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BHUBANESWAR | SATURDAY DECEMBER 30 | 2023



Fearless beginning

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

OLUME 13, ISSUE 269 | www.orissapost.com

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

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

SPORTS | P11

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

3 HURT IN CYLINDER BLAST AT HOSPITAL

Secretary in February 2023.

Bhubaneswar: At least three persons were injured after a cylinder used for filling refrigerant gas in airconditioners 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?

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WEATHER

Humidity

VERY LIKELY

CTC 27.0°C 27.8°C **Max Temp** 16.0°(Min Temp

Rainfall **FORECAST** DRY WEATHER

testing 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 pol-

External Affairs Ministry

Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi

icy for a long time.

hospitals, for all critical ailments." Patnaik said. Stating that the BSKY scheme

Bhubaneswar, Dec 29: Chief

Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday

launched the third phase of the

state's flagship health scheme -

Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana

Patnaik said with this third

phase of expansion, it is esti-

mated that over 1.10 crore fam-

ilies, covering nearly 90 per cent

of the state's population, will

be provided health assurance

The Chief Minister said that

the BSKY will ensure that no

family in Odisha is left vulner-

able due to lack of financial re-

sources to meet high expenditure

first two phases of the BSKY,

would be covered in the third

phase, Patnaik said while launch-

ing the new 'BSKY Nabin Card'

third phase of BSKY, where all

left-out families of rural areas

of our state will be assured of

cashless health service in private

We are now launching the

The families left out in the

for critical illnesses.

for the beneficiaries.

under BSKY.



TEA FOR TAO: Buddhist monks bring tea for devotees during a sermon of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama in Bodh Gaya, Friday

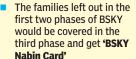
CM NAVEEN PATNAIK LAUNCHES THIRD PHASE OF STATE'S FLAGSHIP HEALTH SCHEME

BSKY now covers 90% people

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

HEALTHCARE BOOST



The scheme will now include all rural families of the state except regular government employees and income

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 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 Yoiana was launched five years ago bringing about a revolution in providing health assurance to

the people of Odisha," the Chief Minister said.

AGENCIES

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, dis-

band the organisation and join

Union Home Minister Amit

the democratic process

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

"Assam has suffered

for long due to the violence

of the ULFA and 10,000 people lost

their lives in this violence since

Shah said the ULFA, the old-

est insurgent group of Assam,

agreed to abjure violence, dis-

band the organisation and join

He said a big development

package will be given to Assam

as part of the accord. Every

clause of the pact will be im-

of the Great Depression in the

1930s, when the growth rate was

up a bit as we leave the pan-

demic years. But it would still be

difficult to get to 7.3 per cent,'

'Of course growth may tick

7.3 per cent.

Frey said.

the democratic process

plemented fully, he said

of Assam.

1979," he 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 em-

panelled 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.

Man killed for not repaying ₹10,000

AGENCIES

Berhampur, Dec 29: A 33-yearold man was allegedly killed in Ganjam district for 'not repaying' ₹10,000 borrowed from the accused, police said Friday.

The accused, Prasant Kumar Swain (21), a resident of Pattapur, allegedly beat fellow villager Surya Kant Sahu to death with an iron rod near a liquor outlet in the area Thursday night over non-repayment of the borrowed sum, a police officer said. Locals found the body lying in a pool of blood Friday morning and informed the police, who sent it for post-mortem.

The accused, who had fled the spot after allegedly committing the murder, was later arrested.

According to the police, Sahu had borrowed ₹10,000 from the accused a few days ago but failed to repay it within the pre-decided date, resulting in a heated argument between the two.

In a fit of rage, the accused beat Sahu up with an iron rod and he died on the spot, the officer said.

Later, the deceased's brother Nityanand Sahu lodged a complaint with Pattapur police.

During investigation, the police identified the accused and arrested him, Ganjam Superintendent of Police Jagmohan Meena said. The police seized the iron rod used in the crime and the mobile phone of the deceased from the accused.

oldest

democratic

Govt signs peace pact with ULFA Shah said that now violence_ has come down in Assam by 87

> 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.

> per cent, deaths by 90 per cent and

The accord came after 12 years of unconditional negotiations between the ULFA faction, led insurgent group Arabinda agrees to shun

Rajkhowa, and the violence, disband the government, officials organisation and join 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 ac-

tivities that led to the central government declaring it a banned outfit in 1990.

post for Padampur POST NEWS NETWORK

CM approves ADM

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

INDIA SEEKS HAFIZ

SAEED'S EXTRADITION said the request for extraditing

> 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

ASSOCIATED PRESS 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

Bureau figures The growth rate for the United States in the past year was 0.53 per cent, about half the worldwide figure. The US added 1.7 million people and will have a population on New Year's Day of

expected worldwide every sec-

ond, according to the Census



World population to top 8 bn by Jan 1

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

335.8 million people.

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

The slowest-growing decade currently was in the aftermath

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.

will further strengthen the administration in the region and help to promptly address public grievances and speed updevelopment activities, the official release said.



cies in a number of ter-India also took note of reports of Saeed's son Talha Saeed con-

in Pakistan handed over the request to Islamabad a few weeks ago, he said.



eisure



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*.



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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. Ganesha says qu out with some old friends whom you have been neglecting of late.

TAURUS

Things will tend to get very difficult and complicated, says Ganesha 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 Ganesha.

CANCER

You can improve your finances with you mental capabilities. Ganesha 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.

A lot of people will sing your not be satisfied with whatever is occuring. 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 Ganesha.

VIRGO

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

Ganesha 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 quests. You will make plans to go for a picnic with close friends or relatives. Ganesha 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. Ganesha, advises your 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 is no point losing heart and getting disappointed. This may only affect your work, instead, wait for a better tomorrow. Ganesha 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 Ganesha, Make the most of today as tomorrow may not the same as today. You will be popular today, especially in your social circle as you'll impress everyone with

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 Ganesha.

