# HERE. NOW

**BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY DECEMBER 28 | 2023** 

Clarifying the buzz Actor Shruti Haasan denies her secret marriage with Santanu Hazarika and urges people to calm down

LEISURE | P2 VOLUME 13, ISSUE 267 | www.orissapost.com



War on multiple fronts

A string of incidents outside the Gaza Strip by Iran-backed militant groups highlights the risk of the conflict spreading

INTERNATIONAL | P10



IPO craze takes over

A total of 12 companies raise ₹8,931.69 crore through initial share sales in December, making it the best IPO month in two years

BUSINESS | P11



Proteas in command

Dean Elgar's century nullifies KL Rahul's gritty ton as South Africa take control of the first Test against India

### SHORT TAKES

### Sensex, Nifty at all-time high

Mumbai: Sensex and Nifty soared to fresh closing record highs Wednesday, with the 30-share benchmark index crossing the historic 72,000 mark, boosted by optimism over the country's macroeconomic fundamentals and firm global market trends. Reflecting broader investor bullishness, the 50-share index surged to a record high of 21,654.75 on intense buying in metal, commodity, auto and banking sectors. Rising for the fourth straight session, the BSE gauge jumped 701.63 points or 0.98 per cent to settle at its all-time closing high of 72,038.43. The Nifty climbed 213.40 points or 1 per cent to settle at a record high of 21,654.75.

#### Similipal tiger reserve reopens for tourists

Baripada: The Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj district, which was closed due to protests by a local outfit, reopened for tourists Wednesday, officials said. Tourists' entry to the tiger reserve had been suspended since November 25, owing to protests by the Similipal Vikash Parishad, to press for various demands, officials informed. The outfit withdrew their agitation Tuesday afternoon after their demands were fulfilled. including construction of a road and bridge, installation of a mobile tower and solar light system in the tiger reserve, the officials said, STR deputy director Samrat Gowda said 190 tourists visited the tiger reserve Wednesday.

### **State reports two** new Covid cases

Bhubaneswar: Odisha reported two fresh Covid-19 cases, pushing the coronavirus tally to five in December so far, a Health department official said here Wednesday, "In November, we had registered 11 cases while this month, so far, only five cases have been detected. We are closely monitoring the situation and have instructed the districts to enhance surveillance for influenza-like illness," Niranjan Mishra, the state's public health director, informed. P3



Senior citizen discount was scrapped so that you can take a photo with PM. We've set up a ₹6-lakh selfie booth

SENSEX **72038.43**  701.63

21654.80

₹ 75,014

**BBSR** 

**VARIATION** 

**1** ₹336

CTC

27.2°C

**MARKET WATCH** 

**FURO** 

GOLD

SILVER

WEATHER

**Max Temp** 

Min Temp

Humidity

Rainfall

**FORECAS**1

DRY WEATHER

VERY LIKELY



CREATIVE STROKES: A painter gives finishing touches Wednesday to a 3D mural on a boundary wall ahead of the inauguration of Srimandir Heritage Corridor project in Puri

**VARSITY BODY WARNS STUDENTS TAKING ADMISSION FOR COURSE** 

## MPhil unrecognised: UGC

New Delhi, Dec 27: The **University Grants Commission** (UGC) warned universities Wednesday against offering MPhil courses. The UGC said it is not a recognised degree and cautioned students against taking admission in such pro-

'It has come to the notice of the UGC that a few universities are inviting fresh applications for MPhil (Master of Philosophy) programmes. In this regard, it is to bring to the notice that MPhil is not a recognised degree." the UGC said in a statement.

"Regulation No 14 of the UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedures for Award of PhD Degree) Regulations, 2022 clearly states that higher educational institutions shall not offer an MPhil programme," UGC secretary Manish Joshi said.

The commission has asked the universities to take immediate steps to stop admissions to MPhil programmes for the 2023-24 academic year, Joshi added. "Students are advised not to take admission in any MPhil programme," Joshi further stated.

The MPhil programme was discontinued by the UGC in November 2022. "The MPhil courses that commenced prior to the notification of the PhD reg-



ulations will not be affected. The existing students will be allowed to complete the courses for the award of MPhil," Joshi explained.

However, a number of academic experts on condition of anonymity pointed out that the clamp down on MPhil has a reason. They said that many students in a number of universities continue to occupy rooms in the name of pursuing an MPhil degree. The reason why UGC has stopped recognising the Mphil degree is due to this, stated an academician.

The UGC also said that in the last five years a large number of varsities have come up across India. The UGC asked students to be careful about the subjects they choose in these varsities as many subjects on offer there are not recognised.

Earlier December 24, the Ministry of Education said 140 private universities had been established across the country in the last five years, with Gujarat being the leading state, followed by Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

बहादुरशाह जफर मार्ग

BAHADURSHAH ZAFAR MARG

According to the Ministry of Education statistics, 28 private universities were set up in Gujarat during the last five years while 15 universities were established in Maharashtra. Madhva Pradesh and Karnataka welcomed 14 and 10 universities respectively during the period.

"Private University is established by an Act passed by the state legislature concerned and Notification issued by the state government concerned," a senior Education Ministry official had explained.

### IOA forms 3-member panel to manage WFI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi, Dec 27: Indian Olympic Association (IOA) constituted Wednesday a three-memfollowing due procedure and not ber ad hoc committee to run the giving sufficient notice to day-to-day affairs of the WFI after the Sports Ministry suswrestlers for preparations.

while taking decisions. Wushu Association of India president Bhupinder Singh Bajwa will be the chairman of the panel with hockey Olympian MM Somaya and former international shuttler Maniusha Kanwar being the other two

pended the wrestling national

body for not following the pro-

visions of its own constitution

members. The Sports Ministry suspended Sunday the WFI, three days after it elected new office-bearers with Brij Bhushan Singh loyalist Sanjay Singh as president, and also asked IOA to constitute an ad-hoc panel to manage the af-

fairs of the sports body. The IOA said in a release that the newly-elected president and officials of WFI have made arbitrary decisions in violation of their own constitutional provisions and also flouted princi-

ples of good governance. "The IOA has recently become aware that the recently appointed president and officials of WFI have made arbitrary decisions in violation of their own con-

The government, while suspending the WFI, cited hasty announcement of organising the U-15 and U-20 nationals without

stitutional provisions and against the principles of good governance," IOA president PT Usha said in the release. "This not only highlights a governance gap within the federation but also signifies a noticeable departure from established norms. In this regard, the IOA has decided to appoint an ad hoc com-

The ad hoc committee was tasked to oversee and supervise WFI's operations, which include athlete selection, submitting entries for athletes to participate in international events, organising sports activities, handling bank accounts, managing the website, and other related responsibilities.

mittee," Usha added.

"This is an Olympic year, we must start preparing from now. We will conduct all senior and junior championships soon, along with camps, to maximize our chances of winning medals in the (Paris) Olympics," Bajwa said after being named in the panel.

could be imprisoned for up to

seven years, the agency clari-

fied. The Chinese security agency

particularly highlighted that

these images could potentially ex-

pose technical details and

progress in military equipment,

such as aircraft carriers, and

be used by 'hostile foreign forces'

to analyse combat effectiveness,

South China Morning Post

It could impact defence plan-

ning by revealing the location of

deployment and the type of mil-

(SCMP) said in a report.

### NZP to get cheetahs, giraffe, white lions Nanda said that the NZP will

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 27: The Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) here will soon have new guests with the addition of a number of animals and birds to its family in the New Year, according to a top official Wednesday.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Susanta Nanda stated that a pair of cheetahs and a number of white (albino) lion calves and birds will soon be brought to the zoo from abroad. These animals will be brought from a zoo in Dubai under an animal exchange programme in January next year, Nanda informed.

Moreover, the authorities of NZP are also planning to bring a few giraffes from the Zoological Garden at Alipore in Kolkata under another animal exchange programme, informed the PCCF. Currently, the zoo has a lone giraffe in its animal family.

bring a male and a female cheetah in exchange for five Manipur brow-antlered deer. Similarly, Nandankanan will get a few African white lion calves in exchange for five blackbucks with the Dubai Safari Park in the UAE, sources informed.

It should be stated here that all the animals that will be brought to NZP will need special care, sources said. Any lax arrangements can lead to the death of the animals. It should be stated here that, a giraffe brought from Alipore Zoo in Kolkata, May 25, 2008 was electrocuted on way.

In February 2016, a male giraffe brought from the Alipore Zoo died under mysterious circumstances. The giraffe had been brought in exchange of four tigers. Till date the reason behind the animal's death remains shrouded in mystery.

The PCCF also said that Nandankanan will soon be made into a world class zoo.

### **JUMBO KILLS MAN IN KEONJHAR DIST**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Champua, Dec 27: In yet another man animal conflict, a 40-year old man died after a wild elephant trampled him to death at Haridajodi village under Balibandha section under Champua police limits in Keonjhar district late Tuesday evening. The deceased was identified as Mithun Munda, son of Sukura Munda of Haridajodi village.

It should be stated here that\_\_\_ there are no signs of the humanelephant conflict decreasing. In 2022-23 (April 2022-March 2023), a total of 148 people had died due to elephant attacks in the state. This year both the elephant and human deaths are continuing in the same vein. As per sources in the Forest department, so far 70 people have lost their lives since April this year till date.

Wildlife expert Subhendu Mallick has repeatedly pointed out that unless special steps are taken for the protection of the tuskers, the conflict will continue to grow. He said that because of reduction in habitat, more and more elephants are entering into human localities leading to frequent conflicts. The death of Mithun, comes only a day after when two elephants died in different parts of the state.

### No breakthrough in embassy blast case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 27: Officials probing a blast that occurred near the Israeli embassy here suspect it was a well-orchestrated plan, knowing that no CCTV camera was installed on Prithviraj Road, police sources said Wednesday. The sources said there was no CCTV camera at the location as compared to Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Road where more than a dozen cameras are installed outside and near the embassy.

The footage obtained from these cameras show some people, including two youngsters, roaming in the area, but they are not on the list of suspects yet, police informed.

A team of forensic experts from the National Security Guard (NSG) visited the spot in the morning and collected samples of leaves and grass that they suspected might contain chemicals used in the explosion, police sources said. They added that a team of NSG's

### SECURITY AGENCY FEELS THAT THE SUPPORTERS ARE INDIRECTLY HARMING THE COUNTRY BY REVEALING SECRET DETAILS

### China promises tough action against 'military fans'

Beijing, Dec 27: China has warned amateur military enthusiasts to avoid posting photos of the country's sensitive military equipment online. Officials said that by posting photos, they could endanger national security.

According to a report in CNN, the warning has been posted by China's counter-intelligence agency on 'WeChat'. It raised concerns about how 'military fans' are spreading the word to a larger population through social media platforms like 'Weibo', which have hundreds of millions of active users, the outlet further said. These photos have become a common site as China is rapidly modernising its forces.

This is a cool hobby, but you must be very careful. Some individual military enthusiasts severely endanger national military security by illegally ob-



Chinese aircraft carrier Fujian has been the cynosure of many photographers

taining information regarding national defence and disseminating them on the internet," CNN quoted China's Ministry of State Security as saying on

ports, ports, national defence and military industrial units, they drove to or took ferries or planes that pass by designated routes, and clandestinely photographed with telephoto lenses or drones," the civilian spy

ministry added.

agency further said. "This is not at all good for national security and can cause a lot of harm," the

First time or occasional of-

itary equipment. The offenders who used professional equipment such as telephoto lenses and drones to secretly photograph military equipment were punished, the SCMP report said. In 2021, one such person was sentenced to prison on charges of illegally obtaining state secrets after se-

'WeChat'. fenders may receive only a warncretly filming the Fujian air-"With a focus on military airing but repeat violators rule craft carrier. dog squad also inspected the spot.



# leisure



### **SHAKIRA TO HAVE HER 21FT TALL STATUE IN COLOMBIAN HOMETOWN**

Singer Shakira said that she was very excited while showing off the honour she received from her hometown. The 46-year-old Grammy winner took to her Instagram page to share her thoughts on her statue that was built in her hometown Barranquilla, reports aceshowbiz.com.

#### **KANYE WEST SHARES** WRITTEN APOLOGY NOTE

Rapper Kanye West took to social media to issue a public apology written in Hebrew and said that he deeply regrets his anti-Semitic remarks. "I sincerely apologise to the Jewish community for any unintended outburst caused by my words or actions. It was not my intention to hurt or demean, and I deeply regret any pain I may have caused," he wrote.





GaneshaSpeaks.com

You will be in a tight fix as the day starts. However, that's exactly the kind of situation in which your skills are tested. In the evening you will draw a lot of praise for your excellent performance. If nesha chooses to shower his blessings on you, you will sign new deals.

#### **TAURUS**

This day is meant for taking some time out from your busy schedule, and seeking some fun and relaxation. So says Ganesha. It is possible that you will be getting together with your friends and family members for a fun filled evening followed by a great dinner and a late

#### **■ GEMINI**

You are likely to be in a romantic mood today. You may just end up falling in love today. A difficult situation will bring out the competitive streak in you and spur you on to physical and mental excellence Your capacity and intelligence will be testi fied to by your work, says Ganesha.

#### **CANCER**

You will focus on financial matters and plan accordingly. Compared to expenses, vou will save more. A beneficial day for cashiers, money lenders and petty traders. Ganesha counsels hard work to achieve success.

#### **LEO**

You will be unable to express the feelings that rise up inside you in spite of wanting to. However, keep them close to your heart. You will be very serious about your work today. There is a possibility of some delay in your schedule today due to unforeseen problems, says Ganesha.

### **■ VIRGO**

In all likelihood, you will be eager to grab the monetary challenges that come your way, as they only enhance your desire for success. You will bring up new ideas and better methods of tackling the challenges on hand. Ganesha gives you an assurance that your present business views will do

Ganesha advises you not to take stress about small issues or matters. To avoid tension and to gain mental peace it is advised you perform yoga or meditation There will be pressure put on you regard ing certain matters at the work-front. You should take decisions regarding critical matters only after carefully weighing the pros and cons.

### **SCORPIO**

Thank Ganesha that you have the grace to handle today, you are going to be bogged down with a lot of work pressure. By the end of the day, try some stress bursting activities like yoga, meditation of listening to soft music.

### **SAGITTARIUS**

Ganesha predicts a day full of romantic developments today. Mushy talks and whispering sweet nothings in your beloved's ears may give you little joys of life. However, brace yourselves as there are times when relationships do not workout. and you may experience this soon.

### CAPRICORN

Your lover is in for many pleasant surprises today You'll be in a completely romantic mood, making every wish of your sweetheart your command. Both of you will go shopping, and have fun. Extravagant expenditures will keep you charged up for the day. You will achieve what you had wanted, that is the happiness of your sweetheart.

### AQUARIUS Travelling is on the cards for

you today. Ganesha advises you to travel alone, because if you take people with different tastes along with you, their preferences may dampen your mood and spoil the trips.

### PISCES

Your planetary configuration not being favorable, you are advised not to start any new projects today. The benefits accrued by any project you take up today might not justify the risks associated with it Businessmen need to be extra careful in all their dealings



Mumbai: Actress Shruti Haasan, who made it known to the world about her dating artist Santanu Hazarika, has

reacted to rumours of her getting secretly married to him on her personal social media

Clearing the air around

it, the Salaar actress took to her social media and asked people to calm down. She wrote on her Instagram stories, "So, I'm not married. For someone who has been open about every single thing, why would I hide this? LOL. So people, who don't know me at all, please calm down." Soon after her, BF Santanu Hazarika

also posted, "You all need to calm down! We are not down! We are no married. Individuals who don't know us, please stop spreading rumour. Yesterday, social media

personality Orry, who is friends with all of B-town hosted an 'AMA' session on Reddit and revealed that Shruti Hasaan was rude to him during an event and also addressed her boyfriend Santanu Hazarika 'husband' sparking rumour of them being secretly married.



choices, includes risqué dresses and statement saris. As she prepares to make her OTT debut, she discusses her fashion evolution over the years.

"Fashion has always been a form of selfexpression for me. Over the years, I've experimented with different styles, and been a journey of self-discovery. I enjoy the creative process of putting together my looks. It's about having fun, being free and comfortable with fashion," the Radhe actress shared. She also talked about her OTT

debut. She said, "Today, OTT is booming, if script and right project comes that excites me then why not? I have never made that distinction be it films, OTT, stage performances, music videos etc - and equally respect them all. It's not apprehension, just a matter of finding the right

On the work front. Disha turned a director this year music video Kyun Karu Fikar.



Debuting as a character as headstrong and feisty as her gave me so much to work with. I fell in love with her the day I auditioned." Furthermore, the actress revealed that Ashim Ahluwalia, the director of *Class*, allowed her to contribute creatively to the show. This included rewriting her dialogues, co-creating scenes not initially scripted, shaping digital inserts for livestream comments and text messages, and even providing input on outfits for her character.

girl archetype, Yashika.



in the immensely popular

streaming series *Class*, openly

shared insights into her jour-

ney of achieving success in

The young actress articu-

sider who's never even really

foot in an acting class -

god knows, I've had to

work to get here. But

I've never felt more

driven than I am

today. As an actor

perpetually moti-

vated to carve a dis-

lated, "Being an industry out-

the industry as an outsider.

### Twinkle busts myth about actresses of the 90s

Mumbai: Former actress Twinkle Khanna recently talked about how she starved herself while filming the song 'Mohabbat Ho Gayee' from Baadshah and felt like a gas canister. The International Khiladi actress

said, "I know you see all these actresses saying that they don't diet and they eat everything; it's not true, most of them are starving. I was starving, if you want your stomach to be flat in all those catsuits that we used to wear—I don't know why we wore them. This was my own brainwave that I'm

FUN

going to live on channa. For some reason, being Gujarati, I felt that was also cheap, and you know, I could get it easily wherever I went. So, this was my diet."

"In the song SRK had to lift me up, and I was so scared that I would explode like the gas canisters in the Parliament, but I didn't. So if you see my teeth clenching there, other things are also clenching and just holding on, but yes, I survived that bit as well," Twinkle ended.

On the work front, Twinkle recently launched her latest book, Welcome to Paradise.

