who is a hit on social media, said people who are unable to meet Rahul Gandhi take pictures with him instead. Faisal is the most 'clicked' man after Gandhi in Bharat Jodo Yatra which is in its last leg.

His video clips and pictures have gone viral on social media where he can be seen marching along with other yatrins. "People come to me and take pictures and videos with me. I love it," said Faisal, who joined the yatra on January 5 from Baghat

at Uttar Pradesh-Delhi border. He said that it is people's love for Rahul Gandhi that they take pictures with him. "People love Rahul Ji. That is why they take pictures and videos with me, when they are unable to meet Rahul Ji," he said. "I feel lucky to be Rahul Ji's look-alike. As a party activist, my face resembles my top party leader's. But I will always be his activist," he added.

Faisal, who has a brown beard like Rahul Gandhi, is a resident of Sangat village of Meerat district and is a worker of the Congress party in Uttar Pradesh. Unlike hundreds of yatrins wearing jackets and sweaters, Faisal wore a white half-sleeved T-shirt like Gandhi.

"If Rahul ji can wear a T-shirt, why can't anyone else. I am wear-



In this image tweeted by Indian Youth Congress, Congress worker Faisal Chaudhary is seen with Rahul Gandhi. PHOTO CREDIT: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ing it. I have no problem", he said. Tearing into the remarks of the

BJP that the yatra will not get support from people of Jammu and

Faisal, who is a hit on social media, said people who are unable to meet Rahul Gandhi take pictures with him instead

Faisal is the most 'clicked' man after Gandhi in Bharat Jodo Yatra which is in its last leg

Kashmir, Faisal said, "People of J&K have wholeheartedly given love to Rahul Ji and support to this yatra. Thousands of people are out and throng the venues. We thank them".

Faisal opined that Rahul Gandhi will dismantle the walls of hatred and bring in a new atmosphere of love and harmony. "This yatra will be hundred percent successful. There will be a new dawn."

Another prominent supporter of the yatra, 88-year old Karuna Prasad Mishra, who joined it in October last year in Madhya Pradesh is an old warhorse of the Congress party and will continue to be part of the yatra. Earlier, Rahul Gandhi had acknowledged Mishra's appeal by solicitously putting a shawl around him during a concert in Jaipur to mark 100 days of the yatra December 16. The party has also put out several Twitter posts centred around Mishra.

"There is a need to bring back an atmosphere of harmony and brotherhood in the country. We pray for Rahul ji successful mission", Mishra said. The Bharat Jodo Yatra is slated to end on January 30 in Srinagar.



Some people consider it expenditure, but it is investment. I feel that you can construct four bridges less and four roads less, but we should provide best exposure and training to our teachers. They will groom students who will build roads and bridges in the future

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

SPECIAL OPERATION LAUNCHED

The Karnataka authorities Monday launched a special operation to track down and trap man-eater leopard and tiger in the Mysuru district. The big cats have attacked and killed two persons in different incidents



of the day quote

The Punjab government is mulling over the idea of setting up a film city in the state

Today there are a lot of problems before the people. The Congress will go to people on issues like corruption, unemployment, inflation, increasing crime and drug abuse

Modi has connected every Indian with the G20. There are 11 conferences related to G20 which will be held in Agra, Lucknow, Varanasi, and Gautambuddha Nagar

Digvijaya questions surgical strikes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu/New Delhi, Jan 23: Congress leader Digvijaya Singh Monday questioned the surgical strikes and accused the government of peddling lies, drawing furious reaction from the BJP which said the opposition party was blinded by its "hate" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and has "insulted" the armed forces.

Addressing a public meeting during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir, Singh alleged that the government did not agree to the CRPF request of flying its personnel from Srinagar to Delhi and 40 soldiers sacrificed their lives in Pulwama in 2019 to a terror attack.

"From where did the terrorists get 300 kg of RDX in Pulwama incident? DSP Davinder Singh was caught with terrorists but then why was he released? We also want to know about the friendship between the prime ministers of Pakistan and India." In his video message attached to the tweet, Singh said 40 CRPF personnel sacrificed their lives in Pulwama, but this government has not been able to reveal from where three quintals of RDX came.

"Besides, the government has not been able to answer where is DSP Davinder Singh, who was caught involved with terrorists. Why was he let free and why was a case of treason not registered against him? We would also like to know from the prime minister as to what kind of relations he has with Pakistani prime minister that both are praising each other. At least, he should answer these questions," the Congress leader said in

They talk of surgical strikes. They claim to have killed so many people but no proof is given. They are ruling by peddling a bundle of lies

DIGVIJAYA SINGH | CONGRESS LEADER

a video message. The BJP launched a sharp attack on the Congress, saying that such comments show that the Rahul Gandhi-led foot march across the country is Bharat Jodo Yatra only in name while he and his party colleagues are working to "break" the country. It is essentially "Bharat todo yatra", BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said.

He said, "India will not tolerate if they speak against armed forces. Rahul Gandhi and the Congress hate PM Modi but it seems they have been blinded by the hate to an extent that their dedication to the country has withered away." He said Congress leaders had raised questions about the surgical strikes soon after the Indian Air Force said it hit terror camps in Balakot in Pakistan in retaliation to the Pulwama terror attack.

"Gandhi and the Congress do not have trust in our brave armed forces. They repeatedly raise questions and insult the citizens of India and our armed forces," Bhatia claimed. He added that Congress leaders had tried to deflect attention from Pakistan after the terror attack as well. Randeep Singh Surjewala had then blamed "home-grown terrorism", he claimed, alleging that the opposition party tried to give a clean chit to Pakistan.

Pakistan is in a lot of pain when our armed forces strike terrorists, while in India it is the Congress which is in anguish, he said.

Uddhav ties up with Ambedkar's party



Now there are some bad practices in politics and to eradicate them, the inheritors of these two leaders, and people around them, have come together to protect the country's interest. We are coming together to ensure democracy is alive

UDDHAV THACKERAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 23: The Shiv Sena (UBT) and Prakash Ambedkar's Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi Monday announced an alliance ahead of civic polls in several cities in Maharashtra, the move coinciding with the birth anniversary of Shiv Sena founder late Bal Thackeray.

Addressing a joint press conference, Uddhav Thackeray said his grandfather Keshav Thackeray, also known as Prabodhankar Thackeray, and Prakash Ambedkar's grandfather, legendary social icon and jurist BR Ambedkar, were contemporaries who admired each other and worked to eradicate social evils and bad practices.

"Now there are some bad practices in politics and to eradicate them, the inheritors of these two leaders, and people around them, have come together to protect the country's interest. We are coming together to ensure democracy is alive," Thackeray said. Without

naming the Bharatiya Janata Party which is ruling in Maharashtra as well as at the Centre, Thackeray said the country is heading towards autocracy.

The terms of several municipal corporations, including those of Mumbai, Thane, Pune, and municipal councils ended last year but polls could not be held due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thackeray also dared the powers-that-be to hold Assembly polls in Maharashtra at the earliest.

