



BEATING STRESS

Upcoming actress Suhana Khan shares what helps her cope when she feels overwhelmed due to work

LEISURE P2



KHALISTANIS HECKLE SANDHU

Khalistani supporters heckle India's US envoy Taranjit Singh Sandhu during his visit to a gurudwara in New York

INTERNATIONAL P10



KHO KHO IN CUTTACK

Cuttack prepares for the 2nd edition of Ultimate Kho Kho which will start December 24

SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

Laser scanning of Ratnabhandar today

Puri: The Archeological Survey of India (ASI) is all set to carry out the proposed laser scanning of the Shree Jagannath temple here from Tuesday. After completion of scanning, ASI will submit the report to the technical expert team for review, informed Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator Ranjan Kumar Das here Monday. "Keeping in mind the large congregation of devotees at the shrine on the occasion of 'Kartik Purnima', the laser scanning of Bahara Ratnabhandar (outer treasury) will be done November 28," Das said.

Mates attack Class IV student with compass

Indore: A student of Class IV was allegedly attacked by three of his classmates 108 times with a geometry compass during a fight at a private school here, an official said Monday. The victim's father has alleged that the victim suffered multiple injuries during the attack which took place November 24. A complaint in this regard has been lodged at the Aerodrome police station here. The boy's father alleged that the school authorities were not providing him with the CCTV footage of the incident.

P9



BOAT FEST: People float miniature boats at Gadagadia Ghat of Mahanadi river in Cuttack on the occasion of Kartik Purnima, Monday, to commemorate the ancient maritime history of Kalinga

Lightning kills 31

While 27 deaths were reported from Gujarat, 4 lost their lives in MP

AGENCIES

Ahmedabad, Nov 27: Twenty seven people have been killed in lightning strikes in the last 24 hours in different parts of Gujarat during widespread unseasonal rainfall in the state, an official said here Monday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah condoled the deaths due to lightning and said the local administration was engaged in relief work. In Madhya Pradesh, which also experienced unseasonal rains, four people were killed and a boy was seriously injured in lightning strikes following showers at different places in the state, officials said Monday in Bhopal. As per an official of the Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) here a total of 27 rain-related deaths have been reported from different parts of Gujarat. All the fatalities were attributed to lightning strikes. Most of the deaths were reported in the districts of Dahod, Tapi, Dangs, Amreli, Surendranagar, Botad, Mehsana, Kheda, Panchmahal, Sabarkantha, Ahmedabad, Bharuch and Devbhumi Dwarka, officials said.

Cyclone threat looms

Even though the IMD is yet to predict the path of 'Cyclone Michaung', various models indicate that it will affect south Odisha

PNN & AGENCIES

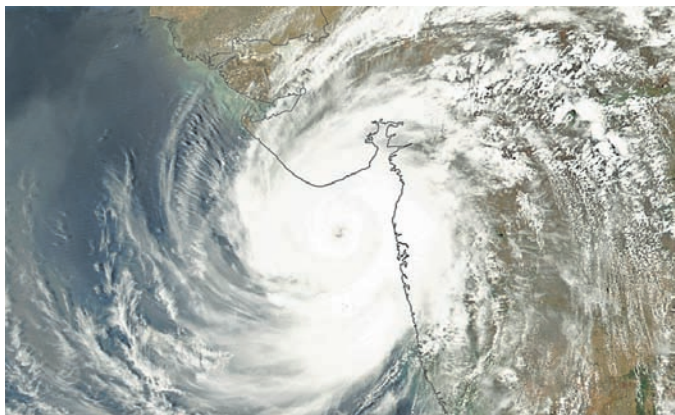
Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: The regional office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) here said Monday that a low pressure area has formed near Andaman and Nicobar Islands and it may intensify into a severe cyclonic storm over the Bay of Bengal in the next few days. The Met department, in a special message based on data received till 8.30am Monday, said that the low pressure area has been formed over south Andaman Sea and adjoining Strait of Malacca.

"It is likely to move west-northwestwards and intensify into a depression over southeastern Bay of Bengal around November 29. Thereafter it is likely to move north-westwards and intensify further into a cyclonic storm over southeast Bay of Bengal in the subsequent 48 hours," the IMD said. A number of IMD sources however, pointed out that various models indicate that there is a strong possibility of the cyclonic storm crossing the

the north Andhra Pradesh and south Odisha coasts.

If that happens, a number of districts in south Odisha including Ganjam, Gajapati, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri and Koraput may bear the brunt of the cyclonic storm which may cause widespread havoc and destruction.

However, IMD director general, Dr Mrutunjay Mohapatra asserted Monday that it is too early to predict the exact path of the storm which will be christened 'Cyclone Michaung' once it forms. "Yes definitely a cyclonic formation will take place December 1 close to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands," Dr



Mohapatra said. "However, at this moment we cannot predict the path it will take. Only after the formation of the cyclone we can predict its course," the top IMD official added.

The 'Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre 'Tropical Cyclones' in its weather out-

look issued Monday said that according to the IMD GFS model, there is a low pressure area over southwest Bay of Bengal. It said that the system will move north-westwards till December 4. Then there will be north-northwestwards recurvature due to which the system may cross north Andhra Pradesh and south Odisha coasts as a severe cyclonic storm December 5. The weather body also said that after December 5, the cyclone will rapidly weaken.

The ECMWF model has also indicated that the cyclone formation will take place December 2 and the system will cross over the south Odisha coast December 6.

TRAIL OF DEVASTATION		
YEAR	NAME OF CYCLONE	DAMAGE
May 2019	FANI	Damages worth ₹11K crore
Nov 2019	BULBUL	Major damage in number of districts
May 2020	AMPHAN	More than 44 lakh people affected
May 2021	YAAS	More than 60 lakh persons hit
Sept 2021	GULAB	Coastal south Odisha hit
Dec 2021	JAWAD	State escapes brunt of cyclone

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Not only the statue, a clock tower too is urgently needed

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	28.6°C	28.6°C
TEMP. MIN	18.3°C	18.0°C
Humidity	78%	80%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Dry weather very likely

Alia latest 'deepfake' victim

EARLIER, ACTORS LIKE RASHMIKA MANDANNA, KAJOL AND KATRINA KAIF WERE TARGETED THROUGH AI-INITIATED VIDEOS

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 27: Amid consternation and outrage over a series of 'deepfake' videos, actor Alia Bhatt has joined the list of celebrities who have fallen prey to the technology. Deepfakes of several celebrities - including Rashmika Mandanna, Kajol, Katrina Kaif and Sara Tendulkar - had earlier surfaced on the internet, sparking concerns over the misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The latest video shows a woman with the morphed face of Alia Bhatt making obscene gestures and trying to attract the viewer's attention. However, Alia is yet to comment on the emerging controversy.

Alia is currently shooting for action movie, *Jigra*, directed by Vasana Bala and co-produced by



herself and Karan Johar. She was last seen on screen in Karan Johar's *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani* with Ranveer Singh playing the hero. The incident has once more sparked massive worry about fake videos targeting public figures and the power of AI to create misleading deepfakes. The Centre has said that the

creation and circulation of deep-fakes carry a strong penalty - ₹1 lakh in fine and three years in jail. Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar last week said that the Centre will soon appoint an officer to take appropriate action against such content.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also flagged the misuse of AI

for creating deepfake videos and called it a 'big concern'. "During the times of Artificial Intelligence, it is important that technology should be used responsibly," he had cautioned. The first to fall prey to a deepfake video was Rashmika. The AI-fabricated video showed the *Pushpa* actress, wearing a black dress and entering an elevator. However, the video is of another lady and was created by using an AI technology called 'deepfake'. Even megastar Amitabh Bachchan had expressed concern after the video went viral.

VK Pandian joins BJD

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's close aide and former IAS officer V Karthikeyan Pandian formally joined Monday the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD). He joined the regional party in the presence of the Chief Minister, state ministers, lawmakers and senior BJD leaders at the Naveen Niwas here, the residence of Patnaik.

"I welcome Pandian into the BJD. He will work for the party and the people of Odisha with all sincerity and dedication," the CM said in a video message. "He has been working very hard for the state for several years and would continue to do so. He has earned people's respect. I wish him all the best," Patnaik added.

Pandian meanwhile said that he will continue to work for the people under the guidance of Patnaik. "With the blessings of Lord Jagannath and under the guidance of CM Naveen Patnaik, I will work for the party and the people of Odisha with full sincerity and dedication," Pandian stated. Before joining the party, Pandian visited Puri and had a darshan of Lord Jagannath Monday morning.

BJD's Puri MP Pinaki Mishra told reporters that Pandian sought the blessings of the CM and touched his feet. Mishra exuded confidence that Pandian would



bring success to the party like he did for the administration. Mishra added that Pandian's administrative and political experience will be a great asset for the party.

Forty-nine years old Pandian, a 2000-batch IAS officer who sparked several controversies and was accused of violating the service rule, had taken voluntary retirement from government service October 23 this year. He was later appointed as the chairman of the state's flagship 5T (transformational initiative) and Navin (new) Odisha scheme in the rank of Cabinet Minister to work directly under Patnaik.

Pandian hails from Tamil Nadu and his wife, Sujata Kartikeyan Rout, is from Odisha. He was initially in the Punjab cadre but later shifted to Odisha as his wife worked in the eastern state.

BJD's organisational secretary Pranab Prakash Das, considered No 2 in the party, said, "Pandian is a strong disciple of

the CM and is dedicated to him. There is no doubt over his sincerity towards Patnaik and the people of Odisha."

Pandian after formally joining the BJD, visited Maa Tara Tarini temple, one of the famous Shakti shrines in Ganjam district and performed puja. Hundreds of party functionaries and supporters, Aska MP Pramila Bisoil, Berhampur Mayor Sanghamitra Dalei and a number of MLAs thronged the Tara Tarini temple to welcome Pandian into the party fold. He was accompanied by Pranab and some other legislators. Pandian is attached to the temple since his days as the district collector of Ganjam from 2007 to 2011.

"He (Pandian) is one of the devotees of Maa Tara Tarini and visits the place very frequently. Like other days, he also visited today and spent around 15 minutes to perform rituals and seek blessings," a priest said.

Miscreants loot ₹20L from ATM in Balasore

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bahanaga, Nov 27: Miscreants allegedly decamped with cash worth ₹20 lakh from an ATM kiosk by cutting the machine with gas cutters at Bahanaga Bazaar locality around 100 metres from National Highway-16 under Soro police limits in Balasore district late Sunday night. Police have launched a probe to identify the miscreants by examining the CCTV footage installed at the facility.

The incident reminds one of the loot of an ATM kiosk at Lingipur Housing Colony in Bhubaneswar, April 5. In that incident, the miscreants had used a stolen heavy vehicle to uproot the ATM and had fled with the cash. The burglars had dumped the ATM on the banks of the Daya river. Police later arrested two persons for

their involvement in the case, a Bangladeshi national and a youth from Kolkata.

Police said two miscreants with their faces covered entered the ATM kiosk and broke the machine open with gas cutters after downing the shutters. Local traders said that the ATM had been loaded with a large amount of cash during the day. A local trader who closed his shop at 12 midnight said there was no sign of any untoward incident at the ATM when he left for home. However, the ATM was broken when traders opened their shops Tuesday morning.

They alerted the house owner who reached the spot and informed the Soro and Khantapada police stations. Police reached the spot and launched an investigation. A forensic team has also been pressed into service.

leisure



MIRREN URGES PEOPLE TO NOT FIGHT AGEING

Actress Helen Mirren has never thought about defying the ageing process because she'd rather lead a long and full life and enjoy each day as it comes. "I say celebrate it, don't fight it," she told Britain's *HELLO! Magazine*.

KIDS SHOULD NOT WORK, SAYS NATALIE PORTMAN

Actress Natalie Portman is against encouraging young people to become child actors. The Black Swan star, 42, launched her career at age 12 when she starred in the action film *Leon: The Professional* in 1994.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
If your work has anything to do with money, today you will be busy counting your riches. If you've applied for a loan, it may get sanctioned today. Look for variety, says Ganesh, and you may find your day filled with smiles and what not.

TAURUS
You are likely to be mentally alert and watchful today, says Ganesh. Creativity will run through your veins no matter what you attempt. You may dabble in performing arts, designing, graphics or special effects. Your charm will play Piper to the opposite gender today.

GEMINI
Your physical appearance and personal attitude will see a marked improvement today, predicts Ganesh. A well-groomed you will climb up the popularity chart among peers, friends and members of the opposite sex. You will keep people under your spell with your wit and wisdom both at the workplace and at social gatherings. Romance is also in the air.

CANCER
You will be firing all cylinders in the creativity department, says Ganesh. Even your colleagues may pitch in, and will give you new ideas to make your work better.

LEO
Karmic balance dictates an equitable distribution of joy and sorrow, says Ganesh. So if your day seems drab and depressing today, rest assured, your evening shall be all the more refreshing and exciting. Surround yourself with family and friends, as you will receive royal treatment from them.

VIRGO
Play dodge ball with prejudice today. Do not let intolerance find shelter in you today, advises Ganesh. Instead, chances are you will seek to find love, affection and goodwill among those around you. Stay away from negativity as it may bog you down.

LIBRA
Lights, camera, and action! Be prepared as the limelight is focused on you on this very motivating and inspiring day, enabling you to attract excellent public praise. Today is an encouraging day to set in motion innovative projects, especially for those who desire to be their own masters and embark upon fulfilling self-financed ideas.

SCORPIO
You are most likely to resent the dominating and overbearing nature of your partner today. Patience will probably go to the dumps in this case then. But Ganesh advises you to sit together and resolve all personality clashes and quarrels in view of the larger scheme of things.

SAGITTARIUS
Expect a call to late-night revelry and a chance to binge. But you don't seem to be in the mood to let your hair loose and party, says Ganesh. However tempting it may be, your serious side will take over and you shall deny the offer. No wonder they like that sensible head on your shoulders.

CAPRICORN
You will start the day with verve and vigour, and will appear a completely different person at work. There will be a discernible change in your way of working, especially in terms of the level of energy and concentration you will put in. The switch to the new strategy will better your performance considerably and will make you feel that it was a good change after all.

AQUARIUS
A productive day, as you will receive unrestrained support from your bosses and colleagues. Your creativity will reach its zenith and the resulting work will augment your reputation. The day will seem complete when you spend quality time with your family in the evening, says Ganesh.

PISCES
Happiness shared is double the joy; sorrows shared are half the burden. Your family is the foundation of your success, and it is to them you will turn in times of failure as well.

Suhana's way of relieving stress

Mumbai: Suhana Khan, daughter of Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan, is gearing up for her first film, *The Archies*, directed by Zoya Akhtar. She recently mentioned that she tends to overthink and described herself as an anxious person, sharing that working out helps her cope when she feels overwhelmed. During a recent chat with a news portal, when asked about the importance of staying mentally and physically healthy, Suhana responded by saying that for her, engaging in physical activities is more about the mind than the body. There are times when she's in a bad mood or anxious because she tends to worry a lot, especially about small things. She said, "Sometimes I'll be

in a really bad mood or anxious about something because I am a very anxious person and I worry a lot over small things. So when I go to the gym and I'm working out for that one hour, nothing else matters." *The Archies* portrays the escapades of well-known fictional teenagers like Archie Andrews, Jughead Jones, Betty Cooper, Veronica Lodge, and Reggie Mantle, as they experience love and friendship in the 1960s. United, they work together to protect their town, Riverdale, from developers aiming to demolish a cherished park.

AGENCIES

Kangana speaks to Indra's AI-version

New Delhi: Actress Kangana Ranaut, who will soon be seen portraying former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the biographical historical film *Emergency*, visited the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, here, and shared a glimpse of herself with the AI-created version of Indira.

Kangana attended the launch of light and sound show called *Veerangnaon ki Mahagatha*.

Taking to the social media, the Queen actress shared some pictures from her visit to the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya. In the pictures, Kangana can be seen sitting on a chair with AI-created version of Indira Gandhi. The actress captioned it as: "Was lovely chatting with IG he he he... (since I made a film on Mrs Gandhi, IG was our crew code name for her) #emergency".

The string of photos also shows Kangana posing with AI-created image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Kangana captioned the post as: "Today a terrific light and sound show called, 'Veerangnaon ki mahagatha' is launched in Delhi. What an incredible step in the revival of our great history and Shakti spirit."

"Also many chapters of the history unfolded before my eyes through various narratives, some through age old methods and some through futuristic techniques, a must visit for everyone," the post read.

Meanwhile, the upcoming movie *Emergency* is based on the Indian Emergency, and also features Anupam Kher, Shreyas Talpade, Mahima Chaudhry and Milind Soman in pivotal roles.



'No greater love than love for your country'

Mumbai: In *Ae Watan Mere Watan*, Sara Ali Khan portrays a character inspired by real-life freedom fighter Usha behen Mehta, although the character is not directly based on Usha behen Mehta. The makers emphasize staying true to the events surrounding the Quit India movement, but they admit to taking creative liberties to craft an engaging story.

