



UNRESTRAINED KANGANA

Actor Kangana Ranaut says India has only and only loved all Khans and is obsessed over Muslim actresses

LEISURE P2



US COPS' VIOLENCE

The number of people who have died during interactions with police hit a 10-year high in 2022, at 1,186 deaths

INTERNATIONAL P10



UNIQUE FEAT

Indian eves create history by winning the inaugural edition of the U-19 T20 World Cup beating England by 7 wickets

SPORTS P12

Cash-strapped Pak hikes fuel prices by Rs 35

AGENCIES

Islamabad, Jan 29: Cash-strapped Pakistan's government Sunday raised prices of petrol and diesel by Rs 35 each, giving another jolt to the country's inflation-stricken people.

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar made the announcement in a televised address Sunday morning, spoiling people's weekly holiday as prices in the past had been adjusted on a fortnightly basis from the first to sixteenth of every month.

"We have decided to increase the price of petrol and diesel by Rs 35 each. The price of kerosene oil and light diesel oil has been increased by Rs 18 each," Dar said, adding that the new prices would come into effect at 11 am Sunday.

After the rise, the price of petrol was set at Rs 249.80 per litre, high-speed diesel at Rs 262.80, kerosene oil at Rs 189.83, and light diesel oil at Rs 187 per litre.

Last week, PM Shehbaz Sharif had said that the ruling alliance was ready to swallow the bitter pill of the IMF's stringent conditions to revive the loan programme and it has clearly conveyed intentions to complete the ninth review to IMF. Pakistan entered a \$6 billion IMF programme during Imran Khan's government in 2019, which was increased to \$7 billion last year. The programme's ninth review is currently pending with talks being held between IMF and the government for the release of \$1.18 billion.

Naba Das shot dead

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar Jan 29: Health Minister Naba Kishore Das, who was shot and critically injured when a police officer opened fire at him in Jharsuguda district Sunday, succumbed to his injuries at Apollo Hospital here, officials said.

In a statement, the hospital said the minister was admitted to the hospital with gunshot wounds on his left chest. A team of doctors, led by Dr Debashish Nayak, immediately attended to and operated on him. On operating, it was found that a single bullet had entered and exited the body, injuring the heart and left lung, and causing massive internal bleeding and injury, it said.

"The injuries were repaired, and steps were taken to improve the pumping of the heart. He was given urgent ICU care. But despite best efforts, he could not be revived and succumbed to his injuries," the hospital said.

The incident occurred earlier in the day near Gandhi Chhak at Brajarajnaragar in Jharsuguda as Das was on the way to attend a function. ASI Gopal Das, who was in his uniform, suddenly came near the minister's vehicle and opened fire at him with his service revolver, said Brajarajnaragar sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) Gupteswar Bhoi.

The ASI was taken into custody, but the reason behind the shocking attack on the senior BJD leader



was yet to be ascertained.

The minister fell unconscious at the spot. In such a critical condition, he was first admitted to a local hospital. Then, he was airlifted to Bhubaneswar and admitted to the Apollo Hospital.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed deep shock and distress over the minister's death. In a statement, he said: "I am shocked and distressed over the very unfortunate demise of Minister Naba Das. The doctors made every possible effort to save his life. But unfortunately, he could not recover."

Stating that Das was an asset for both the government and his party, Patnaik said he has successfully carried out many initia-

tives in the Health Department to the benefit of the people. As a leader, he was instrumental in strengthening Biju Janata Dal, he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also offered his condolences on the unfortunate incident. "Saddened by the unfortunate demise of Minister in Odisha Government, Shri Naba Kishore Das Ji. Condolences to his family in this tragic hour. Om Shanti," Modi tweeted.

The CM, who visited the Apollo Hospital, directed the Crime Branch to investigate the case. Senior officers of the Crime Branch have been asked to rush to the spot, he said.

Soon after receiving orders, ADG, Crime Branch, Arun Bothra left for Brajarajnaragar along with

KILLER COP IN CUSTODY

Assistant sub-inspector Gopal Das who fired at the minister has been taken into custody and an investigation is on, the police said. Witnesses claim the assistant sub-inspector fired at the minister from a close range just as he stepped out of his vehicle to attend an event. A video shows the minister bleeding from the chest as people carry him to a local hospital in a car.



his team to inquire into the incident, sources said. Meanwhile, a forensic team visited the spot and started investigations.

Two teams of doctors conducted the post-mortem at Capital Hospital in the presence of Crime Branch IG and DSP. The government announced that state honour will be accorded to the departed soul while three days of mourning will be observed. **More P3**

Rahul unfurls Tricolour at Srinagar's Lal Chowk

AGENCIES

Srinagar, Jan 29: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday unfurled the National Flag at the historic clock tower of Lal Chowk here as part of the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', amid stringent security measures usually reserved for a prime ministerial visit, and said a 'promise' made to India has been fulfilled.

"By hoisting the Tricolour at Lal Chowk, the promise made to India was fulfilled today. Hate will lose, love will always win. There will be a new dawn of hopes in India," Gandhi tweeted in Hindi after the event.

The yatra, which was launched September 7 last year in Kanyakumari, has traversed 12 states and two Union Territories. It will culminate with the hoisting of the national flag at the Congress office here Monday.

The security for the 10-minute event was at its peak as all roads in a one-kilometre radius leading to the chowk, which holds symbolic importance for the city, were sealed off from Saturday night and no vehicular movement was allowed.

Barricades were set up and concertina wires installed at all entry points with a heavy deployment of security personnel, while shops, business establishments and the weekly flea market were closed as part of the security exercise.

Monday, a public rally will also be held at the SK Stadium for which



23 Opposition political parties have been invited by the Congress.

Gandhi said the restoration of statehood and democratic process is a very important step in Jammu and Kashmir as he avoided a question on whether his party would be part of an Opposition alliance in the Union Territory.

"Love, affection and listening, I believe, are powerful forces. I don't want to comment on the historical aspect of it, I want to look forward and I (have) come here with an open heart ... And open arms to help in whatever way I can," Gandhi told reporters here at the end of the yatra.

Germany clinch third WC title

GERMANY MAKE REMARKABLE COMEBACK TO BEAT DEFENDING CHAMPIONS BELGIUM 5-4 IN THE SUDDEN DEATH SHOOT-OUT

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Germany made a remarkable comeback to beat defending champions Belgium 5-4 in the sudden death shoot-out after playing a 3-3 in the regulation time to win the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023, at Kalinga Stadium here Sunday.

This is Germany's third Hockey World Cup title after they won it in 2002 and 2006. With this, they draw level with Netherlands and Australia.

Germany also became the fourth team to register a come-from-behind win in a World Cup final. From a 2-0 deficit to a 3-2 to lead and ultimately a shoot-out, they

eventually became champions.

Trailing 0-2 at the break, Germany scored three goals in the second-half to take a 3-2 lead.

However, Belgium equalised in the final moments of normal time from a penalty corner. In the penalty shoot-out, Germany eventually prevailed 5-4.

Earlier, two-time champions Netherlands clinched the bronze medal at the ongoing FIH Men's Hockey World Cup after defeating three-time champions Australia 3-1 in the third-place match.

With this, the Netherlands have finished their World Cup campaign in third position while Australia finished in fourth position.



German players and support staff pose with the World Cup winners' trophy at Kalinga Stadium, Sunday

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I never worry about our banks. All my money is in offshore accounts

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP	MAX 31.8°C 31.0°C
	MIN 17.3°C 16.0°C
Humidity	71% 89%
Rainfall	Nil Nil
	Forecast: Mainly clear sky

Live in an igloo, not in the Arctic, but in Manali

HAMPTA VALLEY IS NOW CHRISTENED AS THE IGLOO VALLEY WHERE TRAVELLERS ARE OFFERED A CHANCE TO LIVE LIKE THE INUIT PEOPLE OF ALASKA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Manali, Jan 29: The Hampta valley, easily accessible from Manali in Himachal Pradesh, is now christened as the igloo valley where travellers are offered a chance to live like the Inuit people living in the ice-clad Arctic regions of Alaska and Newfoundland.

Starting from six igloos, the valley, almost without tourist buzz, at present has 30 igloos of different



shapes and sizes to offer for the backpackers from January to February. Most of the igloos, owned

by the local youth, are dotted in the vicinity of Sethan village, 12 km uphill from Manali, the area known

for delicious apples.

"For the first time we experimented in 2017 to set up an igloo by using the knowledge of our village elders. In that year we offered travellers a day's stay free of cost," local entrepreneur Vikas Kumar told IANS.

He and his friend Tashi Dorjee are the first to start the concept of the Eskimo village in the Hampta valley that offers an opportunity to live the life of the Inuit people on the edge of the wilderness amidst stunningly beautiful surroundings. Kumar said in the first year a handful of travellers preferred to stay in the igloo. "It was the word of mouth that started attracting travellers next year onwards."

The igloos are located on ski slopes that have more than three feet of snow. In summer, the slopes turn into lush sheep pastures.

An official with the state Tourism Department said seeing the success of the Kumar-Dorjee duo,

more local youth, who are basically skiers and involved in camping, have opted the concept of this tourism on the pattern of state's rural homestay scheme.

"Now the Hampta valley houses more than 30 igloos and it is now aptly called Igloo and Eskimo valley," he added.

To reach an igloo unit, one has to trudge the snow-laden path for 15-20 minutes. Only a four-wheel drive vehicle, which is provided by the host and covered within the accommodation cost, will take you up to Sethan, the last motorable village. From there potters will take the luggage. Depending on the snow conditions, a team of five-eight people can build an igloo measuring six feet in circumference in a couple of hours. "It was really cosy to stay in an igloo that offers a chance to live like Inuit on the edge of the wilderness," remarked newlywed Ramesh Menon, a tourist from Chennai. **Contd..4**

Tusker poaching: 4 held, 2 tusks seized

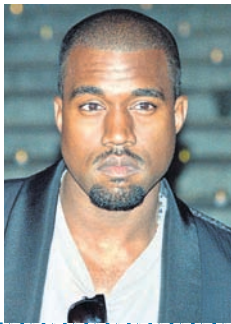
POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Jan 29: A joint team of police and forest officials seized two tusks of a tusker and arrested four poachers in connection with its poaching in Talabandha wildlife range under north division of Similipal Tiger Reserve in Mayurbhanj district, late Saturday night.

A case was registered under relevant sections of Wildlife Act and further investigation is on. The accused were identified as Gobinda Hembram, Kunasingh Naik, Ramrai Tudu and Kuna Naik. The two seized tusks weighed around 40 kg, said Sai Kiran, deputy director of Similipal Tiger Reserve, North Division, Sunday.

The breakthrough came during a late night raid by Bisoi police and forest officials at Rugudihidi, Matiani and Talakabadi. **More P5**

leisure



KANYE THROWS PAP'S PHONE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET

Rapper Kanye West, in a viral video, was seen snatching a paparazzo's phone before throwing it in the middle of the street. Kanye pulled up to ask a photographer to stop filming him. "I wanna just see my kids," the rapper said while inside his car.

PAMELA'S EX LEAVES \$10MN IN HIS WILL DESPITE 12-DAY MARRIAGE

Hollywood star Pamela Anderson's former husband Jon Peters has included her name in his will, putting aside \$10 million for her. Married to former *Baywatch* actress, for a total of 12 days in 2020, the 77-year-old producer explained that he's leaving with the money because he will "always love" her.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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accuracy • reliability • trust
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ARIES
Today, you will crave total freedom in whatever you are doing, says Ganesh. And sheer entertainment is on the cards for teenyboppers, like mall-hopping or going for a film. The kids will demand a Jumbo Berry ice cone. All in all, it will be a family day for you.

TAURUS
Your unflinching punctuality, your insistence on following time schedules is due to be noticed and appreciated today. Your colleagues and superiors will be singing praises as soon as you arrive for work. If you are in an artistic or a creative profession, such as designing, journalism, multi media, you have a remarkably eventful and gratifying day ahead.

GEMINI
You will find yourself caught in two minds repeatedly, owing to your unpredictable mood swings. This will be the cause of a lot of mental stress. You can reduce your anxiety by talking out your issues with family members and experts. You need to take care of your health today, says Ganesh.

CANCER
A day to indulge in fantasy. Your ideas will be fantastic. Your status and prestige go up. People will praise your efforts. (Your efforts will be appreciated). A day of creativity and success, with Ganesh's blessings in tow.

LEO
You will relentlessly try to find means to progress at the workplace today. You will remain steadfast in your resolutions. You will not allow those working under you to slack. You will need to let go of your inhibitions and fears to be happy in life. You will receive the benediction of highly placed superiors, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Confidently take on the challenges that in all likelihood will test your business abilities, especially the ones that are related to your investments and monetary matters. You will most probably come up with novel ideas to solve long-pending issues, and Ganesh says that this will be very effective.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that you will be busy in your work field today and will be able to attain your goals in your work field today. Your level of enthusiasm will be at its peak. Today you may be able to meet with a person from the opposite sex who will be your future partner.

SCORPIO
You are a visionary and today you work towards building a successful future. But, expecting an instant result would be unfair. You need to have patience to bring in those dynamic changes in your life. Wait and watch, the patience would reap sweet fruits!

SAGITTARIUS
The cloud of worries is likely to keep you gloomy today. Try to burst that cloud, and take a decision that would help you to solve your troubles. There may be some delay, if you want the situation to get back to normal. However, as Ganesh says, you would be the one who would benefit at the end of the day!

CAPRICORN
You want to enhance your knowledge by exploring foreign shores, but luck hasn't favoured you yet. Ganesh predicts today to be a favourable day for you to try again for higher studies. If associated with the Stock Market or speculation, you are likely to make profits.

AQUARIUS
Are you facing a roadblock in your path? Make a minor change in your route, you will find a smooth and clear road once again, advises Ganesh. The efforts you have made in the past will come to fruition, today. Don't get satisfied with your current achievements, you still have a long way to keep working hard.

PISCES
Do not commit yourself to any large investments today. It is best to avoid speculative activities. For those who have a job, the co-operation of your colleagues will help you progress, says Ganesh.



India has only loved the Khans: Kangana

Mumbai: Queen actress Kangana Ranaut, who is gearing up for her next directorial *Emergency*, feels that the Indian audience have always loved the three Khans of Hindi film industry and the success of Shah Rukh Khan's recent release *Pathaan* is a testimony to the same. While taking to Twitter, Kangana, who recently made a comeback on the micro-blogging site,

tweeted as a response to a producer's tweet which read, "Big Congratulations to @iamsrk & @deepikapadukone for the runaway success of #Pathaan!!! It proves 1) Hindu Muslims love SRK equally 2) Boycotts controversies don't harm but help the film 3) Erotica & Good music works 4) India is super secular." Kangana, who recently made a comeback on the micro-blogging site,

country has only and only loved all Khans and at times only and only Khans. And obsessed over Muslim actresses." Her tweet further mentioned, "So it's very unfair to accuse India of hate and fascism. There is no country like Bharat in the whole world." IANS

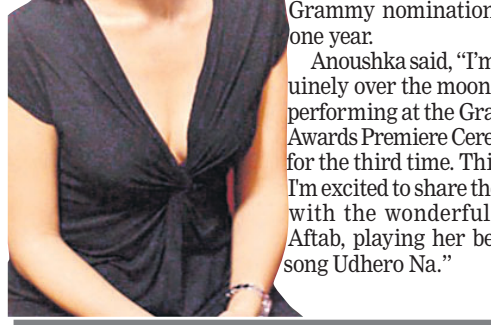
ANOUSHKA SHANKAR TO PERFORM AT GRAMMYS

New Delhi: Kicking off the proceedings for the 65th annual Grammy Awards, the Grammy Awards Premiere Ceremony will return to the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles on 5th February 2023. In an exciting development, the ceremony will be marked by a stirring performance by current Grammy nominee Anoushka Shankar, making it her third Grammy performance.

The masterful sitar player, producer, film composer, activist, and nine-time Grammy Award Nominee will perform alongside vocalist Arooj Aftab on their Grammy-nominated track *Udhero Na* from Arooj's new album, *Vulture Prince*.

While *Udhero Na* is up for Best Global Music Performance, Anoushka's latest album, *Between Us* (Live) with Metropole Orkest & Jules Buckley featuring Manu Delago has also been nominated for Best Global Music Album this year. This earns Anoushka the massive coup of being the first Indian female musician to receive two Grammy nominations in one year.

Anoushka said, "I'm genuinely over the moon to be performing at the Grammy Awards Premiere Ceremony for the third time. This time I'm excited to share the stage with the wonderful Arooj Aftab, playing her beautiful song *Udhero Na*." IANS



Neha Dhupia revisits her 20-yr-old 'Either sex sells or SRK' comment

Mumbai: Neha Dhupia revisited her 2004 statement, where she had said while promoting her film *Julie* that only 'sex or Shah Rukh Khan' sells. The actor, who recently watched *Pathaan*, said that even after 20 years her 'statement rings true'.

In 2004, the actor grabbed attention by saying that 'either sex sells or Shah Rukh Khan'. She was responding to a question on her 'intimate scenes' in *Julie* (2004), and had said that since Shah Rukh was not in *Julie*, the film had to have 'love-making scenes and shots'. Neha played a sex worker in the film that also featured Priyanshu Chatterjee and Sanjay Kapoor. Almost two decades later, Neha revisited her old statement about Shah Rukh, and recently took to Twitter to praise him after watching *Pathaan* on Republic Day 2023.

