



## SRK FANGIRL

Actor Deepika Padukone says she wouldn't be in the industry, if it wasn't for SRK and his vision for her

LEISURE P2



## NOBLE DEED

A couple hailing from Jharkhand, who left their corporate jobs and turned to farming, has become model farmers

TWO STATES P8



## PUTIN THREATENED BORIS

Boris Johnson claims Vladimir Putin threatened him with a missile strike in an 'extraordinary' phone call

INTERNATIONAL P10

## BUDGET SESSION BEGINS TODAY

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 30: The Budget session of Parliament begins Tuesday with the maiden address of President Droupadi Murmu to the joint sitting of both Houses.

While the government's priority will be to seek approval on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address and the Finance Bill, the Opposition is raring to corner it on a range of issues, including the Adani-Hindenburg row, a nationwide caste-based economic census and the women's reservation bill.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the last full-fledged Union Budget of the Modi government before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections February 1.

The Economic Survey will be tabled Tuesday after the President's address. The government plans to bring around 36 bills - including four related to the budgetary exercise - during the session.

The session will have 27 sittings and will continue till April 6 with a month-long recess to examine the budget papers.

The first part of the session will conclude February 14. Parliament will reconvene March 12 for the second part of the Budget Session.

At an all-party meeting convened by it Monday, the government said it was willing to discuss every issue under the rules during the Budget Session of Parliament.

"We seek the Opposition's co-operation in running the proceedings smoothly," Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said after the meeting which was attended by 37 leaders, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, representing 27 parties.

At the meeting, Aam Aadmi Party's Sanjay Singh, RJD's Manoj Jha, DMK, Left parties and others raised the Adani issue and sought a discussion on it in Parliament during the session.

The US-based short seller Hindenburg Research has accused the Adani Group of wrongdoing like stock manipulation. The company has dismissed the allegations as nothing but a lie.

Parties like the BRS and DMK raised the issue of conduct of governors in states ruled by them. The YSR Congress demanded a nationwide caste-based economic census.



In a show of opposition strength, leaders of several national and regional parties braved snowfall and bone-chilling cold to share the stage with Congress leaders at a rally organised to mark the culmination of the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar, Monday

## Fraud cannot be obfuscated by nationalism: Hindenburg

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 30: US short seller Hindenburg Research has dismissed charge that its report on Adani Group's malfeasance was a calculated attack on India, saying a fraud cannot be obfuscated by nationalism or a bloated response that ignored key allegations.

Adani group's listed companies have lost over USD 70 billion since the January 24 report of the New York firm that flagged high debt levels at the ports-to-energy conglomerate and the alleged use of offshore entities in tax havens. The Indian group has denied all charges and threatened to sue the US firm.

Hindenburg responded to a 413-page detailed statement issued by the Adani Group late Sunday, saying it failed to specifically answer 62 of its 88 questions, and conflated the company's meteoric rise and the wealth of Asia's richest man with

the success of India itself.

In the Sunday evening statement, Adani group had called Hindenburg 'Madoffs of Manhattan' and that its report was 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.

Standing by its report that alleged fraud at the second largest conglomerate in India run by the world's then-third richest man, Hindenburg said it disagrees with Adani group's assertion of its report being an attack on India.

"To be clear, we believe India is a vibrant democracy and an emerging superpower with an exciting future," it said. "We also believe India's future is being held back by the Adani Group, which has draped itself in the Indian flag while systematically looting the nation." **Contd...P4**

# Gopal Das admits crime, arrested

THE STATE GOVERNMENT WRITES TO ORISSA HC REQUESTING FOR A SITTING/RETIRED HC OR DISTRICT JUDGE TO MONITOR THE CB PROBE TO BRING IN TRANSPARENCY

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 30: The Odisha Police Monday dismissed ASI Gopalkrushna Das from service after arresting him for allegedly gunning down Minister Naba Kishore Das at Brajarajnagar the day before.

The assistant sub-inspector was held following his confession during initial interrogation, ADG (Crime Branch) Arun Bothra said.

"The accused ASI has confessed to the crime. We will bring him on remand for further interrogation to ascertain the motive," Bothra told reporters.

He also denied reports that the ASI had earlier served as a personal security officer of the deceased leader.

## DAS CREMATED WITH FULL STATE HONOURS

Jharsuguda: The mortal remains of Minister Naba Kishore Das were Monday consigned to flames with full state honours here in the presence of thousands of people, who bade a tearful adieu to the departed leader. Amid chants of 'slokas', his son Bishal Das lit the funeral pyre, as a large gathering of MPs, MLAs and industrialists paid tributes to the popular BJD minister. The last rites were held at the Kherual Crematorium. **P5**

The Crime Branch (CB) has sought the court's permission to take Gopal on a seven-day remand for further enquiry into the case.

Jharsuguda District SP Rahul Jain dismissed the policeman from service, officials said. He was posted at Gandhi Chhakh Outpost under the Brajarajnagar police station. The ASI is believed to be suffering from a mental disorder.

The team of sleuths along with

Bothra, who camped at the crime spot Monday, interrogated the accused at Reserve office for more than 12 hours.

The CB team is headed by Ramesh Chandra Dora, DSP while Inspector Jibanananda Jena is assisting Dora. Another team of scientific/ballistic experts of State Forensic Science Laboratory, Bhubaneswar is also camping at Brajarajnagar.

## NABA DAS ASSASSINATION



CM Naveen Patnaik pays tribute to Das at the latter's official residence

Meanwhile, the Crime Branch in a statement said the case registered against ASI Das under Section 307 of the IPC and 27(1) of the Arms Act, has been converted and he is now booked under Section 302 of the IPC (punishment for murder). **Contd...P4**

## CM allocates health portfolio to FinMin

A day after the death of Health Minister Naba Kishore Das, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday allocated his portfolio to cabinet member Niranjan Pujari. With the approval of Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal, the CM asked Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Niranjan Pujari to additionally take charge of the health and family welfare department, said an official statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office. The minister was holding the health portfolio since May 2019. The number of members in the council of state ministers now comes down to 21 after the demise of Das.

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 30: The Supreme Court will hear next Monday pleas challenging the Centre's decision to block a controversial BBC documentary on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the 2002 Gujarat riots even as Law Minister Kiren attacked the petitioners for wasting precious time of the top court.

Taking note of the submissions of lawyer ML Sharma and senior advocate CU Singh, appearing for veteran journalist N Ram, TMC MP Mahua Moitra and activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan, seeking urgent listing of the petitions against the Centre's ban on the two-episode BBC series using its emergency powers, a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said it will hear the matter February 6.

One of the petitioners also alleged that the ban on the documentary 'India: The Modi question' was malafide, arbitrary and unconstitutional. Reacting strongly, Rijju tweeted this is how they waste the precious time of Hon'ble Supreme Court where thousands of common citizens are waiting and seeking dates for justice.

At the outset of the proceedings, lawyer Sharma, who has filed a PIL in his personal capacity, mentioned the plea and sought an urgent hearing.

It will be listed Monday, said the bench, also comprising Justices PS Narasimha and JB Paridwala.

The plea has also sought quashing of all orders directly or indirectly censoring the information including those shared on social media.

## SHORT TAKES

### BUS CATCHES FIRE; 15 PATIENTS HURT

Nayagarh: At least 15 persons were rendered hurt after a bus caught fire after hitting a road divider near Phalpadu village under Banigochha police limits in Nayagarh district late Sunday night. The bus was carrying 30 patients of Harbhanga area in Boudh district after their eye surgery at a private Sai Seva Sadan Hospital at Kuhudi in Khurda district. The mishap occurred after the driver of the bus lost control on the wheels and banged against the roadside divider. The bus was immediately caught up in flames after hitting the road divider. The bus driver and helper fled the scene after the mishap.

### ANOTHER MUGHAL GARDEN RENAMED

New Delhi: Mughal Garden in Delhi University's North Campus has been renamed as 'Gautam Buddha Centenary' Garden, an official said Monday. The garden does not have a Mughal design, was the rationale given by the university behind the rechristening, which was done January 27. The Rashtrapati Bhavan too had Saturday changed the name of its famed Mughal Gardens to 'Amrit Udyan'. A university official, who did not wish to be named, said that the coinciding of the name change was a matter of chance, and that the varsity had come to the decision after a prolonged discussion with its Garden Committee. A Gautam Buddha statue has been standing in the garden for at least 15 years.

## TALIBAN SUICIDE ATTACK AT PAK MOSQUE

# 61 killed; nearly 150 injured

Mostly policemen and security officials among the dead and injured

AGENCIES

Peshawar, Jan 30: A Taliban suicide bomber blew himself up in a mosque packed with worshippers during afternoon prayers Monday in the high-security zone in Pakistan's restive northwestern Peshawar city, killing at least 61 people and wounding nearly 150 others, mostly policemen, officials said.

The blast occurred inside the mosque in the Police Lines area around 1.40pm when worshippers, which included personnel of the police, army and bomb disposal squad



- were offering the Zuhr (afternoon) prayers. The bomber who was present in the front row blew himself up, officials said.

Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Peshawar Muhammad Ijaz Khan said 61 people have been

killed in the blast. He said that 300 to 400 police officials were present in the area at the time of the blast. It is apparent that a security lapse occurred, he told the media. A brother of the slain commander of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Umar Khalid Khurasani claimed that the suicide blast was part of the revenge attack for his brother who was killed last August in Afghanistan.

The outlawed TTP, known as the Pakistani Taliban, has carried out a number of suicide attacks in the past. **Contd... on P4**

# Millet delicacies now on Parliament canteens' menu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 30: From jowar vegetable upma to ragi dosa, bajre ki tikki to bajra khichdi - these food items made of millets will now be part of the menu of Parliament House canteens.

As the government is promoting the use of millets, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has made arrangements for serving the dishes made primarily with ragi, jowar, bajra, rajgira and kangni to MPs, staff and visitors during the budget session starting January 31.

Dishes from across the country have found a place on the menu of Parliament canteens after Prime

Minister Narendra Modi Sunday highlighted the benefits of millets during his 'Mann ki Baat' programme.

During his 97th radio talk show 'Mann Ki Baat', Modi elaborated the new term Milletpreneurs. "You must have heard the word entrepreneur, but have you heard Milletpreneurs? Milletpreneurs of Odisha are in the limelight these days. A Self Help Group of about 1,500 women of the tribal district Sundargarh is associated with the Odisha Millets Mission," he said.

He further added women from the district are making everything from millets like cookies, rasgulla, gulab jamun, and even cakes. Due

United Nations has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets after the Government of India brought forward a proposal in this regard

PM Narendra Modi during 'Mann ki Baat' Sunday praised a women's SHG from Sundargarh saying 'milletpreneurs of Odisha are in the limelight these days'



to their great demand in the market, the income of women is also increasing, Modi pointed out.

Last month, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar organised a lunch made of only millets for parliamentarians during the winter session.

The United Nations declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets, after the Government of India brought forward a proposal in this regard and was endorsed by members of FAO Governing Bodies, as well as by the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly.

In Parliament canteens, health-conscious people can now have oats milk or soya milk, besides

bajre ke raab (from Rajasthan) and ragi matar ka shorba (soup), bajra onion ki muthiya (Gujarat), ragi rava idli with sambhar, shahi bajre ki tikki (Madhya Pradesh) and jowar vegetable upma (Gujarat) as starters.

Besides, Kerala's ragi dosa with peanut chutney, Rajasthan's rajgira poori with aloo ki sabzi and baje-ragi ki roti and Gujarat's bajre ki khichdi would be served in Parliament canteens, apart from the normal menu.

Visitors can also enjoy amaranth salad and korra millet salad, kesari kheer made of small millets and ragi walnut laddoo. **Contd...P4**

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Looks like it's one of those days when you have to pay respect to Gandhi. Godse is trending on social media.

## MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	59500.41	↑ 169.51
NIFTY	17648.950	↑ 44.60
DOLLAR	81.49	↓ ₹0.02
EURO	88.72	↑ ₹0.15
GOLD	₹56,760	↓ ₹97
SILVER	₹68,500	↑ ₹171

## WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	32.2°C	30.6°C
TEMP. MIN	17.2°C	17.0°C
Humidity	80%	76%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Foggy	weather mostly

# leisure



## ANNIE WERSCHING LOSES BATTLE WITH CANCER AT 45

Actress Annie Wersching, best known for her roles in the television shows *The Vampire Diaries*, *24*, *Bosch* and *Timeless*, died of cancer aged 45, her publicist confirmed. Wersching continued to shoot even after her 2020 diagnosis, with prominent roles in *Star Trek: Picard* as the Borg queen in Season 2.

## STYLES TO PERFORM AT 2023 GRAMMYS

Former One Direction member Harry Styles will perform at the 65th annual Grammy Awards February 5. It was announced during the AFC Championship game Sunday evening, reports Variety. Styles joins previously announced performers Bad Bunny, Mary J. Blige, Brandi Carlile, Luke Combs, Steve Lacy, Lizzo, Kim Petras, and Sam Smith.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

#### ARIES

You are very apprehensive about your possessions today, and will not like to share them. This mood may be because of someone particular. Affairs regarding love, Ganesh says, are progressing fine, and your married life will bloom.

#### TAURUS

This day you will have an urge to take a trip, be it a small one. Ganesh sees you enthusiastically making detailed plans and arrangements, arranging for funds and getting in touch with all those you desire to take along. It is possible that you may ultimately scrap your plans and choose to stay at home.

#### GEMINI

You will make a reputation for yourself as a leader in your social circle. You yearn for something in your heart, and need to concentrate your energies upon attaining it. Your creative mind will come up with solutions today, to certain questions that have been perplexing you for quite some, says Ganesh.

#### CANCER

You will get a surprise gift or god news from your friends or relatives. You will enjoy with your family. You will get the affection and co-operation of family members. Happiness and rapport in domestic life is indicated.

#### LEO

You will pay more attention to matters at home. You may take up home renovation projects. You may end up replacing the entire furniture at your place even. You will spend the day enjoying with your family members and friends, says Ganesh.

#### VIRGO

Emotions that have been locked in the inner recesses of your heart might just surface today. You may develop an emotional attachment with your material possessions. However, Ganesh says, if you don't find your surroundings conducive, you will feel extremely restless.

#### LIBRA

Ganesh says today will be an auspicious day for starting any new work. In the office you will be assigned new positions and you shall excel in the same. Whatever work is undertaken by you will see you attain success in it. Today is a lucky day for you Ganesh says.

#### SCORPIO

Today, there may come up situations which may test your patience, predicts Ganesh. However, it would be wise to sit and sort out all the differences with your colleagues or family members or your partner.

#### SAGITTARIUS

You need to increase your tolerance power as you may have to face criticism from close ones. However, it is not feasible to please everyone around. You may just be happy doing basic favours for your loved ones. Ganesh asks you to be patient.

#### CAPRICORN

You'll kick start the day in high spirit which will take everyone by surprise. You will shift gears at work so that you can perform more efficiently and productively. Such a change will boost your confidence as you will see the positive results for yourself. Most of the day, you will work like a busy bee, but at the end you will listen to music or be with your friends to relax your mind, foretells Ganesh.

#### AQUARIUS

Today is a day of communication and associations. While at a family gathering, you will enjoy chatting nineteen to the dozen! But at work, you may be left teaching, explaining, negotiating, co-ordinating and arranging meetings. A productive but draining day, says Ganesh.

#### PISCES

Compromise is the name of the game when it comes to relationships, and you are adept at it. You realise the importance of losing an argument to win over a heart, and do so with panache. Indeed, this is an area where others emulate you, says Ganesh.

## Bhumi woos fashion police in bold outfit

**Mumbai:** Bhumi Pednekar is known for portraying powerful female roles from her very first movie, and she looks stunning in any type of attire. The celebrity has carved out a niche for herself in the fashion industry, wearing both ethnic and western clothing. She managed to woo the fashion police with her stylish outfits whether she was on the red carpet or the ramp.

No wonder, with her most recent appearance at an award ceremony in a gorgeous Gretelz Milano emerald cut-out gown, the actress has swept the Internet.

The actress's jaw-dropping outfit is going viral after she posted a series of images of herself on Instagram wearing a green cut-out gown with a floor-length train.

In a beautiful emerald hue, Bhumi Pednekar's backless satin gown has a cut-out pattern, a halter neck, and a full-length wraparound skirt with a floor-sweeping train. Her frame is wonderfully hugged by the outfit, which also draws attention to her curves and toned abs.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Bhumi will be sharing screen space with Arjun Kapoor in Ajay Bahl's romantic thriller *The Lady Killer*.



PATHAAN'S FIRST PRESS MEET



## Deepika sings SRK's praises

**Mumbai:** After *Pathaan* breached the Rs 500 crore mark worldwide in its opening weekend, the film's cast decided to interact with the media. During the first official press meet, Deepika Padukone got emotional and said that she wouldn't have been here if it wouldn't have been for SRK.

"To be honest, I don't think we set out to break records. We set out to make a good film. This is what SRK taught me in my first movie. He told me you should work with people who make you happy. It's such a lovely atmosphere to work in and that's what the audience is taking back," Deepika said.

She further added, "Whether it's *Om Shanti Om*, *Chennai Express* - what makes it special is the relationship we share, the trust. I wouldn't be here today, if it wasn't for SRK and his vision for me. To shower me with so much love and grace. He has given me confidence and even he doesn't know that. I do what I do because I know Shah Rukh will always be there for me."

## CURTAINS ON VAGDEVI THEATRE FEST 2023



*Odasa* (Bedbug), an Odia play, was staged on the second and final evening of Vagdevi Theatre Festival at Rabintra Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Monday. Written by Sharat Chandra Acharya, the drama, based on the importance of bedbugs in human's life, was directed by Pabitra Mohanty. Though these insects feed on human blood, they don't bite people unless they are hungry whereas human wants are unlimited. Bedbugs also give life and livelihood to a few people and at times they even become the medium of romance, narrated the play. Apart from director Mohanty, festival director Mamata Tripathy, Deepajanli Mohanty, Manu Patnaik, Sunil Patnaik played key roles in the drama.



## ALKA YAGNIK IS WORLD'S MOST STREAMED SINGER

**Mumbai:** Play back singer Alka Yagnik has featured on the Guinness Book of World Records for a third year in a row. She was the most streamed singer of 2022, beating even the world's biggest singers like Taylor Swift, Drake and Beyonce. Her number of streams are legions ahead of others.

As per a report on the Guinness Book of World Records, Alka's songs recorded 15.3 billion streams, an average of 42 million streams per day. And she achieved this feat in the last two years as well. She had 17 billion streams in 2021 and 16.6 billion in 2020.

Second to her on the list is Bad Bunny with 14.7 billion streams. The other three on the list are all Indian singers: Udit Narayan (10.8 billion), Arijit Singh (10.7 billion) and Kumar Sanu (9.09 billion).

The list would come as a surprise for not even millionaire singers have been able to record such numbers. *BTS* (7.95 billion) and *BLACKPINK* (7.03 billion) both made the top ten, while *The Weeknd* (5.7 billion) took 13th spot; Taylor Swift (4.33 billion) was 26th; and Drake (2.9 billion) was 50th.

## Sushmita: I have lived as Aarya

**Mumbai:** Actress Sushmita Sen, who has cultivated a loyal fan following with her web series *Aarya*, feels that the show has become synonymous with her name. The third season of the show started its shoot Monday and the actress can't be more excited.

Talking about the same, Sushmita said: "Aarya is synonymous with my name. I have lived as Aarya for two whole seasons and the love received by the audiences has only encouraged me to do more. Walking on the sets of *Aarya Season 3* makes me feel at home and gives me a sense of empowerment."

The International Emmy-nominated show follows the story of the titular character of an independent woman who seeks to protect her family and joins a mafia gang in order to get revenge for her husband's murder.

