



**Fearless beginning**  
Actor Katrina Kaif reflects on her fearless early career choices, emphasising the importance of genuine connection with the audience

LEISURE | P2



**Biggest attack**  
Russia launches 122 missiles and dozens of drones against Ukrainian targets, killing at least 27 civilians across the country

INTERNATIONAL | P9



**Musk world's richest**  
Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk returns as the world's richest man with a net worth now estimated to be \$232 billion

BUSINESS | P10



**Jadeja starts training**  
In a major boost, Ravindra Jadeja begins training and could be available for the second South Africa Test, starting Jan 3

SPORTS | P11

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BHUBANESWAR | SATURDAY DECEMBER 30 | 2023

12 PAGES | ₹5.00

**SHORT TAKES**

**CHIEF SECY JENA GETS 6-MONTH EXTENSION**

**Bhubaneswar:** The state government Friday extended the tenure of Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena by six months. He will continue to remain at the helm of Odisha administration till June 30, 2024. A notification in this regard has been issued by the Department of General Administration and Public Grievance. Jena was supposed to superannuate December 31, 2023. The state government had appointed the 1989-batch IAS officer as the Chief Secretary in February 2023.

**3 HURT IN CYLINDER BLAST AT HOSPITAL**

**Bhubaneswar:** At least three persons were injured after a cylinder used for filling refrigerant gas in air-conditioners exploded at a private hospital here Friday, police said. The incident took place at Hi-Tech Hospital at Pandara, here. There were no patients and outsiders on the floor when the cylinder exploded, a hospital official said. "The injured are in the ICU," hospital CEO Jotirmay Panda told reporters. A cylinder burst when refrigerant gas was being pumped into the outdoor AC unit.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**



How many more miles do we have to walk before we get a chair to sit?

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	72240.26	↓ 170.12
NIFTY	21731.40	↓ 47.30
DOLLAR	83.13	↓ ₹0.06
EURO	92.04	↓ ₹0.48
GOLD	₹63,168	↓ ₹221
SILVER	₹ 73,859	↓ ₹1100

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	27.8°C	27.0°C
Min Temp	17.2°C	16.0°C
Humidity	87%	87%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

**FORECAST**  
DRY WEATHER  
VERY LIKELY

**INDIA SEEKS HAFIZ SAEED'S EXTRADITION**

**New Delhi, Dec 29:** India has asked Pakistan to extradite LeT founder Hafiz Saeed, the Mumbai attack mastermind and a UN-proscribed terrorist, who is wanted by Indian probe agencies in a number of terror cases. India also took note of reports of Saeed's son Talha Saeed contesting elections in Pakistan and said the "mainstreaming" of radical terrorist outfits in that country is nothing new and that it has been part of its state policy for a long time. External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi



said the request for extraditing Saeed along with certain documents was recently sent to Islamabad. "The person in question is wanted in numerous cases in India. He is also a UN-proscribed terrorist. In this regard, we have conveyed a request along with relevant supporting documents to the government of Pakistan to extradite him to India to face trial in a particular case," he said. Bagchi's remarks came in response to a question at his weekly media briefing. The Indian high commission in Pakistan handed over the request to Islamabad a few weeks ago, he said.

**CM NAVEEN PATNAIK LAUNCHES THIRD PHASE OF STATE'S FLAGSHIP HEALTH SCHEME**

**BSKY now covers 90% people**

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday launched the third phase of the state's flagship health scheme - Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY). Patnaik said with this third phase of expansion, it is estimated that over 1.10 crore families, covering nearly 90 per cent of the state's population, will be provided health assurance under BSKY. The Chief Minister said that the family in Odisha is left vulnerable due to lack of financial resources to meet high expenditure for critical illnesses. The families left out in the first two phases of the BSKY, would be covered in the third phase, Patnaik said while launching the new 'BSKY Nabin Card'. "We are now launching the third phase of BSKY, where all left-out families of rural areas of our state will be assured of cashless health service in private hospitals, for all critical ailments," Patnaik said. Stating that the BSKY scheme



**HEALTHCARE BOOST**

- The families left out in the first two phases of BSKY would be covered in the third phase and get 'BSKY Nabin Card'
- The scheme will now include all rural families of the state except regular government employees and income taxpayers
- In the past five years, BSKY has provided free healthcare service to nearly 21 lakh patients with cashless healthcare of about ₹4,500 crore in pvt hospitals alone

was launched five years ago to provide health assurance to all, Patnaik said this expansion phase will include all rural families of the state except regular government employees and income taxpayers. The people not covered under BSKY will be eligible to receive the 'BSKY Nabin Card', he said. As per the BSKY norms, the new beneficiaries will also be entitled to cashless care worth ₹5 lakh per annum and the amount of coverage for women would be up to ₹10 lakh in empanelled

private hospitals both inside and outside the state. "Sustha (Healthy) Odisha, Sukhi (Happy) Odisha has been the driving force behind all interventions in the health sector in Odisha. It has been my dream to provide universal health coverage to the people of Odisha, where healthcare is a right, accessible and affordable by all. To take this vision forward, the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana was launched five years ago bringing about a revolution in providing health assurance to

the people of Odisha," the Chief Minister said. In the first phase of BSKY, all services in public health facilities were made free of cost for all persons, irrespective of income or residence. In the second phase, BSKY provided cashless healthcare in private health facilities for all covered under the Food Security Schemes and ration card holders. Official sources said every month over 45 lakh persons receive free health care at public health facilities in the state, while 1.3 lakh persons received cashless care in private hospitals under BSKY. This amounts to ₹260 crore each month in empanelled private hospitals. In the past five years, BSKY has provided free healthcare service to nearly 21 lakh patients with cashless healthcare of about ₹4,500 crore in private hospitals alone. "It has become a unique model for universal health coverage, leveraging the strengths of both the public and private sectors to provide comprehensive health assurance to the people of Odisha," the CM said.

**Govt signs peace pact with ULFA**

**New Delhi, Dec 29:** The pro-talks faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) Friday signed a peace accord with the Central and Assam governments, agreeing to shun violence, disband the organisation and join the democratic process. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who was present along with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at the signing of the accord here, said it was a very big day for the people of Assam. "Assam has suffered for long due to the violence of the ULFA and 10,000 people lost their lives in this violence since 1979," he said. Shah said the ULFA, the oldest insurgent group of Assam, agreed to abjure violence, disband the organisation and join the democratic process. He said a big development package will be given to Assam as part of the accord. Every clause of the pact will be implemented fully, he said.

Shah said that now violence has come down in Assam by 87 per cent, deaths by 90 per cent and kidnappings by 84 per cent. The Chief Minister termed the accord as 'historic' and said it has fructified due to the guidance and leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Home Minister. The accord came after 12 years of unconditional negotiations between the ULFA faction, led by Arabinda Rajkhowa, and the government, officials said. The peace pact is expected to end decades-old insurgency in Assam. However, the hardline faction of ULFA, headed by Paresh Baruah, is not a part of the agreement. Baruah is believed to be residing at a place along the China-Myanmar border. The ULFA was formed in 1979 with the demand for a 'sovereign Assam'. Since then, it has been involved in subversive activities that led to the central government declaring it a banned outfit in 1990.



**GLOBAL POPULATION GREW BY 75 MILLION OVER THE PAST YEAR AT A RATE OF JUST UNDER 1 PER CENT**

**World population to top 8 bn by Jan 1**

**Washington, Dec 29:** The world population grew by 75 million people over the past year and on New Year's Day it will stand at more than 8 billion people, according to figures released by the US Census Bureau. The worldwide growth rate in the past year was just under one per cent. At the start of 2024, 4.3 births and two deaths are expected worldwide every second, according to the Census Bureau figures. The growth rate for the United States in the past year was 0.53 per cent, about half the world-wide figure. The US added 1.7 million people and will have a population on New Year's Day of



335.8 million people. If the current pace continues through the end of the decade, the 2020s could be the slowest-growing decade in US history, yielding a growth rate of less than four per cent over the 10-year-period from 2020 to 2030, said William Frey, a demographer at The Brookings Institution. The slowest-growing decade currently was in the aftermath

of the Great Depression in the 1930s, when the growth rate was 7.3 per cent. "Of course growth may tick up a bit as we leave the pandemic years. But it would still be difficult to get to 7.3 per cent," Frey said. At the start of 2024, the United States is expected to experience one birth every nine seconds and one death every 9.5 seconds. However, immigration will keep the population from dropping. Net international migration is expected to add one person to the US population every 28.3 seconds. This combination of births, deaths and net international migration will increase the US population by one person every 24.2 seconds.

**CM approves ADM post for Padampur**

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday approved the proposal for the creation of a new post of Additional District Magistrate (ADM) for Padampur sub-division in Bargarh district, an official release by the CMO said. Chavan Kunal Motiram, a 2020 batch IAS officer, has been posted as the first ADM of Padampur. He is currently serving as Sub Collector of Balasore. The ADM Padampur office will further strengthen the administration in the region and help to promptly address public grievances and speed up development activities, the official release said.

# leisure

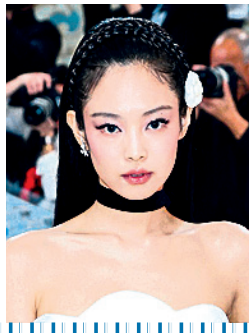


## GARY THINKS HIS PERFORMANCE IN HARRY POTTER WAS MEDIOCRE

Actor Gary Oldman, whose streaming series *Slow Horses* returned for a third season last month, critiqued his performance as Sirius Black in the *Harry Potter* franchise. He thinks his portrayal of the beloved character was 'mediocre' and believes that he could have performed the role 'differently', reports *People magazine*.

## JENNIE MAKES FIRST SOLO BILLBOARD HOT 100 DEBUT

K-pop girl band BLACKPINK's singer Jennie has etched her name in music history with her debut on Billboard's Hot 100 chart as a solo artist. The achievement comes with her collaboration on *One of the Girls* alongside The Weeknd and Lily-Rose Depp, a track featured in the HBO series *The Idol*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You have to take care of your health, and at last you realise the importance of diet and exercise. However, today you may wish to eat something new, or try some different cuisine. Ganesh says go out with some old friends whom you have been neglecting of late.

**TAURUS**  
Things will tend to get very difficult and complicated, says Ganesh. Be prepared for setbacks and challenges today. No matter how big the issue, your competence, your resourcefulness will see you through. Try to remain focused and alert. Be cautious and circumspect. Act coolly and sensibly. That is all that you need. No predicament or dilemma or predicament will hold you back. You will come out with flying colours.

**GEMINI**  
You will be lost in the memories of the past today. You will be in a nostalgic frame of mind. Intellectual pursuits will attract you. Do not let your past lay a shadow upon your present and your future, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You can improve your finances with you mental capabilities. Ganesh says that you will get success in both private life and career. You will be entrusted many tasks and responsibilities. Yet by evening, you will spend time in your pursuits.

**LEO**  
A lot of people will sing your praises, however you will not be satisfied with whatever is occurring. The answers to some questions that have been bothering you will remain elusive. You may become emotional owing to feelings of personal loss. You will also be bothered about the near future, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesh foretells that your writing abilities will help you give vent to your emotions without hurting others. You will finish all your incomplete tasks successfully. Ganesh says that you will experience success in everything that you choose to do today.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says today is a good day to renovate your home. You will be able to decorate your home artistically because of your designing skills. The atmosphere at your home will be a happy one with the arrival of guests. You will make plans to go for a picnic with close friends or relatives. Ganesh wishes you all the very best for your future.

**SCORPIO**  
It's time to influence people and win their hearts whether it's your crush, love or your boss. You may be eager to express your feelings for them. At work, you are likely to work actively and kick start the projects in the pipeline. Ganesh, advises you to keep your eyes and ears open.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
For you, appreciation and recognition for the efforts you put in may be delayed, but it's not denied. There's no point losing heart and getting disappointed. This may only affect your work, instead, wait for a better tomorrow, Ganesh says giving you hope.

**CAPRICORN**  
Your accomplishments may take you on cloud nine today. Success may come easily to you, but don't try your luck too much, advises Ganesh. Make the most of today as tomorrow may not be the same as today. You will be popular today, especially in your social circle as you'll impress everyone with your wit and humour.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will be able to strike a balance between the emotional and rational side of your personality. You will find pleasure in your work and may successfully mix your personal life into your professional life. Financially, there are no major issues, but negligible matters may keep your mind occupied, feels Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
Just as melting ice caps on faraway mountains can swell the oceans, concerted efforts you make now will have far-reaching beneficial consequences, says Ganesh. Do not be disheartened in the face of obstacles and keep soldiering on.

## Was more fearless in my early career: Kat

**Mumbai:** Actress Katrina Kaif, who is gearing up for the release of her much-anticipated thriller, *Merry Christmas*, shared insights into her fearless choices at the beginning of her career. In an interview, the *Welcome* actress mentioned that in the beginning, she was far more fearless in her choices as an actor because there was no thought behind them. According to her, you just went exactly with that, you went with your gut feeling, and you took everything as a challenge. The *Tiger* actress also explained that some-

times she feels that subconsciously, as an actor, you can start trying to chase a hit film. 'Do I think this film has the potential to be a hit? Okay, will this film be a hit?' If you're doing that, then that can sometimes cloud your judgment rather than just going on the sheer love of a character or a film. According to her, you don't make films for an empty cinema. Without that support and that love, you cannot make movies, so you must also understand what it is that is resonating with the audience and with people today, in terms of emotions, stories, philosophy, and the mood of the nation and the mood of people.