PISCES

Just as melting ice caps on faraway mountains can swe the oceans, concerted efforts you make now will have far-reaching beneficial consequences, says Ganesha. 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,

actly with that, you went with your gut feeling, and you took everything as a challenge. The Tiger ac-

you just went ex-

tress also explained that

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 cinand that love, you cannot make movies, so you must also understand what it is that is resonating with people today, in terms of emotions, stories,

ema. Without that support the audience and with philosophy, and the mood of the nation and the mood of people. AGENCIES



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

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

On the work front, Kusha was seen last in Selfiee, Plan A Plan B, Thank You for Coming and Case Toh



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





Mumbai: During a recent

interview, actress Kajol confessed that she wants to play something as unapologetically black

as Hannibal in the future. true. After the actress recently shared her wish to play Hannibal on Netflix India's Film Actors

Roundtable, she's "ended up taking

Would the thought home," as she claimed. Kajol used Artificial Intelligence to turn herself into love to play Hannibal: 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. Kajol has made her wish come 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." "Wowzersss! 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



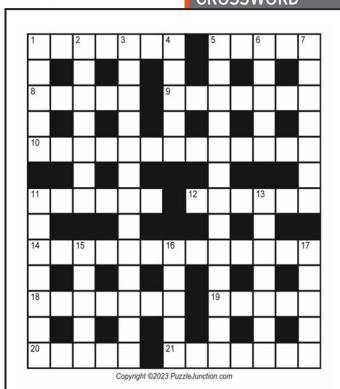
CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY



FUN **CROSSWORD**



Across

or car

- 1 Type of movie 5 Vessel
- 8 Dissent 9 Ring locale
- 10 Wart remover <u>Down</u> 11 Urchins
- 12 Parting words
- (3-3)14 Sharks at
- dinner? (7,6)
- 1 Healed
- 2 Canadian

19 Coronet

20 A spirited

horse

- province

18 Religious letter

21 Gambler's ruin

- 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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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	d		1	92
4		5	2	9				7
1		7						2
				6	6			4
2		9			7			3
			8		1			
			5)):	2		
	5					3	9	

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWOR

SUDOKU

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

IN SYNC

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



downtown

COPS NAB 3 FOR CITY BIZMAN KIDNAPPING



red i20 car by three miscreants while returning home Thursday

ater, the miscreants demanded _₹10 lakh ransom from his wife, failing which they threatened to

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 kidnappers.

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

on a tip-off, rescued Pintu Sahu, a resident of Kinjal Garden in Patrapada from an abandoned cottage near Arua under Dharmasala 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.



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

Miscreants break into house in Mancheswar

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 29: Hours be fore the Navapalli 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 Balianta 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 oddjobs 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

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

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 Ghanshyam 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.

Hosps asked to keep O2 beds ready

POST NERWS NETWORK

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 hos-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 FIGURES RISE

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 influenzalike 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 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 OSMCL, 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 HYDERABAD GIRL

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.



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.

SUSTAINS BURNS

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-yearold 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 Kelu 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

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-



tre 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, Deogarh, 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 manyplaces over the districts of Odisha during the next five days.

64TH FOUNDATION DAY NZP to be

a world-class zoo: Min

1,500 acre land has been provided to the zoo for the

expansion and development of the major tourist

destination of the state, says Forests, Environment and

Climate Change Minister Pradip Kumar Amat

Kalahandi Univ gets new name

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 29: Kalahandi University will now be known as Maa Manikeswari University as Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday approved a proposal of Higher Education department for changing the name of the educational institution.

The CM gave his approval to the Higher Education department's proposal to rename Kalahandi University in Bhawanipatna after goddess Maa Manikeshwari worshipped as the presiding deity of Kalahandi district. During his visit to Kalahandi district in November, Patnaik had announced that Kalahandi University would be named after Maa Manikeshwari, the reigning deity of the district.

It may be recalled here that the Odisha government had accorded university status to Bhawanipatna Autonomous College in 2019.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I, Minati Nanda, W/o Dhirendra Narayan Nanda, R/o Flat No.126, Northern Heights, Kalarahanga, Bhubaneswar, Dist.-Khurda, Odisha-751024, declare that by this Affidavit No.131 dated 28.12.2023, that now onwards I shall be known as MINATI PARIHARI NANDA, for all future purposes.

I, Makardwaj Singh, S/o-Late Rampati Singh, resident of ward-3. PO/PS-Lamtibahal, Brajarajnagar, Dist-Jharsuguda, Pin-768216, Odisha declare by this affidavit No-495636, Dtd 29.05.2023 that now onwards I shall be known as Makardhwaj Singh for all future purposes.

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Balasore on 23.12.2023, I SK. SHAYANUJ ZAMA, Son of Sk. Samsuj Zama, At-Golapolo Road, P.S.-Sahadevkhunta, Dist-Balasore, do hereby declared that as per name is NILOFER NASRIN. But in my Passport No. M4128904 it has been inadvertently mentioned as NILOFAR NASRIN. NILOFER NASRIN & NILOFAR NASRIN is the same and one Person. This affidavit is sworn to be produced for correction in my Passport. Sd./- Sk. Shayanuj Zama

Sabita Biswal, W/o. Anchal Kumar Biswal resident of At/PO-Ramalenka, PS-KrushnaPrasad, Dist-Puri, Odisha declare by this affidavit No. 2122 dt.27.12.2023 sworn before Jagyneswar Acharya, Notary, Govt. of India, BBSR. That my before marriage name was Kumari Sabita Devi as per my education certificate. After marriage I have already change my surname & known as Sabita Biswal, obtained Aadhaar Card bearing No. 2408 xxxx xxxx. I declare that Sabita Biswal & Kumari Sabita Devi is one & same person. I shall be known as Sabita Biswal for all future purpose.

'State museum a treasure trove of knowledge'

The state museum will be transformed under 5T initiative to attract the youths, says Odia Language, Literature and Culture commissioner-cum-secretary Sujata R Karthikeyan

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 29: Inaugurating the 90th foundation day celebrations of the Odisha State Museum here Friday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said that the museum is a treasure trove of knowledge and has become an identity marker of the state.

"All the high school students of the state need to be made familiar with the museum, where they can learn a lot about our glorious past." he said while extending his greetings to the museum officials on this occasion.

Joining as chief guest, chief advisor to the Chief Minister R Balakrishnan said that the state museum houses all historical



elements of Odisha and is an essential component of progress as there is a need to develop soft powers like culture and heritage.

On the occasion, Karthikevan said that language, literature of a nation.

"A nation can only develop if these foundations are protected and preserved," she added while informing that the museum will be transformed under 5T initiative for further development and to attract the youths of the

Emphasising museums' role in nation building, as the chief speaker, eminent museologist Jyotindra Jain said that the material available in the Odisha State Museum is extensive. Similarly, Odisha Tourism Development Corporation chairman Lenin Mohanty urged everyone to contribute to the ongoing transformation of the state, which will help accelerate the pace of development.

On the occasion, commentary of 'Ushaavilasa' were wheels of Nandighosha, Taladhwaja and **Darpadalana chariots** were also presented

At the event, the Cultural Calendar, 2024 and special issue of 'The Odisha Historical

Musical fountain, audio vi-

Notably, the museum was inaugurated in 1932 at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack by Nirmal Chandra Banerjee and Ghanshyam Dash. Later, it was shifted to the Odisha State Museum building at Kalpana Square in the Capital City.

musical fountain, audio visuals of the first Odia inaugurated, while the

Research Journal' were unveiled. ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

suals of the first Odia commentary of 'Ushaavilasa,' an animal carnival selfie-zone were inaugurated, while three wheels of chariot Nandighosha, Taladhwaja and Darpadalana were presented for the public.