Saturday, the actor responded to a Twitter user, who spoke about *Pathaan*'s box office performance, tweeting,



"Almost two decades back Neha Dhupia had given a statement 'only sex or Shah Rukh Khan sells' and that stays true even today!" In reaction to the tweet, Neha wrote, "20 years on, my statement rings true. This is not an actor's career"

but a 'king's reign!' AGENCIES

2-DAY VAGDEVI THEATRE FEST 2023



A scene from the Odia play *Apekhyare Ramachandra* staged at Rabindra Mandap of Bhubaneswar, Sunday, on the first day of the event. Written by Shankar Tripathy, the drama was directed by Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi secretary Prabodh Rath. Apart from Rath, the actors who performed on stage included Manu Patnaik, Sunil Patnaik, Debedra Sundaray, Gyanadeep Khuntia, Kaminkanta Mishra, Sipra Priyadarshini, Deepanjali Mohanty and festival director Mamata Tripathy. Utsav Das and his troupe performed *Ghodanach* during the play. OP PHOTO

12th IFFB concludes with much fanfare



A film director being felicitated during the closing ceremony

BHUBANESWAR: Curtains came down on the seven-day 12th edition of Indian Film Festival Bhubaneswar (IFFB) organised by Film Society of Bhubaneswar here at Odissi Research Centre, Sunday.

As many as 81 films in different languages like Hindi, English, Kannada, Tamil, Kashmiri, Manipuri and Bengali were screened at the event.

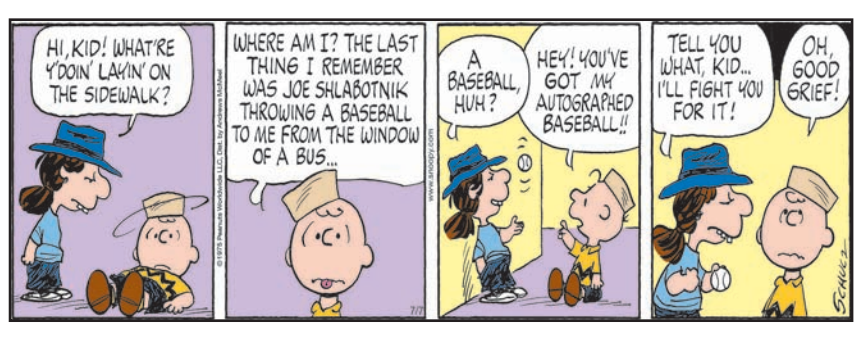
Satyajit Ray's iconic movie *Kapurush* was screened on the last day of the festival. An epic romance of all times, *Kapurush* narrates the story of Amitabha, who accidentally finds himself at the house of his old lover, after his car broke down.

Babu Eshwar Prasad's Kannada movie *Hariva Nadige Maiyella Kaalu* was next in line. The film chronicles the lives of three characters – a discontented photojournalist, a salesgirl, and a prisoner – as they engage in the simple, meditative act of 'walking'. The secretary of the society engaged in an interactive session with the filmmaker after the screening.

The festival concluded for the year with Ray's *Agantuk*. The last day of the festival also saw three student films – *Amma Lodge* by Shivashis Pradhan, *Anekantvad* by Ikprabh Singh Kohli, and *Aalam* by Deependra Kumar.

The festival enthralled audiences across age groups over the past seven days, adding to the cultural space of the vibrant city.

PEANUTS



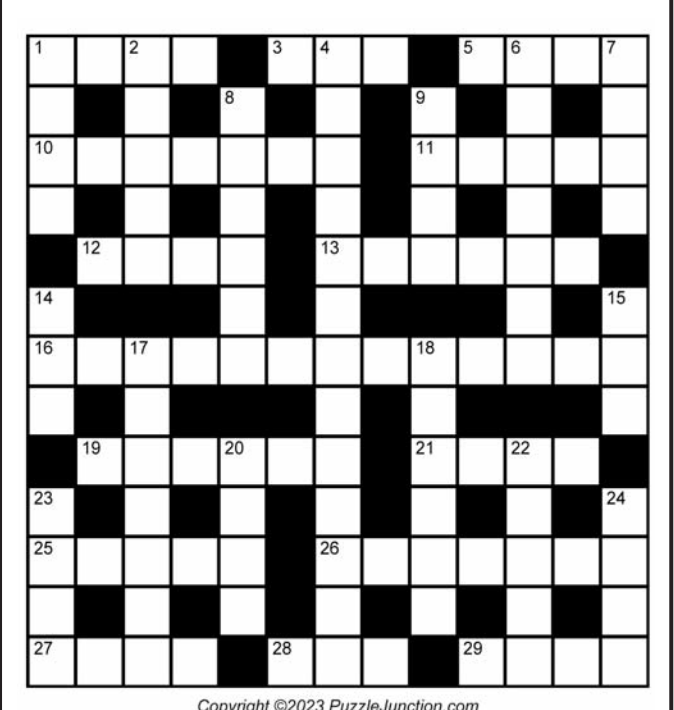
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



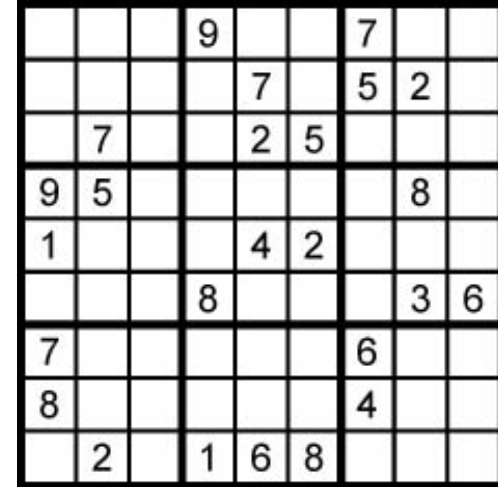
FUN post CROSSWORD



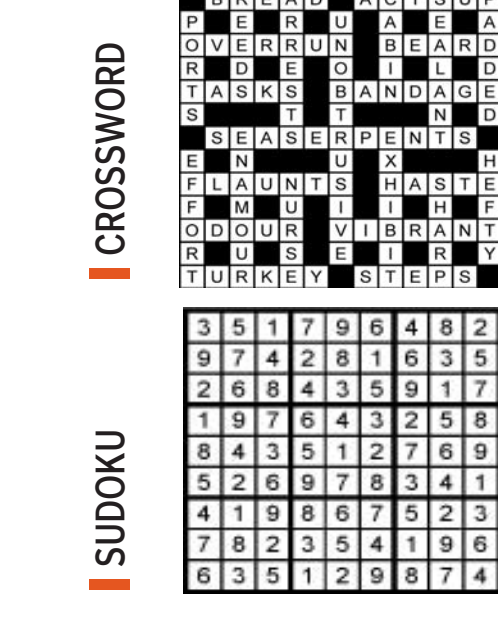
- Copyright ©2023 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Scottish lake
 - 3 Frigid
 - 5 Tumble
 - 10 Not whole
 - 11 Geological eras
 - 12 Nothing
 - 13 Commotion
 - 16 Dark comedy (7,6)
 - 19 Complete
 - 21 Wild swine
 - 25 Seethe
 - 26 Aware
 - 27 Pitcher
 - 28 Request
 - 29 Egress
 - 6 Pear-shaped tropical fruit
 - 7 Lavish
 - 8 Japanese robe
 - 9 Twosome
 - 14 Hen dropping
 - 15 Sphere
 - 17 Time off
 - 18 Sophisticated
 - 20 Hostels
 - 22 Append
 - 23 Pinnacle
 - 24 Apartment
- Down**
- 1 Canter
 - 2 Slice
 - 4 Interior decorator's concerns (6,7)

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

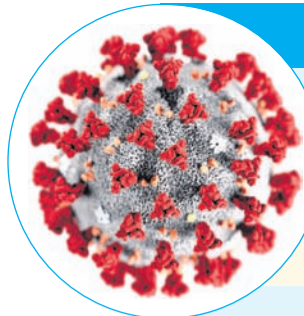


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



DIVINE TOUCH

A man seeks blessings from a Naga Sadhu at Khandagiri Mela in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,46,43,524	64,67,65,670	67,57,380
India	4,46,82,530	4,41,49,949	5,30,739
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

EOW arrests banker in 1.5 crore fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: The Economic Offence Wing (EOW) of crime branch has arrested an absconding banker on charges of misappropriation of funds to the tune of Rs 1.5 crore. The accused was identified as Banshidhar Majhi who worked as the cashier at the Pahanga branch of Odisha Gramya Bank in Niali, Cuttack.

The sleuths arrested the accused from his hideout situated near Bhawanipatana Town, Kalahandi, January 28. Police registered a case (4/23) on the basis of the complaint lodged by Jatindra Nath Sarangi. Majhi was Sunday produced before the court of JMFC, Niali and later sent into judicial custody.

"Investigation of the case re-



Majhi had issued ATMs in names of several bank customers without their consent and used those accounts for illegal monetary transactions

As per EOW sources, the accused used to transfer money illegally from the accounts of Self Help Groups (SHG)

vealed that accused Bansidhar Majhi during his tenure as cashier of Odisha Gramya Bank, Pahanga

Branch from May 24, 2021 to May 19, 2022 and as a cashier of Binishpur Branch from May 20,

2022 to May 23, 2022 was misappropriated the public money by not depositing the cash received from the bank customers in their respective accounts though he used to issue the receipt to the customers," the EOW sources revealed.

The EOW sources also claimed that the accused used to transfer money illegally from the accounts of Self Help Groups (SHG). Reportedly Majhi has issued several ATMs in the name of certain bank customers without their knowledge and was using those for illegal monetary transactions.

"The total amount misappropriated by the accused touches nearly Rs.1.15 crore and the conspiracy took place with the forging of real bank documents," EOW official added.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Gopal suffered from bipolar disorder: Doc

PNN & AGENCIES

Jharsuguda, Jan 29: Assistant sub-inspector of police (ASI) Gopal Krishna Das, who allegedly shot dead health Minister Naba Kishore Das here, was being treated for bipolar disorder by a psychiatrist.

Despite the history of mental disorder, somehow Das was issued a service revolver and appointed in-charge of a police post at Brajarajnagar where he shot Das.

MKCG Medical College and Hospital, Berhampur, psychiatry department head doctor Chandra Sekhar Tripathy told reporters that Das was suffering from bipolar disorder.

"Das had first visited my clinic about eight to ten years ago. He used to get angry very easily and was undergoing treatment for this," Tripathy said.

"I am not sure whether he was taking medicines regularly. If medicines are not taken regularly, the disease reappears. It has been a year since he visited me last," the doctor said.

Bipolar disorder is a mental health condition that causes extreme mood swings that range from hyper-mania to depression, according to experts. However, the disease can be controlled by treatment including counselling.

Das was a resident of Jaleswarkhandi village of Ganjam district. He started his career in police as a constable in Berhampur and was later transferred to

Jharsuguda district 12 years ago.

Jharsuguda SDPO Gupteswar Bhoi said the ASI was issued a licensed pistol after he was made in-charge of a police outpost at Gandhi Chhak of Brajarajnagar area.

Das's wife Jayanti also confirmed that her husband used to take medicines for the psychological disorder. "As he stays about 400km from us, I cannot say whether he was regularly taking medicine," she said.

Official sources said that Das was Sunday deployed for law and order arrangement for Minister Naba Das's visit. Before opening fire at the minister, Das had kept his motorcycle nearly 50 metres away from the spot where he attacked Das.

Meanwhile, officials said the crime Branch of Odisha Police has taken over the case relating to killing of the health minister.

"A seven member special investigating team comprising cyber expert, ballistic expert and officers of Crime Branch has been formed," a senior CB official said adding that the team is led by Ramesh Chandra Dora, deputy Superintendent of Police rank officer.

He along with a ballistic expert has reached Jharsuguda by helicopter to start the investigation.

Arun Bothra IPS, ADGP, CID- CB has also accompanied them to personally supervise and monitor the probe.

The CID Crime Branch has registered a case under section 307 IPC read with 27 Arms Act, an official said.



Jayanti Das (Gopal's wife)



Dr Chandra Sekhar Tripathy

State mourns minister who managed Covid



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik visited late Minister Naba Das at the hospital and was seen consoling his kin OP PHOTOS

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Naba Kishore Das, 61, who succumbed to bullet injuries at Apollo hospital on Sunday, was among the few Congress leaders who could withstand the Naveen Patnaik wave for nearly two decades, winning electoral battles against BJD candidates, before smoking the peace pipe and joining Patnaik in 2019.

Das, a law graduate, was in politics from his college days and was elected as the Students' Union president at Gangadhar Meher College, Sambalpur.

During 1980s, while studying at Sambalpur, Das became the student leader representing the "Grand Old Party". He later became vice-president of Odisha National Students Union of India (NSUI) and Odisha Youth Congress before becoming a member of Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC). His rise was steady as an All India Congress Committee (AICC) member and one of the working presidents of the OPCC-

over the last two decades.

From the mining town of Jharsuguda, Das is believed to be one of the richest members of Patnaik's cabinet and has properties worth Rs 34 crore according to a property statement filed in 2022. Besides huge real estate holdings, the politician is believed to have more than 80 vehicles.

Das won his first state election from Jharsuguda in 2009 on a Congress ticket by defeating BJD candidate Kishore Kumar Mohanty. He was again elected from Jharsuguda in 2014 by defeating Mohanty. However, 5 years later he decided that he needed to jump ship to join the very party he had been fighting against.

He is believed to have told the Congress leadership that his "people wanted him to be with Naveen Patnaik," before leaving.

An ace politician from western Odisha, Das was also known for his organisational skill of which he gave proof when he managed the recent Padampur by-polls, where despite fears that

it would be a neck-to-neck fight, the BJD candidate won by a handsome margin of over 42,000 votes.

Considered a close confidant of CM Naveen Patnaik, Das, who took oath as a minister of health and family welfare May 29, 2019, continued in his portfolio even when the chief minister came up with an overhaul of his cabinet last June. The health minister's proactive role during the Covid-19 pandemic possibly ensured this vote of confidence by the BJD supremo.

Das is survived by wife Minati Das, a son and a daughter. Naba Kishore, as his name indicates, was also a great devotee of Lord Krishna and was known for his generous donations to charity and to temples.

When Das recently donated a gold pitcher, he made it into national headlines. Das reportedly gave an urn weighing 1.7 kg of gold and 5 kg of silver to the Shani Shingnapur temple in Maharashtra, one of the country's most famous Shani temples.



A crowd gathered in front of the hospital following Minister's death

CITY BIDS ADIEU TO .FEST



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar Jan29: The second edition of .FEST, held against the backdrop of 2023 Hockey World Cup, concluded with visitors from various states taking part in cultural, musical, food and storytelling events. Inaugurated Jan 15, the programme saw participation of more than 6 lakh people in the 15 days with an average foot-fall of over 40,000 per day at the Exhibition Ground.

The festival also witnessed

major support from the Odisha Tourism department and the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC). Speaking on the event's successful conclusion, Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) vice-chairman Balwant Singh said, "The BDA had planned this year's festival to provide a unique experience for people from City and outside, to which all segments of the community has responded with utmost enthusiasm."

During Bhubaneswar's grand .FEST 2023, the people attended



Glimpses from the last day of .FEST

various events related to food, entertainment, art and natural beauty such as 'Bhubaneswar Live, BhuFeSto, Trails, and Sebe-Au-Ebe'. Tourists and city folks have witnessed enthralling moments including splendid performances of leading Bollywood singers and regional musicians, along with a few international celebrities.

The festival saw 2000 people turning up for 80 plus trails curated by Ekamrawalk in three categories namely Nature trails, Food trails and Museum Trails.

The fest also hosted Sebe-Au-Ebe (Then and Now), a photo exhibition of over 450 pictures showcasing the transformational journey of Bhubaneswar, which was curated by Ramakanta Samantaray.

The International Food Festival was enjoyed by the public, where more than 80 international cuisines introduced from the 16 Hockey World Cup participating countries. This included a total of six international stalls and 24 state stalls



OP PHOTOS

of various states of India that were set up to present international and regional delicacies.

The event also featured 4 government-run stalls with cuisine participation from Millet Mission to Mission Shakti to Koraput Café among others. Curated by the Hotel & Restaurant Association of Odisha, the International Food Festival was a super hit as the entire food bonanza has created a total business of around INR 2 crore throughout the fortnight long festival and witnessed

the presence of around 18 thousand people each day.

Another major attraction was the City's 1st ever Night Flea Market which witnessed the presence of around 7-10 thousand people daily and was curated by Sonal N More of the OCLAL & ALBA. The flea market featured more than 270 stalls of local artisans, new-age designers, entrepreneurs, and alike which made a total business of around INR 1 crore through the fortnight long festival.

Kulange inspects Khandagiri Mela

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: With the gradual rise in hustle and bustle at the much awaited Khandagiri Mela, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) commissioner Vijaya Amruta Kulange along with the additional commissioner, zonal deputy commissioner south-west zone and other BMC officials visited the fair to inspect the overall arrangements for the ease of the visitors.

The commissioner examined the control room set up by BMC and interacted with the staffs of various teams present. He instructed the medical team to remain well equipped and alert to handle any adverse situation. He also took thorough measure of the security arrangements at the fair.

He asked BMC officials to ensure safe drinking water facilities and sanitised urinals for the visitors while overseeing the arrangements made for the participating saints and devotees.

When asked about the arrangements made, one visitor Bijay said, "The BMC has taken into consideration all the factors that affect visitors like us. These are the best arrangements we have seen many years."

Birsa Munda Stadium in Guinness World Records

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Guinness Book of World Records has certified the Birsa Munda Stadium in Odisha's Rourkela as the world's largest fully seated hockey stadium Saturday. It served as one of the two venues for the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup which concluded Sunday.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik was elated to get the news. "It is thrilling news. I'm truly delighted to know that the Birsa Munda Stadium has been certified by the Guinness Book of World Records as the biggest hockey stadium in the world. The fact that it has been built in 15 months, leaves me amazed. I congratulate the people of Odisha and the team that has made this possible. It is indeed a great accomplishment for them," he can be heard saying in a video message after 5T Secretary VK Pandian broke the news to him.