**AGENCIES** 

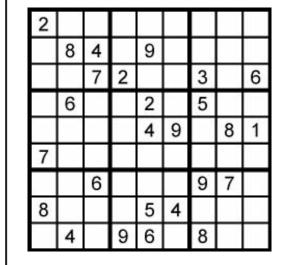
10

**CROSSWORD** 





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



### **CALVIN AND HOBBES**

**PEANUTS** 

MARCIE, YOU'RE

GONNA KILL

THAT KID WHO'S

BEEN CALLINE

YOU NAMES

YOU'VE HIT HIM WITH A

FIRST-AID KIT CLOBBERED

HIM WITH A LUNCH TRAY PUSHED HIM INTO THE

A PATCH OF POISON OAK

HAVE YOU NOTICED, SIR

THAT HE HASN'T CALLED

ME A NAME ALL DAY ?

WHERE IS

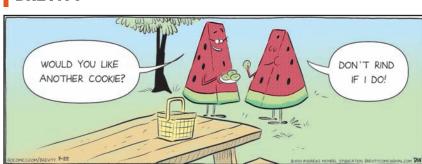
HE NOW?

IN THE

DISPENSARY



### BREVITY



### Copyright ©2023 PuzzleJunction.com

19 Electronic cue

card

23 Sea wolf

22 Movie part

24 Global get-

together

25 Taro plant roots

**Across** 1 Four-star

3 Empty words 9 Musician on

his own

10 Belly button

11 Lacking in magnanimity

(4-8)

13 Like hen's teeth

15 Glasgow gal

<u>Down</u>

1 Spice rack 2 Fancy home

17 Calamitous 18 Eskimo boat

20 Lukewarm **4** Empty talk (3,3)

21 Audition tape

5 Court game

there

6 Cote d'Azur is

7 Kind of phone

8 Wash cycle

12 Caffè latte

14 Astronaut's

concern

16 Overhaul

SUDOKU

CROSSWORD

# SOLUTIONS

6 4 2 7 8 1 1 3 8 5 9 7 9 8 2 5 3 9 7 4 6 9 2 5 8 7 3 1 1 9 7 5 8 3 6 4 2

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



### 2 new Cov cases; tally goes up to 5

downtown



Bhubaneswar, Dec 27: Odisha reported two fresh Covid-19 cases, pushing the coronavirus tally to five in December so far, a Health department official said Wednesday

"In November, we had registered 11 cases while this month, so far, only five cases have been detected. We are closely monitoring the situation and have instructed the districts to enhance surveillance for influenza-like illness," Niranjan Mishra, the state's public health director,

He said Covid-19 cases have marginally increased across India, with five states - Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Goa – contributing to over 90 per cent of the infec-

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, in a message on X, said, "Pandemics like #COVID pose devastating impact on human lives, threatening lives and livelihood of millions. On #InternationalDayOfEpidemicPr eparedness, reaffirm commitment to continue to bolster our resilient healthcare system, and prepare Yodhas in every household for a disaster and pandemic-



CREATIVITY APLENTY: Visitors appreciate handcrafted items at International Contemporary Art Exhibition organised by 3G Artist Group at Lalit Kala Akademi in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

### **IDCO** officer held in DA case

Bhubaneswar. Dec 27: Vigilance sleuths Wednesday arrested a senior Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) officer for allegedly possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income, officials said.

The officer is serving in the Industrial Infrastructure **Development Corporation** (IDCO), Bhubaneswar, they said.

Acting on a complaint, Vigilance department sleuths conducted raids at seven places in the state and unearthed a triple-storey building in Cuttack, a double-storey building in Jajpur, two flats in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, besides 10 plots allegedly belonging to him, the officials

Gold jewellery weighing 703.38 gram and 869 gram of silver, bank, insurance and postal deposits over ₹70.55 lakh, along with vehicles and household articles worth over ₹20.88 lakh were also found in his possession, said A James, SP, Vigilance-Bhubaneswar Division.

# No Zero Night party post 12:30am: CP

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 27: In a bid to ensure that Zero Night celebrations go incident-free in twin cities, the Commissionerate Police has stepped up its vigil and urged hotel, club and apartment owners to finish New Year eve parties by 12:30am. The police also instructed the stakeholders not to use loudspeakers whose sound exceeds 65

Speaking on the security arrangements, twin city police commissioner Saumendra Priyadarsi said, "More than 50 platoons of additional force will be deployed in every nook and corner of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. Hotels and bars seeking to run till 1:30am will have to

3 held for illegal

cattle trafficking

Wednesday arrested three per-

when the PCR van gave the ve-

hicle a chase. The police finally

intercepted the vehicle after a few

During inspection, the police

found five cows in the trolley

tied inhumanely with a rope,

said an officer at the Airfield

police station. During ques-

tioning, the accused failed to provide any document regarding

the procurement of the cows. The accused were booked under Sections 279 and 336 of IPC, along with Sections 11 (a), (d) and (f) of Prevention of

Cruelty to Animals Act. They

were produced before a local

Primary investigation has re-

vealed that the accused used to

procure cattle illegally from

around Jatni area and sell them

to customers in the Capital city.

court for remand.

kms, he added.

obtain prior permission from the Commissionerate Police."

A final plan will be chalked out in this regard at a meeting with deputy commissioner of police (DCP) Prateek Singh and additional commissioner of police Brijesh Rai that will strategise the role of ACP and IIC in the security arrangement, he added. Moreover, Priyadarsi said there is no restriction on any kind of celebrations. "However, strict action will be taken against

drunken driving and road rage. The organisers, particularly hotel and club owners, are required to deploy additional staff More than 50 platoons of additional force will be deployed in every nook and corner of Bhubaneswar and **Cuttack to ensure** incident-free Zero Night celebrations

to ease congestion at parking areas. They should also make special arrangements to drop inebriated guests at home, said a senior police official. For smooth conduct of the event, they must ensure the venue does not get overcrowded, he added.

Expressing resentment over

the decisions, several hotel owners in twin cities said obtaining permission from police for overnight celebrations is a regular affair in other states. Although the hoteliers and pub owners requested the Commissionerate Police to extend the deadline for the New Year eve celebrations till 2:30am, it went unheeded, they added.

Other guidelines issued by the twin city police are: Loud music must not be played within 100 metre radius of schools, colleges, hospitals and courtsl; celebrations must not, in any form, disturb senior citizens and students; venues must comply with fire safety standards and organisers must avail an ambulance and medical team in emer-

### Sisir Saras 2024 to

Bhubaneswar, Dec 27: A total

Odisha Rural Development & Marketing Society (ORMAS) Director -cum -Chief Executive Officer Poonam T Guha said the national level fair will be held from January 6 to 15 at the Biju Patnaik PlayGround, Baramuda.

A special food court with 20 stalls and theme stall depicting the ORMAS activities like Marketing, Livelihoods and Skill Development will be the centre of attraction for the revellers in this year's mela

### Govt to create 228 senior AMO posts

**OAMS CADRE RESTRUCTURE** 

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 27: With an aim to ensure smooth and efficient management of healthcare facilities in Ayurvedic hospitals and dispensaries, the state government has decided to restructure and revive the pay structure of Odisha Ayurvedic Medical Service (OAMS) Cadre of the Health and Family Welfare department.

As per a notification issued by the government, out of the existing sanctioned strength of 690 base level posts of Ayurvedic Medical Officer (AMO) in the pay scale of ₹44,900 to ₹1,42,400 (Level-10 under ORSP Rules, 2017), 228 posts shall stand abolished in lieu of creation of 245 posts at different levels in the cadre hierarchy, leaving 462 posts at base level.

Moreover, there shall be creation of 228 senior AMO posts in the pay scale of ₹56,100 to ₹1,77,500 (Level-12 under ORSP Rules, 2017) which is the first promotional hierarchy in the cadre. In addition to the existing 20 District Ayurvedic Medical Officer/Deputy

Superintendent/Superintendent posts, 15 posts of District Ayurvedic Medical Officer (DAMO) in the pay scale of ₹56,100 to ₹1,77,500 (Level-12 under ORSP Rules, 2017) shall be created arriving at a total of 35 posts, which is the 2nd promotional hierarchy in the cadre.

In addition to the existing one post of Deputy Director (Ayurveda) in the pay scale of ₹67.700 to ₹2.08.700 (Level-13 under ORSP Rules, 2017), another post of Deputy Director (Ayurveda) -Level-13- shall be created arriving at a total of two posts, which is the third promotional hierarchy in the

cadre. There shall be creation of one post of Joint Director (Ayurveda) in the pay scale of ₹78,800 to ₹2,09,200 (Level-14 under ORSP Rules, 2017), which is the fourth promotional hierarchy in the cadre.

The total cadre strength will be 728.

#### **OHMS CADRE REVISION** The government also re-

structured Odisha Homoeopathic Medical Service (OHMS) cadre with corresponding pay revision. With this, the total cadre strength has been enhanced to 630 with 399 posts at base level. The H&FW secretary, in a notification, mentioned that there would be 196 posts at the first promotional hierarchy in the pay matrix of Level-12 under ORSP Rules. The number of the posts of Deputy Director in the pay Level-13 would be enhanced to two. Similarly, the fourth promotional hierarchy in the cadre would be the post of joint director in the pay Level-14. The revised cadre would include: Joint director-1; deputy director-2; DHMO/deputy superintendent/CMO-32; and senior

### Steady economy strength of democracy: Ahluwalia

Bhuhaneswar, Dec 27: The Commissionerate Police ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

sons allegedly involved in illegal Bhubaneswar, Dec 27: Despite trafficking and sale of cattle. governments changing at the The accused were identified as Centre, continuity has been Enam Khan, Satar Khan and maintained in economic policy. which demonstrates the strength Mahammad Salman, all natives of Delanga area in Puri district. of Indian democracy, said noted ACP Zone II, GS Chakrabarty economist and former deputy said around 3:30am a police pachairman of Montek Singh trol team noticed a recklessly Ahluwalia at 106th edition of driven mini-truck travelling at the Indian Economic Association a high speed on the stretch be-(IEA) Conference being organised tween Jatni and Sundarpada. at KIIT Deemed to be University The driver refused to slow down here Wednesday.

The conference commenced with insightful remarks from distinguished speakers, shedding light on crucial economic aspects and the evolving landscape of technology and policymaking.

Speaking as chief guest at the inaugural session, Ahluwalia delved into the influence of evolv-



ing technology on policymaking, emphasizing the rise of tech giants and their role in decision making. He highlighted the impending structural changes needed to facilitate technologyled advancements

Ahluwalia also advocated for a balanced policy approach to integrate new technology without inhibiting innovation, stressing on ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to jobs. He urged economists to reflect on these challenges and encouraged cultivation of diverse perspectives within the IEA.

On the occasion, the guests released a book titled 'Community Builder for Education, Empowerment and Enlightenment, honouring contributions of KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta.

The 'Architect of IEA' award was presented to well known economist Shanmugasundaram. The 'Best Controller' award was given to the Sanjay Kumar, registrar of BRA Bihar University, while the Gyanchand Academic Excellence Award was given to Pankaj Kumar, post-doctoral researcher of the department of economics, TM Bhagalpur University.

### kickstart from Jan 6

AGENCIES

of 400 stalls will be erected by Women Self Help Groups (WSHGs), Producers Groups (PGs) and Producers Enterprises (PEs) having various handicrafts, handloom and food spices products from 26 states in the SISIR SARAS-2024.

Guha was speaking at the

preparatory meeting held here Tuesday for organising the mela.

### IIT Bhub sets up research centre for application of AI

AHRC WILL PROMOTE A COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE SCIENTISTS AND ACADEMICIANS FROM MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES AND INSTITUTIONS WILL COME TOGETHER TO FORM A COMMON RESOURCE AND KNOWLEDGE POOL

Bhubaneswar, Dec 27: Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar has established a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) and HPC Research Centre (AHRC) to conduct interdisciplinary and collaborative research in the fields of AI and **High Performance Computing** 

AHRC is designed as a National Research Centre with participation of other eminent academic, industry, and government research organisations in India and abroad to find solutions to real world problems in several areas through research, innovation and application of AI and HPC.

AHRC will promote a collaborative environment where scientists and academicians from multiple disciplines and institutions will come together to form a common resource pool and knowledge pool to cope up with this fast moving

Researchers from various fields of engineering, computer science, medicine, agriculture, basic sciences, finance, economics and other areas will work together to find integrated and comprehensive solutions to problems faced by industry and society.

The most pressing research and innovation focus of AHRC is in the application of AI and HPC in areas that directly ben-



efit the society such as medicine, agriculture, environment, sustainable communities, smart cities and cyber security.

IIT Bhubaneswar director

Shreepad Karmalkar will serve as the chairman of the AHRC Board while Ashwini Kumar Nanda will lead AHRC activities

as its founding centre-director.

In addition, Subhranshu Ranian Samantaray and Manoranjan Satpathy will serve as associate centre-directors of AHRC.

Speaking about the novel initiative of the IIT, Karmalkar said, "This is a one-of-a-kind national research centre hosted by IIT Bhubaneswar. It will provide a global platform to the researchers from the state and across India for leading edge research and innovation in the field of Artificial Intelligence and high performing computing, which is the need of the hour.

Center-director Ashwini Nanda said, "The goal of AHRC is to bring global knowhow to serve the people of India, as well as make global technology impact and serve the global community through its world class research.

Besides establishing research collaboration with over a dozen US universities and industrial laboratories. AHRC is also collaborating closely with national institutions such as AIIMS and other IIT's, as well as universities in Odisha and the Odisha state govt.

AHRC scientists are working on developing AI tools for diagnosis of several diseases and fast screening for life threatening diseases in the rural communities in Odisha in collaboration with scientists from-AIIMS Bhubaneswar and State University of New York.

### 'Nua-0' activities Bhubaneswar: The deadline for sports and cultural activities under 'Nua-O'

Date extended for

programme of the state government has been extended till January 15. This was revealed during a review meeting of the 'Nua-O' initiative held at the conference hall of Rural Development department under the chairmanship of Higher Education Minister Atanu Sabvasachi Nayak and the department's commissioner-cum-secretary Arbind Agrawal.















The flame of the aspiration must be so straight and so ardent that no obstacle can dissolve it.

THE MOTHER



Emily Wilkinson &

Kanni Wignaraja

The use of credit

creditworthiness

has long been

recognised as a

threat to financial

particularly in the

ultimate measure of

ratings as the

a country's

stability,

Global South

### **Credit Rating Chaos**

The sun-drenched coral islands and reefs of the Maldives are in existential danger. With 80 per cent of the country's population living just one metre above sea level, many islands could become uninhabitable as climate change causes the ocean's level to rise. By the end of this century, half a million people could be displaced. The Maldives is confronting this threat with a range of innovative adaptation initiatives, from restoring coral reefs to floating solar-power systems. But survival does not come cheap.

The Maldives earns much of its revenues from high-end tourism. So, like many other countries, it was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought much global travel to a halt. But in 2021, when restrictions were loosened, a powerful tourism rebound fuelled robust economic recovery in the Maldives, with the promise of a return to pre-pandemic growth by 2023.

That recovery was interrupted by two successive credit-ratings downgrades – first from Moody's and then from Fitch – which caused borrowing costs to rise sharply. The last bonds the Maldives issued in 2021 carried a coupon rate of 9.875 per cent and a yield of 10.5 per cent. Since then, bond yields have surpassed 20 per cent – a reflection of in-

vestors' perceptions of higher risk. As a result, the Maldives has effectively been locked out of international markets. It has not issued a bond to finance its development programmes since 2021.

The Maldives isn't alone. During the pandemic, 11 of the 16 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) – which are particularly vulnerable to climate change - that are rated faced a downgrade or a negative credit outlook by at least one of the big three credit-ratings agencies (CRAs): Moody's, Fitch, and Standard & Poor's This is catastrophic for economic-development and climate-adaptation efforts.

The use of credit ratings as the ultimate measure of a country's creditworthiness has long been recognised as a threat to financial stability, particularly in the Global South. Downgrades have an enormous impact, triggering sell-offs and market volatility at precisely the moment countries can least afford it. Yet the creditratings industry itself is neither transparent nor competitive.

A recent UNDESA study found that during the pandemic, emerging-market and developing economies' credit ratings were downgraded by a total of 125 notches whereas advanced economies – which both contracted and accumulated debt more rapidly - were downgraded by only six notches. This probably partly reflects the fact that the big three CRAs are largely

staffed and regulated in the Global North. Moreover, rating decisions are often shaped by ideological biases such as the belief that government intervention in the economy automatically undermines growth and efficiency – instead of the factors that matter for debt sustainability: economic and social development, as well as climate resilience. Sovereign credit assessments capture

nored, despite their important implications for debt sustainability. The SIDS are among the world's most highly indebted countries: their public-debt-to-GDP ratio averaged 82.5 per cent in 2020, and is set to remain above 70 per cent until 2025. Climate change is an important reason why. As a 2018 study by the United Nations Environment Programme showed, climate vulnerability raised the average cost of debt for a sample of developing economies by 117 basis points over the previous decade, forcing them to pay \$40 billion in additional interest payments. Some have predicted that, over the coming decade, this burden will increase by \$146-168 billion.

climate-related risks indirectly, through environmental, social, and

governance (ESG) scores, but efforts to build climate resilience are ig-

This would prove catastrophic for the SIDS. If these countries are to stay above water (literally), they must be able to invest in the building blocks of sustainable growth and development: people, infrastructure, energy, and food security. But their debt-servicing costs are already massive - far bigger than the limited climate finance delivered through global agreements. From 2016 to 2020, SIDS received \$9.42 billion in development and climate finance to strengthen their resilience, and paid out \$26.6 billion to external creditors.

Making matters worse, the SIDS have few options for restructuring their debts – not least because of ratings downgrades. Notably, countries participating in the G20's Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative face the threat of a downgrade. Small wonder, then, that only three eligible countries have so far applied for relief under the Common Framework, Downgrading countries while they try to renegotiate their debts - nearly half of which is held by private bondholders - amounts to a devastating blow, as it compounds the already-high barriers between them and international credit markets.