Bhubaneswar, Dec 29: Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) celebrated its 64th Foundation Day, Friday, with the launching of the zoo's portal and several new initiatives. Minister of Forests, Environment and Climate Change Pradip Kumar Amat graced the occasion as the chief guest Amat said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's dream and goal is to make Nandankanan a world-class and safe zoo. For

this, as per the CM's instructions, the Forest department is pumping in huge amount of funds. In this regard, 1,500 acre land has been provided to the zoo for the expansion and development of the zoo. The department's additional

chief secretary Satyabrata Sahu and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden Susanta Nanda also graced the occasion as guests of honour.

Sahu welcomed the guests and other dignitaries. On the occasion, eminent herpetologist Sudarsan Maharana was felicitated with the "Lifetime Commitment Award for Gharial Conservation" in recognition of his outstanding contribution towards crocodile conservation.

Annual report for the year 2022-23 and a dedicated website for State Botanical Garden - www.statebotanicalgardenodisha.org-were released on the occasion. Further, an app 'NIMS' (Nandankanan Integrated Monitoring System) was released by the chief guest to aid zoo management with realtime monitoring, animal health tracking, visitor management and analytics for informed decision making.

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www.statebotanicalgardenodis ha.org - were released

An app 'NIMS' (Nandankanan Integrated Monitoring System) was released by the chief guest to aid zoo management with real-time monitoring, animal health tracking, visitor management and analytics for informed decision making

A modern wallaby enclosure with 340 sgm nature-immersive exhibit area that has been designed to house Parma wallabies, two feeding cells, and with provision of CCTV monitoring was inaugurated

The chief guest flagged off 16 rapid response team vehicles for patrolling at Similipal Tiger Reserve near the Botanical Garden entrance.

Moreover, a modern wallaby enclosure with 340 sqm natureimmersive exhibit area that has been designed to house Parma wallabies, two feeding cells, and with provision of CCTV monitoring was inaugurated.

Adding excitement to visitors' experience, cassowaries and ostriches (both flightless birds) were released into the renovated large enclosures enrichments.

Meanwhile, tiger and lion cubs were given names that have been finalised through online poll conducted by various social media platforms.

The female cubs of tigress 'Ankita' were named 'Shree', 'Trupti' and 'Jayashree' while the male cub was named 'Amit'. The male and female cubs of tigress 'Rupa' were named 'Shiva and 'Amrita'.



₹290cr supplementary budget of BMC gets nod

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 29: A supplementary budget of ₹290 crore was passed at the monthly council meeting of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Friday. Mayor Sulochana Das, Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange and other BMC officials were present at the

A total of 17 issues were raised by the corporators at the meeting. The issues pertained to roads, drains, municipal offices, community halls, electricity, welfare pavilions, old age, widows and differently-abled people among others. Divisional officer, Commissioner and Mayor replied to the queries of the corporators, said sources.

Notably, a total of ₹690.20 crore was sanctioned in the current year's annual budget of which 90 per cent has been utilised so far.

In the meeting, it was also decided that the fourth phase of distribution of Land Rights Certificates (LRCs) will start Saturday.

It was also instructed to take stringent action against the owners, who leave their cattle on roads. The civic body asked its officials to take the stray cattle roaming on the City streets to

482 PG Teachers join non-govt aided higher secondary schools

As many as 110 high schools have been upgraded to higher secondary level and have started functioning this year alone, the Chief Minister informed on the occasion

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 29: As many as 482 Post Graduate Teachers (PGTs) joined non-government aided higher secondary schools of the state at an induction programme organised at the Lok Seva Bhawan here Friday.

Addressing the new teachers. first such batch to join these schools, the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik urged them to keep themselves updated with the latest academic skills and use information technology as a tool to make teaching more interesting and accessible

While advising the teachers to discharge their duties with utmost dedication. Patnaik said that their in-depth knowledge and expertise in different subjects will transform the classroom ecosystem and influence the learning outcome of students

in a positive way. Congratulating the teachers and their family members, he said that education determines a population's future. "It provides the foundational support for developing a better society. The The Chief Minister urged the newly-inducted teachers to keep themselves updated with the latest skills

quality of education is one of the indicators of individual and social development," he said elaborating on his government's pri-

ority to education. Under the 5T initiative, he said, the higher secondary schools have undergone significant transformation in terms of infrastructure and availability of IT tools. "As many as 110 high schools have been upgraded to higher secondary level and have started functioning this year alone,

Patnaik added Speaking on the occasion, School and Mass education Minister Sudam Marndi congratulated the newly recruited teachers while also appreciating the fact that in the first batch 50 per cent are women. "This is an indication of growing status of women and their empowerment in the state," he underlined.

Only 18% borrowers understand data privacy rules in India: Report

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 29: Only 18 per cent of borrowers in India understand the data privacy rules, with the majority of them (88 per cent) having a superficial understanding of the subject, a new report said Friday.

According to global consumer finance provider Home Credit India, about 60 per cent of borrowers are worried about how their personal data is collected and used by the lending apps.

Around 58 per cent of these worried borrowers also feel that the lending apps collect more data than required.

Gen \boldsymbol{Z} and borrowers from smaller towns show higher concern with the amount of data being collected by lending apps.

Among metros, 78 per cent of borrowers from Chennai voiced their concern about the amount of data collected. "The survey not only high-

lights the preferences of today's borrowers but also emphasises the need for greater awareness of data privacy," said Ashish Tiwari, chief marketing officer at Home Credit India.

The report surveyed about 1.842 borrowers in the age group



of 18-55 years, with an average income of ₹31,000 per month across 17 Indian cities. Moreover, the report noted that over onefourth of borrowers opted for online channels for availing

Loans initiated through telecalling increased by 3 per cent (from 16 per cent in 2022 to 19 per cent in 2023), while loans through POS/bank branches saw a decline of 4 per cent (from 56 per cent to 51 per cent).

In keeping with the digital revolution, more than half of borrowers (51 per cent) are looking forward to completing their entire future loan application on a mobile app without any physical connection with POS/Banks.

The preference for online loan mediums is primarily driven by younger and aspirational small-town borrowers,

with cities like Dehradun at 61 per cent. Ludhiana at 59 per cent, Ahmedabad at 56 per cent, and Chandigarh at 52 per cent.

In terms of digital literacy, 23 per cent of middle-class borrowers have heard/seen about the chatbot service in the past. About 43 per cent of borrowers found chatbot services as easy to use, led by Women and Gen Z.