The state is being ruled by a faction of the Sena that broke away in June last year and the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the Thackeray group has routinely called it a dispensation of "traitors".

Speaking about the alliance, Ambedkar said the coming together of the VBA and Shiv Sena (UBT) was the start of the 'politics of change'.

The move is seen as an attempt by Thackeray to consolidate support among Dalits ahead of the civic polls in the state.

KARNATAKA HIJAB BAN ROW

SC to consider setting up 3-judge bench

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: The Supreme Court Monday said it will consider setting up a three-judge bench to adjudicate the case related to the ban on wearing of Islamic head-covering hijab in Karnataka government schools following its split verdict.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices V Ramasubramanian and JB Pardiwala took note of the submissions of senior advocate Meenakshi Arora that an interim order was needed keeping in mind the practical examinations, scheduled for some classes from February 6 in the state.

"This is the headscarf matter...These girls moved out from the colleges where it (head scarf) was not allowed to them. They moved to private colleges. They have now lost one year. Now the examinations are to be held in the government colleges. Private colleges cannot hold the examinations. The practical (exams) will start on February 6. We are only praying that the matter can be taken up for interim order before that," the senior lawyer said.

"I will examine it. This is a three-judge bench matter. We will allot a date," the CJI said.

A two-judge bench of the apex court had on October 13 last year delivered opposing verdicts in the hijab controversy.

SHORT TAKES

IEDs recovered

Jammu: The security forces recovered two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in J&K's Rajouri district which were later defused. The IEDs were detected on Sunday. A police statement said on Monday, "On 22-01-2023 at 6 p.m. a joint search operation was launched by police, special operations group (SOG), 225 field Regiment of Army and CRPF 72 battalion at Dassal and its adjoining areas. During searches two IEDs were recovered. Later on IEDs were defused by Bomb Disposal Squad".

20 injured

Chennai: At least 20 passengers were injured when a state transport bus overturned and fell into a canal at Komangalam near Vriddachalam in Tamil Nadu's Cuddalore district on Monday, police said. The injured are admitted to Vriddachalam General hospital, where the condition of a few is stated to be serious. According to Vriddachalam police, bus driver Saravanan lost control after he tried to swerve to avoid hitting a minivan coming from the opposite direction, and the bus fell into a canal.

Three arrested

Hyderabad: Hyderabad police Monday arrested three persons for the brutal killing of a man, who was hacked to death in broad daylight in the city a day ago. Task Force personnel arrested Akash, Tiliu and Sonu who murdered Sainath, a resident of Esamia Bazar, on the Jiyaguda bypass road near Puranapul under Kulsumpura police station limits. On Monday, the police said that the accused and the 32-year-old deceased were friends.

Man killed

Chennai: The wild elephant menace continues in Tamil Nadu with now a wild tusker in the Nilgiris district trampling a person to death on Sunday morning. The deceased, identified as Shivanandhi, was on his way to work on a farm when he was attacked by the elephant.

Twitter account of AP DGP hacked

Amaravati: The Twitter account of Andhra Pradesh Director General of Police was hacked on Monday, and hackers posted an obscene photograph on it. Cyber crime police have registered a case and took up investigation. Deputy Inspector General P.H.D. Ramakrishna said that the account was created in 2019 and it was inoperative since February 2020. The account was hacked on Monday by some unknown persons, who posted an objectionable photograph on it.

SC junks CBI plea against bail to Anil

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 23: The Supreme Court Monday declined to entertain a plea by CBI challenging bail granted by the Bombay High Court to former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh regarding a corruption case in connection with alleged illegal gratification sought from bar owners and corruption in police transfers and postings in Maharashtra.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said, "No, we are not interfering. SLP is dismissed." The bench, also comprising justices V. Ramasubramanian and J.B. Pardiwala, noted that Deshmukh has been granted bail in the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) case in connection with the same set of transactions.



The CBI had moved the apex court challenging the high court order. The CBI contended that the high court failed to consider that socio-economic offences needed to be viewed differently and that the accused still holds considerable clout in the state.



Camel mounted contingent of Border Security Force marches past during the full dress rehearsal of the Republic Day Parade 2023, at Kartavya Path in New Delhi

CEC flags threat of 'deep fake narratives' to elections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar Monday flagged the disturbing trend of "deep fake narratives" to elections in India and abroad where "disruptive elements" attempt to alter public perception and mislead people by repetitively presenting fake as fact.

He said social media platforms ought to use their algorithm power

and artificial intelligence to detect deep fakes "proactively", especially in jurisdictions like India where electoral cycles are definite and well announced.

The CEC made these remarks at an international conference organised by the Election Commission here on the "Use of Technology and Elections Integrity".

Kumar, according to an EC statement, also raised concerns over



level-playing field not being in-built in platforms search results to

at least show officially verified versions with the same prominence as fake content.

"The CEC used enforcement agencies' analogy to put onus on social media platforms to detect deep fakes proactively. He said that it is difficult to imagine if the enforcement agencies say that they would not act unless crime is reported to them; intelligence prevention is not their responsibility," the statement said.

CRIME DOES NOT PAY BUT THE CRIMINAL DOES!

Crime does not pay but the criminal does! So it was that the currency capers of conniving cops became the flavour of the season, this last week in Gujarat.

On December 12, 2022, Bharat alias Bobby Patel alleged by the cops to be the notorious kingpin of an international illegal immigration racket operating out of Gujarat was nabbed by law enforcement agencies in Ahmedabad. The arrest came ten months after an FIR was filed against him when a Gujarati family froze to death while trying to make an illegal crossing into the US from Canada. The State Monitoring Cell (SMC), a watchdog body which functions under the direct charge of the state police chief took credit for it though a thick fat dossier on his criminal activities was handed over to the Indian authorities by their counterpart agencies abroad as was a tip on his movement. Ninety four passports including five fake ones were learnt to have been seized from

his office. Two of the happiest hunting grounds for the illegal immigration racket operating out of India are Gujarat and Punjab and Bobby is alleged to be a part of the global network. Three weeks later, he was out on bail having denied any wrongdoing in court.

However Bobby Patel is not the subject of this writing, the Gujarat police is. Over a month later, on January 18, the Home department of the Gujarat government announced the suspension of an inspector of the SMC, accused of taking bribes in the case wherein the racket kingpin figured. The official explanation was that complaints had been received and the evidence gathered suggested monetary involvement to favour Bobby and so the action. Though there was no mention of the amount involved, a published media report put it in crores. That the home ministry came into the picture attests to the seriousness of the matter and also that the axis of information necessitating



action lies outside the state. The inspector came into the ambit of suspicion after it was known that despite not being connected to the case he had a 2-hour long meeting with Bobby at a city police station. Highly placed sources aver to the fact that the suspected involvement of some ruling party politicians in the effort to intercede in the illegal immigration case has piqued the PMO which saw red and directed the national party top brass to seek a detailed report from Gujarat.