Secure, prosperous, climate-resilient states are clearly better for the rest of the world - including private creditors and advanced-economy governments - than unstable, debt-ridden countries enduring extensive human and environmental dislocation and loss. If credit ratings are to remain a market barometer, they must be made transparent, fair, and constructive.

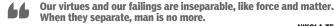
To this end, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has rightly called for the suspension of credit ratings during crises. CRAs should also suspend the publication of reviews during periods of upheaval, to allow markets to adjust to changing fundamentals.

CRAs' ideological biases and lack of transparency could be addressed by decentralising them or establishing regional or multilateral ratings agencies. Finally, CRAs should share guidance on how climate risks and adaptation efforts fit into their methodologies, particularly when it comes to rating sovereigns.

Just as the credit-ratings system in the United States was reformed after the 2008 global financial crisis through the Dodd-Frank Act, CRAs must be improved in response to the challenges SIDS are now facing. Plagued by fires and floods linked to a climate crisis they had no hand in creating, these countries deserve support, not punishment.

Emily Wilkinson is Director of the Resilient and Sustainable Islands Initiative at ODI, a global affairs think tank. Kanni Wignaraja is UNDP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific.

### WISDOM CORNER



There are things known and there are things unknown, and in

Follow your bliss and the universe will open doors where there were

### FOCUS POLITICS

### **GIMMICKS VS REALITY**



Dhurjati Mukherjee

**ELECTORAL POLITICS IS MORE AND MORE GETTING CARVED OUT** ON GIMMICKS **AND FALSE PROMISES** 

NDIA bloc's decision to give top priority to seat-sharing for 2024 general elections is in the right direction, but it would do well to have partners share assessment of the electorate's outlook to plug loopholes and engage with it through a combined strategy. More so as understanding electoral politics is difficult given that calculations go awry as witnessed recently. The gimmicks in Indian politics are intriguing. Moreover, majority of the electorate is uneducated or half educated and fails to comprehend the real motives of politic parties. Corruption charges against leaders of the ruling dispensation in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, for example did not quite bother the masses. Charisma instead held sway and issues that mattered got relegated to the back-

Another important factor that needs attention is the propagation of aggressive Hindutva that swayed the masses in favour of the BJP, despite such an approach being harmful to social integration and leading to alienation of minorities. As the CPM editorial in its party organ, People's Democracy aptly pointed out: "The basic failure of the Congress has been its inability to confront this reality (Hindutva consolidation that has created an 'over-arching pan-Hindu identity').

The inauguration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya in January 2024 will again impact those who are enamoured with the Hindu ethos. But it can't be considered as true Hindu religion in the backdrop of reading the philosophical propositions of Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and even later interpreters such as Dr S Radhakrishnan and Swami Rangathananda. The INDIA bloc would need to work around it and reach out to voters.

At the same time, parties and their leaders would need to stress on grassroots development and not get caught in pop-



The freebies announced by the Congress had rival BJP doing the same. There was hardly any promise about reviving the economy and deterioration in living conditions of the rural poor

ulist tendencies to attract and win voters' sentiments. The freebies announced by the Congress had rival BJP doing the same, be it free bus rides or cheaper gas cylinders. There was hardly any promise about reviving the economy and deterioration in living conditions of the rural poor and the surge in unemployment rates over the years.

Congress leader and former Finance Minister Chidambaram recently quoted the PLFS to say that the Workers Population Ratio (WPR), the share of working people in the population, was 46%, including 69% for men and 22% for women. It is estimated that less than 50% of them actually work. The unemployment rate for graduates below 25 years of age is 42% while among the employed, 57% are self-employed. He also said that rising prices of essential commodities combined with unemployment had affected the purchasing power of the people. As a result, the net financial savings of households reached a historic low of 5.1% in 2022-23. But the message didn't get to the voters or was unfortunately ignored in the din of freebies coming their way.

The looming agricultural cri-

sis, acute job scarcity, poor education and health services, lack of rural infrastructure development, dysfunctional cities, broken judicial system and rampant environmental damage to the ecosystem were not areas of concern for the ruling party. No plan was given to address these development deficiencies and widening disparity in the incomes of the rich and the poor, of the urban and rural sectors, of the formal and informal sec tors did not find elaborate mentions in the campaigns of the BJP. The Congress tried to highlight these issues but was unsuccessful. The crux of the matter is that the voters are not able to judge and understand the manipulative techniques of political parties.

While religious fundamentalism has been used to brainwash the half-educated and uneducated sections, the clamour that India is set to become the third largest economy, banking on the wealth accumulation of the corporate groups, is being highlighted. The 'excellent' performance of the country's economy has been used to win hearts of the educated/elite who are oblivious of India's backward regions. Various global agencies are painting fantastic pictures

of the country's economic de velopment without considering the incomes of the lowest 25% of the population. Even if the GDP grows at around 6.5% this fiscal, will it lead to perceptible income growth of the lowest 25% of the population?

India is currently said to be the fifth largest economy with a GDP of \$3.7 trillion and the leaders are talking of becoming the third largest economic power by 2030. A vision document prepared by Niti Aayog has shown that India will be a \$30 trillion developed economy by 2047 but the document has failed to reveal the income growth of the poor and the economically weaker sections during the last decade or so. This is because there's been no growth in their incomes

A professor at a national conference expressed concern that the rich drive to big hotels passing through slums and shanty settlements but are least both ered to reflect on it. Even the undersigned, who has lectured in many institutes, including government's, finds that the bureaucracy is least perturbed over the poverty and squalor existing in rural and backward areas and fails to define true development, unless directed to. For it, development is some thing that benefits the middle income sections, normally residing in cities and towns.

Thus, ruling dispensations aided by the bureaucracy, have not paid the attention that the rural sector or the backward areas deserve. Electoral politics is increasingly getting carved out on gimmicks and false promises.

If India is really to become a developed country as is being aired time and again, there must be a change in strategy. More attention is needed for rural sector and an action plan formulated for uplift of the poor or the less privileged in the coming term of office of the new government. INDIA bloc needs to do its homework right.

### SPECTRUM SOCIETY

### Cultural competence in organisations



Debabrata Dash

**CULTURAL COMPETENCE IS ESSENTIAL IN TODAY'S WORLD** WHICH IS **BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIVERSE** 

bitious growth plan of going global, cultural competence is one of the significant elements to be focused at. While competence refers to ability, skill, knowledge, or proficiency that enables an individual to perform a task or function effectively, cultural competence is essential in today's world which is becoming increasingly diverse, where individuals from various cultural backgrounds interact in various surroundings such as workplaces. healthcare, education, and community environments. It represents a set of values, behaviours, attitudes, and practices within a system, organisation, programme or among individuals which enables them to work crossculturally. It also refers to the ability to honour and respect the beliefs, language, interpersonal styles and behaviours of individuals and families receiving services, as well as staff who are providing such services

Striving to achieve cultural competence is a dynamic, ongoing, developmental process that requires a long-term commitment. Cultural competence requires a comprehensive and coordinated plan that includes pol-

s many progressive or- icymaking by apex leadership, nises the importance of cultural mation is accessible to all patration and evaluation and infrastructure building.

Key components of cultural competence include awareness of one's own culture, knowledge of other cultures, open mindedness, adaptability, different communication styles, non-verbal cues, the potential for misunderstandings based on cultural differences and cultural sensitivities in practices. Assessing cultural competence in the hiring process is equally important to ensure that candidates can work effectively in diverse environments. Some strategies to test cultural competence during the hiring process include behavioral event interviewing to explore a candidate's past experience, inclusion of a diversity panel who represent various functions in the organisation, reference check, assessment of cultural sensitivity through role play and simulations and identification of candidate's self-perceived cultural competence through assessment tools.

Imagine a hospital that serves a diverse community with patients from various cultural backgrounds. The hospital staff recogcompetence in providing effective and patient-centered care. Here's how they demonstrate cultural competence.

The hospital employs a diverse staff that reflects the community it serves, including individuals who are fluent in multiple languages. For languages not covered by the staff, the hospital has access to professional interpreters who can assist in facilitating clear communication between healthcare providers and patients. All healthcare providers and staff members undergo cultural competence training. This training covers topics such as cultural awareness, communication styles, religious practices, and healthcare beliefs of the diverse patient population. The hospital has implemented policies that respect and accommodate cultural practices. For example, they have flexible visiting hours to accommodate cultural preferences for family involvement in patient care. The hospital respects and supports diverse dietary preferences and religious dietary restrictions in their meal offerings. Patient education materials, signage, and forms are available in multiple languages to ensure that inforally sensitive imagery and messages in its promotional materials to make all patients feel included and represented. It recognises and accommodates religious practices. For instance, there are designated prayer rooms for patients and families to observe religious rituals and the staff is trained to be respectful and supportive of diverse religious needs. Healthcare providers take the time to understand and respect the diverse health beliefs and practices of their patients. They ask open-ended questions to encourage patients to share their perspectives, allowing for a more personalised and effective care plan.

In this example, the hospital's commitment to cultural competence ensures that healthcare services are accessible, respectful, and effective for all members of the community regardless of their cultural background. This approach contributes to improved patient outcomes, increased patient satisfaction and a more inclusive healthcare environment.

> The writer is a senior human resource professional.

## etters

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 rissapost

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Aggrandising popularity

Sir, As the year 2023 is drawing close, it is time to reflect on the aggrandising popularity of Indian chess at the global level, especially so after the 44th Chess Olympiad held in Chennai in August, which earned massive plaudits from the global chess community. This proliferating interest can be attributed to the exceptional talent and strategic brilliance of some young Indian Grandmasters. These individuals have not only achieved outstanding feats, but continue to serve as a wellspring of inspiration for generations of chess enthusiasts. The game of squares that lingers silently, except for occasional punches on the clock during play, has already made a lot of noise in India. Chess is a timeless game where intellect and imagination meet head-on, and in the moves of the Grandmasters like Praggnanandhaa, we find the paradigm of this beautiful interplay. One really wishes that these young greats take Indian chess to dizzying heights in 2024 and make it as the fulcrum, on which global chess hinges on

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

### **Drone farming**

Sir, Drone farming refers to the practice of using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for farming activities. These UAVs play a considerable role in boosting productivity through the effective utilisation of resources while minimising the environmental impact on the farming system. Undoubtedly, drones have been leading from the front in modern agricultural activities like crop monitoring, weed control, and irrigation. The agricultural sector must grow exponentially in response to the increasing global population. Simultaneously, addressing the twin issues of environmental impact and food security becomes crucial. Therefore, it is important to apply modern technological advances to resolve issues facing the farming sector. Notably, the farming community can enhance productivity and reduce the environmental footprint by adopting technological breakthroughs such as drone applications in farming. It was in 1998 that the application of drones in farming was initially reported. Over the past few decades, their utilisation has grown dramatically and exponentially. Recognising their widespread reach and significant benefits, global organisations like the United Nations have highlighted the importance of drone technology in agricultural operations like pest control and crop monitoring. *P. Senthil Saravana Durai*, MUMBAI

### No cheers for BJP in Ganjam after parting ways with BJD

With the 2024 general elections drawing near, the ruling BJD has started preparations in advance for a stupendous victory while the BJP is also rolling its sleeves up to overcome the zinx

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Dec 27: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has failed to register a win in Ganjam district after the end of its alliance with the ruling party in 2008.

In the 2000 Assembly elections, the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) had given away Sorada and Chhatrapur Assembly seats in Ganjam to BJP as part of its seat sharing agreement with the saffron party. Rama Chandra Panda of BJP had won from Chhatrapur Assembly segment and went on to become the deputy speaker of the state

Dharakote royal Kishore Chandra Singhdeo representing the BJP was defeated from Sorada Assembly seat. Later, Singhdeo won from Sorada while Panda was defeated from Chhatrapur in the 2004 Assembly elections.

However, cracks appeared be tween both the parties and the alliance came to an end following the brutal murder of Swami Lakshmanananda Saraswati in Kandhamal district in 2008.

Before that, BJD had kept Aska Lok Sabha seat for itself while giving away the Berhampur seat to BJP in the



1999 general elections. Naveen Patnaik won from Aska Lok Sabha seat while BJP candidate Anadi Sahoo tasted victory from the Berhampur Lok Sabha seat. However, both the BJD and BJP contested separately in the 2009

Meanwhile, the state has witnessed three elections from 2009 to 2019. However, the BJP candidates have performed badly and eaten the dust each time in these elections. The BJP candidates came third in the two Lok Sabha seats and 13 Assembly seats in the 2014 general elections. Things came to such a pass that many of the BJP candidates even failed to retain their deposits in some of the seats in the district.

The grand old Congress party was active in the district from 2000 to 2014 elections. The party always stood second despite getting defeated from the BJD.

However, the oldest national party received a serious drubbing in 2019 elections due to weakened organisation. All its candidates were defeated from all the seats in the district and in majority of seats in the state. The party candidates were defeated in all the seats in the district and some of its candidates

**National Theatre Festival concludes** 

even lost their deposits in various Assembly segments including Berhampur.

The pocket votes of Congress went to BJD and the saffron party. As a result, BJP managed to secure the second position in the electoral politics. The Congress handed over the Aska Lok Sabha seat to Communist Party of India (CPI) while fielding an unknown and new face in the Berhampur Lok Sabha seat. As a result, the ruling BJD managed to wrest the two Lok Sabha seats from the opposition candidates

Meanwhile, with the 2024 general elections drawing near, the ruling BJD has started preparations in advance for a stupendous victory while the BJP is also rolling its sleeves up. However, the Congress party is yet to start its poll

preparations. BJP is dreaming of forming the government in the state by contesting on its own while the BJD leaders and party workers are confident of a resounding success. On the other hand, Congress party workers have become concerned over their leaders' silence and indifferent attitude towards

### Jual writes to Civil **Aviation Minister**

Rourkela: Sundargarh MP and member of Parliamentary Standing Committee for Defence, Jual Oram his letter, Oram has mentioned about the flight condition at the airport and sought actions in this regard. "The aerodrome land belongs to the state government who has leased it to the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP). And this is hindering the development of the aerodrome as the Airport Authority of India (AAI) is unable to undertake any developmental work here." Besides, he has also requested to start the direct ATR flights to Delhi from this airport. "The airport should have the instrument landing

### Similipal Tiger Reserve reopens

Baripada: The Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj district, which was closed due to protests by a local outfit, reopened for tourists Wednesday, officials said. Tourists' entry to STR had been suspended since November 25, owing to protests by the Similipal Vikash Parishad, to press for various demands, they said. The outfit withdrew their

agitation Tuesday afternoon after their demands fulfilled. including

construction of a road and bridge, installation of a mobile solar light system in the tiger

### Labour hostel construction in full swing



RAJESH MOHANTY, OF

Rourkela, Dec 27: Construction of a labour hostel by the state gov ernment for the industrial labourers working in the Kalunga Industrial Estate here is in full swing.

"The sole aim of the project, which is unique in itself, is to provide hygienic, safe and comfortable stay to workers or labourers. They come from different parts of the state and beyond but do not get a proper place to stay, for which a hostel is being constructed for them." said Minister for Labour and ESI Sarada Nayak.

The minister while explaining about the project said, "This is being constructed for those people, who come to the state in search of livelihood and also

The construction is going on at full pace now and would be completed in two years' time.'

The hostel is spread over an area measuring five acre. There will be four multi-storeyed hostels with 1,606 rooms and each room will house two persons. "Of the four hostels, three hostels will have seven floors and the other hostel will have three floors with lifts. The three-storeyed hostel will provide facilities like dining, cafe, entertainment room. two multipurpose halls and indoor games provisions, said Nayak.

2023. Work is going on in full swing and over 200 labourers are working in three shifts to complete the project in time. The on-site monitoring office is similarly working full time here to keep strict watch over daily

progress of the project. The hostel is coming up at a cost of ₹45 crore and has been awarded to UCDL of Burla. The project manager Umakant Gupta said, "The work is going on as per the schedule and the quality of the work is being maintained assiduously. There is no compromise anywhere."

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

Badra, resident of Abhaypur, P.O.-Sapha, P.S.-Tangi, District-Cuttack, Odisha has lost (1) Original Regd. Sale deed No. 10431503671 dtd. 21.12.2015 executed by Minati Rani Das and another in favour of Pravakar Gochhaya pertaining to Plot No. 1052/2500 (Gharabari) area AC.0.04 decimals unde Khata No. 609/788 of Mouza Jenipur Narasinghpur in Tangi Choudwa Tahasil under District- Cuttack recorded in her name. Nandini Badra of the above address has applied for a housing loan to the LIC Housing Finance Ltd., Cuttack by offering the mortgage of the said property title documents All concerned therefore having any claim over the property purchased under he said document, i.e. Original Regd. Sale Deed No. 10431503671 dtd 21.12.2015 are required to file their claim with the undersigned within 15 fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it will be resumed that the property having link with the said document is free from incumbrances and any claim in respect thereof against the applicant as a nortgager and the Company as the mortgagee shall be void and ineffective after the lapse of 15 (fifteen) days of publication of this notice Sd./- (U.K. MISHRA) Dt.27.12.2023

Advocate Phone - 9437314816 LIC Housing Finance Ltd., Link Road, Cuttack

Reserve Price

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that Pranati Tarai, W/o Rabindra Tarai resident of Machhua Bazar, P.O.- Buxi Bazar, P.S. Mangalabag, District Cuttack, Odisha, has lost (1) Original Regd. Sale deed No.10431503211 Dtd. 09.11.2015 executed by Sudarshan Behera in favour of Prayakar Gochhavat pertaining to Plot No. 1055/3023 (Gharabari) area Ac 0.02.5 decimals unde Khata No.609/799 of Mouza Jenipur Narasinghpur in Tangi Choudwa Tahasil under District- Cuttack recorded in her name. Pranati Tarai of the above address has applied for a housing loan to the LIC Housing Finance Ltd.. Cuttack by offering the mortgage of the said property title document All concerned therefore having any claim over the property purchased under the said document, i.e. Original Regd. Sale Deed No. 10431503211 dtd. 09.11.2015 are required to file their claim with the undersigned within 15(fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it will be presumed that the property having link with the said document is free from encumbrances and any claim in respect thereof against the applicant as a mortgager and the Company as the mortgagee shall be void and ineffective after the lapse of 15(fifteen) days of publication of this notice. Sd./- (U.K. MISHRA) Dt.27.12.2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

Advocate Phone - 9437314816 LIC Housing Finance Ltd., Link Road, Cuttack

### OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, SIDDHARTHA HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL, BINKA **DIST.: SUBARNAPUR, PIN-767019**

### e-mail- siddharthacollegebinka@gmail.com

A walk-in-interview will be held on Dt.05.01.2024 (Friday) at 10.00 A.M. in the College premises for the post of Lecturer in Physics (Management Post). Candidates having at least 55% Mark in concerned subject may attend the interview with their complete biodata and all testimonials (Original & Xerox copies)

WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

The undersigned reserves the right to cancel the Walk-in-interview without assigning any reason thereof.