Sara shared that there are so many freedom fighters who have not been given their due. "When we talk about due, we do not mean fame; we mean their ability to inspire generations, lead the country, lead themselves, and fight against the many challenges in our history," added the *Atrangi Re* actress.

She said, "I'm a history student, but I don't think I can name more than 25 freedom fighters even on a good

day. And there are many more, and the story of sacrifice takes many forms. Their sacrifice may not be physical, but it requires so much mental fortitude on a daily basis to fight for what you truly love."

Sara also shared that there is a qawwali in the film, and somebody asked her, "Qawwalis are usually a declaration of love, so how is this qawwali different in your film?" And she replied, "It is not. This is the epitome of love. No greater love than love for your country."

AGENCIES

SHWETAPADMA'S NATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL-2023



Members of Bhubaneswar-based drama troupe Shwetapadma presented Odia play *Manika Jodi* at Rabintra Mandap Monday, on the first evening of the three-day festival to commemorate its 10th Foundation Day. Written by Bhanja Kishore Pattnaik, the play was directed by Pradeep Biswal. OP PHOTO

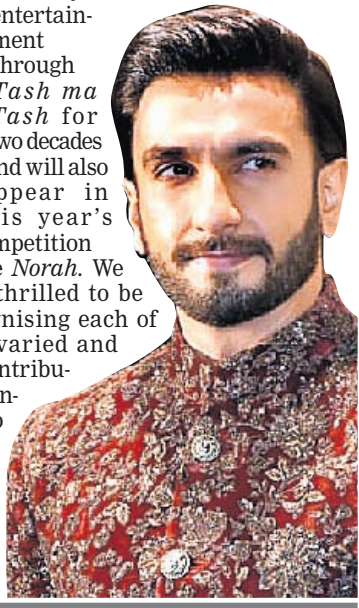
Ranveer to be honoured at Red Sea Int'l Film Festival

Mumbai: Actor Ranveer Singh will be receiving career honours at the upcoming Red Sea International Film Festival and will take place in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

This year's jury lineup includes Swedish-American actor Joel Kinnaman (of *Suicide Squad*); Freida Pinto (of *Slumdog Millionaire*); Egyptian actor Amina Khalil and Spain's Paz Vega.

Talking about this year's honours, Mohammed Al-Turki, CEO of the Red Sea Film Foundation, said in a statement, "This year we are honouring Ranveer Singh, an icon of Hindi cinema; Diane Kruger, who has delivered us a series of unforgettable characters from Helen of Troy to Tarantino's Bridget von Hammersmark and affected us with her powerhouse performance of the avenging Angel Katja in Fatih Akin's *In the Fade*; as well as the hugely beloved Abdullah Al-Sadhan who has been a mainstay of Saudi

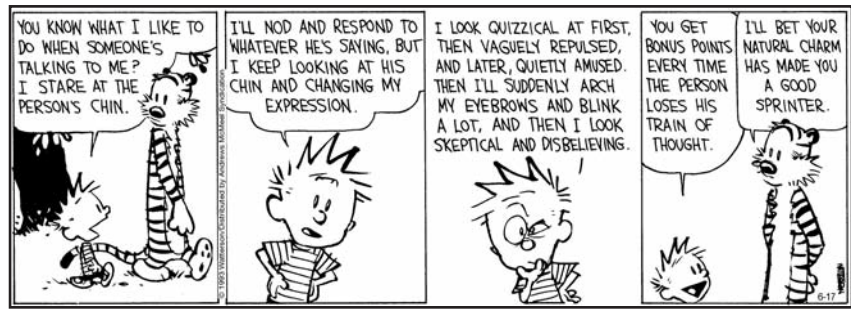
entertainment through *Tash ma Tash* for two decades and will also appear in this year's competition title *Norah*. We are thrilled to be recognising each of their varied and deep contributions to cinema and to have them with us for our third edition."



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

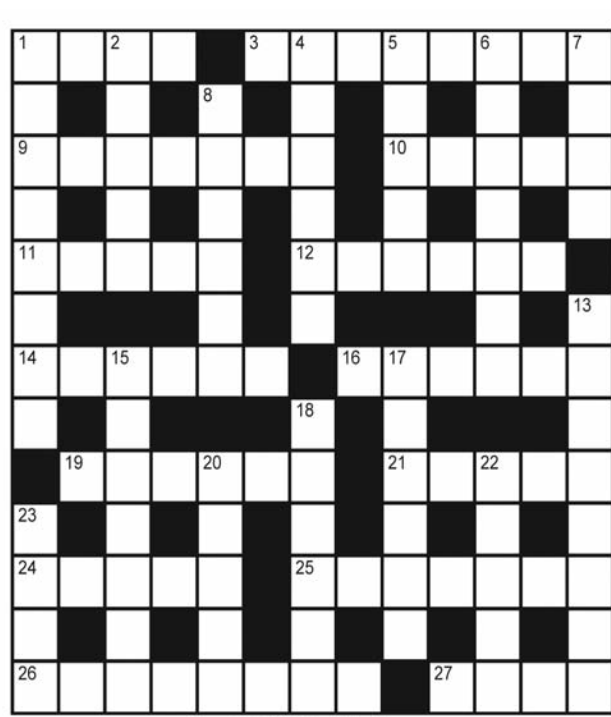


BREVITY



FUN post

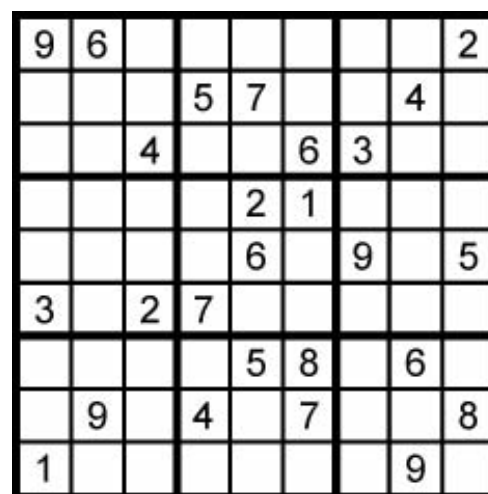
CROSSWORD



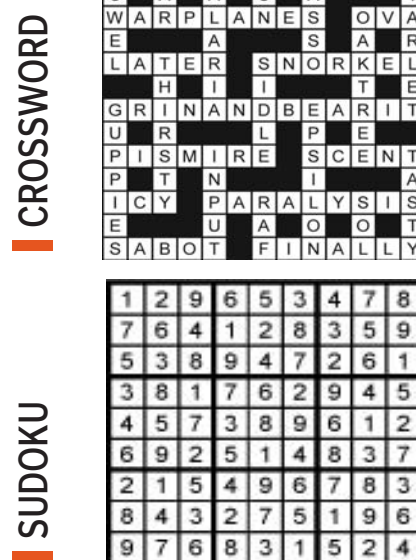
- Copyright ©2023 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Skirt style
 - 3 Impress, at sea
 - 9 Pasta dish
 - 10 Bird sound
 - 11 Playful water animal
 - 12 Ancient Egyptian city
 - 14 Funny bones
 - 16 Brown shade
 - 19 Cereal fruit
 - 21 Dyed fabric
 - 24 Hungarian wine
 - 25 Hair care item
 - 26 Sewing guides
 - 27 Myanmar cash
 - 6 Gigolo's target
 - 7 Capri, for one
 - 8 Regret
 - 13 Surveillance ploy
 - 15 Cold weather warmer
 - 17 Optimistic
 - 18 Concord
 - 20 Fashion
 - 22 Stewed
 - 23 Dance bit
- Down**
- 1 Clawed monkey
 - 2 Duffer's cavity
 - 4 Elevates
 - 5 Saltpetre

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Ratnabhandar laser scanning from today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Nov 27: In order to examine the structural stability of Srimandir Ratnabhandar, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is all set to carry out laser scanning of the outer wall of the temple treasury from Tuesday, an official said Monday.

According to sources, the ASI had sought the permission of Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) for carrying out laser scanning of Ratnabhandar. The temple body had November 4 allowed the Central agency to go ahead with its plan to carry out laser scanning after Kartika Purnima.

As the Pilgrim City witnesses a huge footfall of devotees due to the holy month of Kartika, the ASI was asked to start the laser scanning after Kartika Purnima



– November 28. The temple body had also asked the agency to carry out the procedure without causing any inconveniences to devotees visiting the 12th century shrine.

According to SJTA, apart from the outer Ratnabhandar, the central monument conservator will also carry out laser scanning of temples of subsidiary deities on the shrine complex.

“If required, laser scanning of the inner temple treasury may also be allowed. The temple and district administrations will provide necessary cooperation to

the ASI for smooth completion of laser scanning,” the temple body had said.

It is worth mentioning that following directives of the Orissa High Court, a 17-member team had visited the 12th century shrine for inspecting the structural stability of the temple treasury. However, the team had to return only after examining the walls of the outer Ratnabhandar as they could not enter the inner chambers due to the unavailability of keys.

In its report, the team had observed that the outer walls were damp and had multiple deep cracks. Later, following the HC direction, a high-level committee, under the Chief Administrator, was formed November 4. The committee decided to carry out laser scanning of the temple treasury from November 28.



MAKING A POINT: Dharitri and Orissa POST Editor Tathagata Satpathy speaks during the second day of Chudanga Gada Barang Mahotsav 2023, organised at Barang, on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, Monday

Govt doc held for taking ₹5K bribe

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Nov 27: Vigilance sleuths Monday arrested a government doctor in Subarnapur on charges of demanding and receiving ₹5,500 bribe to perform a cataract surgery.

“Dr. Sanjib Kumar Kar, an ophthalmologist at the district headquarters hospital (DHH) in Subarnapur, has been taken into custody after he was caught taking a bribe of ₹5,500 from the complainant for conducting cataract surgery on the latter’s uncle,” said a Vigilance source.

Although cataract surgeries are conducted free-of-cost in state-run facilities across Odisha, Kar had been demanding bribe from several patients for the procedure, sources added.

“Expressing inability to pay the bribe, the complainant requested Kar on multiple occasions to conduct the cataract surgery on his uncle, an ailing octogenarian. The ophthalmologist, however, kept demanding the bribe for the procedure,” said the official.

Based on the complaint, a trap was laid by plain-cloth Vigilance sleuths at the office of the doctor. Kar was caught red handed while accepting the demanded bribe of ₹5,500 from the complainant, said the official, adding that the money was seized in presence of witnesses.

“Soon afterwards, simultaneous searches were launched at the residential house of Kar at Bolangir town, government quarters on the DHH premises in Subarnapur and his clinic in Kalapathar area of Subarnapur. Further, ₹2,06,440 cash was recovered during searches at his residential locations in Sonepur and Bolangir, which he could not account for satisfactorily,” said the Vigilance Directorate in Cuttack.

Murmu: Need to further strengthen ports’ infra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paradip, Nov 27: President Droupadi Murmu Monday said there is a need to further strengthen infrastructure of ports in the country and increase their efficiency.

Murmu said this while gracing the ‘Boita Bandana’ (boat worship) ceremony, organised by the Paradip Port Authority here. Boita Bandana is an annual festival observed in Odisha, remembering the ancient maritime glory of the state, earlier known as ‘Kalinga’.

Stating that the government’s Sagarmala programme is a commendable step to strengthen port activities, Murmu said the Government of India is working to realise the vision of ‘Ports for Prosperity’ and ‘Ports for Progress’.

The President said that maritime trade has been playing an important role in the trade and economic development of the country. “I am told that 95 per cent of India’s total trade in terms of volume and 65 per cent in terms of value are done through sea transport,” she said.

Stating that India’s ports need to function with greater efficiency in line with global standards, she said, “That is why there is a need to further strengthen the infrastructure of Indian ports and increase their efficiency.”

The President said that historic Baliyatra is a symbolic boat trip of merchants to the islands of Java, Sumatra and Bali. Baliyatra is a unique festival celebrated in memory of Odisha’s glorious past.

“Celebrated since time immemorial, this festival is a symbol of the prosperity of maritime trade of Odisha. It also highlights the rich cultural consciousness of the people of Odisha,” Murmu said.

Noting that the sea has been a major means of strengthening India’s trade, commerce and international relations, the President said that lit-



erature based on the sea has also enriched Indian culture.

Murmu said Odisha and other coastal states had a long and prosperous tradition of naval commerce. Apart from trade and commerce, those merchants also played an important role in spreading Indian art and culture abroad, the President pointed out.

The President expressed her pleasure that Paradip Port’s cargo handling capacity has doubled in the last decade. It is poised to become the largest port on the East Coast, she said, adding that it also got the ‘Port of Operational Excellence Award’ at the Global Maritime India Summit – 2023.

Murmu also inaugurated the Multi-Modal Logistics Park which she hoped will give a new direction to the transparent development of trade.

She said that the Vessel Traffic Management and Information System (VTMIS) enabled new modern signal stations will make navigation through this port safer and orderly.

Odisha Governor Raghuraj Das and Union minister Bishweswar Tudu joined the event. Murmu also flagged off a special boat at the event, commemorating the state’s ancient maritime glory. The president also boarded a special vessel ‘Amogh’ of the Indian Coast Guard.

The President inspected port craft and met members of the fishing community.

This is Murmu’s second visit to Odisha in a week after spending three days in her home district Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur from November 20.

Miniature boats, firecrackers mark Kartika Purnima

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: People of all ages flocked river fronts and other water bodies on Kartika Purnima, Monday, and celebrated the occasion by floating miniature boats and bursting firecrackers to commemorate the ancient maritime history of Kalinga.

The festival is known as ‘Boita Bandana’ (worship of boat) and is celebrated on a full moon night in the month of Kartika.

Huge congregations of women and children were witnessed at the Bindu Sagar tank near Shree Lingaraj Temple and banks of Kuakhai river in Bhubaneswar; at Gadagadia ghat on Mahanadi river in Cuttack as well as ponds in different places across the state.

The festival is also celebrated at the 12th century Shree Jagannath temple in Puri, where the sibling deities – Lord Jagannath, Goddess Subhadra and Lord

“Every year, I get up early and go to Kuakhai river to float miniature boats and celebrate our rich maritime tradition. My family continues to use the traditional boats made up of banana stems and coconut sticks”

PRIYANKA NANDA, BHUBANESWAR RESIDENT

Balabhadra – are adorned in golden attire in a ritual known as ‘Raja Rajeswar Bhsha’.

Expecting a huge rush of devotees at the shrine, the temple administration kept open the temple for darshan the entire night Sunday, an official of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) said.

Tight security and traffic management steps were taken near major water bodies here and in Cuttack where a large number of people gathered since the early morning hours. Governor Raghuraj Das, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Union

Minister Dharmendra Pradhan greeted the people of the state on the occasion.

The festival celebrates the ancient maritime history of Kalinga, the old name of Odisha, when traders, then called ‘Sadhbas’ used to embark on voyages to islands in south-east Asia like Java, Sumatra and Bali for business. Their family members are said to have performed ‘Boita Bandana’ by floating small boats for their safe return. The practice continues to this day. While the people of yore used banana stems and coconut timber; a majority of the boats now are made of paper and thermocol and carry lighted lamps, betel leaves, flowers, milk and coins. Prayers are offered to keep the mariners safe during their voyage. “Every year, I get up early and go to Kuakhai river to float miniature boats and celebrate our rich maritime tradition. My family continues to use the traditional boats made up of banana stems and coconut sticks,” said Priyanka Nanda, a Bhubaneswar resident.

NANI PALKHIVALA MEMORIAL CONCLAVE

Ink of Kesavananda Bharati judgement may fade, words won’t: Justice Datta

The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences (NUJS) in Kolkata hosted the Nani A Palkhivala Memorial Conclave, supported by the Tata Group.

The event consisted of a constitutional law quiz competition and an essay presentation on the ‘Scope and Formulation of Judicial Review and Promulgation of Ordinances’.

The Chief Guest’s Address was delivered by Justice Dipankar Datta, Judge of the Supreme Court of India, who remembered Nani Palkhivala as one of the ‘foremost thinkers of modern India’ and added that his impact had gone much beyond the legal sphere, reported Live Law, one of India’s leading legal news portals.

Justice Datta evaluated the essays and observed that some lacked clarity on the understanding of the basic structure doctrine. He delivered a detailed explanation of the critical importance of the doctrine, and explained its role in the Indian Constitution.



Palkhivala’s contribution as the petitioner’s counsel in the landmark case of Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala (1973) which cemented the basic structure doctrine within the Indian Constitution and made it a part of the country’s Constitutional identity.

On the relationship between parliamentary supremacy and the basic structure doctrine, Justice Datta pointed out, “No one would accept, with grace, the curtailment of power of the institution to which they belong. As Frederick Douglas had said, power concedes nothing without a demand, it never did, and it never will. Lawmakers must realise that they cannot fundamentally alter the tenets of the

Constitution. Articles 141 and 144 must be followed. As Nani Palkhivala would have placed it, the Constitution is not a jellyfish, it cannot lose its identity in the process of amendment.”