The SMC is considered an elite set-up which has over-riding statewide jurisdiction to conduct raids in connection with liquor and allied offences. Now the en-

tire SMC is in the cross-hairs of suspicion. Moreover it has come into controversy at a time when the present Director General of Police, Ashish Bhatia to which it reports and who has already been given two extensions is slated to retire at the end of the month and a choice of his successor is underway in the union home ministry.

Now comes news that the elite watchdog of the Gujarat police, the State Monitoring Cell was itself under watch! The siege within was masterminded by its own-two constables of the Bharuch district Local Crime Branch. The cops had been provided a cellphone that provided them access to the SMC network so that they may keep them informed of bootlegging operations to facilitate raids. Instead, the SMC claims, that the suspended cops used the communication instrument to keep tabs on the movement of SMC officers and men and tipped off the bootleggers on the impending raids for financial considerations. This

had been going on for some months but suspicion was roused when the SMC raids began proving a damp squib leading to an internal investigations and the nailing of the two cops who were getting hefty monthly payoffs from the bootleggers, had reportedly been gifted luxury cars and had enjoyed sojourns abroad.

Liquor is big business in Gujarat and the single largest bribe-multiplier for the police in the state. Even before the shame of the Bharuch cop tattling on cop infamy could subside, cops in Aravalli district running regular liquor supply business to retailing bootleggers and sourcing it from neighbouring Rajasthan has come to light. Acting on information, a car was stopped and checking led to seizure of 240 bottles of liquor bound for the state capital of Gandhinagar. Investigations revealed a regular liquor supply network being run by the two police constables.

international



There is credible information that Ukrainian troops are stockpiling the Western-supplied weapons and ammunition on the territory of nuclear power plants

YELLEN IN ZAMBIA

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is in Zambia on the second leg of her African tour, a stop aimed at promoting American investment and ties while she's in a capital city that is visibly dominated by Chinese investment



of the day quote

I make it clear that there will not be even a slightest change from Japan's non-nuclear and self-defence-only principles and our footsteps as a peace-loving country

We must encourage and accelerate at the European level necessary public and private investments for the ecological transition. The two allies must complete the diversification of their sources and encourage the production of carbon-free energy in Europe

Over the last three years, we have entered a new era of globalisation. We have shifted from market-driven globalisation to politically powered globalisation

SHORT TAKES

Russia, Estonia expel envoys

MOSCOW: Russia and Estonia Monday were expelling the ambassadors from each other's countries in a tit-for-tat move, saying that their diplomatic missions will be headed by charges d'affaires as relations between the countries sank to a new low over Ukraine. In a show of solidarity with its Baltic neighbour, Latvia announced that it would also downgrade diplomatic relations with Moscow as of February 24. The Russian Foreign Ministry summoned Estonian Ambassador Margus Laidre and ordered him to leave the country by February 7.

All five bodies of Indians identified

KATHMANDU: The bodies of all five Indians, who were killed in the Yeti Airlines plane crash in Nepal's resort city of Pokhara, have been identified and handed over to their respective family members, hospital sources said Monday. The five Indians - identified as Abhisekh Kushwaha (25), Bishal Sharma (22), Anil Kumar Rajbhar (27), Sonu Jaiswal (35) and Sanjaya Jaiswal (26) - were among 72 people on board when the Yeti Airlines plane crashed on the bank of the Seti River between the old airport and the new airport in Pokhara, minutes before landing January 15.

NATO chief to visit S Korea next week

SEOUL: Jens Stoltenberg, secretary general of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), will visit South Korea early next week on a regional swing that will also take him to Japan, Seoul's Foreign Ministry said Monday. Stoltenberg is scheduled to make a two-day trip to Seoul January 29-30, during which he will conduct a series of meetings with top South Korean government officials, including Foreign Minister Park Jin and Defence Minister Lee Jong-sup, Yonhap News Agency quoted the Minister is saying.

Erdogan announces Turkish elections

ISTANBUL: Turkey's president has announced May 14 as the date for the country's next parliamentary and presidential elections. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who plans to seek reelection, made the announcement during a Saturday youth conference in northwestern Bursa province. A video of the event was released Sunday.

LUNAR NEW YEAR MASSACRE

Gunman found dead; motive unclear

The massacre in Monterey Park was the nation's fifth mass killing this month — and it struck one of California's largest celebrations of a holiday observed in many Asian cultures, dealing another blow to a community that has been the target of high-profile violence in recent years



A woman holds her arms up in prayer as members of the community hold a prayer vigil near the scene of the shooting

New York Times reported that a man whose family runs that venue wrested the gun from the assailant. It was also the deadliest attack since May 24, when 21 people were killed in an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas. No other suspects were at large, according to Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna. He said the motive remained unclear for the attack, which wounded 10 people, seven of whom were still hospitalized. Speaking at a Sunday evening news conference, the sheriff said he didn't have their exact ages but that all of the people killed appeared to be over 50. The suspect was carrying what Luna described as a semi-automatic pistol with an extended

magazine, and a second handgun was discovered in the van where Tran died. Monterey Park Police Chief Scott Wiese said Sunday evening that within three minutes of receiving the call, officers arrived at the Star Ballroom Dance Studio in Monterey Park. There, they found carnage inside and people trying to flee through all the doors. "When they came into the parking lot it, was chaos," Wiese said. About 20 to 30 minutes after the first attack, the gunman entered the Lai Lai Ballroom in the nearby city of Alhambra. But, Luna said, two people wrested the weapon away from him. The Times reported that after the gunman entered the club, he pointed

12 shot in US nightclub

WASHINGTON: Twelve people were shot and injured at a nightclub in Baton Rouge, capital city of the US state of Louisiana. Three of the injured were in critical condition and were rushed to the hospital. Xinhua news agency quoted local media reports as saying. On Sunday evening, police spokesman L'Jean McKeenly Jr. said all the injured were in stable condition. The shooting occurred at the Dior Bar and Lounge around 1.30 a.m., said McKeenly. No arrest has been made so far, and the motive of the shooting remains unclear.



his weapon at Brandon Tsay, who works a few days a week at the venue his grandparents started. Tsay said he acted on instinct, lunging to grab the gun after getting the feeling the gunman was looking to hurt people. The two struggled before Tsay said he got control of the weapon.