The director of the show, Ram Madhvan said: "Getting to and com-

mencing Season 3 of *Aarya* is too special for me and my team. I'm grateful to our audiences who showered the series with so much."

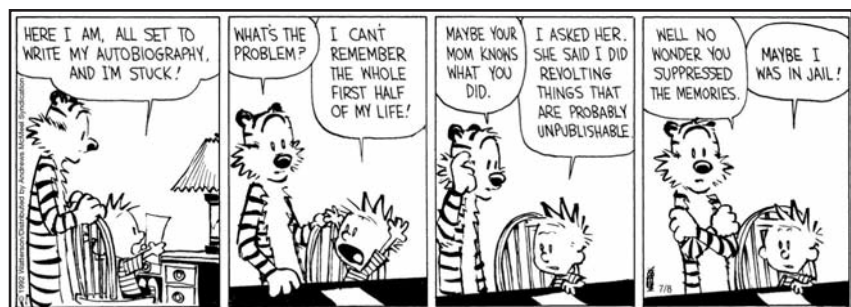
Produced by Endemol Shine India and Ram Madhvan Films, *Aarya* is now being shot for its Season 3. The show will soon be released on Disney+ Hotstar.



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

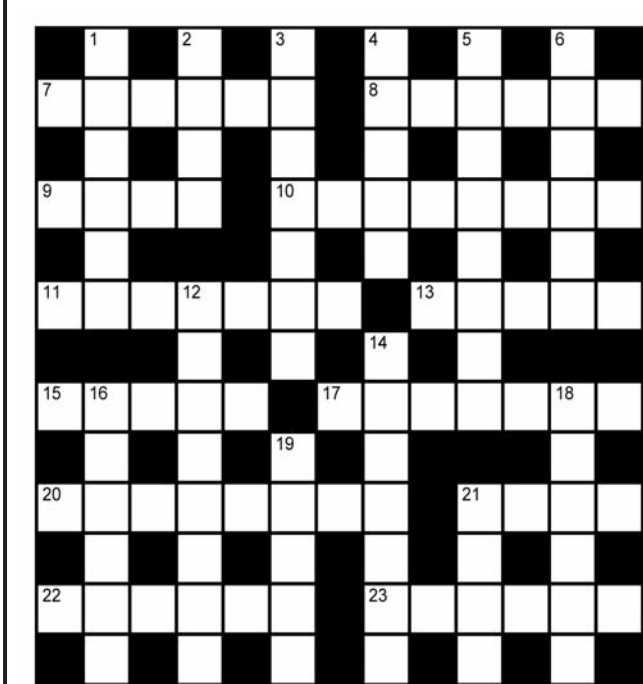


### BREVITY



### FUN post

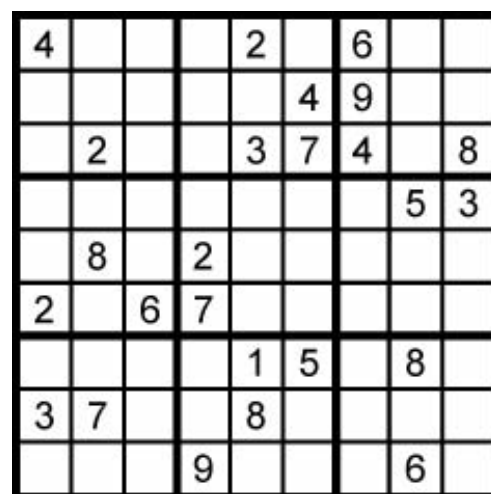
### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 7 Become extinct (3,3)
  - 8 Certain musician
  - 9 Untamed (3,2,3)
  - 10 Seasickness
  - 11 Most atrocious
  - 13 Entice
  - 15 Bellow
  - 17 Display of bad temper
  - 20 Strike with a club
  - 21 Anchovy or sprat, e.g.
  - 22 Watchman
  - 23 French tower
- Down
- 1 Equestrian sport
  - 2 Amphibian
  - 3 Enumerate
  - 4 Shape
  - 5 Small sofa (4,4)
  - 6 At rest
  - 12 Swamp
  - 14 Promenade
  - 16 Attendant
  - 18 Greatcoat
  - 19 Aquamarine
  - 21 Transverse flute

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



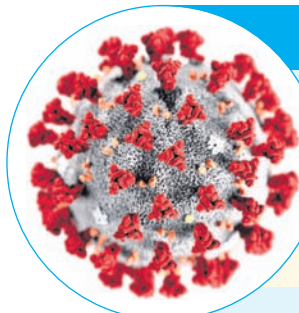
#### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

**REMEMBERING BAPU**

Students pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi on the premises of Odisha Khadi and Village Industries Board office in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of the death anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Monday



**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,49,02,818	64,71,77,239	67,59,752
India	4,46,82,719	4,41,50,131	5,30,740
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

# Work-life balance - A tightrope walk for cops

**A STUDY CLAIMS THAT 90% OF POLICE PERSONNEL IN CHHATTISGARH, ODISHA AND HIMACHAL PRADESH ARE NOT GETTING WEEKLY OFF OR REST AT ALL**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 30:** At a time when the state is in utter shock after the assassination of Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba Kishore Das by Gopal Krushna Das, an assistant sub-inspector (ASI), who was supposed to be mentally ill, the incident has brought to limelight how the cops are struggling to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Speaking to mediapersons, Gopal's wife claimed that the ASI was suffering from mental illness and has been under medication for the last seven to eight years. Corroborating her statements, Chandrasekhar Tripathy, a psychiatrist of MCG Medical College and Hospital at Berhampur, said that he had treated Gopal who was suffering bipolar disorder, a mental health condition that causes extreme mood swings.

The horrific incident has once again brought to the limelight how the police personnel in the state are under severe occupational stress while a healthy work-life balance sans leaves has become a pipedream for them.

Studies conducted by several government and non-government agencies in the past have highlighted the pressing need for addressing growing mental stress among the security personnel in the country including armed, paramilitary and state police forces.

The studies revealed that mental health issues are mostly reported among cops in lower ranks



The mortal remains of Health Minister Naba Das leave BJD office in Bhubaneswar, Monday, for Jharsuguda OP PHOTO

**STUDIES REVEALED THAT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES ARE MOSTLY REPORTED AMONG COPS IN LOWER RANKS LIKE CONSTABULARY**

**EXPERTS CITED MEAGRE SALARY, POOR WORKING CONDITIONS, LACK OF JOB SATISFACTION, DENIAL OF TIMELY LEAVES, REST, HOUSING AND OTHER ALLOWANCES AS THE MAJOR FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR POOR MENTAL HEALTH AMONG SECURITY FORCES INCLUDING THE POLICE FORCES IN STATES**

like constabulary.

The experts cited meagre salary, poor working conditions, lack of job satisfaction, denial of timely leaves, rest, housing and other allowances as the major factors responsible for poor mental health among security forces including the police forces in states.

The situation in Odisha is no different from what the forces in rest of the country have been facing.

'Status of Policing in India Report, 2019' published by The Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Lokniti revealed that police personnel from Odisha re-

ported highest average working hours of 18 hours a day, while police personnel from Nagaland reported the lowest average of eight hours a day.

The cops participated in the survey blamed excessive workload and emergency nature of duty as the primary reasons behind the stress.

The study claimed that 90 per cent of the police personnel in Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Himachal Pradesh are not getting weekly off or rest at all. Almost 97 per cent personnel from Odisha who took part in the survey claimed that they were unable to spare adequate time

for their family members due to the pressing duties.

What is more worrisome is that about 89 per cent of the police personnel claimed that heavy workload is telling upon their physical and mental health.

"Several people in almost all the departments develop psychological disorders due to reasons like workload and family related issues. The government should immediately recruit additional manpower at police stations, especially at rural police stations across the state," said GC Nanda, former Director General of Police (DGP).

According to Suwendu Narayan Mishra, a psychiatrist at Sum Hospital, "Stress can prompt anyone to commit suicide or homicide. The police personnel are most vulnerable to such mental health hazard owing to their stressful duty schedule. Work-life balance is very crucial. They seldom get any scope to take rest,

## BJP for CBI probe; Congress seeks Naveen's resignation

The saffron party questions as to why a service pistol was issued to a cop who was mentally unsound

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar:** Opposition BJP Monday demanded a CBI probe into the killing of Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba Kishore Das by a police officer to unearth the "conspiracy" behind it, while Congress sought Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's resignation claiming collapse of law and order in the state.

The 60-year-old minister was fired upon at Brajaraj Nagar town around 1pm Sunday by ASI Gopal Das, who is believed to be suffering from mental disorder. The injured BJD leader was airlifted to a private hospital in Bhubaneswar, where he died.

"I suspect that the minister's killing is part of a conspiracy as the accused ASI Gopal Das was issued a service revolver only a day before the minister's killing," Leader of Opposition Jayanarayan Mishra of the BJP told reporters here.

He said that as an employee of the force is an accused, the state police could not probe into this incident. Mishra also sought to know why a service pistol was issued to the accused policeman even though he was mentally unsound.

Claiming that the Crime Branch probe cannot reveal the truth, he said a CBI investigation could pro-

perly probe into the incident.

"If the chief minister wants to reveal the truth behind the minister's murder, he must order a CBI probe," Mishra said.

He suspected the involvement of influential persons and senior officers in the incident.

The Congress demanded Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's resignation holding him responsible for the "worsening" law and order situation of the state.

"Is there any law and order situation in the state? A minister is killed by a policeman in broad daylight. An accused in the murder case in Kalahandi woman teacher's case died in jail under mysterious circumstances," Congress lawmaker Santosh Singh Saluja said.

Saluja asked what the situation of common people is when ministers are not safe.

Another Congress MLA Suresh Routray also demanded a judicial inquiry into the incident.

Meanwhile, Brajaraj Nagar police station inspector-in-charge Pradumnya Kumar Swain lodged a formal complaint against Gopal in connection with the killing of the minister. The FIR claimed that Das shot the minister with his service pistol from a very close range with the intention to kill him.

do yoga or meditation for relaxation. I have advised many police officials to set aside some time from their stressful work schedule Saturdays or Sundays for recreation. The government

should arrange regular once-a-week relaxation programme for the policemen and allow consultation with psychiatrists to avoid such unfortunate happenings in future."

**Congress MLA Santosh Singh Saluja sought to know what the situation of common people is when ministers are not safe**

# Bakul awarded for innovative library

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 30:** In the 5th edition of the India Reading Olympiad, City-based Bakul Foundation was awarded in the "Most Innovative Library" category at the prestigious Hyderabad Literary Festival recently.

The India Reading Olympiad, instituted by the Food 4 Thought Foundation, gives away awards in 14 categories recognising the work of voluntary outfits, schools, individuals, book clubs and authors working towards bringing about a reading revolution in the country.

Bakul Foundation was only such organisation that had made it to the final shortlists in two categories: "best NGO" and "most innovative library".

The jury was impressed with Bakul's innovations such as open unmanned library at Ekamra Haat, books in an old refrigerator, a little tree library in Forest Park, and converting an old discarded bus into a library stationed in the parking area of Kalabhoomi in Bhubaneswar.



Bakul founder Sujit Mahapatra (2nd from R) receiving the award

Sharing her views, Food 4 Thought Foundation director Madhavi Sharma said, "This was one award in which the jury was unanimous since the other nominees had a few innovations whereas Bakul had so many of them in different formats, each innovation worthy of the nomination."

Bakul founder Sujit Mahapatra received the award on behalf of

the foundation, along with two Bakul volunteers, Nilanjana Das and Debajyoti Baij, both now working in Hyderabad.

In his acceptance speech, Mahapatra acknowledged the work of all the volunteers responsible for the innovations and work at the foundation.

He said, "When we started promoting reading, we realised that our

**Bakul Foundation was only such organisation that had made it to the final shortlists in two categories: "best NGO" and "most innovative library"**

goal was not just limited to reaching readers but also to create readers. Hence, the need emerged to attract children and adults through various methods including that of bringing books to people through innovative formats."

There was another initiative from Odisha, a library created in an old boat at Bhitarkanika by the Forest department, was also in the final shortlist in the innovation category.

The Bhubaneswar Book Reading Club was nominated in the 'Book Club' category and Riyad Maroof Hassan got nominated in the category of 'I am Bond (under 18)' for developing a historical web show by children.



**STELLAR SHOW:** Artists of Nrtyadham perform during a classical dance festival organised at Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre in Bhubaneswar, Monday OP PHOTO

## Cong observes Gandhi's death anniv, BJD send-off

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 30:** Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) Monday observed the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and celebrated the concluding ceremony of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra (BJY).

To commemorate the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, OPCC vice president Sibananda Ray along with other Congress leaders and workers garlanded the statue of Gandhiji at Mahatma Gandhi Park situated near Nalco Square in Chandrasekharpur here.

Later in the day, a team of Congress workers gathered at the party office and paid floral tributes to Mahatma's statue.

The Congress workers present at the Congress Bhawan hoisted the party flag and sang the national anthem.

"The Bharat Jodo Yatra was a venture to unite the whole country against violence, hatred and intolerance and to showcase the astounding response it (BJY) received from the people across the country," said Biswajit Das, Bhubaneswar Congress Committee president.

The OPCC had instructed the party's district-level committees to observe both the occasions.

Rahul Gandhi-led BJD started September 7, 2022 from Kanyakumari, ended Monday after having covered a distance of nearly 4,080 km across 12 states and two Union territories of the country.

# \$3.1mn spent on privacy last year in India: Report

According to a report by networking giant Cisco, about 85 per cent of respondents in India recognise significant business benefits of privacy investment, and 41 per cent of respondents identify privacy as a core skill in the country

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 30:** The average privacy spending by businesses in India was \$3.1 million in 2022 and \$2.4 million in 2021, a new report said Monday.

According to a report by networking giant Cisco, about 85 per cent of respondents in India recognise significant business benefits of privacy investment, and 41 per cent of respondents identify privacy as a core skill in the country.

Moreover, estimated privacy benefits in India have been \$2.8 million in 2021 and \$3.5 million in 2022.

"As the study shows that despite

a challenging economic environment, organisations continue to invest in privacy, with spending in India significantly up almost 30 per cent in the last year," said Samir Kumar Mishra, Director of Security Sales, Cisco India & SAARC.

"By embedding data protection and privacy into their culture and ongoing operations, organisations can ensure that they are well-positioned to meet the challenges of an increasingly data-driven digital world," he added.

Reacting to privacy laws globally, 92 per cent of all corporate respondents in India state privacy laws have had a positive impact, and only 1 per cent indicated that the



**As per the study, despite a challenging economic environment, organisations continue to invest in privacy, with spending in India significantly up almost 30 per cent in the last year**

**SAMIR KUMAR MISHRA | DIRECTOR OF SECURITY SALES, CISCO INDIA & SAARC**

laws had a negative impact.

The report further mentioned that when it comes to the application and use of AI in their solutions, about 98 per cent of respondents said that the organisation needs to be doing more to reassure customers that their data is only being used for intended and legitimate purposes and only 2 per cent disagree.

When it comes to data localisation, about 95 per cent of respondents in India believe that their data would be inherently safer if it could be stored within their country or region, and 93 per cent believe that global providers can better protect their data compared to local providers.

# Humane Sagar, Shriya Mishra resolve their marital dispute



**Misunderstandings between us have been resolved, thanks to the police officials. Now the two of us are going to stay together**

SHRIYA MISHRA

written complaint was submitted in this case. The couple solved their disputes today after we phoned them twice. They pledged not to say anything negative about one another. Later, Humane's mother and Shriya's parents will talk and fix a time for her to return to her in-laws," he continued.

Earlier in the day, the couple appeared at the police station for counseling. Some of their family members were also present at the station during the session.

Notably, Shriya had brought a string of allegations against her husband among them domestic violence, extra-marital affairs and pressure for religious conversion. However, the singer had refuted the allegations saying that nothing like that occurred between the two.

ductive today, as it was on the first day. "Humane and Shriya will talk to each other during the next 15-20 days. Shriya will then take a decision regarding returning to her in-laws' place with consent from her guardians. The marital dispute has been resolved. Both want to stay together. Shriya will go back to her father's house because she didn't bring her belongings with her today. She will decide when to go back to her marital home later," said Mohapatra.

Mohapatra also informed that no formal complaint was filed in the matter. "There were only verbal accusations made, and no



GRACEFUL MOVES: Artistes performing Rasaila dance during a cultural festival on Puri Sanskruti Bhawan premises, Monday

OP PHOTO

## BJD reiterates demand for Women's Reservation Bill

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Jan 30:** The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Monday reiterated its long-standing demand for passage of Women's Reservation Bill in the budget session of the Parliament.

It requested the Union government during the all-party meeting to pass the reservation bill which seeks to grant 33 per cent reservation to women in Lok Sabha and state assemblies. Along with BJD, Janata Dal (United), YSRCP and Bharat Rashtra Samithi also de-



mandated passage of the bill in the budget session.

Asserting that Women's Reservation Bill is going to be a priority for the ruling party of the state, BJD Rajya Sabha MP Sasmit

Patra said that they will also build consensus with like-minded parties to put pressure on the Union government to ensure that the bill is passed.

Apart from the reservation bill, BJD also raised the issues of PM Aawas Yojana & PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana during the meeting. Patra said that the party wants renewal of and continual PMGKAY. "We'll also demand that all pending houses should be provided under PMAY," he said. The BJD will also demand reduction of GST on Kendu leaves.

## Draper urged to open startup house in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 30:** Billionaire venture capitalist Tim Draper and Startup Odisha Executive Chairman Omkar Rai met in Cuttack and had a discussion on the prospects of escalating the growth of Startups and fostering entrepreneurship in Odisha and on the possibility of establishing a 'Draper Startup House' in Odisha.

Tim Draper lauded the efforts of the State government in supporting the Startup Ecosystem. Bitcoin billionaire investor Tim Draper, known for his early bets in breakthrough tech companies like Tesla, SpaceX, Hotmail and Skype also backs startups in a big way. Discussions have begun between Tim Draper's team and Startup Odisha on the modalities of how to take it forward.

"The startup ecosystem in Odisha is growing by leaps and bounds capitalizing on the strength of both traditional and modern sectors. Odisha is ranked among the 'top performing states as per the Startup Ranking 2021 given by the government of India. To further, spur the growth and support the startup ecosystem, we had a discussion regarding establishing a 'Draper Startup House' in Odisha. We have received a positive response and have started discussions on how we could work together. A 'Draper Startup House' has been established in Bengaluru and with the potential that Bhubaneswar holds in the startup Ecosystem, the next destination can likely be Odisha's capital," said Rai.

"Draper Startup House" supports startup entrepreneurs across the world, with a vision and mission to one million entrepreneurs by 2030. Draper Startup Houses are in about 25 cities around the world and Draper is expecting to move that to 50 this year.

CONTINUED FROM P1

### Gopal Das...

During its investigation, a CB team examined the informant and other eyewitnesses in the case. The team visited the spot and seized one empty case and other physical clue material.

The team also seized a 9 mm pistol and 3 rounds of live ammunition and a mobile handset of the accused ASI. The firearms, arms and ammunition will be sent for ballistic examination and opinion, the Crime Branch said.

Another team of the CB conducted investigation at Bhubaneswar including inquest followed by autopsy by a team of doctors of Capital Hospital, after arranging sufficient lighting facility. Videography of the entire process has also been done.

The team at Bhubaneswar also seized the treatment records and blood-stained clothes, including other biological exhibits. Viscera sample has been preserved for further chemical examination and opinion, they said. The accused ASI is in police custody and will be present before a court for further police remand. However, the reason behind the assassination is yet to be revealed by the police.