Justice Datta signed off by advising the young lawyers to make informed decisions and recalled the memory of Justice Hans Raj Khanna, another architect of the basic structure doctrine, by observing that no generation had a monopoly on wisdom. “No one knows what the future holds, the rigidity of reality may pale in front of it. The onus is on us to take the spirit of Kesavananda Bharati forward. The ink of the judgement may fade, but the words will not,” he concluded.

Other speakers included Senior Advocate & ex-West Bengal Advocate General S.N. Mookherjee, Senior Advocate & Solicitor Jamsheed P. Cama, Prof(Dr) N.K. Chakrabarti, Vice Chancellor, NUJS, Swati Kapadia, CEO, Nani A Palkhivala Memorial Trust, and Mr Siddharth Sharma, General Counsel, Tata Group.

Advertisement for Utkal FAB FEST 23 BHUBANESWAR FABRICATION SYMPOSIUM. The event is held from 28th to 30th November 2023 at O-Hub. The agenda includes an exhibition by student innovators on 28.11.2023, a keynote address by Dr. Omkar Rai on 29.11.2023, and a visit to handicraft clusters on 30.11.2023. The event is organized by FAB FOUNDATION in collaboration with THE CENTER FOR BITS AND ATOMS and Startup Odisha. Participation is by invitation only.

OIPR-43001/13/0016/2324

Odisha Pavilion bags gold at IITF



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: Odisha Pavilion bagged the first position for 'Excellence in Display' and received gold medal at India International Trade Fair (IITF) that was being held at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. The trade fair that began November 14 concluded Monday.

This is a big recognition for Odisha's rich art, craft, tribal culture, heritage and new-age success stories at national and global forums.

As per a statement issued by the Odisha government, the state's pavilion at IITF features a strong representation from tribal groups and a major highlight of the exhibition was active participation

Odisha's date palm jiggery - 'Talgur' - drew the attention of visitors and guests at Odisha Pavilion

The visitors also had the opportunity to have a thorough look at brick-coloured terracotta artefact models, reflecting India's rural culture

of women who are at the forefront of the entire production process. "Embracing the theme, 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: United by Trade', the Odisha pavilion embodies the spirit of 'Unity through Trade'. This underscores the state's commitment to fostering a collaborative environment where trade serves as a bridge between diverse cultures and communities, includ-

ing representation of tribal groups at the fair," the statement said.

The IITF is one of the biggest trade fairs in the country, attracting thousands of domestic and foreign exhibitors to showcase their unique products, services and initiatives.

State Public Enterprises Minister Ashok Chandra Panda inaugurated the state's pavilion at the 42nd edition of the India International Trade Fair (IITF) in the national capital November 14. At IITF-2023, the Odisha pavilion showcased local products made by rural women artisans in line with Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's vision to empower women and rural entrepreneurs.

Odisha's date palm jiggery - 'Talgur' - drew the attention of visitors and guests at Odisha Pavilion. Made with date palm nectar collected before sunrise by local farmers, this organically produced natural sweetener has got many buyers.

The visitors also had the opportunity to have a detailed look at brick-coloured terracotta artefact models, reflecting India's rural culture. This year, the state pavilion showcased stalls, famous handloom outlets and government departments.



FETE BEGINS: People in large numbers throng the Baliyatra Ground in Cuttack on the first day of the eight-day-long open air trade fair, Monday. PIC: RAIKISHORE MOHANTY

8-day long Baliyatra kicks off in Cuttack

AGENCIES

Cuttack, Nov 27: The historic Baliyatra got off to a colourful start in Cuttack Monday evening.

Finance Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha, in the presence of local MPs and MLAs, inaugurated the eight-day festival at Gadagadia Ghat on the bank of Mahanadi river, adjacent to the 10th-century Barabati Fort ruins.

Spread over more than 20 acres, the two fairgrounds have housed more than 2,000

makeshift stalls, officials said. Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) has allotted nearly 450 stalls to beneficiaries of self-employment schemes.

Rural producers and artisans have packed their stalls with ethnic items, ranging from products made of golden grass and terracotta to wooden and bamboo items.

The fair, which will continue till December 4, is also famous for its food stalls. On the inaugural day, revellers were seen crowding stalls selling 'Thunka

Puri' and 'Dahi Bara'. Rides such as swings, merry-go-rounds and giant wheels were seen attracting youth and children in large numbers.

While the district administration and the civic body have made arrangements to keep the fairgrounds garbage-free, a ban has been imposed on polythene.

Police said they have made elaborate arrangements to maintain law and order, besides managing traffic on the roads leading to the fairgrounds. Anti-sabotage, anti-terror-

ist and quick reaction forces (QRF) have also been deployed at the festival grounds. Elaborate fire-fighting arrangements have also been made.

Cuttack DCP Pinak Mishra said 25 aid posts have been set up at different places on the fairgrounds to assist visitors. Special arrangements have been made for senior citizens, women and children at the grounds, he said.

A total of 60 platoons of police forces (one platoon comprises 30 personnel) have been deployed, he added.

Utkal Fab Fest 2023 to start today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: Startup Odisha, an initiative of state MSME department, is all set to host Utkal Fab Fest 2023 Tuesday. Utkal Fab Fest is a unique and pivotal symposium that aims to integrate Odisha into the coveted international fab lab network and develop a state-of-the-art regional world class all-inclusive Fab City.

It is a pioneering initiative for understanding the international standards and advancements in the global Fab community and introduction to the

varied Fab needs of Odisha ecosystem stakeholders.

Startup Odisha is providing Odisha-based artisans, startups, ecosystem partners, universities, R&D centres, COEs, and existing fab labs an excellent opportunity to gain invaluable access to essential knowledge on the cutting-edge fabrication technologies and digital fabrication.

In pursuit of this vision, Startup Odisha has meticulously planned workshops to be conducted by the Fab Foundation and Fab City Foundation team. These workshops aim to sensitise the stakeholders by intro-



ducing them to the latest concepts, trends and advancements in digital fabrication.

Executive chairman of Startup Odisha Omkar Rai will kick off the proceedings with a keynote address. Delegates from international fab community will provide a comprehensive introduction to the Fab Foundation

and Fab City Foundation. Workshops on ecosystem mapping and co-creation shall add a practical dimension to the theoretical discourse.

Rai said, "Startup Odisha is looking forward to welcoming delegates from the Fab Foundation and Fab City Foundation. We are particularly excited about the collaborative efforts going ahead to pave the way for dynamic growth of startup ecosystem through transformative power of digital fabrication, integration with the global fab network combined with cutting-edge technologies."

Policy on cards to strengthen critical minerals' supply chain

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Nov 27: The Ministry of Mines will soon come up with a policy to strengthen the supply chain of critical minerals like lithium, cobalt and titanium, an official said, Monday.

According to the official, the ministry has also been preparing a strategy for recycling of metals.

"The strategy will help augment the recycling capability and streamline the recycling

process. It will also go a long way in helping the ministry to work with partner countries in co-developing mineral processing and raw material manufacturing capabilities," said the official, adding that the strategy will identify the responsibilities of different central ministries in ensuring the resilience of the supply chain of critical minerals.

Apart from strengthening the domestic mechanisms, collaborative international efforts through multilateral and bi-

lateral engagements have been made to build a resilient critical minerals value chain, the official said.

Significantly, the Centre has already amended the MMDR Act giving power to auction 24 identified critical minerals to the Union government.

Further, to boost exploration, a provision has also been made for a new mineral concession mainly exploration license exclusively for the identified critical minerals, including some deep-seated minerals.

Garg reviews Drain-10, Lake Neutral revival

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: Development Commissioner-Cum-Additional Chief Secretary, Water Resources, Anu Garg Monday visited Drain-10 near Nicco Park and reviewed the work of reviving waterbodies. She was briefed about the transformation initiatives at Lake Neutral being carried out under MUKTA scheme involving self-help groups (SHGs).

BDA vice chairman Balwant Singh and BMC Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange explained her about different activities undertaken there.

Waterbodies in cities and their outskirts are an important form of surface water that play a vital role in maintaining balance in the ecosystem. However, maintenance of these waterbodies through the existing artificial treatments is not sustainable solution to restore the waterbodies. Hence, the state government has taken up initiatives to rejuvenate waterbodies in more natural way by adopting sustainable and long-lasting solutions.

This intervention will help check pollution at the source level, conserve stormwater, increase groundwater recharge, improve catchment area and address water scarcity and urban flooding in long run.

In the pilot stage, it is proposed to revive the drain & lake no-10 located at ward number 36 near Nicco Park here at a cost of around Rs 1.85 crore. The entire project will be executed by 16 Mission Shakti SHGs of ward no-28, 35 & 36 under MUKTA programme.

UU committed to excellence: Acharya

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: A commitment to excellence coupled with progressive thinking will help the university continue the trend of educational change, said Utkal University vice chancellor Sabita Acharya at the university's 81st Foundation Day celebrations here Monday.

"The university is 81 years old and the next 19 years will be more successful and transformative for the institution. It will persist in its commitment to complete 100 years while maintaining its uniqueness and integrity," said Acharya, adding that this commitment will shape the next generation of research



and innovation. Acharya emphasised that science and research have taken priority at the university as they promote interpersonal cooperation between humans and societies. "A good and comprehensive education is one that guides both science and humanity. It not only bridges knowledge

but also explores the cognitive complexity of our interconnected global society," she said. "The university will promote researchers and advance the frontiers of knowledge," she said, assuring that the university will work in the direction as prescribed by the new education policy. Former vice chancellor of

Ravenshaw University Prakash Sarangi joined the event as the keynote speaker and addressed the gathering about reinvention of individuals and institutions, among other matters like artificial intelligence, deep fakes, and use of new technology in teaching and development of creative knowledge.

PG Council chairman Navaneta Rath welcomed the guests while registrar Kahnu Charan Dhir presented the annual report of the university. Student welfare director Mitali Chinara gave the vote of thanks. At the event, prizes were distributed to students who had won various competitions organised by the university.

KARTIKA PURNIMA CELEBRATED AT NEXUS ESPLANADE IN CITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: To commemorate the old tradition of 'Boita Bandana,' on Kartika Purnima, visitors and staff at Nexus Esplanade floated miniature boats in an eco-pond created on the mall premises here Monday.

Keeping up with the festive mood, Nexus Esplanade has decorated the City mall for Kartika Purnima and has come up with a 'box setup' at the mall to give the visitors an experience of the ancient journey to Bali.

The mall has been organising engagement activities and workshops to celebrate the journey to Bali. To make the festiv-



ities more memorable, Esplanade organised an origami workshop November 26 with participation of Sampad Mohapatra (renowned origami and storyteller). "A beautiful blend of cultural history and the art of paper folding, fused with the magic of storytelling, gave birth to a unique process of boat-making that the mall visitors took part in," said a mall official.

Bacteria store memories and pass them on: Study

Bacteria can create memories about when to form strategies that can cause dangerous infections in people, such as resistance to antibiotics, a study has found.

Researchers at the University of Texas at Austin (UT) in the US said these strategies also help bacteria to form swarms when millions of these microorganisms come together on a single surface.

The finding, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, has potential applications for preventing and combatting bacterial infections and addressing antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

The discovery relates to a common chemical element bac-

terial cells can use to form and pass along these memories to their progeny over later generations, the researchers said.

They found that E Coli bacteria use iron levels as a way to store information about different behaviours that can then be activated in response to certain stimuli.

"Bacteria don't have brains, but they can gather information from their environment, and if they have encountered that environment frequently, they can store that information and quickly access it later for their benefit," said Souvik Bhattacharyya, the lead author and a provost early career fellow at UT.

The researchers noted that it all comes back to iron, one of



the most abundant elements on Earth. Singular and free-floating bacteria have varying levels of iron.

They observed that bacterial cells with lower levels of iron were better swimmers. In contrast, bacteria that

Researchers found that E Coli bacteria use iron levels as a way to store information about different behaviours that can then be activated in response to certain stimuli

These iron memories persist for at least four generations and disappear by the seventh generation, according to the researchers

They noted that it all comes down to iron. Singular and free-floating bacteria have varying levels of iron

contrast, bacteria that formed biofilms, dense, sticky mats of bacteria on solid surfaces, had high levels of iron in their cells

disappear by the seventh generation, according to the researchers.

"Before there was oxygen in the Earth's atmosphere, early cellular life was utilising iron for a lot of cellular processes. Iron is not only critical in the ori-

gin of life on Earth, but also in the evolution of life," Bhattacharyya said.

"It makes sense that cells would utilise it in this way," he added.

Researchers theorise that when iron levels are low, bacterial memories are triggered to form a fast-moving migratory swarm to seek out iron in the environment.

When iron levels are high, memories indicate this environment is a good place to stick around and form a biofilm.

"Iron levels are definitely a target for therapeutics because iron is an important factor in virulence. Ultimately, the more we know about bacterial behaviour, the easier it is to combat them," Bhattacharyya added.

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Rourkela-Puri Vande Bharat pelted with stones; none hurt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: Rourkela-Puri Vande Bharat Express has been pelted with stones, the East Coast Railway (ECoR) said in a statement Monday.

However, no injuries were reported in the incident that took place between Meramandali and Budhapank stations in Dhenkanal-Angul railway section Sunday night, it said.

“Train number 20835 Vande Bharat Express has been targeted by some stone-pelters between Meramandali and Budhapank in the Dhenkanal-Angul railway section of the Bhubaneswar-Sambalpur rail line,” the statement read.

A windowpane of an executive class coach was damaged and the train reached Puri with a delay of 13 minutes, a railway official said.

The incident was reported by an official of the Railway

Protection Force (RPF), he said. RPF’s Assistant Security Commissioner from Cuttack has been rushed to the spot.

The security wing of ECoR has taken the matter seriously and has alerted the RPF and the Government Railway Police (GRP), he said.

Local police have also been informed about the matter and strict action will be taken against the stone-pelters, the official said.

The security wing of the ECoR, in coordination with local police, is on the job to trace the culprits, he said.

The ECoR is consistently undertaking drives to make people aware, especially those residing near railway tracks, not to throw stones at trains, the official said.

Similar incidents of pelting Vande Bharat Express trains with stones had earlier been reported from various parts of the country.



FASTEST FERRY FIRST: Participants row their boats at a state level boat race competition on the theme of ‘Clean, Green and Healthy Mahanadi’ organised by Bhagabata Pathagar in Sonepur on the occasion of Kartika Purnima, Monday

Man’s body found; father cries murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, Nov 27: Town police here recovered the body of a youth from the river side near Narayani temple in this town Monday.

The deceased was identified as Baikunth Meher, 46, son of Abhimanyu Meher of Mochisahi here. While the deceased’s wife said that Baikunth committed suicide by consuming poison, his father has alleged that his son has been murdered and lodged a complaint at Town police station in this regard.

As per the complaint, after death of his first wife, Baikunth had married Rasmita Meher, a married woman of Katipadar area under Junagarh block in Kalahandi district, 20 years ago. Rasmita already had a son and later gave birth to two more boys.

Sources said that everything wasn’t well between Abhimanyu and Rasmita. They often quarreled with each other. Their relationship turned sour after Rasmita allegedly developed an extra-marital affair with another married man of Tikabali area.

Abhimanyu alleged that Rasmita’s extra-marital partner and his sons had given life threats to Baikunth many times earlier. He also alleged that they assaulted Baikunth November 26 and he did not return home after that. His body was found lying on the bank of the river near Narayani temple Monday.

Acting on the complaint, police reached the spot, seized the body and sent it to district headquarters hospital (DHH) at Phulbani for post-mortem. The exact reason of the death will be ascertained after the post-mortem report is received, said Phulbani Town PS IIC Kanak Kumar Majhi.

JAJPUR-KEONJHAR ROAD RLY STN

₹81.78cr funds may return as flyover remains a non-starter

The railway line in Vyasanagar municipality area divides the town into two halves

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Nov 27: Fear over return of ₹81.78 crore sanctioned for construction of a flyover bridge on Jajpur-Keonjhar Road railway station has deepened as the project has remained a non-starter despite sanction of funds.

Locals apprehend that the inordinate delay in construction by the district administration may result in return of the fund sanctioned by the Railways.

The fear is not unfounded as the plan for construction of a flyover bridge and limited height subway (LHS) at the railway gate near a temple of the railway station has received approval over a year back.

However, as the district administration is not taking any steps for construction of the bridge, the Railways may take back the funds.

Moreover, demands for renaming of the station as New Vyasanagar railway station, halting of all express and superfast trains, and expansion of the foot over-bridge till the railway station front, shifting of the goods shed and opening of a ticket counter towards Malgoadown are yet to be realised.

Reports said the railway line in Vyasanagar municipality area divides the town into two halves. The main town is north-east of the railway line while the hospital, Kendriya Vidyalaya, NC High School, veterinary hospital, girls’ high school and Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir are located on the other side.



Vyasanagar Municipality area is a bustling town close to Kalinganagar industrial hub and has several settlements like Ganesh Bazaar, New Market, Jhatiasahi, Mahatab Nagar, Goshala, Kopand, Mundomal, Khandahata and Benupur.

The level crossing has become a bane for the residents as the railway line which passes through the middle of the town does not have a flyover or LHS. Local residents have demanded for construction of a flyover bridge or LHS several times in past. They have even filed public interest litigations (PIL) in the Orissa High Court but their demands are yet to be fulfilled.