According to the report, WhatsApp is an emerging digital channel for loans, with 59 per cent of borrowers having received loan messages on WhatsApp. However, only onefourth of borrowers consider loan offers received on WhatsApp as trustworthy, with Gen Z showing more trust towards this.

EMI cards continued to be the most preferred medium to take loans, accepted by 49 per cent of the borrowers.

OR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

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

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

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.



rushed to the spot, intercepted the mechanised fishing boat and arrested seven fishermen, including one from West Bengal.

The sanctuary personnel also in the wee hours of Thursday intercepted another fishing vessel and arrested 11 fishermen for catching fish at the 'No Fishing Zone' within Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary.

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.



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

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. The accused were identified as Samir Badamali

and Raju Sahu of Bolangir town. 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-Saturday, police sources said.



dents. Treatment of patients was hampered at the hospital owing to the agitation of the house surgeons and other students, sources said. Though the superintendent of

the medical college persuaded the protesting surgeons to call off the agitation, they continued with their agitation and marched towards the OPD which led to a brief faceoff-like situation with the police. Finally they relented and withdrew their protest at 2pm and resumed their duties.

Notably, the police team nabbed the accused duo from Kandhamal district and was on its way to Bolangir when reports last came in. The accused will be produced before a court in Bolangir

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

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 that the on-duty house surgeon Sahu also conducted a check-up of the woman. This irked the husband of the woman as he alleged that the privacy of his wife was

intruded upon. 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 Baralapokhari village under Town police limits in Bhadrak district Thursday night.

The injured were identified as Narahari Dalei, Bhagat dalei, Rabindra dalei, Manasi Dalei, Shradhanjali Senapti 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

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 crit-

ically 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.

Brundaban palace in Gajapati district wallows in utter neglect

However, these sites are fast los-

ing their existence due to lack of

Basant Niwas carries legacy of

erstwhile Paralakhemundi royal

Maharaja Goura Chandra Gajapati

and his son Maharaja Krushna

Chandra Gajapati. The palace is

spread over 17 acre of land on the

According to some researchers,

this palace was constructed in be-

tween 1890 to 1905 and the building plan

was prepared by Italian architects.

The Mahendratanava river flowing

on its backyard and the lush green

cover makes it an absolute destination

for picnickers and people interested

from Paralakhemundi town and it

used to be a summer retreat for the

former royals of Paralakhemundi

in the natural surroundings and take

a look at the beautiful architecture of

the heritage building. People in large

Tourists throng this palace to unwind

earning the name 'Basant Niwas'.

The palace is situated around 3 km

bank of Mahendratanaya river.

proper upkeep.

in heritage sites.



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,

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.

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE STAKEHOLDERS OF KRISHNA RESIDENCY PRIVATE LIMITED KRISHNA RESIDENCY PRIVATE LIMITED U55101OR2009PTC010598 Name, Address, Email Address, Telephone Mohan Ram Goenka The stakeholders of Vulcan Estates Private Limited are hereby called upon to submit a proof of the claims, on or before 27th January 2024, to the Liquidator at the address mentioned against item 7. The financial creditors shall submit their proof of claims by electronic means only. All other stak may submit the proof of claims in person, by post or by electronic means Date: 29.12.2023 Place: Kolkata



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:

S. No	Work	Value (₹)	Submission Deadline
1	HVAC	₹ 17,00,000 /-	21-01-2024
2	Passenger Lift	₹ 20,00,000 /-	21-01-2024
3	Aluminium Windows	₹ 6,00,000 /-	15-01-2024
4	Aluminium System Windows	₹ 11,00,000 /-	21-01-2024
5	Metal Storage Racks	₹19,00,000/-	15-01-2024

Interested firms/parties should:

- 1. Email spaces@jdcentreofart.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 guoted amt. (Rs.) to JDCA, A5 Jagamara, NH5 (next to Hotel

Kharavela), Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar 751030, Odisha,

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

as per tender instructions before deadline.

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

POSSESSION NOTICE

PIN-751009, Ph.: 0674-2620423 (Under Section 13(4) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 for Immovable Property

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the UCO Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the borrowers, co-borrowers & guarantors to repay the amount as mentioned below within **60 days** from the date of the said Notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers, co-borrowers & guarantors and the public in genera hat the undersigned has taken POSSESSION of the property/ies described here in below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the date mentioned below. The borrowers, co-borrowers 8 guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of the **UCO Bank** for the amount plus interest plus expenses- thereon. **The borrower's attention is invited** to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to them, to redeem the secured assets

to providend of our decition (b) of	To visions of our section (b) of the section to of the Ast, in respect of time available to them, to redeem the secure assects.		
SAHID NAGAR BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower(s)	Amount Outstanding as on Specified Date	Demand / Possession Notice Date	Description of the Immovable Property/ies
Borrowers: 1) Mr. Manajeet Samal, S/o- Late Parsuram Samal & 2) Mrs.		ľ.	All the part and parcels of Land and Building standing in the name of Mr. Manajeet Samal & Mrs. Sushree Sangeeta Samal of Flat No.:
Sushree Sangeeta Samal, W/o-Mr.	31.05.2023		110 in First Floor, Block-C, Type-2BHK of the Apartment named and
Manajeet Samal, Both are at Plot			styled as "Kalyani Heights" including car parking space, Tahasil No.
No.: 1749, Mancheswar, Pandara,		26.12.2023	288, Balianta, P.S. No. 7, Balianta, Khurda, Mouza: Bhimpur. Kalyani
Railway Colony, Bhubaneswar, Odisha PIN-751017	thereon from 31.05.2023		Heights Bounded by- North: Road & Plot No. 664, South: Plot No. 671, 666 & 661, Fast: Plot No. 675 & 674, West: Plot No. 662

Date: 29.12.2023, Place: Bhubaneswar

Sd/- Authorised Officer, UCO Bank



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

THE MOTHER



Health Diplomacy

etired 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.

As the first Indian to serve as the regional director of WHO South-East Asia, Dr Khetrapal Singh's recognition exemplifies India's commitment to global health leadership. Her pivotal role in advancing transformative healthcare in Bhutan, leading to the early elimination of measles and rubella, has elevated India's status as a key partner in Bhutan's development.

The timing of the award, coinciding with Bhutan's National Day celebration and the announcement of the Gelephu "mindfulness" megacity project in the presence of a large Indian contingent is being seen as quite significant. Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk made the announcement during elections in Bhutan, signalling the project's continuity despite political changes. King Wangchuk's subsequent visits to India to discuss the project, where Indian infrastructure and private investment will play a vital role, indicate India's commitment to countering China's growing influence in the region.