Meanwhile, opposition BJP and Congress strongly condemned the murder of Das and criticised the government for failing to protect its own Minister. While the BJP demanded a CBI probe into the case, Congress demanded a SIT probe under the supervision of the Orissa High Court.

### Fraud cannot...

"A fraud is fraud, even when it's perpetrated by one of the wealthy

est individuals in the world," it said, adding, "Adani also claimed we have committed a 'flagrant breach of applicable securities and foreign exchange laws'. Despite Adani's failure to identify any such laws, this is another serious accusation that we categorically deny."

Adani's 413 page response only included about 30 pages focused on issues related to the report and the remainder consisted of 330 pages of court records, along with 53 pages of high-level financials, general information, and details on irrelevant corporate initiatives, such as how it encourages female entrepreneurship and the production of safe vegetables. On Sunday evening, Adani group said the Hindenburg report was intended to enable the US-based short seller to book gains by crashing stock prices.

The report had come just as a Rs 20,000-crore share sale at the group's flagship company, Adani Enterprises, opened to anchor investors.

All transactions entered into by us with entities who qualify as 'related parties' under Indian laws and accounting standards have been duly disclosed by us, it had said late on Sunday. 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.

### Millet delicacies...

The move to serve millet foods comes as they are considered as the traditional cereals of India and are known for health benefits in various ways.

The International Year of Millets

stands to provide a unique opportunity to increase global production, ensure efficient processing and consumption, promote a better utilization of crop rotations, and encourage better connectivity throughout food systems to promote millets as a key component of the food basket.

### 61 killed...

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army chief General Asim Munir dashed to Peshawar to review the relief and rescue operation.

The premier along with the army chief also visited the Lady Reading Hospital in Peshawar and inquired after the health of the injured. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and other officials were also present. Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb tweeted that the premier summoned an emergency meeting.

She said that "all relevant institutions have been directed to attend the meeting" which will "look into the motives behind the terrorist attack". The preliminary probe report would be presented in the meeting.

Superintendent of Police (Investigation), Peshawar, Shazad Kaukab, whose office is close to the mosque, told the media that the blast occurred when he just entered the mosque to offer prayers. He said he luckily survived the attack. A police official said that a portion of the mosque collapsed and several people were believed to be under it.

"We are currently focused on the rescue operation. Our first priority is to safely retrieve the people buried under the debris," in-charge Rescue operation Bilal Faizi told the media.

### KIIT-KISS now associate sponsor of Rugby India

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 30:** Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) and Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) have become the only group of institutions in the country to be the associate sponsor of Indian Rugby Football Union (IRFU) for the next three years, with the deemed to be universities signing a pact with the IRFU, also known as Rugby India, in this regard Monday.

The state government will be the main sponsor of the game, it was learnt. The pact was signed between KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta and Rugby India president Rahul Bose. Among others, three coaches and selectors of the Indian National Rugby 15s teams - Naas Botha, Kiano Fourie and Andre Venter - were present.

Sources said KISS has been promoting rugby since 2004. The partnership will entail KISS-KIIT making available its facilities for the conduct of camps and competitions.

### 110 artificial limbs distributed



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 30:** Savex Technologies in association with Freedom Trust Organisation held a free distribution of artificial limb camp January 29 at Ramkrishna Mission Matha, Bhubaneswar, Sunday.

On this Occasion, Anil Jagasia founder of Savex Technologies, Director of Savex Anu Jagasia, Vice President Latha Joshi, Founder of Freedom Trust Sunder Ramakrishna Mission Chief Atma Pravananda Maharaja were

present as dignitaries.

Savex Technologies Bhubaneswar Branch DGM Sujit Das and other members were also present.

About 110 differently-abled people were benefitted from the camp. Last year also, artificial limbs were distributed among 102 differently-abled persons in the camp organised at Ramakrishna Mission Matha, Bhubaneswar.

Savex is planning to organize many more such free artificial limb distribution camps in the near future.

## State to observe 'Pani Panchayat Pakhya'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 30:** The state Water Resources department is all set to observe annual 'Pani Panchayat Pakhya' between February 1-15 this year to highlight the role of pani panchayats in water governance, participatory irrigation management and ensuring equity at grassroots level.

This year, the fortnight will be observed at the division, district and state levels February 1, February 8, and February 15 respectively. "Chariots carrying messages on importance of Pani Panchayats will be flagged off by ministers, in presence of local MLAs and eminent personalities February 1. Various activities such as debate, essay, painting and quiz competitions amongst school children will be organised along with exhibitions," informed a department official.

The Water Resources depart-



ment which has been engaged in sustainable development and management of water resources has set new goals like online grievances redressal, online payment of wages to construction labourers, real time flood forecasting system, online tracking of water allocation to industrial and other commercial establishments, ground water mapping, water conservation under the 5T drive.

"In the command area development (CAD) sector, a number of reformative measures have been taken keeping the tail end in mind, such as: legislative measures such as amendment to Pani Panchayat Act including spouses of water users being declared as members and formation of Pani Panchayats under mega lift irrigation projects," briefed the official.

### Night temperature to drop by 2°C to 3°C from Feb 4

**Bhubaneswar:** The day temperatures (maximum temperatures) in several places of Odisha have risen significantly during the past few days. As a result, the winter cold has subsided considerably in the state. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), this hot weather condition will prevail in the state for the next three days. Following this, it will again get a little colder and the temperature is likely to drop by 2°C to 3°C. As per the IMD bulletin, the minimum temperature will increase from Monday night due to cloudy weather conditions. The coastal areas of Odisha are likely to witness an increase in night temperature due to partly cloudy weather Tuesday. Thereafter, the mercury level in the state will decrease again and cold conditions will increase. Cold waves are likely to return to the state; consequently, the minimum temperature will increase by 2°C to 3°C in interior and north coastal Odisha.

## BMC official accused of harassing album actress

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 30:** An album actress Monday brought allegations against a zonal deputy commissioner of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC). The victim, a resident of SreeRam Nagar in Lingaraj area, said in her complaint that the civic body official, Jogeswar Nayak, forcefully entered into her house Monday morning and sexually harassed her using foul language. The actress also accused Nayak of making false claims before the PCR staff. The deputy commissioner told the PCR staff that the actress had taken Rs 4 lakh from him on the pretext to invest in her business. The actress had a salon at Babuji Nagar. However, the actress asserted that Nayak had given her Rs 2.50 lakh to produce an album song in which



his wife was the producer. Nayak was also accused of blackmailing the alleged victim and asking her to share bed. On the other hand, Nayak filed a counter complaint. Lingaraj police started investigation into the matter after registering two cases (27/23 and 28/23) in this regard.

**FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS**

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

# Naba Das cremated with full State honours



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jharsuguda, Jan 30:** The mortal remains of Odisha minister Naba Kishore Das were Monday consigned to flames with full State honours here in the presence of thousands of people, who bade a tearful adieu to the departed leader.

Amid chants of 'slokas', his son Bishal Das lit the funeral pyre, as a large gathering of MPs, MLAs and industrialists paid tributes to the popular BJD minister. The last rites were held at the Kherual Crematorium.

The Odisha government has also announced a three-day state mourning as a mark of respect to the deceased leader.

Das breathed his last Sunday evening, hours after he was shot by an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) at Brajarajnagar, where he had gone to attend an event. The ASI is believed to be suffering from a mental disorder.

Among those present at the

funeral were Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari, Agriculture Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain, MLA Dibya Shankar Mishra, Bargarh MP Suresh Pujari and industrialists from this town.

Earlier in the day, thousands paid homage to Das, as his mortal remains reached here from Bhubaneswar.

Many shops, business establishments and educational institutions in the district remained closed Monday, with locals pouring out on the streets to shower flowers on the hearse carrying the departed leader's remains, which drove through the streets of this town on its way to his home.

Governor Ganeshi Lal and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik visited the leader's residence in Bhubaneswar, where people from different walks of life had also gathered to pay tributes to the 61-year-old leader, who dominated the political landscape in western Odisha for at least three decades.

# Padma Shri Patayat lives in cowshed

NO FINANCIAL HELP FOR MAN WHO HAS PRODUCED 3,000 VARIETIES OF MEDICINAL PLANTS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, Jan 30:** Patayat Kumar Sahu, 70, son of Hari Sahu of Nandoli village in Kalahandi district has become a household name in the state after being conferred the Padma Shri a few days back. Earlier, he had been lauded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the latter's 'Mann Ki Baat' radio talk show. Modi had praised Patayat for producing 3,000 medicinal plants over 1.5 acre of land in his backyard.

Patayat is the first person from Kalahandi district to be conferred with the Padma Shri. Naturally he has been getting accolades for his efforts from all quarters. But, how many know that this Padma winner doesn't even have a proper house to live in.

Patayat, his wife Gayatri, their two sons and a daughter basically stay in a cowshed which is his bed as well as living room. He has not received any government assistance to build a house or a house under the Awas Yojana.

Patayat attended the Nandoli Primary School in 1970. However,



after a few years he joined the Junagarh High School and passed his HSC examination in second class. Later, he joined Rajendra College in Bolangir but dropped out after he failed to arrange the fees for his Intermediate exams.

To make ends meet, Patayat joined the primary agricultural cooperative societies (PACS) office in Nandoli as a salesman. It was during this stint that he gained knowledge about Ayurveda and medicinal plants from his father and grandfather. He started working on his medicinal garden 40 years back and kept on adding

new species of plants to it over the years.

Patayat learnt the traditional healing practices from his grandfather who was a 'Vaidya'. A book on agricultural science which he studied in Class-VII, also prompted him to learn about the traditional healing methods. It should be stated here that Patayat does not charge fees from his patients. He accepts whatever they offer. This is because the medicines are prepared in his garden only.

Patayat said that despite financial hardships, he has brought plants from various parts

of Odisha and outside the state for his garden. He informed that he had brought certain varieties of plants from abroad also.

Patayat's garden boasts of rare species of plants like Ashoka, Lodhra, Bidanga, Sambarsingha, Rasnjadi, Tihudi, Bhin Kakharu, Maeda, Sarpagandha and Shatavari. Besides, he has different varieties of Bhringraj, Pengu, Panikusuma, Rajapatha, Nagavel, Debanasan, Jaladimbiri and Jyotismati and all species of Dasamoola.

Patayat has written two books with illustrations about the plants he has grown and the way they can be used for healing purposes. He, however, does not have the funds to publish them.

Since Modi spoke about Patayat, scores of political leaders and administrative officials have rushed to his doorsteps to click pictures with him. A similar scene was witnessed again after his name was announced for Padma Shri. Patayat however, is quick to point out that if he has a proper house, he can concentrate on his research on medicinal plants in a better manner which will then be beneficial for the society.

# BODY FOUND ON RAILWAY TRACKS

**Berhampur:** The unidentified body of an elderly man was recovered from the railway tracks near Jagannathpur railway station. Police registered an unnatural death case (No 11/23). The police suspect that the man in his 60's might have been run over by the Howrah-Tiruchchirappalli Express while crossing the tracks. The body has been sent for post-mortem, they said.

# EAST COAST RAILWAY

File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/22-23  
E-Tender/144 Dt.: 25.01.2023  
Tender No. e-tenderEastKUR-407-2022  
Dt.: 20.01.2023  
Description: CONSTRUCTION OF OFFICER REST HOUSE AT CUTTACK OF KHURDAROAD DIVISION.  
Approx cost of the work: ₹ 105.21 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 2,02,600/-, Completion period: 08 months.  
Tender closing date & time: at 1500 hrs. of 10.02.2023  
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders.  
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>  
Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender.  
Divisional Railway Manager (Engg), Khurda Road  
PR-953/N/22-23

# HOCKEY STICKS BUILT BY ITI STUDENTS FIND PLACE IN ASIA BOOK OF RECORDS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, Jan 30:** The Industrial Training Institute (ITI) here has found a place in the 'Asia Book of Records' for building a pair of giant 43-foot long hockey sticks using scrap iron. The sticks were unveiled just before the beginning of the FIH Men's World Cup in Odisha. The sticks have been installed at ITI's open air Scrap Sculpture Park. Students of Welding, Painting and Electric departments took a fortnight to build this scrap sculpture.

Over three tonne of automobile

SCRAP SCULPTURE



scrap were used to build the hockey sticks and were unveiled January 13 by Minister for Urban Development Usha Devi in the presence of Berhampur MP Chandra Sekhar Sahu, Berhampur MLA Bikram Panda, Aska MLA Manjula Swain, Ganjam Collector and SP, Berhampur.

"The students want to motivate more and more people to take up the game of hockey. That is the main reason why they created such an unique sculpture. It has been attracting thousands of people every day, ITI principal Rajat Kumar Panigrahy informed Monday.

# Newly-married dies by suicide

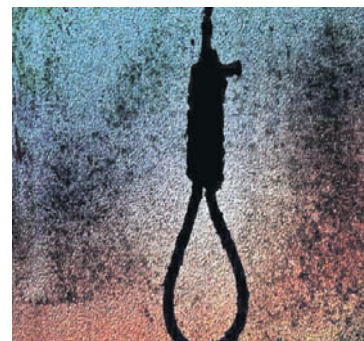
POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, Jan 30:** A newly-married woman died by suicide by using a piece of cloth to hang herself at Gurundi village under Nimakhandi police station in Ganjam district late Sunday night.

The deceased was identified as Kanak Behera, wife of Shankar Behera. Police said an unnatural death case (No 2/23) has been registered after a complaint was lodged by Shankar. The inquest of the body was conducted in the presence of the magistrate, police said. Post-mortem would be conducted by a team of doctors, said sources.

Although the exact cause of the death is yet to be ascertained, preliminary investigation indicates that she might have died by suicide due to depression and hypertension.

Sources revealed that Kanak, the daughter of Daitari Behera of Chikarada under Golanthara police



station, got married to Shankar of Gurundi village November 25, 2022.

Shankar works as a cook in a private college. On the fateful day, both of them went to sleep after having dinner. Later Shankar found his wife hanging in the kitchen at midnight. Hoping that Kanak may be alive, Shankar cut the rope and brought the body down. However, it was too late and Kanak had already died.

# ANGUL-SUKINDA RAIL ROUTE

# Goods train trial run conducted successfully

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kamakhyanagar, Jan 30:** Days after rolling an engine on the Angul-Sukinda rail route, the Indian Railways conducted a trial run of a goods train on the same route, Monday. The goods train started from Baghuapala (Tomka) in Jajpur district and ran for a stretch of 67km till Budhapanka in Angul district. The train with two engines and carrying 700 tonne



of goods in 58 wagons completed the run without a hitch.

Sources said that the trial run is an indication that work on the much awaited Angul-Sukinda route which is around 95km has reached its last

leg. People are hoping that very soon the route will be operational for passengers. When contacted, chief project manager, Pradip Kumar Mohanty of Rail Vikash Nigam Ltd (RVNL) said that after the trial run of the engine was successful, the decision to run the goods train was taken. He said they will file a report to the government as well as to the Indian Railways regarding the success of the trial runs.

# JUMBO ATTACKS ON THE RISE IN ODISHA, JHARKHAND

In the last 5 years, 499 people have died in Odisha while for Jharkhand the figure stands at 462



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar/Ranchi, Jan 30:** With animal habitats shrinking and their corridors fast vanishing in Odisha amid rampant construction, instances of man-elephant conflicts have spiked in the state. Reports state that 499 people have died in Odisha in the last five years due to elephant attacks.

The scene in neighbouring Jharkhand is quite similar too where 133 people have died in jumbo attacks in 2022-23, a steep climb from 84 in 2021-22.

A 65-year-old man, who was trampled to death January 22 by an elephant in Ranchi's Tamar locality, and a two-year-old boy trampled to death by a herd are among the latest victims of such attacks. In January alone, five people in Jharkhand have died in elephant attacks, officials said.

While replying to an RTI filed by advocate Satya Prakash, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate has said that 462 people have

died in man-elephant conflicts in a span of five years since 2017 in Jharkhand. In West Bengal and Assam the fatalities stood at 358 and 385 respectively for the same period. Wildlife experts and forest officials said that encroached corridors, shortage of food and habitat fragmentation are the factors exacerbating man-elephant conflicts.

According to India State of Forest Report (ISFR), Jharkhand's forest cover has increased by 243 square kilometers - from 23,478sq km in 2015 to 23,716sq km in 2021 - but that has not curbed elephant menace.

DS Srivastava, a former member of the Centre-run Steering Committee for Project Elephant, informed that unplanned development work, mining activities, unregulated grazing, forest fires and encounters between Maoists and security forces have caused major damages to animal habitats.

"Forest cover might have increased in Jharkhand, but animal habitats have

degraded in the past one decade. Elephants are facing food scarcity owing to thinning of bamboo and grass canopy," Srivastava pointed out.

"Also, elephants are fast losing their traditional movement routes. One of the corridors - from Saranda forest in Jharkhand to Sundargarh in Odisha - was destroyed due to mining. Similarly, several hurdles have come up for elephants moving from Ramgarh in Jharkhand to Purulia in Bengal due to a national highway expansion project. These are just two of the many examples that can be cited," Srivastava informed.

A former State Wildlife Board member, Srivastava said the conflicts may increase with time as the jumbos, in search of food, may keep moving into villages, causing damage to human lives, property and crops.

"Elephant calves are gradually turning into grain eaters, and that is a cause for concern. If forests are not restored in line with their needs, these elephants will start depending only on grain. Under such circumstances, man-elephant conflicts will become a common affair in many states," Srivastava warned.

Jharkhand Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife), Sasikar Samanta, admitted that conflicts have increased in the state due to 'growing human pressure' on the ecosystem.

"We are working on a long-term plan to revamp elephant habitats and corridors. As of now, villagers have to follow the guidelines issued by the department in the face of such attacks," informed Samanta.

# UTKAL GRAMEEN BANK

(Sponsored by State Bank of India)  
Regional Business Office: Region-V,  
Bhawanipatna-766001, Dist.: Kalahandi

# POSSESSION NOTICE

(For Immovable Property)  
[See Rule-8-(1)]

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Utkal Grameen Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrowers and Guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest and expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrowers/Guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealing with the said properties will be subject to the charge of the Utkal Grameen Bank for the amount stated below with interest, cost and incidental expenses thereon.

BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrowers / Guarantors	Description of the Security Interest taken over possession	Liabilities due on the specified date as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Possession Notice
<b>SANTPUR BRANCH /</b> Borrower: Sri Pradeep Kumar Sa, S/o.: Tankadhar Sa, At: Santpur, PO.: Santpur, Via: Kalahandi - 766001 /Guarantor: Jagannath Sa, S/o.: Late Pitambar Sa At: Santpur, PO.: Santpur, Dist.: Kalahandi - 766110	All that Part & Parcel of the Property situated at Mouza: Santpur, Khata No.: 246/12, Plot No.: 714/974, KISSAM: Gharabari, Area: Ac.0.07 Dec., standing in the name of <b>Sri Pradeep Kumar Sa</b>	₹ 2,41,226.15 and further interest from 24.01.2023, cost, etc. thereon	26.03.2019 / 24.01.2023
<b>SANTPUR BRANCH /</b> Borrower: Sri Bhisma Goud, S/o.: Sri Amar Goud, At: Ratul, PO.: Santpur, Dist.: Kalahandi, /Guarantor: Dhanurjaya Gahir, S/o.: Karjaya Gahir, At: Badchiching, P.O.: Santpur, Dist: Kalahandi, PIN - 766110	All that Part & Parcel of the Property situated at Mouza: Ratul, Khata No.: 117/2, Plot No.: 273/758, KISSAM: Gharabari, Area: Ac.0.07 Dec., standing in the name of <b>Sri Bhisma Goud</b>	₹ 3,47,758.24 and further interest from 24.01.2023, cost, etc. thereon	26.03.2019 / 24.01.2023
<b>SANTPUR BRANCH /</b> Borrower: Sri Tikeram Sahu, S/o.: Chudamani Sahu, At: Suknabhata, P.O.: Santpur, Dist.: Kalahandi, /Guarantor: Chudamani Sahu, S/o.: Late Pitabasa Sahu, At: Suknabhata, P.O.: Santpur, Via.: Naria, Dist.: Kalahandi, PIN - 766110	All that Part & Parcel of the Property situated at Mouza: Suknabhata, Khata No.: 30, Plot No.: 284, Area: Ac.0.06 Dec., Plot No.: 285, Area: Ac.0.04 Dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, standing in the name of <b>Sri Tikeram Sahu</b>	₹ 3,33,392/- and further interest from 24.01.2023, cost, etc. thereon	26.03.2019 / 24.01.2023
<b>SANTPUR BRANCH /</b> Borrower: Sri Ajapa Harijan, S/o.: Late Phuta Harijan, At: Dhamankhunta, PO.: Nishanpur, Dist.: Kalahandi - 766002, /Guarantor: Hari Naik, S/o.: Padu Naik, At: Dhamankhunta, P.O.: Nishanpur, Dist.: Kalahandi, PIN - 766002	All that Part & Parcel of the Property situated at Mouza: Dhamankhunta, Khata No.: 2, Plot No.: 763, KISSAM: Gharabari, Area: Ac.0.07 Dec., standing in the name of <b>Sri Ajapa Harijan</b> , S/o.: Late Phuta Harijan	₹ 2,65,278/- and further interest from 24.01.2023, cost, etc. thereon	09.11.2021 / 24.01.2023
<b>SANTPUR BRANCH /</b> Borrower: Khageswar Sahu, S/o.: Romanchal Sahu, At/P.O.: Santpur, District: Kalahandi, PIN - 766110 /Guarantor: Kishore Chandra Sahu, S/o.: Madan Sahu, At/P.O.: Santpur, District: Kalahandi, PIN - 766110	All that Part & Parcel of the Property situated at Mouza: Santpur, Khata No.: 246/24, Plot No.: 689/1013, KISSAM: Gharabari, Area: Ac.0.05 Dec., standing in the name of <b>Sri Khageswar Sahu</b> , S/o.: Romanchal Sahu	₹ 2,66,742/- and further interest from 24.01.2023, cost, etc. thereon	14.01.2022 / 24.01.2023
<b>BHAWANIPATNA BRANCH /</b> Borrower: Sri Keshari Tandi, S/o.: Sri Butia Tandi, At: Jagannathpur, PO.: Medinipur, Dist.: Kalahandi - 766001, /Guarantor: Loknath Nag, S/o.: Khudamani Nag, At: Jagannathpur, PO.: Medinipur, Dist.: Kalahandi - 766001,	All that Part & Parcel of the Property situated at Mouza: Jagannathpur, Khata No.: 28, Plot No.: 518, Area: Ac.0.01 Dec., Plot No.: 521, Area: Ac.0.06 Dec., Plot No.: 522, Area: Ac.0.01 Dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, standing in the name of <b>Keshari Tandi</b> , S/o.: Butia Tandi	₹ 3,76,403/- and further interest from 24.01.2023, cost, etc. thereon	04.11.2017 / 24.01.2023
<b>BHAWANIPATNA BRANCH /</b> Borrower: Sri Banabasa Naik, S/o.: Rasik Naik & Sri Sarat Chandra Naik, S/o.: Banabasa Naik, At/PO.: Medinipur, Dist.: Kalahandi-766001 / Guarantors: 1) Lukamani Nag, S/o.: Khudamani Nag, 2) Baishnaba Mahanand, S/o.: Krishna Chandra Mahananda, At: Jagannathpur PO.: Medinipur, Dist.: Kalahandi - 766001,	All that Part & Parcel of the Property situated at Mouza: Medinipur, Khata No.: 359/136, Plot No.: 1095, KISSAM: Gharabari, Area: Ac.0.24 Dec., standing in the name of <b>Sri Banabasa Naik</b> , S/o.: Rasik Naik	₹ 1,40,009/- and further interest from 24.01.2023, cost, etc. thereon	01.07.2019 / 24.01.2023
<b>REGEDA BRANCH /</b> Borrower: Sri Rupadhar Sahu, S/o.: Sri Muralidhar Sahu, At/P.O.: Ektara, Dist.: Kalahandi - 766102, /Guarantor: 1) Thayakar Sahu, S/o.: Khagapati Sahu, At: Ainlapali, P.O.: Turuchi, Dist.: Kalahandi, PIN - 766102 2) Tikeram Sahu, S/o.: Mahendra Sahu, At/P.O.: Ektara, Dist.: Kalahandi - 766102	All that Part & Parcel of the Property situated at Mouza: Ektara, Khata No.: 150/45, Plot No.: 652, Area: Ac.0.03 Dec, Khata No.: 125, Plot No.: 653 Area: Ac.0.02 Dec, KISSAM: Gharabari, standing in the name of <b>Rupadhar Sahu</b> , S/o.: Muralidhar Sahu	₹ 3,84,774/- and further interest from 24.01.2023, cost, etc. thereon	06.02.2020 / 24.01.2023
<b>PASTIKUDI BRANCH /</b> Borrower: Sri Debraj Meher, S/o.: Pabitra Meher, At/P.O.: Phatkamal, Dist.: Kalahandi - 766011 /Guarantor: Hema Meher, W/o.: Pabitra Meher, At/P.O.: Phatkamal, Dist.: Kalahandi, PIN - 766011	All that Part & Parcel of the Property situated at Mouza: Phatkamal, Khata No.: 364, Plot No.: 416, Area: Ac.0.03 Dec, Plot No.: 417, Area: Ac.0.01 Dec, Plot No.: 433, Area: Ac.0.05 Dec, KISSAM: Gharabari, standing in the name of <b>Smt. Hema Meher</b> , W/o.: Sri Pabitra Meher	₹ 4,87,097/- and further interest from 24.01.2023, cost, etc. thereon	01.07.2019 / 24.01.2023

Place: Bhawanipatna, Date: 30.01.2023 Sd/- Authorised Officer, Utkal Grameen Bank

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

# THE COST OF TRANSITION



While oil and gas have propped up the economies of countries like Nigeria, Mexico, Ghana, and Argentina over the years, dependence on them has led to a host of problems, from environmental pollution that harms public health to overreliance on fossil-fuel exports at the expense of the development of other sectors

By developing domestic clean-energy sectors, policymakers could complement their diversification strategies. Given the changing geopolitical landscape and growing demand for energy, renewables could stabilise prices, revenues, and employment. To support these efforts, governments should harness the power of civil society and the private sector, including oil companies.

Lastly, governments must provide the funding necessary to complete the clean-energy transition. In the near term, they could use income from fossil-fuel production to diversify their economies and invest in green projects. They could also reallocate funds currently used for subsidy programmes and require the oil and gas industries, especially multinationals, to help cover the costs of environmental remediation and support programmes for affected workers and communities.

But while middle-income countries could fund some of these measures by mobilising internal resources, developed countries and international financial institutions must also offer the financing and technical assistance that these countries need to pursue their diversification strategies.

Shifting away from fossil fuels is not only necessary to avert a climate catastrophe, but also represents an opportunity to build a healthier and more equitable future for all. But developed countries must not expect middle-income fossil-fuel exporters to give up their main revenue source without international assistance. Ensuring that the net-zero transition does not leave anyone behind is a moral imperative. It is also smart climate policy.

*The writer, a professor at the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town, is a member of World Resources Institute's Board.*

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

The ongoing volatility in oil and gas markets has come as a shock to many people across the developed world. But its impact on developing countries that rely on producing fossil fuels has been far worse.

Over time, as the world increasingly shifts to cheaper and cleaner energy sources, fossil fuels will likely become less profitable, forcing energy-exporting countries to find other sources of income. What would that mean for "middle-income" developing countries which together account for 48 per cent and 52 per cent of global oil and gas output, respectively?

While oil and gas have propped up the economies of countries like Nigeria, Mexico, Ghana, and Argentina over the years, dependence on them has led to a host of problems, from environmental pollution that harms public health to overreliance on fossil-fuel exports at the expense of the development of other sectors.

But breaking free from the addiction to fossil fuels will not be easy. Middle-income energy exporters are poorer than their developed-country counterparts and therefore have fewer resources with which to support workers and communities through the clean-energy transition. Nearly half the world's fossil-fuel workers live in Africa, Asia, or South America, and they would need to find new jobs – and the training to fill them. In addition, these countries' oil and gas industries employ many more people indirectly, including contract workers who do not have the same protections as permanent and unionised workers.

But worker displacement is only one of the risks for which middle-income countries must plan if they are to kick their fossil-fuel habit. Given that the oil and gas industries are a major primary source of their tax revenue, many cash-strapped governments would be unable to fund essential services, such as health care and ed-

ucation, if those proceeds suddenly disappeared.

Price volatility has already devastated economies that grew too dependent on fossil fuels. Following the 2020 crash in oil prices, for example, Nigeria proposed cutting education spending by up to 55 per cent. And in response to the 2014 oil-price crash, Mexico pared public spending by close to 0.7 per cent of GDP. Although high prices may lead to economic booms, they inevitably fall – and often drag down the economy with them. Ultimately, relying on finite resources is no way to fund a twenty-first-century economy.

Developing and implementing the right strategies to shift away from fossil fuels will not happen overnight. But policymakers in middle-income energy-exporting countries can already take three immediate steps to ensure that the clean-energy transition does not harm their workers, communities, and economies – and that

it lays the groundwork for a more prosperous future.

First, governments must engage in long-term planning, particularly when it comes to the economies of regions that would most likely be affected by the green transition. To that end, policymakers should consult various stakeholders, develop inclusive plans to help displaced workers and affected communities, and strengthen social safety nets. Closing data gaps regarding demographics, wages, and skills will be essential to assisting oil and gas workers, especially female workers.

Second, given that oil and gas revenues will most likely decline over the long term, middle-income exporters must double down on economic diversification. This would involve studying and developing other promising sectors, such as agricultural processing, manufactured goods, and business services.



Carlos Lopes

**NEARLY HALF THE WORLD'S FOSSIL-FUEL WORKERS LIVE IN AFRICA, ASIA, OR SOUTH AMERICA, AND THEY WOULD NEED TO FIND NEW JOBS – AND THE TRAINING TO FILL THEM**



It is not God who made man wicked. It is man who makes himself wicked by separating himself from God.

THE MOTHER

## Ukraine's Twin Wars

As military and humanitarian aid worth billions of dollars keep pouring into Ukraine during its ongoing war against Russia, there has been creeping suspicion of misuse of the funds and corruption at high offices. The temptation seems to be too great to be resisted in a country known for endemic corruption at the higher echelons. That the killings and sufferings of the people on a monumental scale could not deter the corrupt from allegedly satisfying their greed for filthy lucre is a measure of the state of affairs not only in Ukraine but it would very much be the same in India too. It is a well known fact that senior Indian armed forces officers and even civilian bureaucrats dealing with matters of defence do not hesitate to take a big piece of the pie when it has to do with purchases for the forces.

The war in Ukraine may have deflected the attention from this side of the story, but corruption appears to be too deep-rooted to stop resurfacing even in the midst of a deadly turmoil. Now comes the biggest political shake-up in wartime Ukraine. A slew of top officials have either resigned or been sacked in the past few days in the wake of the revelation by a Ukrainian newspaper of a corruption scheme involving food supplies to the military. Curiously, the scandal was unearthed after Germany finally consented to supply to Ukraine some of the world's most sophisticated tanks it produces – the Leopard 2 – after dithering at the crucial meeting of defence ministers of Europe and the US in Germany a few days back. It is believed Germany changed its stance after it got word that Ukraine would come clean on allegations of corruption by some front ranking political and military leaders.

High-profile corruption scandals have triggered a chain of dismissals and resignations in Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office announced the sacking of four Deputy Ministers and five regional Governors in the past three days. Among them is the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidency, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the Deputy Minister of Defence, Vyacheslav Shapovalov, and the Deputy Prosecutor General, Oleksii Simonenko. Regional Governors of Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv, Sumy and Kherson, which were on the frontline against Russian troops, have also been removed from positions of power.

These dismissals and resignations come after the revelation of two cases of financial malpractice. The Deputy Minister for Infrastructure, Vasyl Lozinsky, is accused of having pocketed US\$400,000 (€368,000) in bribes on contracts to purchase generators. He was removed from office. He seemingly had no compunction to indulge in corruption when the people in his country continue to face severe power shortages due to the fighting. The Deputy Defence Minister Vyacheslav Shapovalov resigned after an investigation by the Ukrainian Press accused the defence ministry of paying "two or three times the market price" for food for the army. The swindle reportedly amounted to €303 million.

Kyrylo Tymoshenko did not give a reason for his resignation, but he had been a target of attack in the media for his personal use of an SUV that was donated by the United States to evacuate victims in combat zones. He later publicly gave up the vehicle and sent it to the frontline.

According to a Ukraine media report last week food prices quoted in a Ministry of Defence contract were up to three times higher than in supermarkets in Kyiv. "The rear front rats from the Defence Ministry steal more food from the armed forces than in peacetime," the report stated. Defence Minister Oleksiy Reznikov fulminated against the publication, saying the prices were higher because of the logistical problems involved in delivering goods to the frontlines. He has managed to keep his job till now, but heads have begun to roll with the list of sacked officials growing longer by the day. The alleged corruption casualties include his Deputy.

The question is what has prompted the sudden spate of resignations at the height of the war against Russia when the morale of the people is so high following successes in repelling Russians out of strategic areas. Zelenskyy's assertion in his television address gives ample clue: "I want it to be clear – things would not be the same anymore." His pledge of "zero-tolerance" to graft shows in the war against corruption he has nothing to lose, but much more to gain. Both entry into NATO – a major cause of the war against Russia – and further supply of arms, ammunition and aid for rebuilding the war-ravaged country presuppose corruption-free governance. Zelenskyy's advantage is that he is not a hardcore politician and he won the election in 2019 on the promise of fighting against corruption that bedevilled the previous government.

Whipping up war hysteria, as many ruling politicians the world over including India do, is easy demagoguery. Waging a war against corruption, however, against corrupt ministers and cronies in business and industries looting financial resources of a country appears to be an uphill task. Like most Indians would have realized by now that big talk necessarily does not always go with big action when friends and cronies enter the pictures.

### WISDOM CORNER

In the long run, the sharpest weapon of all is a kind and gentle spirit. ANNE FRANK

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young. HENRY FORD

What the caterpillar calls the end of the world the master calls a butterfly. RICHARD BACH

### WORDSWORTH

#### Fletcherise

The word commemorates The Great Masticator, a title that these days might lead to juvenile hearers getting the giggles. He was Horace Fletcher, a food faddist of the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth. He advised people to chew each bite of their food 32 times, to eat small amounts, and only to eat when hungry and free from stress or anxiety. Hence the verb's meaning, to chew thoroughly, and this rhyme of the time: *Eat somewhat less but eat it more Would you be hearty beyond fourscore. Eat not at all in worried mood Or suffer harm from best of food. Don't gobble your food but "Fletcherize" Each morsel you eat, if you'd be wise. Don't cause your blood pressure e'er to rise By prizing your menu by its size.* The heyday of Fletcherism was the early 1900s. Time Magazine wrote a retrospective on the craze in 1928, "For a time wealthy mothers counted their children's jaw beats at the table while ragged micks in the streets threatened to 'Fletcherize' their little enemies." A good example appeared in 1908 in Food Remedies by Florence Daniel: "But whatever is taken must be 'Fletcherised,' that is, chewed and chewed and chewed until it is all reduced to liquid." The word for a while became frequent in writings of all sorts. P G Wodehouse used the term in The Adventures of Sally in 1922 to illustrate the serious nature of a dog fight: "The raffish mongrel was apparently endeavouring to fletcherize a complete stranger of the Sealyham family." Fletcherism was taken seriously by many people and had some distinguished adherents; it lasted until the 1930s. Unfortunately, eating meals took much longer than usual and there were complaints that it severely restricted the conversation at dinner parties.

### LOL

#### Getting into fights

They were married, but since the argument they had a few days earlier, they hadn't been talking to each other. Instead, they were giving each other written notes. One evening he gave her a paper where it said: "Wake me up tomorrow morning at 6

am." The next morning he woke up and saw that it was 9 o'clock. Naturally he got very angry, but as he turned around he found a note on his pillow saying: "Wake up, it's 6 o'clock!"

### SPECTRUM ECONOMY

## Recession unlikely to enter Indian shores

The prevailing murmur of imminent recession hitting the global market has pushed investors into a 'wait and watch' strategy. The rise in demand of other asset classes like gold is a reflection of the apprehensions in the mind of the investors. This kind of scenario validates financial logic. But are we heading towards an unavoidable recession?

To answer the above-mentioned question, we need to analyse a set of both subjective as well as objective questions. The glaring question is whether India is 'decoupled' from the global world or not. Another subjective topic that needs to be evaluated is US' role in exporting inflation to the entire world.

From India's perspective, let's analyse the recently published data. Consumer Price Index or retail inflation stands at 5.75 per cent, with core inflation at 6.2 per cent for the month of December. A major contributor to reduction in December numbers is food inflation. With food inflation going down, it will provide the requisite impetus for rural consumption.

The forex reserves held by RBI is close to 561 billion USD. It had almost reached a level of 600 billion USD and India was one-time current account surplus instead of current account deficit. India

continues to import oil from Russia at a discounted price. Hence India's trade deficit will have a limited impact.

FII (Foreign Institutional Investors) and FPI (Foreign Portfolio Investors) have withdrawn close to fifteen thousand crores from the Indian market in the month of December. If such outflow would have taken place in 2017-2018, Nifty and Sensex would have corrected by more than 50 per cent. But our benchmark indices are still resilient to the market headwinds.

The reason for such resilience is the enhanced commensuration by domestic retail investors and domestic institutional investors. The number of demat and trading accounts opened in the month of December was up by 34 per cent on YoY (Year on Year) basis. This shows the confidence of the domestic investors in the Indian market. The paradigm shift post the COVID pandemic led to the mushrooming of demat and trade accounts through mobile apps.

In a phase of high interest rates, the yields and returns from fixed income products have gone up. But still, investors have placed their bet on equity. Gold is being used as a hedge. In the long run, equity, as an asset class, will beat debt category quite handsomely.

IT and technology sectors, which had been underperforming since a year, have bounced back but are far away from their glory days. The 'valuation gap' witnessed during the pandemic period, is slowly getting narrowed down. But it will take some time to get back on track, irrespective of the positive Q3 returns.

From tax collection perspective, both direct taxes as well as GST (Goods and Services Tax) attained all time numbers. Financial inclusion, digital and technology penetration, online payments, have brought the unorganised sector into mainstream organised sector.

The Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) Index on Business Confidence achieved its highest reading in last two years for the October-December quarter. This shows the optimism with which the world views India. This was all about the objective analysis, which gives us the confidence that the Indian market is still very robust from a fundamental perspective.

Now analysing the subjective debate of India being 'decoupled' from the world, we must keep the following factors in mind. No country (except closed economies) can be completely insulated from global events. But the nature of a country's economy can determine the

degree of its 'decoupling'.

While the retail inflation in the US stands at 6.5 per cent, the retail inflation in India is 5.6 per cent. For an emerging country like India, retail inflation less than 6% is absolutely a healthy parameter, rather than something to be worried of.

Secondly, the Indian economy is driven by domestic consumption rather than exports. India, with its strategic foreign policy, has been importing oil at a cheaper price from Russia, which has helped in curbing the inflationary pressures.