The gate often remains closed when a train has to pass on the railway line. As a result, students in a hurry to reach their schools and colleges, office goers, traders and patients travelling in ambulances had to remain stranded outside the gate for long hours.

The Railways sanctioned the

above funds for construction of a flyover near the railway gate no-142 and an underpass under the railway line on public-private partnership mode after an order of the Orissa High Court pronounced while hearing a PIL-14425/14 filed by advocate Jeetendra Pratihari.

It was expected that work on the project will start after the plans are approved. However, it has got delayed as the district administration is yet to make any move.

A delegation of residents under the aegis of Vyasanagar Citizen Committee met the senior deputy finance manager Himanshu Bhushan Biswal of Khurda Road railways division and held discussions in May.

Biswal informed them that the project will surely be implemented but is dependent on the cooperation of the state government. They have even drawn the attention of the public representative. Since then, six months have passed but the project is yet to be implemented.

Youth drowns while floating boat in canal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Talcher, Nov 27: A youth drowned in Samal right canal here in Angul district while floating a paper boat in the water body on the occasion of Kartika Purnima, Monday.

The deceased was identified as Ashis Kumar Sahoo, 22, an employee of a private finance firm in Chasaguruja village under Pallahara block of Angul district.

Sources said, Ashis was staying at his maternal uncle’s house since his childhood. The incident occurred when he went to the canal to float boats with some of his friends in the village.

He was trying to float a boat when he accidentally slipped his legs and went inside deep water and drowned.

Locals rescued and rushed him to the Mandapal hospital where doctors pronounced him dead. On being informed, Talcher police reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem to the Talcher sub-divisional hospital. A case was registered in this connection.

Sexagenarian jumps in front of train, dies

Rupsa: A 63-year-old man died after being ran over by a train at Gatebazar railway crossing of Amarda road railway station under South-East Railway zone’s Kharagpur division Monday. The deceased was identified as Kanhu Charan Gochhayat of Bhandipur village under Natakata panchayat and Basta police limits in Balasore district. As per reports, Kanhu Charan sold dried fish in weekly markets in nearby villages.

Monday afternoon, he jumped in front of a speeding train at the railway crossing and died on the spot. The exact reason behind the suicide has not yet been ascertained. Informed, Balasore GRP reached the spot and seized the body.

Pandian visits Tara Tarini shrine after joining BJD



PNN & AGENCIES

Berhampur, Nov 27: After formally joining the ruling BJD Monday, former bureaucrat VK Pandian visited Maa Tara Tarini temple, one of the famous Shakti shrines in Ganjam district, and performed a puja.

The 49-year-old new generation leader, chairman of 5T (transformational initiative) and Nabin Odisha programme, also visited Srimandir in Puri before formally joining the BJD.

Hundreds of party functionaries and supporters, Aska MP Pramila Bisoi, Berhampur Mayor Sanghamitra Dalei and a number of MLAs thronged the Tara Tarini temple to welcome Pandian into the party fold. He was accompanied by the party’s organising secretary Pranab Prakash Das and some other legislators.

Maa Tara Tarini, the twin goddesses, are the presiding deities of Ganjam. Pandian is attached to the temple since his days as the district collector of Ganjam from 2007 to 2011. He joined as the private secretary to the chief minister in 2011 and worked for 12 years till he retired from government service October 23, 2023.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also visits the Shakti shrine every time before filing nominations from Hinjili Assembly constituency.

“He is one of the devotees of Maa Tara Tarini and visits the place very frequently. Like other days, he also visited today and spent around 15 minutes to perform rituals and seeking blessings of the Goddess,” said a priest of the temple.

Maa Tara Tarini temple development was the state government’s initiative for transformation of pilgrims’ amenities in temples under Pandian’s supervision. The transformation work that started in the shrine has been taken up across the state in several other temples, said R Ch Chaupatnaik, former MLA (Berhampur), and party’s Ganjam district president.

The renovation of the 500-year-old temple was done with an investment of around ₹117 crore. An attractive main gate (singhadwara), a yajna mandap, bathing hall, diya house, view point, administrative building, mundan (tonsuring) hall, which are included in the renovation scheme, were inaugurated by the chief minister in May last year.

During his visit to Puri earlier in the day, Pandian directed authorities to complete the work of the Heritage Corridor Project by December 15. He also advised the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) and the Puri district administration to have a proper mechanism for crowd management at the 12th century shrine.

Major tourist destinations in Sundargarh getting a makeover

KHANDADHAR WATERFALL AND VEDVYAS, A POPULAR SHAIVITE SHRINE, NEAR ROURKELA, ARE BEING REVAMPED AT PRESENT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Nov 27: Things are moving in a positive direction to realise Sundargarh district’s tourism potential. Major tourist destinations of the district are being upgraded and plans are afoot to also develop some new spots.

At present, the 244-metre high Khandadhar waterfall, and Vedvyas, a popular Shaivite shrine situated at the confluence of three rivers near Rourkela, are being revamped to make them more attractive for tourists with addition of various provisions and amenities for them.

Khandadhar has already become an eco-tourism spot with ten cottages facing the Korpani stream, which forms the horse tail-like waterfall. The



cottages, both AC and non-AC, remain full almost throughout the year. Besides, there are provisions for adventure sports like hiking and cycling. A beautiful park has been developed for the picnickers who throng there during winter with ample space for parking and other facilities.

Similarly, Vedvyas will be developed in two phases. In the first phase, after the visit of the Chairman, 5T VK

Pandian, ₹35 crore has been sanctioned for the entire developmental project. Out of that, ₹14 crore has been released. The place will have all the facilities that a religious tourist requires.

Meanwhile, the tourism office here has sent a proposal for development of another place, the Akshaya Sila near Bisra. It has a small waterfall and also some rocky features nearby. Speaking about the spot, the tourist officer here Niranjan Behera said, “We have sent a proposal to the government to develop it as this place has potential.”


Regarding the status of the project after the letter, he said, “There is a positive response in this regard. Once we receive a green signal we will go ahead with preparing a project report. I am sure there will be a positive response in this regard.”

Prasant Das, a resident of Bisra, reacting to this said, “If this happens then it will be a boon for the entire Bisra area. In fact, Akshaya Sila is already drawing picnickers and tourists and with all the development coming in once the government approves this, then it will be another popular destination the district has to offer.”

Advertisement for Chola CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED. Includes details about E-Auction Sale Notice for the Sale of Immovable Assets under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

“To stand for the Truth in all circumstances, to declare it if necessary in the teeth of the worst opposition and to be ready to all you can for its sake, is the definition of heroism.”

THE MOTHER



Now, Netherlands

To the ever lengthening list of Far-Right parties forming governments or coming within striking distance of capturing power in one European country after another is added the resounding victory of the Party for Freedom (PVV) led by Geert Wilders of the Netherlands. It has won 37 of the 150 seats in the Dutch Parliament. If the number appears to be far too short of a simple majority, that is misleading since the incumbent party led by Prime Minister Mark Rutte got less number of seats when it formed a coalition government the last time. The poll dynamics in the Netherlands is such that the party winning more seats than any other rival, however small the number is, is in a position to forge a coalition and form government. That represents the danger to liberal and established parties in the Netherlands and across Europe. The victory of Wilders is an alarming continuation of a recent trend in democracies that have seen populist, Far-Right parties flourish and traditional parties decline.

National-conservative or Far-Right parties are already in power, on their own strength or in coalition, in Italy, Sweden, Hungary and Slovakia. They are rising in the polls in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Belgium and France.

No Dutch party with Far-Right leanings had ever secured more than 20 per cent of the vote in a national election. In Europe's political landscape, it is an achievement for any party to cross that threshold. Yet Geert Wilders' PVV has accomplished the feat with ease. That marks a grave threat in European politics with the potential to spill over to other continents as well.

The danger that Wilders poses is his aggressive campaign on a nakedly Islamophobic manifesto, which called for bans on mosques and the Quran. He has won a quarter of the vote. His party's tally is 12 more than its closest rival and nearly double its own in the last election. The PVV's political agenda has all the ingredients of Far-Right politics - rejecting all asylum claims, drastically reducing overall levels of immigration, rolling back climate legislation and holding a referendum on leaving the European Union. The party is also opposed to sending more arms to Ukraine.

As he attempts to cobble up a coalition-government he is expected to follow the pattern of Far-Right parties in other countries falling far short of the required number in their bid to capture power. The easy route is to tone down for the time being the extreme Rightist rhetoric as a tactical move to gain acceptance by probable coalition partners that are allergic to any downright ultra-Right political agenda. Already, Wilders has started talking about putting on hold his electoral pledges of shutting mosques and banning the Quran. Such a climbdown is caused by the likelihood of an alternative Centrist coalition being formed excluding the PVV from power altogether. As hectic behind-the-scenes activities are on, it appears that the two main Centre-Right parties, including Rutte's People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), are giving a thought to clinching such a deal.

One reason for Wilders getting political legitimacy in the form of winning the highest number of seats seems to be the decision of mainstream parties on the Right, including the VVD, to endorse his anti-migrant agenda. That was a mistake to play second fiddle to Wilders on this issue. The voters seem to have preferred the original party that talked against migrants to the ones that copied the original. The poll results confirm it. Dilan Yesilgöz, the Dutch justice minister who succeeded Rutte as leader of the liberal VVD party, saw fit to position herself further to the Right than the outgoing Prime Minister and let immigration dominate the electoral debate. In the process the VVD lost 10 seats, down from 34 to 24.

The main reason for Wilders' success is the acute crisis of trust of the electorate in traditional politics. In one survey this autumn, 72 per cent of respondents said that they believed the country was on the wrong path. Another poll found a "worrisome" level of dissatisfaction on the Right with the functioning of democracy. The failure of the established political parties - Left, Right and Centre - to deliver is fuelling the growth of hate-filled Far-Right politics.

Unless liberal, democratic parties immediately get their act together and formulate and implement policies to mitigate the economic and cost of living crisis of the common man, the Far-Right is most likely to dominate the political landscape across the world. This is ominous for freedom-loving, liberal populace.

WISDOM CORNER

- Some of us think holding on makes us strong; but sometimes it is letting go. **HERMANN HESSE**
- Happiness doesn't result from what we get, but from what we give. **BEN CARSON**
- There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man; true nobility is being superior to your former self. **ERNEST HEMINGWAY**

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1582:** Famed English poet and dramatist William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway.
- 1757:** English engraver, artist, poet, and visionary William Blake, whose notable works included the poetry collections Songs of Innocence (1789) and Songs of Experience (1794), was born.
- 1820:** German philosopher Friedrich Engels, co-author with Karl Marx of The Communist Manifesto (1848), was born.
- 1872:** Wilhelm Reiss became the first climber to reach the top of Cotopaxi, the world's highest active volcano, in Ecuador.
- 1943:** The Tehran Conference between the US, the UK and the Soviet Union began at the Soviet Embassy in Tehran. The conference dealt with the Axis powers in Europe and Asia and made plans to open up a second front against the Germans in France during WW II.

LOL

Growing chickens

A New York City yuppie moved to the country and bought a piece of land. He went to the local feed and livestock store and talked to the proprietor about how he was going to take up chicken farming. He then asked to buy 100 chicks. "That's a lot of chicks," commented the proprietor. "I mean business," the city slicker replied. A week later the yuppie was back



again. "I need another 100 chicks," he said. "Boy, you are serious about this chicken farming," the man told him. "Yeah," the yuppie replied. "If I can iron out a few problems." "Problems?" asked the proprietor. "Yeah," replied the yuppie, "I think I planted that last batch too close together."



Ajit Ranade

THE GOLD PRICE IN INDIA CAN ESCALATE EVEN AS THE RUPEE-DOLLAR EXCHANGE RATE DEPRECIATES

Sovereign gold bonds were introduced by the Union government eight years ago. Since then, these bonds, sold through the Reserve Bank of India have been sold periodically every few months. So far 62 such tranches have been sold. Each bond has a life of eight years, so the bonds sold in the first tranche have reached their end of life. They must be redeemed for actual cash. The government will accept the return of the bond, and deposit cash in the account of the investor. The investors have been able to buy these bonds in as small a value as five thousand rupees (equivalent to one gram) or as high as a few crores (equivalent to 4 kilograms of gold per individual).

These bonds have several advantages. Firstly, they are in demat form, so there is no need to physically hold any paper, unlike the old Kisan Vikas Patra or other such instruments. Secondly the bond represents actual units of gold. So, it is like buying gold, only in demat form. Which means that when you redeem the bond, it is like redeeming physical gold. You benefit from the price escalation in gold. The price escalates for two reasons. Gold becomes expensive when international speculators and bullion investors start buying it in huge quantities, as a safe haven investment. The gold price in India can escalate even as the rupee-dollar exchange rate depreciates. The third advantage of the gold bond is that it can be pledged as collateral for a loan. The fourth advantage is that capital gains made on the final sale of the bond are exempt from taxes. The fifth advantage is that the investor not only gets a double price escalation advantage of the bond gaining in value, but also a top up of 2.5% interest that the government gives to the investor.

When investors from the first

ENDURING ALLURE

FOCUS SOVEREIGN GOLD BONDS



By selling demat gold bonds the government was hoping to reduce the insatiable appetite that Indians have for gold

tranche redeem their gold bonds, they will realise a post-tax gain of more than 12% per annum over eight years. That's because the price of gold has more than doubled from Rs 2,684 per gram in November 2015 to about Rs 6,000 now. In addition to this the rupee dollar rate has gone down from 62 to 82, a fall of 33 percent. Thus, the investor has made a handsome annual gain of 12% returns on a post-tax basis for eight years, as compared to stock market returns of around 13.8% per year over the previous eight years. Keep in mind that the gold returns are risk free and that the stock market has been booming, and yet gold has delivered handsome gains.

This column is not about investment advice. By selling demat gold bonds the government was hoping to reduce the insatiable appetite that Indians have for gold. Every year India imports around 1000 tonnes of gold, with an average outgo of 50 to 80 billion dollars of precious foreign exchange. The government has imposed a stiff import duty of 12.5% on gold. Alas, neither the gold bond scheme nor the stiff import duty has made any dent on the import of gold. Of course, the import

of gold in 2022-23 was 24% lower than the previous year. And the outgo is now at around 40 billion dollars, which is less than what it used to be. But the import of gold represents a drain on foreign exchange, which for a country with a trade deficit is bad news. The export of dollars also reduces the net benefit of foreign direct investment that comes into the country.

By selling gold bonds at fairly attractive terms to investors, the government was hoping to at least wean away some investors from physical gold. So far, the outstanding stock of gold represented by gold bonds is about 110 tonnes, just one tenth of our annual imports. The total borrowing by the government due to the sale of gold bonds is about Rs 64,000 crore. But the cost of this borrowing has been more than 10% per annum which is much more than the cost that the government pays for borrowing to plug the fiscal deficit. During much of the period between 2008 till 2020, the Western nations were used to paying a cost of 1% on their sovereign debt, and India was paying nearly 6%. Now, thanks to inflation and monetary tightening the cost of raising sovereign debt has gone up, but is

still substantially lower than the cost of selling gold bonds.

It is because of this reason that there is a rumble asking for the discontinuation of the sovereign gold bond scheme. It is too expensive, and it has not made a dent in the insatiable appetite for physical gold. But this would be hasty and premature. The gold bond scheme needs to be sold more aggressively, especially to small retail investors, in the hinterland. An upper limit of 2 kilos instead of 4 kilos, can be kept. Sales can be enabled through smartphone-based apps, rather than through banks and the RBI. The gold bonds can be made freely tradable. And the benefits of demat gold needs to be advertised with much more intensity. Imagine a brand ambassador like Amitabh Bachchan selling sovereign gold bonds rather than only Kalyan Jewellers' products.

The bonds can coexist with gold backed exchange traded funds. And the government can reduce its borrowing cost by hedging in international markets against gold price escalation and volatility. It can thus slice off at least one or two percent of its cost by hedging using derivatives. This calls for some smart financial expertise at North Block which is eminently possible. It is possible that the impact of gold bonds on physical gold will happen non-linearly. The government must also energetically introduce schemes to dematerialise gold in millions of households, without using coercion or banning the ownership of gold, which is of course unthinkable in India. This gold deposit scheme can coexist with the gold bond scheme, and slowly but surely help bring gold wealth into the formal liquid financial sector.

The writer is a noted economist.
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SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Cognitive flexibility in an evolving landscape



Debabrata Dash

MODERN CHALLENGES ARE OFTEN MULTIFACETED AND REQUIRE CREATIVE AND ADAPTABLE PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACHES

Cognitive flexibility refers to the mental ability to adapt and switch between different tasks, concepts or ways of thinking in response to changing situations or demands. It involves being open to new information, perspectives, and approaches and adjusting one's mindset and behaviour accordingly. It allows individuals to generate creative solutions, navigate complex situations and thrive in dynamic environments. Some of its key aspects include adaptability (the capacity to modify one's thinking and behaviour in response to changing circumstances or new information), switching (the ability to shift attention and focus between tasks or concepts seamlessly), problem solving (applying multiple perspectives and strategies to solve problems efficiently and effectively), creativity (incorporating various ideas, perspectives, or experiences to generate novel and innovative solutions).