India's proactive engagement in healthcare and development in Bhutan assumes significance, and its involvement in the country's ambitious projects symbolises a strategic response to reinforce India's regional leadership

Delay in appointments raises alarm

As Central paramilitary forces and Central police organisations grapple with several vacant Director General (DG) level posts, the impend-

ing retirement of Mohammad Tai Hasan adds to the ongoing leadership vacuum. Hasan is set to retire at the end of this month as DG of Fire Services, Civil Defence and Home Guard.



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. Compounding this issue is the prolonged vacancy in the key position of DG (Investigation) at the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), since August, following Manoj Yadava's transfer to the Railway Protection Force (RPF).

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. The retirement of A Seema Rajan in February 2023 led to the elevation of the then Inspector General Amit Gard as the head of the institution in the rank of ADG

Recent security lapses in Parliament have heightened the awareness of senior officials across services and batches regarding crucial vacancies at the senior level. It may hasten the announcement of new appointments of regular DGs in the CISF, CRPF, Fire Service & Civil Defence, and possibly the NHRC. Watch this space for updates.

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. This position became available after Atul Verma completed his second extended term in November. As head of the independent investigation arm of the CCI, Pattanaik will lead inquiries into several high-profile corporate giants, including Big Tech companies, scrutinising anti-trust and competition-

Meanwhile, in other IRS-related developments, the 2006 batch of IRS officers have seen promotions to the grade of Commissioner of Income Tax (CIT). A total of 58 IRS officers have been promoted, signifying a reshuffling of key positions within the IRS. While the general impression is that this is a routine matter, it is noteworthy that the recommendation of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) for the empanelment of 16 IRS officers has been shrouded in secrecy, with the names placed in "sealed covers'

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. It will be interesting to observe the impact of these changes on the dynamics of tax administration and regulatory oversight in the country.

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.

The first principle is that you must not fool yourself and you are the

Gratitude is a duty which ought to be paid, but which none have a

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
- **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. In doing so, they skipped December 30 and moved directly from December 29 to December 31. 119 years ago, Samoa had made a similar shift, eastwards of the dateline, to synchronise its time with the United States. Today, Samoa follows West Samoa Time, which is 13 hours ahead of UTC.

'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. Sandy approached and asked if she was

The girl said she was. A little while later,

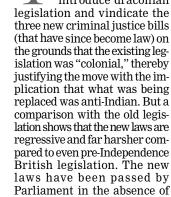


the woman suspiciously. Feeling she was making progress. Sandy then asked, "Why are you standing here

all alone? "Because," the little girl said with great exasperation, "I'm the goalie!"

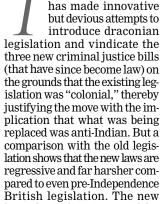
FOCUS NATION

MISLEADING PEOPLE



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**



140 MPs from Opposition, who

The Central government

have been suspended. 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. In fact, a study of how criminal law protection deteriorated over time from the British period to modern India would show that lawmaking today in India has taken a sharp turn towards very repressive frameworks designed to crush already existing freedoms. The three newly enacted statutes are a case in point.

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. It is to destroy what is good in the past and confuse the present.

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 nonviolent dissent. Under British



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. Insurrectionary violence against the State coupled with words of incitement were necessary to bring home the charge. Despite this decision hundreds of prosecutions of journalists, students, activists and others continued. This is why, a year ago, the SC stayed all prosecutions for sedition.

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. Freedom of speech and expression is a very powerful protection given in Article 19(1)(a). In the 1989 judgement in S. Rangarajan vs. Jagjivan Ram involving "Ore Oru Gramathile," a film banned for criticising caste-based reservations, the SC noted that "freedom of expression cannot be suppressed on account of threat of demonstration and procession or threats of violence." The bench wrote in the judgement that "The

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." Therefore, the most draconian part of the new laws

is stifling of speech and dissent. 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. Now the government proposes to introduce an indigenous law extending police custody to 90 days. No other country in the world has such a terrifying provision.

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

every 48 hours and a medical record prepared. The memo of arrest and the medical record were to be sent along with the FIR to the magistrate within 24 hours of the arrest. The court guidelines were to be displayed in every police station. These guidelines are not to be found in the new laws. The new laws are there fore torture-enabling legislation.

To control the tendency of the police to not accept complaints from the public and to refuse to register FIRs in respect of serious offences particularly against powerful people, the SC in a fivejudge bench decision in Lalita Kumari vs UP govt of 2013 made the registration of FIR mandatory. The court said the FIR must be registered immediately and rejected the excuse that the FIR was not registered because the police were conducting a preliminary inquiry. In the new law, the government has, contrary to the SC decision, made the conducting of a preliminary inquiry the normal rule.

Finally, the provision in the UAPA regarding terrorism has been transplanted into general criminal law. One wonders why the duplication. The reason is not hard to find. The terrorism law universally condemned as draconian had two safeguards which curtailed the powers of the Investigating Officer. First, the IO after collecting evidence had to get a sanction from the government and could not proceed with prosecution in the absence thereof. Secondly, an independent expert was appointed as an 'Authority' under the Act, to assess the evidence gathered and make a report as to whether the prosecution for terrorism should proceed. Unless these two safeguards were implemented fully, the trial could not proceed. Both these safeguards do not exist in the new statutes drafted. As a result, there is now a severe statute in place, without the two safeguards, which makes the new law doubly draconian.

The writer is a senior advocate in the Supreme Human Rights Law Network.

Court and founder of the **©THE BILLION PRESS**

SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

AI age requires inequality insurance



Ian Ayres & Aaron Edlin

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

uropean Union lawmakers recently reached a provi-✓ sional 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. But this regulation does not address one of the greatest disasters AI may bring – the prospect of mass unemployment and sharply increased income inequality. Regulation cannot eliminate these risks without precluding the world from enjoying AI's potential benefits, namely dramatic increases in productivity and enormous wealth creation. That is why policymakers must also enact policies to compensate citizens if these disasters occur.

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. Those who make and own the inventions could amass immense wealth, much of which will come from economizing on labour costs.

Policymakers 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. Other economists, such as the Nobel laureate Edmund Phelps, have instead suggested subsidising wages by expanding the negative income tax for low-income families or by adjusting corporate tax deductions. Either way, these plans require funding, and building inequality insurance into the tax system could be a long-term adjustment.

Even though our proposal does not cap the amount of money people can earn or save, we are under no illusions that establishing inequality insurance will be politically easy. But too much is at stake not to try. As US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis put it, we can have democracy or great wealth concentrated in the hands of the few. but not both.