But the pessimists will accentuate the concerns as well. The revocation of "zero COVID policy" in China can act as a "double edged sword". On one side, there will be increase in demand, while it may lead to spread of COVID as well.

The exporters will take the hit with reduced global demand if recession actually hits the Western countries. A depreciating rupee will add fuel to the fire. The laying off of employees from big MNCs will strengthen the claim of imminent recession.

Recession might hit the Western countries, but it is highly unlikely to enter Indian shores.

*The writer is an investment banker. Views are personal.*

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Water war

Sir, A hint of the Narendra Modi government's rethink on the Indus water treaty came for the first time in September 2016. "Blood and water cannot flow together," the Prime Minister had said in a meeting after Pakistan-based terrorists attacked the Indian Army base at Uri in Jammu. Now, India has issued a notice of modification for the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) with Pakistan, with good reason. Since 2015, Pakistan has been trying to subvert IWT by persistently raising objections regarding India's Kishenganga and Ratle hydropower projects in Jammu and Kashmir. While the projects are on the Chenab and Jhelum, for which Pakistan has unrestricted use under IWT, the treaty also allows India to use these rivers in non-consumptive ways. Going forward, Pakistan first unilaterally insisted on the appointment of a neutral expert and then switched to demanding a court of arbitration to adjudicate its objections, in contravention of IWT's graded dispute settlement mechanism. At the heart of Pakistan's objections is the fictitious claim that India is using river waters as a hybrid warfare tool. But, this kind of schizophrenic thinking is precisely the reason Pakistan finds itself in its present mess. Yet, Pakistan's deep-state remains fixated with India and Kashmir. This issue needs to be resolved in a bilateral format.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

### Congress revival

Sir, Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra has finally wrapped up following the unfurling of the Tricolor at Srinagar's Lal Chowk. But at this moment it's really hard to judge exactly how much political mileage the party has gained in traversing 14 states over the past five months. Even during this period, the Congress has recorded a humiliating defeat in Gujarat. However, the marginal win in Himachal Pradesh has brought some respite from the 18 losses the party has registered in the near past. True, the yatra has showcased Congress' organisational skills, both on the ground and on social media. The outreach has branded Rahul with empathetic and collegial gravitas. But that will be tested in the nine state elections lined up this year ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The results will clarify whether the yatra has been just a vanity project of the Gandhi family or whether it has spurred a long-awaited revival of Congress.

Ahhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

# national

## of the day quote

The BJP's political identity of creating new controversies for narrow political and electoral interests, spreading ethnic and religious hatred, creating hysteria, and religious conversions etc are well known. But the same political colour of the SP, under the guise of the 'Ramcharitmanas', is sad and unfortunate

MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

BJP will be able to form the next government in Tripura on its own strength because of development during the past five years. The saffron party has decided to fight the election alone for the unity and development of the state and to ensure the people's rights

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

The world community should lay greater emphasis on globally coordinated policies and actions to deal with complex challenges which are deeply interlinked and are not defined by borders alone

NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR | UNION MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Hideout busted

**Srinagar:** Security forces busted a terror hideout in the Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir and arrested four militant associates, police said Monday. A police official said the hideout was in the forest area. "Police alongwith security forces busted & destroyed terrorist hideout in Hafoo Nageenpora forests of Awantipora. 04 terrorist associates linked with terror outfit LeT arrested. Incriminating materials & other items recovered. Case registered, investigation in progress," the Kashmir Zone Police said on Twitter.

### Youth dies

**Patna:** Engrossed in talking on his mobile, a 17-year-old youth in Bihar's Siwan district fell into a well and died, police said Monday. The deceased, Rahul Kumar, resident of Raghunathpur Bazar, was talking when he stepped out of his house and did not realise that there was an open well just in front, fell in, and drowned, police said.

### Man ends life

**Kolkata:** In a shocking incident, a man committed suicide Monday while he was on a video call with his wife, who is currently staying in Ahmedabad. The police later recovered the hanging body from his rented accommodation at Garfa in South Kolkata.

### Woman dies

**Meerut:** In a shocking incident in Meerut, a newly-married woman passed away due to suffocation after inhaling gas leaked from a geyser. The woman had gone to a bathroom at her in-laws' house to take a shower and remained in there for quite some time. When the family members tried to check on her and got no response, they reportedly knocked down the door to find her unconscious in a corner. She was then rushed to a hospital where she was declared brought dead.

### Kailash attacked

**Vijayanagara (Karnataka):** The Karnataka Police have taken two youths from the audience gallery into custody for throwing water bottles at famous singer Kailash Kher who was performing on stage here. The two were demanding Kher to sing Kannada songs, police said on Monday.



**Bengal and its milestone events such as the annual book fair celebrate unity amid diversity and peace in the midst of shrill cry for war and aggression**  
MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

## EMERGENCY LANDING

An Andhra Pradesh government plane with Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy onboard returned to the Gannavaram airport about 24 minutes after the take-off as it faced a technical glitch, according to an official statement



## Air Marshal AP Singh to be new vice chief of IAF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 30:** Air Marshal AP Singh has been appointed as the new Vice Chief of the Indian Air Force, officials said Monday.

He will succeed Air Marshal Sandeep Singh, who will retire from service on Tuesday. Air Marshal A P Singh is currently serving as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Central Air Command. He will take charge as the Vice Chief on Wednesday, the officials said.

He was commissioned into the fighter stream of the IAF on December 21, 1984. Air Marshal A P Singh is an alumnus of National Defence Academy, Defence Services Staff College and National Defence College.

He is a Qualified Flying Instructor and an Experimental Test Pilot with more than 4,900 hours of service flying on a variety of fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft. His operational tenures include being the Flight Commander and Commanding Officer of a MiG 27 squadron and Air Officer Commanding of an air base.



An activist dressed up as Mahatma Gandhi takes part in a cleanliness drive at Gandhi Maidan on the death anniversary of the Father of the Nation, in Patna

# Bharat Jodo Yatra ends in Kashmir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Jan 30:** The Bharat Jodo Yatra ended Monday in an opposition show of strength with leaders of several parties joining Congress leader Rahul Gandhi as he capped his ambitious 145-day journey that covered some 4,000 km from Kanyakumari to Kashmir.

The skies over Kashmir opened up and the snow fell steadily through the morning, blanketing much of the Valley in white, as the former Congress president unfurled the tricolour at the yatra campsite and then went to the Pradesh Congress Committee office where party chief Mallikarjun Kharge hoisted the national flag. From there they went to the Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium at the foothills of the Shankaracharya Hills for a rally marking the grand finale of the cross-country yatra.

"I have not done this (yatra) for myself or for the Congress but for the people of the country. Our aim is to stand against the ideology that wants to destroy the foundation of this country," Rahul Gandhi said.



I have not done this (yatra) for myself or for the Congress but for the people of the country. Our aim is to stand against the ideology that wants to destroy the foundation of this country

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

Those on stage in a show of solidarity included leaders from the DMK, National Conference, People's Democratic Party, Communist Party of India, the Bahujan Samaj Party, the Indian Union Muslim League, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, and the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

Among the notable absentees of the 22 parties invited were the Trinamool Congress, Samajwadi Party and JD(U). Sources said some opposition party leaders could not make it on account of the weather. However, some leaders had also expressed their inability to be part of the rally on account of previous commitments.

In a speech that was in turn political and personal, Rahul challenged the BJP top brass to undertake a yatra such as his in Jammu and Kashmir and said they would never do it as they were scared.

## Land issue: Mamata stands by Sen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 30:** The Congress Monday said over 50 institutes of national importance including seven IITs and 22 NITs are without chairpersons. 10 are vacant since the year your government came to power. Many institutes have written to government, but no avail. You speak about 'world class futuristic education' but forget the 'basics'

The Congress chief said this on Twitter while recalling that institutions without full-time chairpersons included seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), 22 National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and 20 Indian



Narendra Modi ji, 50 institutes of national importance are without chairpersons. 10 are vacant since the year your government came to power. Many institutes have written to government, but no avail. You speak about 'world class futuristic education' but forget the 'basics', Kharge said.

**Narendra Modi ji, 50 institutes of national importance are without chairpersons. 10 are vacant since the year your government came to power. Many institutes have written to government, but no avail. You speak about 'world class futuristic education' but forget the 'basics'**  
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

The Congress chief said this on Twitter while recalling that institutions without full-time chairpersons included seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), 22 National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and 20 Indian

# UP has highest number of colleges in country: AISHE report

**ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY REPORT RELEASED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, IN UTTAR PRADESH, THERE ARE 8,114 COLLEGES AND FOR EVERY ONE LAKH POPULATION THERE ARE 32 COLLEGES**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 30:** Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of colleges in the country, followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka, ac-

ording to the government's All India Survey for Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-21.

The top 10 states in terms of number of colleges in India include Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Telangana and Kerala, each having at least 29 or more colleges per lakh population.

According to the survey report released by the Ministry of Education, in Uttar Pradesh, there are 8,114 colleges and for every one lakh population there are 32 colleges. "Similarly, Maharashtra comes second with 4,532 colleges and 34 colleges per lakh population. Karnataka comes at third position with 4,233 colleges and 62 colleges per lakh population, whereas Rajasthan is at fourth position with 3,694 colleges and 40 colleges



per lakh population. Tamil Nadu comes at fifth position with 2,667 colleges and has college density of 40," the report said. "Madhya Pradesh comes at sixth position with 2,610 colleges and 29 colleges per lakh population, whereas Andhra Pradesh is at seventh position with 2,601 colleges and 49 colleges per lakh population. At eighth position Gujarat has 2,267 colleges and 31 colleges for every one lakh population," it added.

The survey report pointed out most of the colleges run only undergraduate level programmes. Only 2.9 per cent of colleges run PhD level programmes and 55.2 per cent run postgraduate level programmes.

colleges, 5,658 (13.3 pc) are private (aided) and 27,039 (65 pc) are private (unaided)," it said.

The Ministry of Education has been conducting All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) since 2011, covering all higher educational institutions located in Indian territory and imparting higher education in the country. The survey collects detailed information on different parameters such as student enrolment, teachers' data, infrastructural information, financial information, etc.

For the first time, in AISHE 2020-21, the higher education institutions, or HEIs, have filled the data online through the Web Data Capture Format (DCF) developed by the Department of Higher Education with the help of the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

## Govt allows private channels to share public service content

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 30:** Granting relaxations, the government Monday said the 30-minute daily obligatory public service broadcast by private broadcasters could be embedded in programmes telecast by other television channels.

In an advisory, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting also said the public service broadcast content need not be of 30 minutes at a stretch and could be spread over smaller time slots. "The time for which the public service broadcasting content is telecast in between commercial breaks shall not be accounted for the 12-minute limit for commercial breaks," the advisory said.

The private broadcasters have to submit a monthly report on the Broadcast Seva Portal. In November last year, the ministry had asked the private television channels to air public service broadcast content for 30 minutes every day under eight themes of national importance and social relevance as part of the new service obligations.

The guidelines were stipulated in the new uplinking-downlinking rules prescribed by the ministry on November 9 last year. The fresh advisory was issued on Monday after holding extensive consultations with private satellite television channels and their associations.

The government has also allowed sharing of content between the broadcasters and repeat telecasts on one or several television channels. It has also allowed the creation of a common e-platform as a repository of relevant videos or textual content from various sources for the purpose of public service broadcasting, which may be accessed and used by the television channels.

The government has also barred the broadcast of public service content between midnight and 6am. Subjects such as water conservation and disaster management have also been added to the list of themes of national importance and social relevance.

The themes notified earlier were education and spread of literacy, agriculture and rural development, health and family welfare, science and technology, welfare of women, welfare of the weaker sections of the society, protection of environment and cultural heritage and national integration.

# Without salary for over a year, HEC employees seek redressal

THE EMPLOYEES ALLEGED THAT BECAUSE OF THIS SITUATION, THEY ARE UNABLE TO PAY THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FEES OR TREAT AILING FAMILY MEMBERS PROPERLY, AND SOME OF THEM INCLUDING OFFICERS HAVE STARTED SELLING FRUITS OR TEA TO MAKE BOTH ENDS MEET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ranchi, Jan 30:** Around 1,300 staff of Heavy Engineering Corporation (HEC), the PSU that some years ago built a launch pad for ISRO, have not been paid their salaries for over a year forcing them to live in penury, and now they have threatened to move court if the issue is not addressed soon.

The employees alleged that because of this situation, they are unable to pay their children's education fees or treat ailing family members properly, and some of them including officers have started selling fruits or tea to make both ends meet.

Workers and officers of the Ranchi-based PSU have formed a combined forum, HEC Adhikari Evam Karmachari Jankalyan Sangh, to fight the battle.

Its president Prem Shankar Paswan told PTI that they have drawn the attention of President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister



A board at Heavy Engineering Corporation (HEC) Ltd. administrative office in Ranchi. PTI PHOTO

Narendra Modi, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, the NHRC and others to their plight through emails January 23.

"If our problem is not resolved soon, we will have to move court in February," Paswan said.

The total salary due for officers is for 15 months while that for workers is for 12 months, said Subhash Chandra, a deputy manager rank official. The chairman and managing director of BHEL, who sits in Delhi, holds the additional charge of CMD of HEC. The

official did not respond to phone calls, messages and email by PTI till the publication of this report.

The company, set up in 1958, used to be one of the leading suppliers of capital equipment in India for steel, mining, railways, power, defence, space research, nuclear and strategic sectors.

Employees are staging protests against non-payment of salaries since November 2022.

"My mother died without treatment. My senior colleague's wife died and he had no money to hire a vehicle to carry her body so he took it inside a car trunk. Shopkeepers don't give us goods on credit. We can't afford to send kids to school. We will die here," Shashi Kumar, 35, a deputy manager at HEC, broke down while talking to PTI. Despite several revival attempts and the High Court of Jharkhand directing the central and state governments to look into the problems, the situation at HEC did not improve.



Tourists ski on snow after a fresh snowfall at Kufri near Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

# Hundreds affected by water contamination in Hamirpur villages

People from a dozen villages, including Banh, Jandgi Gujran, Jandali Rajputan, Panyala, Pathiyalu, Niyati, Rangas Chowki Haar, Thain and Sankar have been affected by the outbreak of water-borne diseases



It is believed that the high amount of bacteria in the water is causing the illness, Kumar said. He attributed it to contamination of the pit from which the water is supplied.

Villagers said the water was supplied without being filtered from an under-construction tank, causing the outbreak.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, who is also the MLA from Naudan, has directed the district administration and the Health department to take proper care of the patients and ensure no shortage of medicines and other items.

He has also sought a complete report from state- and district-level agencies. Health department teams have reached the affected villages to provide treatment to the people under the direct supervision of Chief Medical Officer (Hamirpur) Dr RK Agnihotri.

Officials from the Jal Shakti department have swung into action. It has stopped water supply to the affected villages and sent samples for testing.

# Average stay of visitors declines in Shimla

THE DECLINE IS ATTRIBUTED TO TRAFFIC JAMS, PARKING WOES AND MUSHROOMED GROWTH OF UNREGISTERED ACCOMMODATIONS IN AND AROUND THE STATE CAPITAL SHIMLA, WHICH HAS LED TO A 70-80 PERCENT DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF AVERAGE DAYS OF TOURIST STAY IN REGISTERED ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE QUEEN OF HILLS OVER FIVE DECADES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Shimla, Jan 30:** The average stay of tourists in Shimla has come down from four-five days in the 1970s to one day at present, as per a report by Tourism Industry Stakeholders Association (TISHA).

However, the tourists residing in unregistered/unauthorised accommodations are not accounted for, according to the report on major factors affecting the tourism and viability of the hotel industry in Shimla. The decline is attributed to traffic jams, parking woes and mushroomed growth of unregistered accommodations in and around the state capital Shimla, which has led to a 70-80 per cent decline in the number of average days of tourist stay in registered accommodations in the queen of hills over five decades, the association said.

Water shortage in summer, landslides on the Shimla-Parwanoo National Highway, making commuting risky during monsoons, advisories by the district administration of heavy traffic and to avoid commuting on slippery roads, demotivates tourists planning a trip to Shimla and bookings have been cancelled due to these reasons several times in the past, said a local hotelier Sushant Nag.

The association is preparing a road map for attracting tourists to increase their footfall and stay throughout the year. The Chief Minister will be appraised of the ground reality of the Tourism Industry with suggestions to create a tourist-friendly atmosphere and create new attractions in and around tourist destinations



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

and publicise them, Tourism Industry Stakeholders Association president MK Seth said. "The tourist arrival has increased manifold compared to the 1970s as people had more time and less push and pulls. When we calculate the mean average, the average duration decreases with an increase in the number of tourists," Tourism department, Himachal Pradesh University, head Chander Mohan said, adding that tourists residing in unauthorised accommodations being sold on cheap rates are not included in this data.

Tourist stay in Shimla town might have reduced as some visitors look for solace in rural areas and with the improvement of roads and rural infrastructure and opening of homestays, tourists stay in those belts of the district has increased, Director Tourism Amit Kashyap said.

High tax slabs and huge water

& garbage charges for genuine hoteliers, and cheap unregistered accommodations (hotels, homestays and units under Bread and Breakfast scheme) being offered to tourists have also affected the industry, hoteliers claim.

Even illegal structures awaiting regularisation are selling rooms online, creating unhealthy competition. Over 350 such unregistered units have come up in and around Shimla, which are neither registered with the government departments nor listed under HomeStay and Bed and Breakfast (B&B) and are operating through online portals, as per the report.

Hotels and parking slots in Shimla town can accommodate about 2,800 - 3,000 vehicles. About 40 per cent of the space in six main parking in the town is used by the locals. Overcharging by private or leased parking has become an accepted practice, and the tourists are at the receiving end, Seth said,

adding that unable to survive, the hoteliers have started giving their hotels on lease, and the leaseholders sell rooms at a low tariff to cover the lease amount, creating unhealthy competition.

The total number of registered hotels, guest houses and homestay units in Shimla district was 556, with a total of 9,530 rooms, out of which about 50 per cent are in Shimla town and periphery, as per the data of the tourism department.

As per the guidelines, the Homestay units can have a maximum of three rooms while the Bed and Breakfast scheme can have six rooms, but these guidelines are often flouted.

The tourism sector of Himachal Pradesh contributes around 7.5 per cent to the state GDP and is one of the highest employment-generating industries. In 2021, as many as 9,52,617 tourists visited the Shimla district.

# Gunfight between security forces, ultras

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ranchi, Jan 30:** A gunfight took place between security forces and a banned ultra outfit on Ranchi outskirts, police said Monday.

The encounter started in Sumo forest in Budmu block of the district when security forces were on a search operation at around 8 pm Sunday.

As the forces approached the area, ultras of Tritelva-Sammelan Prastuti Committee (TSPC) resorted to firing at the forces, police said.

"Around 50 rounds of bullets were exchanged from both sides. Later, taking advantage of night, they managed to escape. We recovered 777 INSUS bullets, seven walkie-talkie and eight walkie-talkie chargers from the place of occurrence," Ranchi, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kishor Kaushal told PTI.

Kaushal said there was no report of any casualty and a Jharkhand Jaguar team was sent to conduct a search operation in the area.

The SSP had received a tip-off that TSPC area commander Vikram Ganju's team is camping in the area to execute some big incident. The SSP formed a team and sent it in search of the ultras, police said.

On the night of January 23, an area commander of the banned People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI), a splinter group of CPI (Maoist), was killed in a gunfight with security forces in Ranchi district.



