

Spilling beans

Actor Janhvi Kapoor makes a revelation about her relationship status on the latest episode of Koffee With Karan

LEISURE | P2 **VOLUME 13, ISSUE 272 | www.orissapost.com**



Israel shifts soldiers

Israel shifts thousands of soldiers out of the Gaza Strip to concentrate on other fronts

INTERNATIONAL | P10

BHUBANESWAR | TUESDAY JANUARY 2 |



Stock markets kick off the New Year on a flat note with benchmarks closing with modest gains in a highly volatile trading session

BUSINESS | P11



Final ODI today

Harmanpreet Kaur-led India look for consolation win to salvage pride when they face Australia in the final ODI

SPORTS | P12

ISRO ventures into black hole territory

sources in

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sriharikota, Jan 1: Off to a flying start, ISRO ushered in 2024 with the successful launch Monday of its first X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite that would offer insights into black holes in the space, mak-**Satellite** ing the country only to offer insight into polarisation of the second to conduct

celestial objects. intense X-rav Among the payloads that piggybacked the space agency's ever reliable Polar Satellite Launch

experiment into such

Vehicle (PSLV) was one made by women, prompting ISRO to call it an inspiration for the entire nation. The PSLV-C58 rocket, in its 60th mission, carried the primary payload 'XPoSat' and deployed it in an intended 650km low earth orbit. Later, scientists performed the orbit lowering maneuver by reducing the altitude to 350km for conducting the POEM experiment.

A visibly happy ISRO chairman S Somanath congratulated the team for its feat. "Happy new

year to all of you," Somanath said from the Mission Control Centre. "So on 1 January 2024, yet another successful mission of PSLV has been accomplished. PSLV-C58 has placed the primary satellite 'XPoSat' in the

desired orbit," he added. The main X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat) is intended to investigate the polarisation of intense X-ray sources in space. It is the first dedicated scientific satellite from

ISRO stable to carry out such research.

"Let me also announce the orbit that has been accomplished which is available through various routes - it shows excellent orbit and the deviations from the targeted orbit is hardly 3km in circular orbit of 650km and inclination is 001 degree which is one of the very excellent orbital conditions," Somanath said. "And vet another announcement is that the solar panel of the satellite has been deployed successfully," he added.



PLETHORA OF COLOURS: A large number of visitors turned up Monday at the Odisha State Museum in Bhubaneswar to celebrate the first day of 2024

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Yes, the same party is ruling in our state too, but here they are giving cooking gas for half the price

MARKET WATCH **INDEX VARIATION** SENSEX **72271.94** 👚 31.68 21741.90 DOLLAR 83.29 **1** ₹0.04 ₹0.01 EURO 92.13 GOLD ₹63,322 SILVER **₹74,435 1** ₹45

WEATHER

BBSR CTC 26.6°C 27.2°C **Max Temp** 15.0°(**Min Temp Humidity**

DRY WEATHER **VERY LIKELY**



CM lays Metro stone

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone Monday for the ₹6,225 crore Bhubaneswar Metro Rail project.

Before laying the foundation stone at Ratagada Lenka Sahi near Trishulia, the CM held a roadshow on the 26km route of the proposed Metro project. People stood on both sides of the road and different groups performed traditional folk dances and music to welcome Patnaik during the roadshow.

"Apan Mane Khusi Ta (Are you happy)," Patnaik asked the people gathered on the occasion. Today (January 1, 2024) will remain in the history of Odisha's development. As promised earlier, we are laying the foundation stone of the Metro Rail project," Patnaik stated.

Patnaik pointed out that this is the state government's single largest investment made in any infrastructure project in Odisha's history. He added that the Metro is also the flagship project of Odisha under the 5T (transformation) initiative.

Patnaik said the project will have 20 stations covering 26km from Bhubaneswar airport to Trishulia. The chief minister said that he has asked for the preparation of a master plan for the extension of Metro Rail to Khurda, Puri and Cuttack.

The project will be completed in four years and will provide an easy transport facility from the



- Total investment for 1st phase over ₹6K crore
- Halts at 20 stations from
- BPIA to Trishulia Metro project to be

BPIA to Cuttack via Trishulia and strengthen urban mobility in the state.

completed in 4 years

As per the DPR (detailed project report), the project will connect BPIA with Trishulia Square in the first phase. The 20 stations where the train will stop are BPIA, Capital Hospital, Sishu Bhawan, Bapuji Nagar, Bhubaneswar Railway Station, Ram Mandir Square, Vani Vihar, Acharya Vihar Square, Jaydev Vihar Square, Xavier Square,

Damana Square, Patia Square, KIIT Square, Nandan Vihar, Raghunathpur, Nanadankanan Zoological Park, Phulapokhari and Trishulia Square.

The MoU for the Bhubaneswar Metro Rail Corporation has been signed with Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) for the project. The rail tracks and stations will be on elevated viaducts, an official release said, DMRC will execute the project as a turnkey consultant and charge a fee of ₹326.56 crore.

On the occasion of the Utkal Divas, April 1, 2023, Patnaik had announced the Metro Rail project. The state Cabinet approved the phase-I of the project at a cost of ₹6,255 crore in November 2023.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Jan 1: An undertrial prisoner died allegedly by suicide inside the Baripada Circle Jail in Mayurbhanj district Sunday evening, police informed, Monday. The deceased, Rabi Singh (21), was arrested December 20 on charges of illicit liquor trading. It is not clear as to whether he had been produced in court.

Police said that the deceased was found hanging from a tree at a desolate place inside the prison compound. He had allegedly hanged himself with a towel. Rabi was immediately rushed to the PRM Medical College and Hospital here where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Meanwhile, Rabi's brother lodged a complaint at Bhanjapur police station Monday, alleging that he was killed. The family members of the deceased also staged a demonstration in front of the prison, demanding a thorough probe into Rabi's death. They could not believe that after being lodged in jail for 10 days Rabi could die by suicide.

Prisoner dies by suicide

After police provided ₹10,000 to the family of the deceased to carry out the last rites and assured them that a thorough investigation will be done to ascertain the cause behind Rabi's death, the protestors called off their agitation. "We have still not been able to conduct Rabi's post-mortem because of the protests," a senior police official informed.

Later in the day some of the family members of Rabi alleged that Rabi had been tortured mercilessly by the police leading to his death. "He was in jail for 10 days and had no apparent problems. He has not died by suicide, he has been murdered,' said the deceased's brother. However, other sources indicated that since his arrest, Rabi had been unusually quiet and did not talk much with

other inmates. Meanwhile Bhanjapur police have registered a case of unnatural death in this connection (No 1/2024) and initiated a probe, which is underway. They are waiting for the post-mortem report which is expected by Tuesday.

BJD takes back

Damodar Rout

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Biju

Janata Dal president and Odisha

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik

revoked Monday the expulsion

order of veteran leader and for-

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dress code a must at Srimandir

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, Jan 1: The administration of Shree Jagannath Temple (SJTA) made dress code mandatory Monday for devotees wishing to enter the 12th century shrine. The SJTA

also put a complete ban on chewing gutkha and paan in the shrine premises and use of plastic 🐷 and polythene from the New Year's Day of 2024.

An SJTA official said devotees will be required to wear 'decent clothes' to enter the shrine. Devotees wearing half pants, shorts, torn jeans, skirts and sleeveless dresses will not be allowed to enter the temple.

With the rule coming into effect male devotees coming to the temple on the first day of 2024 were seen wearing dhoti and towels and women were clad in either sarees or sal-

war kameez as they thronged to have a darshan of the deity. The SJTA had earlier

issued an order to the effect and the police were asked to enforce the restric-

tions. The official said the ban on gutkha and paan in the temple premises was being implemented to maintain its sanctity. Those who violate the restriction are being fined, he added.

mer minister Damodar Rout. "The expulsion order of Damodar Rout is hereby revoked with immediate effect," an office order signed by Patnaik said. Incidentally Rout is a seventime MLA. Rout was expelled from the

regional outfit September 12, 2018, after being accused of antiparty activities. He was denied a party ticket and his son Sambit Routray contested from Paradip and won the seat in 2019.

'My father is seriously ill and hospitalised. This expulsion withdrawal order will help him recover," Sambit told reporters here. Sambit on behalf of his father and family thanked the chief minister for revoking the expulsion order on New Year's Day. "My father had quit the BJP after some time and wanted to return to his parent party," Sambit said.

Rout was a minister in the Naveen Patnaik Cabinet for four terms from 2000 to 2018. He became MLA for the first time in 1977. The decision to bring back the veteran leader assumes significance in the run up to the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the state due this year. Rout is consideredan influential politician in Jagatsinghpur district.

SHORT TAKES

Gunmen kill 4 in Manipur's Thoubal

Imphal: Four persons were allegedly shot dead and five others injured in Manipur's Thoubal district Monday evening, officials said. Gunmen, who are yet to be identified, arrived in camouflage dresses in the Lilong Chingjao area, and opened fire targeting locals, they said. Three people died on the spot. Following the fresh violence, curfew was reimposed in Thoubal, Imphal East and Imphal West Kakching and Bishnupur districts, officials informed. In a video message, Chief Minister N Biren Singh condemned the violence, and appealed to the people, particularly the residents of Lilong, for maintaining peace. "The criminals will be caught and punished," Singh said.

Cops shunted for assaulting artiste

Bhadrak: Four police personnel, including an assistant sub-inspector have been attached to the district police headquarters for allegedly assaulting a stage artiste on the night of December 30, a senior official said Monday here. Bhadrak Additional SP, Bamdev Singh informed that two separate cases have been registered in connection with the incident. He added that the victim Gopinath Nayek is undergoing treatment at the district headquarters hospital here. Gopinath's wife had lodged a complaint Sunday alleging that the four cops had brutally thrashed her husband resulting in injuries on the face, chest and back. She said that Gopinath was dragged out of his car by the police and then beaten up.

AFTER TRAIN ENGINE AND A BRIDGE, NOW A POND HAS BEEN 'STOLEN' IN DARBHANGA DISTRICT

Bihar's bizarre theft continues unabated

AGENCIES

Patna, Jan 1: Bihar has been in the news lately for its string of bizarre thefts. A train engine and a bridge were stolen in 2022. The trend seems to be continuing with an entire pond being stolen in the state's Darbhanga district. Officials and locals are baffled so much that they have no clue as to how a pond has been stolen.

Locals woke up Monday morning in the New Year to find a hut on the land where a pond existed Sunday. It created a flutter among them and they promptly informed the police. However, by the time the cops arrived to investigate the matter, the land mafia had



fled the spot. Locals informed that the members of the land mafia group had filled up the pond overnight and built a hut on it, thereby erasing the very existence of the water body.

NDTV has quoted local residents of Darbhanga town who have stated that the pond was publicly-owned and maintained for fishing and other activities. They added that because of the rising land prices, miscreants had hatched plans to fill up the pond and sell it.

Locals said that earlier also the mafia had attempted to 'steal' the pond by filling it up. However,

of the gang had withdrawn. Residents of the area said that they had no inkling that the pond could be filled up overnight. The entire levelling of the pond was done in the dark, locals alleged. "People are saying the pond

after a complaint was lodged

with the local police, the members

was filled with soil overnight. However, it couldn't have happened. The work was done at night over 10-15 days. The major part of levelling could have happened in a day, but a covert operation was being conducted. Officials had visited the spot earlier and even seized some items,' SDPO Amit Kumar was quoted as saying by a TV channel.



eisure



JACKMAN GOT TOLD OFF FOR GOING

While taking a walk December 25 in New York, Australian actor Hugh Jackman got told off by security for going too close to the landmark Christmas tree at New

ZARA LARSSON'S RESOLUTION FOR 2024 IS TO GET MORE SLEEP

Swedish Pop singer Zara Larsson has pledged to adhere to more boring habits in 2024. Asked if she will be making any New Year resolution, she told BANG Showbiz: "Try to get to sleep on time. Try to have a nice little routine!"





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Your attractive personality is always at the disposal of others, and today you could benefit immensely through it. However, there is room for improvement and you could be drawn towards charity work. Ganesha says you will surely feel satisfied by helping the needy

TAURUS

This day you will tend to be too bossy, too harsh on your subordinates or employees and end up making them miserable as well as hostile. Their insubordination could corrode the respect you get and, in addition, make things unworkable. This acrimony and ill will is sure to spread and foul up your larger professional connections and interests

You will want some change in your daily routine today. You are likely to be fed up of the rut of daily life and are looking for a refreshing change. You need to apply your inherent creativity to your work to get more satisfact tion out of it and to ease the boredom of vour daily schedule, says Ganesha

CANCER Don't meddle in others' affairs today, suggests Ganesha. For they will not take it kindly. Adopt the middle path. Ganesha feels that you must keep your brayado and boldness in check.

Your pride and self-confidence will help you to excel in whatever task it is that you take up today. Other people will also praise you. You will buy new clothes and other possessions that you have been desiring since a long time, says Ganesha

Today will be a pleasant day

full of surprises and unforeseen changes. You may go for a long drive with your beloved. The trip will be very interesting and will calm your frayed nerves. All in all. Ganesha says, it is an optimistic and happy day, so go ahead and get the best out of i

Ganesha says you will have a good time with your family members and will have fun with them. You will also be able to organize a picnic or a party for your family members and enjoy the day with them. Ganesha says you will go out for a trip to a religious place or temple, which will enhance your mind and ideas.

SCORPIO

Your sixth sense would work wonders today, as per to what Ganesha has to say. Trust your instincts and work accordingly Work enthusiastically and dedicatedly. When the pressure of work mounts on you, take a break and unwind with the help of soft music.

SAGITTARIUS

It's time for some entertain ment, Movies, picnics and dining out is on your mind. Invite your beloved and enjoy quality time with each other. Also, you will spend time with you family and friends, and attend a music concert together.

CAPRICORN

Actions speak louder than words. Your sincere efforts and honest intentions wil motivate others also to put in their best, feels Ganesha. You'll be like a friend, philosopher and guide to them. People will follow you, but it has a darker side to as many will even over take you.

AQUARIUS

You will take the road to spirituality today and give a miss to materialism. You will visit temples, other religious places, and spiritual leaders to find answers for some of your questions. It will, however, take a while for you to distinguish between mysticism and materialism, and understand that you can have the best of both worlds.

PISCES

You will not take matters to heart needlessly today, and will instead calmly evaluate the bitter words of others to see if there is a grain of truth in them somewhere. This is a good practice and one that should be continued. While you won't be in the mood to tolerate any injustice, you will be able to forgive those who have wronged you and will thus be able to refrain from stoking further, the fires of enmity, says Ganesha.



ROMANCE RUMOUR

Janhvi spills beans on Koffee couch

Mumbai: Karan Johar has done it again!

The host of the hit show Koffee With Karan,

got actress Janhvi Kapoor to confirm her

romantic involvement with rumoured

Janhvi made an exciting revelation

on the Koffee couch, which has set

tongues wagging. The actress, who

had fans and the media speculating

about her equation with Shikhar, ac-

cidentally confirmed her romance

while on the show with her younger

The promotional clip, released

pecially

on matters

of the heart.

offer advice about sharing screen space

with Ananya Panday, she jokingly ad-

vised. "Just make sure vou don't end

Janhvi was rumoured to be in a long

relationship with Ishaan Khatter while

they shot their movie Dhadak together.

Later, Ananya was linked to

When prompted to

Monday, features the Mili actress

being asked to name the three people on her speed dial list. Without missing a beat, Janhvi responded,

"Papa, Khushu, and Shikhu...

inadvertently not just reveal

ing that the hunk is in fact her

beau, but also revealing his

While on the hot seat

Janhvi was also asked

to give her sister some

words of advice,

up liking the same guy.'

Ishaan while they were

in the film *Khaali*

Peeli.

pet name - Shikhu.

beau Shikhar Pahariya.

sister Khushi Kapoor.

TOO CLOSE TO A CHRISTMAS TREE

York's Rockefeller Center.

Dua celebrates New Year in Jaipur with royalty

Jaipur: Pop star Dua Lipa had a blast ringing in the New Year 2024 here with her

The singer, who was en joying her time, touring the state as a local and going about completely unrecognised, got the New Year celebrations off to a royal start. The star shared photos from a swanky bash that she attended along with Rajkumari Gauravi Kumari.(inset)

Taking to her social media handle, Dua posted some happy and blurry photos from her night out, partying with Indian

'New Year's Eve in Jaipur," she captioned the photos that saw her raising her glass while posing with the Rajkumari.