## KUSHA TAKES UP NEW AVATAR

**Mumbai:** Actress Kusha Kapila, who plays Chhaya in the coming-of-age drama series *Dehati Ladke*, shared how she has mostly essayed extremely urban characters. Talking about her new role, Kusha said, "Interestingly, my character in *Dehati Ladke* is unlike any other roles that I have done in the past. I have mostly essayed extremely urban characters. I've never really played a professor, especially somebody who quotes poets and imparts wisdom at the drop of a hat. So, that was very interesting. I am playing an assistant professor at a university. She has a mind of her own, she is a strong-headed yet amicable person, and people find it easy to open up to her. Besides being progressive, she is also unafraid to make mistakes in life." On the work front, Kusha was seen last in *Selfie*, *Plan A Plan B*, *Thank You for Coming* and *Case Toh Banta Hai*.

## Shehnaaz on importance of failure

**Mumbai:** Actress Shehnaaz Gill, who made her debut with Salman Khan's film *Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan*, expressed her desire to work with Ranbir Kapoor and also emphasised the importance of failure and personal growth. In an exclusive interview with a media agency, she shared that 2023 has been an eventful period, marking personal growth and a shift in her perspective. She acknowledged becoming more mature and better equipped to handle various situations. Having collaborated with Salman Khan, Shehnaaz expressed her desire to work with other Bollywood superstars. While keeping an open mind about working with any acclaimed actor, she specifically mentioned her interest in working with Ranbir Kapoor. Despite never meeting him in person, she expressed admiration for him based on glimpses at events. Addressing the inevitable aspect of rejections in the entertainment industry, Shehnaaz stated that rejection is a natural part of life. She emphasised the significance of experiencing failure and learning from it. The actress, who gained widespread recognition through *Bigg Boss 13*, asserted that success is not the sole focus and that failure is integral to personal and professional growth. Expressing contentment with her ability to challenge and alter people's perceptions, Shehnaaz noted that defying preconceived images takes time. She highlighted the shift in how people view her, emphasising that she is not limited to a specific desi persona. As the 29-year-old reflected on her

journey, she embraced the idea that destiny holds positive outcomes, challenging the notion that fate only dictates unfavorable circumstances.



## Would love to play Hannibal: Kajol

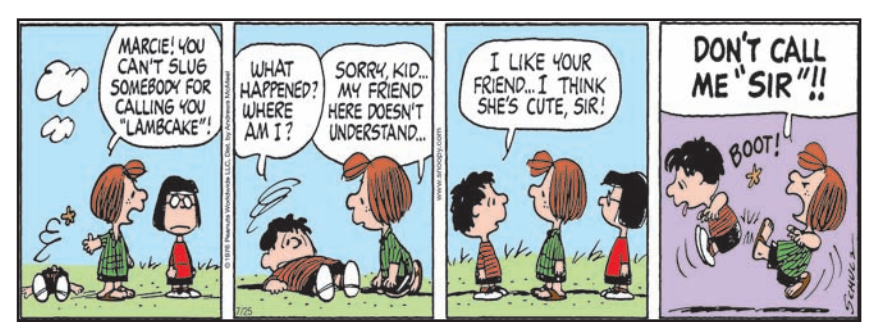
**Mumbai:** During a recent interview, actress Kajol confessed that she wants to play something as unapologetically black as Hannibal in the future. Kajol has made her wish come true. After the actress recently shared her wish to play Hannibal on Netflix India's Film Actors Roundtable, she's "ended up taking

the thought home," as she claimed. Kajol used Artificial Intelligence to turn herself into a popular evil character. The *Dilwale* actress took to her Instagram handle Friday and shared a couple of pictures of her in the Hannibal avatar. In the pictures, she wore a black gown with her hair rolled up. A dark lipstick added the final touch. The *We Are Family* actress wrote in the caption, "I ended up taking the thought home. Worth it! PS- I do like the look, might try it someday IRL (In Real Life). #myvillainera #projectgoals

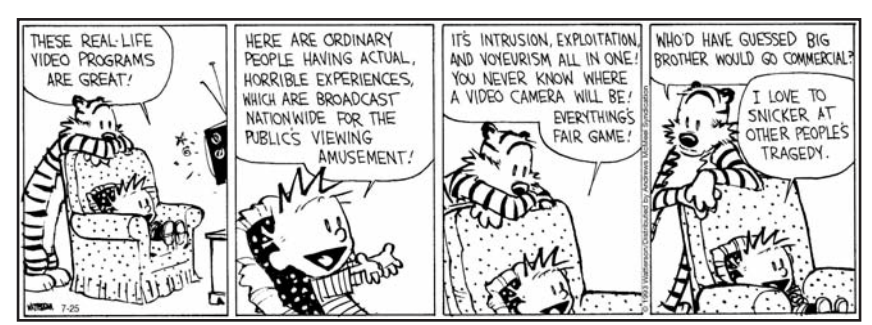
#MyHannibalLook." A user wrote, "Wow... radical! An actor of your calibre should experiment. Pity it doesn't happen much." "Wowzerssss! Love the look 2 so much and can see you in it, being a badass and smashing it!" wrote another user. Earlier at the Actors Roundtable, Kajol had said, "I do want to play a serial killer though. I have played a killer, but not a serial killer. I'd like to play something that's unapologetically black. And without any excuse. I'd love to play Hannibal. I don't know if I'll be able to manage that. But there's a suave feeling to making something unacceptable acceptable that I'd love to do that. I think I'd sell it."



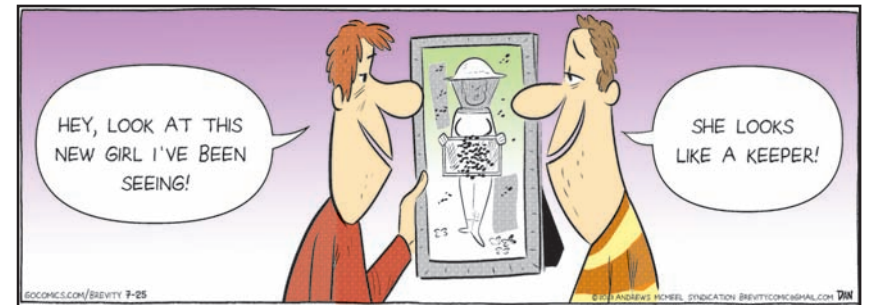
### PEANUTS



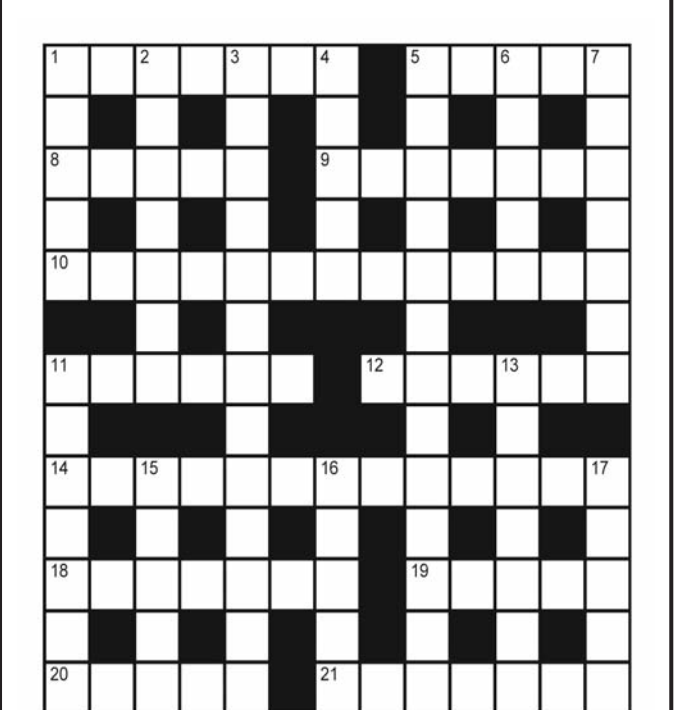
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



### FUN post CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2023 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Type of movie or car
  - 5 Vessel
  - 8 Dissent
  - 9 Ring locale
  - 10 Wart remover
  - 11 Urchins
  - 12 Parting words (3-3)
  - 14 Sharks at dinner? (7,6)
  - 18 Religious letter
  - 19 Coronet
  - 20 A spirited horse
  - 21 Gambler's ruin
  - Down**
  - 1 Healed
  - 2 Canadian province
  - 3 Unauthorised leader (4-9)
  - 4 Belief
  - 5 Dieter's count
  - 6 Garlicky mayonnaise
  - 7 Cinema
  - 11 Muffles
  - 13 Medical dressing
  - 15 Bluebloods
  - 16 Estimate
  - 17 "The Second Coming" poet

### SUDOKU

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

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

### SOLUTIONS

**CROSSWORD**

F	I	N	A	N	C	E	N	A	S	A	L
A	O	A	N	U	W	A					
S	O	N	A	R	T	A	B	L	E	A	U
T	S	C	I								E
S	A	T	I	R	R	I	T	A	T	E	D
O	S	E	R								R
I	M	P	O	S	E						P
P	L	A	U	S	I	B	L	E			M
L	N		O	L	P						O
O	R	G	A	N	Z	A					L
D	L	U	T	E							R
E	X	E	R	T							S
											I
											V

**SUDOKU**

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

IN SYNC

Artistes perform during a play organised by Catch Odisha at Bhanja Kala Mandap in Bhubaneswar



## COPS NAB 3 FOR CITY BIZMAN KIDNAPPING



Pintu Sahu was kidnapped in a red i20 car by three miscreants while returning home Thursday

Later, the miscreants demanded ₹10 lakh ransom from his wife, failing which they threatened to kill Pintu

Khandagiri police station, acting on a tip-off, rescued Pintu Sahu, a resident of Kinjal Garden in Patrapada from an abandoned cottage near Arua under Dharmsala police limits in Jajpur district. The accused trio will be produced before a local court Saturday, he said.

Pintu, according to police, was kidnapped in a red i20 car by three unidentified miscreants while returning home Thursday night. Later, the miscreants made a live video call to Pintu's wife showing him being thrashed by them. They also threatened the hapless woman to pay up Rs 10 lakh ransom, failing which they threatened to kill Pintu.

Unable to arrange the demanded amount, Pintu's wife claimed to have transferred Rs 2 lakh to a bank account mentioned by the accused.

Bhubaneswar DCP Prateek Singh said preliminary investigations have revealed that Pintu had some monetary disputes with the accused. "Further investigation in the case will elicit more details," he added.

The accused have been booked by Khandagiri police under Sections 363, 365, 323 and 34 of IPC.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** A businessman who was kidnapped from near his residence in Khandagiri area here over ransom demand Thursday was rescued by the Commissionerate Police from a hideout in Jajpur with the arrest of the three alleged kidnapers.

ACP, Zone III, Pradeep Kumar Rout said a team from



FOR A CAUSE: Tribals under the banner of Bisthapan Birodhi Jana Andolan Mancha take out a rally at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Friday, to press for fulfilment of their four-point charter of demands

## Miscreants break into house in Mancheswar

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** Hours before the Nayapalli police arrested a gang of five burglars Friday, the Mancheswar police received a house break-in complaint from a man Thursday claiming loot of cash and valuables worth around Rs 21 lakh from his house by unidentified miscreants.

Debadutta Biswal, who has a house in Chakeisihani area, allegedly said in his complaint that the burglars decamped with gold ornaments worth around Rs 20 lakhs and Rs 1 lakh cash when his family was away. He said he suspected the involvement of his tenant in the crime.

Biswal said his family had left for Jharkhand on a picnic December 24. Before leaving, they handed over the door keys to the tenant. "My wife received a call December 26 from the tenant who said the door locks had been broken," he said adding that the tenant suspected the house had been burgled.

Reportedly, Biswal, who works as a lecturer in a college in Rajasthan, rushed home on learning about the incident from his wife. Police said the burglars are believed to have gained entry into the house after breaking the door locks open. Later they used home appliances like kitchen knife and screw driver to break the almirah lock and cleaned the gold ornaments and cash kept inside.

However, the police doubted the veracity of Biswal's claims regarding the stolen articles.

DCP Prateek Singh said the claims appeared to be exaggerated as Biswal failed to furnish the required documents to back those. "Such claims create hurdle in nabbing the actual suspects, as there is inconsistency between the victim's statement and evidence," he said.

## BURGLAR GANG BUSTED; 5 HELD



DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** In what came as a breather from the incessant spate of audacious house break-ins in the Capital city that has created panic among citizens, the Commissionerate Police Friday busted a five-member gang of burglars who had emptied a house in Nayapalli area of cash and valuables, last week.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Prateek Singh said gold ornaments weighing 234 gm, silver weighing 439 gm and Rs 50,000 cash, along with other stolen items have been seized from the accused following their arrest.

The accused were identified as Momin Mallick, 30-the kingpin of the gang who is a native of East Medinipur district in West Bengal, Kishore Mohanty 23 from Jagatsinghpur district, Sk Orangzeb, 22, from Dumduma area, Prabhat Sahoo, 22, from Balianata area and Ikalkul Rahman, 25, a native of Kendrapara district.