# Couple quits corporate jobs, turns model farmers

INSTITUTIONS LIKE NABARD AND IFFCO KISAN ARE IMPRESSED BY THEIR SUCCESS. THESE ORGANISATIONS HAVE SELECTED THEM FOR THE PILOT PROJECT OF AUTOMATED IRRIGATION SYSTEM IN JHARKHAND

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ranchi, Jan 30:** A couple hailing from Jharkhand's Hazaribag district, who left their corporate jobs and turned to farming, have become model farmers scripting an inspiring success story for others.

The couple- Vinod Kumar used to be a bank manager, while his wife Radhika worked in a multinational corporate company- in Pune.

Institutions like NABARD and IFFCO Kisan are impressed by their success. These organizations have selected them for the pilot project of Automated Irrigation System in Jharkhand. They have become the only farmers in the state, who can irrigate the crops grown in their fields even while sitting far away through the mobile app.

Bumper crops ranging from watermelon, cucumber, bitter gourd



to nana are being grown in their fields. Hundreds of tons of vegetables grown by them are reaching other states of the country as well as outside the country's borders- Bangladesh.

In 2020, during the Covid period, when uncertainties prevailed over everyone's mind and heart, about life and career, they were busy in multinational jobs, hundreds of

kilometers away from their home, in Pune. It was not an easy decision for the couple to leave everything all of a sudden and return to the village.

While returning home, there was only one thing in their mind that there is a life in the village too. If we do something here, we may get more or less money, but the happiness and peace we will get in

comparison to that will be the most valuable. Needless to say that in just two-and-a-half years, the couple have set an example for others.

Vinod's village is in Harhad under Churchu block of Hazaribag district. He decided to try his hand at farming with new techniques. He had not enough land in the village for farming. So, he took 18 acres of land on lease for 10 years in Darhwa

and Kusumdih of Rabodh village, which was generally considered barren. This land used to remain fallow for seven-eight months in a year.

After some research and discussion with agricultural scientists, he started watermelon cultivation here. Adopting drip method for irrigation, in the very first year in 2021, he grew 150 tonnes of watermelon. In the second year in 2022, this production reached 210 tonnes and the total business reached about 10 lakh rupees.

Vinod says that along with this, cultivation of cucumber, bitter gourd, nana, chilli and tomato was also started according to the season. Last year about 150 quintals of cucumber, 100 quintals of bitter gourd and 100 quintals of nana were produced. To link crops to the market, he formed Farmers Producers Organization (FPO) with local farmers.

# TIGER PUGMARKS CHEER WILDLIFE ENTHUSIASTS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Paonta Sahib (Himachal Pradesh), Jan 30:** The spotting of tiger pugmarks last week on the periphery of Simbalbara National Park, which supports dense Sal forests with grassy landscape and diverse wildlife and bird species, has cheered wildlife experts and enthusiasts who say the 27.88-sq-km park supports healthy herbivore prey species.

In a faunal survey by the ZSI in 2005 and 2006, tiger pugmarks and scats were observed in two instances. One scat sample collected was composed of pure soil with abundant undigested ants, while another scat sample composed of digested bones in the form of powdery calcareous substance along with undigested hairs.

Although Simbalbara supports a good prey base for large carni-

vores, its smaller size is not suitable for a tiger to reside permanently, says the ZSI.

In November last, a herd of elephants was spotted in Simbalbara National Park, which is now renamed as Sher Jung National Park.

On the habitat of the elephants, the ZSI says since grass is the major food item for elephants, the smaller size and deciduous vegetation of Simbalbara, without much grassland, cannot sustain an elephant herd for a longer period. Hence the park is not an attractive habitat for the elephant.

On the spotting of the last week's pugmark, Divisional Forest Officer (Wildlife) N. Ravisankar told IANS on Tuesday that the pugmark of the fully grown tiger was spotted on the periphery of the Simbalbara National Park. "We have installed camera traps in the area to monitor its movements," he said.





of the day quote

There will be no compromise on it and the government has been working to protect the Mahadayi river water from being diverted

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

The real-time source apppointment supersite will share details of sources of pollution on an hourly basis as well as forecast for the next three days.

ARVIND KEERIWAL | DELHI CM

As Bharat Jodo Yatra (BJY) comes to an end, the nation is getting to see a new Rahul Gandhi who will lead the fight against the forces spreading hatred and anger in the country

A K ANTONY | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

25 children hurt

New Delhi: Around 29 persons including 25 children were injured after vehicles including four school buses collided with each other near Indira Gandhi Stadium in Delhi on Monday morning.

Liquor seized

Lucknow: The Lucknow police have seized as many as 11,688 liquor bottles being transported to Bihar. The police have arrested one Rajesh Rathor of Mainpuri district in this connection.

Ten injured

Chennai: Ten people suffered burn injuries after a Bengaluru-bound bus caught fire in Tamil Nadu's Salem district Monday. There were 43 passengers on board the private bus which came from Coimbatore.

Trial courts gave 165 death sentences in 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 30: Trial courts across the country imposed 165 death sentences in 2022, which is the highest in a single year in the last two decades, a report has said.

Also, 539 prisoners were on death row by the end of 2022, which was the highest since 2016 and the number of prisoners living under death sentence saw an increase of 40% since 2015, the report added.

The highest imposition of death sentences in 2022 was influenced by the sentencing of 38 persons to death in Ahmedabad in a bomb blast case, the report said, adding this represented the largest number of people sentenced to death in a single case since 2016.

The Supreme Court and high courts decided 11 and 68 matters related to death sentencing, respec-



HIGHEST SINCE 2000

THE SUPREME COURT AND HIGH COURTS DECIDED 11 AND 68 MATTERS RELATED TO DEATH SENTENCING, RESPECTIVELY, THE REPORT SAID

539 PRISONERS WERE ON DEATH ROW BY THE END OF 2022, WHICH WAS THE HIGHEST SINCE 2016 AND THE NUMBER OF PRISONERS LIVING UNDER DEATH SENTENCE SAW AN INCREASE OF 40% SINCE 2015, THE REPORT SAID

tively, the report said. "From the 68 cases decided by the high courts, involving 101 prisoners, three prisoners had their death sentences confirmed, 48 saw their sentences commuted to life imprisonment, 43 were acquitted of all charges and six had their cases remitted to the trial court," the NLU report added.

It said the Bombay High Court also enhanced the sentence of one prisoner from life imprisonment to the death penalty in a dacoity and murder case and this was the second case of enhancement since 2016.

"Among the 11 cases decided by the Supreme Court, involving 15 prisoners, the court acquitted five

prisoners of all charges, commuted death sentences to life imprisonment for eight prisoners and confirmed the death penalty for two prisoners," the report said. The acquittal decisions of the apex court noted the improper nature of investigations and procedural failures by the police, prosecution and trial courts, it said.

"Although appellate courts have continued to commute the majority of death sentences decided in the year, worryingly, these commutations have increasingly resulted in the imposition of life imprisonment without remission," the report said.

While the Supreme Court im-

posed life imprisonment without remission for all eight prisoners whose death sentences were commuted, high courts imposed the same for over 56.6 per cent of prisoners, the report added.

The report also noted that in 2022, a three-judge bench had referred the question of the time that must be given for sentencing in death penalty cases, among other aspects of sentencing law, to a Constitution Bench.

The highest number of people on death row were in the states of Uttar Pradesh (100), Gujarat (61), Jharkhand (46), Maharashtra (39) and Madhya Pradesh (31), the report said.

Ramcharitmanas row: Akhilesh backs Maurya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Firozabad (UP), Jan 30: Defending Swami Prasad Maurya in the Ramcharitmanas row, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said he will ask Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath about the meaning of "tadan" - or punishment - in the verse referred to by his party colleague.

Maurya, a prominent OBC leader in Uttar Pradesh, had recently triggered a controversy by claiming that certain verses of the Hindu epic "insult" a large section of society on the basis of caste and demanded that these be "banned". Among them was one that says women and "shudra" deserve "tadan", roughly translated as "punishment".

BJP leaders have condemned Maurya's remarks. An FIR has also been lodged against him for making the controversial remarks. "Our chief minister is from an institution and is a yogi. I will ask him about the lines of Ramcharitmanas on which discussions are being held today. What is the meaning of 'tadan' in the verse and for whom it is used," Yadav told reporters on Sunday night.

"We follow both Ram and Krishna. This is not a matter of Swami Prasad Maurya's remark but of the lines," he said. On registration of FIR against Maurya, Yadav said, "BJP government can register FIR against anyone. Its work is to take credit of other's work and change names. It cannot take credit of any work of its own."



A man clears snow from his car in Srinagar

PTI PHOTO

ASARAM CONVICTED IN 2013 RAPE CASE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gandhinagar, Jan 30: More than nine years after a former disciple of Asaram Babu lodged a case of rape against him during her earlier stay in his ashram, a court in Gandhinagar on Monday convicted the self-styled godman and is likely to pronounce the sentence on Tuesday.

Sessions court judge DK Soni acquitted six other accused, including Asaram's wife Laxmi, their daughter, and four disciples who were accused of aiding and abetting the crime, for want of evidence, the prosecution said.

Asaram's lawyer said the session court's order will be challenged in the Gujarat High Court.

Notably, the victim's younger sister was raped and illegally confined by Asaram's son Narayan Sai. Sai was sentenced to life imprisonment by a sessions court in Surat in April 2019 in the rape case filed against him by his former disciple in 2013.

As per the FIR (First Information Report) registered at Chandkheda police station in Ahmedabad on October 6, 2013, against Asaram Babu and six others, the self-styled godman had raped the woman disciple, who hailed from Surat, on sev-



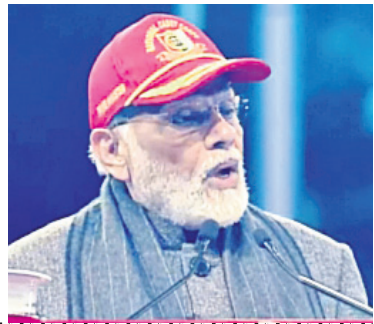
Asaram Babu was living at his ashram at Motera near Ahmedabad before she managed to escape. A chargesheet was filed in July

2014. "The court convicted Asaram Babu under sections 376 2 (C) for rape, 377 (unnatural offences), 342 (Wrongful detention), 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 357 (assault) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code," said special public prosecutor RC Kodekar.

The court is likely to pronounce its order on the quantum of the sentence on Tuesday, he said. The court accepted the prosecution's case against Asaram Babu but didn't agree that six others, including Asaram's wife and daughter, abetted the crime, he added.

PM MAY VISIT MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Mumbai February 10 for the opening of Dawoodi Bohra Community's Arabic Academy in Andheri East, sources said



Nitish hits out at BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Patna, Jan 30: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Monday asserted that he will "rather die" than realign with the BJP, stung by the saffron party's decision that there will be no alliance with the "unpopular" JD(U) leader.

Kumar made the remark while replying to questions here, from journalists, about the BJP's decision taken at its two-day state executive meeting that concluded in Darbhanga on the previous day.

"Mar jaana qabool hai lekin unke saath jaana humko kabhi qabool nahin hai, yah yaad rakhiye (I will rather die than join hands with them, do remember this)," the septuagenarian said on the sidelines of a function organised on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary.

Kumar, the state's longest-serving CM, reminded the BJP of the stupendous success it shared under his leadership at the hustings, including the 2010 assembly polls when the saffron party had won 91 seats, its best-ever performance.

The JD(U) supreme, who pulled the plug on alliance with the BJP in August last year, claimed that the saffron party used to get even the votes of Muslims who felt secure enough under his leadership to temporarily shun their wariness of Hindutva.

"On this day, Babu was assassinated. And he was assassinated by those who had a problem with his commitment to protecting the Muslims," the socialist leader said, referring to Mahatma Gandhi's interventions during the riots that broke out around Partition and his insistence that Pakistan be paid a sum of Rs 55 crore.

Kumar also said that after hav-

Nitish, who has often been called a "habitual betrayer" by the BJP, also claimed that even at the peak of the success of their alliance, the saffron party had not been fair towards the JD(U)

ing snapped ties with the BJP in 2013, when Narendra Modi took centre stage, he committed a "mistake" by realigning with the saffron party again in 2017. Turning towards his deputy Tejashwi Yadav, the CM said, "So many cases have been lodged against his father (RJD supreme Lalu Prasad). Nothing came of it. They (BJP) put pressure on me to join hands again. Now they are trying to frame these people again in other cases".

"I was reluctant to become the CM in 2020 when our party won fewer seats than them, thanks to their inability to transfer their votes to us. Our voters supported them which helped them perform better. They put pressure on me to take charge again. But in my party, resentment was growing towards their questionable role in the polls and I took the decision to part ways," the JD(U) leader said.

Kumar, who has often been called a "habitual betrayer" by the BJP, also claimed that even at the peak of the success of their alliance, the saffron party had not been fair towards the JD(U). "In 2010, at five or six places they had got parties like the JMM, which has the same poll symbol as ours, to contest so that our voters get confused. This cost us five or six seats," he alleged.

GODHRA TRAIN COACH-BURNING CASE

SC seeks response on convicts' bail pleas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 30: The Supreme Court Monday sought the Gujarat government's response on the bail pleas of some convicts sentenced to life imprisonment in the 2002 Godhra train coach-burning case.

A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud was told by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who appeared in the matter on behalf of the Gujarat government, that it was not "merely a stone-pelting" case as the convicts had bolted a bogey of the Sabarmati Express, leading to the death of several passengers on the train.



"Some are saying their role was just stone pelting. But when you look a bogey from outside, light it on fire and then pelt stones, it is not just stone pelting," the top law officer told the bench, also comprising justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala.

"Alright, you examine this. We will list (the bail pleas) after two weeks," the bench told Mehta. Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing in the court on behalf of some of the convicts, said the state government has filed appeals in the cases of certain convicts whose death penalty was commuted to life sentence by the Gujarat High Court.

A tale of one incident, 2 people, 3 months and 4 arrests

So it is that ninety days after the Morbi suspension bridge collapse which killed 135 people, including 50 children, Jaysukh Patel, promoter of the Rs 1,200 crore Oveva group employing a workforce of over 5,000 remains elusive and untraceable, but activist Saket Gokhale, hauled up for a tweet pertaining to it, continues behind bars after four arrests.

Premier investigating agencies which claim the prowess of ferreting an ant out of a molehill have abysmally failed in arresting the industrialist who remains on the run but has filed for anticipatory bail which is expected to be heard on February 1. And all this after a Gujarat High Court division bench led by its Chief Justice Aravind Kumar had suo moto taken up the bridge collapse case and has been pursuing it with equanimity.

Oveva group is a Morbi-based clock and home appliance manufacturer which was given the contract by the town municipality last year to repair maintain and operate the British-era bridge for 15 years and collect revenue from its ticket sales. Though nine of the ten others who were named in the 1,262 page chargesheet filed on January 27 had been booked soon after, Patel who figures in it as the main accused, remained out of reach. Published reports attributed to police sources claim that he had fled to the US and later returned

to the country while another claimed that there was a look-out notice for him at ports and airports. The warrant for his arrest was issued over two months after the bridge collapse. The FIR filed by the police did not name Oveva and its promoters but only "agencies responsible for maintenance and management of the hanging bridge" as the main accused.

In sharp contrast, the Gujarat police was all ginger and gusto when it came to Saket Gokhale, a spokesperson of the Trinamool Congress. He was detained in Jaipur, Rajasthan on December 6 for a tweet he posted and subsequently brought to Ahmedabad and arrested with an FIR filed against him for forgery and printing defamatory content following a complaint by a citizen. Remanded to two days police custody, he was granted bail thereafter. Gokhale is a journalist-turned RTI activist turned politician.

On December 1, Gokhale had shared news clipping about a purported Right to Information application which claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Morbi on November 1, after the bridge collapse, cost Rs 30 crore. Soon after the Press Information Bureau (PIB) of the government of India tweeted a fact check that the information was fake while the newspaper management said that such a news item had never been published



and was a fake created by someone to look authentic.

While the TMC spokesperson was hauled over the coals for a tweet endorsing an alleged fake news item, what about the mischief monger who faked the news item and planted it in the social media? Did Saket fake it? If not, who did and why was he not traced and arrested? The FIR, though has been filed under Indian Penal Code sections 465, 469 and 471 (all forgery) and 501 (printing or engraving known to be defamatory).

Nonetheless, his ordeal was just beginning. Granted bail in Ahmedabad, he was soon re-arrested in another case filed in Morbi district wherein he was accused of allegedly "promoting enmity between classes during the elections" apart from spreading fake news about Modi.

In the second case Gokhale was charged under Section 125 (promoting enmity be-

tween classes) of the Representation of people's Act. The allegations made in the second case were on lines similar to the first one except for the technicality wherein the election official in the Morbi Assembly constituency who filed the FIR, had stated that the fake news had been tweeted at a time when Model Code of Conduct was in effect in Gujarat due to the elections in the state. Presented by the police in Morbi court with a plea for sending him to judicial custody, Gokhale sought bail. The police plea was that he was a politician who was aware that an election is underway in Gujarat, model code of conduct is in place and the tweet could impact the electoral process. Court rejected the police argument and granted him bail.

In hindsight, the police process seemed less matter-of-fact and more mirthful. Gokhale was arrested for the second time on December 8 when the voting was long over in Gujarat and counting of votes was in progress and granted bail on the day the ruling BJP was celebrating its history making victory in the state. The argument of impacting the electoral process lay in tatters!

Nevertheless, the Gujarat police was in Delhi on December 29 to arrest Gokhale for a third time this time for allegedly misusing the money collected through

crowdfunding. Brought to Ahmedabad and remanded to police custody till January 5, the former journalist has been refused bail by the magistrate's court and the sessions court. This time he faces charges of cheating, forgery and criminal breach of trust. "Being a political worker; he might 'hamper and tamper with evidence', if released on bail at this stage, additional sessions judge A.B.Bhojak noted.

The High Court has also asked him to apply for bail after the chargesheet is filed. His lawyer has informed the court that he suffers from multiple ailments and is required to take 14 medicines daily. Also that the onetime-RTI activist and social worker had disclosed during his crowdfunding campaign that the money was required for running his campaign as well as for sustaining himself. All incomes were reflected in his bank accounts which were audited and income-tax paid, his lawyer Asim Pandya, argued in court.

On January 25, Gokhale was arrested for the fourth time this time by the Enforcement Department which has alleged misuse of money collected through crowd-funding. Arrested in Ahmedabad, he is in ED custody until January 31.

Gokhale calls it a frame-up for being anti-establishment, his party TMC terms it vendetta politics, and the official establishment, a process of law. Judge for yourself.

# international



Iran and Saudi Arabia are expected to resume talks on normalising ties soon  
HOSEIN AMIR-ABDOLLAHIAN | IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

## 19,740 ROAD ACCIDENTS REPORTED IN SL LAST YR

Some 19,740 road accidents were reported in Sri Lanka in 2022, the police said Monday. Police spokesman Nihal Thaldewa told reporters here that 2,485 died in these accidents, reports Xinhua news agency



### of the day quote

We may respond differently to Finland if necessary. Sweden would be shocked when we respond differently to Finland. But Finland should not make the same mistake



RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN | TURKISH PRESIDENT

Load shedding damages businesses, disrupts households, compromises the provision of social services, and affects the safety and well-being of the people



CYRIL RAMAPHOSA | SA PRESIDENT

It is important for an urgent intervention to pressure the new Israeli government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu to stop its unilateral measures and abide by the signed agreements



MAHMOUD ABBAS | PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT

### SHORT TAKES

#### Integrity important to me: Rishi Sunak

London: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak Monday defended his actions over the sacking of a Cabinet minister after he was found in breach of the ministerial code over his tax affairs, pledging to restore integrity into politics. The British Indian leader has faced opposition criticism over not taking the action to sack Conservative Party chairman Nadhim Zahawi, a minister without portfolio in his Cabinet, sooner after it emerged he had paid a penalty to the country's tax department. During the launch of his government's new emergency care plan for the National Health Service (NHS), Sunak insisted he had acted decisively by asking the independent ethics adviser to investigate the issue.