The international hockey stadium has been named after the tribal leader and famous freedom fighter Birsa Munda. Besides having capacity of over 20,000 seats, the stadium



Having capacity of over 20,000 seats, the stadium houses a swimming pool, a fitness center and a tunnel connecting the dressing room and the practice pitch

houses a swimming pool, a fitness center and a tunnel connecting the dressing room and the practice pitch. The stadium includes an accommodation called the World Cup village, which has over 200 rooms that can sustain at least eight teams.

"A proud moment for #Odisha. The largest fully seated hockey

stadium of the #world is the Birsa Munda Hockey stadium in Rourkela. Just certified by the Guinness Book of World Records. Salute the team Odisha and inspiring vision of HCM @naveen_odisha. Jai Jagannatha" wrote the Secretary on his official Instagram handle.

Scholarship for meritorious students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, Jan 29: Economically backward but meritorious students have been awarded scholarships by Dr Satyananda Panda Memorial Trust, on the occasion of the fifth death anniversary of Dr panda at Janata Nodal School, established by him in his native village Jhimani under Kujang block of Jagatsinghpur.

Tapan Samal and Shilpa Bhoi who have completed matriculation from Janata Nodal School and Sasmita Rout and Sasmita Tarai of Naryan Birabara Samant College in Jhimani were awarded scholarships in his honour.

Utkal alumni association holds 8th general meet



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: The Alumni Association of Utkal University's statistics department held its 8th general meeting here Sunday in the PG Council conference hall on the university premises. Joining the programme as chief guest, Directorate of Economics and Statistics director Vijay Bhushan Nanda advised the students to work hard, taking the difficulties posed by their subject of study as a challenge rather than complaining.

Nanda also promised to provide opportunities to statistics students to develop their skills through internships on behalf of the directorate.

Joining as guest of honour, Jitendriya Sadangi encouraged the students to recognise their

inner strength and throw away all thoughts of inferiority. Association president Ravindra Kumar Mohanty put forward a proposal to make it more effective, which was unanimously accepted. Association general secretary Anadi Charan Das presented the annual report.

As per tradition, the association awarded certificates to students who excelled in various competitions and topped the 'statistics olympiad'. Head of department Priyaranjan Das delivered the welcome address, while Prafulla Kumar Swain efficiently carried the programme efficiently with the help of Rakesh Behera. More than hundred former students of the department from across the state and outside attended the programme, while the current students helped in organisation.



LIT FEST: Governor Ganeshi Lal with guests at Bhubaneswar Literature Festival organised by Sahitya Samaj Trust at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

KIIT-KISS mini marathon promotes education for all



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: More than one lakh people, across the globe, participated in the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) and Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences' (KISS) mini marathon held Sunday. The event was a part of the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the institute and was organised in 25 cities across the country and 35 towns in Odisha.

The core event was held in Bhubaneswar, where the founder of KIIT and KISS Achyuta Samanta flagged off the mini marathon at 6am in the presence of actors such as Rahul Bose, Sabyasachi Mishra and Archita Sahu along with Bhubaneswar(North) MLA Susanta Rout, athlete Dutee Chand, Amiya Mallick, Anuradha Biswal and rugby association president Priyadarshi Mishra. Senior func-



tionaries of KIIT including vice chancellor Sasmita Samanta were present, while BMC Mayor Sulochana Das joined the concluding function.

About 20,000 individuals participated covering the 6.5 km path-way that leads to KIIT cricket sta-

dium from Xavier Square. The objective of the mini marathon was to promote 'Education for All'.

The event witnessed participation of students from countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Cameroon, Kenya, and Zimbabwe among many other nations.

Live in an igloo, not in the Arctic, but in Manali

Continued from P1

"We were a bit nervous on seeing the ice made beds and reluctant to stay in night. After spending a night, we decided to extend our stay by a day," his wife Aamani said, adding "the igloo preserves the heat generated by the human body and helps keep warm inside the dome."

The creative ice sculptures are also added attractions. The beds made out of snow are covered by layers of warm materials.

Kumar, who runs Keylinga Himalayan Adventure, says the igloos are of different sizes. "We have an igloo for a couple and also for a family of four. We are charging Rs 11,000 per couple that includes all three meals."

The daylong trip costs Rs 2,000 per person with pick up and drop charges of Rs 3,500 for six people.

Picturesque resort Manali in Kullu district houses no less than 1,500 hotels, lodges and homestay accommodations in and around.

Himachal Pradesh has no tourist accommodations in far-off areas. Rural homestays that started in 2008 have been driving tourists to the interiors and that is the best option to stay and enjoy the virgin nature. The highest arrival of tourists in the state in 14 years was at 196.02 lakh in 2017. The state's economy is highly dependent on tourism, besides hydroelectric power and horticulture.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

Before the Notary Public, Malkangiri, I, Lalit Pujari, S/o Budra Pujari, resident of Vill. Sardapat, P.O. Kiang, P.S. Mathili, Dist. Malkangiri do hereby solemnly affirm and state on oath as follows. That, I am working in Central Water Commission (CWC) and designation of Work Sarkar GR-II, where my name wrongly mentioned Lalith Poojari. That, in my all documents my name is mentioned as Lalit Pujari except my Service Book. That, Lalit Pujari, S/o Budra Pujari and Lalith Poojari, S/o Budra Poojari is one and same person.

By virtue of an affidavit I, Ankarboyna Mani, W/o Late Ankarboyna Jagdish Kumar, resident of Gajapati Nagar, Near Siridi Sai Baba Mandir, P.O./P.S.-Jatani, Dist. - Khordha, Odisha declare that my daughter Miss 'ANKARBOYNA DEVI SAI DEEKSHITA's actual DOB is 24.09.2010 in place of 26.09.2010. Hence, in all her official records her DOB shall be considered as 24.09.2010 for all purpose.

LOST

I, Gayatri Das, D/o Rabi Shankar Das, lost my B.Tech. Degree Certificate issued by BPUT. Registration Number- 0701219009. If found, please contact: 7606079625.



SPIRITUAL GATHERING: Guests attending the Pancham Barsik Anchalika Sri Aurobindo Patha Chakra workshop at Town Hall in Cuttack, Sunday

Millet farming groups hailed by PM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday hailed Odisha's women self help groups (SHGs) involved in millet farming.

During his address to the nation on 'Mann Ki Baat', the PM said, "May I ask you one more thing? You must have heard the word entrepreneur, but have you heard Milletpreneurs? Milletpreneurs of Odisha are in the limelight these days."

Modi added, "A Self Help Group of about 1500 women of the tribal district Sundergarh is associated with the Odisha Millets Mission. Here women are making everything from millets... to cookies, rasgulla, gulab jamun, and even cakes."

Due to their great demand in the market, the income of women is also increasing, the PM said further.

Earlier in September 2022, the NITI Aayog had praised Sundergarh district administration for its successful implementation of the Odisha Millets Mission

(OMM) and inclusion of 'ragi laddu' in the supplementary nutrition programme for pre-school children through the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).

Sharing his thoughts on Tweet, Principal Secretary, Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Department, Arabinda Kumar Padhee stated, "Grateful to Hon'ble Prime Minister for recognizing the efforts of @MilletsOdisha. Under the guidance of Hon'ble @CMO_Odisha & leadership of @mission_shakti WSHGs.

Power struggles in nature can be more subtle, nuanced

Scientists used to think power in animals played out in a tidy and simple way. Nature is a dog-eat-dog place. Rams butt heads in a thunderous spectacle, and the winning male gets to mate with a female. Bigger, stronger, meaner animals beat up smaller, weaker, more timid ones, and then walk, fly or swim away with the prize.

All that's certainly going on in the wild. But the natural world, it turns out, is so much more interesting than simply squaring off in brutish battles. As in tales of palace intrigue, the quest for power among animals is subtle, nuanced,

strategic and, dare I say, beautiful.

I'm an animal behaviourist and evolutionary biologist who have been studying complex social behaviour in nonhumans for 30 years. As I describe in my book, "Power in the Wild: The Subtle and Not-So-Subtle Ways Animals Strive for Control over Others," I have come to learn that many power struggles in animals look more like scenes from a Shakespearean drama than rounds in a boxing match.

To study the dynamics of power in nonhumans we need a definition. How do we gauge power in other species? I think of power as the abil-



ity to direct, control or influence the behaviour of others in order to control access to resources.

Using that definition, power pervades every aspect of the social lives of animals: what they eat, where

they eat, where they live, who they mate with, how many offspring they produce, who they join forces with, who they work to depose and more.

Spies in the water For years, my former PhD student Ryan Earley and I were obsessed with power and spying in groups of a tiny fish called the swordtail. So much so that Ryan ended up building his PhD dissertation around these fish whose brains can sit comfortably on the head of a pin.

When two males in a group of swordtails meet, they often engage in a series of chases, followed by

displays in which they twist their bodies into an S shape. If it's not clear at that point who is top swordtail, the fish ram into each other. And if even that doesn't settle matters, they circle each other, lock jaws and mouth-wrestle, thrashing about until a clear victor emerges.

Earley watched these pairwise power struggles for hundreds of hours and began to suspect he wasn't the only one watching - other male swordtails seemed to be as well. To test that hunch, Earley took a page from the script of a spy thriller, where an unsuspecting target is watched from behind a one-way mirror.

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Can BRS make a dent in BJD's Odisha fortress?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: With several Odisha leaders, including former Chief Minister Giridhar Gamang, ex-MP Jayram Pangri and farmers' leader Akshay Kumar, joining KCR's Bharat Rashtira Samiti (BRS), which is eyeing to expand its party base, political atmosphere has charged up in the state.

However, whether the entry of BRS into Odisha will change its political landscape remains to be seen as the Naveen Patnaik-led Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has proved to be an unbeatable political force in the past 23 years.

Defeating the Congress, BJD formed the government in state in alliance with the BJP in 2000. However, in 2009, the BJD ditched the BJP and formed a government on its own. In the past decade, the regional party has defeated two big national parties the Congress and the BJP.

While the Congress is becoming weak in one after another election, the BJP has also failed to perform as a strong opponent to the regional party in past panchayat, urban and Assembly elections.

In past also, many political parties like the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Samajwadi Party (SP), Trinamool Congress (TMC), Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and Left parties tried to enter Odisha politics, but in vain.

Only the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) managed to win four Assembly seats in 2009 when it entered into an alliance with the BJD.



THE NAVEEN PATNAIK-LED BIJU JANATA DAL (BJD) HAS PROVED TO BE AN UNBEATABLE POLITICAL FORCE IN THE PAST 23 YEARS

IN PAST MANY POLITICAL PARTIES LIKE BSP, SP, TRINAMOL CONGRESS (TMC), AAM AADMI PARTY (AAP), JMM AND LEFT PARTIES HAVE TRIED TO ENTER ODISHA POLITICS, BUT ONLY IN VAIN

THE NATIONALIST CONGRESS PARTY (NCP) MANAGED TO WIN FOUR ASSEMBLY SEATS IN 2009 ONLY WHEN IT ENTERED INTO AN ALLIANCE WITH BJD

Besides, many of the political leaders, who have recently joined the BRS, were not very much involved in active politics. And, the non-political leaders have not tried their luck in Odisha politics till now.

New inductees in BRS from Odisha claimed that many leaders from different parties in the state are contacting to join them, whereas the ruling BJD and BJP

have said that KCR's party will not have any impact.

Commenting on this, senior BJD leader and Puri MP Pinaki Misra said, "The BRS has taken the leaders from BJP. As per my opinion, the vote bank of Giridhar Gamang will be diverted to BRS from BJP. It will not have any impact on the BJD's vote bank."

"Nobody can match the USP of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. The BRS may be able to gain a very few thousands of votes in its peripheral areas and that too in two or three districts," said the BJD leader.

Similarly, BJP general secretary Prithviraj Harichandan said, "In the past also, Odisha had witnessed several such parties. But all disappeared at a later stage. So, here the fight is between BJP and BJD."

"The BJP is fighting on development agenda while the BJD is fighting with its face Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik," the BJP leader said.

According to political analyst Rabi Das, the BRS may be able to put some impact on southern Odisha, especially Telugu-speaking border constituencies.

"Many schemes of KCR in Telangana are better than those in Odisha. Odisha's Kalia scheme has come from their state. Telangana is providing more money as old age pension than Odisha," Das said.

"The leaders who were searching for a party which is financially sound, for them, BRS is the best option. So, such leaders will definitely jump into the BRS," he added.



ADVENTURE CAMP: Students of Berhampur University and its affiliated colleges of Ganjam, Gajapati and Kandhamal districts camped on the foothills of Mahendragiri during a training programme on trekking

MCL comes up with eco-park over closed underground mine

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 29: Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL), a subsidiary of Coal India Limited (CIL) as part of its green initiative, has developed an eco-park and a museum over a closed underground mine.

The Chandra Shekar Azad eco-park and coal museum are situated at mine number 4 of Orient Area in Ib Valley coalfields, Jharsuguda, Odisha.

The park was constructed by MCL in record time of just more than a year after coal and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi had laid its foundation stone in 2021.

It was created after repurposing coal mine number 4, where construction had closed down in 2017. Visitors to the park can also avail the opportunity of having a first-hand experience of an underground mine.



TUSKER POACHING IN SIMILIPAL 4 poachers held, 2 tusks seized

POST NEWS NETWORK



POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Jan 29: A joint team of police and forest officials seized two elephant tusks and arrested four persons in connection with the poaching of a tusker at Talabandha wildlife range under North Division of Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj district, late Saturday night.

A case was registered in this connection under relevant sections of Wildlife Act and further investigation is on. The accused were identified as Gobinda Hembram, Kunasingh Naik, Ramrai Tudu and Kuna Naik. The

other was exhumed from the farmland of another accused in Matiani village.

The senior official said that the poachers had killed the elephant and removed its tusks. Over 50 personnel were involved in the operation.

All the accused were nabbed after the joint team got information that the poachers were planning to strike a deal for the tusks. One of the accused had kept the tusk hidden under the ground on a farmland on the backyard of his house.

Sources said that a detailed probe will be carried out to ascertain involvement of the poachers in other wildlife crimes. Further, their linkages with other gangs involved in illegal wildlife trade will also be investigated.

Notably, the decomposed carcass of the elephant without its tusks was recovered from Talabandha wildlife range of Similipal Tiger Reserve, January 21.

Earlier, several Forest department officials of Jenabil range under STR south were arrested on the charge of destroying evidence by burning the carcass of an elephant under Gurandi beat in December 2022.

3 held for murder of retired teacher

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawaniapatna, Jan 29: In a shocking incident, miscreants killed a retired teacher over a land related dispute at Deundi village under Junagarh police limits in Kalahandi district, police said Saturday.

The victim was identified as Kanhu Charan Thakur, a native of the village. Police registered a murder case over a complaint lodged by his son and arrested three co-villagers.

The accused were identified as Manas Gopal, Bimal Gopal and Ashok Gopal in the village.

Police said that the murder took place over a land related dispute between the accused and



the victim. Police said that Thakur was using a government land as an approach road to his house. This led to a dispute between the accused and the victim following which the former cut off the road to the latter's house. The move resulted in a bitter

altercation between the two groups. Enraged, the accused persons beat up Thakur and later strangled him to death. Family members rescued him in critical condition and rushed him to the local hospital where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival.

Man gets 10-yr RI for raping 14-yr old

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Jan 29: A fast track court here sentenced a man to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment after convicting him for the rape of a 14-year-old girl at Ulibur village under Barbil police limits in Keonjhar district, Saturday.

The convict was identified as Aizul Sardar, a casual labourer at a local steel plant and a native of Tanakua village under Bishnupur police limits in North 24-Parganas district in West Bengal. The fast track court judge Manas Kumar Mishra also slapped a penalty of Rs 10,000 on the convict apart from the punishment. On default, the convict will have to undergo additional six months of rigorous imprisonment.

The judge also directed the district

legal services authority (DLSA) to provide Rs 4 lakh financial assistance to the survivor, special public prosecutor Gyanendranath Jena said. Jena pleaded the matter on behalf of the state government.

The incident occurred when the survivor had gone to relieve herself to a nearby forest, October 8, 2017. Sardar spotted the girl and picked her to an isolated place and raped her. Villagers rushed to the spot and rescued the girl when she raised an alarm.

Later, police arrested Sardar and produced him in court over a complaint lodged by the girl's mother. Since then, he had been serving as an under trial in judicial custody.

The judge passed the order after examining the statements recorded by 14 witnesses and the forensic details and the medical report in the case.

Minor critical as spear pierces stomach

POST NEWS NETWORK

Belpada, Jan 29: A 14-year-old boy sustained critical injuries after a spear he was carrying accidentally pierced his stomach at Aainlabhata village under this police limits in Bolangir district, Sunday.

The injured boy was identified as Raju Thanapati, the second son of late Surusingh Thanapati of the village. The incident occurred when he was on the way to his farmland carrying a spear on his shoulder. He stumbled while climbing the walls of his farmland and the spear pierced his stomach when he fell down.

He screamed for help as blood oozed out from his stomach. Family members rushed to the spot and admitted him to Belpada community health centre. There the doctors administered him

FREAK MISHAP

The incident occurred when he was on his way to farmland carrying the spear. It pierced his stomach when he stumbled and fell down

first aid and referred him to Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital (BBMCH) in Bolangir for advanced treatment. His health condition is stated to be critical.