Singh said a complaint was filed December 25 by one Abhimanyu Mohapatra alleging that some miscreants broke into his house in Nayapalli area late in the night and looted gold (ornaments) as well as cash. Gathering clues from CCTV footage in the locality, the local police identified the burglars and rounded up the gang consisting of five members.

Divulging more details, Singh said the accused used to do odd-jobs like scrap collectors and mechanics during day time. However, they would gang up at night and target residential apartments, located in secluded areas, or those with minimal security presence.

Meanwhile, the police have learnt that the gang was involved in two more burglaries under Khandagiri and Badagarh police limits, respectively.

The Nayapalli Police booked the accused under Sections 457 and 380 of IPC and produced them before a local court for remand.

## Promotion for 12 IPS officers

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** The state government Friday promoted 12 IPS officers to the ranks additional DGP, IGP and DIGP, an official said. The promotion would be made effective from January 1, 2024, the official said. IPS officer Ghanishyam Upadhyay, who is on central deputation, was promoted to the rank of ADGP. 2006-batch IPS officer Anup Sahoo was promoted to the IGP rank. Amrita Das, Aniruddha Singh, Anoop Krishna, and Sudha Singh (all from the 2006 batch), who are on central deputation, were allowed proforma promotion to the rank of IGP with effect from January 1, 2024. Mitrabhanu Mohapatra, Sara Sharma and Kanwar Vishal Singh (all of 2010 batch) were promoted to the rank of DIGP and posted in-situ until further orders.

## Hospitals asked to keep O2 beds ready

POST NEWS NETWORK

### COVID FIGURES RISE

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** With the state registering 19 Covid cases, the government has asked authorities in medical college and CDMOs to ensure enough oxygen supported beds in hospitals.

In a letter to the authorities, Director of Public Health, Niranjan Mishra said, "Ensure dedicated beds and oxygen supported beds for any admission and management as per the management protocol and there should not be any unnecessary referrals." He directed the authorities to increase surveillance, testing and remain prepared for possible surge in the number of cases.

Mishra said the recent rise in

COVID-19 cases across India necessitates immediate and proactive measures to combat any surge in COVID-19 cases in the state. "In continuation of the earlier communication, you are requested to implement the action points given therein and to remain alert to meet any exigency," Mishra said while asking the concerned authorities to remain alert for any eventuality. He instructed that influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) surveillance should increase and testing be made available in every health institution, CHC

and above. The tests are to be done as per ICMR guideline version 7, he said.

For those found positive, the home isolation protocol is to be strictly followed and necessary treatment support provided, he added.

The management strategy for the COVID situation should be followed, Mishra said.

Side by side, Mishra asked the authorities to ensure adequate availability of test kits, reagent drugs, and consumables to deal with the COVID situation in coordination with OSML, Odisha.

There should be timely data entry and reporting as per protocol, while contingency plan be kept ready to deal with any situation, he directed.

## Puri police rolls up sleeves for New Year

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, Dec 29:** The district police here has made elaborate preparations to ensure Srimandir devotees a hassle-free darshan of the deities during the New Year. Speaking to reporters, Puri superintendent of police (SP) Kanwar Vishal Singh said as part of the drive against anti-socials, hotels, lodgings and vehicles are being inspected after sundown.

He said darshan arrangements have been divided into two parts - within and outside the shrine. "Temple premises arrangements have been divided into seven sectors and outside into nine. Depending on sensitivity, DSP, ASP and inspector-rank officials, along with adequate force, will be deployed," the Puri SP said, adding that separate darshan arrangements will be made for senior citizens and the differently-abled.



A dedicated centre will be set up near Srimandir to collect post-darshan feedback from devotees. Beach area will be made a hotspot patrolling area and three police outposts will be set up there, Singh said. About the traffic arrangements, the Puri SP said, "With motto of 'minimum restrictions', we'll make sure those coming to Puri can park vehicles in a hassle-free manner."

A green corridor will be created for plying of emergency vehicles like ambulances. Grand

Road and beach area will be made into a 'no vehicle zone', he added.

"Signages will be put up at all key locations to guide visitors to the temple. Volunteers will be roped in to regulate devotees," the Puri SP said.

Five police control rooms, or help aid posts, will also be set up on Grand Road and other key places. "Police and healthcare personnel will be present there to aid devotees," Singh said, seeking cooperation from the locals for a peaceful New Year.

## HYDERABAD GIRL SUSTAINS BURNS

AGENCIES

**Puri, Dec 29:** A minor girl sustained burn injuries inside Srimandir here and was shifted to district headquarters hospital (DHH) for treatment, Friday.

According to sources, a family from Hyderabad has gone to the temple for darshan. While they were moving about in the shrine, the girl's cloth caught fire from a burning 'diya'. The accompanying family members doused the fire and rushed her to the DHH. In another bizarre incident, a stray dog attacked a two-year-old child near the Lion's Gate and left him in a pool of blood.

According to reports, a family from Balugaon was standing within the barricades with their two-year-old child before entering the temple.

Suddenly, a dog attacked the boy and injured his eye. He was rushed to a nearby hospital.



DANCE FEST: Artistes perform during International Odissi Dance Festival being organised by Guru Kulu Charan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Friday

## DENSE FOG COVERS PARTS OF STATE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** Dense fog engulfed many parts of Odisha Friday, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Rourkela experienced 'very dense' fog with visibility level getting reduced to 40 metres, while dense fog was witnessed at Nayagarh, Phulbani, Koraput and Cuttack with visibility reduced to within 100 metres, an IMD bulletin said.

Bhubaneswar, Angul, Dhenkanal, Khurda, and Bhawanipatna witnessed moderate fog (with visibility 200 to 400 meters) while shallow and light fog occurred at Paradip and Sambalpur, the regional cen-



ter of IMD in Bhubaneswar said. Three places in Odisha recorded minimum temperature 10 degrees Celsius. Koraput was

the coldest place in the state in the last 24 hours with a night temperature of 8 degrees Celsius while G Udayagiri and Daringbadi

in Kandhamal district recorded 9 degrees Celsius, it said.

The IMD has issued a yellow warning (be aware) of dense fog for Saturday at one or two places in the districts of Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Koraput and Malkangiri.

The IMD bulletin said there will be no large change in minimum temperature (night temperature) over the districts of Odisha during the next five days.

It is likely to be above normal by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius at many places over the districts of Odisha during the next five days.



18 fishermen held for flouting fishing ban in Gahirmatha

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, Dec 29: As many as 18 fishermen were arrested during the last 48 hours by the forest personnel of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary for fishing illegally inside the no fishing zone of the sanctuary.

All the arrested fishermen were booked under Section 27, 29, 31 of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 which is punishable under Section 51 of the Act.

They were later produced before the JMFC court of Rajnagar, ranger of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary Pradosh Moharana said.

The forest personnel seized two mechanised fishing boats, over ten quintals of marine fish catch, five trawl fishing nets, VHP and GPS sets from the possession of arrested fishermen, Moharana said.

The ranger said during the sea surveillance in the wee hours of Friday, they came across a mechanised fishing vessel illegally catching fish near Satabhaya after entering into the prohibited area of Gahirmatha Marine sanctuary.



FINISHING TOUCH: An artist working on a mural on the wall of the overbridge opposite the office of the IG (North) in Sambalpur, Friday



2 arrested for attacking BBMCH house surgeon

Health services were partially affected Friday after medicos staged a cease-work protest at the hospital premises demanding action

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Dec 29: A special team of Bolangir Police Friday arrested two persons from Gochhapada area in Kandhamal district for assaulting Biswaranjan Sahu, a house surgeon of Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital (BBMCH) in Bolangir.

This came after scores of house surgeons of BBMCH staged a cease-work protest at the hospital premises demanding arrest of the miscreants. The medicos have been protesting since Thursday evening's incident which created tension among the medical students.

Wearing bandages on their heads, the surgeons sat on a protest in front of the casualty ward. On being informed, Bolangir district Collector and SP went to the spot and held dis-



Two female doctors in the presence of one attendant performed the health check-up of the woman and it was diagnosed that the pregnant woman suffered a miscarriage.

According to sources, Samir Badamali, a native of Subarnapur district currently residing at College Square in Bolangir town, had brought her ailing wife to the obstetrics and gynaecology department OPD of BBMCH for check-up.

Two female doctors in the presence of one attendant performed the health check-up of the woman and it was diagnosed that the pregnant woman suffered a miscarriage.

After the incident, the angry husband of the woman along with Raju Sahu, one of his associates, was waiting for the house surgeon's arrival at Laltikra Grid area, 5 km away from the hospital.

In the evening when house surgeon Sahu along with one of his friends was returning to hostel on a bike, they were stopped by the duo. They attacked Sahu leaving him critically injured leading to his admission to the ICU.

Group clash over land dispute leaves 6 critical

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Dec 29: Six people were critically injured in a group clash between two families over a land dispute at Charampa Baralpokhari village under Town police limits in Bhadrak district Thursday night.

The injured were identified as Narahari Dalei, Bhagat dalei, Rabinra dalei, Manasi Dalei, Shradhanjali Senapati and Padmabati Senapati.

According to reports, the land dispute between Dalei family and Senapati family in the village has been going on for the last four years. Some members of Senapati family who were lodged in the jail following a clash earlier were released from jail Thursday. Following this, members of the two families again attacked each other with deadly weapons Thursday night. The scuffle left six of them critically injured.

All the injured have been undergoing treatment at Bhadrak district headquarters hospital in critical condition and police have initiated an investigation into the matter.

Miscreants loot ₹14L from bank

Banki: Unidentified miscreants have looted more than ₹14 lakh from the Banki branch of the Central Cooperative bank here. Sources said the miscreants have also broken the CCTV cameras and taken away the computer hard disk. The incident occurred late Thursday night. The bank officials, however, came to know about this only after they reached the bank Friday to open it. Senior police officials have reached the spot and are inquiring into the incident.

Brundaban palace in Gajapati district wallows in utter neglect



ALSO CALLED BASANT NIWAS, THE PALACE CARRIES THE LEGACY OF ERSTWHILE PARALAKHEMUNDI ROYAL MAHARAJA GOURA CHANDRA GAJAPATI AND HIS SON MAHARAJA KRUSHNA CHANDRA GAJAPATI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, Dec 29: Brundaban palace, one of the heritage buildings situated at Paralakhemundi in Gajapati district, is on the verge of extinction due to lack of proper maintenance. The palace, also known as Basant Niwas, is now in a dilapidated condition.

Notably, Gajapati district, which was carved out of Ganjam district,

numbers also flock to this place mostly for picnic in winter season.

However, the Tourism department has failed to renovate this palace and the building is fast decaying due to lack of necessary repair works. The state government had sanctioned funds for its renovation a few years back but sub-standard works were done on the palace.

While miscreants decamped with some ancient artefacts, the workers pulled down the Ranikund and levelled the area during the renovation process.

Pathways using paver blocks, sitting place and picnic arena were constructed during the renovation works undertaken by a consultancy agency. However, the new constructions are getting destroyed due to sub-standard works.

The maintenance of the palace is in disarray as the district tourism department has never spared a thought for its upkeep. Cracks have developed on the building and wild shrubs have popped out. Many portions of the palace are in decrepit condition. The terrace of the third floor of the palace has also sunk in one side.

Cracks have also appeared on the large compound wall of the palace while plaster of the terrace has peeled off in most of the places. However, tourists and picnickers continue to throng the area. The tourists are mostly from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and people from various parts of the state.

There is no permanent security guard or staff to guard the palace. A single contractual guard has to look after the whole palace and that too without any remuneration. He is neither given any allowance nor daily wage for his duty and thrives on the tips given to him by the tourists.

RSP team wins Inter-Steel Chess Championship

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Dec 29: Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) won the All-India Inter-Steel Chess Championship 2023-24 held under the aegis of Steel Plants Sports Board (SPSB) at Bhilai. The team from RSP received the trophy from Anirban Dasgupta, Director in Charge (BSP) who graced the valedictory function as the chief guest.

More than 50 participants from RINL, RSP, Durgapur Steel Plant, TATA Steel, Bhilai Steel Plant, ISP, SALEM and Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Plant participated in the event.

The match was played in round robin league format in seven rounds in which RSP took the lead over Tata Steel by 2.5-1.5 points in direct encounter. The team comprised Binayak Jena, senior manager (T&RM), PK Bihari, MOMT (HSM-1), NN Behera, senior technician (HSM-1), Gobardhan Behera, master technician (SMS-II), Sushant Kumar Nayak, master technician (FMM) and Prakash Kumar Sahoo, MOMT and team manager from RMHP.

KORAPUT BOAT TRAGEDY

Toll rises to five; CM announces ex-gratia

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, Dec 29: Four more bodies were recovered Friday during the search operation taking the total casualty figure to five, including two minors, in the Patali river boat tragedy in Koraput district.

The country boat ferrying the passengers capsized at Tansing ghat in Patali river under Padua police station in Koraput district Thursday. While the body of one person was found floating on the river Thursday, four others went missing.

Sources said five people of Tansing village were going to Baldela village to attend a family function when the mishap took place.

The fire brigade personnel from Nandapur were pressed Thursday to rescue the missing persons. The body of one Lalmani Sisa of Tansing village was recovered Thursday but the search operation was called off due to darkness.

Bodies of the four missing persons were fished out from the river by the ODRAF and the fire brigade personnel after resuming the search operation Friday morning.