The world is constantly evolving, whether through technological advancements, societal shifts, or economic changes. Individuals with cognitive flexibility can quickly adapt to new technologies, job roles, work environments, and evolving cir-

cumstances. Modern challenges are often multifaceted and require creative and adaptable problem-solving approaches. Cognitive flexibility allows individuals to consider various perspectives, generate innovative solutions, and navigate complex, interconnected issues.

Globalisation has interconnected people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Cognitive flexibility enables individuals to understand and appreciate different cultural norms, values, and perspectives, fostering effective communication and collaboration on a global scale. Rapid advancements in technology frequently introduce new tools, platforms, and ways of interacting with information.

The modern job market is competitive and subject to change due to automation, AI, and shifting industries. Individuals with cognitive flexibility can easily switch between roles, learn new skills, and remain relevant in evolving job markets. The rise of remote and hybrid work models requires individuals to be adaptable in managing their work, schedules, and collaboration methods. Cognitive flexibility helps in adjusting to different work setups and effectively managing work-life integration.

Effective collaboration in diverse teams is vital. Cognitive flexibility helps individuals understand different team members' perspectives, work styles, and ideas, fostering a more inclusive and innovative team environment.

Let's explore a few examples to better understand cognitive flexibility. Imagine an individual who has worked in a traditional office environment for many years but is faced with the opportunity to work remotely due to changes in company policy or a new job offer. To adapt, they need to shift their mindset, work habits and communication styles to excel in a remote work setting. This shift demonstrates cognitive flexibility. In managing a project, unforeseen challenges may arise that require a change in approach or the adoption of new tools or methodologies. The project manager needs to adapt quickly, re-evaluate the project plan, and make necessary adjustments, showcasing cognitive flexibility in problem-solving. An individual who typically follows a strict daily routine suddenly faces a situation where they need to manage unexpected urgent tasks. They need to reorganise their schedule, pri-

oritise tasks, and shift their focus to accommodate the new demands, showcasing cognitive flexibility in managing their time effectively. MS Dhoni - the former skipper of Indian cricket team exhibited cognitive flexibility in his leadership. He implemented various strategies based on different match situations and oppositions.

Cognitive flexibility is an important skill for students as it allows them to adapt to different learning solutions, think critically and approach problem from various angles. A student who can easily transition from studying mathematics to reading literature and then working on a science project demonstrates cognitive flexibility. When unexpected household issues occur, such as a broken appliance or a plumbing problem, cognitive flexibility helps in quickly addressing the situation and finding practical solutions.

In essence, cognitive flexibility equips individuals to thrive and succeed in a world that demands quick adaptation, creative problem-solving, and the ability to embrace change and diversity.

The writer is a senior human resource professional.

Crowd control

Sir, In a heart-wrenching incident, four youngsters died and many others got injured in a stampede that occurred at the CUSAT University auditorium in Kochi where a music concert was to be held in connection with the annual tech fest conducted by the university. Whenever a stampede occurs a list of questions arise regarding the precautionary measures taken by the organisers, crowd management tactics arranged and the various tactics readied if such untoward incident occurs. Sad that, these are not seriously taken before conducting events where heavy crowds normally emerge. Be it music and dance shows, festivals or processions at worshipping sites, fairs or miscellaneous functions, the organisers should definitely sketch a plan in case such mishaps happen. Stampedes in the past too have claimed so many lives in India and abroad. Meticulous crowd management, smart and alert security and quick response action need to be taken.

M Pradyu, KANNUR

Justice at last

Sir, A Delhi court finally handed down the verdict in the murder of journalist Saumya Vishwanathan. This hearing lasted for 14 years. The killers were apprehended within a few months of the murder, which occurred in late 2008, and the first chargesheet was brought against them in 2009. Despite this, the lengthy period it took the court to reach its decision begs the question: can justice be deemed full if it is given so late? When we look at the Soumya case on its own two facts stand out. First, in this case, the prosecutor was either absent for an extended period or could not be assigned. Second, there was a lapse in the police investigation, which resulted in evidence in this case being produced until this year. The judge who was hearing this case was then reassigned as well. The relocation of the judge was a typical procedure, but the absence of the prosecutor and the length of time spent in the police inquiry were not. Former Chief Justice Balakrishnan has even stated that a delay in justice is a denial of justice, which promotes public distrust.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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All eyes on Gehlot's political future

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Nov 27: With Rajasthan's voters having exercised their franchise Saturday, the streets are silent all over again. The corridors of politics and power, however, are abuzz with whispers regarding the fate of CM Ashok Gehlot.

Will he become CM for the fourth time if he wins? And if he loses, is it curtains for his political career? Gehlot himself has been saying that his government will return, breaking the decades old tradition of power going to alternate hands after every election.

The Congress high command had announced to go faceless to the assembly polls this time which means there is no official CM candidate as of now. The party leadership will take this decision later if the party conquers the desert state again.

So what will be Gehlot's future in the long run?

While some Congress leaders claim that Gehlot will become a fourth time CM if the party wins, there are other party leaders who say that Gehlot will not get a chance to become a four-time CM. "Gehlot has been CM thrice. This time, tickets have been



given to candidates who are sure to face defeat. In fact, it was earlier decided that such candidates will not get tickets but they have been given a chance because Gehlot wanted them to contest. Now, if they lose, he will have to take the responsibility. Hence, the high command has put the ball in his court so that he can take the responsibility of whatever is the result in the elections," said a party worker.

Another worker said, "Gehlot chose Design Box as the marketing agency for his work. The agency, in a way, relaunched the Logo of the Congress. All its ads

were put across in the form of banners, posters and ads with dark pink and yellow colours. However, the tricolour logo of the party was hardly seen in these ads. Also, the agency made the Hand symbol go missing the initial time. It was only Gehlot's face which was in the ad. Pradesh Congress Committee chief Govind Singh Dotasara raised his voice against this campaign. Eventually, his picture started coming in the ad."

The Design Box head allegedly badmouthed the Gandhi family but yet again the entire responsibility for the election campaign was given to that company. In this endeavour, the high command has silently given the charge to Gehlot to decide so that he takes the responsibility for the campaign. If he wins, he is the boss, but if he loses, he will be the loser in the long run, he added.

At the eleventh hour, this agency brought in the faces of Sachin Pilot, Rahul Gandhi, Sonia and Priyanka Gandhi in the campaigning when all surveys indicated that the party is not crossing the 70-mark in the number of seats, said another worker.



Tourists pose for photos during the closing ceremony of Pushkar camel fair, in Pushkar, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Vasundhara's fate hangs in balance

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Nov 27: In the last five years, former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje has been making news for different reasons.

She hit the headlines for her posters being removed from the party office, for her absence from the BJP's rallies and protests and finally for her return in party posters, functions and also for being sidelined by her own party leaders.

However, despite being ignored in several functions, Raje managed to get around 40+ tickets for her followers in the just-concluded Assembly election in Rajasthan, which indicates that "madam still cannot be ignored."

Now that the heat and dust of the elections is over, questions are being asked in the Congress and the BJP camps alike as to "what will madam get post election and where will she go."

While campaigning for her workers at different locations last week not only did Raje draw huge crowds but also attacked the Gehlot Government for the high debt burden of the state due to the different policies being launched by the Chief Minister.

"Every child in Rajasthan will be born with a debt of about ₹70,000 on its head. The state has incurred the highest debt during Gehlot's time. This loan was taken by the government for the development of the Congress. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot spends money from the government's treasury not on the people of the state but on his MLAs. When the Congress MLAs tried to topple the government, a huge amount of money was spent in barricading the MLAs for months. The entire stay was in 5-Star hotels. This money belonged to the public. Today investors are running away from Rajasthan because it has the highest power tariff in the country," she had thundered at one of the election rallies.

Raje had also attacked the Congress government over its manifesto and said that it doesn't speak the truth.

She had said, "The Congress promised to provide 4 lakh gov-

ernment jobs, when only 2.5 lakh posts are vacant. How will they provide 4 lakh jobs? Gehlot is saying that he gave jobs to 3 lakh youth. Forget about 3 lakh, he could not even give government jobs to 20,000. In five years, 1.37 lakh government recruitments were done. Out of which 1.20 lakh were recruited during the time of the BJP."

In fact, in the run-up to the election on November 25, she had been attacking the Gehlot Government over issues like ERCP, farm loan waivers and so on. "This clearly shows that she has not lost hope of becoming the Chief Minister for the third time. Not only did she draw huge crowds during the campaigning, she also praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi in all her gatherings and criticized the work done by Gehlot. This shows that she wants to be in the good books of senior leaders. And it also shows that she herself wants to be in the race for the CM's job," said a party worker.

However, the central leadership has taken the command in its hands and is moving ahead as per its strategies. For now, Raje seems to be sidelined and hence comes the big question: What will be her next move? "Raje, as of now, is very much in the CM's race. She has proven many times that she can't be ruled out no matter what the situation," said another party worker.

Meanwhile a veteran party worker said, "The former CM was offered constitutional positions in different states but she rejected those. Now, it's evident that the party leadership wants to develop a young leadership. She will either get the chance of becoming the governor of a state or get a similar position. As of now, she still has five years' time and hence can also be given a chance in the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls." Meanwhile, Narayan Panchariya, who was heading the election management committee in Rajasthan for the recent Assembly polls, told IANS, "Vasundhara has been a senior leader of our party. She has been handling all our responsibilities well."

Fight over PM face may jettison INDIA in UP



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Nov 27: As the Lok Sabha elections are approaching, the INDIA bloc, seems to be weakening due to internal disputes and conflicts.

In recent Assembly elections, INDIA allies were seen contesting against each other on several seats. Also, there is competition among the allies to make their leaders the candidate for the Prime Minister post. This clearly shows the differences arising between the INDIA allies.

INDIA ally JD(U) is pushing for Nitish Kumar's name for the post of Prime Minister while the SP is suggesting Akhilesh Yadav's name for the post.

On the other hand, the Congress is adamant about Rahul Gandhi's name as the prime ministerial candidate.

Recently, at a programme organised in Uttar Pradesh's Saifai on the birth anniversary of Mulayam Singh Yadav, the way senior leaders of the

party put forth the issue of making Akhilesh Yadav the Prime Minister, it is certain that the challenges will mount for the INDIA alliance in the coming times.

Akhilesh Yadav's supporters pitted him against former Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. SP National Vice President Kiranmoy Nanda said, "We would have been very happy if Netaji (Mulayam Yadav) had become the Prime Minister. However, we still have a chance, the Lok Sabha elections of 2024 are very near.. we will send Akhilesh Yadav from Uttar Pradesh in 2024 and make him the Prime Minister of the country."

SP leader Ram Gopal Yadav said that if SP wins 40 seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the party will be in a position to make Akhilesh Yadav the Prime Minister.

Uttar Pradesh Congress spokesperson Anshu Awasthi says that the INDIA bloc has

Congress is adamant about Rahul Gandhi's name as the prime ministerial candidate, while the SP is suggesting Akhilesh Yadav's name for the post

been formed under the leadership of Congress and all decisions will be made in the alliance meeting.

"All these decisions like who will become the Prime Minister or who will contest how many seats will not be decided by the statement of any individual party leader. We are not concerned with the statements of any party leader," Awasthi said.

Taking a dig at the INDIA bloc, Uttar Pradesh BJP spokesperson Sameer Singh said all the parties of the bloc have their own prime ministerial candidate. "These parties which cannot

win elections in their state, want their leader to become the Prime Minister. The public does not pay attention to such things. Because everyone knows that the country is safe in the hands of Narendra Modi and is progressing rapidly," he added.

Senior political analyst Virendra Singh Rawat says that the way senior SP leaders during the Saifai programme have pitched for Akhilesh Yadav as the prime ministerial candidate poses a big challenge for the INDIA bloc because similar demands have been raised by the JD(U), Congress, AAP and Shiv Sena earlier as well.

The Opposition will have to bring a face before Prime Minister Modi which is universally acceptable. In such a situation, only time will tell how effective these faces announced by their respective parties will be. At present, maintaining unity seems to be a very big challenge for the INDIA bloc, he added.

Another senior political analyst Ratanmani Lal says that SP leaders still feel that Mulayam Singh was not able to become the Prime Minister because of the Congress. "They must have discussed that if this trend continues then even Akhilesh Yadav will not get a chance. Keeping this in view, the demand for making the SP chief the prime ministerial candidate gains momentum from time to time."

"SP leaders feel that if their party gets one or two seats in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, then they can stake their claim among the non-Congress parties. Besides the SP, parties such as JD(U), Congress, AAP and others will also stake claim to the prime ministerial post. This will cause loss to the alliance," he added.

Raj hospitals asked to increase surveillance

AGENCIES

Jaipur, Nov 27: The Rajasthan health department has issued an advisory to district hospitals and medical colleges in the state to increase surveillance in view of a surge in respiratory illnesses in children in northern China.

In a communication to chief medical health officers of districts and principals of medical colleges, the department directed them to conduct effective surveillance in all government and private hospitals.

Superintendent of Sawai Man Singh Hospital in Jaipur Dr Achal Sharma said that all arrangements were in place in the state to deal with any eventuality. SMS Hospital is the largest state-run hospital in Rajasthan.

"We have a team of experts and the hospital is fully prepared," Sharma said.

Earlier, the Union Health Ministry had advised states to immediately review public health and hospital preparedness such as availability of beds, drugs and vaccines for influenza, medical oxygen, antibiotics, personal protective equipment, testing kits and reagents, functionality of oxygen plants and ventilators, and infection control practices. In a statement Sunday, the ministry said that recently, information shared by the WHO has indicated an increase in respiratory illnesses in northern parts of China. This is predominantly attributed to usual causes such as influenza, mycoplasma pneumonia and SARS-CoV-2.

"The Government of India is closely monitoring the situation and indicated that there is no need for any alarm," it had stated.

Elephant dung to keep leopards at bay in UP

THE PUNGENT ODOUR OF ELEPHANT DUNG IS PARTICULARLY UNPLEASANT FOR LEOPARDS AND CAN BE EFFECTIVE IN KEEPING THEM AWAY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bahraich, Nov 27: The Uttar Pradesh forest department is employing a unique strategy to stop leopard attacks by using elephant dung.

District forest officer Akashdeep Badhawan said that animal excreta plays a dual role in the wild, serving as both a territorial marker and a deterrent to potential intruders.

"Animals often spray urine and defecate to delineate their territory, and the strong odour of their waste not only warns others of their presence but also conveys a sense of power,"



Badhawan stated. He added that the pungent odour of elephant dung is particularly unpleasant for leopards and can be effective in keeping them away.

This strategy has been successfully used in other parts of India, and the forest department plans to initially implement it in

the worst affected Shivpur block, which encompasses 12 villages and has witnessed recent leopard attacks on children.

"In view of the leopard terror, we have started this initiative in two villages for now. Elephant dung cakes are being distributed to the villagers, who

will burn them. Leopards are allergic to the foul smell emanating from burning elephant dung cakes. Due to this, they will run away from the village. It also helps in killing mosquitoes," he explained.

The recent leopard attacks have caused widespread fear

and anxiety among the villagers. November 17, a 37-year-old woman named Kunti Devi was mauled to death by a leopard while working in the fields, bringing the death toll to four in the past one month.

In addition to the elephant dung initiative, the forest department is also taking other measures to protect the villagers from leopard attacks, including increasing patrols in affected areas, installing camera traps to monitor leopard activity, educating villagers about leopard behaviour and how to avoid encounters.

"Initial implementation of this approach is a positive step," said wildlife expert AN Singh.

"However, leopards are highly adaptable creatures, and they may eventually learn to tolerate or even ignore the odour of elephant dung. Therefore, it is crucial to continuously assess the effectiveness of this strategy and consider alternative methods if necessary," he added.



Pilgrims board a train to Nanded Sahib under the 'Teerth Yojana' (pilgrimage plan) launched by the Punjab government in Amritsar



Smoke billows after a car caught fire on Delhi-Gurugram Expressway in Gurugram



People walk along the Marine Drive promenade in Mumbai



Sikh devotees light candles at a gurdwara on the occasion of Guru Nanak Jayanti in Jalandhar



The crest of Imphal (Yard 12706), Indian Navy's guided missile stealth destroyers, that is scheduled to be unveiled in New Delhi



Vendors inspect the damage after a fire broke out in the Battala market in Agartala



In this photo released by Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry, veterinarian Zulfi Arsan tends to a newly-born Sumatran rhino calf at Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary at Way Kambas National Park, Indonesia



Vietnam's President Vo Van Thuong and Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida shake hands at the end of a joint press conference at the Prime Minister's official residence in Tokyo, Japan



of the day quote

Congress will get clear majority in Rajasthan
ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

Many industrialists are eager to set up plants in Gachchiroli, a place which once evoked fear due to the menace of Left Wing Extremism
EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

The Haryana government is addressing the problem of drug addiction in a comprehensive manner by raising public awareness, rescuing and rehabilitating the addicted youth and dismantling the drug supply chain
MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR | HARYANA CM

SHORT TAKES

16 flights diverted

New Delhi: As many as 16 flights were diverted at the Delhi airport Monday evening due to bad weather, according to an official. The official said that 10 flights were diverted to Jaipur, three to Lucknow, two to Amritsar and one to Ahmedabad. Another official said five Air India flights were diverted. Among them, a flight coming from Sydney was diverted to Jaipur.