CRACKDOWN ON PROTESTORS

EU slaps sanctions on dozens in Iran



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brussels, Jan 23: The European Union Monday imposed sanctions on dozens of Iranian officials, including a government minister, regional governors and lawmakers, suspected in the security crackdown on protestors, but did not add Iran's Revolutionary Guard to its terror group blacklist. At a meeting in Brussels, EU foreign ministers agreed to slap a travel ban and asset freeze on Iran's Sports and Youth Minister Hamid Sajjadi, accusing him of pressuring Iran's athletes into silence, including an Iranian climber who competed without Islamic headgear at a competition in Seoul. The Iranian Special Police Forces were also targeted, accused of using "excessive violence and lethal force against unarmed protestors, including women and children... by firing automatic weapons at

protestors." Another asset freeze was imposed on the Headquarters for Enjoining Right and Forbidding Evil, an Iranian government institution that the EU believes is responsible "for determining and enforcing excessively strict behavioural models in society." Companies linked to cyber security, spyware, social media filtering, and the production of security equipment allegedly used in the crackdown were also hit. Restrictive measures were slapped on senior officers from the Revolutionary Guard and some of its regional units. At least four people have been executed since the demonstrations began, following rapid, closed-door trials. At least 519 people have been killed and more than 19,200 others arrested, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that's been monitoring the rallies. The movement has become one of the greatest challenges to Iran's Shiite theocracy since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. But the ministers did not move forward on blacklisting the Guard, despite last week's appeal from the European Parliament for them to do so. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, who chaired the meeting, said that this could only happen once a court in a member country hands down a ruling condemning the Guard for terror acts.

AGENCIES

Monterey Park (US), Jan 23: Authorities searched for a motive for the gunman who killed 10 people at a Los Angeles-area ballroom dance club during Lunar New Year celebrations, slayings that sent a wave of fear through Asian American communities and cast a shadow over festivities nationwide. The suspect, 72-year-old Huu Can Tran, was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound Sunday in the van that authorities say he used to flee after being prevented from attacking another dance club. The

Rishi Sunak orders ethics probe into tax scandal—hit Tory chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Jan 23: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak Monday ordered an independent investigation into the tax affairs of scandal-hit Conservative Party chairman Nadhim Zahawi amid mounting pressure from the Opposition. After days of headlines over the Iraqi-born minister without portfolio in his Cabinet's alleged penalty settlement with His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) department, Sunak said there were "questions that need answering" in the case which his independent ethics advisor will be looking into.



The issue has dominated the news agenda for his government in recent days, with the Opposition Labour Party demanding that Zahawi, a former Chancellor of the Exchequer, be sacked. "Integrity and accountability is really important to me and clearly in this case there are questions that need answering," Sunak told reporters during a visit to a hospital in Northamptonshire in eastern England. "That's why I've asked our independent adviser to get to the bottom of everything, to investigate the matter fully and establish all the facts and provide advice to me on Nadhim Zahawi's compliance with the ministerial code," he said in a statement.



Lawyers shout slogans against suppressive anti terrorists laws and intervention of the government with judiciary during a protest near the court's complex in Colombo, Sri Lanka

Maldives supports India's candidature for UNSC non-permanent membership

AGENCIES

Male, Jan 23: The Maldives will support India's candidature for a non-permanent seat of the United Nations Security Council for the 2028-2029 term, the foreign ministry said here Monday, citing New Delhi's strong and effective leadership in maintaining international peace and security. India declared its candidature for non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council (UNSC) for the 2028-2029 term last month. "I am glad to inform you that we have declared our candidature for our next tenure at the Security Council for 2028-29," External



Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said at the United Nations. "The Government of Maldives has decided to support India's candidature to a non-permanent seat of the United Nations Security Council, for the term 2028-2029," the foreign ministry said in a statement, days after Jaishankar visited the country.

Lavrov blames West for no Ukraine talks

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pretoria (South Africa), Jan 23: Russia was willing to negotiate with Ukraine in the early months of the war, but the United States and other Western nations advised Kyiv against holding talks, Moscow's top diplomat said Monday. The US and other Western nations have said that Russia isn't serious about hammering out a deal to end the nearly year-long war, which began February 24. "It is well known that we supported the proposal of the Ukrainian side to negotiate early in the special military operation and by the end of March, the two



delegations agreed on the principle to settle this conflict," Lavrov

said. "It is well known and was published openly that our American, British, and some European colleagues told Ukraine that it is too early to deal, and the arrangement which was almost agreed was never revisited by the Kyiv regime." Russia has repeatedly rejected Ukrainian and Western demands that it withdraw completely from Ukraine as a condition for any negotiations. Lavrov is in Pretoria for talks with South African counterpart Naledi Pandor as Russia pushes to strengthen ties with Africa's most developed country and an historical ally amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

Biden's next climate hurdle: Enticing Americans to buy green

BIDEN ACKNOWLEDGED THE HURDLE DURING A RECENT CABINET MEETING AS HE TALKED ABOUT THE INCENTIVES THAT ARE BECOMING AVAILABLE THIS YEAR

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Jan 23: President Joe Biden persuaded Democrats in Congress to provide hundreds of billions of dollars to fight climate change. Now comes another formidable task: enticing Americans to buy millions of electric cars, heat pumps, solar panels and more efficient appliances. It's a public relations challenge that could determine whether the country meets Biden's ambitious goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030. Relying on tax credits and rebates made the climate legislation — it was approved in August with only Democratic votes — more politically palatable than regulations

that force wholesale changes in polluting industries. But it also means the administration's battle against global warming will be waged "one household at a time," said Shannon Baker-Branstetter, who works on energy issues at the Centre for American Progress, a liberal think tank closely aligned with the White House. "It is very incremental," she said. "So it requires a very sophisticated communications strategy." "Folks need to know how to take advantage of these benefits that we passed. That's on all of us around the table here to make sure we get that message out clearly," he said. The White House says it is piecing together a plan to partner with state governments, contractors,



retailers and social media influencers to get the word out. "Lowering utility bills is going to be a key driver," said Josh Peck, a senior policy adviser on clean energy issues. It's also collaborating with Rewiring America, a nonprofit focused on ways to electrify homes and businesses, and companies

like Airbnb, Redfin and Lyft. As part of the effort, Rewiring America created an online calculator that shows what credits or rebates homeowners might be eligible for, depending on their ZIP code and income. Buying a heat pump or installing solar panels is "a major expense line and a major opportunity for

savings," said Ari Matusiak, the group's founder and CEO. "So it's really important to make sure people are aware of the resources they have available and the benefits they can unlock in terms of bringing energy bill savings." But the White House faces an uphill battle. An AP-NORC poll released in September, one month after the law was signed, found that 61 per cent of US adults said they knew little to nothing about the legislation. And despite the multibillion-dollar investment in climate solutions, only a third said it would help climate change; about half said it wouldn't make a differ-

ence. The White House says it's not rattled by the results. The goal is to make sure consumers know the financial benefits of energy efficient products at the moment that they're making key decisions on which products to buy, Peck said. "One of the challenges here is trying to meet consumers where they are when they make decisions about these purchases," he said. Majorities of US adults said they are unlikely to install solar panels or buy an electric vehicle in the next three years, according to the AP-NORC poll.



iPhone-maker Apple is looking to scale up its manufacturing in India as the business environment is helping global firms make the country their base
PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

SPOTIFY LATEST TECH NAME TO CUT JOBS

Music streaming service Spotify says it's cutting 6 per cent of its workforce, becoming yet another tech company resorting to layoffs as the economic outlook worsens. CEO Daniel Ek announced the restructuring in a message to employees that was also posted online.