The four deceased persons were identified as Sashirekha Arlab, 35,



Shanti Sisha, 7, Nabina Arlab, 14, and Pushpanjali Arlab, 6.

The rescue work was going on in the presence of Pottangi MLA and Nandapur administration including Nandapur SDPO Sanjay Mohapatra.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik while expressing grief over the incident has announced an ex gratia of ₹4 lakh to the next kin of the deceased and conveyed his condolence to the bereaved family members. Following the incident a pall of gloom descended on the village.

Notably, the Koraput Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) here has provided only two boats for the communication of locals on Jalaput reservoir in Patali river. The boats remain defunct most of the time forcing the locals to depend on country-made boats to cross the river and risk their lives.

Locals have demanded that the administration should immediately repair the defunct boats and provide at least one boat per panchayat to avoid such tragedies in future.

SCHEDULE I PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT (Regulation 14 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Voluntary Liquidation Process) Regulations, 2017) FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE STAKEHOLDERS OF KRISHNA RESIDENCY PRIVATE LIMITED

JDCA JD Centre of Art

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

JD Centre of Art (JDCA), a museum with approx. 27,000 Sqft built-up area located on an 1 acre land at A5 Jagamara, Bhubaneswar 751030, Odisha, is inviting sealed tender for the following works:

Table with 4 columns: S. No, Work, Value (₹), Submission Deadline. Rows include HVAC, Passenger Lift, Aluminium Windows, Aluminium System Windows, Metal Storage Racks.

Interested firms/parties should: 1. Email spaces@jdcetreofart.org requesting project information and tender documents. 2. Submit the tender fee of Rs. 1,500/- by DD in favour of JD Centre of Art, Payable at Bhubaneswar. 3. Submit Sealed Tender and EMD 2% of the quoted amt. (Rs.) to JDCA, A5 Jagamara, NH5 (next to Hotel Kharavela), Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar 751030, Odisha, as per tender instructions before deadline.

For queries & tender documents: spaces@jdcetreofart.org T: 0674 2951179, +91 9310322133, +91 8582926548

UCO BANK POSSESSION NOTICE C-2, Ashok Nagar, Unit-II, Bhubaneswar, PIN-751009, Ph.: 0674-2620423

Let nothing short of Perfection be your ideal in work and you are sure to become a true instrument of the Divine.

THE MOTHER



Health Diplomacy

Retired Punjab IAS officer Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh's recent award of Bhutan's National Order of Merit Gold Medal not only signifies her exceptional contributions to Bhutan's healthcare but also gains significance in the context of India's ties with the mountain kingdom and China's increasing engagement with Bhutan.

Delay in appointments raises alarm

As Central paramilitary forces and Central police organisations grapple with several vacant Director General (DG) level posts, the impending retirement of Mohammad Taj Hasan adds to the ongoing leadership vacuum.



BABUDOM BYTES Dilip Cherian

The delay in appointing regular DGs in critical agencies such as the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has raised serious concerns.

Babu corridors are abuzz with discussions about the significance of the post of Director at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy, considered an Additional Director General (ADG) rank post.

Recent security lapses in Parliament have heightened the awareness of senior officials across services and batches regarding crucial vacancies at the senior level.

IRS overhaul signals change

The Centre has filled the vacant post of Director General (Investigations) in the Competition Commission of India (CCI) by appointing Anshuman Pattanaik, a 1994-batch IRS (Income Tax) officer.

Meanwhile, in other IRS-related developments, the 2006 batch of IRS officers have seen promotions to the grade of Commissioner of Income Tax (CIT).

Adding a layer of intrigue, at least three IRS officials have been denied empanelment. The reasons behind these decisions and the implications for the affected officers remain undisclosed.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

It's a funny thing about life; if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it. W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

The first principle is that you must not fool yourself and you are the easiest person to fool. RICHARD P. FEYNMAN

Gratitude is a duty which ought to be paid, but which none have a right to expect. JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1853: The United States acquired nearly 30,000 square miles (78,000 square km) of additional northern Mexican territory with the signing of the Gadsden Purchase.

1922: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics established. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, with its capital in Moscow, eventually incorporated 15 republics and constituted (in area) the largest country in the world until its dissolution in 1991.

2006: Saddam Hussein, former president of Iraq, was executed after being convicted of crimes against humanity. Hussein was the fifth president of Iraq and came to power after a coup in 1968.

2011: Samoa and Tokelau skipped December 30. The South Pacific Ocean Islands changed their time zone and moved west of the international dateline to align their time zone with their major trading partners, Australia and New Zealand.

LOL

'Lonely' child

Sandy began a job as an elementary school counsellor and she was eager to help. One day during recess she noticed a girl standing by herself on one side of a playing field while the rest of the kids enjoyed a game of soccer at the other.



however, Sandy noticed the girl was in the same spot, still by herself. Approaching again, Sandy offered, 'Would you like me to be your friend?' The girl hesitated, then said, 'Okay,' looking at the woman suspiciously.

The girl said she was. A little while later,

FOCUS NATION

MISLEADING PEOPLE

The Central government has made innovative but devious attempts to introduce draconian legislation and vindicate the three new criminal justice bills (that have since become law) on the grounds that the existing legislation was 'colonial,' thereby justifying the move with the implication that what was being replaced was anti-Indian.



Colin Gonsalves

A COMPARISON WITH THE OLD LEGISLATION SHOWS THAT THE NEW LAWS ARE REGRESSIVE AND FAR HARSHER COMPARED TO EVEN PRE-INDEPENDENCE BRITISH LEGISLATION



There is a more sinister underlying reason for this casual change in the law. It is to destroy what is good in the past and confuse the present

rule, strong words used against the Crown were by themselves cause enough to attract the charge of sedition and long years of punishment in jail. In 1968, this was expected to change, when a constitution bench of the Supreme Court (SC) delivered its decision in Kedarnath's case, and while disagreeing with Privy Council said that mere words no matter how harsh, without any accompanying violence would not attract charge of sedition.

State cannot prevent open discussion and open expression, however hateful to its policies.' The real danger to public interest, according to the court 'springs not from the public screening of the movie, but from State-imposed restrictions on freedom of expression on indefensible grounds.'

Under British law, the maximum period after arrest where an accused could be kept in police custody was 15 days. It is in police lockups that torture occurs. Even the British understood that if torture was to be curtailed, police custody was to be kept to the minimum.

Understanding that the period immediately after arrest was utilized by the police to torture, the SC in DK Basu vs West Bengal of 1996 laid down basic requirements to be followed in cases of arrest or detention.

According to the guidelines issued, on arrest, the police were required to prepare a memorandum of arrest, giving the place and time of arrest and this memo was to be signed by the arrestee. This was because it was common practice for the police to arrest a person, torture for days and then show the accused as arrested later, so that any injuries on the body would appear to be sustained pre-arrest.

To assume that all laws made by the British were anti-people and anti-human rights would perhaps be a mistake particularly in the realm of criminal jurisprudence. The British developed certain principles of criminal law that have stood the test of time and that is the reason why after Independence many of the existing criminal law statutes were adopted by the Indian Parliament.

When criminal laws are replaced mechanically and casually, all extensive body of jurisprudence tends to disappear with the statute. The history of legal battles is then done away with by the erratic decision of a lawmaker to change the law. Finally, as in the present case there is a more sinister underlying reason for this casual change in the law.

Take the sedition law engraved in section 124A IPC which begins with the words, 'Whosoever by words...' Sedition punished free speech. It was designed to criminalise dissent, especially non-violent dissent. Under British

So, what does this government do? It removes the use of the word sedition. It then repackages the old section (offences against the State, section 152) leaving the beginning intact and starting with the words, 'Whoever... by words...' Thus, even if violent acts did not follow, words alone would constitute the offence.

Secondly, the arrestee was to be examined in a public hospital

SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

AI age requires inequality insurance

European Union lawmakers recently reached a provisional agreement on a landmark regulation to mitigate the risks that artificial intelligence poses to humanity, and other countries seem ready to follow the EU's lead.

Let us be clear: we are not opposed to regulating AI. But just as we take a two-pronged approach to protect flood-vulnerable homes — building sea walls and providing flood insurance — so, too, must governments offer inequality insurance to ensure that AI does not widen the wealth gap.

The writing is already on the wall. This year, Hollywood actors joined screenwriters in the

first industry-wide strike in more than six decades, with safeguards against generative AI being one of their main demands. But AI will revolutionise the future of work for all types of professionals, from doctors and lawyers to taxi drivers and checkout clerks, and the subsequent increases in total output will not be shared equally.

Policy-makers can limit, or even prevent, the resulting increases in inequality by reforming the tax system. For example, if inequality exceeds certain limits, federal income-tax rates on high earners could increase automatically.

To stop inequality from rising further, taxes on the top 1% could be set each year to ensure that their share of total national after-tax income never rises above current levels. To deal with the massive unemployment that AI may bring, many — from Juliet Rhys-Williams in 1943 to US presidential candidate Andrew Yang in 2018 — have proposed a guaranteed minimum basic income for everyone, regardless of what they do.

Second, if the insurance is triggered, the beneficiary class would be much greater in number than the top earners paying the higher marginal rate. In fact, the transfer of wealth from the 1% should go to the bottom half of earners, although it could conceivably be shared with higher earners to garner their support.

Secondly, the arrestee was to be examined in a public hospital

Two aspects of our proposal make it more politically feasible than a traditional tax. First, the cap on inequality can be set above current levels — meaning that it would not be triggered immediately. Psychologists have shown that people are more idealistic when deciding about the

distant future rather than the present. Because voters don't know their future income bracket, they are likely to decide in favor of inequality insurance based on abstract moral principles.

Second, if the insurance is triggered, the beneficiary class would be much greater in number than the top earners paying the higher marginal rate. In fact, the transfer of wealth from the 1% should go to the bottom half of earners, although it could conceivably be shared with higher earners to garner their support.

Explicitly defining tax rates to provide insurance against extreme inequality was a good idea when one of us first proposed it two decades ago. But it is a much better idea today. To reap AI's benefits, we must prepare for a potentially catastrophic increase in disparities of wealth and income.

Ian Ayres is Professor of Law at Yale University. Aaron Edlin is Professor of Economics at University of California.



Ian Ayres & Aaron Edlin

TO REAP AI'S BENEFITS, WE MUST BE PREPARED FOR A POTENTIALLY CATASTROPHIC INCREASE IN DISPARITIES OF WEALTH AND INCOME

Welcome development

Sir, The decision of a Qatar court to reduce the death sentence of eight former Indian Navy personnel imprisoned to imprisonment is a welcome development. Though it is unclear how long these former Navy commanders will be imprisoned for, but there is growing hope that they will be able to return home as soon as possible.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

Rahul's Yatra 2.0

Sir, Following the poll debacle in the Hindi heartland, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will embark on a 66-day Bharat Nyay Yatra. Party president, Mallikarjun Kharge, will flag off the Manipur-Mumbai yatra January 14 in Imphal. Rahul will travel from east to west on a bus, with occasional walks, covering a distance of 6,200 km through 14 states.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

# national



**“ We have the lowest per capita income of all the G20 countries. We have the lowest HDI. The people's miseries are growing; unemployment, price rise, hunger index etc but the Central government dismisses all the global indices**

SITARAM YECHURY | CPI(M) GENERAL SECRETARY

## PRESIDENT GIVES ASSENT

President Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to a Bill that seeks to put in place a mechanism for the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners, according to a government notification issued Friday



## of the day quote

The message is clear. In 2009, Mr Modi was sold to the Indian electorate as the avatar of economic development, the CEO of Gujarat Inc., who would bring development to all Indians. In 2019, with that narrative collapsing in the wake of the disastrous demonetisation, the Pulwama terrorist attack gave Mr Modi the opportunity to convert the general election into a national security election. In 2024, it is clear the BJP will now revert to its core message and offer Narendra Modi to the nation as a Hindu Hriday Samrat

SHASHI THAROOR | CONGRESS LEADER

The government has sanctioned ₹1,170.16 crore for 29 roads projects in Ladakh

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

The government is following a holistic approach to health by not only upgrading and expanding infrastructure but also creating more institutions to meet the requirement of medical professionals

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

# Blast near embassy: Cops find 'crucial proof'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: After three days of investigation into the blast near the Israeli Embassy here, the Delhi Police is planning to register an FIR as they have found "crucial evidence" pointing to a conspiracy to threaten the envoy, sources said Friday.

Delhi Police sources said security agency officials are contemplating the charges under which the FIR would be registered. They are also analysing if the investigation can be handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Officials of the Delhi Police, who are investigating the case, have scanned multiple CCTV footage around the site of the low-intensity blast and spotted a suspect who had come from Jamia Nagar in an auto-rickshaw.

They have questioned multiple auto-rickshaw drivers, including the one who brought that suspect to the spot before the blast occurred December 26. "We found some crucial evidence suggesting a blast at Prithviraj Road. The way the letter was put at the spot also suggests that



DELHI POLICE SOURCES SAID SECURITY AGENCY OFFICIALS ARE CONTEMPLATING THE CHARGES UNDER WHICH THE FIR WOULD BE REGISTERED

OFFICIALS OF THE DELHI POLICE, WHO ARE INVESTIGATING THE CASE, HAVE SCANNED MULTIPLE CCTV FOOTAGE AROUND THE SITE OF THE LOW-INTENSITY BLAST AND SPOTTED A SUSPECT WHO HAD COME FROM JAMIA NAGAR IN AN AUTO-RICKSHAW

there was a conspiracy to threaten the Israeli envoys because of the Israel-Hamas conflict," a police officer privy to the investigations said.