Three elephants killed in Bengal

Kolkata: Three elephants were killed Monday when a goods train hit them while they were crossing the tracks passing through forests at Rajabhatkhawa in West Bengal's Alipurduar district, a senior official of North Frontier Railway said. The Rajabhatkhawa-Kalchini section within which the incident took place is not covered by the Intrusion Detection System (IDS) meant to avert such collisions, he said. The elephant dashing occurred at 7.20 am when the empty goods train was going from Alipurduar to Siliguri, the NFR official said.

Several hurt in clash in Bokaro

Bokaro (Jharkhand): Several people including a few police personnel were injured following a clash between villagers and cops in Jharkhand's Bokaro district Monday. According to officials, the incident took place outside the main gate of ESL Steel Limited, a Vedanta Group company, around 140km from here. Police said the villagers, who were staging a dharna outside the company's gate in support of its nine-point charter of demands since morning, allegedly tried to enter the premises of the company when they were stopped by the firm's security men.

EC asks Telangana govt to stop aid to farmers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Hyderabad, Nov 27: The Election Commission Monday withdrew the permission to the Telangana government on disbursement of financial aid to farmers under the Rythu Bandhu scheme, triggering a blame-game between the Congress and the ruling BRS ahead of the November 30 elections.

The EC action came as a Congress leader on Sunday requested it to bar the BRS from mentioning the disbursement of funds under the scheme during the poll campaign after the state finance minister made a public announcement about the Rabi instalment.

Under the Rythu Bandhu scheme, farmers in Telangana are given Rs 10,000 per acre every year in two tranches in Rabi and Kharif seasons. Earlier, the EC had on November 24 given a green signal to the state government to disburse the amount before November 28.

As the issue snowballed into a major controversy in the last leg of the campaign with the Election Commission Monday withdrawing permission for the disbursement of funds, the BRS alleged that the Congress has "snatched" the payment from the farmers.

"Dirty politics of Congress has once again surfaced. They are delaying the payment of Rythu Bandhu, which is an ongoing payment. It is not an election promise. It is not a new programme that is made for the elec-



UNDER THE RYTHU BANDHU SCHEME, FARMERS IN TELANGANA ARE GIVEN ₹10,000 PER ACRE EVERY YEAR IN TWO TRANCHES IN RABI AND KHARIF SEASONS. EARLIER, THE EC HAD ON NOVEMBER 24 GIVEN A GREEN SIGNAL TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT TO DISBURSE THE AMOUNT BEFORE NOVEMBER 28

tions," BRS MLC K Kavitha said. Telangana Congress senior vice president G Niranjana had in a letter addressed to CEC Rajiv Kumar alleged that BRS leaders were making the EC's nod to disbursement of funds as a "tool to influence" voters as if they are giving it out of their own pockets. But the Congress blamed the BRS for the situation, alleging that those ruling the state, in their desperation to hang onto power, have ended up denying what is due to farmers. It alleged that the withdrawal of permission was the result of the "irresponsible and self-serving" approach of the K Chandrababhan Rao-led party. In its order, the EC said state

Rat-hole miners step in for manual drilling



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Uttarkashi/New Delhi, Nov 27: Rescuers had bored 36 metres into the hill above the Silkyara tunnel by Monday evening in their effort to reach 41 workers trapped inside for 15 days as rat-hole mining experts also reached the disaster site to help tackle the challenge simultaneously from another front.

Twelve rat-hole mining experts will be involved in manual drilling and excavation horizontally through the last 10- or 12-metre stretch of debris of the collapsed portion of the under-construction tunnel on Uttarakhand's Char Dham route.

This drilling was earlier being carried out by a huge auger machine that got stuck in the rubble

on Friday forcing officials to focus on an alternative option - drilling down from above the tunnel. About 40 per cent of the 86-metre vertical drilling required is now done.

For the horizontal through-the-rubble option, officials decided that the final stretch would be handled through a manual approach in which individual workers will go into the escape passage with drills, as well as gas-cutters to tackle obstacles like iron girders.

By Monday evening, the last bit of the stuck auger had been cut out piece by piece and a steel pipe inserted further into the partially complete escape passage. With individuals already working inside the tunnel with tools like gas-cutters, officials said, "in a way" the manual operation has begun Sunday.

In Delhi, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) member Lt Gen (retd) Syed Ata Hasnain said vertical drilling, which began Sunday, has already reached a depth of 36 metres. Rescuers hope to pull out workers through this one-metre-wide shaft when it breaks through the top of the tunnel below, hopefully by Thursday.

All big leaders in the BRS are sitting in farmhouses and running the government and the poor are becoming poorer while the ruling party is becoming richer
PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

PRESTIGIOUS HONOUR

President Droupadi Murmu will confer the prestigious 'President's Colour' to the Pune-based Armed Forces Medical College December 1 in recognition of its 75 years of 'exemplary service' to the nation, the defence ministry said Monday



India, US to seal predator drone deal by March

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 27: India is looking at sealing a landmark deal to procure 31 MQ-9B Predator long-endurance armed drones from the US under a government-to-government framework by March with the US Congress expected to clear the supplies in the next few weeks, people familiar with the matter said.

American and Indian government officials will hold the final series of negotiations on the procurement after Washington responds to India's Letter of Request (LoR) for the acquisition of drones from US defence major General Atomics (GA), they said.

India is procuring the long-endurance 'hunter-killer' drones to crank up the surveillance apparatus of the armed forces, especially along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. Though the price of the drones will be finalised in the negotiation process, it is estimated that the procurement would cost around USD 3 billion.

The people cited above said New Delhi and Washington will depute their respective teams to firm up the deal including finalising the cost and other nitty-gritties. The aim is to seal the deal by March next year, they said.

As part of the laid down process, the agreement will be between the Indian government and American authorities and the Pentagon will convey to General Atomics about the requirement of the Indian armed forces, they added.

It is understood that the issue of India's proposed procurement of the drones figured in US Defence Secretary Lloyd J Austin's talks with his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh in Delhi earlier this month.

Student stabbed 108 times with compass



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, Nov 27: Three students of Grade 4 allegedly attacked a classmate more than 100 times with a geometry compass, inflicting multiple puncture wounds during a fight at a private school in Indore city of Madhya Pradesh, an official said Monday.

The trigger for the fight among the children, all aged below 10 years, was not yet known and authorities are ascertaining if the unruly students were anyway influenced by violent scenes in video games.

Taking cognisance of the incident, the local Child Welfare Committee (CWC) has sought a report from the police, the official said.

CWC chairperson Pallavi Porwal said the student was allegedly attacked 108 times with a geometry compass by his classmates during a fight at a private school under the limits of the Aerodrome police station on November 24.

"The case is shocking. We have sought an investigation report from the police to find out the reason for the violent behaviour of children of such a

young age," she said. The CWC will counsel the children and their families in connection with the incident and find out if the students play video games that contain violent scenes, Porwal said.

The father of the victim alleged that his son had sustained puncture wounds in the attack that occurred at the school around 2 pm on Friday (November 24). The boy was taken to a hospital, administered first aid and allowed to leave.

"My son narrated the ordeal when he returned home. I still do not know why he was treated so violently by his classmates. The school management is not providing me the CCTV footage of the classroom," he said.

A complaint has been lodged about the incident at the Aerodrome police station, he said. Assistant Commissioner of Police Vivek Singh Chauhan said the victim underwent a medical examination after the complaint was lodged.

All children involved in the incident are below 10 years of age and appropriate steps are being taken as per legal provisions, he said.



Visitors during the 42nd India International Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

TAKEAWAYS FROM A CONCLUDING POLL

If words don't add up, it is because truth was not included in the equation. This one sentence may well define the almost concluded elections to five states of the Indian union. Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Mizoram have voted and Telangana will do so before the month is over. The results, at the beginning of the last month, to end an eventful year, will set the pace for the start of a new year that beckons big for a historic general election in 2024.

Verbal calisthenics are an intrinsic part of all elections as jousting opponents seek to outdo each other. Borderline liberties with facts is also a given. However this poll will stand out for sending 'truth' on a journey to the moon and 'morality' drilling depths as if in quest for oil. In an earlier era, the job of hurling invectives

was left to lesser minions, now the frontline leaders do so themselves.

So the spectacle of the prime minister lashing out at the 'revadi' culture and then holding forth on Modi's guarantees to match the Congress and Rahul Gandhi's engraved election manifesto promises. If the Congress picked up fast from Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Gujarat elections 2022, BJP (read Modi) joined the 'gold rush'. It seemed to have worked for the Congress in the Karnataka polls and soon after a mad scramble began in the elections that followed. It is almost like the wizards of Oz dishing out lollies from fantasyland. Whose money is it anyway? And why the grandstanding in giving back what has been extracted leechlike?

Now to the war of invectives. "Morkhon ka sardar" said Prime



Minister Modi lashing out at Rahul Gandhi only to be foisted with a return gift of "panauti" taking things to a new low. The less said about the others the better but the august Election Commission saw merit in one but none in the other creating the impression of being a partisan referee. The national Constitution's secular engravings notwithstanding, religion is now a force multiplier in poll politics with BJP the prime mover in majoritarian sweep

stakes, the others including the Congress are not averse to soft Hindutva while seeking to strengthen their grip over the other vote banks. The consolidation of the BJP in Gujarat under Modi, particularly post-2002 Godhra train carnage and the communal riots that followed has led to the enshrining of a new strategic concept that continues to be pursued relentlessly.

If the last Karnataka Assembly elections saw a Congress expression of a ban on Bajrang Dal metamorphose into a perceived bid to draw Bajrangbali into its ambit, the Ram Mandir was the abiding lyric of the present poll song in the just concluded polls. This is billed to be a stellar attraction in the 2024 elections as well.

There are two distinct takeaways from the just concluding polls. Firstly, that the BJP has not learnt a lesson from

Karnataka and continue to hurl Prime Minister Modi's persona into every electoral fight. In fact, it went out of its way to turn it into a PM versus the Congress tussle fully aware that the critical 2024 combat would require a rested Modi. The sidelining of regional stalwarts like chief minister Chauhan in MP, Vasundhara Raje in Rajasthan and Raman Singh in Chhattisgarh is being watched closely for future evaluation.

Secondly, that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is no longer the 'pappu' that he was projected to be. He is a re-invented, confident leader who has gained tremendously in stature and has the public eyes and ears. The BJP deserves a fair amount of credit for its relentless pummeling of the man and turning him into a worthy opponent who is rejuvenating the Congress.

EC seeks explanation from Karnataka govt

New Delhi, Nov 27: The Election Commission Monday sought an explanation from the Congress government in Karnataka over advertisements publicising its achievements in newspapers in poll-bound Telangana. In a letter to the Karnataka chief secretary, the commission said the state government did not obtain prior approval from it for publishing the advertisements, an action violative of the poll code. It also said the publication of any such advertisement by the government of Karnataka in Telangana should stop with immediate effect till necessary approvals are taken by the state government from the commission. It has sought an explanation by 5 pm Tuesday on the circumstances which led to the violation of the commission's Model Code of Conduct (MCC) instructions.

international



Today's investments, worth more than GBP 29 billion, will create thousands of new jobs and are a huge vote of confidence in the future of the UK economy
RISHI SUNAK | UK PM

JAPAN CULLS 40K BIRDS
About 40,000 birds were culled in southern Japan after a highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak was confirmed, marking the first reported case of bird flu in the country during the autumn and winter season this year



of the day quote

We're determined to keep working to bring down prices for American consumers and ensure the resilience of our supply chains for the future
LAEL BRAINARD | DIRECTOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL

Relentless, intense battles were ongoing in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Kharkiv, while extremely challenging weather was affecting areas from Kyiv region in the north to Odesa in the south
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI | UKRAINE PRESIDENT

Allies will continue to support Ukraine's self-defense until Russia stops its war of aggression
JIM O'BRIEN | TOP US DIPLOMAT FOR EUROPE



This handout photo provided by Haim Zach/GPO shows Sharon Hertzman, right, hugging a relative as they reunite at Sheba Medical Center in Ramat Gan. Sharon Hertzman and her daughter Noam, 12 years old, not pictured, were released by Hamas after being held as hostages in Gaza for 50 days AP/PTI PHOTO

Israel, Hamas agree to extend truce for 2 days

Hamas freed 17 hostages Sunday, including 14 Israelis, and Israel released 39 Palestinian prisoners — the third such exchange under the truce

Gaza/Jerusalem, Nov 27: Israel and Hamas agreed to extend their cease-fire for two more days past Monday, the Qatari government said, bringing the prospect of a longer halt to their deadliest and most destructive war and further exchanges of militant-held hostages for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.



Musk visits Israel

Jerusalem: Elon Musk, who's been under fire over accusations of antisemitism flourishing on his social media platform X, paid a visit Monday to Israel, where he toured a kibbutz that was attacked last month by Hamas militants and was set to meet with top leaders. "It was jarring to see the scene of the massacre," Musk later said in an X Spaces conversation with Netanyahu. Musk said he was troubled by video and photos that the prime minister showed him of the killings of civilians, including children. They spoke broadly about the conflict, the protests it has generated, Hamas, the Middle East and more but did not touch on antisemitism online. Netanyahu said he hoped Musk would be involved in building a better future, to which the billionaire replied, "I'd love to help."



ernment spokesperson Eylon Levy told reporters Monday. So far, 58 hostages have been released during the current truce, including 39 Israelis. Before the truce, four hostages were freed, another rescued and two were

SNIPPETS

Xi Jinping heads to Shanghai

Beijing: Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to make his first post-Covid visit to Shanghai - the communist giant's commercial hub - Tuesday, days after his high-profile visit to the US where he promised to "tear down barriers" amidst dwindling foreign investments in the country. Xi, 70, who presided over the powerful Politburo meeting of the ruling Communist Party on Monday to review guidelines on policies and measures for promoting high-quality development in the country, will visit Shanghai Tuesday, his first to the commercial hub, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. With a population of more than 25 million and contributing nearly four per cent of China's economic output, Shanghai is home to some of the biggest foreign investments in the country, including Tesla, General Motors, Walt Disney and the 10-year-old Shanghai Free-Trade Zone (FTZ), a testing ground for China's economic reforms.

Poland President to swear in 14-day govt

Warsaw: Poland's president is swearing in a government Monday expected to last no longer than 14 days, a tactical maneuver that allows the conservative Law and Justice party to hang onto power a bit longer - and make more appointments to state bodies. Following a national election in October, President Andrzej Duda is due to once again swear in Mateusz Morawiecki, who has held the job of prime minister since late 2017. According to the constitution, Morawiecki will have 14 days to try to build a coalition that can win a majority of support in the parliament. But that looks like a lost cause because Morawiecki has no coalition partners after his nationalist and conservative Law and Justice party lost its parliamentary majority and no other parties want to join its government.

NK restoring guard posts

Seoul, Nov 27: North Korea is restoring front-line guard posts that it had dismantled during a previous period of inter-Korean rapprochement. South Korea's military said Monday, after animosities spiked between the rivals over the North's recent spy satellite launch. The two Koreas previously dismantled or disarmed 11 of their guard posts inside their heavily fortified border, called the Demilitarised Zone, under a 2018 deal meant to ease front-line military confrontations. But the deal is now in danger of being scrapped as both Koreas openly threaten to breach it. The 2018 agreement required the two Koreas to halt aerial surveillance and live-fire exercises that they established along the DMZ, as well as remove some of their front-line guard posts and land mines. The deal left South Korea with 50 board guard posts and North Korea with 150. After North Korea claimed to place its first military spy satellite into orbit on Nov 21, South Korea said it would partially suspend the deal and resume aerial surveillance along the DMZ in response. South Korea said its response was "a minimum defensive measure" because the launch showed the North's intentions to strengthen its monitoring of the South and improve its missile technology. North Korea immediately slammed South Korea's decision, saying it would deploy powerful weapons at the border in a tit-for-tat measure. The North said it also won't abide by the 2018 deal any longer.

Khalistanis heckle Sandhu in New York

New York, Nov 27: India's Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, offered prayers at a gurudwara in Long Island in New York on the occasion of Gurburab where a group of Khalistani supporters heckled him but they were escorted out by members of the Sikh community. "Privileged to join the local Sangat, including from Afghanistan, at Guru Nanak Darbar of Long Island in celebrating Gurburab - listened to Kirtan, spoke about Guru Nanak's everlasting message of togetherness, unity, & equality, partook langar, and sought blessings for all," Sandhu said in a post on X Sunday. Sandhu received a warm welcome at the Hicksville Gurudwara against the perceived notion of opposition from Khalistanis. A few nuisance makers tried to heckle him but were escorted out by members of the Sikh community, sources said. In his remarks at the gurudwara, Sandhu assured members of the Sikh community that Indian diplomats in the US will provide all help and support to them. Sandhu, accompanied by Consul General in New York Randhir Jaiswal and Deputy Consul General Varun Jeph, highlighted growth in the India-US partnership, whether in the healthcare, energy, IT, new emerging technologies, semiconductor or education sectors. On the occasion, the gurudwara members and officials ho-

noured and felicitated the Indian Ambassador.