#### 8 shot dead at birthday party

Johannesburg: South African police Monday said that at least eight people were shot dead and three others injured by two unknown gunmen in the Eastern Cape province. Preliminary investigation has revealed that between 5.15 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. Sunday, the owner of a house in Kwazakale was hosting his birthday party with several guests, and the two gunmen entered the yard and started shooting randomly, reports Xinhua news agency.

#### Tropical storm leaves 30 dead

Antanarivo (Madagascar): Flooding and landslides caused by the passage of tropical storm Chensu across Madagascar caused 30 deaths, left 20 people missing and affected tens of thousands across the Indian Ocean island nation, according to a provisional assessment Monday.

# Putin threatened to lob missile at me: Boris

Former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson says that Russian President Vladimir Putin had "threatened him with a missile strike during an extraordinary phone call" ahead of Moscow launching its invasion of Ukraine February 24, 2022



AGENCIES

London, Jan 30: Former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has claimed Russian President Vladimir Putin threatened him with a missile strike in an "extraordinary" phone call in the run-up to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February last year.

Johnson, who was Prime Minister at the time, said Putin told him it "would only take a minute" in a comment after he warned the war would be an "utter catastrophe" during a phone call in February last year. Details of the exchange are revealed in a BBC documentary, 'Putin Vs the West', to be telecast later Monday, which examines Putin's interactions with the world leaders.

Johnson reportedly warned Putin that a conflict with Ukraine would lead to Western sanctions and

more North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) troops on Russia's borders.

He said he also tried to deter Russian military action by telling the Russian President that Ukraine would not join NATO "for the foreseeable future".

"He threatened me at one point, and he said, 'Boris, I don't want to hurt you but, with a missile, it would only take a minute' or something like that. Jolly," Johnson told the BBC.

"But I think from the very relaxed tone that he was taking, the sort of air of detachment that he seemed to have, he was just playing along with my attempts to get him to negotiate," he said. The BBC notes that no reference to the exchange appeared in accounts of the call given by both Downing Street and the Kremlin at the time.

The BBC documentary also reveals UK Defence Secretary Ben

#### Pro-Kremlin activists in Germany gave money for Russian army gear

A group of pro-Russian activists in Germany donated funds to a Russian army division fighting in Ukraine, and the money was used to purchase walkie-talkies, radios, headphones and telephones, according to an officer in the division and messages from the group's organisers seen by Reuters. The couple at the centre of the group, Elena Kolbasnikova and Max Schlund, handed the sum of 500 euros (\$540) to the officer in person late last year. Their messages show they knew the money paid for telecommunications equipment - despite European Union sanctions which restrict the supply of such gear to Russia's military.



Wallace left Moscow in early February 2022 with assurances that Russia would not attack Ukraine, but he said both sides knew it was a lie.

The minister described it as a "demonstration of bullying or strength, which is: I'm going to lie to you, you know I'm lying and I know you know I'm lying and I'm still going to lie to you". "I think it was about saying 'I'm powerful,'" Wallace told the BBC. He said the "fairly chilling, but direct lie" had confirmed his belief that the Russia-Ukraine conflict was coming.

#### Brawl breaks out over Khalistan referendum in Oz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne, Jan 30: Two people were injured and as many Sikh men were detained when two separate brawls broke out between Khalistani activists and pro-India demonstrators here during the so-called 'Punjab independence referendum', the police said Monday. India has already asked the Australian government to curb the anti-India activities of the Khalistani separatists and also attacks on the Hindu temples in the country.

"Signals that pro-Khalistan elements are stepping up their activ-



ities in Australia, actively aided and abetted by members of proscribed terrorist organisations such as the Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) and other inimical agencies from outside Australia, have been evident for some time," the Indian High Commission in Canberra said in a strongly-worded statement on January 26.

Two men were treated for minor injuries by paramedics on the scene as the police at Federation Square broke up two brawls between crowds during the voting for the referendum Sunday.

The Victoria Police in a statement said it responded to two incidents throughout the day, one at 12.45 pm and another at 4.30 pm (local time).

The police responded quickly to "separate and disperse the crowd" by using pepper spray in the second incident "to separate the fighting men".

According to The Age newspaper, the fracas occurred at 4.30 pm after a group of pro-India supporters waving national flags arrived at the voting site.

# Antony Blinken urges Israel-Palestinian calm as violence escalates

The latest spate of violence erupted last week with an Israeli military raid on a militant stronghold in the West Bank city of Jenin that killed 10 people, most of them militants, followed by the shooting in an east Jerusalem Jewish settlement that killed seven Israelis

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, Jan 30: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged Israel and the Palestinians Monday to ease tensions amid a spike in violence that has put the region on the edge.

Speaking on his arrival at Israel's international airport near Tel Aviv after a brief visit to Egypt, Blinken said he had come at "a pivotal moment" and condemned Palestinian attacks that have targeted Israeli citizens but also called for restraint in response, saying that all civilian casualties are deplorable.

"To take an innocent life in an act of terrorism is always a heinous crime but to target people outside their place of worship is especially shocking," he said, referring to an attack on Friday that killed seven people, many of whom were leaving a Jerusalem synagogue. "We condemn it in the strongest terms," he said.

"We condemn all those who celebrate these and any other acts of terrorism that take civilian lives no matter who the victim is or what they believe. Calls for vengeance against more innocent victims are not the answer. Acts of retaliatory violence against civilians are never justified."

Blinken said it is imperative for both sides to work to de-escalate tensions that have soared since last week in what he called "a new and horrifying surge in violence" that



Secretary of State Antony Blinken upon arrival at Israel's Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv AFP

The bloodshed has alarmed the Biden administration as it attempts to find common ground with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new right-wing government

has prompted severe responses from each. "It is the responsibility of everyone to take steps to calm tensions, rather to inflame them," he said. "That is the only way to halt the rising tide of violence that has taken too many lives, too many Israelis, too many Palestinians.

On Monday, shortly before Blinken's arrival, the Palestinian Health Ministry said Israeli forces killed a Palestinian man in the flashpoint city of Hebron, bringing the toll of Palestinians killed in January to 35.

The violence comes after months of Israeli arrest raids in the West Bank, which were launched after a wave of Palestinians attacks against Israelis in the spring of 2022 that killed 19 people.

#### 5 UKRAINIAN CIVILIANS KILLED

Fighting remained largely deadlocked Monday in eastern Ukraine where Russian shelling killed five civilians over the past day, according to Ukrainian officials, as the warring sides sized up their needs for renewed military pushes expected in coming weeks. The casualties included a woman who was killed and three others who were wounded by the Russian shelling of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city in the country's northeast, regional Gov. Oleh Synyehubov said Monday.

#### FRANCE BUYS NEW MASTERPIECE FOR ORSAY MUSEUM WITH LVMH GIFT

Paris: France has acquired a stunning Impressionist masterpiece for its national collection of art treasures, with a donation from luxury goods giant LVMH paying the 43 million euros (nearly \$47 million) for "A Boating Party" by 19th-century French artist Gustave Caillebotte. The oil on canvas shows an oarsman in a top hat rowing his skiff on languid waters. The work, remarkable in its realism, delicate colours and almost cinematic perspective, as though the artist was in the boat with the rower, went on display Monday in the Musée d'Orsay. It is the latest addition to the Paris museum's already impressive collection of Impressionist art. The painting was sold by Caillebotte's descendants. It had been one of the last Impressionist masterpieces still in private hands, said Jean-Paul Claverie, an adviser to LVMH boss Bernard Arnault.



Colleen Wallin and her sled dog team take off first from the start line of the John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon outside Billy's Bar in Duluth, Minn PFI PHOTO

#### Imran to contest all 33 seats of National Assembly

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Islamabad, Jan 30: Former Prime Minister and Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Imran Khan, has decided to set another record by contesting all the 33 seats of the National Assembly by competing the by-elections on seats, which got vacated after his party members' resignations were accepted by the Speaker of the Lower House.

The by-elections are scheduled March 16. This will be another record by Imran Khan to be the single person from his party to contest 33 seats. Earlier in October last year, Khan had run for at least eight constituencies and made history by bagging six seats.

Announcing the news to the media, PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that the party has mutually agreed to have Imran Khan as its candidate in the upcoming by-elections.

"The other candidates from these constituencies would file their nominations as covering candidates," said Qureshi.

The decision was made during the party's parliamentary committee meeting after a detailed discussion on what the PTI leader termed as "gross violations" of the Constitution, suspension of basic human rights and fundamental rights as well as nose diving economic conditions of the country.



# World 'dangerously unprepared' for next pandemic: Red Cross

DESPITE THREE "BRUTAL" YEARS OF THE COVID, STRONG PREPAREDNESS SYSTEMS ARE "SEVERELY LACKING", THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES (IFRC) SAID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Geneva, Jan 30: All countries remain "dangerously unprepared" for the next pandemic, the Red Cross warned Monday, saying future health crises could also collide with increasingly likely climate-related disasters.

Despite three "brutal" years of the Covid-19 pandemic, strong preparedness systems are "severely lacking", the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said. The world's largest humanitar-

ian network said building trust, equity and local action networks were vital to get ready for the next crisis. "All countries remain dangerously unprepared for future outbreaks," the IFRC said, concluding that governments were no more ready now than in 2019.

It said countries needed to be prepared for "multiple hazards, not just one", saying societies only became truly resilient through planning for different types of disaster, as they can occur simultaneously. The IFRC cited the rise in climate-related disasters and



waves of disease outbreaks this century, of which Covid-19 was just one.

It said extreme weather events were growing more frequent and intense, "and our ability to merely

respond to them is limited".

The IFRC issued two reports making recommendations on mitigating future tragedies on the scale of Covid-19, on the third anniversary of the World Health

Organization declaring the virus an international public health emergency.

"The Covid-19 pandemic should be a wake-up call for the global community to prepare now for the next health crisis," said IFRC secretary general Jagan Chapagain.

"The next pandemic could be just around the corner; if the experience of Covid-19 won't quicken our steps toward preparedness, what will?" The report said major hazards harm those who are already vulnerable the most, and leaving the poorest exposed was "self-defeating" as a disease can return in a more dangerous form.

#### BREAKDOWN OF TRUST

The IFRC said if people trusted safety messages, they would be willing to comply with public health

measures and accept vaccination. But the organisation said crisis responders "cannot wait until the next time to build trust", urging consistent cultivation over time.

The IFRC said if trust was fragile, public health became political and individualised - something which impaired the Covid response. It also said the coronavirus pandemic had thrived on and exacerbated inequalities, with poor sanitation, overcrowding, lack of access to health and social services, and malnutrition creating conditions for diseases to thrive in.

The organisation also said local communities should be leveraged to perform life-saving work, as that is where pandemics begin and end.

# business

## of the day quote

In scooters, the 110 cc continues to be the biggest segment with more than 60 per cent contribution to the scooter market

**RANJIV SINGH** | HERO MOTOCORP CHIEF GROWTH OFFICER

If India has to go for climate change (action), the developed world has to give us finance which it had agreed to... We have not polluted the world, yet we will be impacted by climate change

**AMITABH KANT** | INDIA'S G-20 SHERPA

The global environment remained challenging during Q3 FY23 due to inflation and slowdown across our key markets

**BK GOENKA** | WELSPUN GROUP CHAIRMAN

## SHORT TAKES

### Xiaomi global VP Manu Jain quits

**New Delhi:** Chinese smart devices maker Xiaomi's global vice president and former head of its Indian arm Manu Jain announced his resignation on Monday after about nine years stint at the company. The development comes amidst the ongoing legal tussle between Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Xiaomi over alleged violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) by the company. "Change is the only constant in life! Last 9 years, I'm lucky to have received so much love that it makes this goodbye so difficult. Thank you all. The end of a journey also marks the beginning of a new one, full of exciting opportunities. Hello to a new adventure!" Jain said in a tweet. Jain spearheaded the launch of Xiaomi in India in 2014.

### Mfg, services log 8% attrition in Q3

**Mumbai:** The average attrition rate across manufacturing and services industries increased sequentially to 8.27 per cent in the October-December quarter, a report said Monday. With a continuance of the 'Great Churn', attrition across industries witnessed a 0.46 percentage point increase from an average of 7.81% in the second quarter to 8.27% in the third quarter, according to TeamLease 'Employment Outlook Report'. The report is forward looking statistics for 'Intent to Hire' for January to March 2023, for both manufacturing (nine industries) and services sectors (14 industries), which is based on a survey of 874 small, medium and large companies. The report revealed that the Information Technology industry in the services sector had higher average attrition (27.19%) compared to Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals industry in the manufacturing sector (15.67%).

### GAIL shares fall 4% after Q3 earnings

**New Delhi:** Shares of GAIL (India) Ltd Monday declined over 4 per cent after the company reported a 90 per cent fall in its December quarter net profit. The stock went lower by 4.24 per cent to settle at ₹94.95 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 7.41 per cent to ₹91.80. On the NSE, it declined 4.48 per cent to end at ₹94.70 per share. The state-owned gas utility Monday reported a 90 per cent decline in its December quarter net profit after it suffered losses in petrochemical and natural gas marketing business. Consolidated net profit of ₹397.59 crore in October-December 2022 as compared with ₹3,800.09 crore earning in the same period a year back, according to the company's stock exchange filing.



There is an immediate need to decarbonise the transport sector

**NITIN GADHARI** | UNION MINISTER

### PHILIPS TO CUT 6,000 JOBS WORLDWIDE

Dutch consumer electronics and medical equipment maker Philips said Monday it is cutting 6,000 jobs worldwide over the next two years as it revealed a net loss of 1.6 billion euros (USD 1.7 billion) in 2022, down from a net profit of 3.3 billion euros last year. The job losses come on top of a reduction of 4,000 staff the company announced in October.



## LIC to 'engage' with Adani after short-seller's allegation

LIC has invested more than \$4 billion in the group, which has lost about \$66 billion since Hindenburg Research flagged concerns early last week about the business house's debt levels and the use of tax havens



REUTERS

**New Delhi, Jan 30:** State-run Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), India's largest insurer, is reviewing Adani Group's response to scathing criticism by a US short-seller and will hold talks with the group's management within days to seek clarifications.

LIC has invested more than \$4 billion in the group, which has lost about \$66 billion since Hindenburg Research flagged concerns early last week about the business house's debt levels and the use of tax havens. Adani, founded by Asia's richest person, Gautam Adani, says it complies with all local laws and has made the necessary regulatory disclosures. "Presently there is a situation that's emerging and we are not sure what is the factual position... Since we are a large investor, we have the right to ask relevant

questions and we will definitely engage with them," LIC Managing Director Raj Kumar told Reuters.

LIC said in a statement it had invested \$64.7 billion rupees (\$4.47 billion) in Adani companies, about 1% of its assets under management. It added that Adani debt securities held by LIC were rated AA and above, which was in compliance with India's investment regulations for life insurance companies. "Of course, we are studying the 413-page reply given by Adani Group," Kumar said Monday about the group's response to concerns raised by Hindenburg.

"We will also see if the concerns are addressed. If we believe the concerns are not addressed, we will seek further clarification from them. We will engage with them in a day or two and seek their views and clarification." LIC owned a

4.23% stake in the flagship Adani Enterprises as of end-December, more than 9% in Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, nearly 6% in Adani Total Gas and 3.65% in Adani Transmission, data from the Bombay Stock Exchange shows.

Kumar's comments came after Adani said in a statement late Sunday that its "strategic and long-term investors have reposed complete faith and confidence in the group." Kumar said that LIC looks at "the long-term view unless there is something going very bad."

"Presently, we don't see any kind of this thing," he said of Adani. "We have to gather all the information, clarifications; and a further call will be taken after that. The decision will also be based on an independent risk-assessment, internal risk-assessment, business profile and growth trajectory."

## Shares close higher in volatile trade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 30:** Benchmark BSE Sensex and Nifty closed higher in a highly volatile trade Monday, riding on the back of a recovery in IT, oil and financial stocks after a two-day fall even as investors remained cautious ahead of the Union budget and policy announcement by the US Federal Reserve.

The 30-share Sensex recovered 169.51 points or 0.29 per cent to settle at 59,500.41 as 17 of its constituents ended in the green. During the day, it rose by 313.34 points or 0.52 per cent to 59,644.24.

The broader NSE Nifty gained 44.60 points or 0.25 per cent to end at 17,648.95 as 29 of its stocks advanced. The index moved in a range of 17,709.15 to 17,405.55 during the day.

Among Sensex stocks, Bajaj Finance rose the most by 4.61 per cent on positive quarterly results. Ultratech Cement rose by 2.51 per cent, Bajaj Finserv by 2.22 per cent and NTPC by 1.53 per cent.

IT stocks also recovered with HCL Tech rising by 1.85 per cent, Infosys by 1.37 per cent and TCS by 0.72 per cent. Reliance Industries, Maruti, Wipro, M&M, Kotak Bank, Sun Pharma, ICICI Bank also gained.

Among losers, Power Grid fell the most by 3.38 per cent, IndusInd Bank by 2.56 per cent, L&T by 2.11 per cent, Tata Steel by 1.62 per cent, HUL by 1.55 per cent and Tata Motors by 0.45 per cent.

State Bank of India and HDFC were also among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge dipped 0.22



## Adani firms' combined mcap falls ₹5.56 lakh crore in 3 days

**New Delhi:** Shares of most of the Adani group firms ended lower Monday, a day after it released a 413-page response to allegations of wrongdoing brought by a US-based short seller Hindenburg Research. Since Tuesday last week till Monday, the group firms have collectively lost more than ₹5.56 lakh crore in market valuation. Stock markets were closed Thursday on account of Republic Day. For the third straight trading session, most of the group firms declined, with Adani Total Gas tumbling 20 per cent, Adani Green Energy plummeting 19.99 per cent, Adani Transmission tanking 14.91 per cent and Adani Power declining 5 per cent. Shares of Adani Wilmar fell 5 per cent, NDTV (4.99 per cent) and Adani Ports (0.29 per cent) on the BSE. However, the stock of Adani Enterprises climbed 4.21 per cent, Ambuja Cements gained 1.65 per cent and ACC went higher by 1.10 per cent. Friday, the Adani group stocks fell up to 20 per cent after Hindenburg Research made damaging allegations.

per cent and smallcap index fell 0.10 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, utilities slumped 5.74 per cent, power declined 5.30 per cent, oil & gas (4.06 per cent), energy (3.12 per

cent), capital goods (1.30 per cent) and metal (1.19 per cent). IT, teck, consumer durables, telecommunication, consumer discretionary and commodities were the winners.

## IHC to invest \$400 mn in Adani Enterprises FPO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 30:** Amid a rout in stock prices caused by a US short seller's allegations, Abu Dhabi-based International Holding Company (IHC) Monday said it has invested AED 1.4 billion (USD 400 million) in the share sale of Adani Group's flagship firm.

The investment in Adani Enterprises' follow-on public offering (FPO) was made through its subsidiary Green Transmission Investment Holding RSC Limited, a company statement said. Most Adani group shares have fallen over the past three trading sessions after Hindenburg Research released a damning report that flagged concerns around debt and the use of tax havens at the ports-to-energy conglomerate. Almost USD 70 billion in market value has been wiped out of the Adani empire in three trading days.

The embattled group would use the IHC investment to showcase how strategic institutional investors continue to stay invested.

This is the second investment IHC has made in Adani Group after last year's Dh7.3 billion (USD 2 billion) investment in three green-focused companies of the conglomerate, including Adani Green Energy, Adani Transmission, and Adani Enterprises.