On being informed, Belpada tehsildar Prashanti Pradhan rushed to Aainlabhata village and tried to meet the family members but came back after finding them absent at home. She directed the Belpada RI Golap

Kumbhar to handover Rs 15,000 financial assistance from the district Red Cross fund to the boy's family members for treatment. She also asked the RI to take stock of his treatment and inform her accordingly.

Notably, a javelin had pierced through the neck of a Class-IX student during the annual sports meet of Agalpur Boys' High School in the district December 17, 2022.

The boy was immediately rushed to the nearest hospital in a critical condition with the projectile sticking through his throat. Later, a team of doctors at Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital in Bolangir managed to remove the javelin after an intense surgery.

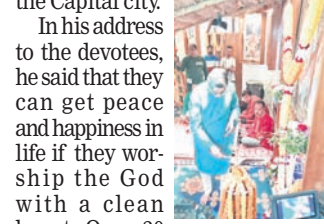
GURU BHAGABAT TUNGI UNVEILED

POST NEWS NETWORK



Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Gururji Chandrabhanu Satapathy, writer of Guru Bhagabat Tungi at the Sai Temple in Tankapani Road of the Capital city.

In his address to the devotees, he said that they can get peace and happiness in life if they worship the God with a clean heart. Over 20 members of Guru Bhagabat Tungi participated in this programme and sang devotional songs to the delight of the audience. Trustees from various places attending this programme were felicitated and a palanquin procession of Lord Siridi Sai was taken out on this occasion.



MESMERISING PERFORMANCE: Artists performed on the concluding evening of cultural festival and Pallishree Mela at Dhenkanal Mini Stadium, Sunday

Blackbuck headcount conducted in Ganjam

IN 2021, THE LAST TIME THE BLACKBUCK CENSUS WAS HELD, THE ANIMAL'S POPULATION IN THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT STOOD AT 7,358

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, Jan 29: The Forest department is gearing up for the biannual head count of blackbucks in Ganjam district, the only habitat for the majestic animal in the state, Sunday.

Over 500 persons in over 100 units will count the endangered species across three forest divisions, including Berhampur, Ghumusar South and North, an official said.

Experts have provided training to enumerators on counting methods of the blackbuck. The counting will start from 6am and will continue till noon, said Dillip Kumar Rout divisional forest officer (DFO) Ghumusar South.

The blackbuck is a Schedule-1 animal as per Wildlife (Protection) Act-1972 (amended in 1992) and is



considered as vulnerable according to the Red Data Book.

The last time the blackbuck count was held was in 2021. The population of the animal in the district then stood at 7,358.

Besides the Bishnoi community of western Rajasthan and the Vala Rajputs of Saurashtra, the people

of Ganjam, especially Balipadar-Bhetanai areas, near Aska in the district, have been enthusiastically protecting blackbucks which are associated with their history, folklore and religious sentiments, said former chief conservator of forest (wildlife) SS Srivastav.

"The people of the region be-

The blackbuck is a Schedule-1 animal as per Wildlife (Protection) Act-1972 (amended in 1992) and is considered as vulnerable

lieve the sighting of the blackbuck in the paddy field is harbinger of good luck for them," said president of the Blackbuck Protection Committee (Ganjam) Amulya Upadhyaya.

He said the villagers did not harm blackbucks. Though the area was not protected by the government, the animal freely roams as they are protected by the villagers. This has resulted in the animal's population increasing in the district, he added.

FOCUS BUDGET EXPECTATIONS

NOTHING ENOUGH TO ANYBODY



Although the government is likely to announce newer schemes for the benefit of the poor the allocations may not be enough to give any tangible benefit to anybody whereby, they remain as token gestures

The budget wish list is big. Yes, the urgent needs of different social classes and the suffering of the poor with high unemployment, inflation, poor healthcare system and education in the country make them aspire for some relief on the big day. More than that, the current malleability of the rulers in the background of elections this year in nine states – Telangana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram – and to the Lok Sabha next year make people think that the government will come with a people friendly budget and therefore make them demand more. But the likely size itself of the budget is not going to be big enough to meet the challenges. The trends of previous years and the current state of the economy make it easy to guess the most probable size of the budget and its capacity to make allocations for different sectors. The budget's size which was about 18% of the GDP has been gradually declining from 2009-10; it reached to a 12.59% level in 2015-16. Later, with some ups and downs, it peaked to 17.1% in 2020-21 thanks to COVID-aided slow growth coupled with the high expenditure need of the government. Again, the share has fallen and it was 15.29% in the current year's budget and the government is much likely to go much beyond that level now. So, assuming the same level of 15.29% of GDP in 2023-24, too, the budget size would be ₹46.32 lakh crore. This guess is based on the most likely GDP estimate of ₹303 lakh crore for the 2023-24 budget year. To be clearer, the 2022-23 GDP estimate as shown in the budget document was ₹258 lakh crore. This sum is going to be revised in the budget to ₹273.08 lakh crore based on the NSO's first advance estimate. Now it is being heard that the government is going to estimate an 11% nominal increase over this which means the GDP figure to be the basis for budget 2023-24 would be ₹303 lakh crore. Add to this, the government wants the fiscal deficit to be under control; it wants to peg it at 5.9% of the GDP or so. That limit will be necessary now to achieve its goal of reaching its FRBM roadmap of 4.5% in 2025-26. So, it has no choice but to be parsimonious in fixing the budget size. In absolute terms, the budget of ₹46.32 lakh will be ₹6.87 lakh crore higher than the current year's budget of ₹39.45 lakh crore, which means not a big increase after factoring in the current inflation. The government has some compulsory spending that it cannot reduce. The essential spending during the current year which includes states' share in taxes (17%), pensions (4%), interest payment (20%), Finance Commission and other transfers (10%), and subsidies (8%) add up to 67% of budget expenditure that is ₹31.03 lakh crore or 10.25% of the GDP. What is remaining is only 33% meaning ₹15.29 lakh crore, which is 5.04% of the GDP. While the available balance itself is about 5% of the GDP, the demands are like 6% spending on education as recommended

by Kothari Commission long back, 3% on health (of course this one States and Centre together) as per Planning Commission or Srinadha Reddy Commission recommendation and so on. So, the government will not be able to spend on various sectors at desired levels. Also, it cannot spend enough on capital investment. So, will be on the other schemes that it might introduce with an eye on coming elections. Yet, the government cannot ignore the middle classes totally because the ruling party has high hopes for support in voting from this class. So, it looks like it may make some tinkering with the income tax rates. The peak in personal income tax may be brought down from the present 42.74% since it is 25.20% higher than that of the corporate tax. Also likely is the increase in the standard deduction from its 2019 set limit of ₹50,000 to ₹75,000 or ₹1 lakh. So will be some concessions under Section 80 C, housing loan deduction and relief on the interest on these loans. Although the government is likely to announce newer schemes for the benefit of the poor the allocations may not be enough to give any tangible benefit to anybody whereby, they remain as token gestures. The economic policy the government is following which restricts the government's role in the economy constrains it from spending expansion. Finally, the budget will end up as everything to everybody but nothing enough to anybody.

The writer is a development economist and commentator on economic and social affairs. Views are personal.



PSM Rao

THE ECONOMIC POLICY THE GOVERNMENT IS FOLLOWING WHICH RESTRICTS THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THE ECONOMY CONSTRAINS IT FROM SPENDING EXPANSION

SPECTRUM AGRICULTURE

Second Green Revolution will be digitised

Farming is one of the world's oldest and most far-reaching endeavors. Meeting the growing food demands of the global population – projected to reach ten billion by 2050 – amid accelerating climate change presents an unprecedented high-wire act that requires human ingenuity, good governance, and technology. The last time the agriculture sector went through a seismic shift like this was when new technologies, such as high-yielding wheat and rice seeds, chemical fertilizers, and irrigation technologies, kicked off the Green Revolution in the 1960s. In the following three decades, cereal production in famine-prone Asia doubled, and wheat and rice became cheaper, even though the population increased by 60% during this period. Unfortunately, the Green Revolution brought with it a host of environmental costs. Lax regulations and generous subsidies made fertilizers and pesticides cheap, and farmers, with no training, used them excessively, leaving soil damaged and waterways polluted. As new crops took over, traditional plant varieties were lost, contributing to biodiversity loss. The rise of robotics and artificial intelligence might help usher in a second, even greener Green Revolution. Robots are already harvesting crops, weeding, and collecting data to improve soil management. Soon, they will be as common in farm pastures and greenhouses as they are in medical labs or Amazon warehouses. The hope is that AI can help meet food and climate goals by adding more precision to agriculture, thus allowing farmers to grow more and waste less. AI-powered programmes, like IBM's Watson, combine data on weather patterns, crop yields, and market prices to advise farmers regarding the best time to plant, the precise amount of fertilizers to use, and when to harvest for peak ripeness. Researchers at Microsoft and Wageningen University in the Netherlands are growing cucumbers with the help of algorithms, combining the efforts of humans and AI to boost yields while using fewer natural resources. In California, a state that grows irrigated fruits and vegetables at a large scale, such technologies mean real savings in seasonal labour requirements. For example, a \$150,000 "grape-gobbling robot" can sort two tonnes of grapes in 12 minutes, replacing 15 human workers – as well as reducing the use of fertilizers, pesticides, and water, while producing higher yields. In the past, agricultural automation was characterised by large industrial farms using heavy machinery to boost yields. Mechanisation on this scale increased producers' dependence on fossil fuels and the unbridled use of chemicals. The steep cost also meant that small farmers, especially in poorer countries, lacked access, creating an uneven playing field. Digital technologies are chang-

ing this to benefit both large-scale and small-scale farms. Farmers have taken a page from ride-sharing apps like Uber, using GPS tracking devices and fleet-management software that allows small producers to share assets required for agricultural mechanisation. Some companies, like TROTRO Tractor in Ghana and Tun Yat in Myanmar, allow small farmers to share the cost of renting a tractor they could not afford alone. Digital support can also upgrade traditional mechanisation, even if it is not advanced technology. For example, GPS devices that track cattle ("smart collars") and transmit data about animals' health and movements can determine the amount of feed to dispense and automate the feeding process, improving productivity. The great advantage of robotics is its potential for cost-effectiveness, allowing small farmers to compete with their larger counterparts. Like computers and smartphones, these machines, once manufactured in large volumes, should become much less expensive, thus paving the way for wider use. But robotics and AI-based tools, which favour highly skilled farmers over low-skilled ones, have the potential to deepen existing inequality. They could further alienate the world's poorest people, especially those who live in rural areas and eke out a living on a small plot of land without access to markets or financial services. To ensure that agricultural automation, from tractors to drones,

is inclusive, governments should invest in essential infrastructure, including electricity and broadband connectivity in rural areas. They should also provide training on these digital tools to create a new class of skilled farmers who can operate more advanced technologies – and can create new, high-skill opportunities for rural youth. To be sure, technology alone will not right the world's wrongs when it comes to delivering food more sustainably or making farming more efficient and equitable. Nor can it transform agriculture overnight. From California to Kenya, robotics and AI are still expensive and tend to favour larger farms over smaller ones. Moreover, greater use of robotics could encourage the expansion of monoculture farming systems, as robotic machines require uniformity to function efficiently. That would lead to a loss of genetic diversity. Robotics and AI in agriculture are still at an early stage of development. Thoughtful policy and rigorous impact assessments of its adoption are required to realise the Second Green Revolution's full potential. Robots are not substitutes for human farmers. But in a future with billions of extra mouths to feed, they can make food more sustainable, available, and cheaper to produce. It's high time to give machines a chance.

The writer is Chief Economist of the Food and Agriculture Organization. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Maximo Torero

FROM CALIFORNIA TO KENYA, ROBOTICS AND AI ARE STILL EXPENSIVE AND TEND TO FAVOUR LARGER FARMS OVER SMALLER ONES

WISDOM CORNER

- Boredom is just the reverse side of fascination: both depend on being outside rather than inside a situation, and one leads to the other. ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER
- Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough. OPRAH WINFREY
- No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude. ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

WORDSWORTH

Flamenco

Etymologists have puzzled over the word ever since it first appeared in English in the 1880s. A number of theories have been put forward to fill the gap, most of which we can dismiss out of hand (for example, that the word may go back to the Moorish period and could be from the Andalusian Arabic fellah mengu, an escaped peasant). English travellers to Spain in the nineteenth century had been bringing back descriptions of the wild music and dances of the Roma (gypsies) of Andalusia ever since Lord Byron went there in 1819, but none of them used the word flamenco. In The Zinca: an Account of the Gypsies of Spain of 1841, George Borrow called the dances Romalis, which is just Romany for gypsy dance; Richard Ford in 1845 commented in his travel guide Gatherings from Spain that the form was then called Ole by the Spanish. A book of 1995 about Silverio, the famous early populariser of flamenco, says that flamenco was first used in Spanish for the form in 1853. Before then, flamenco had many senses, which included petty criminal, smuggler, soldier, a type of knife, or a person who was irreverent and rebellious. There are two other significant Spanish senses of flamenco. One is for the bird we call a flamingo, known from some southern parts of the country. The other is of a Fleming, a person who lives in Flanders, at one time a separate country but which is now divided between Belgium, France and the Netherlands (the Spanish word in this sense is from Middle Dutch Vlaming, a Fleming.) The flamingo sense has led some word hunters to equate the brightly coloured bird with the colourful dancers. One version of the story holds that at one time flamenco was used of the fair-skinned inhabitants of Flanders, who had flushed complexions, unlike the darker-hued Spanish, and that the word was transferred to the pink coloured flamingo. Nobody now believes any of this. A direct Flemish connection is actually more plausible. From 1579 to 1700 Flanders was part of the Spanish Netherlands and Spanish fighting men were based there. This is why one sense of flamenco in Spanish is of a soldier. It has been suggested that some of them were Roma and that on their return to Spain they were given special dispensation to live where they wanted and take any occupation they liked, unlike other Roma, who continued to suffer severe legal restrictions. In consequence, some Roma families of Andalusia were given the title of los flamencos, the Flemish ones (George Borrow mentions this in Zinca!) and the art form was taken from this.

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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Mixed trends

Sir, Direct interaction with students and teachers on various educational aspects is generally transparent. An NGO has been doing that over the years to assess the schooling status, reading habits and arithmetic skills in 5-16-year-old children in rural India (Annual Status of Education Report or ASER). The organisation's report, after a gap of four years, has concluded that while enrollment in government schools has seen an upward trend at all levels, the reading ability and mathematical skills of class 3 children has taken a hit after 2018. Broadly, the ASER reveals the high impact of social media platforms like the WhatsApp in percolating knowledge between students through groups. It also unmistakably points to the influence of tuitions on children. One shift that was noted in the last four years was that the drop in children's capability to learn arithmetic was less than their ability to read languages like English, and this could be attributed to the thrust on 'difficult' mathematics in tuitions. A salient feature of the study relates to girl dropout that has decreased significantly over the last four years. A high admission in schools and a low girl student dropout can be attributed to a heightened awareness among parents as well as some salutary policies of the government. Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Controlling temples

Sir, "Why should religious places not be left to religious people?" the Supreme Court has aptly questioned. This observation has come from the top court in the wake of a plea by the Andhra Pradesh government against the Andhra Pradesh High Court order. The High Court has upset the plan of the government to take over the administration of the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swami Devasthanam associated with the Ahobilam mutt. The Supreme Court has found no reason to interfere with the judgement of the High Court order. The argument of the government that it had appointed executive officers to the temple even in the past for which there were no protests does not necessarily mean the acceptance of the imposition by the government. People of the yesteryears could not perhaps dare to protest even though the action of the government in those days was not palatable. The government which interferes with the administration of the temple must show willingness to consider the priests and associated staff as government employees and the salaries to them have to be fixed as per government scale. KV Seetharamaiah, BANGALORE

of the day quote

West Bengal is my second home. I wish to soak and imbibe the rich culture and language of this state, which is the soil of so many luminaries

C V ANANDA BOSE | BENGAL GOVERNOR

In Uttar Pradesh, we are running many programmes which are bringing changes to the lives of common citizens and making them self-reliant

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

The population of Delhi is increasing rapidly. I will not say that the previous government did nothing, but the work was not done according to the speed with which the population increased. According to the way the population has increased in Delhi, preparations are being made to provide water. After the formation of our government, the 12th UGR is being prepared

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

NIA attaches Hurriyat office in Srinagar

Srinagar: The National Investigating Agency (NIA) Sunday attached the separatist Hurriyat Conference's office in the Rajbagh area here on the orders of a Delhi court in a terror funding case, officials said. A team of the federal agency arrived at the Hurriyat office and pasted an attachment notice on the building's outer wall, they said.

UNGA President arrives in India

New Delhi: United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) President Csaba Korosi arrived in India Sunday on a three-day visit. It is his first bilateral visit to any country since he assumed Presidency of UNGA in September 2022. During the visit, Korosi will be holding talks with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on key multilateral and regional issues of mutual interest, a statement issued by the External Affairs Ministry said.

Kerala youth stabbed to death in Poland

Thiruvananthapuram: A youth from Kerala, working in Poland, was stabbed to death there Sunday, as per his family. Working in Poland for the past five months as a supervisor in a private firm, Suraj, 23, from Ollur (Thirissur), was stabbed to death by a group of Georgians following an altercation. Four youths from Kerala who were with Suraj were also injured during the attack. The Indian embassy in Warsaw has confirmed the death of Suraj, according to his family members.