Sandhu also spoke about the historical linkages between Sikh Gurus, Sikhs and Afghanistan. He noted that Afghan Sikhs have shown how to face adversities. He mentioned that three Saroops of the Sikh scripture Guru Granth Sahib were brought from Kabul to Delhi in August 2021 after the Taliban took over the war-torn country. During the visit to the gurudwara, some pro-Khalistan elements heckled Sandhu and shouted questions about Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, killed in Canada in June this year.

Earlier, in a separate tweet, Sandhu said Guru Nanak Dev ji's timeless message of equality and universal oneness in the well-known Shabad of Guru Ravidass as he paid his respects at Sri Guru Ravidass Temple in New York Saturday.



Malaysia to allow visa-free entry to Indians

Kuala Lumpur, Nov 27: Malaysia will grant a 30-day visa-free entry for Indian and Chinese citizens from December 1. Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has announced, joining Thailand and Sri Lanka in recent weeks to offer such a facility to foreigners to promote tourism. Ibrahim said the waiver was an additional facility to the existing visa exemptions currently enjoyed by Gulf nations and other West Asian countries, including Turkey and Jordan. However, Ibrahim, who is also the Finance Minister, said the visa exemption was subject to top security screening, the official Bernama news agency reported.



"Initial screenings will be conducted for all tourists and visitors to Malaysia. Security is a different matter. If there are criminal records or the risk of terrorism, they will not be allowed to enter," he said. "That comes under the authority of the security forces and immigration," said the prime minister, who is likely to travel to India in the first half of next year in reflection of the growing upswing in overall ties between the two nations.

Malaysia is a member of the 10-member ASEAN or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations bloc, which is considered one of the most influential groupings in the region. The 30-day visa-free entry is also currently enjoyed by eight ASEAN countries for the purpose of social visits, tourism and business. Malaysia is currently targeting 16.1 million international tourist arrivals with RM 49.3 billion in tourism receipts. India remains to be among the top countries to contribute tourist arrivals to Malaysia.

NZ to scrap law curbing tobacco sales

Wellington, New Zealand, Nov 27: New Zealand's incoming conservative government will jettison world-leading measures to stub out smoking, new Prime Minister Christopher Luxon confirmed Monday, in a move described by health campaigners as a "huge win for the tobacco industry". Unveiled under former Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, the so-called "generational smoking ban" aimed to prohibit the sale of cigarettes to anyone born after 2008. Praised by public health experts and anti-smoking advocates, a suite of near-identical measures were recently announced in the United Kingdom. But after being sworn in on Monday, Luxon confirmed New Zealand would scrap the laws before they came into effect, citing fears of a flourishing black market. Luxon conceded the tax revenue from ongoing cigarette sales would also generate welcome revenue for the government, but stressed it was "not the motivation for doing it."



Kiwi lives," the group has said in a statement. Luxon said the cigarette ban would create "an opportunity for a black market to emerge, which would be largely untaxed." The legislation, scheduled to start later this year, was designed to almost immediately reduce the number of people using tobacco products. While the number of adults smoking in New Zealand is already relatively low at just eight percent, the previous government had envisioned a future where the country was completely smoke-free. As well as the steadily increasing age limit, the new law would have slashed the number of retailers able to sell tobacco products to a maximum of just 600 nationwide, a massive drop from the current figure of 6,000.

SHORT TAKES

Imran Khan sent to judicial remand

Islamabad: A Pakistani accountability court Monday sent Imran Khan on a 14-day judicial remand in a corruption case, rejecting the request of the country's anti-graft body for extending the jailed former prime minister's physical remand. Judge Muhammad Bashir of the Islamabad Accountability Court presided over the hearing of the Al-Qadir Trust corruption case held at the Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, where Khan is currently jailed.

2 killed, 10 hurt in suicide blast

Peshawar: At least two civilians were killed and 10 injured in a suicide bombing by a splinter group of the banned Pakistani Taliban terror group targeted a convoy of security forces in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. An explosives-laden two-wheeler hit the security forces convoy on its way to Bannu from the North Waziristan district near the Azad Mandi in Bannu Cantonment Sunday.

Storm pounds the Black Sea region

Moscow: A weekend storm that pounded the Black Sea region toppled trees, tore down power lines and flooded coastal areas of southern Russia and Ukraine, leaving more than a half-million people without power Monday. The Moscow region, meanwhile, was blanketed with snow that piled drifts up to almost 10 inches, three times heavier than normal, reports said.

Navy rescues 56 immigrants

Rabat: The Moroccan Navy has intercepted and rescued 56 illegal immigrants on board a boat off the Atlantic coast, the media reported Monday. A Moroccan Navy patrol vessel intercepted the boat during an assistance mission near the port of Tan-Tan, the media quoted an unnamed military source as saying.

PIO jailed

Singapore: A 33-year-old Indian-origin man was sentenced to four years in jail Monday for hitting another man to death following an altercation while they were travelling in a taxi in July 2020. Sakthivel Sivasurian was convicted last month of one charge of voluntarily causing hurt to Manjunatha Louis Ravi, who fell and died in hospital five days later from neck and head injuries. According to court documents, Manjunatha, a woman, Sakthivel and Sakthivel's wife were in a taxi on the way to Gangsa Road at around 11 p.m. when a dispute arose between the attacker and the victim.

of the day quote

India is positioned to benefit from this trend by enhancing its supply chain capabilities and investing in healthcare infrastructure

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | CO-FOUNDER, GTRI

The economic outlook for companies in the metal forming sector looks promising, and Intex Forming will play a catalytic role in realising this promise

JIBAK DASGUPTA | DIRECTOR GENERAL AND CEO, IMTMA

The concept of shared workspace has gained significant momentum in the last six years and, currently, India is the second-largest co-working market in the world

UMESH SAHAY | FOUNDER & CEO, EFC (I) LTD

SHORT TAKES

LIC keen to keep IDBI Bank stake

New Delhi: State-owned LIC, promoter of IDBI Bank, has said it plans to retain a part of its stake in the lender to harness the benefits of the bancassurance. Along with the government, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) will also divest its stake in IDBI Bank but may not exit completely, LIC Chairman Siddhartha Mohanty told PTI in an interview. "We have made it clear that IDBI Bank is our number one partner in bancassurance. We will retain the same stake in IDBI Bank so that the bancassurance partnership continues," he said.

Gold prices rise to 6-month high

Mumbai: Gold prices hit a more than six-month high Monday, firming above the \$2,000 per ounce level, as a weaker dollar and expectations of an end to US interest rate hikes lifted demand. Spot gold was up 0.5% at \$2,012.33 per ounce by 1147 GMT, after reaching its highest since May 16 at \$2,017.82. US gold futures also rose 0.5% to \$2,013.10. The dollar eased 0.1% against a basket of major currencies, hovering around a more than two-month low touched last week and making gold less expensive for holders of other currencies.



I remain resolute as Chairman & Managing Director and am fully committed towards the smooth functioning of the company and its business. Even in these difficult times for me, I assure you that at Raymond, it is business as usual

GAUTAM SINGHANIA | CHAIRMAN AND MD, RAYMOND

INDIGO INTRODUCES AI CHATBOT

IndiGo has launched an AI chatbot, 6Eskai, powered by the GPT-4 technology with an aim to address travellers' queries in 10 different languages and to offer a first of its kind platform for booking tickets across the entire network



OVER INFLATION

Auto majors line up price hike

Maruti Suzuki, M&M, Audi, Tata Motors and Mercedes-Benz plan price hikes in January

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 27: Automakers Maruti Suzuki, Mahindra & Mahindra and Audi India Monday announced plans to hike prices of their passenger vehicles in January 2024 citing reasons, including cost pressure driven by overall inflation and increased commodity rates.

Besides, Tata Motors and Mercedes-Benz India are mulling increasing the prices of their models from January.

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India, which sells a range of vehicles from entry-level small car Alto to multi-utility vehicle Invicto, priced between ₹3.54 lakh and ₹28.42 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi), Monday said the price hike would vary from model to model.

In an interaction with PTI, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) Senior Executive Officer (Marketing and Sales) Shashank Srivastava said the price hike would be "substantial" in some models.

MSI had last hiked vehicle prices by 0.8 per cent in April this year. It had affected a total price increase of 2.4 per cent last fiscal.

There is an inflationary pressure all around, including volatility in commodities, so that is the reason we have decided to increase the prices in January

SHASHANK SRIVASTAVA | SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER (MARKETING AND SALES), MSI



"There is no choice left for us now but to enhance the prices. We are yet to figure out the exact quantum of the increase," Srivastava said.

Earlier, in a regulatory filing, MSI said the company has planned to increase the prices of its cars in January 2024 on account of increased cost pressure driven by overall inflation and increased commodity prices.

"While the company makes maximum efforts to reduce cost and offset the increase, it may have to pass on some increase to the market. This price increase shall vary across models," it said. Mahindra and Mahindra CEO

(Automotive Division) Nalinikanth Gollagunta said in that based on the inflation and commodity prices outlook, "we intend to take a price increase for our automotive products effective January 2024."

The details for which will be announced closer to the time, he said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Tata Motors said it is also considering increasing prices of its passenger and electric vehicles in January 2024.

The company, which sells a range of passenger vehicles starting with hatchback Tiago to premium SUV Safari priced between ₹5.6 lakh and ₹25.94 lakh,

also did not specify the quantum of the proposed hike.

"We are considering a price hike across our passenger and electric vehicles in January 2024. The extent of the hike and exact details will be announced in a few weeks," a Tata Motors spokesperson said.

Earlier in the day, German luxury car maker Audi said it will hike prices of its vehicles in India by up to 2 per cent from January next year, citing rising input and operational costs.

The price hike will be effective from January 1, 2024 and will be across the model range, Audi India said in a statement.

"Due to rising supply chain-related input and operational costs, we have effected a price correction across our model range, maintaining the brand's premium price positioning," Audi India Head Balbir Singh Dhillion said in a statement.

Audi India sells a range of vehicles from Q3 SUV to sports car ₹Q8 priced between ₹42.77 lakh and ₹2.22 crore.

When contacted, Mercedes-Benz India said it is also mulling price hike from January.

S&P ups India's FY24 growth hope to 6.4%

ROBUST DOMESTIC MOMENTUM TO OFFSET HEADWINDS, SAYS THE RATINGS AGENCY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 27: S&P Global Ratings Monday raised India's growth forecast for the current financial year to 6.4 per cent, from 6 per cent, saying that robust domestic momentum has offset headwinds from high food inflation and weak exports.

However, it cut the growth estimates for the next fiscal (2024-25) to 6.4 per cent, from 6.9 per cent, as it expects growth to slow on a higher base, subdued global growth and lagged impact of interest rate hike.

"We have revised up our projection for India's GDP growth for fiscal 2024 (ending in March 2024) to 6.4 per cent, from 6 per cent, as robust domestic momentum seems to have offset headwinds from high food inflation and weak exports," S&P said.

The Indian economy grew 7.2 per cent in the 2022-23 fiscal year ended March 2023.

The country's real GDP rose 7.8 per cent year-on-year in the June quarter, up from 6.1 per cent in the March quarter.

To rein in inflation, the RBI had hiked benchmark interest rates by 250 basis points since May last year. The apex bank has held the repo rate steady at 6.5 per cent since February.

Asia Pacific to shine
In its Economic Outlook for Asia Pacific, S&P said growth this year and the next is on track to be the strongest in emerging market economies with solid domestic demand -- India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

Fixed investment has recovered considerably more than private consumer spending in India, it said.

"In Australia, India, and the Philippines, lingering inflation risks are keeping central banks occupied. The government plans



The estimates of S&P is a shade higher than other international agencies. The IMF, World Bank, ADB, and Fitch expects India's GDP to expand 6.3% in the current fiscal. The RBI has projected GDP growth at 6.5% for current as well as next financial year

to expand fiscal policies in several countries could complicate central banks' policymaking," S&P said.

Risks remain but so also does the potential for growth in the region. In coming months, the spotlight may shine a little more brightly on emerging markets where domestic demand is strong, S&P said.

With regard to China, S&P said the outlook for the country has improved, but obstacles still remain. S&P raised its 2023 and GDP growth forecast for China to 5.4 per cent and 4.6 per cent.

NVIDIA MOST PROFITABLE CHIP FIRM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

San Francisco, Nov 27: Graphics chip giant Nvidia has become the most profitable semiconductor firm in the third quarter (Q3) of this year, surpassing Intel, Samsung, and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC).

Taipei-based financial analyst Dan Nystedt compiled financial results from Intel, Nvidia, Samsung Semiconductor, and TSMC for all quarters since Q1 2021, and the figures showed that Nvidia has surpassed all others to become the world's most profitable chip company.



"Nvidia swooped in and took the third quarter chip industry revenue crown, beating out TSMC, Intel and Samsung as the generative AI trend continues to strengthen," Nystedt posted on X. "Nvidia could win second place in full-year chip revenue in 2023, beating Intel and Samsung, while TSMC remains on track to take the title," he added.

India largest market for equity derivatives: Jefferies

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 27: India is the third-largest market in terms of cash market volumes and the largest market for equity derivatives, foreign brokerage Jefferies said in a report.

Active derivatives investor base stands at 3.9 mn and individuals make up 35 per cent of option premiums in the system. However, there is a large concentration at the top. While retail investors are grow-

ing in numbers, the share of smaller retail investors in overall premiums mix is very low, the report said.

Rise of digital discount brokers is expanding active investor base NSE's active investor base has grown 4X post Covid to more than 11mn investors. Further, the number of active derivatives

investors have grown 10x in this period from a low base.

The drivers of this large investor onboarding have been the digital discount brokers who have managed to scale up their investor base to 5-6X that of traditional brokers in a much shorter timeframe.

Rising smartphone/inter-

net penetration, easy eKYC through public digital infrastructure and increasing awareness about equity markets are enabling these digital players to rapidly onboard a large customer base.

Digital brokers are acquiring younger client cohorts and spreading out beyond urban metro locations into tier-2/3 cities for newer customers. Top 5 digital brokers now make up 64 per cent of active NSE clients, the report said.

Foxconn plans \$1.6bn in India expansion bid

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Nov 27: iPhone maker Hon Hai Precision Industry Co, also known as Foxconn, plans to expand its footprint in India with another NT\$50 billion (\$1.6 billion) investment for construction projects.

The announcement, made in an exchange filing in Taiwan late Monday didn't give any further details, saying only that the investment was for "operational needs." A spokesperson for the company declined to say where the new facilities would be or what they would build.

The news comes as Hon Hai, also known as Foxconn, and other Taiwanese electronics manufacturers continue to diversify their businesses outside of China as tensions rise between Washington and Beijing.

About half of Foxconn's revenue comes from business with Apple Inc. The company has been making iPhones and other products in India for several years, including the latest iPhone 15. In September, a Foxconn representative in India said on LinkedIn that the Taiwanese company plans to double the size of its business in the South Asian country.

India's Karnataka state government in August announced that Foxconn planned to invest \$600 million on two component factories in the southern Indian state. That included a plant that will make mechanical enclosures for iPhones and a semiconductor equipment manufacturing plant it will operate with Applied Materials Inc, the government said at the time.

Foxconn already operates nine production campuses and more than 30 factories employing tens of thousands of people in India, where it takes in around \$10 billion of revenue annually.

Currency clashes sour Russia's oil business with Asia

RUSSIAN BANKING SOURCE SAYS "POINTLESS" TO RECEIVE ₹ BECAUSE OF THE LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES TO SPEND IT WHILE CHINA'S YUAN HAS MORE VALUE

REUTERS

Moscow, Nov 27: One of Russia's most lucrative oil trade routes since the imposition of Western sanctions over the Ukraine conflict faces a major challenge because of the drawbacks of payment in currency other than dollars, with no short-term solution in sight.

For decades, the US dollar has been the currency of international oil trade and efforts to find alternatives have been thwarted by the difficulties of conversion, as well as political obstacles.

The problems flared when India - which has become Russia's biggest buyer of seaborne oil since European customers retreated - insisted in July on paying in rupees and the trading

activity nearly fell apart, according to three sources familiar with the matter.

The sources, who requested anonymity, said the Russian oil suppliers - who also could not be named because of the issue's sensitivity - could not do deals in Indian rupees because of informal guidance from the Russian central bank it would not accept the currency.

One Russian banking source close to the Russian central bank said receiving revenue in a non-convertible currency with little value outside India was "pointless". Russia has limited opportunities to spend rupees as its imports from India are insignificant, another source said. Around mid-August, at least two major Russian oil companies threatened to divert around a dozen tankers carrying up to a million tonne of oil that were heading to India to other destinations, according to two of the sources.