of the day quote

We are looking to launch the first electric model in March 2024... It is being developed on a completely new platform and is based on the requirements of the Indian market

ATSUSHI OGATA | HONDA MOTORCYCLE AND SCOOTER INDIA CEO

We have worked towards delivering a world-class product for modern Indian families that will offer safety like never before. As a customer-centric brand, it has been a continuous endeavour to push boundaries and ensure customer delight through our class leading products

UNSOO KIM | HYUNDAI MOTOR INDIA MD AND CEO

The past year was about the revival and recovery of the travel industry. This year is expected to see travellers taking much-awaited international trips as well as exploring lesser known destinations in India and around the world

AMANPREET BAJAJ | AIRBNB'S GM FOR INDIA, SOUTHEAST ASIA

Govt may borrow record ₹16 trillion next fiscal

The Centre's gross indebtedness has more than doubled in the past four years as the government has spent heavily to cushion the economy from the effects of the pandemic and to provide relief to the poor

REUTERS

Bangalore, Jan 23: The government will borrow a record ₹16 trillion (\$198 billion) in the fiscal year to March 2024, according to a Reuters poll of economists, who said infrastructure spending and fiscal discipline ought to be its highest budget priorities.

The Centre's gross indebtedness has more than doubled in the past four years as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has spent heavily to cushion the economy from the effects of the pandemic and to provide relief to the poor.

The Feb. 1 budget will be the last full-fledged one before national elections in 2024 and before elections in several large populous states that will be key tests for the ruling BJP.

But a fall in tax revenue and expected slowing economic growth next fiscal year will limit the government's ability to cut borrowing in the near term.

Gross borrowing next fiscal year is expected to hit ₹16.0 trillion, up from an estimated ₹14.2 trillion in 2022/23, according to the median forecast of 43 economists.

Predictions were in a narrow range of ₹14.8 trillion to ₹17.2 trillion. Even if it is at the lower end of the range, 2023/2024 gross borrowing would easily be the highest



on record. When Modi's BJP swept to power in 2014, the country's gross annual borrowing was just ₹5.92 trillion.

"The key reason gross borrowing is going to be still quite high is the repayment burden," said Dhiraj Nim, economist at ANZ. "The government borrowed a lot in the last few years to have funds for the pandemic, which means the repayment burden will now be quite elevated for several years."

While economists in a separate Reuters poll forecast the government would bring the budget deficit down to 6.0% of GDP in 2023/24, it will still be well above the average of 4% to 5% seen since the 1970s and far from the target of reaching 4.5% by 2025/26.

The deficit is more than double what it was before the pandemic.

Rising interest rates have increased the burden of repaying the borrowed money.

DEBT SUSTAINABILITY

The International Monetary Fund said last month India needed a more ambitious plan for fiscal consolidation to ensure debt would be sustainable in the medium term. The government says its current plan is already enough for the task.

The indebtedness of federal and state governments is equal to 83% of annual GDP, a ratio higher than that of many other emerging economies. The country's sovereign credit rating is just a notch above junk level.

"With the fiscal deficit and public debt at historical highs, India has to delicately balance fiscal discipline vis-a-vis the need to support

growth. The government has to do the heavy lifting on capex," said Sujit Kumar, economist at Union Bank of India.

Kumar added that infrastructure investment "will be an obvious preference" for spending but an economic slowdown will lower tax collection and that will limit the government's ability to keep capital expenditure as fast as it has since 2020/21.

The poll also showed the Indian government's capital expenditure would increase to a record ₹8.85 trillion, around 2.95% of GDP, in the coming fiscal year.

But growth in such spending would likely slow to barely half the pace of the past three years.

India needs plenty of government funding to overhaul infrastructure to fulfill its ambition of becoming an alternative to China as the world's factory.

When asked what should be the two most pressing budget priorities, just half of respondents, 18 of 36, said fiscal discipline and infrastructure investment. The other 18 nominated job creation, education, healthcare or rural development.

India's government will cut food and fertiliser subsidies to ₹3.7 trillion, more than 25% below the level of around ₹5 trillion budgeted for 2022/23, the poll found.

MCL to set up 1,600 MW power plant in Odisha



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 23: Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), a subsidiary of Coal India Limited, is looking to diversify into power generation, and plans to set up a ₹12,000 crore power plant in Odisha.

It also aims to enter into aluminium business and may soon set up a greenfield aluminium project.

Sources informed that the 1,600 megawatt capacity coal-fired power project would come up in Sundargarh district as a wholly owned subsidiary of MCL.

MCL also plans to enter into the aluminium business, they further said.

The mini ratna company is currently

looking to secure a bauxite mine for the purpose.

Coal India's board in October 2021 had approved a pre-feasibility report for setting up an integrated aluminium project in Odisha.

Earlier, the coal behemoth in December 2020 had got in-principle approval for venturing into aluminium and solar sectors and creation of special purpose vehicles.

Coal India in a regulatory filing in October 2021 had said that the proposed aluminium project would include bauxite mining, alumina refinery, aluminium smelter and an associated captive power plant by its wholly owned subsidiary MCL.

SHORT TAKES

Maruti recalls 11,177 units of Grand Vitara

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki Monday said it is recalling 11,177 units of its mid-sized sports utility vehicle Grand Vitara to fix a possible defect in the rear seat belt mounting brackets. The affected lot was manufactured between August 8, 2022 and November 15, 2022, the country's largest carmaker said in a regulatory filing. "It is suspected that there is a possible defect in rear seat belt mounting brackets which in a rare case, may loosen in the long run and impact its functionality," it stated. Vehicle owners will be receiving communication from the company authorised dealer workshops for inspection and replacement of the affected parts, free of cost, it said.

Amazon launches air cargo service

Hyderabad: Amazon India Monday launched Amazon Air in the country to further enhance its transport network and enable faster deliveries to customers. Telangana Industries Minister KT Rama Rao launched the service near the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport here. Amazon is the first e-commerce company in India to launch a dedicated air cargo network, said a press release from the firm. Akhil Saxena of Amazon India said two planes are being operated now. He said each plane can carry 20,000 shipments. "We are partnering with third party carrier...Quikjet is the company through which we have leased out the plane. They are operating the plane and maintaining it for us," he said.

Tata Motors confirms delisting from NYSE

New Delhi: Tata Motors Monday said the voluntary delisting of its American Depository Shares, representing ordinary shares, from the New York Stock Exchange will become effective close of trading on January 23, 2023. After Monday, there will be no over-the-counter market trading of the American Depository Shares (ADSs) in the US due to regulatory restrictions under the Indian law, Tata Motors said in a regulatory filing. The ADS holders can surrender their ADSs to the Depository in exchange for the underlying ordinary shares of the company at any time on or prior to July 24, 2023, it added.

NSE CO-LOCATION CASE

SAT SETS ASIDE SEBI'S ORDER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: In a relief for NSE, the Securities Appellate Tribunal Monday set aside Sebi's order that had directed disgorgement of profit worth ₹625 crore in the co-location case but directed the exchange to pay ₹100 crore to the regulator for the lack of due diligence in the matter.