We sometimes say Pakistan did this or that, and we will show strategic patience. The best example of strategic patience is the way Lord Krishna handled Shishupal. He (Lord Krishna) forgave him 100 times

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

RAIN FAILS TO DAMPEN BEATING RETREAT SPIRIT

Rains failed to dampen the spirit of Beating Retreat ceremony held at the historic Vijay Chowk here Sunday as Indian classical tunes played by bands of the armed forces filled the air, marking the end of Republic Day celebrations



What next for Cong after BJJ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Jan 29: The Bharat Jodo Yatra may have galvanised the rank and file of the Congress party and helped improve the image of its leader Rahul Gandhi, but the party's path to parliamentary elections in 2024 remains strewn with many challenges, analysts and experts say. The grand old party faces the onerous task of rebuilding its moribund organisation, which is struggling to overcome a leadership crisis and regain credibility with the voters. It also has to craft a political narrative that not only counters the ruling BJP's Hindutva-driven mobilisation but also yields tangible electoral gains. Political commentator Sanjay Jha, who was once a spokesperson for the Congress party, said the real task of taking on the BJP begins now for the Congress and the party has a clear "tailwind". "The cadres have been galvanised. (Congress president) Mallikarjun Kharge is making aggressive, combative speeches that are seemingly getting under BJP's skin," Jha told PTI. He said the Congress needs to treat 2023 as a semi-final knockout and a "do or die". As many as nine states -- Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh

and Telangana -- go to polls this year. Not much is expected to go in favour of the Congress in the four north-eastern states, where assembly elections will be held next month. The party has been steadily losing ground in these states and is unlikely to revive its electoral fortunes there.

In Mizoram, the Congress had suffered a crushing defeat in 2018 and was down to just five seats. While in Meghalaya it had lost to the NDA; it had drawn a blank in Tripura and Nagaland. But a dismal show in the northeast can be more than offset, if the party wrests power in Karnataka, which will likely go to polls in March-April. Most political observers give Congress an edge over the BJP in this southern state. That said, the most crucial electoral test will come toward the end of the year, when the four other bigger states hold elections.

"With Karnataka looking to swing back, Congress needs to immediately resolve the Rajasthan gridlock by making Sachin Pilot the chief minister. Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh can both be won, if the Congress stops committing hara-kiri," said Jha. Telangana is also crucial, where the Congress party runs the risk of losing being the main Opposition to the BJP.

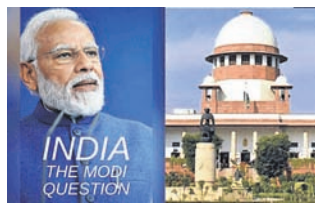
The success of the over 4,000-kilometre Bharat Jodo Yatra, which concludes Monday, will be judged by the outcome of the state polls in the run-up to the 2024 national election



President Droupadi Murmu visits the Rashtrapati Bhavan gardens 'Amrit Udyan' ahead of the opening of Udyan Utsav- 2023 in New Delhi. The gardens will open for the public January 31

PIL filed in top court challenging Centre's decision to ban BBC docu

On January 21, the Centre issued directions for blocking multiple YouTube videos and Twitter posts sharing links to the controversial BBC documentary "India: The Modi Question", according to sources



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: A PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court against the Centre's decision to "ban" a BBC documentary on the 2002 Gujarat riots in the country, alleging it was "malafide, arbitrary and unconstitutional". The PIL filed by advocate ML Sharma also urged the apex court

to call and examine the BBC documentary - both parts I and II - and sought action against persons who were responsible and were involved directly and indirectly with the 2002 Gujarat riots. Sharma said that in his PIL he has raised a constitutional question and the top court has to decide whether citizens have the right under Article 19(1)(2) to see news, facts and reports on the 2002 Gujarat riots. He has sought direction to quash the order dated January 21, 2023 of the Ministry of the Information and Broadcasting, terming it as

illegal, malafide, arbitrary and unconstitutional.

His plea said whether the central government can curtail freedom of press which is a fundamental right as guaranteed under Article 19(1)(2) of the Constitution.

"Whether without having an Emergency declared under Article 352 of the Constitution of India by the president, Emergency provisions can be invoked by the central government?" the PIL said. It claimed the BBC documentary has "recorded facts" which are also "evidence" and can be used to further the cause of justice for the victims.

On January 21, the Centre issued directions for blocking multiple YouTube videos and Twitter posts sharing links to the controversial BBC documentary "India: The Modi Question", according to sources.

Guj junior clerk exam cancelled after paper leak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Jan 29: The competitive examination for the recruitment of Gujarat government's junior clerks scheduled Sunday was postponed soon after it came to light that its question paper had been leaked, following which 16 persons were arrested, officials said.

The Gujarat Panchayat Service Selection Board (GPSSB) announced postponement of the examination early Sunday morning, hours before it was scheduled to start across 2,995 centres at 11 am. As many as 9.5 lakh candidates had applied for 1,181 posts. The Gujarat Anti Terrorist Squad (ATS) said it arrested 16 persons in this connection and recovered the copy of the question paper from their possession.

GPSSB's in-charge chairman Sandeep Kumar later announced that the examination will be conducted within 100 days and a new date will be announced in the next few days.

Addressing a press conference, Superintendent of Police (SP) of Gujarat ATS Sunil Joshi said 16 persons have been arrested so far in this case, including 15 from Vadodara and one from Hyderabad. Seven out of the 16 accused are part of a gang from Bihar. "The state ATS nabbed 15 accused from a computer exam centre named Stackwise Technology in Vadodara around 1.30 am Sunday when they had gathered there with the copy of the question paper. The question paper recovered from them matched with that of the original paper, prompting the government to immediately decide on postponing the exam," he said.

Air Asia flight makes emergency landing



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 29: A Kolkata-bound AirAsia flight made an emergency landing at Lucknow airport after suffering a bird hit soon after take-off Sunday, an airline official said.

All the around 170 passengers on the Airbus aircraft are safe, the airline said. "Flight i5-319, scheduled to operate from Lucknow to Kolkata, encountered a bird strike during the take-off roll. As a result, the aircraft returned to bay and was grounded for detailed inspection," an AIX Connect spokesperson said.

The airlines is making arrangements for accommodating the passengers on another flight.

Farmers block rly tracks

In Amritsar district, hundreds of agitating farmers led by Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee (KMSC) leader Sarwan Singh Pandher squatted on the Amritsar-New Delhi railway track in Jandiala town, nearly 25 km from Amritsar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amritsar, Jan 29: Members of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee Sunday squatted on railway tracks in Punjab to demand a legal guarantee on MSP and withdrawal of cases registered against farmers during the farm laws stir, among other things. The blockade from 1 pm to 4 pm disrupted the movement of trains on several routes including Amritsar-



Delhi, Amritsar-Khemkaran and on the Jalandhar-Jammu rail section, according to official sources.

KMSC leader Sarwan Singh Pandher said the farmers blocked railway tracks from 1 pm to 4 pm at 13 places in 11 districts of Punjab.

The protesters also blocked railway tracks on Amritsar-Delhi, Amritsar-Khemkaran, and Amritsar-Pathankot routes besides those in Gurdaspur, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur, Fazilka, Moga, Muktsar, Mansa, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana districts. In Hoshiarpur, the blockade was on the Jalandhar-

Jammu rail section at the Tanda railway station.

According to the official sources, train no. 12920 Malwa Superfast Express and Superfast Jammu-Mumbai train were stranded at Dasuya and Bhangala railway stations respectively due to the rail blockade.

The protesters are also seeking stringent action against those who had allegedly attacked a group of farmers during the agitation against the now-repealed farm laws at Delhi's Singhu border in January 2021.

'Put conversion matter before five-judge bench'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: A fresh application has been moved before the Supreme Court urging that the matters related to alleged forcible religious conversions be taken up by a larger bench of five judges as they involve the interpretation of the Constitution.

A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud is scheduled to hear the batch of pleas Monday against anti-conversion laws of several states regulating religious conversion due to inter-faith marriages and on matters related to alleged forcible conversions. The fresh application is filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, who is among the petitioners. He has asked the court to refer the petitions to a larger bench saying there are several questions of laws involved which require the interpretation of the Constitution. He raised questions like whether

On January 16, the top court asked the parties challenging the anti-conversion laws of several states to file a common petition seeking the transfer of cases on the issue from various high courts to the apex court

the previous judgments of this Court interpreting Article 25(1) of the Constitution are grossly erroneous in so far as they upheld the word "propagate" would include entitlement to convert.

"Whether the word 'propagate' needs to be construed in a manner which is not detrimental to fraternity, unity, dignity and national integration..." Upadhyay's fresh plea said.

Urgently address gaps in leprosy services disrupted by Covid: WHO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: The World Health Organisation (WHO) Sunday urged countries, especially those in the South-East Asia Region, to urgently address gaps in leprosy services disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Leprosy is 100 per cent curable when detected early, yet today in addition to Covid-19-related challenges, stigma and discrimination, both institutionalised and informal, continue to impede prompt diagnosis and treatment and facilitate onward spread, said Poonam Khetrapal Singh, regional director of WHO South-East Asia. "This has to change," she said on the eve of World Leprosy Day. In 2021, 1,40,000 new leprosy cases



were reported, with 95 per cent of new cases coming from the 23 global priority countries. Of these, 6 per cent were diagnosed with

visible deformities or grade-2 disabilities (G2D).

Over 6 per cent of new cases were children under the age of 15,

with 368 being diagnosed with grade-2 disabilities.

The global health organisation asked countries to accelerate efforts towards achieving the goal of zero leprosy disease, stigma and discrimination -- the vision of the WHO Global Leprosy Strategy 2021-2030

ties, she stated. Despite a 10 per cent increase in new cases from 2020 to 2021, the reported cases were 30 per cent lower

in 2021 than in 2019.

This is not due to a decrease in transmission, but because the leprosy cases remained undetected due to Covid-19-related disruptions, Singh said.

"Countries must continue to urgently restore leprosy services, with a focus on expanding single dose rifampicin chemoprophylaxis, intensifying active case finding, and ensuring prompt diagnosis and treatment with multidrug therapy," the regional director said.

Singh stressed focusing attention on vulnerable populations, including women, children, immigrants, refugees, elderly, homeless, residents of deprived leprosy 'colonies' and those living in geographically inaccessible areas to end suf-

fering and achieve zero leprosy.

With at least 115 discriminatory laws reported to be in place in seven countries, WHO is calling on all countries to immediately and unequivocally revoke discriminatory laws and comply with and implement UN principles and guidelines for the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their families.

"Act Now. End Leprosy." is this year's theme for World Leprosy Day. WHO reiterates its steadfast support to leprosy-affected countries in the South-East Asia Region and across the world to drive rapid, equitable and sustained progress towards achieving the target of zero leprosy infection and disease among others by 2030.

MID-DAY MEAL

Central team to check height-weight ratio of West Bengal students

Bengal LoP Suwendu Adhikari recently complained of diversion of the mid-day meal funds for paying compensation to the victims of Bogtui carnage in March last year

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Jan 29: The central inspection team from the Union Education Ministry to West Bengal to review the implementation of the mid-day meal scheme might conduct random height-weight ratios of the students covered under the scheme.

According to sources aware of the tentative schedule of the central inspection team to conduct the review from January 30 to February 6 in different districts, there are several methods to evaluate whether the mid-day meal beneficiaries are receiving adequate nutritious food or not and examining the height-weight ratio is one of the most effective ways to do that.

From the constitution of the nine-member team, which was set to arrive in Kolkata Sunday afternoon only more than bureaucratic representation the focus has been given on inducting specialists in the field of nutrition. This has been done to make the field inspection process more fruitful.

The central inspection team will be led by Dr Anuradha Dutta, the head of the department for foods & nutrition department of Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, which

is based out of Pantnagar in Uttarakhand. Three members of the nine-member fact-finding team are chief consultants with the Union Ministry of Education. A representative from the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) will also be a member of the team.

Sources from the state secretariat said that as per preliminary information communicated to them by the Union Education Ministry, the central inspection team will also conduct on-spot examination of the cooked mid-day meal to check the nutrition value there. They will also check whether proper management information system chain is followed in the entire process.

While these will be the part of the inspection aspect from the nutrition side, the Central team will also evaluate the financial and management aspect in implementation of the scheme. This second aspect will involve the inspection of the infrastructure facilities like the condition of the kitchens, involvement of the teachers in monitoring the cooking system, payment mechanism to the cook hired for the purposes and status of Aadhaar-linking of those outsourced in the system.

The central inspection team is visiting the state amid complaints of irregularities regarding the implementation of the mid-day meal scheme. The leader of the opposition in West Bengal Assembly Suwendu Adhikari has even complained of diversion of the mid-day meal funds for paying compensation to the victims of Bogtui carnage in March last year.



MUD TO MEAL: A farmer ploughs agricultural land before planting paddy saplings, in Nadia, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

UP claims development, but Budget allocations unspent

According to official sources, till December 31, 2022, many departments have been able to use only half of the budgetary provisions

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 29: Even as the Uttar Pradesh government prepares to table its annual Budget for 2023-24, a low utilisation of funds earmarked in the state budget for 2022-23 reflects the state of administration and also puts a question mark on development claims.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has now asked many of its departments to ensure that these allocations are used by March 20, 2023. He has warned that the performance of the department in the current financial year would be considered while deciding the upcoming budget provision by the Finance Department.

According to official sources, till December 31, 2022, many departments have been able to use only half of the budgetary provisions.

Though UP government has consistently monitored the utilisation of funds, the low expenditure has remained a cause of concern for many departments.

Allocated funds, if not used within a given financial year (when the budget is passed), are not carried over to the next financial year.

The situation is monitored at various levels of the state government almost every month and steps are taken to ensure that the maximum funds are used before the end of year, said an official in the state finance department.



A close scrutiny of the budgetary provisions and allocations indicates that the expenditure by different departments was nearly 50 per cent or even less than 50 per cent of the funds earmarked in the first three quarters (up to December 31, 2022) when the last review was conducted early in January 2023.

The departments, which have not been able to use funds up to satisfactory levels, include the PWD, medical and medical education, vocational education, social welfare, women's welfare, tourism, environment and civil aviation.

The state government's progressive expenditure (as indicated on the koshvani.up.nic.in in January 19, 2023) indicates that many departments have not been able to make improvement in the situation after the last review.

The PWD (special area programme) was able to spend only Rs 175.67 crore against budgetary pro-

vision of Rs 700 crore and allocation of Rs 113.60 crore.

A sum of Rs 6,118.47 crore has been used under PWD (roads) head against the budgetary provision of Rs 26,594.41 crore and allocation of Rs 12,827.80 crore.

A sum of Rs 4,980.69 crore has been used against budgetary provision of Rs 10,390.76 crore and allocation of Rs 7,974.44 crore for medical (allopathic medicine) while Rs 801.27 crore and Rs 386.41 crore have been used against budgetary provision of Rs 1,784.94 crore and Rs 684.55 crore for medical (Ayurvedic and Unani) and medical (homeopathy).

The vocational education department used Rs 608.70 crore against budget provision of Rs 1,222.98 crore. The social welfare department utilised Rs 5,647.29 crore against the budget of Rs 12,158.09 crore and allocation of Rs 9,820.93 crore.

The women's welfare department used Rs 2,341.95 crore against budget provision of Rs 4,643.86 crore. A sum of Rs 528.22 crore has been used by the tourism department against budgetary provision of Rs 1,104.20 crore and allocation of Rs 594.73 crore.

The environment and civil aviation departments used Rs 5.78 crore and Rs 577.71 crore, respectively, against budgetary provision of Rs 18.20 crore and Rs 2,315.68 crore, respectively.

TEACHERS' RECRUITMENT SCAM

TMC may walk the Partha Chatterjee way against Ghosh

Ghosh was arrested from his residence January 21 by the ED sleuths

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Jan 29: The Trinamool Congress leadership will soon adopt the Partha Chatterjee path in the case of party's youth leader Kuntal Ghosh, who is currently in the Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody because of his alleged involvement in the multi-crore teachers' recruitment scam in West Bengal, by stripping him off from all party posts.

"Partha Chatterjee was a very senior leader of the party. He occupied several important posts in the party. But he was removed from all his posts. Similarly, action will be taken against Kuntal Ghosh who is a member in the state committee of the party's youth wing and when it will be done the media will be informed," state president of the youth wing of Trinamool Congress and actress-turned-politician Sayani Ghosh informed media persons Sunday afternoon.

Before his arrest by the ED in July last year in connection with the teacher's recruitment irregularities, the former state education minister Partha Chatterjee was holding two important positions of the state commerce & in-



dustries minister and Trinamool Congress's secretary general.

However, a week after his arrest, Trinamool Congress's national general secretary and party MP Abhishek Banerjee at a press conference announced the expulsion of Chatterjee for all ministerial and party portfolios.

Ghosh was arrested from his residence January 21 by the ED sleuths after conducting a marathon search and seizure operations there for about 24 hours. Later he has reportedly confessed to the central agency sleuths of collecting around Rs 19 crore for arranging primary teachers' jobs in state-run schools, out of which he passed on Rs 15 crore to Partha Chatterjee.

The ED sleuths have recently recovered some WhatsApp communication of Ghosh which revealed that he had selectively leaked questions of written examination for primary teacher's appointment which was endorsed by Chatterjee.

Ghosh himself had told media persons that there are bigger brains behind the scam and someday or the other these names will surface.



HIGH SPIRITS IN UP TO COME AT HIGHER PRICE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 29: High spirits will come at a higher price in Uttar Pradesh now.

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has approved the new excise policy, in which the licence fee of liquor and beer shops has been increased by 10 per cent.

The government has set a target of raising revenue of about Rs 45,000 crore from the excise department in the next financial year 2023-24, which is Rs 5,000 crore more than last year's target.

These provisions made in the excise policy may increase the prices of country-made, English, and premium brand liquor by Rs 5-10.