"Our interest in Adani Group is driven by our confidence and belief in the fundamentals of Adani Enterprises Ltd; we see a strong potential for growth from a long-term perspective and added value to our shareholders," said Syed Basar Shueb, Chief Executive Officer, IHC.

IHC's first investment of the year comes as the company continues to scale and diversify its investments locally and internationally, focusing on Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America Markets in 2023.

"The advantage of the FPO is the historical reference for the company's earnings report, company's management, business practices, and much data to bank on before making any investment decision," Shueb explained.

The embattled group would use the IHC investment to showcase how strategic institutional investors continue to stay invested



REUTERS

**New Delhi, Jan 30:** India is considering a number of tariffs and non-tariff steps to cut imports of non-essential consumer and electronic goods, including from China, as trade imbalances concern policymakers, two government officials and an industry source said.

As many as 18 key government ministries, led by the federal trade ministry, met last week to firm up steps first aimed at cutting imports from China, which accounts for nearly a third of India's trade deficit, said the three sources who

declined to be named.

India has been trying to reduce its trade deficit with China since 2020, when border tensions flared along a contested frontier; but with little success as the country is a key and cheap supplier of goods including active pharmaceutical ingredients, electrical equipment and several chemicals.

The trade gap with China widened 28% in April-December 2022 from the same period a year earlier; as India's domestic demand continued to support Chinese imports while COVID lockdowns in China crimped imports from India.

## Q3 RESULTS CORNER

### PNB net profit falls 44%



**New Delhi:** Punjab National Bank (PNB) Monday reported a 44 per cent decline in stand-alone net profit at ₹629 crore in the third quarter ended December due to higher provisions for bad loans. The

state-owned bank had earned a net profit of ₹1,127 crore in the year-ago period. However, total income during October-December 2022 increased to ₹25,722 crore as against ₹22,026 crore in the year-ago period, PNB said in a regulatory filing. During the quarter, the net interest income (NII) grew by 17.6 per cent to ₹9,179 crore while operating profit increased by 12.6 per cent to ₹5,716 crore on YoY basis. PNB managing director Atul Kumar Goel said. However, provisions for bad loans increased to ₹3,908 crore during the quarter as against ₹3,654 crore a year ago, he said, adding, this led to an increase in Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) to 85.17 per cent in December 2022 from 81.85 per cent in December 2021. Secondly, he said, provision for wage revision and earmarking of performance linked incentives of ₹79 crore was also made during the quarter. On the asset quality front, the bank recorded an improvement with gross NPAs (Non-Performing Assets) declining to 9.76 per cent as compared to 12.88 per cent at the end of the third quarter of previous fiscal. At the same time, net NPAs eased to 3.30 per cent as against 4.90 per cent in the same period a year ago.

### L&T net profit rises 24%



**New Delhi:** Engineering and construction conglomerate Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Monday reported a 24.2 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at ₹2,552.92 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2022 on the back of higher revenue from operations. The company had posted consolidated net profit of ₹2,054.74 crore in the year-ago period, L&T said in a regulatory filing. The consolidated revenue from operations of the company in the October-December period increased to ₹46,389.72 crore, over ₹39,562.92 crore in the year-ago period. "Larsen & Toubro achieved consolidated revenues of ₹46,390 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2022 recording a Y-o-Y growth of 17 per cent, aided by improved execution in the infrastructure projects segment and continued growth momentum in the information and technology and technology services (IT&TS) portfolio," the company said. The company received orders worth ₹60,710 crore at the group level during the quarter ended December 31, 2022, registering a growth of 21 per cent over the corresponding quarter of the previous year. During the quarter, orders were received across multiple segments like oil and gas, public spaces, hydel and tunnels, irrigation systems, ferrous metals and power transmission and distribution.

### Tech Mahindra profit falls by 5%

**New Delhi:** IT company Tech Mahindra Monday posted a 5 per cent decline in the consolidated profit after tax at ₹1,297 crore in the December quarter. The company had registered profit after tax of ₹1,378.2 crore in the year-ago period. "We are witnessing moderation in growth given the tough macro economic environment. We will continue to work with our customers to pre-empt their technological requirements and identify new demand drivers, especially for digital services," Tech Mahindra Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer CP Gurnani said. Tech Mahindra's consolidated revenue from operations, however, increased by about 20 per cent to ₹13,734.6 crore during the October-December quarter from ₹11,451 crore in the previous year. Chief Financial Officer Rohit Anand attributed the margin impact to pressures on the supply side, wherein higher wages impacted profitability. He also hinted that achieving the 14 per cent target for end of FY23 may be difficult, explaining that an increase in wages due to the overall industry scenario has hiked staff costs, there was an accounting impact due to recent acquisitions and large deals being a drag on profitability initially. Like some of its peers, the company reported a decline of nearly 1,800 people to 1.57 lakh employees, which was attributed to a reduction in business process outsourcing services staff.



## India plans to curb Chinese imports as trade gap mounts

REUTERS



The government is considering ramping up investigations to weed out unfair practices on a 'wide array' of imports, from China and elsewhere, one of the officials said, without specifying which goods or what the unfair practices were.

The industry source said that so far this year anti-dumping investigations have focussed on products such as printed circuit boards and a type of toughened glass imported from China.

If a trading partner were found to have engaged in unfair practices, it would be necessary to introduce safeguards such as the im-

position of anti-dumping duties, the official said.

India's federal trade ministry and China's embassy in New Delhi did not immediately respond to requests for a comment.

India's overall merchandise exports fell 12% in December from a year earlier, while merchandise imports dropped 3%, widening the deficit by 13%, government data showed.

The officials said India would also intensify checks on imported goods to make sure they adhere to national quality standards, the two government officials added.

# Graham Reid resigns

# Shafali not content with WC glory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 30:** Indian men's hockey team chief coach Graham Reid Monday resigned from his position following the host nation's disastrous outing at the just-concluded World Cup.

Reid, who was appointed India coach in April 2019, led the team to a historic bronze medal finish at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

The 58-year-old Australian submitted his resignation to Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey, a day after the conclusion of the World Cup in Bhubaneswar, where Germany beat Belgium in a penalty shootout to emerge as champions.

"It is now time for me to step aside and hand over the reign to the next management," Reid said, announcing his retirement. Reid's term was till next year's Paris Olympics.

"It has been an honour and privilege to work with the team and Hockey India and I have enjoyed every moment of this epic journey. I wish the team all the very best," he added.

Reid took the decision after HI chief Tirkey and secretary general Bholanath Singh met with the players and support staff to discuss the team's performance and strategy going forward.

Besides Reid, the team's analytical coach Greg Clark and scientific advisor Mitchell David Pemberton also tendered their resignations Monday morning. The trio will be serving a notice period of one month before relinquishing their duties.

Under Reid, India achieved a lot of success, including an Olympic medal after 41 years, a silver in last year's Birmingham Commonwealth Games and a third-place finish in the FIH Hockey Pro League season in 2021-22.

Reid's successful outings with India also includes the FIH Series Final title victory in 2019. The team made the Tokyo Games by winning the qualifiers in Bhubaneswar in the same year.

Tirkey accepted the trio's res-



ignations and said the country will always remain grateful for their services. "India will always have gratitude towards Graham Reid and his team of support staff who have brought good results to the country, particularly the Olympic Games," he said.

"As all journeys move to different phases, it is now time for us to move on towards a new approach

for our team."

Hosts India started the tournament as fifth in world rankings but failed to qualify for the quarterfinals, losing to lower-ranked New Zealand in a shootout in the cross-over match.

The home team, led by Harmanpreet Singh, eventually finished joint ninth along with Argentina after defeating Japan

8-0 and South Africa 5-2 in classification matches.

'Change is always good' Legendary Ajit Pal Singh feels Reid's resignation will be good for the Indian team as "change" was required after the home team's disastrous outing at the WC. "Reid's resignation is his personal decision but at the end of the day somebody has to take the blame for this awful show," Pal told PTI.

"Being Olympic bronze medalist, there was high expectations from India in this World Cup but we were just below-par in all departments. We finished a lowly ninth and I don't think we could have fared any further. It is the worst performance from the team.

"Change is always for good and I feel Reid's resignation will be good for the Indian team. I feel we now want a person with new ideas, who can gel the team together once again," added the captain of India's only World Cup-winning side.

Ajit Pal, who led India to a maiden gold medal in the 1975 World Cup in Kuala Lumpur, also blamed the selectors for the shoddy performance. "The selectors also should take some blame because the boys looked tired and fatigued in the World Cup. I feel there was no need to change the crux of the Olympic winning team," he felt. "Where was the need to change the captain as well?"

Former India captain Sardar Singh, who is also a national selector, however, feels Reid's resignation came at the wrong time. "Definitely Reid's resignation didn't come at the right time because we have the Asian Games this year and then Olympics next year. It now remains to be seen what Hockey India does. I hope Hockey India has a better person in their mind to replace him and take the team to the next level," he said.

"I don't know what's in Hockey India's mind, they might have had something in their minds before accepting Reid's resignation." The former ace midfielder said the players also have to take some blame for the shoddy show.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Potchefstroom, Jan 30:** Not content with the U-19 T20 World Cup triumph, batting sensation Shafali Verma has already set her sights on replicating the success with the senior women's team in less than two weeks' time.

She will get her chance when the Women's T20 World Cup gets underway from February 10 in South Africa, the same country where the country just won the inaugural U-19 world tournament.

Shafali, 19, has already established herself in India's senior side and wants to make the visit to South Africa even more memorable with another silverware.

"No, the big one also," Shafali said when asked if the U-19 trophy was the only one she was hoping to take back from South Africa. "I am someone who focuses on task at hand. When I entered the U-19s, I only focused on winning the U-19 Cup and we have won that today (Sunday).

"I will look to take this winning confidence with me and win the senior World Cup. I will try and forget this and get involved with the senior setup and gel with the team and win the World Cup," she was

quoted as saying by the ICC.

India Sunday won their maiden ICC title in women's cricket as a bunch of supremely talented teenagers lifted the inaugural U-19 World Cup with a seven-wicket victory over England.

Shafali was part of India's squad that fell at the final hurdle at the 2020 T20 World Cup, when Australia defeated the side by 85 runs in front of more than 85,000 fans at the MCG. She said she still feels the pain from the loss.

"Melbourne was a very emotional day for me in that final game, we didn't win the game," Shafali recalled. "When I joined the Under-19 team, I'm just thinking, 'you know, we have to win this Cup.' I'm just telling all the girls, 'We have to win this Cup, we are here for the Cup.'

"We had lost the World Cup and it was tears of sadness. Today, they were tears of happiness because we achieved what we came here for. I tried controlling it but it couldn't happen. I will look at this as a big achievement and look to use this to learn something more. I will try to score more runs for India and am not going to be satisfied with this Cup. This is just the beginning."

The spinners and seamers have been very impressive and in both the departments we need

improvement at the senior level. It's always good to have more options and build a solid pool of players. When you compare to the highest level, there is obviously a bit of difference in terms of standards, technique and temperament at the U-19 level. We will have to work on them. And from what I saw in South Africa, they are really good



MITHALI RAJ

The U-19 team's victory provides added inspiration. Winning any world title is huge and one will always remember this one since it was the inaugural edition of the championship. I congratulate the team for the historic victory and hope we can emulate them in the senior event



HARMANPREET KAUR

# MURALI VIJAY CALLS TIME ON INT'L CAREER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, Jan 30:** Out-of-favour India player Murali Vijay Monday announced he was retiring from international cricket. The right-handed batter who featured in 61 Tests, 17 ODIs and nine T20 Internationals last played for the country in the Perth Test against Australia in December 2018.

His Test debut was against Australia in the 2008-09 season at Nagpur as a replacement for Gautam Gambhir. He featured in first-class and List A cricket for Tamil Nadu late in 2019. As far as professional cricket is concerned, he last turned out for Chennai Super Kings in the Indian Premier League in 2020.



"Today, with immense gratitude and humility, I announce my retirement from all forms of international cricket," Vijay said in a statement on Twitter. "I am excited to announce that I will be exploring new opportunities in the world of cricket and the business side of it, where I will also continue to participate in the sport that I love and challenge myself in new and different environments," the 38-year-old Vijay added.

"I believe this is the next step in my journey as a cricketer and I look forward to the new chapter in my life." He thanked the BCCI, TNCA, CSK and Chemplast Sanmar as well as his teammates, coaches, mentors and support staff, and also the fans "for their support through his ups and downs".

In 61 Tests, Vijay scored 3982 runs at an average of 38.28 with a highest score of 167. He hit 12 hundreds and 15 half centuries. In 17 ODIs, he made 339 runs and in seven T20Is, he got 169 runs.

In the IPL, he shone for CSK and the runs he scored turned the attention on him. In the 2010 season, Vijay scored 458 runs for CSK with a century and two fifties, including a blistering 127 against Rajasthan Royals in Chennai, which brought him into the national reckoning.

# Surya 'was confident' of India's win in 2nd match



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, Jan 30:** In a low-scoring second T20I which went down the wire, India's in-form batter Suryakumar Yadav steered his side home with an unbeaten 26 off 31 balls, including slapping Blair Ticker over mid-off for the winning boundary and level three-match series to set up a decider in Ahmedabad Wednesday.

Suryakumar, who took Player of the Match award, said in a video posted by BCCI that he was confident in himself staying at the crease till the end and get the win for India in the last over.

"I was there in the middle with a clear mindset that it's a tough wicket

to play on and it was important for someone to play till last. It was equally important to build small partnerships and adapt to the situations.

"I knew this was a totally different wicket than the ones I play freely. I was confident that if I managed to stay till last, I could win the game in the last over as well. When Hardik came in, we had a chat and planned to take the game till last."

Asked about the pressure of three runs needed off the last two balls, he remarked, "We were confident enough to win the game and Hardik and I were in a conversation that if any one of us gets the big hit, the match is ours. We did not panic and the communication with Hardik was very important."

# Satwik-Chirag, Saina opt out of Thailand Open

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangkok, Jan 30:** Commonwealth Games champions Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will miss the Thailand Open Super 300 badminton tournament after the former failed to completely recover from his hip injury suffered recently.

Satwik had sustained the injury during the India Open Super 750 tournament earlier in the month and was forced to withdraw midway from the tournament in New Delhi.

"It hasn't healed yet, so won't be playing Thailand," Chirag, one half of the world number six pair, told PTI. "Mostly we are targeting All England Championship now," he added.

The top seeded Indian duo, who reached the semifinals of the season-opening Malaysia Open super 1000, was scheduled to face Chinese Taipei's Su Ching Heng and Ye Hong Wei in the opening round.

The USD 210,000 tournament, in fact, lost a bit of sheen with many Indian shuttlers, including former number 1 Saina Nehwal and Malvika Bansod, also pulling out of the event.

While Saina was supposed to face Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt, Bansod was scheduled to open against top seed and former world



champion Ratchanok Intanon. With the duo pulling out, Anupama Upadhyaya and Ashmita Chahliha are the only two women in singles event but they will face-off in an all-Indian opener.

In men's doubles, world no. 34 Krishna Prasad Garaga and Vishnuvardhan Goud Panjala also decided to give it a miss, leaving Ishaan Bhatnagar and Sai Pratheek K. and PS Ravikrishna and Sankar Prasad Udayakumar in the fray now.

However, India will have a host of players, led by Tokyo Olympian B Sai Praneeth, competing in men's singles. While former Singapore Open



champion Praneeth, who has slumped to World No.51, will face an uphill task against second seed Lu Guangzu of China. Sameer Verma, who is also on a comeback trail after recovering from injury, meets another Chinese in six seed Li Shi Feng.

Priyanshu Rajawat, who had reached the main draw at Indonesia Masters last week, will square off against Heo Kwang Hee of Korea. Odisha Open champion Kiran George is pitted against Chinese Taipei's Chia Hao Lee and Orleans Masters runners-up Mithun Manjunath will cross sword with fifth seed Japanese Kenta Nishimoto.

In women's doubles, Commonwealth Games bronze medallist pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand will fight it out against Japan's Rena Miyaura and Ayako Sakuramoto but new pairing of Shruti Mishra and N Sikki Reddy pulled out.

Tanisha Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa will face China's Tan Ning and Xia Yu Ting, while Simran Singh and Ritika Thaker too are in the competition.

In mixed doubles, B Sumeeth Reddy and Ashwini Ponnappa and eighth seed Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha are also in the fray.

# Djokovic clearly not done dominating tennis

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Melbourne, Jan 30:** Novak Djokovic clearly is not done dominating his sport. He says so. His coach says so. And, most importantly, his performances throughout a draining run to a record-extending 10th Australian Open championship and record-tying 22nd Grand Slam title, plus his return Monday to No.1 in the ATP rankings, say so.

His message Sunday night, essentially, was: Look out. "I still have lots of motivation. Let's see how far it takes me. I really don't want to stop here. I don't have intention to stop here," the 35-year-old Djokovic said after beating Stefanos Tsitsipas, a man more than a decade his junior in the final at Melbourne Park.

"I feel great about my tennis. I know that when I'm feeling good physically (and) mentally present, I have a chance to win any Slam

against anybody." Hard to argue.

Not only has no man won more major trophies (Rafael Nadal also has 22; Margaret Court, with 24, and Serena Williams, with 23, are the only players in history with more), but Djokovic just keeps applying constant pressure on opponents — regardless of the surface or any apparent obstacles in his way.

He returned to Australia with some trepidation, unsure of what sort of reception awaited a year after he was deported for not being vaccinated against COVID-19, and was fine.

He dealt with a sore left hamstring, and was fine, dropping one set along the way to the title. He was bothered by the unusual circumstances that kept his father — who had last attended the Australian Open 15 years ago — away from Rod Laver Arena for Djokovic's semifinal and final, and was fine.

Well, able to bottle all of that up, anyway, until the last point was



Novak Djokovic poses with the Australian Open trophy alongside digit '1', which indicates his position in the ATP rankings, at the Government House in Melbourne, Monday

played. That's when Djokovic "emotionally collapsed," as he put it, sobbing in the stadium.

"It required an enormous mental energy, really, to stay present, to stay focused, to take things day by day," he said, wearing a white zippered

jacket with "22" printed on the chest, "and really see how far I can go."

His strokes are pure as can be. His athleticism, too. His resolve? Off the charts. "Novak is a player that pushes you to your limits," is the way Tsitsipas explained it. He

**I don't know how many more years I'm going to play or how many more Slams I'm going to play. It depends on various things. It doesn't depend only on my body. Physically, I can keep myself fit. Of course, 35 is not 25, even though I want to believe it is. But I still feel there is time ahead of me. Let's see how far I go**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

would know. He has lost 10 consecutive matches to Djokovic, two in Grand Slam finals.

"I don't see this as a curse. I don't see this as something, like, annoying," Tsitsipas continued. "This is very good for the sport — to have competitors like him, to have champions like him."

The "GOAT" debate — "Greatest of All-Time" — has consumed tennis fans for years, comparing

Djokovic, Nadal and Roger Federer. It's an OK parlor game, sure, although silly on its merits. All three, it goes without saying, are great.

Federer, 41, is retired. Nadal, 37 in June, left Melbourne with an injured left hip flexor. Djokovic, 36 in May, keeps on keeping on. For how much longer?

"Definitely two, three more years," said Goran Ivanisevic, the 2001 Wimbledon champion who has coached Djokovic since 2019. "The way he's taking care of his body; the way he (approaches) everything, the food, it's amazing."

Djokovic won't be pinned down on what he has left. Nor should he. Like Federer, like Nadal, like Williams, he can play as long as he pleases. Let's just say Djokovic is not satisfied with what he's done.

Djokovic is sure to be the favorite at Roland Garros if Nadal isn't healthy, and at Wimbledon, which he already has won seven times.