Sebi, in April 2019, had directed the National Stock Exchange (NSE) to disgorge profits worth more than ₹687 crore, comprising initial amount of ₹625 crore, along with 12 percent annual interest in the case.

Also, the regulator had imposed a six-month ban on the bourse on launching new derivative products, barred some present and past executives from the market and initiated strict action against stock brokers. Further, Sebi had directed Ravi Narain and Chitra Ramkrishna - who had served as MD and CEO of the exchange - to disgorge 25 per cent of respective salaries drawn during a certain period.

The case relates to alleged lapses in high-frequency trading offered through NSE's co-location facility wherein some entities allegedly got preferential access in high-frequency trading.

NSE co-location facility allows



stock brokers to take on rent specific racks and co-locate their servers and systems within the exchange premises. The primary objective of co-location services of NSE is to reduce latency for connectivity to the exchange's trading systems for Direct Market Access (DMA), algo trading and Smart Order Routing (SOR).

While setting aside Sebi's disgorgement order, SAT said that NSE did not commit any violation of the SECC Regulations. These pertain to stock exchanges and clearing corporations.

SAT noted that there was a lack of due diligence on the part of NSE while allocating IPs on various ports and that there was inequitable distribution of IPs. Besides, there was failure to monitor frequent connections to the secondary server by certain trading members.

According to the appellate tribunal, NSE has not indulged in any unethical act or has unjustly enriched itself. It has not adhered to its own norms and guidelines and has not followed the circular.

Q3 RESULTS CORNER

Canara Bank profit surges 92%

New Delhi: Canara Bank Monday reported 92 per cent jump in profit at ₹2,882 crore for the quarter ended December 2022, helped by a rise in interest income and decline in bad loans. Its net profit stood at ₹1,502 crore in the same quarter of the preceding financial year. Total income increased to ₹26,218 crore in the quarter from ₹21,312 crore in the year-ago period, the state-owned bank said in a regulatory filing. At the same time, interest income rose to ₹22,231 crore as against ₹17,701 crore in the same quarter a year ago. On the asset quality front, the bank recorded an improvement with gross NPAs (Non-Performing Assets) declining to 5.89 per cent as compared to 7.80 per cent at the end of third quarter of 2021-22. Net NPAs too eased to 1.96 per cent as compared to 2.86 per cent in the same period a year ago.



Axis Bank profit rises 62%



New Delhi: Private sector lender Axis Bank Monday reported a 62 per cent surge in profit at ₹5,853 crore for the quarter ended December 2022, driven by increase in net interest income and decline in bad loans. Its net profit on standalone basis stood at ₹3,614 crore in the same quarter of the preceding financial year. Total income increased to ₹26,892 crore in the quarter from ₹21,101 crore in the year-ago period, the bank said in a regulatory filing. At the same time, net interest income rose by 32 per cent to ₹11,459 crore, it said, adding the net interest margin (NIM) increased to 4.26 per cent. The bank's operating profit grew 51 per cent on annual basis to ₹9,277 crore. On the asset quality front, the bank recorded an improvement, with gross NPAs declining to 2.38 per cent of the gross advances as compared to 3.17 per cent at the end of the third quarter of 2021-22.

IDBI Bank profit jumps 60%

New Delhi: State-owned IDBI Bank on Monday reported a 60 per cent growth in net profit to ₹927 crore in the third quarter ended December 31, 2022, on lower provisioning and better interest income. IDBI Bank, for which the government and the LIC have invited bids to sell a majority stake, had a net profit of ₹578 crore in the October-December quarter of 2021. The bank's net interest income (NII) improved by 23 per cent during the third quarter of current fiscal to ₹2,925 crore, as against ₹2,383 crore in the same period last fiscal. Gross NPA ratio improved to 13.82 per cent as on December 31, 2022 as against 21.68 per cent as on December 31, 2021.



Laid-off Indian techies scramble for options to stay in US

Nearly 200,000 IT workers have been laid off since November last year, including some record numbers in companies like Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Amazon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Jan 23: Thousands of Indian IT professionals in the US, who have lost their jobs due to the series of recent layoffs at companies like Google, Microsoft and Amazon, are now struggling to find new employment within the stipulated period under their work visas following the termination of their employment to stay in the country. According to The Washington Post, nearly 200,000 IT workers have been laid off since November last year, including some record numbers in companies like Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Amazon.

As per some industry insiders, between 30 to 40 per cent of them are Indian IT professionals, a significant number of whom are on H-1B and L-1 visas.

The H-1B visa is a non-immi-

grant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

L-1A and L-1B visas are available for temporary intracompany transferees who work in managerial positions or have specialised knowledge.

A significantly large number of Indian IT professionals, who are on non-immigrant work visas like H-1B are L-1, are now scrambling for options to stay in the US to find a new job in the stipulated few months time that they get under these foreign work visas after losing their jobs and change their visa status as well. Amazon staffer Gita (name



changed) arrived in the US only three months ago. This week she was told that March 20 is her last working day.

The situation is getting worse for those on H-1B visas as they have to find a new job within 60 days or else, they would be left with no other option but to head back to India.

Under current circumstances, when all IT companies are on a firing spree, getting a job within that short period, they feel is next to impossible.

Sita (name changed), another IT professional on an H-1B visa, got laid off from Microsoft on January 18.

She is a single mother. Her son is in High School Junior year, preparing for getting into college.

"This situation is really hard on us," she said.

"It is unfortunate that thousands of tech employees are facing layoffs, particularly those on H-1B visas who are facing additional challenges as they must find a new job and transfer their visa within 60 days of termination or risk leaving the country," Silicon Valley-based entrepreneur and community leader Ajay Jain Bhutoria said.

"This can have devastating consequences for families, including

the sale of properties and disruptions to children's education. It would be beneficial for tech companies to show special consideration for H-1B workers and extend their termination date by a few months, as the job market and recruitment process can be challenging," he said.

Global Indian Technology Professionals Association (GIT-PRO) and Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS) on Sunday launched a community-wide effort to try and help these IT professionals by connecting job seekers to job referrers and informers. FIIDS will work on efforts to influence policymakers and decision-makers of US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Adding to the miseries of Indian IT professionals is the latest decision of Google that they are pausing their Green Card processing. This is primarily because, at a time when they have fired thousands of employees, they cannot be seen arguing before the USCIS that they need a foreign IT professional as a permanent resident. Other companies are expected to follow the same.



Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd had on Friday reported a 15 per cent drop in net profit for the December 2022 quarter as higher finance costs, the new windfall profit tax and depreciation neutralised strong operating performance.

The broader indices traded mixed as the BSE Midcap rose by 0.44 per cent to 25,114.15 while the small-cap declined by 0.30 per cent to 28,544.40.

Among sector indices, BSE IT rose by 1.65 per cent, BSE Teck by 1.48 per cent, Bankex by 0.76 per cent, FMCG by 0.73 per cent, Auto by 0.64 per cent, and Financial Services by 0.57 per cent.