As a temporary solution to the clash involving Indian deals, the cargoes were paid for in a combination of the Chinese yuan, the Hong-Kong dollar as a transition currency into the yuan and the UAE dirham, which is pegged to the US dollar, 10 trading sources and officials told Reuters.

They said, however, the prob-



lem remained of finding a viable alternative to the dollar, and that the problems affect buyers in Africa, China and Turkey which have become top buyers of Russian oil.

The biggest issue, however, concerns India, which has been buying more than 60% of Russian seaborne oil, according to LSEG data and Reuters calculations. It is the biggest overall buyer of seaborne Russian crude after China.

The problems are likely to worsen as scrutiny on the trade increases. Washington imposed the first sanctions on owners of

tankers carrying Russian oil priced above a Western price cap in recent weeks, the first enforcement of the cap since it was introduced late last year.

DITCHING THE DOLLAR
Since Western sanctions imposed on Russia in February last year, Moscow has shifted from transactions in dollars and euros, the world's dominant currencies, and is largely locked out of the international banking system.

According to five traders involved, less than 10% of Russia's output of roughly 9 million barrels of oil per day (bpd) is sold

If you help increase Indian exports, there will immediately be a lot of help from various Indian associations. You create a company in India, do a small localisation and you will get more opportunities

IVAN NOSOV | HEAD OF THE INDIAN BRANCH, SBERBANK

in dollars and euros.

The Russian central bank cannot operate in dollars because of sanctions, and while Russian exporters theoretically can use the currency, avoiding it has the advantage of making it harder for the United States and other Western governments to monitor their trade.

The alternatives, however, lead to high levels of risk for both parties to a deal.

India in the first months of this year owed about \$40 billion to Russia for oil and other supplies, according to four trading and banking sources, who said the amount was now significantly lower without giving a precise details.

₹ A PARTICULAR ISSUE
Doing business in rupees is particularly difficult for Russia.

India encourages rupees to be spent on its territory and has imposed punitive exchange rates on converting rupees into other

INDIA AIM TO SEAL SERIES

With a 2-0 lead in the series, India look to continue their winning run against Australia in the 3rd T20 international

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Nov 27: The stylish Tilak Varma wouldn't mind some quality batting time before his possible exit from the playing eleven as the Indian team aims to take an unassailable lead in the third T20 International against Australia here Tuesday.

Shreyas Iyer, who was given a week's rest after the World Cup final, will join the squad for the last two games in Raipur and Bengaluru, taking vice-captaincy duties from Rituraj Gaikwad.

That effectively means that Iyer will walk into the playing XI and there is a strong possibility that he will replace Tilak. The replacement has more to do with combination rather than form.

After near-flawless batting performance in back-to-back games, the new-look Indian team would like to keep its foot firmly on the pedal on a Barsapara Stadium track that has traditionally been a batting belter. And there is no reason to think that the 22-yard strip is any different this time also.

The 40,000 spectators, expected to fill up the stands, would expect a run-feast from the talented Indian batting unit, which would



It was heartbreaking but a lot of our guys will learn, the game moves on, and I see India winning a World Cup very soon
RAVI SHASTRI | FORMER HEAD COACH

want to add to the 36 boundaries and 24 maximums it has collectively hit across the two games.

For Australia, some of their senior players like Steve Smith, Glenn Maxwell, Marcus Stoinis and Adam Zampa have been in India for nine weeks and fatigue is showing. They need considerable rest before their next assignments.

Bash League next month. For Smith, the Pakistan Test series would be his next international assignment.

India's top-order has ticked all the boxes with Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rituraj Gaikwad and skipper Suryakumar Yadav hitting a half-century each.

Ishan Kishan, showing no signs of rustiness even after spending nearly five and half

weeks on the World Cup bench, has got two half centuries under his belt.

Rinku Singh, with two superb rear-guard knocks, has consolidated his status as designated finisher in this format and is slowly ensuring a permanent No 6 slot for him in this batting order ahead of the T20 World Cup.

However, Tilak, who has not

missed any of India's last 12 T20 Internationals, is in a tricky place as he bats No 5 and he faced just 12 deliveries in the last two games.

In the first game, he scored 12 runs off 10 balls with two boundaries in a chase of 209. In the second game in Thiruvananthapuram Sunday, he faced the final two deliveries of the Indian innings as Rinku was promoted ahead of him to give the final push.

It would be interesting to see if skipper Suryakumar himself drops a place down in the batting order and gives his younger colleague a chance to play few more balls and get some runs under his belt before Iyer comes calling in the next game in Raipur.

Considering the nature of tracks on offer, Indian bowlers put up a far improved performance in the second game after conceding 208 runs in the series-opener.

While the dot ball count in the first two games remained nearly the same - 45 in the first and 44 in the second - what has significantly improved is the decrease in boundary percentage while defending in dew-laden conditions in Thiruvananthapuram.

From being hit for 24 fours in

THE SQUADS

INDIA

Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Rituraj Gaikwad (vice-captain), Ishan Kishan, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Shivam Dubey, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Prasidh Krishna, Avesh Khan, Mukesh Kumar.

AUSTRALIA

Matthew Wade (captain), Aaron Hardie, Jason Behrendorff, Sean Abbott, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Tanveer Sangha, Matt Short, Steve Smith, Marcus Stoinis, Kane Richardson, Adam Zampa.

Match starts at 7pm

the first game, the same Indian attack cut it down to half in the next game.

Prasidh Krishna, after being creamed by Jos Inglis and Steve Smith in Visakhapatnam, made a strong comeback with three wickets in his second spell.

However, one needs to also factor in that Prasidh was bowling with a cushion of a mammoth target of 235. He was not under pressure. Even the normally profligate Arshdeep Singh, for a change, nailed his block-hole deliveries during death overs.

HYBRID MODEL IN FRAY

Champions Trophy likely to be shifted out of Pakistan

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 27: The 2025 edition of Champions Trophy, the second biggest multilateral One-Day International (ODI) cricket tournament after the World Cup, would be shifted out of Pakistan or played under hybrid model, reports said November 27.

The tournament could be moved to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), or played under an Asia Cup-like hybrid model with matches scheduled in both the countries, the media reports claimed.

Pakistan is currently scheduled to host the Champions Trophy 2025, but speculations are rife that the International Cricket Council (ICC) may come out with an alternative plan as India may decide against sending its national team to the neighbouring nation due to political and security reasons.

A similar scenario emerged during the recently held Asia Cup, which was originally scheduled in Pakistan. However, after India decided against sending its team to the country, the tournament was held under hybrid model in Sri Lanka.

Four Asia Cup matches were played in Pakistan, whereas, the remainder of the tournament was held in Sri Lanka.

SHORT TAKES

SL sports min fired over cricket crisis



Colombo: Sri Lanka's sports minister was sacked Monday after he accused President Ranil Wickremesinghe of trying to assassinate him over his moves to clean up corruption at the cricket board. Officials said Roshan Ranasinghe was dismissed ahead of Monday's weekly cabinet meeting after he told parliament that Wickremesinghe should be held responsible if he was killed. "I fear I could be killed over my work to clean up the cricket board," Ranasinghe told parliament, escalating a confrontation with Wickremesinghe who had been at loggerheads with the minister over the running of Sri Lanka Cricket. "If I am assassinated on the road, the president and his chief of staff will be responsible," Ranasinghe said. The cricket board is the richest sporting organisation in the otherwise bankrupt island country.

Gujarat Titans name Shubman as captain



New Delhi: Gujarat Titans Monday appointed Shubman Gill as their captain for the 2024 season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) following Hardik Pandya's decision to move back to Mumbai Indians. The Gujarat Titans will receive Rs 15 crore from MI for the all-cash trade deal apart from a hefty undisclosed transfer fee, a part of which will also go to the cricketer. Once Pandya's exit was sure, 24-year-old opener Gill was an obvious captaincy choice, having got the coveted 'orange cap' in the last season with 890 runs, second to only Virat Kohli's all-time record of 973.

Italy clinch 1st Davis Cup title in 47 years



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Malaga (Spain), Nov 27: Jannik Sinner capped his perfect week by leading Italy to its first Davis Cup title in nearly five decades.

Sinner took his record to 5-0 this week by beating Alex de Minaur 6-3, 6-0 in the second singles match of Sunday's final, giving Italy a 2-0 win over Australia for its first Davis Cup title since 1976.

Matteo Arnaldi had given Italy the first point with a 7-5, 2-6, 6-4 win over Alexei Popyrin.

The No 4 Sinner beat top-ranked Novak Djokovic in the singles and doubles matches in Saturday's semifinal showdown against Serbia.

The 22-year-old Italian needed 1 hour, 21 minutes to seal Italy's victory against Australia.

"We are all very young. We are really hungry to try to win it one more time for our life, but having this feeling at least once, it is a really special feeling," said Sinner, who has beaten nine top-10 players since September, though he lost to Djokovic in the ATP Tour Finals a week ago. Arnaldi earlier saved eight

break points before getting a break of his own to close out the first match in the decisive third set.

"I think I won one of the most important matches of my life," the 44th-ranked Arnaldi said.

The Italians, who had never won the title other than in 1976, had lost the three finals it played against Australia, which was last year's runner-up to Canada.

Australia eliminated Finland in the last four this year. The Aussies are 28-time champions but haven't lifted the trophy at men's tennis top team event since captain Lleyton Hewitt was on the winning squad as a player in 2003.

"There hasn't been another nation that's gone back-to-back in the last two years, so we are showing a pretty good effort collectively," De Minaur said.

"We are very, very close. It stinks like hell. We'll be back. We'll get this. I mean, we've got a very, very strong future ahead of us."

Australia this year became just the second nation to win 200 Davis Cup ties, with the United States being the other.

Odisha U-17 hockey teams shine

ODISHA U-17 BOYS HOCKEY TEAM WIN GOLD, WHILE U-17 GIRLS BAG THE BRONZE MEDAL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: The U-17 boys hockey team from Odisha was crowned champions at the 2nd Mirnawan Cup, held in Malaysia.

The Odisha U-17 boys hockey team emerged victorious, to clinch the gold following a thrilling, 4-3 victory against South Africa. Meanwhile, in another triumph for Odisha the U-17 girls team claimed bronze with a 2-0 win over South Africa.

Highlighting the prowess of Odisha hockey, Vivek Lakra was awarded the title of best goalkeeper in the boys category while Binati Minz and Janhabi Bada from the girls team were recognised as the best scorers of the tournament.

Following the victory, coach of the U-17 boys team, David John said, "We are very proud of this



achievement as it shows the strength of our program on an international level. This has been a tremendous opportunity for some of our young players to get international experience and they have performed very well."

"We have been training very hard and the boys have been together for a while and their chemistry was evident during the tournament. The state of Odisha



has been making great strides towards the development of hockey in the state and India and we are grateful for all their support", he further added.

Echoing these sentiments, coach of the U-17 girls team, Sujit Lakra said, "We were keen on winning our second gold, but unfortunately lost to a last-minute goal in the decider. However, I am very happy that we are going back to Odisha with a medal.

The fact that the girls have beaten teams like Australia, Japan and South Africa gives us immense confidence and it shows good preparation ahead of the upcoming Khelo India Youth Games 2024 to be held in Chennai."

The success in Malaysia augurs well for hockey in Odisha, as the state has undertaken numerous measures towards the development of the game in the state and the country.

India unveil Street Premier League SIX-TEAM TENNIS BALL CRICKET LEAGUE IN T10 FORMAT TO BE ORGANISED IN MARCH

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Nov 27: A six-team tennis ball league in T10 format comprising a total of 19

matches will be organised here from March 2-9 next year, with all games to be played inside cricket stadiums.

The league, named Indian Street Premier League (ISPL), will feature franchise-owned teams that will represent Mumbai (Maharashtra), Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), Bengaluru (Karnataka), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Kolkata (West Bengal), and Srinagar (Jammu and Kashmir).

With a squad limit of 16 players, each side will also have six-member support staff with an overall fee of Rs 10 lakh as well as a mentor; for example, a former Ranji Trophy player, at a fee of Rs 15 lakh. Each team will have a 'celebrity anchor owner'.

Each franchise will have a purse of Rs 1 crore while the base price at the auction for each player will be Rs 3 lakh with no upper limit. The player auction will be organised here February 24.

Former India head coach and captain Ravi Shastri is the commissioner of the ISPL whereas BCCI treasurer Ashish Shelar and Mumbai Cricket Association's (MCA) president Amol Kale are the core committee members.

Odisha FC humble MBSG in AFC Cup

OFC avenge their 0-4 loss to the Kolkata-based club in the Bhubaneswar leg earlier in the tournament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Nov 27: A dominant Odisha FC humiliated reigning ISL champions Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG) 5-2 in their high-scoring penultimate Group D clash of the AFC Cup here Monday, leaving the legacy club's legion of fans crestfallen in their own backyard.

The seasoned Hugo Boumous propelled Mohun Bagan into lead with his 17th-minute strike at the Salt Lake Stadium.

Roy Krishna found the equaliser in the 29th minute and Diego Mauricio silenced the home crowd by putting Odisha FC ahead with his 32nd-minute goal. The visiting OFC scored two goals in a span of three minutes.

More misery awaited Mohun Bagan as Cy Goddard made it 3-1 in favour of OFC by finding the back of the net in the 41st minute, leaving the fans wearing the green-and-maroon jersey at the Salt Lake Stadium shocked.

The hosts sought a way back into the game after the interval and came close as the hour approached, Liston Colaco's free-kick from 30 yards hitting the top of the OFC crossbar on the way over. But it was game on in the 63rd minute as Bagan pulled one back when substitute Kiyan Nassiri rose highest in the middle to head Boumous' cross from the left into the back of the net.

The visitors had a chance against the run of play as the game entered its final five minutes



Roy Krishna celebrates a goal against Mohun Bagan Super Giant

but Gahlot at the back post was off target after getting on the end of Jahouh's dangerous free-kick from the left. However, Mohun Bagan failed to draw parity this time.

Instead, when one thought that OFC would be content to hold on to their one-goal cushion, they fired in two more goals in the injury time to complete the humiliation.

Aniket Jadhav's (90+2) left-footed shot from very close range found its target after an assist by Roy Krishna following a set-piece situation. OFC were not done there as Isak Vanlalruatfela's right-footed shot from outside the box went in after Carlos Delgado did the spadework.

The goal-feast left Mohun Bagan Super Giant third in the points table and Sergio Lobera's team above MBSG. Thanks to the famous win, Odisha moved within a point of table-toppers Bashundhara Kings of Bangladesh, who they host December 11.

Odisha to host 2nd edition of Ultimate Kho Kho

ODISHA JUGGERNAUTS TO DEFEND THEIR CROWN AT HOME AS THE SEASON BEGINS DECEMBER 24

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 27: Backed with a successful, exciting and entertaining inaugural season which reached 164 million households, Ultimate Kho Kho (UKK) is all geared up for its grand second edition, scheduled to kick-start December 24, 2023, and final on January 13, 2024 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Odisha.

Inspired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's vision of 'sports for youth, youth for future', the Odisha government has not only hosted some of the major global sports events in the state, but it has also developed world-class multi-sport infrastructure and sporting experi-



We are extremely excited to host the 2nd edition of the Ultimate Kho Kho in Odisha. This is an exciting opportunity for all of us

TUSHARKANTI BEHERA | MINISTER OF STATE, ELECTRONICS & IT, SPORTS & YOUTH SERVICES, GOVT OF ODISHA

ences for sports enthusiasts from the state.

"Kho-Kho is a sport that is not only played but widely followed as well in Odisha and hosting the second edition here will be a great opportunity for the people of the state to not only experience the spectacle live but also get inspired and pursue the game. We are fully committed to making the season a grand suc-

cess," commented Tusharkanti Behera, Minister of State, Electronics & IT, Sports & Youth Services, Government of Odisha.

UKK, promoted by Amit Burman in collaboration with the Kho Kho Federation of India, is dedicated to reinventing and promoting the indigenous sport in a more dynamic and engaging manner.

"We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Odisha Government

and the Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik for their support for the Season 2. The resounding success of the inaugural edition has attracted significant interest from brands and helped us secure new partners. Our focus remains on selecting partners who share our long-term vision. Season 2 aims to build new-age superstars of the future especially with the presence of younger talent on the field. Anticipate more intensified rivalries, thrilling action, more speed and innovations that will redefine the sports viewing experience, making it more immersive TV viewing experience," commented Tenzing Niyogi, CEO and League Commissioner of Ultimate Kho Kho.

The Ultimate Kho Kho Season 2 will feature India's top 145 players, including 33 young talents aged between 16 to 18. Defending champions Odisha Juggernauts (owned by the Government of Odisha), Chennai Quick Guns (owned by KLO Sports), Gujarat Giants (owned by Adani Sportsline), Mumbai Khiladis (owned by Janhavi Dhariwal Balan, Punith Balan, and Badshah), Rajasthan Warriors (owned by Capri Global Group), and Telugu Yoddhas (owned by GMR Sports) will be the six franchises to fight for the coveted crown in the upcoming season. The exciting action from Season 2 will be broadcasted live, and the fixtures will be announced soon.