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया BOI

Sd./- Principal-cum-Secretary Siddhartha Higher Secondary School, Binka

### No.: G.129/Catg Stall/E-Tender/KUR/2023/5981, Date: 20.12.2023 **Tender Notice**

KUR-PF-2-1

G129-CATG-5,96,199/- P.A. & Palasa (Platform No. 2/3 31,00,235/- for 05 year GMU-PSA-5 1,55,100 Dtd. 20.12.2023 Pole No. 676/20-676/22 Palasa (Brahmapur (BAM) G129-PSA-CATG-GMU-4 end near crew and 31,00,235/- for 05 year 1,55,100 Dtd. 20.12.2023 guard lobby) G129-CATG-GMU 7,31,000/- P.A. & Brahmapur (Platform No. 1 G129-CATG-2,10,000/- P.A. & Balugaon (Platform No 1 near DR/RR) G129-CATG-Khurda Road (Platform No. 2 2.70.000/- P.A. &

**CATERING STALLS AT DIFFERENT RAILWAY STATIONS** 

**UNDER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION** 

Station Name/

Location

Category of Station: NSG-3(A) (for sl. no. 1, 2, 3 & 5) and NSG-4(B) (for sl. no. 4). Type of Unit: Catering Stall (for all sl. nos.). Category of Stall (GMU/SMU) GMU/Ladies (for sl. no. 1) and GMU (for sl. no. 2 to 5). Size of Unit: 8" x 6" (for al sl. nos.). Cost of Tender Form : ₹ 2,950/- (for all sl. nos.). Date of Closing :

near MYM cold drink booth) 14,04,000/- for 05 years

Complete information including e-Auction documents of the above e-Auction is vailable in website www.ireps.gov.in

PR-919/O/23-24 Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Khurda Road

### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, Dec 27: Curtains came down on the five-day Natvarashmi Prafulla Rath Smaraki National Theatre Festival organised at the Town Hall here in Kalahandi district, Tuesday night. The festival started December 22 and plays in various languages were staged during the five-day period.

A play titled, 'Jamapurare Nirbachana Tati' was staged by the artistes of Smaraki Natya Sanstha tival. The play was written and directed by eminent dramatist Manoj Rath while dramatist Sourav Mohapatra worked as the assistant Artistes Subhendu Mohapatra,

in the last evening of the theatre fes-

Sudhir Rath, Devi Prasad Rath, Biranchi Narayan Mund, Sourav Mohapatra, Rajesh Dash, Deeptimayee Singh, Trinath Kumar, Dhananjaya Sahu, Dibakar Sahu and Subhashis Mohapatra partici pated in the play.

Shantanu Behera, president of Mahaveer Sanskrutik Anusthan ioined as the chief guest in the meeting on the concluding day of the festival attended by Ramesh Chandra Panda, president of Lekhak Kala Parishad, Abdul Kardi, president of Kalahandi Kalakar Sangha and Prabodh Rath, secretary of Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi. On this occasion, music composer Jashobant Ray and light arranger Indrajit Swain

### Miscreants vandalise heritage British cemetery of Balasore

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar. Dec 27: The British cemetery at Barabati in Balasore district, one of oldest colonial era cemeteries of Odisha, has become a den for anti-social elements, who have vandalised this historically important place by demolishing the compound wall, exposing the cemetery to the vagaries of street dogs and cattle.

Some of the marble headstones of the tombs too have been removed. The overgrown vegetation is also spelling the ruin of this heritage site.

The dilapidated and abandoned graveyard has 33 gravestones including spires and tombs dating back to the 18th century, heritage expert Anil Dhir said.

The cemetery also has the graves of Captain Morgan who had freed Balasore from the Marathas and of Sir Francis Walter, the hero of the British Royal Navy who led several battles in Madras, Goa, Harispur, Pipili port and Balasore

The cemetery was built between 1776 and 1881 and also houses tombstones of five clergymen. The inscriptions have corroded with the passage of time. Dhir said.

For the British, Balasore was a favoured maritime centre which had drawn the Dutch, French and Portuguese maritime traders to this coastal town in view of its strategic -location bordering the Bengal

province. Besides many merchants and



tombstones of both Sir Henry Rickett, the first collector of Balasore (1827-36), and his wife Lady Rickett. Lady Rickett died in Balasore while Sir Henry Rickett died in England

As per his last wish, his mortal remains were ferried by sea to this place and buried beside his wife's grave. 'Henry neither forgot Balasore nor Oriya' is inscribed on the then British administrator's tomb.

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) had been entrusted to restore the old place a few years ago and a boundary wall was constructed with the MPLAD funds of Dr Manmath Nath Das under the supervision of the then Collector Ashwini Vaishnaw.

Dhir said INTACH, Balasore Chapter has listed this site as a heritage site along with 73 other built heritages of the district, a list of which was shared with the district administration.

The future administration of

British cemeteries in India had been repeatedly raised during the Transfer of Power before Independence. Before 1947, most were maintained

by the local Executive Engineer in consultation with the local Chaplain. In 1949 the British Government decided not to support the maintenance of the European cemeteries in India and to leave the task of caring for the graveyards to the Christian congregations.

The Government of India, Dhir said had given assurances that they would protect cemeteries from destruction and desecration.

A few graveyards were placed under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and of State authorities.

However, many of these extraordinary legacies of British India lie strewn across the nation, most of them in forgotten, weed-covered cemeteries that have little or no future in modern India, Dhir said.

These decaying colonial-era gravevards in India became targeted for conservation starting in the 1970s by the British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia (BACSA).

Intach's Balasore Chapter Convener Uday Ranjan Das has written to the district authorities to have the cemetery wall reconstructed and cleared of all vegetation from this historically important place.

### Bank of India

Zonal Office: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar, Mob.: 8337911737

Where as the Bank acting through its Authorised Officer in exercise of its powers under-Section 13(4) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (SARFAESI) has decided to put up for E-auction of the following properties for realization of the debts due to the Bank. BRANCH /

SI. No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers/Guarantors/ Total Dues	Description of the Properties	EMD / Bid Increment Amoun
1.	Mrs. Puspalaxmi Mohanty, W/o.: Subhendra Mohanty, At:Lokeswarpur, Pallahat, Khurda-752056 / Total Dues: ₹96,73,778.43 as on 29.03.2021 + interest, costs and expenses from 30.03.2021, less any part amount repaid. Mohanty, Bounded (As per Sale Deed) by North:Karunak Gopal Chandra Narendra & others, West: Maina Biswal	All that part and parcel of the property of Land and Structures/Installations situated over Khata No.: 400,Plot No.: 1475, Area: Ac.0.930 Dec., Kissam: Gharabari, at Mouza: Chhatrama, PS.: Khurda, SRO: Khurda, Tahasil: Khurda, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha, PIN-752060, Standing in the name of Mrs. Puspalaxmi Mohanty, Wo: Subhendra ar Mohanty, South: Shree Jagannath Mahaprabhu, East: & others, Bounded (As per Physical) by North: Plot No.: anath Land, East: Girish Chandra Behera, West: Basant	₹32,78,000/- (excluding GST &
2.	CHAKEISIANI BRANCH, PH.: 8861961676 / Borrower: M/s. Shivashakti Traders, Prop.: Mr. Kabiraj Behera, S/o.: Mr. Dhruba Charan Behera, Address- 1: At: Plot No.: 409, Sameigadia, PO.:	Property-1: All that part and parcel of the Property situated over Khata No.: 216/89, Plot No.: 89/1201, Area: Ac.0.040 Dec. i.e. 1742.4 Sqft., Kissam: Homestead at Mouza: Kalyanpur, P.S.: New Capital,	₹13,67,000/-

18.05.2023, less any part amount repaid.

Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar-751010, Address- 2: At: Plot Thana No.: 09, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, Registration No.: 89/257, Mouza: Kalyanpur, Near Anukulachandra SRO: Bhubaneswar & Dist.: Khurda, Standing in the Mandira, Bhubaneswar / Total Dues: ₹44,75,637.02 as name of Mr. Kabiraj Behera, S/o.: Mr. Dhruba Charan 17.05.2023 + interest, costs and expenses from Behera, Bounded (as per Sale Deed) by North: Rest Part of this Plot, South: Road, East: Rest Part of this Plot, West: Plot No.: 83, Bounded (as per Physical) by North: Plot No.: 88, South: Road, East: Plot No.: 89,

Property-2: All that part and parcel of the Property situated over Khata No.: 216/144, Plot No.: 89/257, Area: Ac.0.080 Dec. i.e. 3484.8 Sqft., Kissam: Homestead at Mouza: Kalyanpur, P.S.: New Capital, Thana No.: 09, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, Registration SRO: Bhubaneswar & Dist.: Khurda, alongwith single storied RCC Building of G.F Built up Area: 904 Sqft., Standing in the name of **Mr. Kabiraj Behera**, S/o.: Mr. Dhruba Charan Behera,

Bounded (as per Sale Deed) by North: Plot No.: 89, South: Road, East: Plot No.: 93 & 94, West: Vendee Bounded (as per Physical) by North: Plot No.: 89 (P), South: Road, East: Road, West: own Plot EQM of Land & Building G+1 constructed over Land SAHID NAGAR BRANCH, PH.: 9652075096 /

Borrower: Mr. Chitta Ranjan Mishra, At: Plot No.: 562/1973/2794, Khata No.: 704/1270, Mouza: Balianta, Tahasil: Balianta, Dist.: Khurda Communication Address: At: N-6, Plot No.: 181 IRC Village, Bhubaneswar, Khurda, Odisha - 751013 / Total Dues: ₹37,33,118.38 as on 30.07.2023 +

interest, costs and expenses from 31.07.2023, less

bearing Khata No.: 704/1270, Plot No.: 562/1973/ 2794, duplex No.: 15, admeasuring Area: Ac.0.0264 Dec. i.e. 1149.98sqft, in name & style JB TWINS, status: sthitiban, Kissam: Gharabari, situated at Mouza: Balianta, P.S/SRO: Balianta, Dist: Khurda standing in the name of Mr. Chitta Ranjan Mishra Bounded by North: Road, South: Kailash Chandra Sahoo & Óthers, East: Sovita Rani Mohapatra West:Debashree Bhatacharya

₹60,40,000/excluding GST other statutory ₹6,04,000/-₹50.000/-

other statutory

₹1,36,700/-

₹50,000/-

Property-2:

₹34,83,000/-

(excluding GST 8

other statutory

₹3,48,300/- / ₹50,000/-

Date & Time of E-Auction: 31.01.2024 at 11.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 10 (Ten) minutes each Last date & time for submission of EMD & Documents: 30.01.2024 upto 4.00 P.M

Inspection will be provided to the prospective bidders on any working day before 30.01.2024

with prior appointment of the authorised officer

The sale shall be subject to the terms and conditions and provisions prescribed in the SARFAESI Act 2002 read with the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. This is also a 15/30 days sale notice to the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) of the aforesaid loan account for

settlement of their outstanding dues with the Bank and to participate in the public auction on the above mentioned date. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in (1) https://www.ibapi.in (2) https://www.mstcecommerce.com (3) www.bankofindia.co.in

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 28.12.2023

any part amount repaid.

Authorised Officer, Bank of India

conducted surprise raids on the premises of a distillery firm in Bolangir and Titilagarh towns December 6. Searches were carried out at Sudapada unit of Boudh Distilleries, its office at Clubpada and at the rented accommoda tions of their mangers Rajesh Sahu and Bunty Sahu even as ₹285 crore in cash was found. Further raids were conducted at the residences of liquor traders Sanjay Sahu and Deepak Sahu where the I-T officials seized ₹11 crore in cash stashed in 176 bags. The money was brought in trucks and mini-trucks to the main branch office of State Bank of India (SBI) in Bolangir. Around 50 bank officials and over 25 cash counting machines had to be engaged to count the huge amount of cash that were seized during the raids. After seizure of the huge amount of cash, chatters went abuzz that the stashed crores belonged to Rajya Sabha MP Dhiraj Sahu of neighbouring Jharkhand. Later, two teams of I-T officials raided Bada Bazaar head office and Dhanupali, Mahaveerpada des tination centre of liquor trader Baladev Sahu and Sons in Sambalpur. The I-T sleuths seized ₹37.5 crore during the raids at both the places. Similar raids were conducted in Sundargarh, Boudh, Dhenkanal and Angul districts as well as in Bhubaneswar. The issue took a political turn after Prime Minister Narendra Modi put a post on a micro-blogging platform.

### **ANDHRA'S BRAZENNESS**

disha's southern neighbour Andhra Pradesh's incursion bid in Nandapur block of Koraput district, following Kotia panchayat of Pottangi block in the same district, kicked up a row this year. The neighbouring state officials tried to tresspass into Nandapur block on the pretext of construction of drinking water rojects for the households. Andhra tried to wean away the idents from Odisha and stamp its supremacy in the area y trying to supply drinking water to the households in taipahad of Golur panchayat, Jayantigiri of Panthalung anchayat and in the fringe areas of Sudub, ndaraguda and Totaguda villages. However, the

landapur block administration frustrated the plans f the neighbouring state. Andhra never shied away om making its presence felt and triggering unrest n Kotia panchayat earlier. The state government and the Koraput district administrations' failure to check Andhra raised serious question marks. AP Deputy CM P Rajanna Dora visited Kotia panchaya February 9 and tried to wedge a rift between the villagers with their own state and government by elaborating on the success and achievements of Andhra

Andhra government visited Kotia panchayat at regular intervals and organised health camps and distributed the benefits of various welfare schemes. People are of the opinion that the district administration and block officials are knowingly allowing the Andhra officials to Kotia panchayat and remaining silent on the issue.

government. After Dora went back, several officials of

### **OSSC** question paper leaked



e Odisha Staff Selection Commission OSSC) cancelled the written examination for illing up 1,008 posts of Junior Engineer (Civil) in arious departments July 23 following formation by the Balasore police that the uestion papers had been leaked almost a nonth before the tests. The Commission ther On the Orissa High Court's direction an investigation, under a DIG-level official, led to the arrest of 27 persons from Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, including the mastermind Vishal Kumar Chaurasia from Bihar.

niarrhoea claimed at least 10 lives after its spread in Steel City December 11. Uthough the unofficial figure stood at over 16. The disease was confirmed cholera following receipt of stool examination reports of some patients. December 19. More than 1,000 patients underwent treatment at Rourkela Government Hospital and other hospitals in the city. Among them, 429 patients were residents of different areas under Rourkela Municipal Corporation, while the others hailed from peripheral areas of Rourkela and Jharkhand. As many as 224 patients were discharged following recovery. The stool examination report of the infected persons revealed the presence of 'vivio cholera' and E. coli bacteria. RGH superintendent in-charge Sudharani Pradhan attributed the spread of the disease to water contamination. The disease also reared its head in Bolangir with the death of two people in suspected diarrhoea

> in Kantabanii town of the district. December 25. Reports said that six patients with symptoms of omiting and loose motion were admitted to Kantabanii hospital December 24. However, two of them breathed their last December 25. Doctors remained mum when asked the reason behind the death of the two persons. Howeve it was said that possibility of diarrhoea could not be ruled out.

### Minz, Lugun death mysteries

Assistant collector of Rourkela Sushmita Minz's body was found in a pond at Sensory Park September 19. ibsequently, the deceased's brother filed a complaint alleging the complicity of five persons in the 'murder' that included assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of Uditnagar police station Alice Narmi Lugun. On October 1, Lugun's body was While visceral reports linked Minz's deatl to accidental drowning, postmorte reports blamed excited delirium for Lugun's death. The findings were





Seizure of as many as 22

packets of cocaine

# FOOTPRINT

2023 began with a promising note as the state witnessed a watershed moment at the just concluded Make in Odisha Conclave. However, approximately a month into the New Year, came the shattering news of Health Minister Naba Das' brutal assassination. Nevertheless, life went on, and the return of Biju Babu's Dakota from Kolkata and some quick strides made by the state government in pushing the cart of development ahead brought in renewed vigour and reasons to hope. Although on the economic front, the state scripted many milestones, social, moral and familial upheavals dominated headlines with never-ending sagas of sensational murders, ordinary citizens losing hard-earned penny to scammers and burgeoning civic problems that exposed the authorities' failure to address issues concerning the populace. As curtains come down on the year, **Orissa POST** encapsulates the twists, turns and events that left deep imprints in everyone's mind in 2023...

# Murder that shook Odisha to the core

n January 29, Health Minister Naba Kishore Das was shot at from a very close range at Gandhi Chowk in Brajrajnagar of Jharsuguda district during an official visit, sending shock-

Das, an MLA from the same constituency and one of Biju Janata Dal's strongmen from western Odisha, was immediately airlifted to the Apollo Hospital in Bhubaneswar where he breathed his last during treatment.