Under the new excise policy, the licence fee of the model shops

has been increased from two lakh to three lakhs rupees, which implies that in such a situation, people may have to pay more for drinking liquor.

Licence fees and security fees of godowns have also been increased.

The fees for registration and renewal of the master warehouse have also been increased.

The licence fee of hotels, restaurants, and clubs located up to five kilometres in the periphery of the Lucknow Municipal Corporation area has also been increased.

In the excise policy, the opening and closing times of country-made and English liquor, beer shops, and model shops have been kept unchanged, but on special occasions, the time of sale can be increased with the prior permission of the government.

'Politics over Ramcharitmanas may dent people's faith in it'

Experts believe that Ramcharitmanas has been the centre of political criticism for the first time in its rich history

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 28: Political experts believe that the Ramcharitmanas, a famous Hindu text penned in the Awadhi language by Tulsidas in the 16th century, has been caught in the midst of the conflict between political parties.

They believe that Ramcharitmanas has been the centre of political criticism for the first time in its rich history.

In several places, its Sunderkand is recited by the Ramayana Mandals Tuesdays and Saturdays.

According to historians, Ramcharitmanas, which consists of 12,800 lines divided into 1,073 couplets and seven kandas, is considered a popular work of Awadhi literature (Hindi literature).

Senior political analyst K Vikram Rao said that raising questions on the text is basically irrelevant as



it is a 500-year-old book. Its readings have been prevalent in Hindu weddings in India.

Rao added that the sudden questioning of it in 2023 reveals a certain motive of Hindus becoming unified. He said, "Secular Hindus can support the view that this is an attempt to secure votes."

Rao added that Ramcharitmanas has never been a subject of controversy if seen through the national perspective. He commented, "Ram Manohar Lohia himself was an atheist. He started the Ramayana Mela. Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh



also used to visit this fair. I don't know why the people of his party are raising questions."

Analyst Ratanmani Lal said that the discussion on the Ram Mandir issue will start in the next few months. The talk of the temple's inauguration in January, 2024 is coming to light. In such a situation, the support of the Hindus may go to the ruling party. The opposition will definitely try to weaken this support, which is why they are questioning the book and the characters instead of raising questions about Ram Mandir, he

added.

Honoured with the Sahitya Bhushan award and well versed in spirituality, Pramodkant Mishra said, "It is foolish to question the character of Lord Rama and it is not a matter of politics. Those who want to achieve cheap popularity engage in politics on this. The book is widely read in every household. This epic composed by Goswami Tulsidas, 500 years ago cannot become a means of selfishness."

He claimed that questioning the scriptures is a cheap means to get popularity.

Samajwadi Party National

Spokesperson Ashutosh Verma said that objections are raised on a book if it creates a rift in the society, however this is not done by political leaders but by religious ones.

BJP state spokesperson Avneesh Tyagi said Ramcharitmanas is the book of faith of Hindus. It is considered epic. Opposing it shows mental bankruptcy.

The beginning of the dispute

Retired Professor and writer KS Bhagawan from Karnataka stirred a controversy by making objectionable remarks against Hindu deity Lord Ram.

He commented, "He (Ram) used to sit and drink alcohol with Sita during the day, so Lord Ram is not ideal."

Bihar Education Minister Chandrashekhar while addressing the students at the convocation of Nalanda Open University in Patna, alleged that Ramcharitmanas is a book that spreads hatred and divides the society.

Uttar Pradesh's SP leader and Legislative Council member Swami Prasad said that the Shudra community was insulted in the Ramcharitmanas. He said that certain couplets should be removed from such books or they should be banned.

of the day quote

I am confident that India's dream of techade will be fulfilled by its innovators and their patents



NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

Today history stands witness as RG (Rahul Gandhi) unfurled the same flag albeit under completely different circumstances at a time when J&K has been turned into a military garrison.



MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

Rahul Gandhi is hoisting tiranga with pride at Lal Chowk. PM Modi and his government had created such a situation in Kashmir that every Indian can unfurl tiranga with pride there.



RAJYAVARDHAN SINGH RATHORE | FORMER UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

2 suspected Khalistani supporters detained

New Delhi: Delhi Police's Special Cell Sunday arrested two men in connection with alleged "anti-national" and "Khalistan-related graffiti" that appeared on walls in areas of west Delhi January 19, ahead of Republic Day, officials said.

Bikers ram, chase car in Bangalore

Bangalore: In a terrifying incident for a couple in Bangalore, a pair of bikers rammed deliberately into their car on early Sunday and asked them to come out, going on chase them for five km till their residence when they did not comply, police said.

Kuru Kolumn

Baffling absence of Nitish Kumar

There is considerable shock and disbelief across political parties as to why Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar did not pay homage to the departed socialist leader Sharad Yadav.

Experts seek Himalayas be termed eco-sensitive zone

In a resolution passed at a roundtable organised by the Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), experts termed as "inadequate" the steps taken to deal with the prevailing situation in subsidence-hit Joshimath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: Unplanned and uncontrolled construction in the name of development in Uttarakhand has brought Joshimath on the brink of sinking, experts said here, demanding that the Himalayas be declared an eco-sensitive zone.

They also asked the government to consider taking long-term measures to address the problem, saying a similar situation may arise in Nainital, Mussoorie and other areas of Garhwal as well if the "so-called development driven by human greed" is not checked in the hill state.

"Declare Himalayas as an eco-sensitive zone. Regulate big projects causing devastation," the resolution said. While the width of the road under the Char Dham road widening project must be regulated to intermediate standard to minimize the damage to the terrain, the Char Dham railways project should be reassessed, it added.

"Even though some steps have been taken in view of the current crisis, experts believe that the sinking of this first Jyotir Math established by Adi Shankaracharya cannot be stopped," he added.

Termining the steps taken by the government to deal with the prevailing situation "inadequate", the resolution noted that while on one hand a large number of people are going to be displaced due to the sinking of Joshimath, on the other, the solution is being sought only by



SDRF personnel demolish the Hotel Mount View, which has been marked unsafe, in the land subsidence affected area in Joshimath

Supreme Court-appointed committee on the Centre's Char Dham project Ravi Chopra, its former member Hemant Dhyani and others, SJM co-convenor Awshwani Mahajan told PTL. "Sri Adi Shankaracharya founded the city where the holy Jyotirlinga is located in the eighth century, which is known as Joshimath (Jyotir Math). Today, this math is at the brink of collapse. The news of the sinking of Joshimath has shaken the whole country," Mahajan said.

way of rehabilitation of affected residents. "Currently work on the mega projects in this area - the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) hydropower project, Helang bypass road construction which is part of Chardham road widening project and ropeways project, has been stopped by the district administration succumbing to the local protests," it noted.

It can be seen that areas such as Bhagirathi ESZ, where large scale mega projects have not been implemented and the local ecology has not been tampered with, land subsidence, landslide incidents and devastating disaster events are minimum to none, it underlined. "This is proof enough that the indiscriminate, unplanned robust construction everywhere else in Uttarakhand has directly or indirectly impacted and aggravated the disaster like situation," it added.

"It is worth mentioning that the way the mountain was cut at the foothills of Joshimath for the construction of Chardham Marg and how without a proper hydrogeological study, the NTPC dug a tunnel in the middle of the mountain, this fragile mountain was destroyed," the resolution noted.

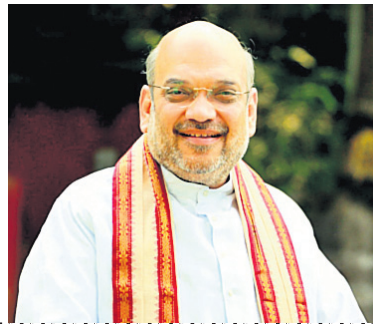


Only our Prime Minister thinks that China has not intruded in our land but the situation is otherwise and I think we need to deal with China firmly and we are not going to tolerate them sitting on our land

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

RALLY OVER PHONE

After his visit here to attend a public rally Sunday was cancelled due to bad weather, Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressed the gathering briefly over phone and exuded confidence that "lotus will bloom" on all Lok Sabha seats in the state in 2024 elections



AIR CRASH

Wing Commander cremated with military honours in Belagavi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Belagavi (K'taka), Jan 29: Wing Commander Hanumanth Rao Sarathi, who was killed in a plane crash between Sukhoi-30MKI and Mirage-2000 aircraft in Madhya Pradesh, was cremated with full military honours.

The black box of Mirage 2000 and a part of the flight data recorder of Sukhoi-30MKI jet, have been found in the wreckage, an official said. The two frontline combat aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) crashed during a training mission in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district Saturday, resulting in the death of Wing Commander Sarathi while two other pilots ejected safely.

Wrapped in tricolour, the coffin carrying the body of the pilot was brought from Morena to Belagavi for the last rites by a special IAF plane. It was then taken to Sarathi's home in Ganeshpur. Various people, including former Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and Congress MLA Laxmi Hebbalkar, paid homage to the departed soul by garlanding the body.

Later in the evening, the mortal remains were consigned to flames with full military honours. A pall of gloom descended at the residence of Wing Commander Sarathi, an instructor at Tactics and Air Combat Development Establishment (TAC-DE) in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior. The family members and relatives were inconsolable with his untimely demise.

The 35-year-old pilot is survived by his wife, a three-year-old daughter and a one-year-old son. The IAF officer comes from a defence background.



Shivpal, Maurya among 14 general secretaries in new SP national executive



While Akhilesh Yadav will continue to hold the post of national president, Kiranmoy Nanda will be national vice president and Ram Gopal Yadav will continue as national principal general secretary

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 29: The Samajwadi Party declared its 63-member national executive on Sunday with Akhilesh Yadav as its national president and his uncle Shivpal Yadav as a general secretary.

Swami Prasad Maurya, who recently stirred controversy over his remarks on Ramcharitmanas, and veteran leader Azam Khan are also among the 14 general secretaries. Criticising Maurya's appointment, the BJP alleged that the "anti-Hindu and casteist face" of Akhilesh Yadav has come to the fore, while the Congress said it is now clear at whose behest Maurya gave the unfortunate statement.

The uncle-nephew duo of Shivpal and Akhilesh, who parted ways in 2016, came together during the Mainpuri Lok Sabha by-election in December last year following the death of Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav.

The SP Sunday released the list of 63 national executive members on its Twitter handle. In 2016, Shivpal Yadav, the then SP's Uttar Pradesh unit president had an open feud with the then chief minister Akhilesh Yadav and was sacked from Uttar Pradesh Cabinet.

Sidelined in the party, Shivpal Yadav formed the Pragatishheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) in 2018 and

contested against his nephew Akshay Yadav from Firozabad. After their show of unity in Mainpuri, there was speculation that Shivpal may be formally rehabilitated in the party.

A former minister in the Yogi Adityanath government, Maurya switched from the BJP to the SP before the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections and lost from the Fazlunagar seat. The other national general secretaries are Ravi Prakash Verma, Balram Yadav, Vishwambhar Prasad Nishad, Awadhesh Prasad, Indrajeet Saroj, Ramjilal Suman, Lalji Verma, Ram Achal Rajbhar, J Antony, Harendra Malik and Neeraj Chowdhury. Sudip Ranjan Sen will be the party treasurer, while there will be 20 national secretaries, including Madhu Gupta, Kamal Akhtar, Rajendra Chowdhury, Rajiv Rai, Annu Tondon and Abhishek Mishra.

Jaya Bachchan, Abu Asim Azmi, Ram Govind Chowdhury, Pawan Pandey, Lilawati Kushwaha, Ujjwal Raman Singh, Akshay Yadav, Tej Pratap Yadav, Dharmendra Yadav, and Raj Kumar Mishra are among the party's national executive members.

Lashing out at the SP, BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi said Maurya was rewarded for "insulting" Ramcharitmanas.

BUDGET SESSION

All-party meeting today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: The government has called an all-party meeting Monday, a day ahead of the start of the Budget Session of Parliament.

The customary meeting, called by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi, is to be held at noon January 30 in Parliament Annex Building. During the meeting, the government is expected to seek co-operation from all parties for the smooth running of Parliament.

Opposition parties are expected to raise matters of concern during the meeting and also highlight issues they plan to raise during the session.

In the afternoon, a meeting of NDA floor leaders will also be held to strategise floor cooperation. The Budget Session will be held in two parts.

The session will begin with President Droupadi Murmu's ad-

dress to the joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament. Economic Survey will be tabled after the President's address.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union Budget February 1

The Union Budget 2023-24 may be the last full budget before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

The first part of the session will be held from January 31 and will go till February 13.

The first part of the session will be held from January 31 and will go till February 13.



Participants in a bicycle rally ahead of the Khelo India Youth Games-2022 in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

receive his mortal remains at Bhopal airport and declared state mourning. A large number of BJP MPs also visited Yadav's home to mourn his death. Rahul Gandhi cut short his Bharat Jodo Yatra and flew to Delhi to pay his tribute. But those waiting for Nitish Kumar's presence were in for a shock as he and Sharad Yadav worked together in Janata Dal (U) for several decades. Yadav parted company with Nitish Kumar when the latter joined hands with the BJP after winning Assembly polls in 2015 in alliance with the RJD and Congress. Nitish Kumar did not join Yadav's funeral at his native village in Madhya Pradesh either. Political analysts say that Nitish Kumar's absence may cost him dearly at a time when he is aspiring to be Opposition parties consensus Prime Ministerial candidate.

Strange Gag orders

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) issued a rather strange gag order to all government authorities and scientific institutions

including ISRO not to share details of their studies with the media relating to Joshimath which saw a rapid sinking of 5.4 cm in just 12 days. The ISRO report said the massive soil sinking at Joshimath occurred due to a "rapid subsidence event that was triggered January 2." Prior to the ISRO report, a number of other institutions of the Central government involved in scientific studies of the Himalayas claimed that they had repeatedly issued warnings for the past 40 years to the power that be that all construction activities would be fatal for the very existence of the Himalayan range, but no one listened. These reports embarrassed the "double engine Sarkars" in Uttarakhand and New Delhi. Last year, the Modi government issued a strange "gag order" to former bureaucrats and persons who held key posts not to go public by speaking on TV channels or writing articles in newspapers. Modi firmly told his ministers and bureaucrats in 2014 not to go to 5-star hotels and waste time by going to parties. The restrictions on the movement of media men to government

offices and even in Parliament was restricted making their task difficult.

New DG for India Habitat Centre

The sixteen-member governing council of the prestigious India Habitat Centre this month decided to constitute a Search Committee to find out the successor of former President G. Parthasarathy (IFS) who completed his second extended term August 31, 2022. The BJP leadership is gearing up to install a person of its choice for the coveted post. The BJP leadership is determined to install persons of its choice in all such key institutions including India International Center (IIC), Gymkhana Club and Delhi Golf Club and others in Lutyens Delhi. The BJP leadership is also closely watching the induction of new members in these institutions.

Sub-centres function without electricity

The Modi government has been shouting from the rooftops that it has

provided electricity to every village in the country. But a report by the Union Health ministry revealed that electricity has not reached every 9th sub-centre in rural areas in the country. The number of such centres is around 18,000. There are 1.58 lakh health sub-centres in rural areas across the country. According to the report, UP is the worst performer where every 4th sub-centre is without power and the situation is relatively better in Maharashtra. There are 20,781 sub-centres in UP out of which 5385 have no electricity which is 25%. In comparison, Maharashtra has 10673 centers and of them 1397 are without power which is 13.1%. But performance in the PM's home state of Gujarat is commendable where the number of centers without power is just 2.9%. The figure is shade better in Madhya Pradesh with 2.5%. But in large states, Mamata Banerjee is best where only 2.1% health sub-centers are without power. Haryana and Andhra Pradesh are the winners where all centers are operating with full power while in Punjab the number is poor with 6.3%.

12 blackbucks die after jumping from bridge in Solapur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 29: Twelve blackbucks died and two were injured after they jumped off a road bridge in Kegaon on the Solapur-Bijapur highway, around 44 kilometres from here, at 6:30pm Saturday, he said.

"The blackbucks fell to the ground from a height of 30 feet. Twelve died while two injured blackbucks were rushed to a nearby hospital run by the forest department. Local residents alerted police and forest department officials," he said.

The carcasses have been sent for post mortem and, so far, no foul play is suspected in the incident, the official added.

international



The Security Council which has been created back then and given the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security and preventing wars now is paralysed
CSABA KOROS | PRESIDENT, UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

H1B VISA APPLICATIONS DATE OUT

The highly anticipated H1B visa filing season for fiscal 2023-24 will officially begin March 1 when the US immigration agency will start accepting applications for skilled foreign workers visas, the most sought-after by Indian IT professionals



of the day quote

Ukraine's supporters in the West understand how the war is developing and the need to supply planes capable of providing cover for the armoured fighting vehicles
MYKHAILO PODOLYAK | ADVISER TO PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

I think historically, this (India-US relationship) has not been as strong a relationship as it needs to be. We are the two biggest democracies. India has a huge economic power. India now has the leadership of G-20
SHRI THANEDAR | INDIAN-AMERICAN CONGRESSMAN

Ashraf Ghani (Ex-Afghan President) was a total fraud who had wasted American lives and was focused solely on his own desire to stay in power. Never once did I sense that he was prepared to take a risk for his country
MIKE POMPEO | FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE, US

SHORT TAKES

Winter kills 170
Kabul: Heavy snowfall and chilly weather have claimed 170 lives in Afghanistan over the past three weeks, spokesman for the Ministry of Natural Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs Shafiuallah Rahimi said Sunday. "A total of 170 people, including children and women, have lost their lives and 30 others including women and children injured due to chilly weather and snowfall in 24 out of the country's 34 provinces over the past three weeks," Rahimi told Xinhua. More than 150 residential houses have been completely destroyed or partially damaged over the period, the official said, adding the continued freezing climate and snowfall have also killed about 80,000 cattle including cows, sheep and goats elsewhere in the country.