While Dua looked fashionable in the

halter dress with a risque neckline, she also shared some goofy photos of herself lying around her safari tent in a bathrobe.

"Anyone else do this after 5 negroni's? Happy 2024!!" she captioned the photos.

The Popstar, who is on vacation with her family in India, Sunday penned a heartwarming note about ending 2023 in the country and also thanked the Indian people for extending their love and hospitality to her and her dear

ones. Dua also shared a series of pictures of herself visiting a temple with her familv, going on a safari, and shaking a leg with folk dancers at a luxury resort.

This is not her first visit to India. She last toured the country in 2019 for a music festival in Mumbai.

Rakul-Jackky to wed

Mumbai: Rakul

Preet Singh and

Jackky Bhagnani might be

the first celebrity couple this

"Rakul and Jackky are getting

elor party. In fact, Rakul is also

in Thailand, enjoying the

reak," adds the source.

The couple made it offi-

cial on Instagram back in

October 2021. Earlier this

year, Jackky Bhagnani

shared a reel featuring the

moments he and Rakul

have spent together

so far, wishing

married on February 22, in Goa. They

are being really hush-hush about it, as

they want to keep the affair very intimate,"

The insider adds, "They are really private

people and want to keep the wedding also pri-

vate." In fact, they are enjoying a break before

getting busy with the wedding festivities. "Jackky

is currently in Bangkok (Thailand) for his bach

says a source.

year to get married.

on her birthday. The reel features glimpses of their vacation diaries, dinner dates, red car pet walks as well as on stage performances.

Jackky also penned a special note for his girlfriend, as he wrote: "On our special day, I want to express my admiration for the one who always leaves me in awe. With you, every day feels like an incredible journey, and there's never a dull mo-

Sangeet Natak Akademi award winner. On the inaugural evening Manana will perform Odia play Pasanda Palabhuta.

the host

rected by Manoj Pattanayak.

director- Debananda Nayak (Soni) by Expressions of Bhubaneswar, April-27 (writer and director -Subash Chandra Pradhan) by Mirror Theatre of Belpahar_ and Trishanku (playwright- Ashis Kumar Sonar, direc-

Several eminent personalities, including danseuse Padma Shri Aruna Mohanty who is also the President of Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi. Odissi dance guru Ratikanta Mohapatra, author Chandrasekhar Nanda, Minister Sarada Nayak and MLA Prafulla Kumar Samal have given their consent to grace the occasion, claimed the organisers

February 22

drama fest from Jan 3 Bhubaneswar: City-based Manana Natya Sanstha, one of the oldest theatre troupes in Odisha, is set to celebrate its 45th Foundation Day by organising a five-day state-level drama festival beginning January 3, according

Manana's state-level

to its President Manoj Pattanayak. "Five prominent theatre troupes, including

> organisation, will present mous contemporary plays of our time during the event at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar," added Pattanayak, a

Written by Sudhansu Nayak, the play is di-Other plays of the event on successive days are: Suna Sujane (playwright-Biswajit Das, director- Debabrata Pattanayak) by Dynamic Platform of Bhubaneswar, Shuka Sari Katha (playwright- Kartika Chandra Rath,

tor- Satya Ranjan Behera) by Shree Cultural Association of Sambalpur.

PEANUTS



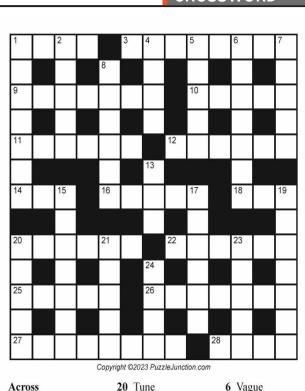
CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY



FUN **CROSSWORD**



20 Tune Across

1 Cheese nibblers

- 3 Branch 9 Neanderthal
- (4,3)10 Covered in dirt
- 11 Codfish 12 Aftermath
- 14 Unit of energy
- 16 Any port in a
- storm
- **18** Airport posting (Abbr.)
- <u>Down</u>
- - 1 Gruesome
 - 2 Blanket 4 Penalty, at times 5 Marsh plant

22 Turkish port

26 Mezzanine

27 Decoration

28 Capri, for one

25 Heiress, perhaps

city

- castles 24 Black, to
 - poets

7 Rendezvous

13 Common vine

15 Sailing vessel

17 Light-footed

20 Chutney fruit

19 Examine

21 Chimera

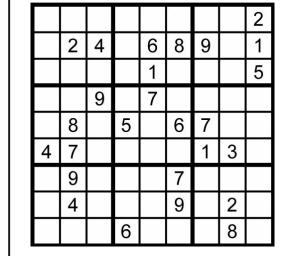
23 Movable

8 Polished

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWOR

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

3 6 2 4

downtown

CULTURAL EVENT

An artiste performs during cultural event 'Maa Pari Kiye Heba' at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Monday



3.5L throng **Puri on NYD**



Puri, Jan 1: About 3.5 lakh people thronged the Pilgrim City on the New Year's Day (NYD) Monday even as the district administration and Shree Temple Administration (SJTA) made elaborate arrangements for smooth darshan of the presiding deities of Srimandir.

The SJTA and police have made elaborate arrangements for smooth darshan. An air-conditioned tensile fabric structure built outside the temple was made functional for devotees from Monday morning.

Facilities such as drinking water and public toilets have been made available at the structure, which has also been equipped with CCTV cameras and public announcement system. Sitting arrangements have also been provided in them.

Inspector general of police (central range) Ashish Kumar Singh said, "Nearly more than double the number of devotees compared to the same day last year have already visited the temple today. The darshan (of deities) began early at 1:40 am and is still going on. The darshan was halted for some time to hold the rituals connected with the deities.

Special arrangements have been made for senior citizens and people with disabilities. After visiting the temple, the devotees are exiting through the north gate, Singh added.

According to SJTA sources,

Special arrangements have been made for senior citizens and the differently-abled. After visiting the temple, the devotees are exiting through the north gate

- Traffic restrictions have been imposed in the town for New Year's Day
- The area between Market Chakka to Singhadwara (main gate) on Badadanda has been declared 'no vehicle zone', while vehicles have been banned on the beachside road from Digabareni to the lighthouse
- Consumption of pan and tobacco products has been banned inside the Lingaraj Temple in Bhubaneswar from Monday

about 3.5 lakh people visited the 12th century shrine till 5pm of

Traffic restrictions have been imposed in the town for NYD. The area between Market Chakka to Singhadwara (main gate) on Badadanda has been declared 'no vehicle zone', while vehicles have been banned on the beachside road from Digabareni to the lighthouse, officials said. Consumption of pan and tobacco products has also been banned inside the Lingaraj Temple in Bhubaneswar from Monday.

Devotees found chewing tobacco or betel leaves are not being allowed to enter the premises of the 11th century Shiva temple. The use of polythene and plastics has also been banned in the temple as decided by the Lingaraj Temple



Govt unveils SOP for picnic, pilgrimage vehicles Man dies in explosion;

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Launch of a standard operating procedure (SOP) for vehicles going on picnics and pilgrimages, and a walkathon were among the host of events that marked the inauguration of state-level Road Safety Week 2024 here, Monday.

Commerce and Transport (C&T) Minister Tukuni Sahu inaugurated the seven-day statelevel Road Safety Week 2024 themed 'Sadak Surakhya, Parivar Rakhya' - at KIIT Deemed to be University here in the morning.

As part of the event, a van was flagged off that will move throughout the district and showcase short films to spread awareness on road safety. Besides, an SOP for vehicles going on picnics and pilgrimages was also unveiled during the event.

'Vehicles need special permit from RTOs for picnics and pilgrimages. Posters featuring testimonials from road mishap victims or their family members, along with accident photos. need to be displayed at major picnic spots. Police personnel shall conduct a thorough inspection of vehicles near picnic spots or pilgrim places in order to identify and prevent transportation of hazardous or objectionable materials like cooking gas, kerosene oil and firecrackers," an official said elaborating on the SOP that would help curb road mishaps.

The inauguration was followed by a walkathon that began at the educational institution and concluded at the driving test centre in Chandrasekharpur



area of the City. People from various walks of life, including school and college students, took part in the walkathon.

According to the C&T minister, road safety is not limited to safety of the individual but is connected to the safety of their family and other road users as well. "It (road safety) extends beyond mere duty and should be a shared responsibility among all road

users," Sahu said. C&T department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee said the state government was leaving no stone unturned to sensitise everyone about the importance of road safety. "It is the responsibility of road users to follow traffic rules as they will ultimately ensure a safer road for everyone," added Padhee.

Transport Commissioner Amitabh Thakur emphasised the importance of road safety in daily lives. He highlighted that the role of students in spreading road safety awareness among peers and family is very impactful.

Additional Transport Commissioner (Road Safety) Lalmohan Sethi, Joint Transport Commissioner (Road Safety) Pradeep Kumar Mohanty and other senior officials were present during the inauguration ceremony.

wite kills selt in Jatnı

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jatni, Jan 1: A day after a man died during treatment following an explosion at Hi-Tech Medical College and Hospital in Bhubaneswar, his wife died by suicide at Nuagaon Gandhinagar under Jatni Municipality, Monday.

The deceased was identified as Soumyashree Jena, 24, daughter of Sadashiv Jena. Soumyashree was found hanging from a ceiling fan at the residence of Sadashiv, who took her to Jatni community health centre where doctors declared her dead. According to sources, Soumyashree didn't respond when her father knocked on the door repeatedly Monday

morning following which Sadashiv had to broke open the door. Jatni police registered a case (01/24) of unnatural death and sent the body to Capital Hospital for post-mortem. A probe is on.

Notably, Soumyashree was staying at his paternal place following the death of her husband Dillip Samantray, who was working as an AC mechanic at Hi-Tech Medical College and Hospital. The explosion took place December 29 when Dillip and four others were engaged in some construction work at the hospital.

Soumyashree and Dillip, a resident of Harirajpur Banga village under Delang police limits, had tied the nuptial knot in 2022.

DC PURE VEG RESTAURAI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Jan 1: Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) marked the beginning of the New Year by inaugurating an exclusive pure vegetarian restaurant at Purusottam Bhakta Nivas in the Holy City. This culinary initiative without use of onion and garlic is aimed at providing a delightful dining experience to pilgrims.

The inauguration ceremony witnessed the presence of OTDC chairman Lenin Mohanty, Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator Ranjan Kumar Das. The occasion was also graced by senior district-level officials, members of the Srimandir Managing Committee, general manager of OTDC Lalatendu Sahoo, divisional manager (HS) Abhijit Sourav Swain and various other OTDC officials.

The vegetarian restaurant located at Purusottam Bhakta Nivas



is not only a culinary delight for pilgrims but also a testament to OTDC's commitment for enhancing the overall experience of visitors in Puri. The menu, meticulously prepared without using onion and garlic, respects the dietary preferences of pilgrims and provides a diverse range of vegetarian options.

Expressing his enthusiasm on the initiative, the OTDC chairman said, "The inauguration of this pure vegetarian restaurant aligns perfectly with our mission to cater to the diverse needs of visitors, particularly pilgrims. It reflects our commitment to ensuring a comfortable and culturally sensitive environment for everyone.'

In addition to the restaurant launch, OTDC also opened a dedicated travel desk at Purusottam Bhakta Nivas. The travel desk aims at providing comprehensive Odisha tour packages for tourists, showcasing the rich cultural, historical and natural treasures that the state has to offer.

Sahoo said, "The introduction of the travel desk is a significant step towards making Odisha's diverse attractions more accessible to tourists. We are committed to offering curated tour packages that showcase the beauty and cultural richness of our state.3

The combined inauguration of the pure vegetarian restaurant and the travel desk exemplifies OTDC's dedication towards enhancing the overall tourism experience in Puri. These initiatives align with the organisation's ongoing efforts to promote Odisha as a prime tourist destination.



GST collection up 15% in April-Dec

GST COLLECTION FOR

2022-23, THE POST SETTLEMENT

enal' growth rate of 70.07 per

cent in state GST revenue, with

a collection of Rs 2,578.05 crore

during December 2023 as against

Rs 1,515.88 crore in the last month

The state generated 22.49 lakh



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Jan 1: Odisha has recorded 15 per cent year-onyear growth in goods and services tax (GST) collection during April-December period of financial year (FY) 2023-24 in contrast to the same period last year at pre-settlement.

The pre-settlement State GST collection for April-December period stood at Rs 11,903 crore which is 15 per cent higher than Rs 10,313 crore collected April-December period of the previous fiscal. Likewise, the post-settlement SGST stood at Rs 18,093 crore for the April-December period, a growth of 29 per cent. In FY 2022-23, the post settlement SGST was Rs 14,046 crore for the same period.

Odisha recorded a 'phenom-

waybills in December compared to 19.66 lakh waybills during the corresponding period of 2022, they added.

Significantly, the post-settlement GST is cumulative of the GST revenues of the states/UTs and the SGST portion of the IGST settled to the states/UTs.

The Union Ministry of Finance said that the gross GST collection of all the states and UTs during the April-December 2023 period witnessed 12 per cent y-o-y growth, reaching Rs 14.97 lakh crore, as against Rs 13.40 lakh crore collected in the same period of the previous year (April-December 2022).

The average monthly gross GST collection of Rs 1.66 lakh crore in the first nine-month period this year represents a 12 per cent increase compared to the Rs 1.49 lakh crore average recorded in the corresponding period of FY23," the ministry said.

It further said that the gross GST revenue collected in the month of December was Rs 1,64,882 crore out of which CGST was Rs 30,443 crore, SGST Rs 37,935 crore, IGST is Rs 84,255 crore (including Rs 41,534 crore collected on import of goods) and cess was Rs 12,249 crore (including Rs 1,079 crore collected on import of goods). Notably, this marks the seventh month so far this year with collections exceeding Rs 1.60 lakh crore.



CANDID MOMENTS: A parakeet pair expresses mutual affection by sharing food on the first day of 2024 on the City outskirts in Bhubaneswar, Monday

11 held for raping Odia girl in Vizag

Visakhapatnam: Eleven men were arrested for allegedly raping a minor girl hailing from Odisha on different occasions in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, police said Monday. Under the pretext of celebrating the girl's birthday December 17, 2023, a migrant labourer from Jharkhand, with whom the girl got closer, took her to a room where she was raped, said an official. "He brought his friend who also sexually assaulted the girl," Visakhapatnam Zone-1 DCP K Srinivas Rao said. Unable to bear the trauma she went to the RK Beach in the port city to end her life. However, a photographer met her. He later took her to a lodge and sexually assaulted her. Later, she was taken to another room, where eight to nine of the photographer's friends raped her, the official said.

Create awareness on **BSKY Nabin Card: Secy**

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) commissioner-cum-secretary Shalini Pandit Monday directed all district Collectors to hold campaigns to create awareness about the BSKY Nabin Card and prompt the public to register under the scheme.

In a letter to Collectors and District Magistrates, Pandit said that the scope of Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojna (BSKY) has been expanded to make room for all those who were left out of the scheme earlier.

Stating that the registration portal will be open from January 6, she said, "I am to say that the Chief Minister has announced the expansion of BSKY through the BSKY Nabin Card which will cover all left-out rural families (except for regular government employees, government pensioners and income tax payers). The eligible families can apply for BSKY Nabin Card online. The registration portal at www.bskynabin.odisha.gov.in will open from January 6, 2024 and will close on January 16, 2024."

The Health secretary asked the district authorities to reach out to the general public and intended beneficiaries to inform them about the benefits and the registration process. An information-education-communica-

tion (IEC) document prepared by the government, in both Odia and English, was provided to the Collectors for this purpose

with instruction to share it on so-

cial media platforms. "Public awareness on the same may be undertaken through field functionaries of different departments like Mission Shakti, PR&DW, WCD, S&ME and the H&FW at district and sub-district level. In addition, miking activity should be taken up in all Gram Panchayats to create awareness," Pandit said.

Notably, each district has been provided Rs 1 lakh through the State Health Assurance Society (SHAS) account to carry out these campaigns. "However, if there is requirement of further funds, the same can be intimated to the CEO, SHAS and it will be reimbursed from State Health Assurance Society," she added

Techies to aid in cybercrime investigation

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: The twin city Commissionerate Police has

POST NEWS NETWORK

decided to rope in software engineers for investigating offences like cybercrimes, official sources said Monday. Speaking to media.