Although no one was injured in the low-intensity blast, an "abusive" letter addressed to the Israeli ambassador was found near the site, officials had said. According to them, Tuesday's

blast and the recovery of the letter is a grim reminder of the 2021 blast near the embassy in which some cars were damaged. The NIA had probed the case.

Investigating officials are awaiting reports from the National Security Group's laboratory where samples have been sent to ascertain the components used in the explosion that oc-

# Won't implement UGC's MPhil order: Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 29: West Bengal Education Minister Bratya Basu has said the state government will not abide by the decision of the University Grants Commission (UGC) to universities to stop admission to MPhil programmes for the 2023-24 academic year.

UGC Secretary Manish Joshi December 27 said, "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.

"Regulation number 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".

Asked if West Bengal will also go by the UGC decision, Basu said on the sidelines of a programme Thursday, "We will not follow the diktat of UGC".

Emphasising that the state higher education department



will go by the guidelines earlier framed by the expert committee of academics, Basu said MPhil courses will continue to be run in state universities. "The state has its own policies with regard to MPhil courses in state universities and there is no reason to tinker with that," Basu said.

UGC in its recent communique to universities in the country against offering MPhil courses, maintained it is not a recognised degree and cautioned students against taking admission in such programme. The MPhil programme was discontinued by UGC in November 2022.

The UGC also advised students not to take admission in any MPhil course.

# NITISH BACK AS JD (U) PRESIDENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was elected Janata Dal (United) president Friday with the party projecting him as the "hope of backwards, extremely backwards, minorities and unemployed youth" and urged bigger parties in the INDIA bloc to "show a big heart" to make the alliance successful.

While Kumar, in his brief speech, reiterated that he seeks no post and will work to make the alliance stronger, the resolution



adopted at the JD (U)'s national council meeting asked the bloc to give "any leader responsibilities as per experience and capability" and said there are few leaders as experienced as him in the national politics.

The national council meeting followed the party's national executive meeting in which Lalan

Singh stepped down as its president and Kumar was elected in his place at a time when the JD (U), whose political fortunes have been on a decline, gears up for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

The council unanimously endorsed Kumar's election. Both he and Singh also slammed the reports about a rift within the party, with Singh asserting that it will remain one and will never go back to allying with the BJP.

Kumar's decision to cut short Singh's tenure as JD (U) president and take up the reins himself underlines the troubles besetting the party, which is feeling ignored within the INDIA bloc and battling intra-party differences, issues he is best suited to address, sources said.

The Bihar Chief Minister was characteristically sober in his remarks after taking over the mantle but accused the BJP of "misleading" people and not delivering on its promises, including providing employment.

He exhorted his party leaders to work unitedly and spread the word about the good work of the Bihar government in carrying out caste census, giving jobs and boosting the state's development, sources said. Kumar was also authorised to take decisions in talks with INDIA bloc parties and all organisational matters.

Replying to questions, JD (U) chief spokesperson K C Tyagi said the BJP is not an enemy as "there is no enemy in politics but only disagreements" but ruled out any alliance with the ruling party at the Centre.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath clicks a selfie at Lata Mangeskar Chowk in Ayodhya

PTI PHOTO

# Govt hikes interest rates on Sukanya Samridhi scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: The government Friday raised the interest rates on Sukanya Samridhi scheme by 20 basis points and three-year term deposit scheme by 10 basis points for the January-March quarter, while retaining the rates for all other small savings schemes.

According to a finance ministry circular, the deposit under Sukanya Samridhi scheme would attract an interest rate of 8.2 per cent from the existing 8 per cent, while the 3-year term deposit would become 7.1 per cent from the current 7 per cent.

However, the interest rates for popular PPF and savings deposits have been retained at 7.1 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively. The rates were the same during the

December quarter. The interest rate on the Kisan Vikas Patra is 7.5 per cent and the investments will mature in 115 months.

The interest rate on the National Savings Certificate (NSC) remained unchanged at 7.7 per cent for January 1 to March 31, 2024, period. There is no increase in interest rate for the Monthly Income Scheme, and this will earn 7.4 per cent for the investors.

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# Himanta Sarma apologises for casteist post

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Dec 29: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has apologised for uploading a post with casteist remarks on his social media platforms saying that his team made an "incorrect translation" of a verse from the Bhagavad Gita.

Sarma in a post on X and Facebook Thursday night said that he uploads one verse of Bhagavad Gita every morning on his social media handles, which have posted 668 shlokas till date.



"Recently one of my team members posted a shloka from Chapter 18 verse 44 with an incorrect translation. As soon as I noticed the mistake, I promptly deleted the post... If the deleted post has offended anyone, I sincerely apologise," he said.

The Chief Minister stressed that Assam reflects a "perfect picture" of a casteless society due to the reform movement led by Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva. December 26, Sarma had uploaded an audio-visual post on his social media handles like X and Facebook that he claimed to be from Shloka 44 of Sanyas Yoga from the 18th chapter of Gita.

# DENSE FOG ENVELOPES NORTH INDIA

THERE WAS DENSE FOG IN PARTS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR, PUNJAB, HARYANA, UTTAR PRADESH AND RAJASTHAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: Dense fog shrouded several parts of north India Friday, severely reducing visibility and affecting rail and air traffic. Minimum temperatures were mostly close to normal, but the mercury dropped below the freezing point in Kashmir and the hills of Himachal Pradesh.

There was dense fog in parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. A warning of heavy fog over the weekend was sounded in 30 districts of Uttar Pradesh and an advisory issued for motorists in Srinagar. Authorities in Srinagar said the foggy conditions were the "worst in recent memory".

According to the IMD, "dense to very dense" fog conditions are very likely to continue from Friday night till Sunday morning in parts of Punjab, Haryana,

Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, north Rajasthan and Bihar.

Visibility improved in parts of Delhi Friday, after two days of dense to very dense fog. The IMD said the improvement can be attributed to the breaking of the inversion layer in the morning, in contrast to the conditions observed from December 25 to 28.

Visibility was 200 metres at Safdarjung, Delhi's main weather station, and 50 metres at Palam. Eleven Delhi-bound trains were delayed due to the fog, according to officials. Amid disruptions in flight operations at the Delhi airport over the last couple of days, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said the ministry is coordinating with airports and airlines, and putting in place measures to deal with the issue.

In Kashmir, which is currently in the grip of the 40-day harsh winter period of "Chilla-i-Kalan", the temperatures dropped con-



siderably. The minimum temperature in Srinagar settled at minus 3.3 degrees Celsius. Visibility in Srinagar city and its adjoining areas was below 50 metres.

In Himachal Pradesh, the sky was partially overcast in the evening in Shimla and surrounding areas, while moderate to dense fog was recorded at some places in the lower hills.

The lower hills witnessed bit-

ing cold-wave conditions as the mercury hovered around the freezing point and Bhuntar recorded a minimum temperature of zero degree Celsius, followed by Mandi at 1.1 degrees Celsius, Sundernagar 1.2 degrees Celsius and Una and Narkanda at 2 degrees Celsius each.

The high-altitude tribal areas and other higher hills reeled under piercing cold-wave conditions, with the mercury settling 10 to 15 notches below the

freezing point. Natural sources of water, such as lakes, springs, rivulets and tributaries, including a large stretch of the Chandrabhaga river, have frozen in the high-altitude tribal areas.

In Punjab and Haryana, parts of which were enveloped by a thick blanket of fog earlier in the day, the minimum temperatures mostly hovered close to the normal limits. Chandigarh, the common capital of the two states, recorded a minimum temperature of 8 degrees Celsius.

In Punjab, Amritsar recorded a minimum temperature of 9.9 degrees Celsius, Ludhiana 9 degrees Celsius, Patiala 9.5 degrees Celsius, Pathankot 8.8 degrees Celsius and Faridkot 8.6 degrees Celsius. In Haryana, the mercury settled at 9.8 degrees Celsius in Ambala, 8.2 degrees Celsius in Hisar, 9.4 degrees Celsius in Karnal, 9.6 degrees Celsius in Rohtak and 9.8 degrees Celsius in Sirsa.



Border Security Force personnel stand guard near the International Border on a cold evening at Pargwal in Jammu



People sit around a bonfire on a cold day at the Sangam in Prayagraj



Revellers battle with flour and eggs during the traditional 'Els Enfarinats' (The Floured) festival in Ibi, Spain



People at an ice-skating rink at Lakkar Bazar in Shimla



Flowers in bloom at Sabarmati riverfront, a day before the commencement of the 17-day-long flower show in Ahmedabad



People take part in the funeral procession of DMDK founder-leader Vijayakanth in Chennai



CISF, NDRF and Uttar Pradesh police personnel during a mock drill at Taj Mahal in Agra



Two men walk through ocean debris in the Rio Del Mar neighbourhood of Aptos



# international

### of the day quote

The stopwatch for a diplomatic solution is running out. If the world and the Lebanese government don't act to prevent the firing on Israel's northern residents, and to distance Hezbollah from the border, the IDF will do it

**BENNY GANTZ** | MEMBER OF THE ISRAELI KNESSET

More than 576 have been injured and others have reportedly been detained. Furthermore, the West Bank has been heavily affected by movement and access restrictions

**ADELE KHODR** | UNICEF REGIONAL DIRECTOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

War is always a defeat. No one wins, everyone loses. The only ones who win are the weapons makers

**POPE FRANCIS** | CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER

## SHORT TAKES

### Turkey detains 32 IS militants

Ankara (Turkey): Turkish security forces have detained 32 people suspected of links to the Islamic State extremist group who were allegedly planning to carry out attacks on synagogues and churches as well as the Iraqi Embassy, Turkey's state-run news agency reported Friday. The suspects, including three alleged senior IS militants, were detained in raids carried out at dawn in nine provinces across Turkey, Anadolu Agency reported, citing unnamed security sources.

### Heavy floods hit parts of Germany

Berlin: After weeks of heavy rainfall, the flood situation in many parts of Germany remains serious in the run-up to New Year's Eve. Several districts have declared the preliminary stage of a disaster alert. Cities and municipalities along the rivers Elbe and Weser in eastern and northern Germany continue to be affected by high water and flooding.

### Two dead after truck hits several

Berlin: Two people have died after a truck struck several people in southern Germany Friday morning, police said. The 63-year-old truck driver struck a group of five people close to the railway station in downtown Passau, police said in a statement. A 37-year-old woman died of her injuries at the site. Her 11-year-old daughter passed away in hospital late Friday afternoon, police said. Three other pedestrians were injured, among them the 9-year-old son of the killed woman.

# Hate salad or veggies? Just keep eating them

### THE CONVERSATION

Newcastle (Australia), Dec 29: Do you hate salad? It's OK if you do, there are plenty of foods in the world, and lots of different ways to prepare them. But given almost all of us don't eat enough vegetables, even though most of us (81%) know eating more vegetables is a simple way to improve our health, you might want to try.

If this idea makes you miserable, fear not, with time and a little effort you can make friends with salad. Why do many dislike salads? It's an unfortunate quirk of evolution that vegetables are so good for us but they aren't all immediately tasty to all of us. We have evolved to enjoy the sweet or umami (savory) taste of higher energy foods, because starvation is a more immediate risk than

- Adding heat with chillies or pepper can also help by acting as a decoy to the bitterness
- Adding fruits to salads adds sweetness and juiciness, this can help improve the overall flavour and texture balance, increasing enjoyment
- Pairing foods you are learning to like with foods you already like can also help

long-term health. Vegetables aren't particularly high energy but they are jam-packed with dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals, and health-promoting compounds called bioactives. Those bioactives are part of the reason vegetables taste bitter. Plant bioactives, also called phytonutrients, are made by plants to protect themselves against environmental stress



This is partly due to our genes. Humans have at least 25 different receptors that detect bitterness, and we each have our own genetic combinations. So some people really, really taste some bitter compounds while others can barely detect them.

This means we don't all have the same starting point when it comes to interacting with salads and veggies. So be patient with yourself. But the steps toward learning to like salads and veggies are the same regardless of your starting point. It takes time. We can train our tastes because our genes and our receptors aren't the end of the story. Repeat exposures to bitter foods can help us adapt over time. Repeat exposures help our brain learn that bitter vegetables aren't poisons. And as we change what we

eat, the enzymes and other proteins in our saliva change too.

This changes how different compounds in food are broken down and detected by our taste buds. How exactly this works isn't clear, but it's similar to other behavioural cognitive training. Add masking ingredients. The good news is we can use lots of great strategies to mask the bitterness of vegetables, and this positively reinforces our taste training. Salt and fat can reduce the perception of bitterness, so adding seasoning and dressing can help make salads taste better instantly. You are probably thinking, "but don't we need to reduce our salt and fat intake?" - yes, but you will get more nutritional bang-for-buck by reducing those in discretionary foods like cakes, biscuits, chips and desserts, not by trying to avoid them with your vegetables.