The police had, by then, taken into custody Assistant Sub-

Inspector (ASI) Gopal Das who was deployed for traffic clearance duty for the minister's programme on the fateful day. It was revealed that Gopal had fired at Das from his service pistol. He was immediately dismissed from service. The daylight murder of the political heavyweight triggered a political slugfest with the Opposition Congress

and BJP asking the government to unearth the larger conspiracy behind the murder, while questions were raised on the security of important state personalities as the protector turned predator Questions were also raised over mental health issues of po-

lice personnel in Odisha after Gopal's wife Jayanti claimed that the decorated ASI, who had received 18 citations and nine rewards for exemplary performance, was undergoing treatment for 'psychological issues', a fact appeared to have been overlooked by department higher-ups.

he Rhubaneswar Municipal Corporation

(BMC) has struggled to manage waste produced in

the City since operations have ceased at Bhuasuni dumping yard due to

protests from residents of the nearby Daruthenga village. The civic authority

started dumping waste at temporary transit station (TTS) near Sainik School

leading to nearly 54,000 tonne garbage being dumped in six months. Due to

settlements and residents of the Capital staying even 6 or 9 km away. Later,

near TTS was made operational, to ensure processing of more than 10 tonne

of wet waste daily. By the end of December, BMC said, City residents will get

respite from the smell after mega MCC at Palasuni becomes operational,

adding an additional 300 tonne of waste processing capacity per day.

irsa Munda stadium at Rourkela entered

Dthe Guinness Book of World Records for

largest seated hockey stadium in the world

with a seating capacity of 20,011. It has a sepa-

Cup Hockey match during the ongoing FIH Pro

League tournament at the

rate fitness centre, a swimming pool and a tunnel

connecting the dressing room and the adjacent prac-

of recognisation to the Chief Minister during the World

ice pitch. The stadium was built in a record 15 months ahead of the

FIH Odisha Men's Hockey World Cup 2023. Recognising the feat, an

official of the Guinness Book of World Records gave away a certificate

setting a new world record for being the

with deployment of new Trammels, the Mega MCC (micro composting center)

non-processing of sufficient amount of waste, the garbage heap started

giving off pungent smell, causing trouble to people living in the nearby

The investigation of the case was subsequently handed over to the Crime Branch which finally filed a 543-page chargesheet at the Jharsuguda Judicial Magistrate First Class Court, May 27 against Gopal under IPC Sections 307 (attempt to murder), 302 (murder) and the Arms Act.

Allying suspicion of any conspiracy or support in the

gruesome crime, the chargesheet claimed that Gopal

was the lone accused in the case and he executed the crime after meticulous planning due to a personal grudge and anguish in stable mind. For corroboration, the police relied on Gopal's narco test and voice analysis reports which, they claimed, confirmed that the policeman had pulled the trigger due

"He felt threatened by the minister and his supporters and feared for his life. Gradually, he made up his mind to commit murder," the Crime Branch claimed, amid Opposition charges that the chargesheet hides more and reveals less.

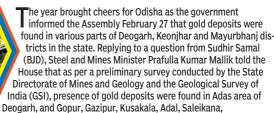
to personal grudge.

Nevertheless, Gopal, who is presently lodged in a jail may face prison term ranging from 10 years to life if found guilty of the crime.

### Ratnabhandar laser scanning

In order to examine the structural stability of Srimandir Ratnabhand in Puri, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) carried out laser scanning of the temple treasury's outer walls for three days, beginning November 28. A 15-member team, comprising sur veyors, civil engineers, draftsmen and archaeologists from the state as well as Delhi and Mumbai, scanned a total of 45 points in the northern side and upper part of the temple treasury along with a few other areas. The Central agency will carry out the laser assessment of the inner structure of Ratnabhandar during Rath Yatra next year when the treasury is most likely to be opened for inspection and audit, it was learnt. The ASI had in 2018 and 2022 sought permission of the temple administration to undertake strucural inspection of Ratnabhandar, both its inner and outer sur faces. However, it was only in the first week of November this year when the temple body allowed the ASI to conduct laser scan ning of the treasury to examine its structural status.

### Golden hope



imunda and Karadanga areas of Keonihar district. Similarly. traces of vellow metal were also found in Jashipur, Suriaguda, Ruansi, Ladelkucha, Maredihi, Suleipat and Badampahar areas of Mayurbhani district, the minister said, Mallik said as per the sur vey conducted by GSI, 1.685 kg of gold is estimated to have been present in copper ore at the G2 level in Adas area. He said two gold-carrying quartz veins were found in the Gopur area during a survey conducted by the State Mine and Geology Directorate from 1977-83 and 1989-96. The survey found the presence of 1 kg gold in one-tonne ore. Presence of gold is also found in Saleikana in Ouezon vein on the southern side of Gopur and in Saleikana areas. Presence of gold is found 30 to 60 metres below the surface of the earth. The minister said a survey conducted in Jashipur-Suriaguda. Ruansi area of Mayurbhani district found presence of 0.1 to 2.6 gram gold per tonne and 0.1 to 08 gram gold per tonne in 2.3 km conglomerate horizon spread over Dhusuri hill.

### **KASHMIRI FRAUDSTER IN STF NET**

The Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha Crime Branch December 16 arrested Kashmiri fraudster Sayed Ishaan Bukhari from Jajpur for impersonating a PMO official, NIA official and carrying out practice as a doctor at Neulpur. Investigations revealed that the Kupwara native had designed a mobile phone application through which he would engage girls in nude video calls and later extort them. He was married to seven women across several states, including Odisha. Central agencies grilled him for his alleged links with anti-social elements i Kerala and personnel belonging to ISI. The probe is still on.

### Mayurbhani in

in March, the famed Time Magazine placed Mayurbhanj, the home district of President Droupadi Murmu, among 50 extraordinary destinations to explore in its World's Greatest Places of 2023 list, Ladakh was the only other Indian destination on the list. This was a reassurance that Odisha is indeed India's best kept secret. The magazine said, "It is renowned for its green landscape, rich cultural legacy and ancient temples." The

In a pleasant summer surprise

The iconic Dakota aircraft used by former Chief Minister and aviator late Biju Patnaik several decades ago was brought back to Bhubaneswar fron Kolkata, January 18. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik paid floral tributes to the plane which carries memo ies of his late father. Biju Babu had in 1940 founded the Kalinga Airlines which had a fleet of 12 planes, four of them Dakotas. He had many historic exploits in the Dakota planes and the memorable of those was his flight to Indonesia dodging Dutch blockades and rescuing the hen Indonesian Prime **.**= Minister Sutan

C

:o-pilot.

lution fo

early warnin

magazine goes on to say that it is "the only place on earth to spot

the exceedingly rare black tiger. Apart from the famous Similipal

National Park, there's a lot more that you can do in this district.

Siahrir. The only other person in th aircraft was wife Gyana 🚦 Patnaik, who was also the 📊

8

2



Odisha breathed easy after four out of five workers, who were trapped in Silkyara tunnel on Brahmakhal-Yamunotri National Highway in Uttarakhand, returned home December 1 amidst rousing welcome by the state government. The four workers along with their family members accompanied by state Labour Minister Sarada Prasad Nayak and the department officials arrived at Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar to receive them. The five from Odisha were among the 41 workers trapped in Silkyara tunnel for 17 days and were pulled out November 28 evening. The rescued workers hailing from Odisha were: Raju Nayak, Dhiren Nayak and Bisweswar Nayak from Mayurbhanj district, Bhagwan Bhatra from Nabarangpur and Tapan Mandal from Bhadrak district. Tapan stayed back in Delhi while the others returned to their home state. After arriving in Bhubaneswar, the workers met Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at Naveen Niwas. Congratulating the workers, the Chief Minister inquired about their health and handed over cheques of ₹2 lakh to each of them.

### India's 1st climate change colony

Satabhaya Bagapatia colony in Kendrapara district is the first such settlement in the country developed to rehabilitate peopl displaced by climate change. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik allocated some ₹22.5 crore to develop it as a model colony in the first phase. The funds would be utilised for construction of houses, and provision of drinking water, electricity, roa and other facilities for the displaced people. As per sources, the state government also planning to provide agricultural land to the villagers who have lost their livelihood to



coastal erosion. Further, the CM has asked the state Tourism department to develop the Panchubarahi shrine in the locality as a tourist place. Notably, in 1960s, these villagers moved inland to create new villages, naming one of them Satabhaya in memory of the seven villages lost to coastal erosion. However, the approaching sea continued to gobble up the villages, making it necessary for the people to move further away from the coast for survival.

### Bolts from the blue

n a startling first, a staggering 61,000 lightning strikes in just two hours killed at least 12 people and injured 14 others across Odisha, September 3. At least 36,597 cloud-to-cloud lightning and 25,753 cloud-toground strikes were recorded til 5:30pm of the day, the Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) said, adding that eight cattle also perished in the barrage of lightning. Four deaths were reported from Khurda, two from Bolangir and one each from Angul, Boudh, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Jagatsinghpur and Puri, the Special Relief Commissioner's



office said, adding that state government has announced an ex-gratia of ₹4 lakh to each of the bereaved families. According to weather scientists, these unusual and extreme lightning activities occur when the monsoon returns to normalcy after a long break. Collision of cold and warm air masses creates the perfect conditions for such unprecedented lightning events, they said.

### World's hottest

Odisha literally found itself in the Sun April 13 this year as three of its towns were among the top-15 hottest places in the world, with Baripada taking the top position at 43.5 degrees Celsius, Global weather forecasting site eldoradoweather.com also placed Angul (42.5 degrees

Celsius) in the sixth place and Titlagarh (42.2 degrees Celsius) in the 11th position for the day Maharashtra's Chandrapur (43.2 degrees Celsius) ranked second in the hottest scale, followed by Kolda (43 degrees Celsius) in Senegal. The twin cities of

Bhubaneswar and Cuttack recorded 40.8 degrees Celsius and 41.4 degrees Celsius respectively of the day. Most places in the state witnessed hot weather conditions with mercury hovering above 40 degrees Celsius in at least 25 towns.

### LAccMI as blessing for panchayats

To facilitate economic development in rural areas of the state, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched affordable bus services under the Location-Accessible Multimodal Initiative (LAccMI) in six southern districts in October. Despite initial resistance by private bus owners, who perceived the scheme as a threat to their livelihoods and oragnised a strike, the services started in Malkangiri and then extended to Nabarangpur, Koraput, Rayagada and Gajapati districts. Under the scheme buses will run from gram

panchayats (GPs) to block

headquarters and from block headquarters to district headquarters. Through the scheme, around 1,000 buses will connect all GPs, block headquarters and district headquarters of the state with the major cities, giving farmers access to good markets and students the access to quality education.



Trishulia in Cuttack. The in-between stoppages will include Capital Hospital, Bapuji Nagar, Ram Mandir Square, Vani Vihar, KIIT Square, Rail Sadan and Nandankanan. Bhubaneswar metro area has a population of around 1.2 million people, and is categorised as a Tier-2 city. The DPR was completed after conducting traffic survey, geo-technical investigation topographic survey and environmental and social impact assessments. The project will be extended to Khurda, Puri and other areas of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack city.

usic lovers were in for a shock upon VI hearing the death of Akshay Kumar, popularly known as DJ Azex, popularly known as the smiling DJ of Odisha, whose body was found at his residence under mysterious circumstances March 18. Bhubaneswar Zone-1 ACP Manas Gadnayak said preliminary investigation suggested the DJ died by suicide, Kharvelnagar Police had registered a case on the basis of a complaint lodged by the family nembers of Azex. One of Azex's relatives, on the condition of anonymity, said that Azex was in his room March 18 evening. When the family members tried to open

the door at around 10pm, they found it bolted from inside. Later, they discovered Azex's lifeless body hanging from the ceiling. The deceased DJ's uncle Bholanath Moharana accused Azex's girlfriend and her male friend of 'blackmailing' the DJ, driving him to commit the extreme act. One of Azex's friends said that Azex's girlfriend used to extort money from him. Besides, she along with her male friend used to mentally harass him over some pictures or videos. It also came to the fore that the performer was in conversation with his rumoured girlfriend for around 97 seconds before death. Later, her video call to him went unanswered.

200 km stretch under Sambalpur and Khurda Roa

Railway Divisions have been taken into hand in the first phase. IDS will help detect wild elephants approaching the railway tracks and alert railway officials to help to

avert deaths. The existing optical fibers will be used as

sensors to identify movements of wild animals at loca-

tions and alert control offices, station masters, gate

The system will also help in detecting rail fracture

trespassing on railway track and alert about disaste

The project aims at

ast Coast Railway (ECoR) has decided to install

movement areas to prevent wild elephant deaths on railway tracks under its jurisdiction. As per sources, ECoR has obtained a sanctioned amount of ₹79.12

crore to install the detection systems at

in Odisha. Six

railway sec-

sisting of

Intrusion Detection System (IDS) in elephant



 $\hbox{Children head to school on a bicycle during a foggy winter morning in Gurugram, Haryana } \\$ 



Navy personnel during rehearsals for the upcoming Republic Day parade in New Delhi  $\,$ 



Tourists at an ice-skating rink at Lakkar Bazar in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh



A cat sits on the shoulder of a Ukrainian serviceman  $% \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right)$ 



Police personnel use water cannon to disperse Delhi BJP workers during their protest against AAP government over allegations of fake medicines being used in Delhi government hospitals, outsite AAP office in New Delhi



Tribal women take part in a tug-of-war competition at the 130th Santiniketan Poush Mela, at Santiniketan in Birbhum district, West Bengal REUTERS/PTI PHOTOS



MV Chem Pluto ship which was hit by a drone launched from Iran in the Indian Ocean last Saturday.

The Indian Navy Tuesday said it has commenced "focused" maritime security operations in the Arabian Sea in view of the recent incidents in the region, including the attack on the merchant vessel

# national



It can be said that liver is the security guard of our body. **Health problems related to** liver are serious in our country and the huge number of diseases caused by them is a cause for worry DROUPADI MURMU I

#### **AYODHYA RAILWAY JUNCTION** RENAMED AS AYODHYA DHAM

Ayodhya railway junction in Uttar Pradesh has been renamed as Ayodhya Dham junction, local MP Lallu Singh said Wednesday. The announcement came days before the inauguration of the redevelopment railway station by Prime Minister Narendra Modi



Rahul's 'Bharat Nyay



guardians of Apart from the responsibility toward security of the country, winning the

hearts of the citizens is also a big responsibility on your shoulders RAJNATH SINGH DEFENCE MINISTER

Gangasagar is the biggest fair in India. At least 40 lakh people will gather this year. All measures are being taken to ensure that pilgrims do not face any

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM



Bengal after the next assembly polls. A BJP government will mean the end of infiltration, cow

smuggling and providing citizenship to religiously persecuted people through CAA

AMIT SHAH UNION HOME MINISTER

#### SHORT TAKES

#### Neelam Azad moves Delhi HC

New Delhi: Neelam Azad, an accused arrested in the December 13 Parliament security breach case, Wednesday approached the Delhi High Court alleging her police remand was illegal as she was not allowed to consult a legal practitioner of her choice to defend her during the trial court proceedings. In her petition seeking a writ of habeas corpus directing her production before the high court as well as an order to "set her at liberty", Azad said not allowing her to consult a lawyer of her choice amounted to violation of her fundamental right guaranteed under the Constitution, making the remand order unlawful.

### Panic after gas leak, several hospitalised

Chennai: The leak of ammonia gas from a subsea pipeline linked to a fertiliser manufacturing unit in north Chennai led to local residents suffering shortness of breath and nausea, authorities said Wednesday, adding that 52 persons are under observation in hospitals. The leak has been fully plugged and there is no cause for concern, the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) said, following protests by people who sought closure of the plant.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Wednesday.

New Delhi, Dec 27: The government

has directed social media and other

online platforms to ensure that they

do not host advertisements of

fraudulent loan apps, Union Minister

Rajeev Chandrasekhar said

Chandrasekhar said the IT

ministry has made it clear to

platforms that they cannot carry

advertisements of fraudulent and

illegal loan apps as they are

misleading and exploiting people

"One of the areas we are now

cracking down on is advertising of

fraudulent loan apps that many

platforms are carrying and we have,

through yesterday's advisory, made

it clear that no intermediary can

carry advertisements of fraudulent

loan apps because it will be misleading and exploits people who are using the internet," the Minister

of State for Electronics and IT said

the IT Ministry directed that "in-

who are using the internet.

# Jammu and Kashmir outfit banned

The ban comes as a response to Muslim League Jammu Kashmir's involvement in anti-national and secessionist activities in J&K with the intent to create a reign of terror in the country, the Union Home Ministry said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 27: A faction of Muslim League Jammu Kashmir, led by separatist leader Masarat Alam Bhat, was Wednesday declared a banned organisation by the government under the stringent anti-terror law.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, while announcing the ban under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, emphasised that the Modi government's message is clear that those who act against the unity, sovereignty, and integrity of the nation will face the full wrath of the law and will not be spared.

The Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) is declared as an 'Unlawful Association' under UAPA. This organisation and its members are involved in anti-national and secessionist activities in J&K, supporting terrorist activities, and inciting people to establish Islamic rule in J&K," Shah said in a post on 'X'.

Masarat Alam Bhat is known for his anti-India and pro-Pakistan propaganda. Bhat became the chairman of the hardline faction of the Hurriyat Conference following the death of Syed Ali Shah Geelani. Currently, he is incarcerated.

The Union Home Ministry, in a notification, stated that the objectives of the Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam



faction) are to attain freedom for Jammu and Kashmir from India, merge it with Pakistan, and establish Islamic rule

The organisation's members have been involved in secessionist activities, raising funds through various sources, including Pakistan and its proxy organisations, to support terrorist activities and sustain stone-pelting on security forces in Jammu and Kashmir.

The home ministry emphasised that the Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) and its members show disrespect towards the constitutional authority and setup of the country

Their unlawful activities undermine the integrity, sover-

### **Rainath Singh meets kin of 3 slain civilians**

Rajouri/Jammu: Defence Minister Rainath Singh Wednesday assured justice to the families of three civilians who were found dead last week after being allegedly picked up by the Army following an ambush on two of Army vehicles in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district. Singh, accompanied by Army chief General Manoj Pande and Lt Governor Manoi Sinha, reached Rajouri district this afternoon, where he met the families of the deceased and also visited the Government Medical College (GMC) to enquire about the health of four other "torture" victims Several District Development Council (DDC) members, former legislators and civil society members were also present at the meeting between the defence minister, Lt Governor and the families of the deceased civilians.

eignty, security, and communal harmony of India.