Bhubaneswar deputy commissioner of police (DCP) Prateek Singh said the twin city police has planned to rope in at least 25 software engineers for the purpose.

"The engineers will assist police investigate cases of cybercrimes. This apart, they will also keep a close tab on various risks and threats posed by cybercriminals," the City DCP said, adding that the plan is at a nascent stage and that the Commissionerate Police is hopeful of a positive outcome.

The Commissionerate Police had, a week back, busted a fivemember gang of cybercriminals that had duped hundreds of people in the Capital city by fraudulently generating credit cards using their documents.

The twin city police will soon hold awareness drives against cybercrimes, the City DCP said.

Sports Odisha win

Championship

FAO Inter-Club Futsal

Bhubaneswar: Sports Odisha was

crowned champion of the FAO

Inter-Club Futsal Championship.

2023 organised here at KIIT Indoor

championship being organised by

the Football Association of Odisha

Inter Club Futsal Championship.

2023 took place with participation

of 8 teams, who were divided into

two groups, four in each group.

"The final match ended in a 2-2

draw within stipulated match time.

According to Futsal rules, extra 10

OGP Club scored two. Thus, Sports

minutes is allotted to determine

the final results, where, Sports

Odisha scored three goals and

Odisha won the match by 5-4,"

said a FAO official.

(FAO) to promote the sport. The FAO

Stadium, Monday. The OGP Club

emerged runners up at the

PAYING HOMAGE: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik pays tribute to former CM and legendary leader Biju Patnaik in Bhubaneswar, Monday, as 5T Chairman Kartik Pandian looks on

Record 71 lakh WhatsApp accounts banned in India in Nov

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 1: Meta-owned WhatsApp banned a record over 71 lakh bad accounts in India in November 2023, in compliance with the new IT Rules 2021. the company said Monday.

Between November 1-30, the company banned 71,96,000 accounts. About 19,54,000 of these accounts were proactively banned, before any reports from users, WhatsApp said in its monthly compliance report.

The most popular messaging platform, which has over 500 million users in the country, received another record 8.841 complaint reports in November in the country, and the records 'actioned' were six.

'Accounts actioned' denotes reports where WhatsApp took remedial action based on the report and taking action denotes either banning an account or a previously banned account being restored as a result.

"This user-safety report contains details of the user complaints received and the corresponding action taken by WhatsApp, as well as WhatsApp's own preventive actions to combat abuse on our platform," according to the company.

In a bid to empower millions of Indian social media users, the Centre recently launched the Grievance Appellate Committee (GAC) which looks into their concerns regarding content and other issues.

The newly-formed panel, a move to strengthen the country's digital laws to tame the Big Tech companies, will look into appeals by users against decisions of social media platforms.

'We are an industry leader among end-to-end encrypted messaging services in preventing and combating abuse. In addition to our safety features and controls, we employ a team of en-

eta said that it took down over 18.3 million pieces of content on Facebook and over Between 1 and 30, WhatsApp 4.7 million pieces of content on Instagram in India in November, 19,54,000 of these accounts were banned, before any reports from users, WhatsApp id in its monthl ince report

gineers, data scientists, analysts, researchers, and experts in law enforcement, online safety, and technology developments to oversee these efforts." said WhatsApp.

Similarly, Meta said that it took down over 18.3 million pieces of content across 13 policies for Facebook and over 4.7 million pieces of content across 12 policies for Instagram in India in November 2023.

WhatsApp

Between November 1-30 Facebook received 21,149 reports through the Indian grievance mechanism, and said that it provided tools for users to resolve their issues in 10,710 cases.

These include pre-established channels to report content for specific violations, self-remediation flows where they can download their data, avenues to address account hacked issues, etc, Meta said in its monthly report in compliance with the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules,

"Of the other 10,739 reports where specialised review was needed, we reviewed content as per our policies, and took action on 4,538 reports in total. The remaining 6,201 reports were reviewed but may not have been actioned." Meta added.

On Instagram, the company received 11,138 reports through the Indian grievance mechanism.

"Of these, we provided tools for users to resolve their issues in 4,209 cases," it informed.

Of the other 6,929 reports where specialised review was needed, Meta reviewed content and took action on 4,107 reports

The remaining 2,822 reports were reviewed but may not have been actioned.

Under the new IT Rules 2021, big digital and social media platforms, with more than 5 million users, have to publish monthly compliance reports.

"We measure the number of pieces of content (such as posts, photos, videos or comments) we take action for going against our standards. Taking action could include removing a piece of content from Facebook or Instagram or covering photos or videos that may be disturbing to some audiences with a warning," said

In October, Meta took down over 33.6 million pieces of content across 13 policies for Facebook and over 3.4 million pieces of content across 12 policies for Instagram.

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

Andhra's incursion in Kotia continues



Zilla Parishad member Tikai Gemel wondered how Andhra Pradesh government obtained permissions to construct a mobile tower in Fagunsineri village which is on Odisha's land

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pottangi, Jan 1: There is no let-up in incursion by Andhra Pradesh in Kotia panchayat of Koraput district as officials and workers of the bordering state

Panini Samman

were allegedly found constructing telephone towers in Fagunsineri village, following Uparsembi village, in the panchayat, a report said.

The development came at a time when the Odisha government is trying to offer a check to Andhra Pradesh for repeated incursions and identifying land for construction of mobile towers in the panchayat bordering the southern neighbour.

For the residents, it has come as shocker. But what has sparked surprise is that the district officials were found unaware of the development. As a result, Andhra officials are doing all they could by taking advantage of the situation.

The state government and the district officials have warned

Bhagwat arrives in Rourkela

from these illegal activities, but that is hardly having any impact on the Andhra officials. They have refused to withdraw and, instead, entering into the panchayat in frequent intervals and carrying out illegal activities despite warnings by the district officials.

Zilla Parishad member Tikai Gemel expressed surprise over the development. She wondered hat how Andhra Pradesh government obtained permissions to construct a mobile tower in Fagunsineri village which is on Odisha's land

She alleged that Andhra had a sinister design behind the construction as it will facilitate in providing various benefits of welfare schemes in online mode and wean away the local residents from Odisha.

The villagers had apprised a senior official of their problem and Andhra's repeated incursion in the panchayat during his visit to the area. However, their pleas are yet to be ad-

When contacted, tehsildar Debendra Bahadur Singh Dharua dismissed the allegations. He said the Andhra government was not constructing the tower, but it is being done by

POST NEWS NETWORK Rourkela, Jan 1: The serious dif-

ferences between the two top BJP leaders in the Steel City - state spokesperson Dhiren Senapaty and 2019 MLA candidate from Rourkela Nihar Ray - do not seem to be waning, rather it look intensified further.

Significantly, the stern request from top party leader and Central minister Dharmendra Pradhan to the warring leaders does not appear to have brought any reconciliation.

The two frontline leaders don't see eye to eye these days. And this is no secret here. In the better interest of the party, Pradhan tried to bring them closer during his last visit here. Even he made a strong request to them to come closer by burying their differences. However, it has not borne any result.

Recently, the youth wing of the party staged a 'gherao' of



No let up in BJP's internal squabble

FAITH HEALS: Devotees stand in a long queue for 'darshan' of Goddess Samaleswari in Sambalpur for an auspicious start to the New Year, Monday

conspicuous by his absence. Even Ray's close aide Ankush Burma, former vice-president of Yuva Morcha, did not participate in the demonstration. Both Ray and Burma were found at Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH) the

Ray, along with his supporters, staged a demonstration in front of the Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) office December 25. He was reported to have come into push and shove with the police present there. Neither Dhiren nor his associates were present on the occasion.

On the same day, BJP celebrated Veer Bal Diwas at the Gandhi Road Gurudwara. It was organized by Dhiren. Ray's absence seems to have caught everybody's attention. In another instance, Dhiren conducted a press

conference flaying the spread of diarrhoea, and subsequently cholera. The event was attended by president of the party here, Latika Pattnaik, and others close to Dhiren. "Ray was invited to attend, but he did not turn up," said a party cadre at the party office after the press conference.

Another person, who is close to both said, "It seems the gulf between them has increased further after Dharmendra bhai made them a request. This is not good."

Last time in 2019, Dhiren had lost out to Nihar in the ticket race for the prestigious Rourkela seat. Dhiren is a career BJP worker and began his association with the party as an RSS cadre. After the ticket fiasco, Ray had personally called on him, and several leaders had also persuaded Dhiren. At that time it looked like things had calmed down between them.

However, a person in the know said, "it was a temporary truce and in due course of time the wound is festering further.'

SEPARATE ROAD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bheden/Gopalpur, Jan 1: In a died after an unknown vehicle hit the scooter in which they were traveling at Panabaraj underpass on Godabhaga-Sonepur state highway -54, under Rusuda police outpost of Bheden polices limits in Bargarh district, Sunday. The deceased were identified as Jagannath Bag, 26, and his younger brother Pitabas Bag, 19, of Sialkhandhata village.

In another incident, one person died while another received critical injuries after a car hit the bike on which they were travelling at Golanthara Chatti Chowk on National Highway 16 under Golanthara police limits in Ganjam district, Monday evening.

The deceased was identified as Rupang Naik and the critically injured person was identified as Sunil Naik of Kotharsingi village. Police seized the vehicle involved in the accident and launched an investigation in this regard.

for Dr Dillip **Kumar Samal** Rourkela, Jan 1: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief POST NEWS NETWORK Mohan Bhagwat arrived here Monday, on a five-day visit to Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Noted the Steel City, during which he is expected to preside over sev-

Bhagwat reached Rourkela by

This is his second visit to the

Bhagwat will participate in

state in a fortnight.

Odia surgeon Dr Dillip Kumar Samal, known for his works in eral meetings of the outfit. the field of community healthcare, received the prestigious road from Jharsuguda airport Panini Samman from the where he arrived from Kolkata, an RSS leader said. Geriatric Care and Research

Bhubaneswar. The award was conferred on Samal at an international conference on healthy ageing organised by GeriCaRe, December 30, 2023 during the celebration of International Day for Older

Organisation (GeriCaRe) at

The event was held to share recent advances in old-age care among the older adults, their caregivers and healthcare pro-

The online conference was attended by a number of professionals, including Jayashree Viswanathan, a doctor from Australia and Nilamadhab Kar. a physician from the UK.

For the unversed, Samal is a well-known entrepreneur in the field of community healthcare. He has established The Medic, an organisation which has been working in this field since 1992.



RSS general secretary

Dattatreya Hosabale will also

take part in the shivir, along

with top functionaries of its af-

filiated organisations, the sources

AWARENESS VEHICLE: Officials flag off an awareness vehicle on road safety to launch the Road Safety Week at Rayagada,

Docs name bore-well girl 'Bijayini'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Jan 1: Authorities at the Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla here Monday observed the 21st Day ritual of the infant girl who was rescued from an abandoned bore well at Laripali village under Rengali block in Sambalpur district December 12, last year.

Following her rescue, the baby girl was admitted to the special newborn care unit (SNCU) at the hospital where she recovered after treatment.

Doctors, nurses and other staff at the hospital attended the celebrations at the SNCU which was decked up with flowers and



balloons. Later, they named the girl as 'Bijayini' on the 21st day of her birth. The event was marked by cutting of cake and distribution of sweets.

The baby girl is currently undergoing treatment in SNCU of VIMSAR as she is underweight. She will be discharged after gaining two kilologram. The newborn had allegedly been thrown Laripalli village. After six-hour long operation by the fire service personnel, ODRAF and NDRF. she was rescued alive. She was immediately admitted to VIM-

SAR for treatment. Doctors and staff expressed happiness by celebrating the event at the hospital. All the staff also extended best wishes to the infant and offered prayers for her wellbeing.

VIMSAR assistant professor of Medicine Shankar Ramchandani shared a picture on his X handle holding the infant in his lap. However, the identity of the parents of the baby girl is yet to be established as police continued in its investigation.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Jan 1: Delay in the arrival of Bhubaneswar Keonjhar Memu train on a regular basis has fuelled resentment among the residents of Keonihar district.

The Memu train had been introduced in place of the intercity express without citing any reason. The train reached Keonjhargarh railway station Friday midnight at around 12.30 am instead of the normal arrival time of 9.40 pm

Sources said that the train had arrived Thursday night at 10.49 pm, at 10.41 pm Wednesday and at 11.21 pm Tuesday. As the train is arriving at Keonihargarh railway station late every day, it is causing hassles to the passengers. Sources said that the Memu train leaves Keonjhar in the morning to Bhubaneswar. Therefore. many feel comfortable in travelling by the train to Cuttack and Bhubaneswar for official works, health checkup, high court works or catching a flight or train to some other cities.

The train also helps them come back to Keonjhar after finishing works, in time. The scheduled arrival time in Keonjhar is 9.40 pm. However, the delay in the arrival time is putting peo-



Many passengers fail to get any accommodation as there is no hotel or lodging in the vicin-

ity of the railway station. A local resident, Himanshu Sahu, who usually depends on the train said due to the late arrival people, mostly coming from interior, areas are facing problems in getting food, conveyance and boarding facilities for night stay. Beside, the toilet in the train seems to be of no use for the passengers due to poor maintenance.

Sahu alleged that the railway authorities are neglecting the interest of passengers to safeguard the interest of mineral carrying trains. The arrival time of the Memu train is getting de-

layed as the railway authorities allow mineral carrying trains to move first by detaining the passenger train on the way, they alleged

Several complaints in this regard have fallen in deaf ears. "We will stage agitations if the problem not resolved at earliest" warned Santosh Mohapatra. member, Keonjhar Yuva Parishad in the town.

The intercity express train was running from Keonihar to Bhubaneswar smoothly since 2014. However, the department is now running the Memu train in its place which has resulted in problems, locals alleged.

When contacted, Kalyan Patnaik, additional divisional railway manager, Khurda said he is not aware of the problems, including the delay in arrival of the Memu train. He however, assured to personally look into

2 youths set out for Ayodhya on foot

cumstances.

Berhampur, Jan 1: Two youths from Odisha have embarked on a journey to Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya on foot to offer prayers at the Ram temple.

The Medic has supported HIV

He has also set up a number

of old-age homes in Angul dis-

trict. His efforts have received

accolades in India and abroad.

and AIDS patients and, recently,

older adults in challenging cir

However, they are likely to miss the inauguration of the temple scheduled January 22 as they may take over 40 days to cover the over 1,400km distance from Berhampur town.

Before starting their journey Sunday, the friends, both 22, Kuresh Behera and Sonu Bisoi - residents of Chandapur and Kanishi areas



respectively, offered prayers at the Ram temple in Kanishi near Berhampur town.

With bags on their back and flags in their hands, the duo set out for Ayodhya amid chants of 'Jai Shri Ram' by locals gathered at the temple. Some people also accompanied them for the next 10-15 km.

Behera said they have received heartening moments of solidarity, with several people, including women, greeting them with 'Jai Shri Ram'

on the first day of their journey. "We have set a target to walk for 30-35 km every day in order to reach Ayodhya in the next 40 days. We will miss the inaugural function of the temple but we will offer prayers later, Behera said.

Bank of India

Zonal Office: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jaydev Bihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Ph.:0674-2362249

Gold Auction Notice

वैंक ऑफ़ इंडिया Bank of India It is hereby brought to the notice of the following gold loan borrowers, their legal heirs, person engaged in the business of gold ornaments and general public that in spite of repeated notices by the Bank, the following borrowers are not repaying their dues to the Bank. Notice is hereby published that if they fail to deposit all their dues in their respective gold loan accounts (including Up-to-date interest and all costs, charges/expenses) by 22.01.2024, their pledged gold ornaments will be auctioned at Concerned Branch Premises on 25.01.2024 at 11.00 AM. For nis Bank shall not be held responsible for any incovenience or damage caused to the concerned borrowers and no allegations or representations will be entertained from any borrowers in this regard. Bank reserves the right to cancel the auction without assigning any reason in case, the bidding price so arrived at is observed to be low or inadequate. Further, if needed be Bank reserves the right to change the data and time of the above scheduled auction or cancel the same without assigning any reasons thereon. Purity and net weight and reserve price of gold ornaments/coins etc. will be available to intersted bidders on auction date and auction venue/auction portal.