Drone attack in Iran
Dubai: Drones attacked an Iranian defence factory in the central city of Isfahan overnight, the state-run IRNA news agency reported early Sunday. It carried a Defence Ministry statement, saying the attack occurred late Saturday and caused minor damage to a rooftop. The report said three drones were shot down by Iranian air defences. The ministry did not say who was suspected of carrying out the attack. Separately, Iran's state TV said a fire broke out at an oil refinery in an industrial zone near the northwestern city of Tabriz. It said the cause was not yet known, as it showed footage of firefighters trying to extinguish the blaze.

Israel retaliates
Jerusalem: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has announced a series of punitive steps against the Palestinians, including plans to beef up Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, in response to a pair of shooting attacks that killed seven Israelis and wounded five others. The announcement Saturday cast a cloud over a visit next week by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and threatened to further raise tensions following one of the bloodiest months in the West Bank and east Jerusalem in several years. Netanyahu's Security Cabinet approved the measures in the wake of a pair of shootings, including an attack outside an east Jerusalem synagogue Friday night in which seven people were killed.

THREE YEARS AFTER GEORGE FLOYD DEATH

US police violence at 10-year high

The recent incident of Tyre Nichols' brutal death by beating left many Americans questioning how much real progress had been made since the passing of George Floyd

Washington, Jan 29: The shocking death of Tyre Nichols after a police beating has reopened an anguished debate across the United States about police violence, fuelling a sense that the huge, nationwide demonstrations of 2020 have done little to solve the problem. Nichols, a 29-year-old Black man, died in a hospital on January 10, three days after a brutal beating by five Black police officers in the southern city of Memphis, Tennessee. The five have since been charged with second-degree murder. The killing that year in Minneapolis of George Floyd, a Black man whose videotaped death under the knee of a white officer was viewed millions of times, sparked the historic Black



Lives Matter movement felt across the US and abroad. In the wake of Floyd's death, promises of police reform swept across the country. And yet two years later, the number of people who have died during interactions with police hit a 10-year high in 2022, at 1,186 deaths, according to the website Mapping Police Violence. African Americans accounted for 26 percent of those deaths, though Blacks represent only 13 percent of the US population. By way of comparison, fewer

US police have killed nearly 600 people during traffic stops since 2017, according to Human Rights Watch

than 20 people die in France each year during police interventions. A huge factor explaining the difference is the enormous number of privately owned firearms in the United States - there are more guns than there are people - which sharply increases the sense of vulnerability police feel during interactions with the public, making them much quicker to draw their own arms. Last year, 66 police officers were killed by gunfire while on duty, according to a fund created to honor them. Memphis police released body-

cam footage of the incident - after starkly warning viewers of its brutality - late Friday. "I'm just sad for where we are in America; we're still here," said Lora King, whose father Rodney King sustained a violent beating by police in Los Angeles in 1991, also caught on camera. The incident fueled lethal and destructive riots in that city and elsewhere. "I'm in disbelief." "We have to do better," Lora King said on CNN. "This is unacceptable." The Memphis police were among those adopting reforms. Officers were barred from forcing their way into homes unannounced; were told they must step in to stop colleagues engaging in violence; and were given additional training in de-escalating dangerous confrontations.

DANCE OF DEATH

TWIN TRAGEDIES HIT PAK

MASS DROWNINGS ARE ALSO COMMON IN PAKISTAN, WHEN AGED AND OVERLOADED VESSELS LOSE THEIR STABILITY AND PITCH PASSENGERS INTO THE WATER



Islamabad, Jan 29: At least 59 people were killed in two separate transport accidents in western Pakistan Sunday, when a bus plunged off a bridge and a boat carrying a class of children capsized. Forty-two are so far confirmed dead after their bus crashed into a ravine in southwestern Balochistan province, while at least 17 students died in the boating accident in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, officials said. At the remote site of the bus crash, north of the city of Bela in Lasbela district, senior administration official Hamza Anjum said "the dead bodies...are beyond recognition". Anjum said 42 corpses were retrieved from the wreck alongside

17 STUDENTS DEAD, 13 INJURED AS BOAT CAPSIZES
42 KILLED AS PASSENGER BUS FALLS INTO RAVINE, CATCHES FIRE
three injured, one of which died shortly after. The remaining two survivors were in "serious" condition. The bus was reportedly carrying a total of 48 passengers when it hit a pillar on the bridge and careened off course earlier Sunday. It had been travelling overnight between Balochistan's provincial capital of Quetta and the southern port city of Karachi. "It is feared that the driver may have fallen asleep," Anjum said, also mentioning the possibility he had been speeding during the long-distance trip. "We will investigate the causes of the accident," he said, adding that DNA tests would be used to deter-

mine the identity of the remains which had been "badly mutilated". "Rescue underway" In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, local police official Mir Rauf told AFP all of the dead so far recovered from the lake were between the ages of seven and 14. He said 11 more children had been rescued, with six in critical condition. However, up to nine more remain missing from the madrasa class which was day tripping at the scenic location. "A rescue operation is underway," Rauf told AFP. Ramshackle highways, lax safety measures and reckless driving contribute to Pakistan's dire road

safety record. Passenger buses are frequently crammed to capacity and seatbelts are not commonly worn, meaning high death tolls from single vehicle accidents are common. In November, 20 people, including 11 children, were killed when a minibus crashed into a deep and water-logged ditch in southern Pakistan. According to World Health Organisation estimates, more than 27,000 people were killed on Pakistan's roads in 2018.

Sunak sacks Tory party chief over tax penalty row



It is a setback to Sunak's attempt at a government reset after a chaotic year that saw three different British prime ministers

ZAHAWI FOUND NOT TO HAVE BEEN OPEN ABOUT TAX PROBE
INDEPENDENT ADVISER FINDS SERIOUS BREACHES OF CODE
SCANDAL DAMAGES PM SUNAK'S ATTEMPTED RESET

London, Jan 29: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak fired the Conservative Party chair Nadhim Zahawi from government Sunday after an investigation found he had been insufficiently open about a tax probe which he settled while finance minister. In an embarrassing episode for Sunak, he initially stood by Zahawi before ordering an independent adviser to investigate questions over his tax affairs after it emerged Zahawi had settled a probe by Britain's tax authority HMRC last year. But Sunak's independent adviser Laurie Magnus said that Zahawi did not declare that his tax affairs were being investigated when he was briefly made finance minister last year, and failed to disclose details when Sunak appointed him to his current role. "Following the completion of the Independent Adviser's investigation - the findings of which he has shared with us both - it is clear that there has been a serious breach of the Ministerial Code," Sunak said in a letter to Zahawi. "As a result, I have informed you of my decision to remove you from your po-

OVER ISLAMOPHOBIA

Turkey issues travel warning to Europe

Istanbul, Jan 29: Turkey issued a travel warning late on Saturday for its citizens living in or planning on going to European countries, citing Islamophobia and anti-Turkish demonstrations. The warning comes after last weekend's protests in Sweden where an anti-Islam activist burned the Quran and pro-Kurdish groups protested against Turkey. The Turkish foreign ministry urged its citizens to take precautions and stay away from demonstration areas. It also said they should go to local authorities if they face xenophobic or racist attacks. Turkey strongly condemned far-right activist Rasmus Paludan's burning of the Quran in Stockholm, which he repeated in Copenhagen Friday. Ankara also summoned the Dutch ambassador after another far-right activist tore pages of the Quran in the Hague. The Turkish government also said there was an increase in anti-Turkish protests by "groups with links to terror groups" - a reference to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which has waged a decades-long insurgency against Turkey. Pro-Kurdish groups have been demonstrating in Sweden, waving the flags of the PKK and its affiliates. The protests are a response to Sweden and Finland's promise to prevent the PKK's activities in their countries in order to gain Turkey's approval for their NATO bids. Following the protests, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned Sweden not to expect support for its membership bid for the military alliance.



PERU PROTESTS: Demonstrators take part in a protest to demand Peru's President Dina Boluarte to step down, in Lima

Snowless streak puzzles New York residents

The city is forecast Sunday to surpass a 50-year record for the latest first snowfall of the season

Yorkers puzzled, some questioning their love-hate relationship with the white stuff. "It's really sad," said retired teacher Anne Hansen. "Basically, we don't like to see the snow. But now we're sorely missing it," she told AFP. The Big Apple usually gets its first dusting around mid-December. Last season it arrived on Christmas Eve. A heavy load often results in "snow days," beloved by children and office workers who gets days off school and work. Joy turns to despair fairly quickly though, as the snow turns yellowish-brown, trash piles up on the sidewalk and trips to the launderette become hazardous. Meteorologists define snowfall in NYC as snow that measures at



Scientists say climate change is causing winters to be warmer, shorter

at least 0.1 inches in Central Park. Some flakes fell last Wednesday but not enough to count. The longest residents have had to wait for measurable snow is January 29, a record set in 1973, according to the National Weather Service (NWS). No snow Sunday will mean the longest wait since records began in 1869. New York is also approaching its longest streak of consecutive days without snow. The current record is 332, which ended December 15, 2020. Sunday would be day 326. Accuweather has called the period a "snow drought." "It's very unusual," NWS meteorologist Nelson Vaz told AFP, saying the global La Nina weather pattern was responsible for keeping colder fronts further north and west. Up to 40 inches (one meter) of snow fell in Buffalo, New York state, near the Canadian border, in December, killing at least 39 people. But a few hundred miles southeast, in NYC and surrounding Atlantic coastal areas, the precipitation has meant lots of rain amid mild temperatures. Only 1932 had a warmer first 25 days of January in New York than 2023, according to Weather.com. New York has never gone a whole cold season without measurable snow. And with February usually its snowiest month, a white blanket could soon envelope the Big Apple yet.

business

of the day quote

ICEA recommends that the tariff of 2.75 per cent (including social welfare surcharge), among other smaller tariffs which have no beneficial impact and only create a burden for legitimate manufacturers, is removed

PANKAJ MOHINDROO | CHAIRMAN, INDIA CELLULAR AND ELECTRONICS ASSOCIATION

There is urgent need to launch the National Mission on Edible Oils with adequate financial support to boost the oilseeds production

AJAY JHUNHUNWALA | PRESIDENT, SEA

Limited visibility of electronic components is a challenge in planning our production. Electronic component shortage is still limiting our production volumes

AJAY SETH | CFO, MARUTI SUZUKI

SHORT TAKES

Sectors with max delayed projects

New Delhi: The road transport and highways sector has the maximum number of delayed projects at 428, followed by railways at 117 and the petroleum industry at 88, showed a government report. In the road transport and highways sector, 428 out of 724 projects are delayed. In railways, out of 173 projects, 117 are delayed, while in the petroleum sector, 88 out of 158 projects are running behind schedule, as per the latest flash report on infrastructure projects for December 2022. The Infrastructure and Project Monitoring Division is mandated to monitor central sector infrastructure projects costing ₹150 crore and above based on the information provided on the Online Computerised Monitoring System by the project implementing agencies.

Under ECLGS, Go First to get ₹210cr

Mumbai: Wadia group-owned Go First expects to receive ₹210 crore under the government's credit line guarantee scheme next month as the budget airline seeks to boost its financial position and expand operations. The airline, which received ₹210 crore from the promoters last month, aims to have 53 operational aircraft in its fleet by the start of April this year, its CEO Kaushik Khona told PTI. The airline currently has 37 aircraft in operation. Under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), which has come as a relief for many pandemic-hit sectors, Go First has so far availed ₹600 crore.



Improving existing infrastructure and capacity at some key airports besides setting up newer airports has also been the need of the hour

SUPRIO BANERJEE | VP & SECTOR HEAD (CORPORATE RATINGS), ICRA LIMITED

APPLE APP STORE PRICES HIKED

Tech giant Apple has announced that it will increase prices of applications and in-app purchases (excluding auto-renewable subscriptions) on the App Store in the UK, Colombia, Egypt, Hungary, Nigeria, Norway and South Africa, February 13, 2023



IN A FIRST IOC begins export of aviation gas

Indian Oil aims to tap into overseas market after addressing the domestic demand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 29: In a first, national oil marketer Indian Oil Corporation has started exports of aviation gasoline, the fuel that fires unmanned aerial vehicles and small planes - turning a chapter in the nation's fuel history from being a net importer to an exporter.

The first consignment of 80 barrels of aviation gas (AV gas), each consisting of 16 litres, was shipped from the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust

(JNPT) to Papua New Guinea over the weekend. This is the first ever instance of India exporting this fuel, produced at IOC's Vadodara refinery, marking its entry into an estimated \$2.7-billion global market, the company said in a statement.

Aviation gasoline powers unmanned aerial vehicles and piston-engine aircraft used by flying schools. It is a higher-octane aviation fuel meeting the product spec-



ifications with superior performance, and quality standards and

The indigenous production of the gas named AV gas 100 LL will not only help save foreign exchange but will also make training in domestic flying schools economical for budding pilots

SM VAIDYA | CHAIRMAN, IOC

DEEPER LAYOFFS AHEAD

219 firms axe over 68K techies in Jan

THE MASS TECH LAYOFFS OF 2022 ARE CONTINUING INTO THE NEW YEAR. THE SACKING EPISODES HAVE GAINED SPEED AMID GLOBAL ECONOMIC MELTDOWN AND RECESSION FEARS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 29: The month of January started on a super bad note for employees in the tech world. With more Big Tech companies like Microsoft and Google joining the ongoing layoff season, more than 3,400 tech employees are being laid off per day on average in January globally.

As per the data by layoffs tracking site Layoffs.fyi, 219 companies have laid off more than 68,000 employees in January so far.

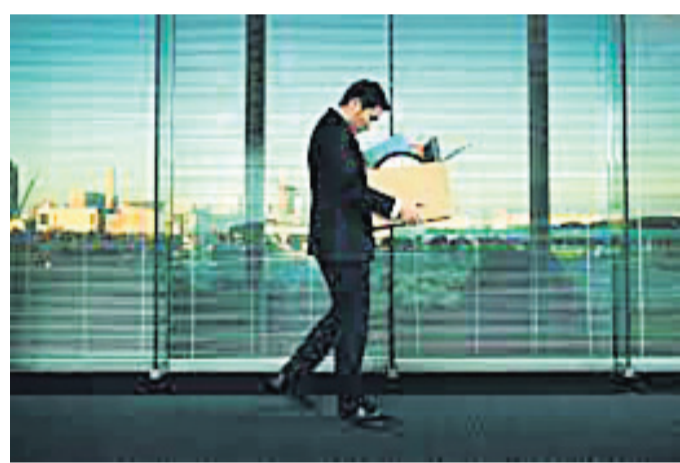
In 2022, over 1,000 companies laid off 154,336 workers, as per the data by layoffs tracking site Layoffs.fyi.

Deeper layoffs are coming in 2023 as most business economists have predicted that their companies will cut payrolls in the coming months.

According to a report in CNN citing a new survey, only 12 per cent of economists - surveyed by the National Association for Business Economics (NABE) - anticipate employment will increase at their firms over the next three months, "down from 22 per cent this fall".

This is the first time since early days of the Covid pandemic that more business leaders anticipate jobs shrinking at their firms.

With more Big Tech companies like Microsoft and Google joining the ongoing layoff season, about 3,000 tech employees are now being laid off per day on av-



erage in January globally, including in India.

According to the survey, a little more than half of the business economists feel the risk of a recession over the next year at 50 per cent or higher, which means more layoffs in the off-

ing in 2023. It's not a secret that the tech industry has been struggling for months. In 2022, hundreds of companies across the tech industry instituted layoffs. Meta's layoffs were among the eye-popping headlines, with over 11,000 employees out of a job.

Earlier this month, Amazon and Microsoft announced layoffs totaling around 28,000 employees combined. While Microsoft is laying off around 10,000 people, Amazon is laying off an astounding total of 18,000 people. This combined number includes layoffs in November 2022. The cuts represent approximately 6% of Amazon's workforce.

Amid the layoffs come another bad news for employees, especially from India in the US, as Google has paused its Program Electronic Review Management (PERM), a key step in acquiring an employer-sponsored green card. Google has sent an email to foreign

employees, notifying them that the tech giant will pause any new filings of PERM, leaving foreign workers in a limbo.

Meanwhile, LinkedIn is full of job hunts, offers of support for laid off friends and colleagues, and advice for coping with career hurdles as several companies trim their workforce to navigate through an uncertain macroeconomic environment.

70+ Indian startups hand pink slips to 21K

New Delhi: As global layoffs deepen, Indian startups are not far behind and have sacked thousands of employees in the past 3-4 months, with many more to be given pink slips in the coming months amid deepening funding winter. In India, more than 21,000 employees have been laid off by more than 70 startups, including from unicorns like BYJU'S, Ola, MPL, Innovaccer, Unacademy, Vedantu, Cars24, OYO, Meesho, Udaan and many more. The edtech sector has laid off the most employees, with 16 edtech startups laying off more than 8,000 employees to date. With the onset of January, more and more Indian companies are slashing jobs across the spectrum. The New Year has already seen more than 16 homegrown startups sack employees in the country.

employees, notifying them that the tech giant will pause any new filings of PERM, leaving foreign workers in a limbo.

Meanwhile, LinkedIn is full of job hunts, offers of support for laid off friends and colleagues, and advice for coping with career hurdles as several companies trim their workforce to navigate through an uncertain macroeconomic environment.