Additionally, there have been indications of the Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) having linkages with banned terrorist organisations. The outfit and its members have been supporting terrorist activities with the intent to create terror in the country, thereby endangering its security and public order. Their anti-national activities demonstrate disregard and disrespect for the constitutional authority and sovereignty of India, the ministry said.

The Central government believes that immediate action is necessary against the Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) to curb its unlawful activities, which pose a threat to the territorial integrity, security, and sovereignty of the country. The outfit is likely to continue advocating the sefrom India, promoting false narratives, and inciting anti-national sentiments among the people of the region, which could disrupt public safety.

Therefore, exercising the powers conferred by the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, the Central government has declared the Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) as an unlawful association with immediate effect, the ministry said.

The ban will remain in effect for a period of five years from the date of its publication in the official gazette, unless otherwise ordered.

Bhat has been in jail since 2010 for his alleged involvement in violent protests in the Kashmir valley. His release in 2015 became the first impediment in PDP-BJP alliance when the then chief minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed got him released immediately after taking oath.

exercise seen as party's attempt to rally support ahead of the crucial 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The Nyay Yatra, which will cover around 6,200 km - mostly

on buses with stretches of walking - and culminate March 20, comes nearly a year after former Congress president Rahul Gandhi completed Bharat Jodo Yatra on foot from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, traversing over 4,000 km in 136 days. While Gandhi raised the

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

issues of "economic disparities, polarisation and dictatorship' during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, the Nyay Yatra will focus on social. economic and political justice for the people of the country, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said at a press conference.

The BJP hit out at the Congress, saying the party under whose rule various injustices were inflicted on the people, including the 1984 anti-Sikh riot victims, is talking about 'nyay' and "mere sloganeering" will not "fool" people. The Nyay Yatra will be flagged off by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge from Imphal January 14 and will pass through Nagaland, Assam, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Bihar. Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra, Ramesh said.

The march is being seen as



politically significant in the wake of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, which are likely to be held in April-May. The announcement of the polls may coincide

with the last leg of the Yatra. The Bharat Jodo Yatra, which started September 7, 2022 and ended in January 2023, was credited by the Congress for its electoral gains in assembly elections in Himachal Pradesh. Karnataka and Telangana, claiming it had enthused its ranks and file and revitalised the party's connect with the masses.

He also said the Congress will hold a mega rally in Nagpur December 28 on the occasion of the party's foundation day. The rally, named 'Hain Tayyar Hum" (we are ready), will sound the bugle for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections for the Congress.

Congress general secretary (Organisation) K C Venugopal said interactions will be held with women, youths and marginalised communities during the Nyay Yatra.

### Cabinet approves six-lane bridge over Ganga in Bihar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 27: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the construction of a new 4.56 km long. 6-lane bridge on the river Ganga, connecting Digha and Sonepur in Bihar. according to an official statement.

"The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, today gave its approval for the construction of the new 4,556 m long, 6-lane high level/ extra dosed cable-stayed bridge across River Ganga (Parallel to Western Side of existing Digha-Sonepur Rail-Cum Road Bridge) and its approaches on both sides in the districts of Patna and Saran (NH-139W) in Bihar on EPC mode," it said.

Digha (situated at Patna and South Bank of Ganga River) and Sonepur (North Bank of Ganga River in Saran District) are presently connected by a rail cum road bridge for the movement of light vehicles only.

Therefore, the statement said, the present road cannot be used for the transport of goods and commodities, which is a major economic blockade.

The constraint will be removed by providing the bridge between Digha and Sonepur, and goods and commodities

Mahadev app

owner detained

Mumbai/Raipur: Sourabh

Chandrakar, one of the promoters

of the Mahadev online betting

app, has been put under "house

detention" in Dubai while Indian

been "alerted" and are working

through diplomatic channels to

said Wednesday.

platforms".

intermediaries.

probe agencies, including ED, have

get him deported, official sources

permit any advertisements of il-

legal loan and betting apps having

the potential to scam and mislead

the users, the consequences of

which will be the sole responsi-

bility of the intermediaries and

redressal mechanisms employed by

In a meeting convened in October 2023, the IT Ministry

and the Reserve Bank of India

(RBI) discussed the necessary

actions against illegal betting

apps. During this meeting, the

The advisory also stressed the importance of robust grievance

can be transported once the bridge is constructed, unleashing the economic potential of the region, as per the statement.

The work is to be implemented on an EPC (engineering, procurement, and construction) model with the use of the latest technology like 5D-building information modelling (BIM), bridge health monitoring system (BHMS) and monthly drone mapping to ensure quality of construction and

The work is targeted to be comoleted in 42 months from the appointed date. "This bridge will provide direct connectivity from Patna to Golden quadrilateral corridor via NH-139 at Aurangabad and Sonepur (NH-31), Chhapra, Motihari (East-West corridor oldNH-27), Bettiah (NH-727) in the Northern side of Bihar," the statement said.

It also pointed out that this project is a part of the Buddha circuit. According to the statement, the economic analysis results of the project have shown an economic internal rate of return (EIRR) of 17.6 per cent in base case and 13.1 per cent in worst case scenario which may be attributed to the savings in distance and time

#### **Delhi reports 1st case of Covid JN.1 variant** New Delhi: Delhi has reported its first case of COVID-19

sub-variant JN.1, officials said Wednesday. Delhi has more than 35 active cases with nine fresh infections being reported Wednesday, an official said, adding that a 28-year-old man, who had comorbidities, died, with Covid not being the primary reason.

### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION-I, GANJAM, BERHAMPUR

Phone- 0680-2291405; E-Mail: eerw\_gm1@yahoo.co.in Government of Odisha e-Procurement Notice Bid Identification No. Online Tender // 09 // SERWDG-I // 2023-24 Letter No. 5126/RWDG-I//BAM//Date:26.12.2023

1	Name of the Work	:	Repair to Road and Building Works
2	Estimated Cost	:	Rs.5.04 to 25.21 Lakhs
3	Period of Completion	:	01 (One) Calendar Months as shown in Column No. 06 of Annexure.
4	Date & Time of Availability of Bid Documents in the Portal		From 29.12.2023 at 11.00 AM to 06.01.2024 up to 6.00 PM.
5	Last Date/Time for Receipt of Bids in the Portal	:	06.01.2024 up to 6.00 PM
6	Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	•	Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-I, Ganjam, Berhampur

https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in Sd./- Superintending Engineer,

R.W. Division-I, Ganjam, Berhampur OIPR-25085/11/0013/2324



#### **GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, **KEONJHAR SADAR NOTICE INVITING TENDER e-Procurement** Online Bid ID No. 07 -KEONJHAR SADAR (KJR/ 2023-2024)

No. 6391 /Dev dt. 22.12.2023

No.i-550:- The Block Development Officer, Sadar, Keonjhar on behalf of the Governe of Odisha invites online percentage rate tender through "e" procurement to be received in online mode for the works as detailed in the Annexure to this bid notice

CIVII Construction works
12 (Twelve) Nos.
Rs. 3,56,43,542.00
Mentioned in Column No. 6 of Tender call notice
04 (Four) calendar months
From 29.12.2023 to 09.01.2024 during office
hours in Website (www.tenderorissa.gov.in)
From 29.12.2023 to 09.01.2024 through online.
At 11.00 A.M. on 10.01.2024 in the office chamb
of the Panchayat Samiti, Sadar, Keonjhar
At 11.00 A.M. on 16.01.2024 in the office chamb
of the Panchayat Samiti, Sadar, Keonjhar
The bidder must possess compatible Digit
Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class-II or Class-
The Panchayat Samiti, Sadar, Keonjhar
At/Po-Keonjhargarh, Dist- Keonjhar, Pin-758001
E-Mail: ori-bkeonihar@nic.in
from the website: www.tendersorissa.gov

OIPR-19123/11/0020/2324

### Govt asks platforms to remove fraud loan app ads Concerns are growing over illegal instant loan apps that have come up in recent times ministry urged the RBI to devise a more comprehensive Know Your Customer (KYC) process for banks. This proposed KYC process, termed

Block Development Officer, Sadar, Block

OIPR-25110/11/0026/2324

'Know Your Digital Finance App'

(KYDFA), is envisioned to enhance

the ability to trace and address

This recommendation was offi-

cially communicated to the

Department of Financial Services

(DFS) and RBI October 13, 2023.

rogue loan apps effectively.

### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION No.-I, KEONJHAR "e" Procurement Notice for Building Works

1. Name of the Work: 03 No. Building Work; 2. Total Number of Work: 03 No.; 3. Estimated Cost Rs.18.81 Lakhs & Rs.20.84 Lakhs; 4. Class of Contractor: C & B Class; 5. Period of Completion: As a contract of a Programment Nation No. 12/2023 24.6. Other details:

### **GOVT. OF ODISHA**

Identification No. Online NCB-13/2023-24

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification		Tender online dding	Last Date & Time of seeking Tender	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/o S.E., R.W. Division-I, Keonjhar	
	No.	From	То	Clarification		
1	2	3	4	5	6	
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-I, Keonjhar	Building Online NCB No. 13	Dt.29.12.2023 at 11.00 A.M.	Dt.05.01.2024 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.04.01.2024 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.06.01.2024 at 11.00 A.M.	

### ତହସିଲ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ, କନିଷି, ଗଞ୍ଜାମ ଦୂରଭାଷ ନଂ. (୦୬୮୦) ୨୨୪୮୪୩୮

ଇ-ମେଲ୍: tah\_@konisi@yahoo.co.in

ପତ୍ର ସଂଖ୍ୟା - ୧୨୪୩୨

ତାରିଖ: ୨୩.୦୨.୨୦୨୩

ବିଜ୍ଞାପନ

ଏତଦ୍ୱାରା ସର୍ବସାଧାରଣଙ୍କ ଅବଗତି ନିମନ୍ତେ ଜଣାଇ ଦିଆଯାଉଅଛି ଯେ,

ତହସିଲଦାର କନିଷିଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ଆବେଦନ କରାଯାଇଥିବା ଦାଖଲ ଖାରକ ମାମାଲା ସଂଖ୍ୟା ୧୯୪୪୯/୨୦୨୩ର ଶୁଣାଣୀ ତା. ୨୮.୧୨.୨୦୨୩ରିଖ ଦିନ ଧାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରାଯାଇଅଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ପଟ୍ଟାଦାର କାପନାଟି ଭେଙ୍କେଟନାରାୟଣ ରାଓ ମୃତ ବୋଲି ଘୋଷିତ ହୋଇଥିବା ଯୋଗୁଁ ତାହାଙ୍କ ଉତ୍ତରାଧିକାରୀମାନଙ୍କର ମକୃଦମାର ଶୁଣାଣି ସମୟରେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଏଣ୍ଡ ଉକ୍ତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନଙ୍କ ଏତଦ୍ୱାରା ଆସନ୍ତା ତା୨୮.୧୨.୨୦୨୩ରିଖ ଦିନ ଅପରାହୁ ୨ ଘୟିକା ସମୟରେ ନିମ୍ନ ସାକ୍ଷରକାରୀଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ମକଦ୍ଦମାର ଶୁଣାଣୀ ସମୟରେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ରହିବେ। ନଚେତ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ନିୟମାନୁଯାଇ ବିହିତ ନିଷତି ନିଆଯିବ ଏବଂ ଧାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଦିନର ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ସମୟରେ କୌଣସି ଆପତ୍ତି ଅଭିଯୋଗକୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରାଯିବ ନାହିଁ ।

ସା/- ତହସିଲଦାର, କନିଷି

No. A-1090

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER-CUM-WILDLIFE WARDEN, KORAPUT FOREST DIVISION, KORAPUT କୋରାପୁଟ ବନଖଣ୍ଡ ଅଧିକାରୀ ଓ ବନ୍ୟପ୍ରାଣୀ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱାବଧାରକଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ ଦରଭାଷ ନଂ. 06852-251270, ଫ୍ୟାକ୍ଲ ନଂ.: 06852-25270, ଇ-ମେଳ IDdfo.koraput@odisha.gov.in & ଅଭିଯୋଗ କକ୍ଷ (SMS) ନଂ. 9437011270 Memo No. 6093/1F-Accts- /2023

**CANCELLATION OF BID** No. MM-394:- The bid for the work i.e. "Construction of Police Out Post-cum-Office at proposed Eco-Cottage Complex at Deomali for the year 2023-24." (the details are given below) is hereby cancelled due to no responsive bid in respect of bid (Sl. No. 01).

Invited Vide bid Name of the work Tender ID identification No. No Construction of Police Out Post-cum-Office at proposed 2023\_DFOKP\_ DFO-KPT-05/2023 1(F) Eco-Cottage Complex at 97990\_1 Deomali for the year 2023-24 Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer, Koraput Forest Division

**GOVT. OF ODISHA** 

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, **BALASORE IRRIGATION DIVISION, BALASORE** Phone No. 06782-296500, email id-eebid1234@gmail.com Tender Call Notice No.04 of 2023-24

The Superintending Engineer, Balasore Irrigation Division, Balasore on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate Offline Tender for Restoration/ Repair/ Shifting of Electric Poles works detailed in the table from eligible Class of Contractors registered with the State Government and Contractors of equivalent grade/Class registered with the Central Government / Registered as HT under Electrical License Board of Odisha/registered firms / MSME/ UDYAM/ Railways for execution of Civil, Electrical, and Mechanical works on production of definite proof from the appropriate authority by drawing agreement in P1 Contract forms of Govt. of Odisha.

1.	Name of work	1.	Details can be seen in the DTCN of the respective works.
2.	Total No. of Works	:	49 (Forty Nine) no. of works.
3.	Estimated Cost put to Tender (Rs. in Lakhs)	:	Details can be seen in the DTCN of the respective works.
4.	Cost of Bid Documents	:	Details can be seen in DTCN
	Bid Security of the estimated cost put to tender	:	Details can be seen in DTCN
5.	Period of Completion	:	Details can be seen in DTCN
6.	Other details as follows	:	
(i)	Tender inviting Authority	:	Superintending Engineer, Balasore Irrigation Division, Balasore.
(ii)	Availability of Tender Document for bidding	:	30.12.2023 from 10.00 A.M to 08.01.2024 up to 5.00 P.M.
(iii)	Date of opening of Bid Document	:	On 09.01.2024 at 11.00 AM in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Balasore Irrigation Division, Balasore.
(iv)	Decision to Conduct Lottery	:	If required the transparent lottery shall be conducted on 12.01.2024 at 11.30 A.M. onwards in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Balasore Irrigation Division, Balasore

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Balasore Irrigation Division, Balasore OIPR-32110/11/0008/2324

termediaries and platforms should take additional measures to not

on the sidelines of an event. In the advisory issued Tuesday,











Sd./- Superintending Engineer, R.W. Division-I, Keonjhar



No. O-2004

# international



motherland must be reunified, and inevitably will be reunified. Resolutely prevent anyone from **splitting Taiwan from** China in any way XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

#### **SWEDEN EDGES CLOSER TO NATO**

The Turkish parliament's foreign affairs commission approved Sweden's NATO membership bid in a key step towards enlarging the Western bloc after 19 months of delays in which Ankara demanded security-related concessions from Stockholm





Iran in recent weeks has increased its production of highly enriched uranium, reversing a previous output reduction from mid-2023



RAFAEL MARIANO GROSSI DIRECTOR GENERAL, IAEA

The goal is (to) start on the road to rebuilding our country, return freedom and

autonomy to individuals and start to transform the enormous amount of regulations that have blocked, stalled and stopped economic growth

JAVIER MILEI NEW PRESIDENT, ARGENTINA

The situation has been created in such a way to allow Nepal to forge partnerships with India Bangladesh, and

China in the area of power trade, the government will now shift its attention to the game changer mega

PUSHPAKAMAL DAHAL PRACHANDA PM. NEPAL

#### SHORT TAKES

### Schaeuble no more

Berlin: Wolfgang Schaeuble, who helped negotiate German reunification in 1990 and as finance minister was a central figure in the austerity-heavy effort to drag Europe out of its debt crisis more than two decades later, has died. He was 81. Schaeuble died at home Tuesday evening, his family told German news agency dpa Wednesday. Schaeuble became Chancellor Angela Merkel's finance minister in October 2009, just before revelations about Greece's ballooning budget deficit set off the crisis that engulfed the continent and threatened to destabilize world's financial order.

### 100 Nepalis missing

Kathmandu: Nepal's Foreign Minister NP Saud Tuesday who joined the Russian Army have been reported missing. Out of several Nepalis who have joined the Russian army, seven individuals have lost their lives, according to Foreign Ministry sources here. "Apart from that, complaints have been filed into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) that around 100 people are missing and injured," Foreign Minister Saud said Tuesday. It is estimated that around 200 Nepali youths, who went to Russia on foreign employment visas, study visas and visit visas have joined the Russian army, the Foreign Minister said talking to the National News Agency of Nepal.

### **Oureshi re-arrested**

Lahore: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party's vice chairman and a close aide of former prime minister Imran Khan. Shah Mahmood Oureshi was on Wednesday manhandled by police as they re-arrested him outside a iail in Rawalpindi, a step termed "illegal" by him and his party. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) released a video on X where Oureshi, who was granted bail in the cipher case by the Supreme Court last week, is seen being pushed and shoved by policemen after he was picked up right at the gate of the highsecurity Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi and packed off into an armoured police vehicle. The footage of the incident also aired on multiple television and social media channels showed the 67-yearold former foreign minister. clad in a cardigan and a shalwar kameez, loudly protesting the "illegality" of the police's actions, being shoved into an armoured police vehicle by officials.

# War spilover looms

AMID ISRAEL'S DETERMINATION TO DESTROY HAMAS IN THE 11-WEEK-OLD WAR, THE CONFLICT HAS REVERBERATED THROUGHOUT THE REGION, WITH ARMED GROUPS BACKED BY ITS ARCH-FOE IRAN ESCALATING ACTIVITY

Cairo, Dec 27: Israel's war on Hamas will last months, Israel's military chief said, as a string of incidents outside the Gaza Strip highlighted the risk of the conflict spreading.

Israeli actions intensified around Christmas, particularly in a central area just south of the seasonal waterway that bisects the Gaza Strip. The Israeli army told civilians to leave the area. though many said there was no safe place left to go.