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. Once the insurance kicks in, the legislation could eventually lower taxes for most workers

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

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

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST (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,

etters

to: edit@orissapost.com rissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

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. In fact, it is only when this occurs that one can breathe a sigh of relief. These ex-Navy officers were apprehended in August of last year. They have been imprisoned since then. They were all sentenced to death a few months ago. That decision astounded both the Indian administration and the Indian public. The verdict did not specify what charges the former Navy officers were sentenced on. According to numerous sources, they were sentenced to death for espionage. It is still unclear why the former naval officers stationed in Qatar were arrested and condemned to death. It is against the norms of justice to impose punishment without first determining the allegations, but this is what occurs in countries such as Qatar. The good news is that the Indian government has always supported the former Navy officers. Apart from providing all legal support to its residents in danger, the MEA was also guaranteeing their families that no stone would be left unturned in returning them home as quickly as possible. India's international stature is allowing it to become more successful in helping its citizens who are in trouble abroad, both knowingly and unknowingly.

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 66day 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. In the first yatra edition. Rahul walked over 4.500 km from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, covering 12 states and two Union Territories. However, one wonders whether Yatra 2.0 will influence Congress' prospects in the Lok Sabha elections.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

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



clear. In 2009. Mr Modi was sold to the Indian electorate as the avatar of economic 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

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





infrastructure but also creating more institutions to meet the requirement of medical professionals

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA UNION **HEALTH MINISTER**

SHORT **TAKES**

9-year-old girl found dead

Bangalore: A 9-year-old girl was found dead under mysterious circumstances in the swimming pool of an apartment complex off Varthur-Gunjur road in Bangalore's tech corridor, police said Friday. The victim has been identified as Manasa. She, along with her family, lived in the same apartment complex, they said. Residents of the apartment complex have claimed that the girl accidentally fell into the swimming pool after coming into contact with a live wire dangling from a light pole near the pool. However, whether the exact cause of death is drowning or electrocution can be ascertained only thro post-mortem examination, police said, adding that they're awaiting the report.

162 cases of JN.1 detected

New Delhi: A total of 162 cases of COVID-19 subvariant JN.1 have been detected in the country, with Kerala reporting the highest number of 83, followed by Gujarat 34, according to the INSACOG's data updated Friday. Several states have been reporting an uptick in the number of Covid cases over the last few weeks and nine states and Union territories have so far detected the presence of the JN.1 sub-variant of the virus. These states are -- Kerala (83), Gujarat (34), Goa (18), Karnataka (eight), Maharashtra (seven), Rajasthan (five), Tamil Nadu (four), Telangana (two) and Delhi (one), according to the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG).

Ayodhya set for PM's visit

Ayodhya: Ayodhya is all geared up for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit December 30, with the city being decked up with flowers, murals and thematic ornamental columns amid heavy security deployment in the temple town. Divisional Commissioner of Ayodhya, Gaurav Dayal said preparations are in full swing for the visit and despite dense fog in the city in the last two days, all arrangements are on course. Modi will visit the town Saturday to inaugurate the redeveloped Ayodhya railway station and a new airport. He will also address a public rally near the airport.

Blast near embassy: Cops find 'crucial proof' Won't implement UGC's

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

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-rick-

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 occurred in the area between the boundary walls of the house on plot number 4 -- Nanda's House - and the Central Hindi Training Institute on plot number 2A on Prithviraj Road.

The NSG has a dedicated forensic lab that is trying to find out the components and chemicals used in the blast. "It may take a few more days to submit the final report," a source said.

Police sources said they have recorded statements from a dozen people who claimed to have heard the loud noise of the blast. The statements reveal that the witnesses spotted a vehicle which broke down near the blast location.

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,"

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

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 to address, sources said.

tle but accused the BJP of "misleading" people and not delivering on its promises, including providing employment.

INDIA bloc parties and all organisational matters.

ruling party at the Centre.



underlines the troubles besetting the party, which is feeling ignored within the INDIA bloc and battling intra-party differences, issues he is best suited The Bihar Chief Minister was characteristically sober in his re-

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

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



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

Govt hikes interest rates on Sukanya Samriddhi scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: The government Friday raised the interest rates on Sukanya Samriddhi 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.

istry circular, the deposit under Sukanya Samriddhi 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.

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.

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 slokas till date.



"Recently one of my team

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 claimedto be from Sloka 44 of Sanyas Yoga

DENSE FOG ENVELOPES NORTH INDIA

According to a finance min-

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

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



minus 3.3 degrees Celsius. Visibility in Srinagar city and its adjoining areas was below 50

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

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 $1.2\,\mathrm{degrees}$ 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

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 tempera-

ture 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.

members posted a sloka 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

from the 18th chapter of Gita.



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



 $Flowers \ in \ bloom \ at \ Sabarmati \ river front, \ a \ day \ before \ the \ commencement \ of \ the \ 17-day-long \ flower \ show \ in \ Ahmedabad$



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

PTI/REUTERS PHOTOS

international



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 contests 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





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 ADELE KHODR UNICEF REGIONAL DIRECTOR

THE MIDDLE FAST AND NORTH AFRICA









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 Iragi Embassy. Turkev'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.



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 Shahedtype 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

China appoints

Dong Jun as new

defence minister

Beijing, Dec 29: China Friday

named naval commander

General Dong Jun as the new

defence minister, two months

after the summary dismissal of

General Li Shangfu without any

National People's Congress

(NPC), had confirmed Li's ouster

Dong, the commander of the

People's Liberation Army Navy

(PLAN), was appointed as

Defence Minister by the NPC

Standing Committee, official

media here reported. Dong,

whose age is not known, has

served in all major naval divi-

sions in the PLAN. Before be-

coming the navy's top com-

mander in 2021, he served in the

Northern Sea Fleet, now a reg-

ular player in joint drills with the

Russian Navy, the Eastern Sea

Fleet, which focuses on potential

conflicts with Japan, as well as

the Southern Command Theatre,

which oversees the South China

Sea, the Hong Kong-based South

China Morning Post reported.

China's top legislature, the

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

explanation.

in October



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 (620mile) 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

criminal law

Jinping exhorted people to maintain

amended its criminal law to punish

those giving bribes to officials as

part of its anti-corruption drive. An

Committee of the National People's

legislature. The amended law, which

intensified the fight against bribe-

givers, stating that those offering

people, or parties involved in major

national projects should be harshly

punished. People who give bribes to

departments, or bribe in fields such

as environment, finance, safety

production, drug and food, social

or healthcare, also need to face

On December 4, President Xi

insurance, rescue relief, education,

severe punishment, the law added.

warned senior ruling Communist

to keep them away from corruption.