SI. No.		Name & Address of the Borrower(s)	Gross Wt. in Gram	Net Wt. in Gram	(excluding unapplied intere Charges, Cost & Expenses
KALPANA SQUARE BRANCH, PLOT NO.: A/88, BJB NAGAR, BHUBANESWAR-751014, MOB.: 7205040070					
1.	513077610000600	Bishnupriya Mallick, W/o- Guru Prasad Mallick, Plot No.: B-20, Bankers Enclave, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar-751025	40.27	39.45	₹1,82,000.00
	513077610000601		45.8	45	₹2,07,000.00
Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 01.01.2024				Zonal	Manager, Bank of Ind



Genius discovers a system; average talent stereotypes it till it is shattered by fresh genius.

SRI AUROBINDO



Partisan Parade

nce again a needless controversy has erupted over the Republic Day 2024 parade. This is an occasion for the whole nation to celebrate the country's adoption of the Constitution and its transition to democracy. There cannot be any room for narrow, partisan politics as the national day is for every citizen irrespective of her or his political belief or religious identity. Yet, it has again generated heated debate on the Centre's alleged political bias against Opposition-ruled states. The tableaux from Punjab, Delhi and West Bengal for the Republic Day parade have been rejected triggering vociferous protests from the two state governments and Union Territory. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has, however, sought to justify the decision and clarify the situation surrounding the selection process for tableaux that participate in the Republic Day parade. The Ministry insists the process of selecting tableaux is transparent and it involves an expert committee. This committee supposedly evaluates the proposals based on various criteria such as the theme of the tableau, its concept, design, and the visual impact it would make during the parade. It is out of the question to bring in political considerations for acceptance or rejection of such tableaux, according to the MoD.

However, Punjab's Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann is not convinced in the least and has alleged discrimination over the selection process. The Ministry of Defence thereafter responded by iterating that there is a well-established system in place to select tableaux. It further explained that the system being followed now is to select the tableaux of 15-16 states and UTs in all for the Republic Day Parade. The states or UTs that would not "make the grade" for the parade have the opportunity to showcase their tableaux during Bharat Parv at Red Fort, New Delhi. This move, according to the government, testifies to the effort to include all states in the celebrations and ensure that no state feels left out of the festivities. However, Orissa has been noticeably kept out of the parade as well as the Bharat Parv event for the past couple of years. Interestingly, the Orissa State Government, unlike Punjab or other states, has not deemed it worthwhile to raise any objections against rejection of its tableaux.

The Aam Aadmi Party governments in Delhi and Punjab and the TMC government in West Bengal are in no mood to accept the Centre's arguments. Delhi's tableaux proposal aimed at showcasing its school education and health services, while the Punjab government intended to exhibit the state's heritage and the history of its martyrs for India's national movement. Bengal prepared its tableaux to display its Kanyashree project that serves girls in the state. This is not the first time that Delhi and Bengal are going to be unrepresented in the parade. Delhi's proposals have been turned down for three consecutive years. In 2022, Tamil Nadu's tableau, highlighting the state's role in national movement, did not qualify. The BJP has said that since these tableaux were meant for the political promotion of Opposition parties, they did not make the grade. It is true the previous UPA regime too was once charged with behaving in a partisan manner while disapproving of tableaux proposed by the BJP-run Gujarat government for several

It is unfortunate how political considerations these days tend to vitiate a national celebration. The Republic Day parade makes the nation proud of its heritage and advancements in different walks of life by people residing in different states and UTs. The glory makes the nation proud as a whole and it is not simply the achievement of any particular state. Thus, Republic Day epitomises patriotism and pomp and the country's core values of unity in diversity. The celebrations refer as much to the herculean struggle the founders of the republic undertook for freedom from imperialism as to the efforts of people of every state to take the country forward. It was not just Hindi speaking north Indians who made this country what it is today. Every state had contributed in the process and those were extremely unique.

No wonder the theme for the 2024 Republic Day is 'India - Mother of Democracy' and 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India). A committee of distinguished persons drawn from various fields screens proposals from states and organisations. Among the criteria used for the final selection of the tableaux are visual appeal, impact on masses, theme, degree of detailing, music, and involvement of local artists. To reject the tableaux of a state is in a way an insult to the collective talent of that state that goes into the making of the tableaux

The Centre should have taken utmost care not to ride roughshod over the feelings of any state, especially those ruled by Opposition parties. The allegations of bias and petty political considerations are bound to be levelled. More so this year when the country will go to the general elections. The fact that only Opposition-ruled states have been affected makes the whole exercise suspect. This is unwarranted and these rejections are yet another divisive move.

WISDOM CORNER



The degree of freedom from unwanted thoughts and the degree of concentration on a single thought are the measures to gauge spiritual progress.

Joy can only be real if people look upon their life as a service and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal

LEO TOLSTOY

The wise have always said the same things, and fools, who are the majority have always done just the opposite.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1492: Granada reclaimed by Spain. On this day in 1492, Granada, home of the Alhambra palace and the seat and final stronghold of the Moorish kingdom in Spain, was surrendered to the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand II and Isabella I, ending the Reconquest.
- **1863:** The Battle of Stones River came to an end during the American Civil War; although indecisive, the clash was a psychological victory for the Union forces, which were led by General William S. Rosecrans.
- **1920:** The most spectacular of the Palmer Raids took place when 3,000-10,000 were arrested in more than 30 US cities, accused of being foreign anarchists, communists, or radical leftists: the raids, led by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, were viewed as the climax of that era's so-called Red Scare.
- 1935: The widely publicised trial of Bruno Hauptmann began in New Jersey as he faced charges of kidnapping and murdering the infant son of famed American aviator Charles A. Lindbergh; he was found guilty and executed.
- **1967:** American Republican politician Ronald Reagan, who previously worked as an actor, was sworn in as governor of California.

FOCUS NATION

OLD WORLD PROBLEMS



Jagdish Rattanani

IT MIGHT BE FASHIONABLE TO ARGUE THAT THERE ARE NO **VALUES IN POLITICS. AFTER ALL, WHICH PARTY IS ABOUT VALUES ON THE INDIAN SCENE?**

e enter 2024 with the spotlight on the grand Ram mandir inauguration coming up in a few weeks, and a spectacular roadshow the focus of which is the promotion of the ruling party and in particular Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The building of the temple is one promise that the BJP has delivered on, and it is only to be expected that its political machinery will be in overdrive to turn this into votes for the party in the upcoming national elections. The full-fledged involvement of the governmental machinery in a religious move ment is of course problematic, first from the standpoint of constitutional correctness but equally for larger implications of governmental capture as opposed to a political mobilisation and of instrumental use of a religious sentiment. But it is a sign of the times that hardly anyone mentions this. There was a time when it was suggested that Modi should participate in the foundation laying ceremony for the temple in his personal capacity as a Hindu, not in his official capacity as the Prime Minister. Not anymore. We are clearly long past the stage where this is seen as something to be flagged, let alone protested.

The narrative we have for the nation amid this frenetic start to the New Year was captured in the words of the PM as he signed off 2023: "Today every corner of India is brimming with selfconfidence, imbued with the spirit of a developed India; the spirit of self-reliance. We have to maintain the same spirit and momentum in 2024 as well."

To the extent that this sets the BJP's agenda for the elections, adds a lot of colour and hyperbole, and presents the BJP as the favourites for 2024, the exercise is understandable and may even be hailed as good planning and agenda-setting well in



The trouble with this kind of governance is that the nation and its people will have to sooner rather than later come to terms with the real problems

advance of a significant national election. We can't fault the BJP for its quick mobilisation

and superior messaging. Yet, it is plain that electionmode is not reserved by the BJP for election time. It appears to be an always-on mode, an everpresent bias towards celebration, overstatement and reiteration of claims that are sought to be turned into perceived reality by a party that is as much flush with funds and media support as the others are devoid of it. The danger is that the party begins to believes its hype, and the government's energies are more towards story-telling and to that extent lesser towards problem-solving.

The trouble with this kind of governance is that the nation and its people will have to sooner rather than later come to terms with the real problems – raging unemployment, the monster of communal hatred, bitter disputes that are ever widening, mounting debt, decimated institutions, the weakening of the spirit of cooperative federalism, corruption and nepotism that favours a few chosen business leaders, increased concentration of power in a few individuals and a democratic decision-making process that remains only in name.

All these are old world problems that India has seen for long, and they have only gotten worse during the eight years of the BJP in power at the Centre. Fancy leaflets, well done graphs and nicely cut videos cannot fix these and a host of other problems that the nation faces today. Coupled with this is an antidemocratic tendency that seeks to decimate not only voices from the Opposition but also kill competition from inside the BJP, or whatever little of it might be there, if political reports are to be believed. The demand appears to be total subservience to authority and the nation and the party has complied, raising questions on the inner strength of Indian democracy and its

still-fledgling institutions. Is this India more secure or less secure? Is our democracy better off when citizens can challenge authority and set new precedents for freedom or are we better off when all challenge is silenced using various means? How could the British have taken over India were it not for the self-defeating inner squabbles that the outsiders used to telling effect to subjugate an entire nation? How far have we moved in terms of our capacity to question authority, to expand our freedoms and to strength our democracy? What has the Emergency

taught us, if anything? The words of Judge Murray I Gurfein in what is known as the Pentagon Papers case of 1971 are significant. He ruled against the government and in favour of the publication of classified papers by the New York Times. His order, which became a First Amendment classic in the US, read: "The security of our nation is not at the ramparts alone. Security also lies in the value of our free institutions. A cantankerous press, an obstinate press, a ubiquitous press must be suffered by those in authority in order to preserve the even greater values of freedom of expression and the right of the people to know." Gurfein was appointed by the Nixon administration and in his first case ruled against the government.

There is also the larger problem of a very un-Indian way of governance, a manner that is far removed from an understanding of the culture and ethos of the nation that the BJP is so proud to claim as one of its foundational grounds. For at the centre of the Indian ethos is values, a steadfast commitment to 'dharma' and a moral compass whose careful calibration of right versus wrong that is never to be compromised. It might be fashionable to argue that there are no values in politics. After all, which party is about values on the Indian scene? And if that is so, then it is possible to argue that the BJP has not risen to power, it has fallen in power and may be taking the nation down with it. We will need all the Lord's blessings to come out of this sinkhole.

The writer is a journalist and a faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal. **@THE BILLION PRESS**

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

The futility of waste management



Sarah Newman

DESPITE NUMEROUS TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES, OUR METHODS OF WASTE DISPOSAL HAVE REMAINED FUNDAMENTALLY UNCHANGED FOR CENTURIES facility. The plant is designed to process two million tonnes of municipal waste annually, producing enough electricity to power 120,000 households per year by incinerating discarded materials. Paradoxically, it is both a cutting-edge innovation and a strategy from the past.

The Dubai facility is one of thousands of WTE projects recently completed, under construction, or planned. Over 2,600 such facilities are currently operational worldwide, including more than 400 in China alone. A recent report projected rapid growth for the WTE industry, with revenues nearly doubling from \$27.7 billion in 2021 to roughly \$45.2 billion in 2029. That expansion will be largely owed to the global effort to meet the Paris climate agreement's targets, which has fueled increased investment in sustainable

waste-management solutions. This bodes well for the battle against climate change. WTE facilities currently process more than 400 million tonnes of waste annually, accounting for roughly 20% of the two billion tonnes of

The United Arab Emirates residual waste remaining each waterways with liquid runoff toms rather than the disease. during the COP28 unveiled year after reuse, composting, the world's highest-ca- and recycling. Decomposing pacity waste-to-energy (WTE) waste in landfills emits methane, a gas with 28 times the warming potential of carbon dioxide. Redirecting waste materials to WTE facilities helps to reduce methane emissions, as well as conserve land and generate electricity.

This is good news, but it is also old news. WTE facilities are adaptations of earlier concepts rather than revolutionary innovations. They are humanity's latest attempt to eliminate waste instead of preventing it in the first place. In my recent book, Unmaking Waste, I chronicle this centuries-long quest to transform profligate consumption into a positive force.

In the early twentieth century, for example, multiple US cities invested in what were known as "reduction" plants, which compressed trash to extract oils and other byproducts for use as fertilizers, lubricants, and even perfume bases. But this approach proved to be unsustainable in the long run. The reduction plants, which "cooked" vast quantities of decaying waste to extract grease and oil, produced pungent odors and polluted nearby

from the compression process.

WTE technologies continue to improve, particularly in reducing toxic emissions. Still, the parallels between the late nineteenth century and today are striking. In 1888, SS Kilvington, then-president of the American Public Health Association, delivered an impassioned speech in which he foresaw a transition from an "age of filth-formation" to an "era of filth-destruction," in which fire would purify both the "refuse of the living and the remains of the dead.'

More than 130 years later, Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum, the crown prince of Dubai, echoed Kilvington's optimism as he inaugurated the UAE's WTE facility.

As the waste crisis becomes increasingly visible, with mountains of discarded clothes in the Atacama Desert and enormous swirling gyres of plastic in the Pacific Ocean – large enough to generate their own ecosystems -WTE facilities are often hailed as sustainable alternatives to disposal on land or at sea. But while these facilities are an improvement over traditional waste-management methods, they are not solutions. They address the symp

Switzerland is a case in point. While the country has successfully phased out landfills, its municipal solid waste per capita especially plastics, which it incinerates instead of recycling continues to increase. Despite numerous technological advances, our methods of waste disposal have remained fundamentally unchanged for centuries. Vast amounts of knowledge, time, and money have been invested in producing things designed to be thrown away.

What would the coming century look like if these resources were redirected toward getting rid of the idea of waste altogether? Already we can have clothes made from milk waste, furniture grown from mushroom mycelium, and bioplastics produced from seaweed and saltwater microbes and watermelon rinds. If we want solutions, we cannot rely on the same ideas that have generated the problems in the first place. We must fundamentally change how we produce waste, not just how we manage it.

The writer is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago.

Challenging landscape



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,

to: edit@orissapost.com rissapost

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Sir, The permacrisis described in the editorial (New Year, Old Woes, January 1, OrissaPOST) indeed paints a complex and challenging global landscape. However, within this intricate web of issues lie seeds of opportunity and resilience. While conflicts, climate disasters, economic strains, and democratic challenges loom large, it's crucial to recognise the innate human capacity for adaptation and innovation. Throughout history, humanity has faced and overcome immense challenges, showcasing an ability to rise above adversity and create positive change. Amidst the escalating concerns about climate change, there's a glimmer of hope in the growing global momentum towards sustainability. The acknowledgment of climate issues and the call for transitioning to green energy sources demonstrate a collective realisation of the need for transformative action. Economic hardships and widening inequalities demand a proactive approach towards policy reforms aimed at ensuring fair wealth distribution. Recognising the disparities and actively working towards closing the wealth gap will be pivotal in creating a more equitable society. While technology brings disruption, the call for regulation, as seen in the EU's AI Act, emphasises the need to harness advancements while ensuring they serve humanity's best interests. Moreover, the spotlight on democratic principles and the impending elections globally signify a pivotal moment. These elections represent an opportunity for individuals to exercise their democratic rights, shaping the trajectory of their nations towards inclusive governance and protecting individual freedoms. Embracing this democratic process offers a chance for societies to reassert their commitment to fundamental rights and pave the way for a future where collective cooperation and rational evaluation guide our journey forward.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Maritime surveillance

Sir, The Indian Navy has done well to beef up maritime surveillance efforts after the recent drone attacks and hijacking in international waters. The Navy deployed warships, missile destroyers, and surveillance aircraft in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden. These heightened measures would ensure the safety of merchant shipping between Bab el-Mandeb and the Indian coast. Meanwhile, the US Navy helicopters sank three vessels operated by Yemen's Iranbacked Houthi rebels that had attacked a container ship in the Red Sea. We hope India's aggressive stance will dissuade the rebels from launching more attacks.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE



TWOSTATES





TUESDAY | JANUARY 2 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAR

Politics of indecision threatens Taj Heady cocktail of religion, politics in UP

The Yamuna dries up after the monsoon rains, and degenerates into a vast sewage canal, while garbage dumps, shallow pools of polluted water become breeding grounds for mosquitoes and bacteria

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, Jan 1: It has been an agonisingly long wait for the promised barrage on the Yamuna river downstream of the Tai Mahal which is threatened by both air and water pollution.

While disposing of the PIL filed by MC Mehta, the Supreme Court had December 30, 1996, directed the Uttar Pradesh government to construct the barrage on the Yamuna.

Over 27 years have passed, but the state government is still dragging its feet on this urgent project, considered necessary to protect heritage structures along

The city has seen many agitations, protests and marches to $highlight \, the \, pathetic \, condition$ of the dry and polluted Yamuna, but the response from the Central and the state governments has been cold, say green activists of the River Connect Campaign.