FPIs take out ₹17,000 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: Foreign investors have pulled out a net of over ₹17,000 crore this month so far due to the attractiveness of the Chinese markets and the cautious stance adopted by them ahead of the Union Budget and US Federal Reserve meeting.

The outflow in January came after a net inflow of ₹11,119 crore in December and ₹36,239 crore in November.

Overall, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have pulled out ₹1.21 lakh crore from the Indian equity markets in 2022, following aggressive rate hikes by the central banks globally, particularly the US Federal Reserve, volatile crude, rising commodity prices and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

For FPIs, 2022 was a subdued year in terms of flow and withdrawal from equities after a net investment in the preceding three years.

According to the data with the depositories, FPIs have made a net withdrawal of ₹17,023 crore this month (till January 27).

Hindenburg allegations attack on India: Adani

The report has led to Adani group losing more than \$50 billion in market value in just two trading sessions and Adani himself losing in excess of \$20 billion, or about one-fifth of his total fortune

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: Richest Indian Gautam Adani's group Sunday likened the damning allegations made by short seller Hindenburg Research to a "calculated attack" on India, its institutions and growth story, saying the allegations are "nothing but a lie".

In a 413-page response, Adani Group said the report was driven by "an ulterior motive" to "create a false market" to allow the US firm to make financial gains.

"This is not merely an unwarranted attack on any specific company but a calculated attack on India, the independence, integrity and quality of Indian institutions, and the growth story and ambition of India," it said.

Stating that the allegations in Hindenburg Research's January 24 report are "nothing but a lie", it said the document is "a malicious combination of selective misinformation and concealed facts relating to baseless and discredited allegations to drive an ulterior motive".

"This is rife with conflict of interest and intended only to create a false market in securities to enable Hindenburg, an admitted short seller, to book massive financial gain through wrongful means at the cost of countless investors," it said.

It went on to question the credibility and ethics of Hindenburg, and said the mala fide intention underlying the report were apparent given its timing when Adani Enterprises Limited is undertaking one of the largest ever further



public offering of equity shares in India.

"Hindenburg has not published this report for any altruistic reasons but purely out of selfish motives and in flagrant breach of applicable securities and foreign exchange laws," it said. "The report is neither 'independent' nor 'objective' nor 'well researched'."

Activist short seller Hindenburg Research, the firm which caught global attention with takedowns of electric-vehicle makers Nikola and Lordstown Motors, alleged in a report Wednesday that its two-year investigation found the Adani Group "engaged in a brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud scheme over the course of decades".

Hindenburg called out the conglomerate's "substantial debt", which includes pledging shares for loans; that Adani's brother Vinod "manages a vast labyrinth of offshore shell entities" that move billions into group companies without required disclosure; and that its auditor "hardly seems capable of complex audit work".

Of the 88 questions raised by Hindenburg, 65 of them relate to matters that have been duly disclosed by Adani portfolio companies, Adani Group said. "Of the balance 23 questions, 18 relate to public shareholders and third parties (and not the Adani portfolio companies), while the balance 5 are baseless allegations based on imaginary fact patterns."

It listed questions from the report and dismissed them as "false suggestions based on malicious misrepresentation of governance practices" or "unrelated narrative around unrelated third party entities" or "biased and unsubstantiated rhetoric".

BIZ BUZZ



Volkswagen India inaugurates a new sales and service touchpoint in Bhubaneswar. Under the guidance of Charchit Mishra, Director, OSL Group the sales touchpoint is located at Pahal whereas the service touchpoint is in Bhanpur, Cuttack. The 6-car display area in the showroom will host India's safest SUV - the Taigun, striking & exhilarating Virtus and the global best-seller, the Tiguan. With the inauguration of Volkswagen Bhubaneswar, the network strength has increased to 159 sales and 126 service touchpoints present across 119 cities in India.

4TH YEAR IN A ROW

NSE world's largest derivatives exchange

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) has again emerged as the world's largest derivatives exchange in 2022, in terms of the number of contracts traded, according to the Futures Industry Association (FIA). This is the fourth consecutive year when the exchange earned the top spot, the NSE said in a statement on Sunday.

In addition, the exchange was ranked third in the equity segment by the number of trades (electronic order book) in 2022, an advancement from the previous year when it was in the fourth position, as per statistics maintained by the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE).

The calendar year witnessed the benchmark equity index - the Nifty 50 touching lifetime high of 18,887.60. Further, significant strengthening in liquidity was seen in several product categories, including equity, equity derivatives and currency derivatives.



In the equity segment, exchange-traded funds (ETFs) daily-average turnover stood at ₹470 crore in CY 2022, an increase of 51 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y).

Sovereign Gold Bond's daily average turnover in the secondary market was ₹7 crore in CY 2022, a jump of 59 per cent YoY.

Government securities, which have been made available in the equity segment of NSE, are also seeing significant growth, although on a lower base, with volumes touching a daily average turnover of ₹3 crore last month.

"The achievement of being ranked 3rd in equity segment and largest exchange in derivatives is a culmination of the collaborative effort of all the stakeholders," Sriram Krishnan, Head of Business Development, NSE noted.

Netherlands becoming key export destination for India

IN 2021-22, THE NETHERLANDS WAS THE FIFTH LARGEST DESTINATION FOR INDIAN EXPORTS AS AGAINST NINTH IN 2020-21. HOWEVER DURING APRIL-DEC THIS FISCAL THE COUNTRY HAS MOVED TO THIRD POSITION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: The Netherlands has emerged as India's third largest exports destination after the US and UAE during April-December this fiscal on account of a surge in shipment of goods such as petroleum products, electronic items, chemicals, and aluminium goods.

India's trade surplus with the Netherlands has also increased from \$1.5 billion in 2017 to \$12.3 billion in 2022.

The Netherlands has taken over major destinations such as the UK, Hong Kong, Bangladesh and



Ajay Sahai said the Netherlands has emerged as a hub for Europe with efficient port and connectivity with EU through road, railways and waterways.

"Petroleum exports went up significantly. During April-November this fiscal, these exports rose from \$2.7 billion during April-November 2021-22 to \$6.4 bil-

lion as oil companies are using the Netherlands as distribution hub. Aluminium, electrical and electronics and pharma exports also contributed significantly though some of these goods may be finally consumed in Germany or France," Sahai said.

According to economic think tank GTRI (Global Trade Research Initiative), ATF (aviation turbine fuel) and diesel were the key petroleum products exported from India to that country.

Telecom equipment and smartphones with a value of over \$1 billion were the largest electronic items, it said.

Mumbai-based exporter and Chairman of Technocraft Industries, Sharad Kumar Saraf said the Netherlands is a gateway to Europe as their ports are very efficient hence cheaper than other European ports for shipping operations.

India and the Netherlands established diplomatic relations in 1947. Since then, the two countries have developed strong political, economic and commercial relations.

The Netherlands is among top trading partners of India in Europe, after Germany, Switzerland, the UK and Belgium. It is also a major investor in India. During April-September this fiscal, India received \$1.76 billion in foreign direct investment from the Netherlands. It was \$4.6 billion in 2021-22.

There are over 200 Dutch companies present in India, including Philips, Akzo Nobel, DSM, KLM and Rabobank. Similarly, there are over 200 Indian companies operating in the Netherlands, including all the major IT firms such as TCS, HCL, Wipro, Infosys, Tech Mahindra as well as Sun Pharmaceuticals and Tata Steel.

U-19 girls create history

JUNIOR INDIAN EVES WIN INAUGURAL EDITION OF T20 WORLD CUP BEATING ENGLAND COMPREHENSIVELY



PROUD MOMENT: The Indian U-19 team is in a jubilant mood as they pose with the winners' trophy PHOTOS: BCCI TWITTER

AGENCIES

Potchefstroom, Jan 29: Brilliant bowling and fielding display enabled the Indian evens win the inaugural edition of the Under-19 T20 World Cup here Sunday. The bowlers and fielders showed terrific prowess as the junior squad powered their way to a seven-wicket

victory over England.

The Indian evens first dismissed England for 68 in 17.1 overs and then scammed over the finish line with 36 balls to spare losing the wickets of skipper Shafali Verma (15), Shweta Sehrawat (5) and Gongadi Trisha (24). Soumya Tiwari (24 n o, 37b, 3x4) hitting the winning runs with Hrishika Basu (0 n o)

giving her company.

But more than the batters it was the Indian bowling and fielding that completely derailed England. Pacer Titas Sadhu (2/6) and spinners Parshavi Chopra (2/13) and Archana Devi (2/17) bowled brilliantly to restrict England

The one-handed stunner that Archana took to send back batter

BRIEF SCORES

England 68 in 17.1 overs (Titas Sadhu 2/6, Parshavi Chopra 2/13, Archana Devi 2/17) lost to India 69 for 3 in 14 overs (Soumya Tiwari 24 n o) by seven wickets

Ryana Macdonald-Gay (19), England's top scorer, will be talked about for a long time. Other than Ryana, the other England batters to get double-digit scores were Sophia Smale (11) and Alexa Stonehouse (11).

Opting to bowl, India came out with a specific plan and executed it perfectly as England's innings never really took off after being



LIVELY SPELL: Pacer Titas Sadhu celebrates with teammates after picking up a wicket, Sunday

BCCI announces ₹5 crore award

New Delhi: BCCI secretary Jay Shah announced Sunday a whopping cash reward of ₹5 crore for the entire India squad following their title-winning performance at the inaugural Women's U-19 T20 World Cup. The Shafali Verma-led India U-19 squad managed to do what their seniors could not do by clearing the final hurdle in a global event. "Women's cricket in India is on the upswing and the World Cup triumph has taken the stature of women's cricket several notches higher. I am delighted to announce ₹5 crore for the entire team and support staff as prize money. This is surely a path-breaking year," Shah tweeted after India's triumph. The secretary also invited the entire team to Ahmedabad Wednesday for watching the third T20 India-New Zealand game.

reduced to 16 for three in four overs. Sadhu bowled 20 dot balls in her quota of four overs, striking with the fourth ball of the innings with a superb caught and bowl effort to get rid of Liberty Heap (0). Wickets continued to fall at regular intervals and England were reduced to 39 for five in 10 overs.

SKY, spinners help India restore parity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 29: Indian spinners revelled on a turning track before the batters made heavy weather of a small target to register a scrappy series-levelling win over New Zealand in the second T20 International here Sunday.

The trio of Yuzvendra Chahal (1/4), Washington Sundar (1/17) and Kuldeep Yadav (1/17) impressed a pitch that offered help to limit New Zealand to 99 for eight, their lowest total against India in the shortest format. However, on a spin-friendly wicket, it was Arshdeep Singh (2/7 off 2 overs) who also impressed.

It should have been a straightforward run chase but the top-order comprising Ishan Kishan (19) Shubman Gill (11) and Rahul Tripathi (13) had a tough time again in spin-friendly conditions. In the end, Hardik Pandya (15 n o, 20b, 1x4) and Suryakumar Yadav (26 n o, 31b, 1x4) took the team over the line with a ball to spare and six wickets in hand.

A four after 45 balls, coming from Hardik's bat in the 19th over, released a lot of pressure before the skipper completed the job alongside Surya who hit the winning four.



Team mates congratulate Kuldeep Yadav after the dismissal of Daryl Mitchell PHOTOS: BCCI TWITTER

Earlier, Hardik decided to employ spinners from both ends in the powerplay after opening the bowling himself. Wrist spinners Kuldeep and Chahal, playing in a T20 game together after a while, extracted a lot out of the Lucknow surface while finger spinner Washington produced another tidy spell.

However, on a number of occasions, the Kiwi batters perished due to their self-destructive mode. Batters like Finn Allen, Devon Conway and Glenn Phillips all were dismissed trying to play the reverse sweep.

Brief scores: New Zealand 99 for 8 (Arshdeep Singh 2/7) lost to India 101 for 4 in 19.5 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 26 n o) by six wickets.

Netherlands pip Aussies to bronze

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Captain Thierry Brinkman struck twice as the Netherlands drew out a superb show of attacking hockey to beat World No.1 Australia 3-1 and clinch the bronze medal in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup here Sunday. Brinkman struck in the 35th and 40th minutes while penalty corner expert Jip Janssen scored the other goal for the Netherlands in the 33rd minute of the game played at the Kalinga Stadium.

Australia's lone goal came from their penalty corner expert Jeremy Hayward in the 13th minute. The bronze meant that Netherlands finished on the podium for the fourth time in succession and they are also equal with Australia on the maximum number of medals won in the showpiece event. Both

the Netherlands and Australia have now won 10 medals each in the 15 editions of the World Cup.

The Dutch finished third in 2010 and runners-up in 2014 and 2018. They have won the title in 1973, 1990 and 1998.

Australia dominated the first quarter of the third-fourth place match. The Kookaburras earned two penalty corners and took the lead from the second one two minutes before the end of the first quarter with Hayward sounding the board for his ninth goal of the tournament.

Australia led 1-0 at the breather but the Dutch turned up a completely different side in the second half as they pumped in three goals in the third quarter. Brinkman was at his absolute best, ruling the midfield play, supplying the forwards and even scoring goals himself.

NOVAK EQUALS RAFA'S RECORD

SERBIAN WINS 22ND GRAND SLAM TITLE EN ROUTE TO HIS 10TH AUSTRALIAN OPEN TRIUMPH

AGENCIES

Melbourne, Jan 29: An emotional Novak Djokovic beat Stefanos Tsitsipas Sunday to claim a 10th Australian Open title and equal Rafael Nadal's 22 Grand Slam crowns, a victory that helped him regain the World No.1 ranking. The Serbian star overcame a hamstring injury and off-court drama on his return to Melbourne Park to sweep past the Greek third seed 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/5) on Rod Laver Arena. He surged to victory without father Srdjan in the stands after the latter sparked controversy by posing with a fan carrying a Russian flag featuring Vladimir Putin's face following his son's quarterfinal win.

Djokovic climbed to his player's box after the win to embrace his mother and broke down in un-

controllable tears, collapsing to the ground sobbing. It capped a remarkable comeback by the 35-year-old fourth seed, who missed last year's tournament when he was deported over his Covid-19 vaccination stance.

Djokovic came into the match with his confidence high having won all nine of his previous Australian Open finals and with a 10-2 career advantage over the Greek. Moving freely with only minimal strapping on his troublesome left ham-

string, Djokovic opened with a comfortable hold after being greeted by huge cheers.

Djokovic worked two break-points on Tsitsipas's opening serve, to no avail, but kept probing and the Greek handed him a break for 3-1 with a careless double fault. That was enough for Djokovic to close out the set in 36 minutes.

The second and third sets were close affairs, but in both Djokovic had the last laugh by winning a majority of the crucial points.

Against odds, Tsitsipas broke for the first time on

string, Djokovic opened with a comfortable hold after being greeted by huge cheers.

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Against odds, Tsitsipas broke for the first time on

Grand Slam show

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2023

WIMBLEDON

2011, 2014, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022

FRENCH OPEN

2016, 2021

US OPEN

2011, 2015, 2018

Djokovic's opening serve in set three, only to relinquish the advantage immediately after a gripping rally. The set again went to a tie-break, where Djokovic once again raised a level to claim another title.

Brighton pile on Liverpool's woes

AGENCIES

London, Jan 29: Liverpool's disastrous season suffered another blow Sunday as the holders were dumped out at Brighton. Kaoru Mitoma's brilliant control and finish in added on time earned the Seagulls a place in the fifth round.

Liverpool had led at the Amex through Harvey Elliott, but have now won just once in their last six games. Lewis Dunk levelled before the break for Brighton and they were well worthy of the victory given to them by a moment of magic from Mitoma. The Japanese winger cushioned Pervis Estupinan's cross into his path, flicked the ball over Joe Gomez and fired high past Alisson Becker in the 92nd minute.

Liverpool are languishing in ninth in the Premier League, 21 points behind pacesetters Arsenal.

SHORT TAKES

Match called off

East London (South Africa): India's match against South Africa ahead of their Women's T20I Tri-series summit clash was abandoned following heavy showers here Sunday. Having already sealed their berth in Thursday's final, this match was a dress rehearsal for both the teams. But with India four for no loss two overs into the game, the match had to be stopped because of rain and could not be resumed again.

Pedri shines

Barcelona: Stymied in attack and without their top two scorers, Barcelona turned to Pedri to ensure they reach the Spanish league midway point ahead of Real Madrid in the title chase. Pedri marked his 100th Barcelona appearance at the ripe age of 20 by scoring as a substitute to help Barca squeeze past Girona 1-0 here Saturday. The Spain midfielder, who has become a pillar of the post-Lionel Messi rebuild under Xavi, became the second youngest player in club history to reach the century mark in games played. Pedri has so far scored six goals this season.

Ashwin seeks time

New Delhi: Senior India off-spinner R Ashwin has urged fans to be patient with star batters Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli as far as winning an ICC trophy is concerned. He said Sunday that it took even "the great" Sachin Tendulkar six attempts to win a World Cup. Backing his former and current India skipper, Ashwin said on his YouTube channel, "It's easy to say you haven't won this and so on. The great Sachin Tendulkar played the 1992, 1996, 1999, 2003, and 2007 World Cups. He finally won the World Cup in 2011. He had to wait for six World Cups to finally win one." AGENCIES

THE FINAL HURRAH



- 1 Players of the Netherlands celebrate after winning the bronze medal defeating Australia in the 3rd-4th place play-off match
- 2 Germany's Niklas Wellen (No. 9) is all pumped up after scoring against Belgium in the final
- 3 Pretty young hockey enthusiasts pose with their tickets ahead of the final at the Kalinga Stadium
- 4 Jeremy Hayward of Australia emerged as the top scorer in this edition of the FIH World Cup
- 5 Fans in funky headgears pose for shutterbugs