On the other hand, BSE Commodities fell 1.14 per cent and realty by 0.72 per cent. BSE Power, industrials, utilities and services also declined.



INDIA EYE SERIES SWEEP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, Jan 23: With a series sweep in sight, the middle order will be eager to give a better account of themselves as the Indian team management contemplates rotating its bowlers in the third and final ODI against New Zealand here Tuesday.

Opener Shubman Gill has been in excellent form, having scored a sensational double hundred in the opener, followed by a 40-run knock in the low-scoring second ODI. Skipper Rohit Sharma, too, is having a good run.

However, the home team is aware that despite enjoying an unassailable 20 lead in the series, Shubman and Rohit have been the only two batters among runs for the hosts.

At the same time, it is also a fact that the others haven't been tested and the dead rubber will be the perfect opportunity for the likes Ishan Kishan,

Hardik Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav to get some batting practice in match situations.

Kohli's problem against left-arm spin has come to the fore once again as the talismanic batter has repeatedly gotten dismissed by Mitchell Santner.

After notching three hundreds in four innings, the former skipper was dismissed cheaply in both the ODIs as New Zealand's star left-arm spinner exposed the chinks in Kohli's armour. With the World Cup just months away, Kohli would be keen for some much-needed course correction.

In the absence of Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar was expected to provide some firepower at the back end. However, the premier T20 batter failed to do that in the series-opener. Hardik, too, has been underwhelming with the bat of late. He has had a mediocre series against Sri Lanka and hasn't im-

pressed against New Zealand yet.

With the T20 fixtures scheduled later this week and the all-important Australia series due to begin next month, the team management may also be tempted to rest players and hand Rajat Patidar, who was added to the squad as a replacement for the injured Iyer, a debut. Patidar has impressed in the domestic circuit as well as in the IPL.

There could also be changes in the bowling department with express pacer Umran Malik coming back into the side or spinner leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal replacing Kuldeep Yadav.

Both Chahal and Umran have not featured in the series so far and with the ODI World Cup later this year, the team management is looking to test the core players while carefully monitoring the workload.

The Indian bowlers were guilty of letting New Zealand score over 300 runs after being 131/6 in the first

ODI, but the seamers came back strongly in the Raipur game. Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj and Hardik were clinical while the spinners have also done a decent job.

New Zealand, on the other hand, will be eager to grab a consolation win to boost their morale. For that to happen, the Black Caps, who are without the services of regular skipper Kane Williamson, will have to address their batting woes.

New Zealand's top six batters have scored 40 or more on just seven occasions in the last 30 innings. The only batter that has impressed in their line-up is Michael Bracewell, who along with Mitchell Santner almost took his side over the line in Hyderabad.

Even the bounce and smaller boundaries make the pitch at the Holkar Stadium batter-friendly and the bowlers will have to work hard to keep the scoring in check.

Tirkey wary of Harmanpreet's form

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: A disappointed Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey Monday said captain Harmanpreet Singh's "sudden drop in form" was a matter of concern, though lack of penalty corner goals was not the sole reason for the home side's shock and premature exit from the FIH Men's World Cup here.

India lost to New Zealand in their crossover match Sunday in the penalty shootout after the two sides were locked 3-3 at the end of regulation time. Tirkey said any talk regarding change of coach and captain is premature as the World Cup is going on and India are to play in the 9th to 16th classification matches.



"Harmanpreet was doing very well in the FIH Pro League matches and in the (five match) Australia series just before the World Cup. We had a lot of expectation from him but suddenly dropping form in the World Cup is a matter of concern," Tirkey, one of the finest penalty corner hitters of his time, told this agency in an exclusive interview.

"There are also some up and coming drag-flickers in the team. Drag-flickers are very important in modern hockey and we will plan accordingly," added Tirkey, who had a long meeting with the team Monday.

"Just one-and-a-half years back, we had won a bronze in the Olympics and then not reaching the quarterfinals of the World Cup is very disappointing."

Harmanpreet took most of India's 26 penalty corners in the four matches, from which the team scored just five goals. Harmanpreet himself converted just two PCs.

"Ultimately, as I said earlier also, if we don't score more goals from penalty corners we will face issues and that was what happened yesterday," Tirkey, a former India captain who has played 412 international matches, said.

"The team's strong point was scoring from penalty corners. We had high expectation from Harmanpreet. But his flicks were not converting into goals, and we saw it from the first match to the last. Not scoring from the PCs hurt

the team a lot."

Tirkey said India had gifted the crossover match to New Zealand from a winning position. "We got enough opportunities to win the match against New Zealand. We were leading 3-1 and we could have done better in the defensive structure. After that in the shootout, both our goalkeepers did very well and gave us opportunities to win the match. But we missed the chances in the shootout also and lost the match."

"Kahi na kahi jita huwa match ko hum unko de diya hey (Somehow, a match we should have won was gifted to them)," he said. Harmanpreet could have sealed the match for India in sudden death but he wasted the chance.

"We played aggressive hockey and we got chances (against New Zealand). We got 10 PCs and we scored just two from them, we could have scored more," Tirkey said. "Some players from whom we had a lot of expectations, they somehow could not perform. We all have accepted it." Tirkey, one of the best defenders of his generation, was also not happy with the performance of the defensive unit of the home side, of which Harmanpreet

is the bulwark.

"If we speak about our defence, I feel there was something missing in our defensive structure, we could have done better (against New Zealand). We also felt the absence of Hardik Singh, he was performing very well and his injury hurt us. But we could have won the match with the players we have."

Asked if there will be changes in the position of coach or the captain, Tirkey said, "We will see later. The World Cup is going on and any discussion on that is not appropriate."

India will play against Japan in their first classification match in Rourkela January 26, before taking on a yet-to-be-known opponent January 28. Tirkey said the team's next priority is to do well in the Asian Games, scheduled to be held this year.

"Asian Games is very important for us and that is our priority before the Olympics next year," he said. "Some players are out of the team due to injury, they will come back. Some players might not have performed well due to pressure. We will provide the team with a mental conditioning coach and we will see."

MC Mary Kom to lead oversight committee



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: Boxing great MC Mary Kom will lead a five-member Oversight Committee that will probe the sexual harassment charges against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. The government-appointed committee will also run the day-to-day affairs of WFI for the next one month.

The other members of the panel are Olympic medalist wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt, former badminton player and Mission Olympic Cell member Trupti Murgunde, ex-TOPS CEO Rajagopalan and former SAI executive director - teams - Radhica Sreeman.

The announcement of the panel was made by Sports Minister Anurag Thakur Monday. Thakur had decided to form the committee Saturday following a three-day sit-in protest by some of the country's top wrestlers including Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and Ravi Dahiya against the WFI and its chief.

The wrestlers ended their protest after a breakthrough was achieved during a marathon second round of talks with Thakur late Friday night.