The relationship between India and Russia is not just about politics or diplomacy or economics. It is something much deeper  
**S JAISHANKAR** | MEA OF INDIA

## NAWAZ SHARIF TO CONTEST NA SEAT IN MANSEHRA

Former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will contest the upcoming general election from Manshera NA-15 constituency. If Sharif's party -- PML-N -- wins the February 8 election, Nawaz will be elected to the highest office for the fourth time



# Russia launches 'biggest' attack

According to the Ukrainian air force, the previous biggest assault was in November 2022 when Russia launched 96 missiles against Ukraine. This year, the biggest was 81 missiles March 9, air force records show

AGENCIES

Kyiv, Dec 29: Russia launched 122 missiles and dozens of drones against Ukrainian targets, officials said Friday, killing at least 27 civilians across the country in what an air force official called the biggest aerial barrage of the war.

At least 144 people were injured and an unknown number were buried under rubble during the roughly 18-hour onslaught, Ukrainian officials said. A maternity hospital, apartment blocks and schools were among the buildings reported damaged across Ukraine.

The Ukrainian air force intercepted most of the ballistic and cruise missiles and the Shahed-type drones overnight, said Ukraine's military chief, Valerii Zaluzhnyi. Western officials and analysts had recently warned that Russia limited its cruise missile strikes for months in an apparent effort to build up stockpiles for massive strikes during the winter, hoping to break the Ukrainians' spirit. The result



was "the most massive aerial attack" since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Air Force commander Mykola Oleshchuk wrote on his official Telegram channel.

It topped the previous biggest assault, in November 2022 when Russia launched 96 missiles, and this year's biggest, with 81 missiles March 9, according to air force records.

Fighting along the front line is largely bogged down by winter weather after Ukraine's Summer counteroffensive failed to make a significant breakthrough along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) line of contact.

Ukrainian officials have urged the country's Western allies to provide it with more air defenses. Their appeals have come as signs of war fatigue strain efforts to keep support in place. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said the attack should stir the world to further action in support of Ukraine.

"These widespread attacks on Ukraine's cities show

(Russian President Vladimir) Putin will stop at nothing to achieve his aim of eradicating freedom and democracy," Sunak said on social media platform X, formerly Twitter.

"We must continue to stand with Ukraine — for as long as it takes."

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said the scale of the attack should wake people up to Ukraine's continuing needs. "Today, millions of Ukrainians awoke to the loud sound of explosions," he wrote on X.

In Boyarka, near the capital, Kyiv, the debris of a shot-down drone fell on a home and started a fire.

The attack hit six cities, and reports of deaths and damage came in from across the country. In the eastern city of Dnipro, four maternity hospital patients were rescued from a fire, five people were killed and 20 injured, officials said.

In Odesa, on the southern coast, falling drone wreckage started a fire at a multistory residential building, according to the regional head, Oleh Kiper. Two people were killed and 15, including two children, were injured, he said.

- Ukraine says Russia fired 122 missiles and drones
- Attack is one of war's biggest missile strikes
- Kyiv says West must respond with robust assistance
- No comment from Russia

Several dozen missiles were launched towards Kyiv, with more than 30 intercepted, said Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv military administration.

Three people were killed there, he said in a statement. In northeastern Ukraine, Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov said the city was subjected to at least three waves of aerial attacks that included S-300 and Kh-21 missile launches.

One person was killed and at least nine injured, officials said. Ukraine has been warning for weeks that Russia could be stockpiling missiles to launch a major air attack on the energy system. Last winter, millions of people were plunged into darkness when Russian strikes pounded the power grid.

# Trump barred from Maine's primary ballot

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Portland (US), Dec 29: Maine's Democratic secretary of state Thursday removed former President Donald Trump from the state's presidential primary ballot under the Constitution's insurrection clause, becoming the first election official to take action unilaterally as the US Supreme Court is poised to decide whether Trump remains eligible to return to the White House.



The Trump campaign said it would appeal Bellows' decision to Maine's state courts, and Bellows suspended her ruling until that court system rules on the case. In the end, it is likely that the nation's highest court will have the final say on whether Trump appears on the ballot in Maine and in the other states. Bellows found that Trump could no longer run for his prior job because his role in the January 6,

2021, attack on the US Capitol violated Section 3, which bans from office those who "engaged in insurrection."

Bellows made the ruling after some state residents, including a bipartisan group of former lawmakers, challenged Trump's position on the ballot.

While Maine has just four electoral votes, it's one of two states to split them. Trump won one of Maine's electors in 2020, so having him off the ballot there, should he emerge as the Republican general election candidate, could have outsized implications in a race that is expected to be narrowly decided.

## GLOBAL SNIPPETS

### China amends criminal law

Beijing: Days after President Xi Jinping exhorted people to maintain personal integrity, China Friday amended its criminal law to punish those giving bribes to officials as part of its anti-corruption drive. An amendment to the Criminal Law was passed by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature. The amended law, which will take effect March 1, has intensified the fight against bribe-givers, stating that those offering bribes repeatedly, to multiple people, or parties involved in major national projects should be harshly punished. People who give bribes to staff members of supervisory, administrative, or judicial departments, or bribe in fields such as environment, finance, safety production, drug and food, social insurance, rescue relief, education, or healthcare, also need to face severe punishment, the law added. On December 4, President Xi warned senior ruling Communist Party officials to maintain personal integrity, set strict rules for relatives to keep them away from corruption.

### Russian poet gets 7-year prison term

Moscow: A Russian poet was given a 7-year prison sentence Thursday for reciting verses against Russia's war in Ukraine, a tough punishment that comes during a relentless Kremlin crackdown on dissent. Moscow's Tverskoi District Court convicted Artyom Kamardin on charges of making calls undermining national security and inciting hatred, which related to him reading his anti-war poems during a street performance in downtown Moscow in September 2022. Yegor Shtovba, who participated in the event and recited Kamardin's verses, was sentenced to 5 1/2 years on the same charges. The gathering next to the monument to poet Vladimir Mayakovsky was held days after President Vladimir Putin ordered a mobilization of 3,00,000 reservists amid Moscow's military setbacks in Ukraine. The widely unpopular move prompted hundreds of thousands to flee Russia to avoid being recruited into the military.

### 20 killed in Congo flooding and landslides

Kinshasa: At least 20 people have died following landslides caused by torrential rains which hit the South Kivu region in eastern Congo, officials announced Friday. That brings to more than 60 the number of deaths caused by flooding and landslides in Congo in the past week alone. Officials said the landslides swallowed up houses and dwellings Thursday in the locality of Burhiny, in the Mwenga territory. "The 20 deaths are the direct result of landslides that buried houses," said territory administrator Walubila Ishikitilo. The government said Friday that it was deploying emergency assistance to those affected and evacuating residents from the area. Flooding also affected other parts of the country Friday, including the capital, Kinshasa, on the banks of the Congo River, and parts of Kasai province.

## Iran executes four for helping Israel's Mossad

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tehran, Dec 29: Iran executed Friday four people and sentenced several others to prison for having alleged links with Israel's Mossad security service, local media reported.

Mizan, the news website affiliated with the country's judiciary, said three men and one woman were executed Friday morning. It identified the men as Vafa Hanareh, Aram Omari, Rahman Parhazo and the woman as Nasim Namazi. The report didn't say how the deaths were carried out, but Iran usually applies hanging.

The four were charged with kidnapping several Iranian security forces to extract intelligence information, Mizan reported.

They were also accused of setting fire to cars and apartments of some of Iran's intelligence agents. The report also said several others - working with the same group - were each sentenced to 10 years in jail, without giving further details. Iran and Israel have long accused each other of spying and waging a shadow war for years. In November, United Nations chief Antonio Guterres said Iran was carrying out executions "at an alarming rate," putting to death at least 419 people in the first seven months of the year.

**Institute Work Department**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Patna**  
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Website:- www.iitp.ac.in Email:- iwd\_head@iitp.ac.in  
Eol No. IITP/IWD/Eol/01/2023

IIT Patna invites Expression of Interest (Eol) for appointment of a public sector undertaking/Government organization as Project Management Consultant for Construction of Boys Hostel along with mess & associated works from concept to commissioning. The details of Eol can be downloaded from www.iitp.ac.in and from www.eprocure.gov.in. The last date of submission of online Eol is 17.01.2024 upto 3.00 P.M. CBC 21366/12/0008/2324 Sd./- Registrar

**Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice**  
Bid Identification No.: Online-AGL-24 of 2023-2024  
No. O-2026:-

1. Name of the Work	: Bridge Work/Building Work
2. Estimated Cost	: Rs.67.02 lakhs to 98.22 Lakhs
3. Period of Completion	: 06 (Six) Calendar Months
Date & time of	From 28.12.2023 to 03.01.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.
4. availability of bid document in the portal	
Last Date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	: 03.01.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.
5. Name & Address of the OIT	: Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Angul

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)  
Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Angul  
OIPR-25096/11/0023/2324

**OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, RAMBHA**  
Rambha N.A.C., Ganjam, Odisha, 761028  
Tel: 06810-278336, E-mail: rambhanac123@gmail.com  
Sl. No. 2961/NAC Dated: 28.12.2023

**QUOTATION CALL NOTICE**  
No. C-2230 - Sealed Quotations in conformity with detailed quotation schedule are invited from the intending authorized reputed IT/Engineering Consulting/ High End Engineering Execution Organisations, having credential of executing similar projects of delivering end-to-end solution including Designing, Consulting, Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Electronics and AMC for "Installation, Commissioning and successful End-to-end Implementation of New IT Enabled Day Night Illuminated LED Acrylic Digital Graphics Entry/Exit of "Notified Area Council, RAMBHA." The Bidder should be an Engineering Organization and should have accredited to ISO 9001:2015, updated PAN, GST clearance and credentials of execution of complete end-to-end projects as turnkey. The details of the design and the technical specification along with the terms and conditions of the quotation can be seen from the Office of the NAC, Rambha during office hour from 29.12.2023 to 10.01.2024 from 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM. In office hour (Excluding Govt. Holidays). The quotation will be received on or before 10.01.2024 upto 5.00 PM and the same will be opened on 11.01.2024 at 11.00 AM in presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives. The bidders have to deposit Rs. 8,000/- (Non-refundable) towards the bid cost in shape of cash /Demand Draft in any nationalized bank in favour of Executive Officer, NAC Rambha payable at Rambha and deposit EMD of 20,000/- in shape of FD/TDR/CHECK pledged to Executive Officer, NAC Rambha. The authority reserves the right to cancel any/all the quotations without assigning any reason thereof.  
OIPR-13114/11/0013/2324 Sd./- Executive Officer, NAC, Rambha

**URANIUM CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED**  
(A Government of India Enterprise)  
INSTALLATION, OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF MOBILE/TELECOM TOWER AT UCIL TUMMALAPALLE UNIT

URANIUM CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED - TUMMALAPALLE UNIT

EOI No.	UCIL/TMPL/EOI/PERS/001 Dated 22.12.2023
Name of Work / Service	Installation, Operations and Maintenance of Mobile /Telecom Tower at UCIL, Tummalapalle Unit
Location	UCIL - Tummalapalle Unit
Last date & time of receipt of EOIs	26.01.2024 up to 15.00 hrs.
Place of submission of Tender	UCIL - Tummalapalle Personnel Office
Security Deposit (towards electricity charges):	Rs.2,68,570.00
Should be enclosed with the EOI	
EMD amount	Nil
Date & Time of opening of Technical Bid of EOI	26.01.2024 at 15.30 hrs.
Place of opening of EOIs	UCIL - Tummalapalle Personnel Office(Admin Building)
Website for downloading of EOI document	<a href="https://www.ucil.gov.in">https://www.ucil.gov.in</a>

CBC 48134/12/0055/2324

business

of the day quote

India has transformed from being a nation of savers to investors with more and more people parking their surplus fund in mutual fund and equity market



UDAY KOTAK | FORMER MD, KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK

Avoid the pitfalls of high-risk derivatives or frequent trading in the stock market. Be a committed participant in India's growth story, and pave the way for a brighter future. Long term investments usually yield better results based on past experiences



ASHISH KUMAR CHAUHAN | CHIEF, NSE

Commercial vehicle finance is seen growing 12-14 per cent per annum over 2023-25, propelled by growth in end-user industries such as cement, steel, and consumer durables



AJIT VELONI | SENIOR DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

SHORT TAKES

₹25,813cr spent under pharma PLI

New Delhi: Investments worth ₹25,813 crore have been made and 56,171 new jobs were added as of September this year under the production-linked incentive scheme for pharmaceuticals, the government said Friday. In its year-end review, the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) also said the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana "achieved its target of opening 10,000 retail outlets in 2023 to provide quality generic medicines at affordable prices to the poor and underprivileged. The production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for pharmaceuticals is being implemented with an objective of enhancing India's manufacturing capabilities by increasing investment and production in the sector and contributing to product diversification to high value goods in the pharmaceutical sector. The total outlay of the scheme is ₹15,000 crore and the scheme duration is from 2020-2021 to 2028-29, an official statement said.

BoB increases deposit rates

New Delhi: State-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) has increased the interest rate on fixed deposits (FDs) for various maturities by up to 125 basis points, days after State Bank of India (SBI) hiked interest rates on some term deposits. Interest rate on term deposits up to ₹2 crore was hiked from 10 basis points to up to 125 basis points on various maturity buckets with effect from December 29, 2023, BoB said in a statement. The highest increase of 125 basis points has been effected in the 7-14 days bucket where interest rate has been increased from 3 per cent to 4.25 per cent, it said. It is followed by a 15-45 days maturity period with a 100 basis point hike to 4.50 per cent, it said.