Party officials to maintain personal

integrity, set strict rules for relatives

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

by flooding and landslides in Congo in the past week alone. Officials said

announced Friday. That brings to more than 60 the number of deaths caused

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

affected other parts of the country Friday, including the capital, Kinshasa,

those affected and evacuating residents from the area. Flooding also

on the banks of the Congo River, and parts of Kasai province.

bribes repeatedly, to multiple

staff members of supervisory,

administrative, or judicial

amendment to the Criminal Law

was passed by the Standing

Congress (NPC), China's top

will take effect March 1, has

Beijing: Days after President Xi

personal integrity, China Friday

(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

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 ex-

plosions," he wrote on X. In Boyarka, near the capital, Kyiv, the debris of a shotdown 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

Moscow: A Russian poet was

Thursday for reciting verses

tough punishment that comes

during a relentless Kremlin

crackdown on dissent.

charges of making calls

and inciting hatred, which

war poems during a street

performance in downtown

Moscow in September 2022.

in the event and recited

Kamardin's verses, was

a mobilization of 3,00,000

reservists amid Moscow's

widely unpopular move

prompted hundreds of

Yegor Shtovba, who participated

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

military setbacks in Ukraine. The

thousands to flee Russia to avoid

being recruited into the military.

given a 7-year prison sentence

against Russia's war in Ukraine, a

Moscow's Tverskoi District Court

convicted Artyom Kamardin on

undermining national security

related to him reading his anti-

■ Ukraine says Russia fired 122

- Attack is one of war's biggest missile strikes
- Kyiv says West must respond with robust assistance
- No comment from Russia

idential building, according to the regional head, Oleh Kiper. Two people were killed and 15. including two children, were injured, he said.

of Lviv, Andrii Sadovyi, said one person was killed there, with three schools and a kindergarten damaged in a drone attack. Local emergency services said 30 people were injured.

The mayor of the western city

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.

Iran executes **GLOBAL SNIPPETS** four for helping China amends **Russian poet gets** 7-year prison term 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.

Maine's primary ballot

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,



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.

Institute Work Department Indian Institute of Technology, Patna

At:- Bihta, District Patna-801106, Bihar

Website:- www.iitp.ac.in Email:- iwd_head@iitp.ac.in Eol No. IITP/IWD/Eol/01/2023

IIT Patna invites Expression of Interest (EoI) 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 EoI can be downloaded from www.iitp.ac.in and from www.eprocure.gov.in. The last date of submission of online EoI is 17.01.2024 upto 3.00 P.M. Sd./- Registrar CBC 21366/12/0008/2324

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

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

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Angul OIPR-25096/11/0023/2324



NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL. RAMBHA

OFFICE OF THE

Rambha N.A.C., Ganjam, Odisha, 761028 Tel: 06810-278336, E-mail: rambhanac123@gmail.com

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 imilar projects of delivering end-to-end solution including Designing Consulting, Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Electronics and AMC for "Installation ommissioning and successful End-to-end Implementation of New I Enabled Day Night Illuminated LED Acrylic Digital Graphics Entry/Exit of 'Notified Area Council, RAMBHA." The Bidder should be an Engineering rganization and should have accredited to ISO 9001-2015, updated PAN GST clearance and credentials of execution of complete end-to-end project as turnkey. The details of the design and the technical specification along with he 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 ceived 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. 6,000/- (Non-refundable owards the bid cost in shape of cash /Demand Draft in any nationalized bank favour of Executive Officer, NAC Rambha payble at Rambha and depos 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 quotation ithout assigning any reason thereof. IPR-13114/11/0013/2324 Sd./- Executive Officer, NAC, Rambha

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

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 (sayoury) 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



Vegetables aren't particularly high energy but they are jampacked with dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals, and healthpromoting 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

and predators.

The very things that make plant foods bitter, are the things that make them good for us. Unfortunately, bitter taste

evolved to protect us from poisons, and possibly from over-eating one single plant food. So in a way, plant foods can taste like For some of us, this bitter

sensing is particularly acute,

and for others it isn't so bad.

ent 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

This is partly due to our genes.

Humans have at least 25 differ-

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 posions.

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 \bar{l} ike cakes, biscuits, chips and desserts, not by trying to avoid them with your vegetables.

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

	UCIL/TMPL/EOI/PERS/001		
EOI No.	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): Should be enclosed with the EOI	Rs.2,68,570.00		
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	https://www.ucil.gov.in		
	CBC 48134/12/0055/232		

business



Already I think global oil prices are coming down. We are continuing our purchase with Russia, and that will go on

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

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

Mumbai. Dec 29: Growth of

bank credit to industry decel-

erated to 6.1 per cent in

November as against 13 per cent

recorded in the same month

last year, according to data re-

leased by the Reserve Bank of

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

India (RBI) Friday.



transformed nation of savers to and more people parking their surplus fund in mutual fund and equity

UDAY KOTAK FORMER MD.

Avoid the pitfalls of highrisk 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 ASHISHKUMAR CHAUHAN | CHIEF. NSE





industries such as cement, steel, and consumer durables



AJIT VELONIE | SENIOR DIRECTOR,

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 vear under the productionlinked incentive scheme for pharmaceuticals, the government said Friday. In its vear-end review, the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) also said the 'Pradhan Mantri Bhartiva Janaushadhi Parivoiana' 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

BoB increases deposit rates

official statement said.

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 and IOAC had entered into a definitive merger agreement



D-St investors' wealth jumps

CLIMBED

3,626.1

POINTS

OR 20%

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

OR

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, 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

In absolute terms, the fiscal

deficit was at ₹9,06,584cr

during the April-Oct

period of 2023-24

New Delhi, Dec 29: The gov-

ernment's fiscal deficit at the

end of November stood at ₹9.06

lakh crore or 50.7 per cent of the

full-vear budget estimate (BE).

according to data released by the

Controller General of Accounts

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.

last vear. the deficit was at 58.9

per cent of the budget estimates

the government is estimated to

be at ₹17.86 lakh crore or 5.9 per

For 2023-24, the fiscal deficit of

In the corresponding period

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

(CGA) Friday.

of 2022-23

cent of the GDP.

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 whispers 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

It took just two-and-a-half years to hit the \$4 trillion land-

The Government of India re-

ceived ₹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 rev-

enue and ₹25,463 crore of non-

Non-debt capital receipts con-

sist of recovery of loans and

miscellaneous capital receipts.

penditure incurred by the cen-

tral government was at ₹26.52

lakh crore (58.9 per cent of cor-

responding BE 2023-24) during

Out of the total expenditure,

₹20.66 lakh crore was on rev-

enue account and ₹5.85 lakh

Continuing the path of fiscal

consolidation, the government

intends to bring the fiscal deficit

below 4.5 per cent of GDP by

crore was on capital account.

As per the CGA data, total ex-

debt capital receipts.

April-November 2023

The Indian market has demonstrated resilience, emerging as one of the

standout performers within the broader emerging markets basket

SUNIL NYATI | MD, SWASTIKA INVESTMART

sation (m-cap) of all listed companies on the BSE touched the \$3 trillion-mark May 24, 2021.