"The WFI president will not discharge his duties and stay away from day-to-day affairs of WFI. The day-to-day working of WFI will be looked after by the Oversight Committee till their mandated duration and it will also probe the serious allegations against WFI and its chief," Thakur said.

"The Oversight Committee will

be under the chairmanship of world champion Mary Kom. Along with her, Yogeshwar Dutt, MOC member and Dronacharya awardee Trupti Murgunde, former TOPS CEO Rajagopalan and former ED Teams, SAI Radhica Sreeman will be part of the committee.

"In the next one month, this committee will probe into the sexual allegations and other charges after talking to all parties and submit its report. Till then all the day-to-day decisions and workings of WFI will be taken care of by this committee," he added.

Both Mary Kom and Yogeshwar are also part of the seven-member committee formed by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to probe the allegations of sexual harassment and corruption against the WFI chief.

Besides legendary boxer Mary Kom and wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt, the IOA panel includes archer Dola Banerjee and Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLFF) president and IOA treasurer Sahdev Yadav.

The other members of the IOA committee are two advocates - Talish Ray and Shlok Chandra - besides former shuttler and IOA joint secretary Alaknanda Ashok, who is its vice chairperson.

The agitating wrestlers, including young Anshu Malik, Sangeeta Phogat and Sonam Malik among others, started the sit-in protest at Jantar Mantar here Wednesday and demanded the sacking of the WFI chief.

The wrestlers also demanded that the WFI be disbanded immediately and a new panel is formed, including grapplers in it.

Djokovic realistic over Australian Open title

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Jan 23: It took about a week for Novak Djokovic to go from worrying about whether he simply could play a match at all on his injured left hamstring to thinking he can win the Australian Open. And one pain-free, nearly perfect performance in the fourth round Monday made a world of difference.

"Tonight, the way I played, the way I felt, gives me reason now to believe that I can go all the way," Djokovic said after completely overwhelming 22nd-seeded Alex de Minaur 6-2, 6-1, 6-2 to reach the quarterfinals for the 13th time at Melbourne Park and 54th time at all Grand Slam tournaments.

"I mean, I always believe I can go all the way in terms of my tennis," continued Djokovic, whose 21 major championships include nine in Australia. "But the way my leg felt before tonight wasn't giving me too many hopes, so to say, for the entire tournament, to go all the way through. Tonight I feel that, so I feel positive about it."

A year ago, he got kicked out of the country before the Australian Open because he was not vaccinated against COVID-19. He still has



n't gotten the shots, but the government's coronavirus rules have been relaxed.

After looking out of joint occasionally in his first three matches in the tournament last week, sometimes stumbling to the ground, sometimes seeking treatment from a trainer, the 35-year-old from Serbia looked like his usual flexible, court-

covering, dominant self at Rod Laver Arena against de Minaur.

Djokovic won 42 of 64 points that lasted five shots or more. He accumulated a 26-9 edge in winners. He won all 12 of his service games, never facing a single break point. Generally considered the best returner in the game now — and, perhaps, ever — Djokovic

earned a dozen break chances and converted half.

He broke to lead 4-2 in the first set and again to end it. He broke to go up 2-0 and 4-0 in the second. He broke for advantages of 1-0 and 3-0 in the third.

Djokovic said he felt "fantastic" and "really great in terms of mobility and movement." In addition

to taking "a lot" of anti-inflammatory pills to help the hamstring, Djokovic said he has been using "different treatments and machines and stuff" to help improve his leg. He also cautioned that he does not "want to celebrate too early," cause "I don't know how the body's going to respond tomorrow and for the next match."

Yes, there are still contests to come and players to contend with. His upcoming opponent is No.5 seed Andrey Rublev, who will head into their matchup Wednesday with an 0-6 record in Grand Slam quarterfinals. That day's other men's match will be between two unseeded Americans in their 20s who've never been this far at a major tournament: Ben Shelton and Tommy Paul.

The men's quarterfinals scheduled for Tuesday: No.3 Stefanos Tsitsipas against unseeded Jiri Lehecka, and No.18 Karen Khachanov vs. No.29 Sebastian Korda.

Of the seven remaining men other than Djokovic, none has won a Grand Slam title and only Tsitsipas ever has even reached a major final, and that was just once, losing to — yep, you guessed it — Djokovic at the French Open in 2021.

Gunners shoot down Red Devils



ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Jan 23: Erling Haaland can break all sorts of Premier League scoring records this season and it still might not secure Manchester City another title. That's because there is just no stopping Arsenal, which overcame another big obstacle in their bid for a first league title since 2004.

A few hours after Haaland scored his fourth hat-trick of the season in City's 3-0 win over

Wolverhampton, Arsenal responded by beating Manchester United 3-2 thanks to a 90th-minute winner by Eddie Nketiah.

The Gunners stayed five points clear of second-placed City and have a game in hand. The top two must still meet each other twice in the league so there is scope for a turnaround.

It will need Arsenal to slow down and Haaland to keep on scoring. Currently, there's no sign of either of those things happening.

Arsenal were relentless against the Red Devils after going behind to Marcus Rashford's ninth goal since the World Cup. Goals by Nketiah and Bukayo Saka put the hosts ahead. Lisandro Martinez equalised after a weak punch clear by Arsenal goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale, only for Nketiah to flick home from close range for a goal that was reviewed for offside.

Remarkably, Arsenal have only dropped seven points from a possible 57 by the halfway stage of the season and has just come through a tough-looking run of games against Brighton, Newcastle, Tottenham and United by taking 10 points from 12.

It is Arsenal's best start to a league season and only two teams — Liverpool (in 2018-19 and 2019-20) and City (in 2017-18) — have collected more points after 19 games. With Haaland, though, there is hope for City, the defending champion.

Arsenal and City meet for the first time in the league February 15. Before that, they play each other at the Etihad Stadium in the FA Cup Friday.

BENZEMA SCORES AS REAL STAY CLOSE TO BARCELONA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, Jan 23: Goal after goal, Karim Benzema keeps putting his World Cup disappointment behind him. Benzema scored for the sixth time after being dropped from France's World Cup squad because of an injury, leading Real Madrid to a 2-0 win at Athletic Bilbao in the Spanish league Sunday.

The goal allowed Benzema to join former Madrid great Raül with 228 league goals with the club — second to Cristiano Ronaldo's 311. It also helped Madrid get back within three points of league leader Barcelona, which earlier Sunday had defeated Getafe 1-0 at the Camp Nou.

Toni Kroos sealed the victory for Madrid with a low shot from outside the area in the 90th. Benzema's sixth goal in six matches since the World Cup came with a left-footed volley from inside the area in the 24th minute at San Mames Stadium.

The only game in which Benzema had not scored after the



World Cup was in Madrid's 3-2 come-from-behind win at Villarreal in the round of 16 of the Copa del Rey Thursday.

Barcelona defeated relegation-threatened Getafe to extend its winning streak to three matches in all competitions. Pedri scored a first-half winner for the Catalan club, who have won four of their last five matches.