Zoomcar merges with IOAC

New Delhi: Car sharing marketplace Zoomcar and special purpose acquisition company Innovative International Acquisition Corporation (IOAC) completed their merger Friday. The merged entity has been renamed Zoomcar Holdings Inc, and is expected to begin trading on NASDAQ Friday, Zoomcar said in a statement. Zoomcar and IOAC had entered into a definitive merger agreement October 13, 2022.

STOCKS SHINE

D-St investors' wealth jumps

AMID A STELLAR STOCKS' RALLY OF NEARLY 20%, EQUITY MARKET INVESTORS TURN RICHER BY ₹81.90L-CR IN 2023

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

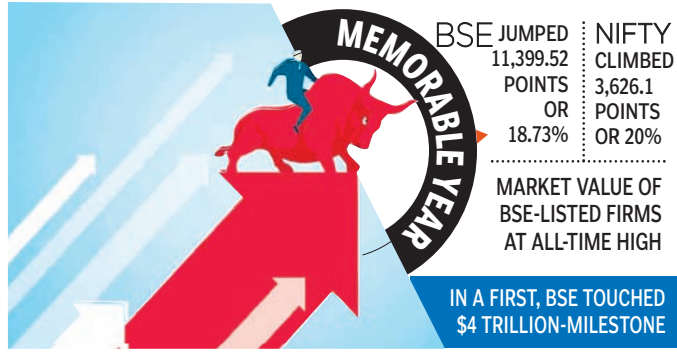
New Delhi, Dec 29: In a memorable year for the equity market, Dalal Street investors added a whopping ₹81.90 lakh crore to their wealth in 2023 as a raft of positive factors powered a stellar rally in stocks.

Experts said India's strong macroeconomic fundamentals, political stability owing to the BJP's success in recent elections, optimistic corporate earnings outlook, signals from the US Federal Reserve about three prospective rate cuts next year and heavy retail investors participation played a major role in fuelling the stock market rally in 2023.

In 2023, the BSE benchmark jumped 11,399.52 points or 18.73 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 3,626.1 points or 20 per cent.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies climbed sharply by ₹81,90,598.32 crore this year to reach an all-time high of ₹3,64,28,846.25 crore.

Indian equities added another feather to its cap as the combined market valuation of all listed companies on the leading



The Indian market has demonstrated resilience, emerging as one of the standout performers within the broader emerging markets basket

SUNIL NYATI | MD, SWASTIKA INVESTMART

stock exchange BSE reached the \$4 trillion-milestone for the first time ever November 29 this year.

The surge can be attributed to a confluence of factors: the impending elections fostering political stability, promising whippers of rate cuts in 2024, and a much-needed decline in energy prices, finally enticing foreign investors back into the fold. This influx of foreign capital propelled largecap indices to new record highs," Sunil Nyati, Managing Director of Swastika Investmart Ltd said.

It took just two-and-a-half years to hit the \$4 trillion landmark after the market capitali-

MEESHO POSTS PROFIT FEAT

Softbank-backed Meesho Friday said it became the first e-commerce unicorn to post consolidated profit after tax in the second quarter ended September 2023. During the first-half period of the current financial year, the company reported narrowing of losses to ₹141 crore and an increase in revenue by 37 per cent on a year-over-year basis to ₹3,521 crore



Bank credit growth to industry decelerates

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 29: Growth of bank credit to industry decelerated to 6.1 per cent in November as against 13 per cent recorded in the same month last year, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Friday.



Among major industries, year-on-year credit growth to basic metal & metal products, food processing and textiles accelerated in November 2023 as compared with the corresponding month of the previous year, while that to all engineering, chemicals & chemical products, and infrastructure decelerated.

On the other hand, credit growth to agriculture and allied activities accelerated to 18.2 per cent in November from 14 per cent a year ago.

According to the data on "Sectoral Deployment of Bank Credit - November 2023", personal loan growth decelerated to 18.6 per cent (y-o-y) in November (19.9 per cent a year ago), due to moderation in credit growth to housing.

Credit to the services sector grew 21.9 per cent in November as against 21.3 per cent a year ago. Credit growth to non-banking financial companies tapered down during the month.

The RBI said the data has been collected from 41 scheduled commercial banks, accounting for about 95 per cent of the total non-food credit deployed by all banks.

Non-food bank credit registered a growth of 16.3 per cent in November as compared with 17.6 per cent a year ago, the RBI added.

Fiscal deficit exceeds 50.7% of full-year BE

In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit was at ₹9,06,584cr during the April-Oct period of 2023-24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: The government's fiscal deficit at the end of November stood at ₹9.06 lakh crore or 50.7 per cent of the full-year budget estimate (BE), according to data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) Friday.

In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit - the difference between expenditure and revenue - was at ₹9,06,584 crore during the April-October period of 2023-24.

In the corresponding period last year, the deficit was at 58.9 per cent of the budget estimates of 2022-23.

For 2023-24, the fiscal deficit of the government is estimated to be at ₹17.86 lakh crore or 5.9 per cent of the GDP.

The Government of India received ₹17.4 lakh crore (64.3 per cent of corresponding BE 2023-24 of total receipts) up to November 2023 comprising ₹14.35 lakh crore tax revenue (net), ₹2.84 lakh crore of non-tax revenue and ₹25,463 crore of non-debt capital receipts.

Non-debt capital receipts consist of recovery of loans and miscellaneous capital receipts.

As per the CGA data, total expenditure incurred by the central government was at ₹26.52 lakh crore (58.9 per cent of corresponding BE 2023-24) during April-November 2023.

Out of the total expenditure, ₹20.66 lakh crore was on revenue account and ₹5.85 lakh crore was on capital account.

Continuing the path of fiscal consolidation, the government intends to bring the fiscal deficit below 4.5 per cent of GDP by 2025-26.

Musk reclaims world's richest man title

■ Tesla, SpaceX CEO's net worth now estimated to be \$232bn

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 29: Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk has returned as the world's richest man, recapturing the title from French luxury tycoon Bernard Arnault.

Musk earned an additional \$95.4 billion through Thursday's close, boosted by the success of Tesla and SpaceX, after losing \$138 billion in 2022, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

His net worth now exceeds Arnault's by more than \$50 billion after LVMH Moet Hennessy Louis Vuitton SE shares fell due



to a global slowdown in demand for luxury products.

As per the Index, Musk's net worth is now estimated to be \$232 billion. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos added more than \$70 billion to his wallet this year and is now neck-and-neck with Arnault for second place, while Meta Founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg's fortune rose by over \$80 billion. Arnault is the second richest

TIDBITS

GOOGLE SETTLES \$5BN CONSUMER PRIVACY LAWSUIT

Washington: Alphabet's Google has agreed to settle a lawsuit claiming it secretly tracked the internet use of millions of people who thought they were doing their browsing privately. US District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers in Oakland, California, put a scheduled February 5, 2024 trial in the proposed class action on hold Thursday, after lawyers for Google and for consumers said they had reached a preliminary settlement. The lawsuit had sought at least \$5 billion. Settlement terms were not disclosed, but the lawyers said they have agreed to a binding term sheet through mediation, and expected to present a formal settlement for court approval by February 24, 2024. The plaintiffs alleged that Google's analytics, cookies and apps let the Alphabet unit track their activity even when they set Google's Chrome browser to "Incognito" mode and other browsers to "private" browsing mode. They said it turned Google into an "unaccountable trove of information" by letting the company learn about their friends, hobbies, favorite foods, shopping habits, and "potentially embarrassing things" they seek out online. Filed in 2020, the lawsuit covered "millions" of Google users since June 1, 2016, and sought at least \$5,000 in damages per user for violations of federal wire-tapping and California privacy laws.



JD.COM WINS ANTIMONOPOLY SUIT AGAINST ALIBABA

Beijing: Chinese online retailer JD.com said Friday that it won a lawsuit against rival Alibaba, which was fined 1 billion yuan (\$140.6 million) for monopolistic practices. The High People's Court of Beijing ruled that Alibaba Group Holding Limited along with Zhejiang Tmall Network Co and Zhejiang Tmall Technology Co had abused their market dominance and adopted monopolistic practices known as "choosing one from two" causing JD.com severe damage, JD.com said in a statement published on its official WeChat account. JD.com said it has nothing more to add beyond the statement. "This ruling is not only a fair decision for JD's resistance against the 'choose one out of two' monopoly, but a landmark moment in upholding market fairness and competition order through the rule of law," the statement said. "It will be a significant moment in China's anti-monopoly legal process." Alibaba was fined a record \$2.75 billion in an anti-trust probe by Chinese regulators in 2021 which stated that it had abused its market dominance. The two e-commerce giants in China had criticised each other for a practice called choosing one out of two, citing brands and merchants who had reportedly been told that if they wanted to operate on their platform, they have to do so exclusively.



Core sector growth eases to 6-month low of 7.8% in Nov

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: The production growth of eight key infrastructure sectors slowed to a six-month low of 7.8 per cent in November due to a decline in the output of crude oil and cement sectors.

The growth rate in the production of coal, fertiliser, steel, and electricity also decreased during November this year.

According to the data released by the government Friday, the growth during the month under review, however, is higher than the 5.7 per cent recorded a year ago.

The core sector's (coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity) growth in October was 12 per cent.

The last low was registered in May when these sectors recorded a growth of 5.2 per cent.



All sectors, except crude oil and cement, recorded healthy production growth in the month under review.

Coal and refinery product output registered a double-digit growth.

The output growth of eight sectors was 8.6 per cent in April-November 2023-24 against 8.1 per cent in the year-ago period.

These numbers assume significance as the eight core sectors contribute 40.27 per cent to the Index of Industrial

Forex reserves rise to \$620.44 billion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 29: The forex reserves continued to rise for the third consecutive week, adding \$4.471 billion more in the week ended December 22, taking the total to \$620.441 billion, according to the weekly data released by the Reserve Bank Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the kitty had swollen by \$9.112 billion to \$615.971 billion, making the quantum of increase one of the highest in a week. In the week before, the overall reserves had risen by \$2.816 billion to \$606.859 billion.

In October 2021, the forex kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion. At over \$620 billion, the reserves are just \$25 billion off the peak. The reserves took a hit as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments since last year.

This takes the year-to-date addition of forex reserves to \$57,634 billion, according to the central bank data.

HFI's data suggests robust growth in Q3, Q4: FinMin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: High Frequency Indicators (HFIs) including vehicle sales and power consumption for October and November 2023 reflect robust economic activity in the third quarter of FY24, which is likely to continue in fourth quarter as well, the Finance Ministry said in a report Friday.

HFIs in October and November 2023 reflect robust economic activity with PMI Manufacturing and Services remaining in the expansionary zone in October and November.

October imprints of the IIP and Index of eight core industries also highlight sustained growth in manufacturing activity.

Downside risks to growth arise from smouldering inflationary pressures in advanced countries and supply-chain disruptions re-emerging from persistent geopolitical stress, while geopolitics is an independent source of risk in itself, the Half-Yearly



Economic Review 2023-24 released by the Finance Ministry said.

However, India's domestic economic momentum and stability, low-to-moderate input cost pressures and anticipated policy continuity are significant buffers against those risks, it said.

The real GDP grew by a healthy 7.7 per cent in the first half of FY24, following a 7.6 per cent growth in the second quarter ended September 2023.

On the back of strong performance in Q2, the RBI has raised its growth forecast to 7 per cent for the full year, it said, adding, resilient consumption and investment have driven up the growth rate in H1.

# Stern Oz test for eves Jadeja in line for 2nd Test



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 29:** A test of character awaits Harmanpreet Kaur's India Women here in the second ODI against Australia on Saturday if they are to end their losing streak at home against the rampant visitors and keep the three-match series alive.

India were outplayed thoroughly in the first ODI on Thursday at the Wankhede Stadium despite the hosts notching up their highest-ever total against Australia — 282/8 — riding on the brilliance of Jemimah Rodrigues (82) and Pooja Vastrakar (62 not out).

When it came to defending the total, India used seven different bowlers including Harmanpreet but to no avail, as Australia romped home with more than three overs and six wickets to spare.

India's crushing defeat was not only their eighth consecutive at home but in the manner in which the hosts went down would cre-

ate some concerns in the dressing room.

After Sneha Rana flew to her left to take a diving catch to get rid of Alyssa Healy in the first over off Renuka Singh, India's fielding errors in the field assisted the Australian pair of Phoebe Litchfield and Ellyse Perry as they piled up a 148-run stand for the second wicket.

India's new ball bowlers, particularly Vastrakar, could not impose themselves and the fate was same for the senior spinners Deepti Sharma and Rana, who had created a lot of trouble for the visiting batters during the one-off Test at this venue last week.

As it was the case on her T20I debut, Saika Ishaque faced troubles settling down as a bowler and plenty of mistakes in the field only added to the team's woes.

Therefore the ask will be tough for India to put this loss behind and recover quickly in a day's time for the second ODI, their seventh match across formats in

the last 23 days in this packed home season.

Playing top-flight cricket consistently could take its toll and India Women will have to find their ways around it as they play an overall 11 matches across formats in a mere 35 days.

It also remains to be seen if vice-captain and key opening batter Smriti Mandhana, who missed the first ODI for being unwell, would be available for the second match.