Equity benchmark indices de clined on the last trading day of 2023 as investors preferred profittaking after the recent sharp rally. The 30-share BSE benchmark fell 170.12 points or 0.23

per cent to settle at 72,240.26 Friday. The Nifty declined 47.30 points or 0.22 per cent to settle at 21.731.40.

The BSE Sensex reached its alltime high of 72,484.34 December 28 after hitting a 52-week low of 57,084.91 on March 20, this year.

The BSE bellwether index made monthly gains in eight while it fell in the remaining four during the year. The months of November and December were the most rewarding in terms of returns. The 30-share BSE benchmark jumped 4.87 per cent in November while in December, it rallied 7.83 per cent.

"India's strong macroeconomic fundamentals, marked by robust GDP growth, moderating inflation, and a stable rupee, played a crucial role in this resilience. This, coupled with improving global conditions like softening inflation, central bank pauses on rate hikes and continued earnings growth, led to a market rally across Indian indices," Sampath Reddy, Chief Investment Officer at Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance, said.

A rally in the broader market also added to the overall optimism. The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 13,746.97 points or 47.52 per cent this year while the midcap index climbed 11,524.72 points or 45.52 per cent.

"Midcap and smallcap stocks dominated the headlines, fueled by robust macroeconomic fundamentals and ample domestic liquidity. However, the final two months witnessed a dramatic shift, with largecap indices stealing the limelight," Nyati said.

Also, a number of mainboard Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) and listing of shares have propelled the rally in the equity markets.

Reliance Industries is the country's most valued firm with a market valuation of ₹17,48,827.92 crore, followed by Tata Consultancy Services (Rs 13,88,591.70 crore), HDFC Bank (Rs 12,97,972.04 crore), ICICI Bank (Rs 6,98,965.47 crore) and Infosys (Rs 6.40.351.80 crore) in the top-five order.

Investors became richer by more than ₹16.38 lakh crore in 2022. The BSE barometer had ended 2022 with an annual gain of 4.44 per cent or 2,586.92 points.

Among major industries, yearon-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,

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.

while that to all engineering,

chemicals & chemical products.

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 vear 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.



Investmart Ltd said.

mark after the market capitali-

Fiscal deficit exceeds

50.7% of full-year BE

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

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

Net worth of richest persons up \$1.5 trillion

in the world with net worth of \$179 billion, followed by Bezos (\$178 billion), Microsoft cofounder Bill Gates (\$141 billion). ex-Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer (\$131 billion), and Zuckerberg (\$130 billion). According to the Index, the collective net worth of the 500 richest persons increased by \$1.5 trillion in 2023, entirely recovering from the \$1.4 trillion lost the previous year.

The wealth of tech billionaires increased by 48 per cent, or \$658 billion, because to the enormous buzz around artificial intelligence.

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 (\$140.68 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 antimonopoly 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 pro-

duction 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

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



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

Coal and refinery product output registered a double-digit 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 Production (IIP).

Natural gas output rose by 7.6 per cent while refinery products output jumped 12.4 per cent during the month under review against (-) 0.7 per cent and (-) 9.3 per cent in November 2022, respectively.

"Cement production decreased by 3.6 per cent in November 2023 over November 2022. Crude Oil production decreased by 0.4 per cent in November 2023 over November 2022," the commerce and industry ministry said.

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 ending 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.

HFIs' 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



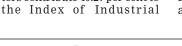
Economic Review 2023-24 released by the Finance Ministry

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 FY'24, 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 consumptionand investment have driven up the growth rate in H1.

Zoomcar said in a statement. October 13, 2022.









OrissaPOST

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 the manner in which the hosts went down would create some concerns in the dressing room.

After Sneh 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 dropped and plenty of 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 oneoff 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, how-

ever, 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 nearperfect 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

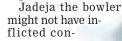
Centurion, Dec 29: Amid the doom and gloom following a humiliating defeat, the Indian cricket team has some good news as senior all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja could be available for the second Test against South Africa in Cape Town, starting January 3.

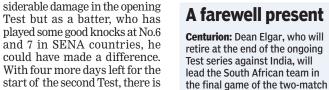
Jadeja missed the opening Test after complaining of "upper back spasm" during the morning of the first day at the Supersport Park. However, on the third day of the first Test, those present at the ground saw Jadeja being a part of the warmup session before the proceedings started in the middle.

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-ip. 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 bowl-





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.

every chance that he will play the

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

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.

series in place of injured Temba

Bavuma. Bavuma has been ruled

out of the final Test of the series

conclusion of the first game here

replace Bavuma in the squad for

the final Test to be played in the

Elgar is no stranger to captaincy,

Thursday. Zubayr Hamza will

at Cape Town from January 3.

having led the Proteas in the

past, including the last time

in 2021-22, the opener led by

India visited South Africa for a

Test series. After going 0-1 down

against India, Cricket South Africa (CSA) said after the



Cummins Pats Australia past Pak in second Test



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

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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 Aamir 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

Australia was out for 262 in its second innings after losing 4/75the 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 Salman 50, Babar Azam 41; Pat Cummins 5/49, Mitchell Starc 4/55) by 79

Odisha FC breeze past Jamshedpur

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 29: Odisha FC pulled off a dominant 4-1 win over Jamshedpur FC in a high-octane, entertaining firsthalf 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 Vanlalruatfela, 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 PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

He first set up one for Isak in the 27th minute, which the youngster tapped in conveniently to bag

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 Rehenesh 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

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.

SHORT TAKES

Location changed

New Delhi: The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) on Friday moved its office out of the residence of its former president and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, after the sports ministry had recently raised serious objections to it. "The WFI will operate from a new address in New Delhi after vacating Brij Bhushan's premises," a source told PTI on condition of anonymity. The new WFI office is located in the Hari Nagar area of New Delhi. The ministry, while suspending the newly-formed WFI panel under president Sanjay Singh December 24, three days after he was elected its head, had cited the office running from Brij Bhushan's residence as one of the reasons for taking the stringent action.

Lamichhane convicted

Kathmandu: Nepal's former national cricket team captain Sandeep Lamichhane was Friday convicted by a court of raping a minor. In January, Nepal court released Lamichhane who was arrested after a 17-year-old girl alleged that he raped her in a hotel room in Kathmandu in August last year. The Kathmandu District Court on Friday convicted Lamichhane of rape. The next hearing will determine the jail term for the senior member of the national team, the report said. Lamichhne is currently out on bail.

Maha eves bag gold at Gymnastics Nat'ls



PNN & AGENCIES

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-

winning the bronze. Maharashtra posted an allaround 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

eves, who secured silver. West

Bengal completed the podium

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

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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 \rightarrow 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

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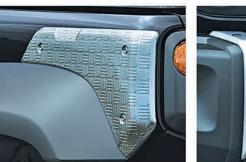
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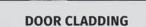
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DOOR VISOR



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