The local MPs and the MLAs too have not shown the desired amount of interest and involvement, says Padmini Iyer, a river

Officials in the district administration say that the location of the barrage has been identified at Nangla Prema, a few kilometres downstream of the Taj Mahal. The required NOCs have been acquired. Only the Taj Trapezium Zone Authority has



to now clear the project.

Sources said the authority was interested in a rubber check dam, and not a barrage.

Interestingly, the foundation for the barrage have been laid thrice at three different places by two Chief Ministers and one Governor, but the project for some mysterious reasons has got stuck up for want of politi-

Environmentalist Devashish Bhattacharya said the state irrigation department responding to his RTI query, has informed that NOCs from three different departments had been received, only one permission was hanging fire.

From 2018 to 2023 the irrigation department received Rs 182 crore, out of which Rs 176 crore had been returned, as the barrage project made no headway.

The department has now come up with a fresh proposal for a Rs 350 crore rubber check dam, downstream of the Taj Mahal, at Nangla Prema.

The Yamuna barrage project was mooted first in 1993, after a series of directions by the Supreme Court, in the PIL filed

The apex court had stated that along with the cleaning of the river, a barrage should be constructed to bring down the air pollution level in the vicinity of the Taj Mahal.

While the local politicians kept pulling in different directions, giving rise to controversies, the beneficiary was Mathura which got the Gokul barrage in

The Yamuna dries up after the monsoon rains, and degenerates into a vast sewage canal. Garbage dumps, shallow pools of polluted water become breeding grounds for mosquitoes and bacteria. The white marble surface of the Taj gets dotted with colonies of mosquitoes and their excreta.

Lok Swar President Rajiv Gupta wonders why successive state governments have been dragging their feet on executing such a vital project.

The river remains dry, polluted and sick with toxic waste, says Eco Club president Pradip Khandelwal.

Whether Yogi Adityanath will speed up the barrage project before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls reThe temple and the general elections, as electioneering picks up, will get intertwined to such an extent that one will impact the other

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 1: Uttar Pradesh is perhaps the only state in the country that will witness a perfectly heady mix of religion and politics in 2024.

The grand opening of the Ram temple that will be preceded by a massive publicity blitzkrieg is bound to have an undeniable impact on politics.

The Ram temple will also be the BJP's biggest election issue one that will not allow the Opposition to make any counter-

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections are a milestone for Uttar Pradesh which sends the maximum number of 80 MPs to the Lok Sabha and helps in government formation at the Centre.

The temple and the general elections, as electioneering picks up, will get intertwined to such an extent that one will impact the other. Both the events will be defining moments for the state.

Besides, the Kashi-Gyanvapi Mathura-Krishna Janmabhoomi issues have also reached the courts and the events that unfold in 2024 will revolve around these two shrines.

The year, therefore, will see Hindutva surging like never before and the BJP seeing a fulfilment of its promise of liberating the shrines in Ayodhya-Kashi-Mathura from Mughal presence.

This will give the ruling BJP a major push for the general elections and if their campaign goes according to plan, it may even override casteism which will again be advantage BJP.

The year 2024 will also see the

emergence of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as an unparalleled Hindu leader.

For the last one-and-a-half vears. Yogi Adityanath has been spending most of his waking hours in planning the development of 'New Ayodhya.

He has been visiting Ayodhya almost every week to ensure that all projects are completed within the specified time and are up to the standards.

The elevation in Yogi's status – after the opening of the Ram temple and the general elections — is expected to change power equations within the BJP too.

The Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh, meanwhile, will not have many surprises to offer since the Opposition remains deeply fragmented and differences between the constituents of the INDIA bloc have not been ironed out yet.

The future of the Samajwadi Party (SP), in general, and Akhilesh Yaday, in particular, will be determined in the Lok Sabha elections. The SP has failed to emerge as

a frontrunner in UP politics since 2017 when Akhilesh took over the reins of the party. If Akhilesh and his party fail to put up a good performance in the general elections, he may face a revolt in the SP ranks.

There is already simmering discontent within the SP over Akhilesh's inability to deal with leaders like Swami Prasad Maurya whose attacks on Hinduism are already irking upper caste Hindus in the party.

The absence of Mohd Azam Khan from active politics due

to his incarceration has left the Muslims in the SP leaderless and Akhilesh, too, has not shown much interest in the problems faced by the community.

Political analysts are of the opinion that if the situation does not change, a large section of the Muslims may shift to the Congress that is seen as a major challenger to the BJP at the national level.

The BSP, on the other hand, remains in a permanent state of confusion about its stand on the general elections.

Mayawati's party is undecided about joining an alliance and its cadres are also in a state of confusion. The party, which has already hit rock bottom in recent polls, is yet to draw up a strategy for the general elec-

1 lakh participate in Bhaderwah winter festival

THE FESTIVAL IS A SYMBOL OF THE CULTURAL SPLENDOUR AND WINTER CHARM OF THE CHENAB VALLEY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Jan 1: More than one lakh people visited the five-day Bhaderwah winter festival in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district that concluded Sunday with a celebration to usher in the new year.

The festival is a symbol of the cultural splendour and winter charm of the Chenab Valley and aims at promoting the local cul ture and traditions, and showcase the tourism potential of Bhaderwah, officials said.

The tourism department is "committed to tap the untapped tourism potential of Bhaderwah and other lesser known tourist destinations" of Jammu and Kashmir, Tourism Secretary Abid Rashid said.

"The aim of holding such kinds of festivals is to promote local culture, traditions, and to tap the tourism potential" of areas bestowed with natural scenic and serene surroundings, he said.

Rashid said the department is also promoting homestays to meet the shortage of tourism infrastructure and to create livelihood for locals.

The festival was organised by the Directorate of Tourism, Jammu, in collaboration with the Doda district administration, the Academy of Art. Culture and Language and



the Bhaderwah Development To conclude the festival, there

was a performance by Puniabi singer Kaka and a display of fireworks. Over the five days. the Bhaderwah Fort was illuminated and it hosted several cultural performances. Films such as 'Sam Bahadur', 'Tiger-3' and '12th Fail' were screened during the festival.

"The festival not only showcased the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Bhaderwah but also marked its emergence as a dynamic

hub of tourism in the Chenab Valley, blending tradition with modernity," Doda Deputy Commissioner S Harvinder Singh said.

He expressed keen interest in encouraging the tourism sector in the district to create livelihood opportunities and to give the district its due share on the tourism map of the country. "All measures will be taken to improve the tourism infrastructure of the district," Singh said.

The deputy commissioner said that in view of the great potential of the district in the tourism

sector, some private stakeholders have already pitched in, and world-class hotels and some fivestar facilities are being established.

The administration is committed to work towards having tourism activities in the district throughout the year, he said.

Joint Director Tourism Sunaina Mehta said Bhaderwah has been earmarked as a wedding destination and a site for 'Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE)' tourism. She said last year, over five lakh tourists visited Bhaderwah.

23 terrorists declared proclaimed offenders ers by the court September

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Jan 1: A court in Jammu and Kashmir Monday declared 23 terrorists from Kishtwar district, who are operating from Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), proclaimed offenders, police said.

The special Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) court in Doda gave them a month to appear before it in connection with cases registered against them, failing which their properties will be attached, officials said.

With Monday's court order, the total number of proclaimed offenders in Kishtwar stands at 36, they said.

"In a significant move to address security challenges within the district, 23 terrorists from Kishtwar operating from Pakistan and PoK have been declared proclaimed offenders by the UAPA special court in Doda," Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP). Kishtwar, Khalil Poswal told reporters.

Thirteen terrorists were declared proclaimed offend-

No.O-2059:

No. i-562

16, he said. There are 36 terrorists from

Kishtwar who are operating from Pakistan and PoK. Two FIRs have been registered against them," he added.

Poswal said this was made possible by the diligent efforts of Kishtwar police, which gathered crucial intelligence and registered FIRs against these terrorists before meticulously presenting all information before the court.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, MOHANA OFFICE ORDER

Date:30.12.2023 No.O-2056: The tender for the work Construction of Day care sub-centre cum HWC Sub-centre at Bariabandha for the year 2023-24, invited vide this office Online Tender Bid Identification No. 11/MOHANA/2023-24 is hereby cancelled due to first time

single tender. OIPR-25148/11/0024/2324

Sd./- Executive Engineer R.W. Division, Mohana

Email: eobptm@yahoo.com OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL. BHAWANIPATNA, KALAHANDI - 766001, ODISHA 2nd CORRIGENDUM

No. C-2253: The opening of technical proposal meeting as per the Request for Proposal (RFP) No. 4293/BPM, Dt.02.12.2023 was scheduled on 01.01.2024 at 11.00 A.M. is hereby rescheduled to Dtd.03.01.2024 at 11.00 A.M. in the Conference Hall of Collectorate Kalahandi. Other terms & conditions are remain unchanged.

OIPR-13100/11/0014/2324

Sd./- Executive Officer **Bhawanipatna Municipality**

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BARGARH

Email: rd_bgh@yahoo.co.in, Gmail: rwd.bgh@gmail.com e-Procurement Notice No.ONLINE-BGH-16 of 2023-24

Name of the Work Road works during 2023-24 in the district of Bargarh @ 1% of the estimated cost put to tender As per DTCN **EMD** Other details Availability of Tende Bid Identification & Time of

Date & Time Procurement Online for bidding Officer of Opening of Seeking Tender tender Clarification ONLINE- BGH-Executive Engineer, 18.01.2024 08.01.2024 18.01.2024 19.01.2024 Rural Works Divi-16 OF 2023-24 upto 4.00 P.M upto sion, Bargarh 11.00 A.M 11.00 A.M

OIPR-25062/11/0016/2324

Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W.Division, Bargarh

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, CHANDBALI At/P.O.: Chandbali, Dist.: Bhadrak, PIN - 756133, e-mail: ori-chandbali@nic.in

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) BID IDENTIFICATION NO. 6/2023-24 Dt.30.12.2023 Qpproximate Name of the Items

Cost of Document SI. No. C-1 Dual-Desk-cum-Bench for Schools (48"L × 35"B × 30"H) Specification attached at Annexure -Rs.83,000/ Rs.10,000/-Dual-Desk-cum Bench for Colleges (48"L × 35"B × 30"H) Specification attached at Annexure - 2

Date & Time: 10 A.M. of 31.12.2023 to 1 P.M. of 06.01.2024

Last Date: Upto 1 P.M. of 06.01.2024

Time of Opening: 3 P.M. of 06.01.2024

Name and Address: Block Development Officer, Chandbali, Bhadrak

rurther details can be seen from the wesbite portal https://bhadrak.nic.in. The interested bidders can contact office of the Block Development Officer, Chandbali, Dist.: Bhadrak, Contact No. 6372685220. DIPR-19398/11/0002/2324

Sd./- Block Development Officer, Chandbal

GANGRAPE OF IIT-BHU STUDENT

Cong workers to gherao PM's Varanasi constituency office

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shahjahanpur, Jan 1: Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Rai said party workers would gherao Prime Minister Narendra Modi's constituency office in Varanasi Tuesday to protest against the alleged involvement of the BJP's local leaders in the gangrape of a BHU student.

Two months after the woman student was allegedly gangraped inside the IIT-BHU campus, police arrested three men Sunday and Opposition parties alleged that they were BJP functionaries. The three accused claimed themselves to be the BJP's IT cell members on their Facebook page.

"Women and children are being raped in Varanasi, the parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. To tell the general public how incidents like rape are being carried out under their patronage, our Banaras district and city unit will gherao the Prime Minister's Varanasi office Tuesday, Rai said Monday.

He claimed that Kunal Pandey, the convenor of BJP's IT cell in Varanasi its working committee member Abhishek Chauhan and co-convenor Saksham Patel were sent to the Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections so that they could not be arrested.

"Had they been arrested before the elections, the message would have gone to the entire country that these three BJP officials are rapists," the Congress Uttar Pradesh unit chief said, adding that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath should tell when bulldozers will run on the houses of these accused.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RWSS DIVISION, RAIRANGPUR **INVITATION FOR BIDS**

E-mail: eerwss_rai@nic.in, eerwss.rai@gmail.com e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE

IDENTIFICATION No. 49 RWSS/RRPUR-2023-2024 / Dated: 30.12.2023 No. O-2052: The Executive Engineer, RWSS Division, Rairangpur on beha of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids to be received in onlin node for the following work from the eligible experienced contractors in simila nature of work, registered with State Govt. & Contractor of equivalent Grade

lass registered with Central Govt./Railways.
. Nature of work: a) Execution of retrofitting PWS Schemes to Village

Bhaliadal of Thakurmunda Block under RWS&S Division, Rairangpur i the District of Mayurbhanj. No. of Packages Period of Completion 01 (One) No

04 (Four) Months Cost of Tender Rs.10000.00 **Estimated Cost** Rs.20.34 Lakhs Cost of EMD Rs.21000.00

Class of Contractor (As mentioned in Tender Call Notice) Date and time of availability of bid documents in Portal: From 10 hours of 06.01.2024 to 17.30 hours of 22.01.2024.

Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the

 Receipt of bid cost, bid security, documents: Online only
 Date & time of opening of technical bid: Dt.24.01.2024 at 11.00 hours Other documents: (As mentioned in DTCN) The bidders have to participate in Online bidding only. Further details ca be seen from the website https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

> Sd./- Executive Engineer, RWSS Division, Rairangpo OIPR-25010/11/0015/2324



PHOTO POST



Members of the Sipoteni bear pack perform a ritual dance in Racova, northern Romania



Painted storks attempt to catch fish at the Pulicat Lake in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh



A street performer balances herself on a rope at the Maidan in Kolkata, West Bengal $\,$



Newborn babies lined up on a bed of Nowrosjee Wadia Maternity Hospital on New Year in Mumbai, Maharashtra



Fireworks light up Copacabana Beach during New Year celebrations in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Revellers from Brazil and beyond flocked to the beach for the celebrations



People ride a horse cart in Kolkata, West Bengal

AP/PTI/REUTERS PHOTOS



Demonstrators chant slogans during a protest outside the US consulate in Istanbul, Turkey to show solidarity with Palestinians amid the ongoing war in Gaza

national



What do you think of the progress achieved by India in various sectors in the last 10 years? Share your feedback directly with me through the Jan Man Survey on the NaMo App! NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

GRAP STAGE-LLL RESTRICTIONS REVOKED IN DELHI-NCR

The Centre Monday revoked the restrictions under Stage-III of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in Delhi-NCR with immediate effect. The Union Environment Ministry, however, said that restrictive actions under Stage-I to Stage-II of the GRAP will remain invoked and be implemented, monitored and reviewed by all agencies concerned in the entire NCR





dedication and self-sacrifices of each worker and

From New Year, should discharge true patriotism and Rajdharma by ensuring only

employment guarantee, because the rest of the government guarantees have proved to be more of deceitful politics of narrow nationalism

As the political head of the state, I will continue to reach out to him. I usually talk to him every three or six months and I plan



HIMANTA BISWA SARMA ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT **TAKES**

Rasgotra takes over as ITBP DG

New Delhi: IPS officer Rahul Rasgotra Monday took charge as the new director general of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), a paramilitary force tasked to guard the India-China Line of Actual Control. Rasgotra, a 1989-batch police officer of the Manipur cadre, was handed over the customary baton by his predecessor Anish Dayal Singh. Singh has been appointed as the DG of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

Drivers stage protests in MP

Bhopal/Indore/Gwalior:

Drivers of commercial vehicles, including trucks and tankers, stopped work in parts of Madhya Pradesh Monday and blocked roads at some places to protest against the provision in the new penal law regarding hitand-run accident cases involving motorists. Amid protests, people rushed to petrol pumps in various cities fearing the agitation would hit fuel supply.

Infant killed, 2 jawans hurt in encounter

Raipur: A 6-month-old girl was killed and her mother was hurt in firing between security forces and Naxalites in Bijapur in Chhattisgarh Monday, which also left two District Reserve Guard iawans injured. an official said. The gunfight took place at around 5pm in a forest near Mutvandi village under Gangaloor police station.

Six killed as car hits road median

Jamshedpur: Six people were killed and two others injured as their car hit a road media in Jharkhand's Jamshedpur city Monday morning, police said. The accident took place near Circuit House Square in Bistupur police station area around 5 am, an officer said. Jamshedpur's Senior Superintendent of Police Kaushal Kishore told PTI, "Eight persons were traveling in a five-seater car, which first hit a median and then a roadside pole".