Israel is determined to destroy Hamas despite global calls for a ceasefire in the 11-weekold war.

There are growing signs the conflict is starting to spread.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi militia claimed responsibility for a missile attack Tuesday on a container ship in the Red Sea and for an attempt to attack Israel with drones.

The Houthis have been attacking ships they say have links to Israel in the entrance to the Red Sea, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. The attacks are a response to Israel's assault on Gaza, the militia says.

US military forces shot down



more than a dozen attack drones and several missiles fired by Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels at shipping in the Red Sea, the Pentagon said, reporting no damage or injuries.

An Israeli airstrike killed a senior leader of Iran's Revolutionary Guards in Syria

And on the Lebanon border Tuesday, Israel said Hezbollah fired anti-tank missiles at a church, wounding nine Israeli soldiers and a civilian, after which it fired rockets from near a mosque, drawing retaliatory

airstrikes

In India, meanwhile, there was an explosion near the Israeli embassy in New Delhi. Authorities said no staffs were

"We are in a multi-front war and are coming under attack from seven theatres: Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), Iraq, Yemen and Iran," Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant told lawmakers Tuesday, listing six places where Iran-backed militants are

active, as well as Iran itself. "We have already responded and taken action in six of these theatres," he said, without specifying the one that had yet to see Israeli action.

#### **NO END TO ISRAELI AGGRESSION**

Israel launched heavy strikes across central and southern Gaza overnight and into Wednesday after broadening its offensive against Hamas to more areas where the military had told Palestinians to seek shelter earlier in the war.

Residents reported heavy bombing in the built-up Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza, in the southern city of Khan Younis and in the southern town of Rafah, areas where tens of thousands have sought refuge as much of northern Gaza was pounded to rubble.

"It was a night of hell. We haven't seen such bombing since the start of the war," said Rami Abu Mosab, speaking from the Bureij camp, where he has been sheltering since fleeing his home in northern Gaza.

He said warplanes flew overhead and gunfire and explosions echoed from the eastern edge of the camp — which, like others in Gaza, houses refugees from the 1948 war surrounding Israel's

creation and their descendants and now resembles other densely populated neighbourhoods.

#### **DEATH, DISPLACEMENT, STARVATION**

Its offensive is already one of the most devastating military campaigns in recent history. More than 20,900 Palestinians, two-thirds of them women and children, have been killed, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza. The count doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants.

Some 85% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million Palestinians have fled their homes, crowding into smaller and smaller areas in recent weeks as the ground offensive has expanded. For many Palestinians, the exodus has echoes of the mass displacement in 1948 that they refer to as the Nakba, or catastrophe.

UN officials say a quarter of the territory's population is starving under Israel's siege, which allows in a trickle of food, water, fuel, medicine and other supplies. Last week, the UN Security Council called for immediately speeding up aid deliveries, but there has been little sign of change.

### Michigan SC keeps Trump on '24 ballot

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Michigan, Dec 27: Michigan's Supreme Court is keeping former President Donald Trump on the state's primary election ballot.

The court said Wednesday it will not hear an appeal of a lower court's ruling from groups seeking to keep Trump from appearing on the ballot. It said in an order that the application by parties to appeal a Dec 14 Michigan appeals court judgment was considered, but denied "because we are not persuaded that the questions presented should be reviewed by this court.'

The ruling contrasts with December 19 decision by a divided Colorado Supreme Court which found Trump ineligible to be president because of his role in the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol. That ruling was the first time in history that Section 3 of the 14th Amendment has been used to disqualify a presidential candidate.

The Michigan and Colorado cases are among dozens hoping to keep Trump's name off state ballots. They all point to the socalled insurrection clause that prevents anyone from holding office who "engaged in insurrection or rebellion" against the Constitution. Until the Colorado ruling, all had failed.

Trump hailed the order, calling the effort to keep him off the ballot in multiple states a "pathetic gambit.'

### Russia to make arms under 'Make in India'

*In a major defence boost, Russia & India closer to joint military equipment production* 

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Moscow, Dec 27: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Wednesday said that Moscow is ready to launch the production of modern weapons under the 'Make in India' initiative.

Lavrov said this while addressing a news conference after holding talks with his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar here. Jaishankar is on a five-day visit to Russia. He said they discussed the

outlook for military-technical cooperation, including joint production of modern weapons, between Russia and India, the staterun news agency TASS reported. "There is concrete progress

on this track," Lavrov said. The diplomat said Russia understands and is ready to support

New Delhi's initiative, "producing military-purpose goods as part of the Make in India programme". "We are ready to cooperate on this issue," he said. Russia has been the major

supplier of defence equipment to India. However, after India and the US stepped up their bilateral ties, New Delhi has diversified its import of military equipment to include many American defence items.

Lavrov also said that the North-South transport corridor project will be implemented "in the near



Russia, India and Iran signed an intergovernmental agreement on the creation of the North-South multimodal transport corridor in 2000. The number of participants expanded to 14 later.

The project goal is to bring transit freight traffic from India, Iran and Persian Gulf countries via the Russian territory to Europe. The project brings together several different transport systems of individual countries at present.

Lavrov said the project "caused great enthusiasm among countries, on which its implementation depends, and it will be definitely realised in the near time"

The foreign minister said Russia and India have agreed on the "whole range of steps making possible for us to broaden cooperation, particularly in the context of the start of the North-South international transport corridor being prepared, creation of the Chennai-Vladivostok route and cooperation on Northern Sea Route development — this is a very promising line"

In his opening remarks before the bilateral talks with Lavrov. Jaishankar said it was always good to be in Moscow.

"I agree with you that our relationship has been very strong, very steady, and I think we have lived up to the responsibilities of a special and privileged strategic partnership," he said.

Jaishankar said that during his meeting with Lavrov, "we will focus on bilateral cooperation in different spheres, adjusting it to changing circumstances and de-

**Our relations have been** very strong, very steady. And I think we have lived up to a special and privileged strategic partnership

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

"We will discuss the international strategic situation, conflicts and tensions where they are. Also, focus on development challenges that the Global South faces. And of course, the state of multilateralism and the building of a multi-polar world order,

### **NUCLEAR POWER PLANT**

In a major boost to their timetested partnership, India and Russia Tuesday signed some "very important" agreements related to the construction of the future power-generating units of the Kudankulam nuclear power plant.

The Kudankulam nuclear power plant, India's largest, is being built in Tamil Nadu with the technical assistance of Russia. The construction began in March 2002. Since February 2016, the first power unit of the Kudankulam NPP has been steadily operating at its design capacity of 1,000 MW. The plant is expected to start operating at full capacity in 2027, according to Russian state media

### **TIDBITS**

### 6-year-old boy put on wrong flight

FORT MYERS: A 6-year-old boy who left on a flight for the Christmas holiday to visit his grandmother in southwest Florida instead was put on the wrong plane and ended up 160 miles away in Orlando, Florida. When the grandmother, Maria Ramos, showed up Thursday at Southwest Florida International Airport in Fort Myers to greet her grandson who was flying for the first time from Philadelphia, she was told he wasn't on the Spirit Airlines flight. "I ran inside the plane to the flight attendant and I asked her, Where's my grandson? He was handed over to you at Philadelphia? She said, No, I had no kids with me,' Ramos told WINK News. She then got a call from her grandson from the airport in Orlando, telling her that he had landed. In a statement to WINK News, Spirit

ogize to the family for this experience."

Airlines said the boy was under the care and supervision of an airlines employee the entire time, even though he was incorrectly boarded on a flight to Orlando. Once the mistake was discovered, the airlines let the family know, the statement said. "We take the safety and responsibility of transporting all of our Guests seriously and are conducting an internal investigation," the statement said. "We apol-

### S Korea childbirths hit lowest-ever tally

SEOUL: The number of babies born in South Korea fell to the lowest point for any October to date, data showed Wednesday. A total of 18,904 babies were born in October, down 8.4 per cent from a year earlier, according to the data from Statistics Korea. The October tally marks the lowest number for any October since the agency began to compile related data in 1981, Yonhap news agency reported. In the first 10 months of the year, the number of newborns stood at 196,041, down 8.1 per cent from a year earlier, marking the smallest number on record during the cited period South Korea reported the first natural fall in its population in 2019, and the trend of deaths surpassing births has continued for 48 consecutive months. The country has suffered a chronic decline in childbirths as many young people opt to postpone or

give up on getting married or having babies in line with changing social norms and lifestyles, as well as in the face of high home prices, a tough job market and an economic slowdown. The number of deaths grew 3.4 per cent on-year to 30,793 in October, and the country, accordingly, suffered a natural decline in population by 11,889. The number of marriages, meanwhile, rose one per cent on-year to 15,986 cases in October, and divorces also increased six per cent on-year to 7.916.

### Whisky, coal mining 'shack': Taiwan poll not only about China

THE CANDIDATES ARE **EXCHANGING BLOWS OVER EVERYTHING** FROM PROPERTY **DISPUTES TO** WHETHER DRINKING WHISKY IS OUT OF **TOUCH, IN A RAUCOUS** AND FREEWHEELING **DISPLAY OF THE ISLAND'S DEMOCRACY** 

REUTERS

Taipei, Dec 27: As Taiwan's election approaches next month, it is not only fraught ties with China competing for electors attention.

Taiwan's January 13 presidential and parliamentary election will define how the Chineseclaimed island deals with Beijing and the subject is indeed a major bone of contention.

debated at rallies, press conferences and on television talk shows where the uncensored exchanges are a major contrast to China, which says it is a socialist democracy but has been ruled only by the Communist Party since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. One subject taking much lime-

But it is far from the sole issue

light in Taiwan is whether the childhood home of Lai Ching-te from the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and currently frontrunner to be next president according to most polls, was illegally expanded by his family in an old coal mining area north of Taipei. Lai has denied anything un-

toward took place. But he has pledged to donate the tidy-looking house, which using Chineselanguage wordplay on his name the opposition have called Lai's "rascally shack", so it can be turned into a miners' museum.

'I've seen that villagers in

mining areas are worried the

houses they've settled down in

would be considered illegally built and be demolished. I'm very sorry about this. It is my responsibility to help everyone find a way to protect their hous-

ing rights," Lai said last week. The property ownership of the other two presidential candidates, Hou Yu-ih from the main opposition party the Kuomintang (KMT) and Ko Wen-je from the small Taiwan People's Party



tention. The DPP has criticised Ko for

co-owning farmland illegally turned into a parking lot, and Hou of profiting from renting out a large number of apartments his

Ko has promised to tear up the parking lot. Hou has denied wrongdoing, and his wife said Wednesday the apartments "from

beginning to end do not belong" to him, denouncing "political smears and suspicion"

Hou's running mate, the outspoken media personality Jaw Shaw-kong, said this week nobody was being forced to live in the apartments, many of which were rented to students. "If people think they are too expensive then boycott them," Jaw told re-

porters. Illegally adding to buildings or putting farmland into other uses are not uncommon problems in Taiwan given the sometimes vague or unenforced regulations.

### **JOHNNIE WALKER**

AND SARSAPARILLA Lai has a lead of around 5 percentage points in most polls, though some have shown Hou only one or two points behind.

One focus for all three parties has been how to appeal to the young, with an estimated 1 million new voters eligible to cast ballots at this

election. Ko has honed in on breadand-butter issues like the high cost of housing, and young people have flocked to his rallies even if he has trailed in the polls.

But the TPP has been attacked as out of touch with ordinary people for Ko's choice of running mate, Cynthia Wu, whose family is a major shareholder of conglomerate the Shin Kong Group.

The TPP's opponents mocked Wu for comments at a vice presidential debate Friday where she said "when I was young, everyone loved to drink Johnnie Walker," referring to

the popular Scotch whisky. Wang Ting-yu, a senior DPP lawmaker, shot back on his Facebook page that when he was young, "we mostly drank plain water"

Wu downplayed the furore. "Sarsaparilla, beer, guava juice and Johnnie Walker is for us Chinese what should be on the table to drink, OK? So there'sno need to make a fuss about

it," she told reporters.





# business



We have been working on a project with IIT Bombay to launch a Bharat GPT programme. We have been working on our own OS (operating system) for a while now for the TVs and we are comprehensively thinking about how to launch it

AKASH AMBANI | CHAIRMAN, RELIANCE JIO INFOCOMM

### **FOG RELIEF BY AIR INDIA**

Tata owned Air India Wednesday announced that passengers flying to and from Delhi airport during the winter season will be allowed to reschedule or cancel their bookings at no extra cost if their flight is likely to be affected by major fog delays





coming out for certain financial support and tax incentives (for coa

projects). This is under consideration... And we will ensure that coal gasification will see positive acceleration

AMRIT LAL MEENA | COAL SECRETARY

Although the basis of our high-quality development and manufacturing competences lie in north-western

Europe, we see many opportunities in India, which is obviously a promising growth market

ROLF-JAN ZWEEP | CEO, VDL BUS & COACH

Overall hiring in the IT sector is expected to surge by 12-15 per cent in CY 2024. especially due to the surge in global capabilities centres and global economy settling down comparatively

SACHIN ALUG | CEO, NLB SERVICES

### SHORT TAKES

### **Coup hits Dish TV**

New Delhi: In a surprise development, shareholders of Dish TV rejected the candidature of four independent directors in the Extraordinary General Meeting held last week. leaving only one person on the board of the direct-to-home service provider. This prompted immediate appointment of two new persons on the board the same day, as the number of directors fell below the statutory minimum number of three. In the FGM held on December 22, shareholders of Dish TV shot down the four resolutions seeking the appointment and reappointments of independent directors Shankar Aggarwal. Aanchal David, Raiesh Sahni and Virender Kumar Tagra. However, these resolutions could get only around 28 per cent of the total votes polled.

### Apple in soup

Washington: Apple said Tuesday it will appeal a US ban on its latest smartwatch models after the Biden administration opted to not veto a ruling on patent infringements. The ban on Apple's latest smartwatch models came into effect Tuesday, with the Apple Watch Series 9 and Apple Watch Ultra 2 no longer available in stores or online. The ban is the latest legal tussle involving big tech companies over valuable patents that has also seen Google battle in court against Sonos in a fight over

### 12 companies raise nearly ₹9,000 crore in Dec

### **BEST IPO MONTH IN TWO YEARS**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 27: As many as 12 companies raised Rs 8,931.69 crore through initial share sales this month, making it the best IPO month in two years.

The previous best was December 2021, when 11 companies mopped up Rs 9,534 crore through Initial Public Offerings

As per an analysis, 12 companies hit the market with their

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 27: French en-

ergy giant TotalEnergies has in-

vested \$300 million (about Rs

2,500 crore) in a renewable energy

joint venture with Adani Green

Energy Ltd as it continues to

repose faith in the conglomerate

run by billionaire Gautam Adani.

French giant will own 50:50 stake

in the company which in turn

will house a 1,050 MW project

a 50 per cent stake in Adani

Renewable Energy Nine Ltd

(ARE9L) for an amount of \$300

million," Adani Green Energy

Ltd (AGEL) said in a stock ex-

change filing. ARE9L is a sub-

The 1,050 MW project portfo-

lio includes 300 megawatts (MW)

of operational capacity, 500 MW

of under-construction solar proj-

ects and 250 MW of under-de-

TotalEnergies, which holds

about 19.75 per cent stake in

AGEL, had previously invested

in Adani Green Energy Twenty

Three Ltd, another subsidiary of

dated November 27, 2023 ob-

tained from Mazars Advisory

LLP, an independent valuer, the

aggregate valuation of the proj-

ect portfolio companies is equiv-

alent to USD 489 million," AGEL

"As per the valuation report

sidiary of AGEL

velopment projects.

"TotalEnergies has acquired

portfolio.

The Adani group firm and the



IPOs in December 2023.

This week, six companies got

Thursday. Reflecting the bull-

While Muthoot Microfin. Motisons Jewellers and Suraj Estate Developers got listed Tuesday, Credo Brands, Happy Forgings and RBZ Jewellers made their debuts Wednesday.

Earlier this month, Doms Industries, Flair, India Shelter Finance and Inox CVA listed on the bourses, while Azad Engineering is set to start trading Thursday. The listing date of Innova

Captab, which has raised Rs 570 crore through an IPO, is yet to be announced.

Through the IPO, Doms

Industries raised Rs 1,200 crore while Flair garnered Rs 593 crore and India Shelter Finance fetched Rs 1,200 crore. Inox CVA mopped up Rs 1,459.32 crore and Muthoot Microfin's initial share sale was worth Rs 960 crore.

Among others, Motisons Jewellers raised Rs 151 crore. Suraj Estate Developers (Rs 400 crore), Credo Brands (Rs 549.77 crore), Happy Forgings (Rs 1,008.6 crore), RBZ Jewellers (Rs 100 crore) and Azad Engineering (Rs 740 crore).

Together, these 12 firms have mopped up Rs 8,931.69 crore, as per the analysis.

Change +701.63

72,038.43

### **RBI okays IDFC-IDFC** First Bank merger

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 27: Reserve Bank of India has given its nod for the reverse merger of IDFC Ltd with its banking subsidiary IDFC First Bank.

The boards of IDFC First Bank and IDFC have approved the reverse merger in July.

"....IDFC Limited and IDFC Financial Holding Company (IDFC FHCL) have received letters dated December 26, 2023 from RBI whereby RBI has conveyed its 'No Objection' to the composite scheme of amalgamation, subject to compliance with the terms specified therein," IDFC Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

As part of the composite scheme of amalgamation, IDFC FHCL would first merge with IDFC and then IDFC into IDFC First Bank Ltd.

The scheme remains subject to other statutory and regulatory approvals, including from the National Company Law Tribunal and the respective shareholders and creditors of the companies involved under the applicable laws, it said.

Under the proposed reverse merger scheme, an IDFC shareholder will get 155 shares for every 100 shares she/he holds in the bank. Both stocks have a face value of Rs 10 each.

Post the merger, the standalone book value per share of the bank will increase by 4.9 per cent, as calculated on the audited financials as of March 2023, it said, adding that as of June 2023, IDFC through its nonfinancial holding company, owned 39.93 per cent in IDFC First Bank.