Similarly there were no further updates on Rodrigues than that she struggled with hydration issues. The right-handed batter, at one stage during her innings, ran towards the team dugout to throw up as she battled intense heat and humidity while producing one of her finest innings at the biggest stage.

The biggest challenge, however, for the think tank as well as those on the field, would be to find ways to stop this long and daunting Australian batting line-up. The Indians will also have to

find a way to stop the Australian vice-captain Tahlia McGrath, who has struck three fifties on this tour already and looks in prime form.

The pitch for the first ODI was a batting-friendly surface and is not expected to be a lot different for the remaining two matches at this venue, which implies bowling would be India's biggest concern going into this contest.

For Australia, it was a near-perfect outing with the team putting up a fine show in the field even though they leaked runs in the death overs. The death overs bowling and batting is one area that the visitors want to improve upon.

**MATCHDAY**

India (W) vs Australia (W)  
2nd One Day International

Time: 1:30 pm

Telecast: Sports 18 Network

Stream: Jio Cinema

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Centurion, Dec 29:** Amid the doom and gloom following a humiliating defeat, the Indian cricket team has some good news as senior all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja could be available for the second Test against South Africa in Cape Town, starting January 3.

Jadeja missed the opening Test after complaining of "upper back spasm" during the morning of the first day at the Supersport Park. However, on the third day of the first Test, those present at the ground saw Jadeja being a part of the warm-up session before the proceedings started in the middle.

The all-rounder didn't look in any sort of discomfort as he ran multiple 30 to 40 metre short strides during the morning session. He also did a few fitness drills during the session.

But the most reassuring aspect was his bowling during the lunch break on the third day. Along with reserve pacer Mukesh Kumar, Jadeja, for close to 20 minutes, bowled on a practice track and was keenly watched by the team's strength and conditioning coach, Rajnikant.

He was mainly doing spot bowling although he himself has a two step run-up. He was hitting the spot consistently and was also seen getting to turn a few in the process. The best part was that he didn't look gingerly at all during the short session when he was bowling.

Jadeja the bowler might not have inflicted con-

siderable damage in the opening Test but as a batter, who has played some good knocks at No.6 and 7 in SENA countries, he could have made a difference. With four more days left for the start of the second Test, there is every chance that he will play the match.

**AVESH INCLUDED**

A day after their embarrassing defeat to hosts South Africa in the first Test, India called up right-arm fast bowler Avesh Khan Friday in a bid to bolster their pace attack for the second and final Test at Cape Town.

Avesh is currently busy representing the India A side in their four-day tour match against South Africa A at Benoni, where he returned 5/54 to help bowl out the hosts for 263 in the first innings.

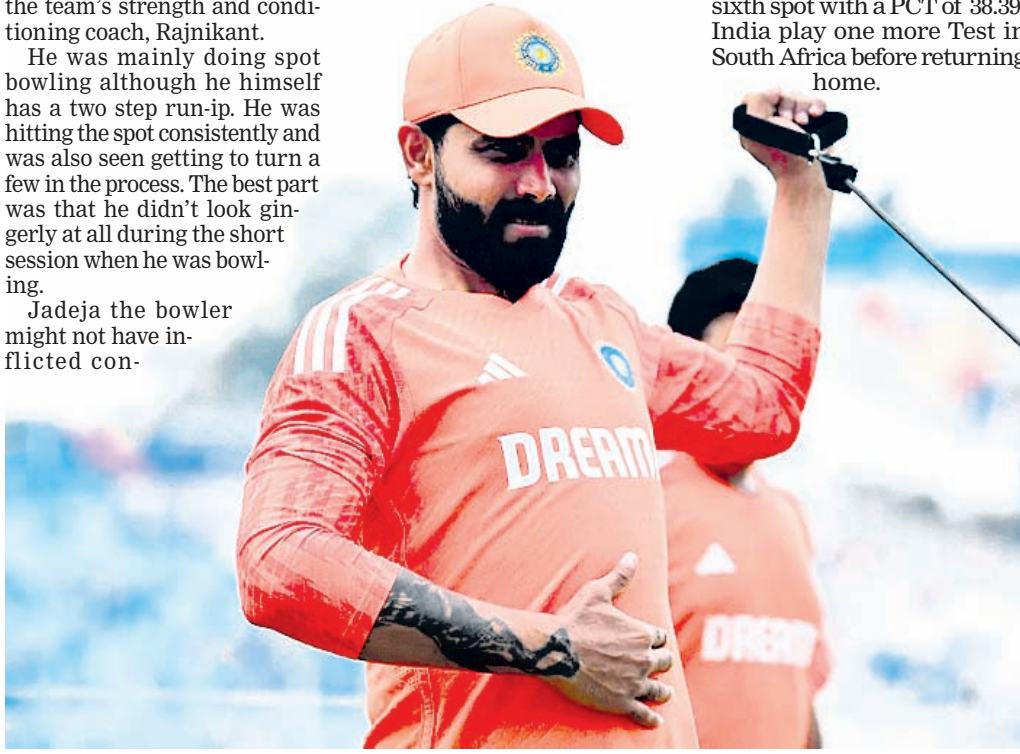
**TEAM INDIA PENALISED**

India's heaviest defeat in South Africa in the first Test at Centurion came along with a fine of 10 per cent of their match fees and Rohit Sharma's team being docked two crucial points in the World Test Championship (WTC).

**A farewell present**

**Centurion:** Dean Elgar, who will retire at the end of the ongoing Test series against India, will lead the South African team in the final game of the two-match series in place of injured Temba Bavuma. Bavuma has been ruled out of the final Test of the series against India, Cricket South Africa (CSA) said after the conclusion of the first game here Thursday. Zubayr Hamza will replace Bavuma in the squad for the final Test to be played in the at Cape Town from January 3. Elgar is no stranger to captaincy, having led the Proteas in the past, including the last time India visited South Africa for a Test series. After going 0-1 down in 2021-22, the opener led by example to complete a comeback 2-1 victory.

Additionally, one point per each over short is docked by the ICC for its WTC, which means India lost two points. Before the penalty India were placed fifth in the points table with 16 points and a PCT of 44.44. After the penalty, they've dropped below Australia to sixth spot with a PCT of 38.39. India play one more Test in South Africa before returning home.



## Cummins Pats Australia past Pak in second Test



LEADING FROM FRONT: Pat Cummins shows off the match-ball as Cameron Green applauds, Friday

**Melbourne, Dec 29:** Captain Pat Cummins' second 10-wicket total in Tests led Australia to a 79-run win over Pakistan at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on the fourth day of the second cricket Test Friday.

Cummins made all the crucial breakthroughs late in the day as the hosts bowled Pakistan out for 237 to win the Boxing Day test and extend Pakistan's losing run in Australian tests to 16 matches.

Mohammad Rizwan and Salman Ali Agha threatened to push Pakistan towards a win but Cummins ended the 67-run partnership between the pair in bizarre and dramatic fashion just 15 minutes before the scheduled close of play.

Australia reviewed a not out call to Rizwan as a Cummins delivery flew into Alex Carey's gloves. But after a long review from the third umpire, Richard Illingworth deemed the ball flicked Rizwan's wrist band that was connected to his gloves.

Rizwan was the furious with the decision, with Pakistan 219/5 at the time and starting to believe it could pull off the country's highest successful winning chase against Australia.

It was Cummins who claimed the crucial wicket of his opposing captain Shan Masood (60, 71b, 7x4), before tea. Cummins

took his fourth of the second innings just minutes later, dismissing Amir Jamal (0).

The wickets earned him the player of the match award and made him the 10th Australian to pass 250 test wickets. At seven wickets down, Australia opted to take the extra 30 minutes in a bid to complete the match Friday instead of coming back for day five.

Australia was out for 262 in its second innings after losing 4/75 during the morning. Wicketkeeper Alex Carey (53) helped push Australia's lead over the crucial 300-mark with his highest score since the first test of the Ashes in June.

Pakistan fast bowler Shaheen Afridi (4/76) made a return to form with his best figures of the series, while fellow left-armer Mir Hamza added 4/32.

Australia had won the first Test in Perth by 360 runs. The third test in the three-match series is scheduled to begin January 3 at the Sydney Cricket Ground, where Pakistan won its last Test in Australia in 1995.

**BRIEF SCORES**

Australia 318 & 262 (Alex Carey 53; Mir Hamza 4/32, Shaheen Shah Afridi 4/76) beat Pakistan 264 & 237 (Shan Masood 60, Agha Salmaan 50, Babar Azam 41; Pat Cummins 5/49, Mitchell Starc 4/55) by 79 runs.

## Odisha FC breeze past Jamshedpur

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** Odisha FC pulled off a dominant 4-1 win over Jamshedpur FC in a high-octane, entertaining first-half action as the Juggernauts enter the Indian Super League (ISL) 2023-24 season break high on confidence.

Their supremely talented and experienced frontline clicked cohesively to put four goals past the Jamshedpur FC defence in the opening 45 minutes to seal the deal straightaway, and take their unbeaten streak to 11 games in all competitions.

Jamshedpur FC, upbeat after their 5-0 thrashing of Hyderabad FC, began the game strongly with a Rei Tachikawa stunner from outside of the box to bag the opener in the 23rd minute.

However, the trio of Roy Krishna, Isak Vanlalratfela, and Diego Mauricio wreaked havoc in the remaining 20-odd minutes, coming together seamlessly, and running circles around the Jamshedpur FC defence to find multiple breakthroughs and produce a thorough entertainer for the home crowd.

Krishna, in particular, was the star of the evening, playing a part in three of the four goals barring the one that Mauricio converted through a spot-kick.



Roy Krishna celebrates one of his goals at Kalinga Stadium. He first set up one for Isak in the 27th minute, which the youngster tapped in conveniently to bag the equaliser.

Nine minutes later, the Fijian jumped upon a rebound of a shot by Mauricio to get his team a slight lead from the right-hand side of the box.

Mauricio got his due in the added time of the first-half, earning a spot-kick due to a foul by TP Rehensh and hammering it into the net to get Odisha FC's third goal of the night.

Krishna was in no mood to pipe down as Isak carved open the backline, which appeared to be disarranged, and the Fijian pulled off another neat finish to bring up the fifth goal of the night.

Odisha FC have rounded off the opening half of the ISL 2023-24 campaign with seven victories and three draws in 12 games. Their dominance has been a result of a free-flowing attacking unit, supported by a solid defensive setup that has conceded only 12 goals so far.

The Red Miners, on the other hand, have a lot of thinking to do from here on. It appeared that they had turned a new leaf with an authoritative win over Hyderabad FC, but things have unravelled pretty clearly for the squad over the course of the last four months. They need to make some corrections to ensure that the second half of the campaign unfolds in a better way for them.

## Maha eves bag gold at Gymnastics Nat's



**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** The Junior Artistic Gymnastics National Championships witnessed yet another day filled with dazzling performances at the Gymnastics Centre in the Kalinga Stadium here.

Maharashtra came out on top in the women's team event claim-

ing the gold medal over Delhi eves, who secured silver. West Bengal completed the podium winning the bronze.

Maharashtra posted an all-around score of 161.20, while Delhi recorded a total of 153.60 points and West Bengal cumulated a total of 153.40 points. The hosts Odisha yet again came short by one position of the

podium finishing fourth with a total of 150.40 points ahead of Telangana, who finished fifth recording a total of 144.90 points.

In the individual all-around rankings, Telangana's Nishika Agarwal finished on top with 44.25 points. She recorded 13.35 points on Vault, 9.30 on Uneven Bars, 10.60 points on Balance Beam and 11.00 points on the Floor Exercise.

West Bengal's Soumili Karar finished second with a total of 42.45 points — 12.50 points on Vault, 7.65 points on Uneven Bars, 11.75 points on Balance Beam and 10.55 points on the Floor Exercise. Sara Rawool from Maharashtra finished third posting an all-around score of 41.60 points on the back of Vault (12.35), Uneven Bars (9.40), Balance Beam (10.35) and Floor Exercise (9.50).

## ARSENAL SUFFER 1ST HOME LOSS IN EPL 2023-24, SPURS THRASHED

**London, Dec 29:** Arsenal lost at home for the first time since May as a 2-0 defeat to West Ham cost Mikel Arteta's team the chance to return to the top of the Premier League.

Goals by Tomas Soucek in the 13th minute and former Arsenal player Konstantinos Mavropanos in the 55th — combined with a stout defensive display — gave West Ham a surprising win at Emirates Stadium and continued a midseason blip by the Gunners.

That's just one win in their last four league matches for Arsenal, who were in first place for Christmas and need to beat Fulham away Sunday to be in that position heading into 2024.

Arsenal are currently in second place and two points behind Liverpool.

At Brighton, Tottenham's top-four credentials were damaged by a miserable performance in a 2-4 defeat. Late goals for Tottenham by Alejo Veliz and Ben Davies gave the score a respectable look but the visitors were outplayed at Amex Stadium by a Brighton team missing up to 10 players through injury.

Jack Hinshelwood powered a shot into the roof of the net in the 11th minute and Joao Pedro converted a penalty in the 23rd. Pervis Estupinan made it 3-0 with a shot from 25 yards in the 63rd before Joao Pedro scored his second — again from the penalty spot — in the 75th.

**MARUTI SUZUKI**

**NEXA**

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