3-yr-old rescued from borewell

Devbhumi Dwarka:

A three-year-old girl was rescued from an open borewell in Ran village in Devbhumi Dwarka district of Gujarat Monday night, nearly nine hours after she fell into it, in an operation that also involved teams of Army and NDRF, officials said.

197 cases detected in India: INSACOG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: A total of 197 cases of COVID-19 sub-variant JN.1 have been detected in the country so far, with Odisha joining the list of states that have detected the presence of the variant, according to INSACOG's data updated Monday.

Ten states and Union Territories have so far detected the presence of the JN.1 subvariant of the virus. These states are Kerala (83), Goa (51), Gujarat (34). Karnataka (eight). Maharashtra (eight), Rajasthan (five), Tamil Nadu (four), Telangana (two), Odisha (one) and Delhi (one), according to the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG).

180 Covid cases recorded in the country in December had the presence of JN.1, while 17 such cases were detected in November. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has classified JN.1 as a separate "variant of interest" given its rapidly-increasing spread, but said it poses a "low" global public health risk.

The JN.1 sub-variant of the coronavirus was previously classified as a variant of interest (VOI) as part of the BA.2.86 sublineages, the parent lineage that is classified as a VOI, the world body said. However, in recent weeks. JN.1 cases continued to be reported from multiple countries and its prevalence has rapidly increased globally.

Govt declares Goldy Brar

New Delhi, Jan 1: Canada-based gangster Satinderjit Singh alias Goldy Brar, who was the alleged mastermind of the murder of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, was Sunday designated terrorist by the government under the

anti-terror law UAPA. In a notification, the Union Home Ministry said Brar, backed by a Pakistan-based agency, has been involved in multiple killings and professes radical ideology. He figured in making threatening calls to pro-nationalist leaders, demanding ransom and posting the claims of killings on different social media platforms.

An activist of the banned Babbar Khalsa International, Brar has been involved in the smuggling of high-grade arms. ammunition and explosive materials through drones from across the border and supplying them for carrying out killings and also providing sharpshooters.

He hails from Sri Muktsar Sahib in Punjab and is presently residing in Brampton, Canada.

The home ministry said Brar and his associates have been conspiring to disrupt the peace, communal harmony and law and order in Puniab through nefarious designs including sabotage, raising of terror modules, carrying out targeted



Brar is also known to be a key member of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and had claimed responsibility for the murder of popular singer Moosewala in Punjab May 29, 2022

killings and other anti-national

A Red Corner Notice has been issued against him by Interpol and there is a non-bailable war rant against him.

the Fourth Schedule to the

72 ultras killed in J&K in 2023

New Delhi: A total of 72 terrorists, 50 of them having a foreign origin, were killed by security forces in Jammu and Kashmir in 2023, officials said Monday. As many as 91 terrorists are still active in the Union Territory, according to figures made available by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). Out of these 91, 66 are foreign terrorists and 25 locals, the data said. The CRPF is deployed extensively for rendering law and order duties and undertaking counter-terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

"In the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, in the Fourth Schedule, after serial number 55 and entries relating thereto, the following serial number and entries shall be inserted, namely:- '56. Satwinder Singh alias Satinderjit Singh alias Goldy Brar'," the notification said.



Chandrachud trashes

allegations against

collegium system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud Monday rubbished the allegation about lack of transparency in the collegium system where judges appoint judges to constitutional courts and desisted from responding to criticism of the Supreme Court judgement upholding the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution that bestowed special status on the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashir.

In a candid and free-wheeling interview with PTI, the 50th CJI responded to questions on several issues pertaining to the judiciary, including the criticism of the Supreme Court verdict upholding the abrogation of Article 370 and the five-judge constitution bench judgement

The INSACOG's data showed

The central government be-

lieves that Satwinder Singh alias Satinderjit Singh alias Goldy Brar is involved in terrorism and he is to be added as a terrorist in Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, the home ministry said. "Now, therefore, in the exercise

of the powers conferred by clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 35 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, the central government hereby makes the following amendment in the Fourth Schedule to the said Act, namely:-

refusing to legalise same-sex marriage. Justice Chandrachud also dealt with questions about criticism by eminent lawyers on allocation of cases to particular judges and 'bench hunting', and said the allocation of cases is not "lawyer-driven" and vowed to maintain the credibility of the institution of the Supreme Court.

He said the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) was never given a chance to work, leading to angst in political circles and friction in the working of the collegium system.

"To say that the collegium system is lacking in transparency would not be correct. We have taken steps to ensure that greater transparency is maintained. A sense of objectivity in the decision making process is maintained. But I must also share something and that's my caveat. When we consider judges for appointment in the Supreme Court we are dealing with the careers of the sitting judges of the high court. Responding to the criticism of the unanimous five-judge bench verdict of the Supreme Court upholding the scrapping of Article 370 of the Constitution. he said the judges decide a case "according to the Constitution

and the law".

SNIPPETS

India, Pak exchange list of nuclear installations

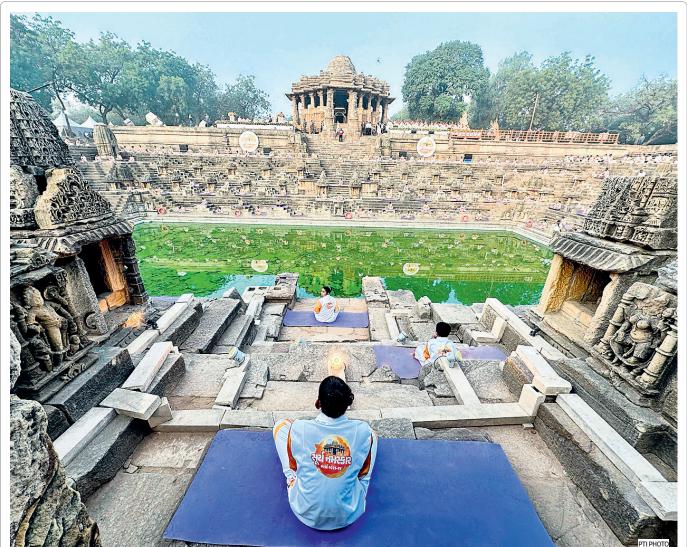
New Delhi: : India and Pakistan Monday exchanged a list of their nuclear installations under a bilateral pact that prohibits the two sides from attacking each other's atomic facilities, continuing an annual practice that began in 1992. It was done simultaneously through diplomatic channels in New Delhi and Islamabad. The exchange of the list came amid frosty ties between the two countries over the Kashmir issue as well as cross-border terrorism. "India and Pakistan today exchanged, through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad, the list of nuclear installations and facilities, covered under the Agreement on the prohibition of attack against nuclear installations and facilities between India and Pakistan," the MEA said. The agreement was signed December 31, 1988 and came into force January 27, 1991

IMD forecasts coldwave days for Central India

New Delhi: The weather office Monday cautioned about coldwave days in central parts of the country for January and forecast dense fog days over parts of northwest and east India for the next three days. Addressing a press conference monthly forecast for January, India Meteorological Department Director General Mrutynjay Mohapatra also forecast normal rainfall during the January-February-March period, raising expectations for a better wheat crop during the rabi season. Mohapatra said 2023 was the second warmest year since 1901 as the annual mean air temperature for the country was 0.65 degree Celsius above normal. The warmest year since 1901 was 2016 when the annual mean air temperature for the country was 0.710 degrees celsius above normal.

Himachal grants ST status to Hatti community

Shimla: Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu Monday announced granting of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to the Hatti community, settled across four assembly constituencies of Sirmaur district. A notification in this regard has been issued that clarified that the Scheduled Caste (SC) community, residing in Sirmaur, has been excluded from the ST status as per their demand. Sirmaur is one of the country's most backward districts. Nearly 50 per cent of the population in Sirmaur comprises Hatti community members. All people belonging to the Hatti community and residing in the trans-Giri area, excluding the Scheduled Castes, will get the benefit of the ST reservation. The Hattis of Shillai, Renuka, Pachhad and Paonta Sahib assembly constituencies will be benefitted. Chief Minister Sukhu said: "As per our commitment, we have issued the notification within 24 hours of the Centre clarifying on the issue of SCs being excluded from the notification."



FOR GOOD HEALTH: Yoga volunteers perform 'Suryanamaskar' to create awareness about yoga at the heritage Sun Temple in Modhera, Mehsana district, Gujarat

Cong slams govt over Aadhaar based payments in MGNREGA

THE OPPOSITION ALLEGED THAT MODI'S "WELL-KNOWN DISDAIN FOR MGNREGA HAS TRANSLATED INTO A SLEW OF EXPERIMENTS DESIGNED TO USE TECHNOLOGY AS A WEAPON TO EXCLUDE"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: With an Aadhaar-based system becoming mandatory for MGNREGA payments, the Congress Monday said the Modi government should "stop weaponising technology", especially Aadhaar, to deny the most vulnerable Indians their social welfare benefits.

Wage payments under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural **Employment Guarantee Scheme** will now be done only through the Aadhaar-Based Payment $System \, (ABPS), sources \, said \, on \,$ Monday. The last extension of the deadline to state governments to make the payments mandatory through the system ended December 31. The sources said it has been conveyed to



states that payments will now be made only through the ABPS. If any state has any grievance, it will be dealt with on a case-bycase basis, they said. In a statement, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "There are in total 25.69 crore MGNREGA workers of whom 14.33 crore are considered as active workers. As December 27, 34.8 per cent of

total registered workers (8.9 crore) and 12.7 per cent of active workers (1.8 crore) are still ineligible for ABPS.3

Despite many challenges highlighted by workers, practitioners and researchers in using ABPS for MGNREGA

payments, the Modi government has continued with its "destructive experiments with technology", he said.

"This is Prime Minister's cruel New Year gift to exclude crores of the poorest and marginalised Indians from earning a basic income," he alleged.

Ramesh pointed out that a statement issued by the MoRD dated August 30, 2023, made certain questionable claims such as job cards will not be deleted on the basis that the worker is

not eligible for APBS and that different "stakeholders" in certain "consultations" have found ABPS as the best route for making wage payment.

It also claimed that ABPS helps workers get their wage on time and avoids transaction rejections, Ramesh noted.

"First, since April 2022, an alarming 7.6 crore registered workers were deleted from the system. 1.9 crore registered workers were deleted from the system nine months into the current financial year. Ground verification of deleted workers has shown that a significant number of deletions have been wrongfully done -- as a result of the tearing hurry of the Modi government to implement Aadhaar authentication and ABPS," he alleged.

Minor murdered after failed rape attempt in Agra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

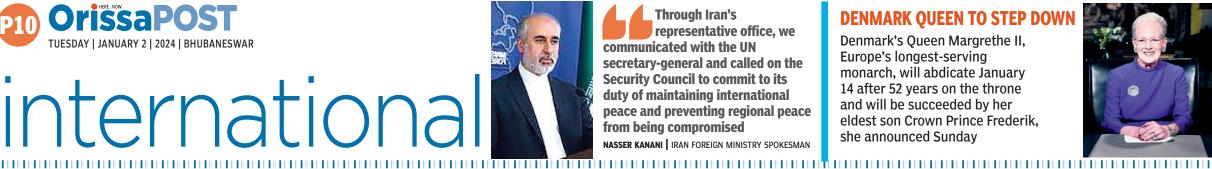
Agra, Jan 1: A six-year-old girl was drowned in a water tank and her head smashed with a stone to hide her identity after a failed rape bid, police said Monday. Police have arrested a 43-year-old private watchman who had been hired to guard the crops from stray cattle on charges of killing the girl.

"The body of a six-year-old girl was found December 30 in a village field under the jurisdiction of the Etmadpur

Police Station in Agra district." "As per the complaint of the father, an FIR was registered in the case under section 302 of IPC at Etmadpur Police Station in Agra district," Deputy Commissioner of Police (City) Suraj Kumar Rai told reporters.



international



Through Iran's representative office, we communicated with the UN secretary-general and called on the **Security Council to commit to its** duty of maintaining international peace and preventing regional peace from being compromised NASSER KANANI I IRAN FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN

DENMARK QUEEN TO STEP DOW!

Denmark's Queen Margrethe II, Europe's longest-serving monarch, will abdicate January 14 after 52 years on the throne and will be succeeded by her eldest son Crown Prince Frederik, she announced Sunday





We are willing to take direct action and we won't hesitate to take further action to deter threats to freedom of

navigation in the Red Sea

GRANT SHAPPS BRITISH DEFENCE SECRETAR'

Japan faces a multitude of significant challenges, including our responses to a society in which the population is shrinking and constitutional reform



FUMIO KISHIDA JAPANESE PM

If there are 100,000 or 200,000 Arabs in Gaza and not two million, the whole discourse about the day after will be

different. The removal of around 90 per cent of Gaza's residents would help achieve the goal

BEZALEL SMOTRICH | ISRAEL'S FAR-RIGHT FINANCE MINISTER

SHORT **TAKES**

Russia launches 90 drones

Kyiv: Russia launched a record 90 Shahed-type drones across Ukraine during the early hours of the New Year, and Russian President Vladimir Putin said his country would "intensify" its attacks on its neighbour. Speaking during a New Year's Day visit to a military hospital, Putin said Ukraine could expect more such strikes after shelling of the Russian border city of Belgorod that killed more than two dozen people and wounded more than 100 others. "They want to intimidate us and create uncertainty within our country. We will intensify strikes. Not a single crime against our civilian population will go unpunished," the Russian leader said, describing the barrage of Belgorod as a "terrorist act".

New visa norms come into force

London: International students, including Indians, starting courses at British universities this month will no longer be able to bring family members on all but postgraduate research courses and courses with government-funded scholarships under tougher UK visa norms effective from Monday. The UK Home Office said the changes, first announced by former home secretary Suella Braverman in May last year, are aimed at clamping down on people using the student visa as a backdoor route to work in the UK and will see an estimated 140,000 fewer people come to the UK.

China, N Korea to firm up ties

Beijing: Close allies China and North Korea Monday announced plans to jointly designate 2024 as the 'China-DPRK Friendship Year' and launched a series of activities, amid speculation over Beijing's concerns over Pyongyang moving closer to Moscow. Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in their New Year greetings announced plans to hold a series of events designating this year as Friendship Year, state-run Xinhua news

21 arrested

agency reported.

Multan (Pakistan): Pakistan's counterterrorism police said Monday they arrested 21 members of outlawed militant group the Pakistani Taliban, which has been behind several deadly attacks across the country. Acting on intelligence information, the arrests were made in the eastern Punjab province over the past two weeks, the provincial **Counterterrorism Department** said in a statement.

The Indian Embassy in Japan Monday set up an emergency control room for Indians wanting any assistance in the wake of the tsunami alerts issued by the authorities after a series of strong earthquakes jolted the country's western

ASSOCIATED PRESS

coastline

Tokyo, Dec 31: Japan dropped its highest-level tsunami alert, issued following a series of major earthquakes Monday, but told residents of coastal areas not to return to their homes as deadly waves could still come.

The quakes, the largest of which had a magnitude of 7.6, started a fire and collapsed buildings on the west coast of Japan's main island. Honshu. It was unclear how many people might have been killed or hurt.

The Japan Meteorological Agency reported more than a dozen quakes in the Japan Sea off the coast of Ishikawa and nearby prefectures shortly after 4 p.m. At least six homes were damaged by the quakes, with people trapped inside, government spokesman Yoshimasa Hayashi said. A fire broke out in Wajima city, Ishikawa Prefecture, and electricity was out for more than 30,000 households, he said.

The agency initially issued a major tsunami warning for Ishikawa and lower-level tsunami warnings or advisories for the rest of the western coast of the **QUAKES SLAM JAPAN** The quakes, the largest of which damaged by the quakes, with



Cracks are seen on the ground in Wajima, Ishikawa prefecture, Japan

island of Honshu, as well as the northernmost of its main islands, Hokkaido.

The warning was downgraded to a regular tsunami several hours later, meaning the waters could still reach up to 3 metres (10 feet). Aftershocks could also slam the same area over the next few days, it said. Japanese public broadcaster NHK TV initially warned torrents of water could reach as high as 5 metres (16.5 feet).

NHK said the tsunami waves could keep returning, and warnings were continuing to be aired hours after the initial alert. Several aftershocks also rocked the region. Havashi stressed that it was critical for people in coastal areas to get away from the oncoming tsunami. "Every minute counts. Please evacuate to a safe area immediately," he said.