IDFC was an infra lender in the private sector space, and following its bigger peers like ICICI and IDBI, it also launched a banking subsidiary in 2015 --IDFC Bank -- but could not make a mark as the other two could do.

Like HDFC Bank, the merged IDFC First Bank will also have no promoter entity, but fully owned by institutional and public shareholders

IDFC began as an infra lender in 1997. It got in-principle approval from the RBI to set up a bank in April 2014, and in October 2015, it launched IDFC Bank when on-tap licensing began, following which loans and liabilities of IDFC were transferred to the bank.

in JV with Adani Green

listed after their IPOs and one company will start trading

seeking approval for the

TotalEnergies will acquire a 50

per cent stake in ARE9L, which

will house this Project portfo-

lio companies, for an amount of

\$300 million which are terms

more beneficial to the company

and under-development projects

achieving commercial opera-

tions, TotalEnergies will also

invest an additional amount to

be determined based on actual

project cost subject to certain

parameters around the project

TotalEnergies will be over and

above the initial investment of

\$300 million and will be subject

to suitable approvals as may be

The French firm infused an

amount of Rs 4,013 crore into

AGE23L by subscribing to com-

pulsorily convertible debentures

issued by AGE23L, which have

been used to redeem the existing

non-convertible debentures held

"Such further funding by

cost and timelines.

required," it added.

Upon the under-construction

"As part of the transaction,

TotalEnergies deal.

ishness in the primary market, three firms each made their stock market debut Tuesday and

### Total invests \$300mn BULLS BACK WITH BANG **SENSEX SCALES 72K PEAK FOR FIRST TIME; NIFTY HITS ALL-TIME HIGH**

**BSE Sensex** 

GAINERS

2.97% JSW Steel

2.91 Tata Motors

4.23 UltraTech Cement

Previous day close: 71,336.80

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 27: Sensex and Nifty soared to fresh closing record highs Wednesday, with the 30-share benchmark index crossing the historic 72,000 mark, boosted by optimism over the country's macroeconomic fundamentals and firm global market trends.

Reflecting broader investor bullishness, the 50-share index surged to a record high of 21,654.75 on intense buying in metal, commodity, auto and banking sectors.

Rising for the fourth straight session, the BSE gauge jumped 701.63 points or 0.98 per cent to settle at its all-time closing high of 72,038.43. During the day, it zoomed 783.05 points or 1.09 per cent to reach its intra-day lifetime high of 72,119.85.

The Nifty climbed 213.40 points or 1 per cent to settle at a record high of 21,654.75. During the day, it rallied 234.4 points or 1.09 per cent to reach its all-time intraday peak of 21,675.75

It has hit record highs in 12 of the 18 sessions so far in December. The last time was on Dec. 20, which sparked some profit-booking and led to a three-session lull before the latest jump.

UltraTech Cement was the biggest gainer on the Sensex chart, rising 4.23 per cent, followed by JSW Steel, Tata Motors, Bharti Airtel. State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro, Infosys and Bajaj Finserv were the major

2.15<sub>%</sub> > Bharti Airtel The upbeat domestic market continued reaching a new record high and easily recovered the last week's losses. This upward trend was predominantly supported by the Santa Claus rally in anticipation of early rate

cooling global inflation VINOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH, GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

cuts by the US Fed and

On the other hand, NTPC and Tech Mahindra were the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.41 per cent, and smallcap index advanced 0.20 per cent. Among the indices, metal jumped 1.33 per cent, auto climbed 1.33 per cent. commodities (1.19 per cent), teck (0.96 per cent), IT (0.68 per cent),

on the Nifty Bank seems likely tomorrow," Sharma said. The BSE benchmark climbed

consumer durables (0.67 per

cent) and capital goods (0.67 per

cent). Utilities, power and serv-

Foreign Institutional Investors

 $\mbox{``21,800}$  on the Nifty and  $49{,}000$ 

(FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs

95.20 crore Tuesday, according to

ices were the laggards.

exchange data.

229.84 points or 0.32 per cent to settle at 71,336.80 Tuesday. The Nifty advanced 91.95 points or 0.43 per cent to 21,441.35.

#### **Investors' wealth zooms** Investors became richer by Rs 11.11

lakh crore in four days of market rally with the benchmark Sensex zooming past the historic 72,000 mark for the first time Wednesday. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies went up by Rs 11.11.599.28 crore to Rs 3.61.31.598.15 crore in four days.

### by TotalEnergies. said in a notice to shareholders RBI asks NBFCs to broad-base fundraising

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 27: The Reserve Bank Wednesday asked nonbank finance companies to broadbase their fundraising to limit reliance on banks as it called for strengthening balance sheets and guarding against frauds and data breaches.

According to the report 'Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2022-23' released by the RBI, the Indian banking system and NBFCs remain sound and resilient, backed by high capital ratios, strengthening asset quality

and robust earnings growth.

The consolidated balance sheet of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) in 2022-23 expanded by 12.2 per cent, driven by credit to retail and services sectors. Deposit growth also picked up, although it trailed credit growth, it said.

Looking ahead, it said, "Given the increasing interconnectedness between banks and NBFCs. the latter should focus on broadbasing their funding sources and reduce overdependence on bank funding. Banks and nonbanks both, need to bring in greater empathy in their cus-



tomer services'

The concerted efforts are needed by all stakeholders to protect the banking and payments system from the risks of fraud and data breaches emanating from cyber threats, the report added.

"Overall, banks and NBFCs need to further strengthen their balance sheets through robust governance and risk management practices to meet the growing aspirations of the Indian

economy," it said. As per the report, the improvement in asset quality of banks that began in 2018-19 continued during 2022-23, and even in the first half (April-September) of 2023-24, the gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio stood at 3.2 per cent.

Higher net interest income and lower provisioning boosted net interest margin (NIM) and profitability in 2022-23, it said.

### Inflows from PE, VC funds to firms took a hit this yr

The year also saw more money being pulled out from the country by

private equity players with overall exits touching \$19.34 billion from 248 companies as against 233 exists worth \$18.45

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 27: Investments from private equity and venture capital funds into domestic companies declined about 40 per cent to \$27.9 billion so far this year, while the outflow increased marginally to \$19.34 billion year-

According to the numbers collated by Venture Intelligence that tracks private capital and debt flows, and industry body IVCA, investments by private equity and venture capital funds as of December 20, 2023, fell to a low of \$27.9 billion across 697 transactions, as against \$47.62 billion inflows in 2022 across 1,364 deals.

The top five investments of the year included TPG Capital and Temasek pumping in \$2.4 billion into Manipal Hospitals in April, followed by HDFC Credila (the education loans arm of the now defunct HDFC right before its merger with HDFC Bank) being snapped up by Baring Asia and ChrysCapital for \$1.35 billion in June; Qatar Investment Authority pumping in \$1 billion into Reliance Retail Ventures in August; the renewable player Avaada Ventures getting \$1 billion from Brookfield in April; and fertility clinic Indira IVF



Clinics getting \$732 million from Baring Asia in July.

Venture Intelligence said the fall in volumes is a strategic refinement and suggests a strate gic approach to investment, focusing on quality and sustainability along with optimizing opportunities and ensuring a more discerning selection process for long-term value creation.

The investments were led by sectors such as the healthcare and life sciences which saw 30.2 per cent higher inflow compared to last year, energy (14.5 per cent), retail (98.8 per cent) and advertising & marketing which received inflows nearly double (199.8 per cent) than last year.

In contrast, sectors that saw deepening funding winter included players in the IT & ITES sector receiving 64.5 per cent less than what they got in 2022. While BFSI (Banking, Financial Services and Insurance) sector got 47.6 per cent less this year, funding in manufacturing went down by 43 per cent, while in engineering & construction lowered by 64 per cent.

Also, shipping & logistics witnessed a fall of 60.6 per cent, inflow in education lowered by 78.4 per cent. It declined by 48.5 per cent in FMCG and fell 80.9 per cent in agri business, dipped 70.4 per cent in food & bever-ages, and decreased by 83.6 per cent in telecom.

## Real estate space sizzles in 2023; rush to continue

MARKET EXPERTS STRONGLY BELIEVE THE DEMAND WILL NOT ONLY SUSTAIN IN 2024 BUT RISE FURTHER, ALBEIT AT A SLOWER PACE, ON HIGH ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EXPECTATIONS OF A FALL IN HOME LOAN INTEREST RATE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 27: India's housing market defied logic this year to register all-time high sales as home buyers snapped up deals despite a jump in asking prices and the highest interest rates in six years.

The real estate industry saw record sales of residential properties in terms of both volumes and value, real estate market data showed as consumers are increasingly buying into the idea of home ownership post-Covid pandemic.

The ouster of dubious developers from the real estate market thanks to greater regulatory oversight via RERA helped boost confidence among home buyers. The insolvency law too has played a role in elimination of defaulting builders.

According to real estate con-



are estimated to rise by 30 per cent this year to a record 4.74 lakh units in primary (fresh sales) markets of top seven cities -- Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region), Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Pune.

In value terms, the sales of residential properties are seen at a whopping Rs 4.5 lakh crore,

Housing prices, which started moving up from last year after remaining stagnant for almost a decade, continued an upward

trend and appreciated by an average 14 per cent this year, encouraging investors to return to the primary residential market. The changing sentiments of homebuyers -- wherein not only

are home-renters converting

into buyers but also buying big-

The Indian residential real estate sector experienced remarkable

growth in 2023, reaching a pinnacle not seen in the past 15 years. On the back of a strong Indian economy, real estate sector is seeing this robust end user-led growth in the residential demand and supply

ANUJ PURI | CHAIRMAN, ANAROCK

ger homes -- has played a huge contributing hand to sectoral and economic growth. The consumer has realised the importance of owning a home and we expect this sentiment to continue in the foreseeable future," realtors' apex body CREDAI President Boman Irani told PTI.

Property developers and consultants are of the opinion that the industry is witnessing the

"best time" and it is possibly in the first or second year of longterm upcycle.

Sales were strong across price brackets, be it affordable, mid-income, premium and ultra-luxury homes, but what surprised everyone was the huge demand for properties starting from Rs 3-4 crore range to as high as Rs 100 crore. DLF, the country's largest

real estate firm, announced in March sales of 1,137 luxury apartments, priced Rs 7 crore and above in its housing project in Gurugram for over Rs 8,000 crore within 3 days.

DLF, Prestige Estates, Macrotech Developers and Godrej Properties all reported sales bookings between Rs 12,000 crore and Rs 15,000 crore during the last fiscal year and they expect to better their performance in 2023-24 fiscal.

### billion in 2022

on-year.

# as SA take command





PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Centurion, Dec 27: Walking into cricketing sunset in another 11 days, Dean Elgar displayed his understated brilliance with a counter-offensive hundred that not only neutralised KL Rahul's superlative ton but also put South Africa in complete command on the second day of the opening Test against India here Wednesday.

Playing his 85th and penulti mate Test, left-handed Elgar (140 batting, 211b, 23x4), not exactly known for his elegant stroke-play, stacked up his 14th Test hundred and also took South Africa to 256/5 at stumps to offset India's first innings total of 245. With debutant David Bedingham (56, 87b, 7x4, 2x6), Elgar added 131 runs for the fourth wicket as India now will

have to play a catching game. The conditions remained bowl ing friendly as clouds hovered over throughout the second day but it was Mohamamed Shami's absence and ineptitude of Shardul

Thakur (0/57) and inability of debutant Prasidh Krishna (1/61) that hurt India dearly as they neither found the right line nor the length on the day.

Jasprit Bumrah (2/48), in his comeback Test, gave his all and Mohammed Siraj (2/63) was 200 percent honest in his effort but two couldn't have done the job which required all four to sing from the same hymn sheet.

Ravichandran Ashwin (0/19) kept things tight but this isn't the pitch where one can expect him to run through the opposition.

Elgar nicely blended defence with a plethora of pulls and tucks off his legs and ferocious cuts. He left a few deliveries during the first 30 minutes and missed a few before Shardul and Prasidh played into his hands. By the time, Siraj castled Bedingham and Prasidh got his first Test victim in Kyle Verreynne, India

had lost the initiative. In the morning, Rahul, starting the day unbeaten on 70, completed his eighth Test ton with a maximum and the innings could well be considered on par with some of the best knocks played by Indians in SENA countries if the degree of difficulty

is taken into account. No Test batter from any other country has been able to score two Test hundreds at this venue and Rahul now holds that unique

#### An Odisha link

Satbir Singh Riar, a member of the Odisha Cricket Association (OCA), has been appointed as the manager of Team India for the two-match Test Series in South Africa, OCA said in a media release, Wednesday.

#### **BRIEF SCORES**

India 245 (KL Rahul 101; Nandre Burger 3/50); South Africa 256/5 (Dean Elgar 140 batting, David Bedingham 56; Jasprit Bumrah 2/48, Mohammed Siraj 2/63).

### Elgar outdoes Rahul Eves look to better ODI record against Oz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 27: Flying high after two consecutive Test wins, India Women will now shift focus to white-ball cricket as they take on seven-time World Champions Australia in a three-match ODI series, looking to resurrect their dismal record in the format, here Thursday.

India have been in top form winning their last three contests - two Tests and one T20I - after losing the first two T20Is to England and concede the three-match series in this long home season.

After crushing England by a record 347 runs in the one-off Test, India carried the momen-

Bhubaneswar, Dec 27: Odisha is all set to host the Junior and

Senior Artistic Gymnastics

National Championships at

the Gymnastics Centre in the Kalinga Stadium here. The

championship will see top

gymnasts, including Dipa

Karmakar who will compete

after a gap of eight years, across

The junior championship will

take place December 28-30, while

the senior event will be held

January 2-4. A total of 750 par-

ticipants, including 550 players,

120 support staff and 100 offi-

cials from across the country

are expected to take part in what

will be a grand showcase of gym-

Besides Dipa, the champi-

onship will feature the likes of

Tokyo Olympian Pranati Nayak,

Yogeshwar Singh, Rakesh Patra,

Tapan Mohanty, Saif Tamboli,

Speaking ahead of the event,

Odisha's Sports & Youth Services

Secretary Vineel Krishna said,

'We are absolutely delighted to

host the event. It is an apt op-

portunity for our gymnasts to

learn from the best.

Gaurav Kumar among others.

PNN & AGENCIES

the country.

nastics prowess.

tum to defeat Australia by eight wickets last week here at the Wankhede Stadium, which will also be the venue for the threematch ODI series.

Given their current form, India will eye more success in the fixtures lined up but the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side would know that it has a huge task cut out against Australia who have historically dominated them in 50-overs cricket.

India have only 10 wins and 40 losses to show from 50 ODIs against Australia overall, while at home, their record has been simply terrible.

With only four wins in 21 ODIs and 17 defeats at home, India

**MATCHDAY** ndia Women vs Australia Women 1st One Day International

Time: 1:30 pm Telecast: Sports 18 Network Stream: Jio Cinema

have not beaten Australia in any of their last seven matches playing at home since February 2007.

In fact, the last time India and Australia played ODI cricket at the Wankhede Stadium, the home team suffered heavy defeats in March 2012, losing by 221 runs and five wickets in the last two ODIs of the three-match series. India had lost the opening ODI heavily at Ahmedabad by 30 runs and were eventually whitewashed.

However, India have a new leadership pair of skipper Harmanpreet and coach Amol Majumdar and it will be a perfect opportunity to bolster their preparations for the ODI World Cup in 2025. These games will also bring a chance to improve a recent poor record in 50-overs cricket against this opponent.

India have lost each of the last seven ODIs — including a 0-3 whitewash at home in 2018 against Australia to remain winless for about six years now, a trend that Kaur's side would want to change starting with the first ODI to be played here Thursday.

**Aussies in complete** 

**Test against Pakistan** 

control of second



PNN & AGENCIES

Cuttack, Dec 27: Defending champions Odisha Juggernauts returned to winning ways in the Ultimate Kho Kho Season 2 with a 31-28 victory over Mumbai Khiladis, while Telugu Yoddhas defeated Rajasthan Warriors 38-28 at the Jawaharlal Nehru

Chasing first, Mumbai Khiladis made a balanced start to the match as they did not give ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne (Australia), Dec 27: Australia's pace-bowling captain Pat Cummins struck twice in four balls to crush Pakistan's comeback attempt on the second day of the second Test Wednesday.

Pakistan started strongly then collapsed to reach 194/6 at stumps in reply to Australia's first-innings total of 318 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. A total of 13 wickets fell in an eventful second day's play.

Cummins claimed 3/37 and off-spinner Nathan Lyon took 2/48 for Australia. Abdullah Shafique (62) and skipper Shan Masood (54) both scored half centuries, sharing a 90-run partnership for Pakistan's second wicket. Mohammad Rizwan was unbeaten on 29 at stumps. Pakistan trails by 124 runs with four first-innings wickets in hand.

Australia had resumed Wednesday on 187/3. The home side were bowled out for 318, losing seven wickets for 131 in an extended morning session. Marnus Labuschagne top-scored with a patient 63 and Mitchell Marsh crunched 41

#### **ODISHA GEARS UP** Juggernauts beat Khiladis TO HOST ARTISTIC **GYMNASTICS NAT'LS**



Indoor Stadium here, Wednesday.

Juggernauts have now secured the top spot in the points table with eight points from three matches, while Yoddhas are second with six points.

turn and allowed Odisha to earn a dream run bonus point as well. The last turn turned out to be in the favour of the defending champions as they attained 16 points with sublime attacking to

register a remarkable victory.

any dream run bonus points to

the defending champions early

on. However, they only managed

to grab 14 points in the first turn

as Odisha returned to the contest

by claiming 14 points during the

Mumbai went into the second

inning with a point advantage

courtesy of a dream run bonus

point in the second turn. They fur-

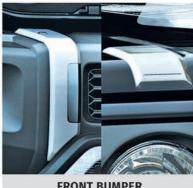
ther won 12 points in the third

following turn.





**FENDER GARNISH** 



FRONT BUMPER **AND HOOD GARNISH** 



FRONT SKID PLATE



DOOR CLADDING



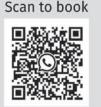
INTERIOR STYLING KIT



**DOOR VISOR** 

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