People returning to get their wallets and other belongings have been known to be swept away and drowned even hours after the first evacuation warning. People were evacuated to stadiums, where they will likely have to stay for a few days.

Hayashi said no reports of deaths or injuries had been confirmed from the quakes, saying the situation was still unclear. Japan's military was taking part in the rescue efforts, he said. Japanese media footage showed people running through the streets, and red smoke spewing from a fire in a residential neighbourhood. Photos showed a crowd of people, including a woman with a

had a magnitude of 7.6, started a fire and collapsed buildings on the west coast of Japan's main island, Honshu

baby on her back, standing by huge cracks that had ripped through the pavement. Some people sustained minor injuries when they tripped and fell while fleeing, or objects fell off shelves and hit them, according to NHK.

Bullet trains in the area were halted, although some parts of the service were restored by evening. Parts of the highway were also closed, and water pipes had burst, according to NHK. Some cell phone services in the region weren't working.

The Meteorological Agency said in a nationally broadcast news conference that more major quakes could hit the area over the next week, especially in the next two or three days. More than a dozen strong quakes had been detected in the region. with risks of setting off landslides and houses collapsing, according to the agency.

people trapped inside, government spokesman Yoshimasa Hayashi said Takashi Wakabayashi, a worker at a convenience store in Ishikawa Prefecture, said some items had tumbled from the shelves, but the biggest problem was the huge crowd

customers at three times the level of usual," he said. Tsunami warnings were also issued for parts of North Korea and Russia. The Japanese government has set up a special emergency centre to gather information on the quakes and tsunami and relay them speedily to residents

of people who had shown up

to stock up on bottled water,

rice balls and bread."We have

Fumio Kishida told reporters. Japan is an extremely quake-prone nation. In March 2011, a major quake and tsunami caused meltdowns at a nuclear plant.

to ensure safety, Prime Minister

North and South Korea brace for tsunami

Seoul: A tsunami measuring under one metre (3.3 ft) reached South Korea's east coast in the wake of a massive earthquake that hit Japan Monday, South Korea's meteorological agency said, which added there may be more and larger waves in the next hours. The first tsunami to reach South Korea's coast was 67 cm (2.2 ft) but it may increase in size after the initial waves and may continue for more than 24 hours, the meteorological agency said. Separately, North Korea issued tsunam warnings for its coast of possible waves of more than 2 metres, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported, citing the North's state radio. South Korea's Gangwon province warned residents to take precautions and evacuate to higher ground, according to the Ministry of Interior and Safety.

US sinks Houthi boats, 10 killed

Copenhagen/Dubai/Cairo, Jan 1: US helicopters repelled an attack by Iran-backed Houthi militants on a Maersk container vessel in the Red Sea, sinking three boats and killing 10 mili tants, according to accounts by American, Maersk, and Houthi officials Sunday. The naval battle occurred Sunday as the attackers sought to board the Singapore-flagged Maersk Hangzhou, Maersk and US Central Command (CENTCOM) said. Helicopters from the USS Eisenhower and USS Gravely joined the ship's security team in repelling the attackers after receiving a distress call, CENT-COM said.

Maersk said it was pausing all sailing through the Red Sea for 48 hours after the attack. A spokesman for the Houthis said the group carried out the attack because the ship's crew refused to heed warning calls. He said 10 Houthi naval personnel were "dead and missing" after their boats were attacked by US forces in the Red Sea.

The naval battle underlines the risk of a regional escalation in fighting as Israel continues with its relentless bombing campaign following a Hamas surprise cross-border attack on Israeli towns on October 7 that left 1,200 dead, and took 240 hostages.

Israel's air and artillery bombardment has killed more than 21,800 people, according to Gazan

Israel shifting soldiers



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tel Aviv (Israel), Dec 31: Thousands of Israeli soldiers are being shifted out of the Gaza Strip, the military said Monday, in the first significant drawdown of troops since the war began as forces continued to bear down on the main city in the southern half of the enclave.

The troop movement could signal that fighting is being scaled back in some areas of Gaza, particularly in the northern half where the military has said it is close to assuming operational control. Israel has been under pressure from its chief ally the United States, to begin to switch to lower-intensity fighting.

Word of the drawdown came ahead of a visit by Secretary of State Antony Blinken to the region and after the Biden administration bypassed Congress for the second time this month to approve an emergency weapons sale to Israel.

But fierce fighting continued in other areas of Gaza, especially the southern city Khan Younis and central areas of the territory. Israel has pledged to charge ahead until its war aims have been achieved, including dismantling Hamas, which has ruled Gaza for 16 years.

The military said in a statement Monday that five brigades, or several thousand troops, were being taken out of Gaza in the coming weeks for training and rest.

In a briefing Sunday that first announced the troop withdrawal without specifying how many forces were leaving, army spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari did not say whether the decision meant Israel was launching a new phase of the war.

Israel Supreme Court strikes down iudicial reforms

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, Jan 1: Israel's Supreme Court Monday struck down a key component of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's contentious judicial overhaul, a decision that threatens to reopen the fissures in Israeli society that preceded the country's ongoing war against Hamas.

Those divisions were largely been put aside while the country focuses on the war, which was triggered by a bloody cross-border attack by Hamas.

Monday's court decision could reignite those tensions, which sparked months of mass protests against the government and had rattled the cohesion of the pow-

erful military. There was no immediate reaction from Netanvahu. In Monday's 8-7 majority decision. the court narrowly voted to overturn a law passed in July that prevents judges from overturning government decisions they deem

"unreasonable" Opponents had argued that Netanyahu's effort to remove the standard of reasonability opens the door to corruption and improper appointments of unqualified cronies to important positions.

Yunus jailed for six months while Yunus was in the dock.

YUNUS WON THE **NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IN** 2006 FOR HIS ANTI-**POVERTY CAMPAIGN, EARNING BANGLADESH** THE REPUTATION OF **BEING THE HOME OF MICROCREDIT THROUGH HIS GRAMEEN BANK, WHICH HE FOUNDED IN 1983**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Jan 1: Bangladesh's Nobel laureate economist Dr Muhammad Yunus was Monday sentenced to six months in jail by a court for violating the labour laws, a verdict termed as "politically motivated" by his supporters ahead of the January 7 general elections

The 83-year-old economist, who was present in court, sought bail after the ruling, which Third Labour Court Judge Sheikh Merina Sultana granted imme diately for a month in exchange for a Taka 5,000 (USD 45) bond. The court gave the defence 30 days to appeal.

Yunus won the Nobel Peace



Prize in 2006 for his anti-poverty campaign, earning Bangladesh the reputation of being the home of microcredit through his Grameen Bank, which he founded in 1983. Yunus and three of his colleagues in Grameen Telecom-- one of the firms he founded-- were accused of violating labour laws when they failed to create a workers' welfare fund in the company. Judge Sultana ordered Yunus

to serve six months of simple or non-rigorous imprisonment for violating the law as the Grameen Telecom chairman, along with three other executives of the social business company.

The allegation of violating the Labour Law against him has been proved. It appears that the allegation has not been barred by limitation (either)," the judge said, pronouncing the judgment

She also slapped a Taka 25,000 fine (USD 227.82) on each of them, adding that they would have to serve 10 more days in jail in case of a default.

Under the law, all four can appeal against the verdict in the High Court. The verdict comes just days ahead of the January 7 general election in Bangladesh. Describing the judgment as "po-_ litically motivated", his supporters said the charges were filed to harass him.

Last month, after a court appearance for the hearing, Yunus rejected claims of profiting from Grameen Telecom or any of the more than 50 social business firms he founded in Bangladesh. "They were not for my personal benefit," he said.

Grameen Telecom owns 34 per cent of Bangladesh's largest mobile phone company Grameenphone. Yunus' lawyers called the case "meritless, false and ill-motivated" and claimed it was only aimed to harass and humiliate Yunus before the global community.

The Nobel laureate is also facing a series of charges relating to labour law and misappropriation of money. The economist was on a protracted row with the incumbent government due to obscure reasons.

Stopping China from leading the Global South

A GLOBAL SOUTH LED BY BEIJING WILL BE **FAR MORE ANTAGONISTIC TO THE UNITED** STATES AND THE WEST THAN ONE IN WHICH **INDIA PLAYS A LARGER ROLE**

ast year, Chinese President Xi Jinping sent his premier, Li Qiang, to lead the country's G20 summit, which India convened in New Delhi in September. Though some observers speculated that Xi's reluctance to attend the summit was due to its location, the Chinese authorities did not provide an explanation for his choice to skip such a prominent event. Ultimately, the Narendra Modi government in India used the G20 summit to present India as a leader and future champion for the Global South. Xi was hesitant to use his authority to support such messaging. China was not invited to the second "voice of the Global South" summit

that India arranged in November. Many US policymakers see India as a possible bulwark against an ambitious and aggressive China. In recent years. Chinese and Indian troops have sparred over the two countries' disputed border, and the Indian public has grown increasingly hostile to its neighbour to the north. Officials in New Delhi worry about the economic and military inroads Beijing has made in India's South Asian backyard, including in Myanmar, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. As a result, the United States hopes to draw India, a country that has traditionally eschewed formal alliances and prized its autonomy, into a closer alignment.

But friction between India and China extends beyond their shared border and the region to a much bigger arena. The grow-



ing rivalry between the two countries includes a competition for influence and even leadership among the far-flung countries of the Global South

However, New Delhi's and Beijing's respective visions for the Global South differ in important ways. Where China seeks to supplant the Westernled international order, India instead wants to reform it. India views itself as a bridge between

the Global South and the developed world, seeking to foster meaningful conversations and ensuring that the voice of the former reaches the high tables of global governance. By contrast, China sees itself at the top of an alternative world order-what it calls a "community of common destiny"to that constructed by Western powers and seeks to enlist Global South countries into

the ranks of its coalition. As Modi said, "If the global South has to make that high jump, India can be that shoulder

to propel it ahead." The problem for New Delhi is that both China's rhetorical posture and its material largesse may win it more friends in the Global South than India's gentler criticism of the international order. On its own, India does not have the resources to match China's economic overtures to the Global South.

The rise of China as a selfstyled southern superpower demands that Western powers pay more attention to the political narratives circulating in the Global South. Abetting India's efforts in the global South will help foil China's grand ambitions. The United States and the West must work with India to facilitate economic and infrastructural assistance for developing countries. They must also listen to India's sober arguments about the challenges confronting the Global South

when it comes to the restructuring of sovereign debt, waiving patents for vaccines, and reforming global institutions. Washington must realize that reforming the current global institutional order is far better than contemplating an expanding, rival China-led world order.

A Global South led by Beijing will be far more antagonistic to the United States and the West than one in which India plays a larger role. Despite New Delhi's increasingly instrumental view of the Global South, its non-ideological approach to the developing world could also help bridge the gap between poorer countries and the developed world. As a powerful Global South country and an aspirant for great-power status in the prevailing order, India has the ability to traverse major fault lines in the international system. Washington must make use of this unique role that-New Delhi can play in world politics.

business



Globally, the world needs India to become a reliable challenger to China's supply-chain dominance. That is the great opportunity of 2024. That is what will fuel the lift-off. **Investment is going to flow into India in unprecedented volumes** ANAND MAHINDRA | CHAIRMAN, MAHINDRA GROUP

A350 TO TAKE OFF FROM JAN 22

Air India will start operating India's first A350 aircraft on the domestic routes from January 22, with the first flight from Bangalore to Mumbai. The A350-900 aircraft will have a three-class cabin configuration with 316 seats. There will be 28 business class, 24 premium economy and 264 economy seats





We are seeing several banks and non-banks experimenting with AI. Global experience, so far, however, suggests that such

deployment is mostly limited to back-office work and optimisation of business processes to deliver

M RAJESHWAR RAO DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RB

India's share in cumulative global greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions has been current emission is 7 per cent, despite its population share

ARUN KUMAR SINGH | CHAIRMAN, ONGC

About 25,000 tonne of kharif onion has so



result, the all-India average retail price of onion has come down hy 27.58 per cent to ₹42 per kg from over a month ago

ROHIT KUMAR SINGH | SECRETARY, CONSUMER AFFAIRS

SHORT TAKES

ATF price cut 4%

New Delhi: Jet fuel or ATF price Monday was cut by 4 per cent, the third straight monthly reduction, and commercial cooking gas (LPG) rates were marginally lowered by ₹1.50 per 19-kg cylinder in line with international benchmarks. However, the price of domestic LPG -- used in household kitchens for cooking purposes -- remained unchanged at ₹903 per 14.2-kg cylinder. Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was cut by ₹4,162.5, or 3.9 per cent, in the national capital to ₹101,993.17 per kl, according to price notifications of state-owned fuel retailers. This is the third straight monthly reduction in jet fuel prices. ATF price was cut by almost 6 per cent (Rs 6,854.25 per kl) in November and by ₹5,189.25, or 4.6 per cent, in December.

Fuel sales drop

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel sales in India slumped in December as setting in of winter tapered demand, preliminary data of stateowned firms showed Monday Petrol sales of the three stateowned firms, which control 90 per cent of the fuel market. fell 1.4 per cent to 2.72 million tonne in December 2023 when compared to the year-ago period, while diesel demand dropped 7.8 per cent to 6.73 million tonne. The onset of the winter season in northern India led to the tapering of airconditioning demand. Monthon-month petrol sales dropped 4.9 per cent when compared to 2.86 million tonne consumption in November, Diesel demand too was down 0.8 per cent monthon-month when compared to 6.79 million tonne in November.

D-St kicks off '24 on flat note

IN 2023, THE BENCHMARKS CLIMBED NEARLY 20%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 1: Stock markets kicked off the New Year on a flat note with benchmark Sensex closing with modest gains of 31 points in a highly volatile trading session Monday helped by buying in energy, services and telecom shares.

The 30-shares barometer scaled new intraday record high of 72,561.91 before closing at 72,271.94, a gain of 31.68 points or 0.04 per cent over the last close. During the day, it hit a low of 72,031.23 and a high of 72,561.91.

The broader Nifty also hit its all-time intraday high of 21,834.35 before settling higher by 10.50 points or 0.05 per cent at 21,741.90. As many as 22 Nifty shares advanced while 28 declined.

Key stock indices remained volatile throughout the session as traders were indecisive in the absence of global cues, analvsts said.

"Market exhibited strength led by optimism on rate cuts, easing global inflation, and softer

TOP GAINERS **BSE Sensex** 2 80 Nestle India Previous day close: Change ____ +31.68 72,240.26 2.00 Tech Mahindra 1.25 Tata Motors 1.16 HCL Tech LOSERS -1.92 Bharti Airtel -1.43 M&M -0.66 Bajaj Finserv 72,271.94 -0.53 HDFC Bank 72,000 --0.53 NTPC

bond yields. But profit booking was visible at higher levels as lingering concerns over Red Sea disruptions pose short-term risks to global supply chains and freight costs," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit

Financial Services, said. The spotlight of this week is also on FOMC minutes which will provide an insight for 2024 rate cut. Nair added.

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.

On the Sensex chart, Nestle, Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, Tata Motors, Wipro and ITC were among the

In contrast, Bharti Airtel, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, HDFC Bank, NTPC and Hindustan Unilever were among the laggards.

Momentum in mid and small caps remained strong, buoyed by a positive macro-outlook but private banks experienced a reversal trend.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.73 per cent and midcap index advanced 0.54 per cent.

Among the indices, energy jumped 0.82 per cent, telecommunication climbed 0.76 per cent, services (0.73 per cent), commodities (0.59 per cent), oil & gas (0.64 per cent) and industrials (0.35 per cent).

₹ FALLS **5 PAISE**

The rupee started the New Year on a weak note, depreciating by 5 paise to 83.21 against the US dollar amid a muted trend in domestic equities and dollar demand from importers. Forex traders said the rupee traded in a narrow range in the absence of global cues. Global crude oil markets were closed for New Year Day holiday. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.18 and finally settled at 83.21 (provisional) against the dollar. down by 5 paise from its previous close. On Friday, the rupee appreciated 4 paise to settle at 83.16 against the US dollar on the last trading day of 2023.

Auto, bankex and consumer durables were the laggards. Asian and European markets were closed Monday for the New Year. The US markets ended marginally lower Friday.

According to exchange data, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹1,459.12 crore Friday.

The BSE benchmark fell 170.12 points or 0.23 per cent to settle at 72,240.26 on the last trading day of 2023 on Friday. The Nifty declined 47.30 points or 0.22 per cent to settle at 21,731.40.

GST mop-up rises 10% to ₹1.64L-cr

THIS MARKS THE **SEVENTH MONTH SO FAR THIS YEAR** WITH COLLECTIONS **EXCEEDING ₹1.60L-CR**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections jumped 10 per cent to about ₹1.64 lakh crore in December compared to ₹1.49 lakh crore in the same month a year ago. the finance ministry said Monday.

During the April-December 2023 period, gross GST collection witnessed a robust 12 per cent growth, reaching ₹14.97 lakh crore, as against ₹13.40 lakh crore collected in the same period of the previous year, the ministry said in a statement.

The average monthly gross GST collection of ₹1.66 lakh crore in the first nine-month period this year represents a 12 per cent increase compared to the ₹1.49 lakh crore average recorded in the corresponding period of FY23, it said.

"The gross GST revenue col-



During April-Dec 2023 period, gross GST collection witnessed a robust 12% growth, reaching ₹14.97L-cr, as against ₹13.40L-cr YoY

lected in the month of December, 2023 is ₹1,64,882 crore out of which CGST is ₹30,443 crore, SGST is ₹37.935 crore, IGST is ₹84.255 crore (including ₹41.534 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is ₹12,249 crore (including ₹1,079 crore collected on import of goods)," it said.

Notably, this marks the seventh month so far this year with collections exceeding ₹1.60 lakh crore, it said.

Nearly 97% of ₹2,000 notes returned to banking system

FROM ₹3.56L-CR OF ₹2,000 DENOMINATION **NOTES IN CIRCULATION TO** ₹9,330CR STILL WITH **PUBLIC, SAYS RBI**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai. Jan 1: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Monday said that nearly 97.38 per cent of the ₹2,000 bank notes have been returned to the banking system, and only about ₹9,330 crore worth of the notes are still with

On May 19, the RBI announced the withdrawal of ₹2,000 denomination bank notes from circulation. 'The total value of ₹2,000

bank notes in circulation. which amounted to ₹3.56 lakh crore as at the close of business on May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal of ₹2,000 bank notes was announced, has declined to ₹9.330 crore as at the close of business on December 29, 2023," the RBI said in a state-

Thus, 97.38 per cent of the high-value currency in circulation as of May 19, 2023, has since been returned to the banking system, it added.

The ₹2,000 bank notes continue to be legal tender," the RBI added.

People can deposit and/or exchange ₹2,000 bank notes at the 19 RBI offices across the country. People can also send ₹2,000 bank notes through India Post from any post office to any of the RBI Issue Offices for credit to



their bank accounts in India. Public and entities holding such notes were initially asked to either exchange or deposit them in bank accounts by September 30. The deadline was later extended to October 7. Deposit and exchange services at bank branches were discontinued on October 7.

Starting October 8, individuals have been provided with the choice of either exchanging the currency or having the equivalent sum credited to their bank accounts at the 19 offices of the RBL

Meanwhile, queues are being witnessed during working hours at the RBI offices for exchange/deposit of ₹2,000 notes. The 19 RBI offices depositing/exchanging the bank notes are in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Belapur, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu, Kanpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, New Delhi. Patna Thiruvananthapuram.

The ₹2,000 bank notes were introduced in November 2016 following the demonetisation of the then-prevailing ₹1,000 and ₹500 bank notes.

Automakers see best-ever annual sales

FOR THE FIRST TIME, PV DESPATCHES CROSSED THE 4 MILLION MILESTONE IN 2023 PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: Passenger vehicle sales in India touched a

record high of 41.08 lakh units in 2023, growing by 8.3 per cent over the previous year driven by SUVs, which accounted for almost half of the total despatches from manufacturers to dealers. The record sales have been

achieved despite an increase in the average price of vehicles to ₹11.5 lakh last year as compared to ₹10.58 lakh in 2022 Market leader Maruti Suzuki,

Hyundai Motor India, Tata Motors and Toyota Kirloskar Motor reported their best-ever annual sales in 2023.

"If you look at January to December 2023, wholesales crossed 41.08 lakh. This is the first time the industry has ever crossed the 4 million mark. That, I think is a huge milestone in the history of the Indian passenger vehicles (PV) industry," Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer (Marketing and Sales) Shashank Srivastava said.



The previous record for the highest annual PV sales was recorded in 2022

Srivastava further said the industry estimate for retail sales in 2023 is 40.51 lakh against 37.30 lakh in 2022, at a growth of 8.6 per cent.

Maruti Suzuki India crossed the annual sales milestone of 20 lakh units in calendar year 2023, which includes its highest ever calendar year exports of 2,69,046 units.

Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) reported a 9 per cent year-on-year increase in total sales at 7,65,786 units in 2023, on the back of record annual domestic sales. The company had sold a total of 7,00,811 units in 2022. Homegrown automaker Tata

Motors also said it clocked its best

sales in a calendar year. Another automaker, Toyota Kirloskar Motor also reported its best ever annual sales with a 46 per growth in wholesales at

2,33,346 units in 2023. Mahindra & Mahindra said its passenger vehicles sales in December 2023 stood at 35,174 units, as against 28,445 units in December 2022, up 24 per cent.

Record 8.18cr ITRs filed for AY2023-24 till December 31

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: A record of 8.18 crore tax returns have been filed until December 31 this fiscal against 7.51 crore I-T returns filed at the end of December 31, 2022, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said Monday.

This is 9 per cent more than the total Income Tax Returns (ITRs) filed for 2022-23, the CBDT said in a statement.

The total number of audit reports and other forms filed during the period is 1.60 crore, as against 1.43 crore audit reports____ and forms filed in the corresponding period of the preceding year, it said.

"The Income-Tax Department appreciates taxpayers and tax professionals for making compliances in time, leading to a surge in filing of ITRs, resulting in a new record of 8.18 crore ITRs for the AY 2023-2024 filed up to 31.12.2023 as against 7.51 crore ITRs filed up to 31.12.2022,' it said.

TAX TROUBLE

LIC gets GST notice for ₹806cr; to appeal

New Delhi: The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has received a demand order for collection of GST along with interest and penalty for the state of Maharashtra to the tune of ₹806 crore.LIC received the GST notice of ₹806.3 crore



from the Deputy Commissioner of State Tax, Mumbai. LIC will file an appea before the Commissioner (Appeals), Mumbai, against the said order within the prescribed timeline. The total includes GST worth ₹365.02 crore, penalty of ₹404.7 crore and interest of ₹36.5 crore

UltraTech slapped two GST demand orders

New Delhi: Leading cement maker UltraTech Cement has received two demand orders, interest and penalties totalling ₹72.06

lakh from the GST



authorities. The company said it will challenge the orders before the appellate authorities. It has received an order from Assistant Commissioner, Bathinda, for a demand of "Rs 25.11 lakh together with interest and penalty, alleging that the ISD (Input Service Distributor) credit not reflected" in the statement of FY18, the Aditya Birla Group firm said in a regulatory filing Friday.

Now printing 'date of mfg' and 'unit

NEW YEAR

Quick-comm, food-delivery firms on a roll

ZOMATO, BLINKIT, SWIGGY FOOD AND INSTAMART WITNESS RECORD ORDERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

industry executives.

New Delhi, Jan 1: Food delivery and quick commerce platforms like Zomato, Blinkit and Swiggy Food and Instamart witnessed a massive order surge on New Year's Eve, said senior

The top executives posted regular updates on microblogging site X (formerly Twitter) informing about the order trends on New Year's Eve Sunday

Zomato CEO Deepinder Goyal shared that the food delivery platform delivered almost as many orders on New Year's Eve (NYE) 2023 as it did on NYE 15,

16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 combined. "Fun fact: We've delivered almost as many orders on NYE 23



as we did on NYE 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 combined. Excited about

the future!" Goyal posted on X. Albinder Dhindsa, Co-Founder and CEO of Zomato-owned quick commerce delivery platform Blinkit, stated in a post on

Sunday evening that it logged

the highest-ever orders in a day and orders per minute.

In a post on X, Swiggy CEO Rohit Kapoor informed: "NYE'24 broke all records across Swiggy Food and Instamart! With the team at the stroke of midnight could not be happier!"

In another post, he shared that the orders per minute on Swiggy Instamart surpassed their previous high registered on the World Cup Finals day.

"The orders per minute (OPM) on Swiggy Instamart is the highest we have seen so far. It's surpassed our previous high during the WC Finals by 1.6X," Kapoor said.

LOVE FOR BIRYANI

Over 4.8 lakh biryanis were ordered on Swiggy during New Year's Eve celebrations with a peak of 1,244 units of the dish being ordered every minute, sources employed with the food delivery platform said Monday.

While close to one in every four biryani orders were placed

in Hyderabad, Swiggy Instamart -- the platform for ordering groceries and home essentials -did 1.6x more orders per minute in comparison to the previous record high witnessed during the 2023 Cricket World Cup final November 19

"Almost a million users were active on the Swiggy app in the last hour. That's more than the number of people who will join the gym starting tomorrow," the app said in a post on 'X' at 9.50 PM Sunday. Over a million people ordered food for others this year, it said.

Swiggy Instamart in a separate post at 9.24 PM Sunday said orders for condoms peaked at 1,722 condoms per hour in the morning.

sale price' on packaged items must

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: Printing the 'date of manufacturing' and 'unit sale price' has become mandatory on all packaged commodities effective from Monday, according to Consumer Affairs

Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh. Earlier, companies were given the option to either print the 'date of manufacturing' or 'date of import' or date of packaging on the packaged commodities.

Now, companies have been mandated to print only the 'date of manufacturing', along with the 'unit sale price', as per the latest notification issued by the

Consumer Affairs Ministry. Since packaged items are sold in different quantities, it is important that consumers are aware about the 'unit sale price' of what is packed and make an informed purchase decision, the consumer affairs secretary told

Printing the date of manufacturing will help consumers know how old the packaged item is and help them make conscious purchase decisions.

Similarly, the printing of unit sale price will make it easy for consumers to ascertain the cost in unit terms.

For example, a packaged wheat flour of 2.5 kg will have a unit sale price per kg, along with the Maximum Retail Price (MRP). Similarly, a packaged commodity of less than one kg quantity will have a sale price per gram,-

along with the total MRP of the product.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Jan 1: Batting stalwart David Warner Monday announced his retirement from ODI cricket alongside the end of his Test career here this week but he will continue to play T20 cricket for Australia.

The 37-year-old swashbuckling opener, however, kept the door open for himself to be available for the 2025 Champions Trophy if the Australian team needs him.

Ahead of his swansong Test at his hometown venue SCG Warner revealed that Australia's World Cup final victory over India in November was his last match in the 50-over format.

"I'm definitely retiring from one-day cricket as well. That was something that I had said through the (50-over) World Cup (in India in 2023), get through that, and winning it in India, I think that's a massive achievement," he said at a press conference at the SCG on Monday.

"So I'll make that decision today, to retire from those forms, which does allow me to go and play some other leagues around the world and sort of get the one-day team moving forward a little bit," said an emotional Warner.

"I know there's a Champions Trophy coming up. If I'm playing decent cricket in two years' time and I'm around and they need someone, I'm going to be available.'

Considered as one of Australia's and world's most destructive batters in recent times Warner ended his one-day career as a two-time world champion after finishing the 2023 World Cup in India as his team's leading run scorer.

The left-handed opener made his ODI debut in 2009 in a match against South Africa in Hobart. Since then, he has played

161 ODIs, scoring 6932 runs at an average of 45.30 with the help of 22 hundreds and 33 fifties.

ADIEU TO ODIs

He is Australia's sixth-highest run-scorer in men's ODIs and second on the hundreds list behind Ricky Ponting who played 205 more ODI innings than Warner. In the 111 Tests he has played so far, Warner has scored 8695 runs at an average of 44.58 with 26 hundreds and 36 fifties.

He will continue to be available for Australia in T20 cricket and is hopeful of featuring in their World Cup campaign in that format in June in the Caribbean and USA. After the ODI World Cup in India, Warner had hinted at pushing on until 2027 although he will have been 41 by then. He said that the way the team had rebounded in India made it the ideal finishing point. Warner holds an IPL

contract with the Delhi Capitals and he could be one of the most sought after cricketers on the domestic T20 circuit. "I definitely am keen to pursue playing Big Bash next year. There's going to be conversations behind the



Obviously I've joined the Fox commentary team next year during the Test series against India, which I'm looking forward to. There's a BBL window that we're able to play, and then quite clearly there has been a lot of talk about the ILT20 which will be starting, I'm pretty sure, after the

ALREADY MOVED ON

The controversy surrounding the lifetime captaincy ban on Warner following the 2018 balltampering scandal could have been handled differently but he has moved on from that episode, the retiring batting stalwart said here Monday.

Warner was handed a lifetime leadership ban after team-mate Cameron Bancroft was caught with

India look to salvage pride in final Oz ODI **ANNOUNCES** RETIREMENT

Mumbai, Jan 1: Captain Harmanpreet Kaur's form with the bat will be in focus as the Indian Women's team looks to salvage pride and end a nine-match losing streak at home against a dominant Australia in the third and final ODI here Tuesday.

FROM

50-OVER

FORMAT

AHEAD OF

SWANSONG

BUT KEEPS

DOOR OPEN

FOR 2025 ICC

CHAMPIONS

TROPHY

TEST AT SCG.

Kaur has led her side admirably well in a long home season with a couple of historic results in the Tests, but this period has also witnessed her struggle with the bat. She has scored runs in double digits only thrice in eight innings across formats this season with her highest being 49 against England in the one-off Test last month.

In the historic win against Australia in the one-off Test, Kaur was out for a duck in India's first innings and she was not required to bat in the second essay. In the two ODIs against Australia who have taken an unassailable 2-0 lead in the threematch series, her scores were 9

While India made the most of the favourable home conditions in the one-off Test, the home team's frailties have come to the fore again in white-ball cricket in the last two ODIs.

If India were ordinary with the ball in the first ODI wherein they lost by six wickets even after posting their highest-ever total of 282/8 in the format, Kaur's side dropped as many as seven catches in the second game. as Australia get away with a three-run win.

At the same time, Richa Ghosh's heroics in the second ODI in a stiff chase and Jemimah Rodrigues' consistency have delivered the goods with the bat for India. Ghosh is India's new find in No.3 and to have an aggressive batter in the top order gives the hosts a lot of firepower.

Pressure will be on the likes of Amanjot Kaur and Deepti Sharma, who could not finish



the game for India despite the equation being almost run-aball in the second ODI.

India's defeat by six wickets in the first ODI and narrowly by three runs in the second extended their plight at home against Australia, whom they have not beaten even once in the 50-over format in the last 16 years since February 2007.

India will host the 2025 Women's 50-over World Cup and with the core of the squad already determined, the task hereon would be to improve in all departments, particularly fielding.

Australia, on their part, would be keen on putting a better show in the field after dropping a few regulation chances in the last match, while big runs are awaited from skipper Alyssa Healy.

MATCHDAY

IND Women vs AUS Women 3rd One Day International Time: 01:30 pm

Telecast: Sports 18 Network Stream: Jio Cinema

ad-hoc panel, suspension



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: Indian wrestling teetered on the edge of a deeper crisis with Sanjay Singh, President of the suspended WFI, Monday declaring that they will soon organise the national championships and insisting that they neither recognise the suspension of their newly-elected body by Sports Ministry nor the ad-hoc panel.

Three days after the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) held its polls, the ministry suspended the sports body citing several violations of rules December 24.

On the request of the government, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) then formed a three-member panel, headed by Bhupender Singh Bajwa, to manage the day-to-day affairs of the body.

The other members of the committee are former hockey player MM Somaya and ex-shuttler Maniusha Kanwar. The ad hoc panel announced that it will host the senior national championships in Jaipur from February 2-5.

Sanjay, though, remained combative and said they will not cooperate with the ad-hoc panel and will organise the Nationals. 'We got elected democratically. The Returning Officer had signed the papers, how do they ignore that. We do not recognise this adhoc panel," Sanjay told PTI.

Asked how will they organise they Nationals, he said, "We do not recognise this suspension. The WFI is working smoothly, we are on the job. How will they (ad-hoc panel) organise Nationals if our state associations will not send the teams. We will organise our National Championship soon. We are soon calling the Executive Committee meeting. The notice of the EC meeting will be sent in a day or two and we will have the Nationals organised before they do it."

If the WFI goes on to organise its own Nationals the crisis will take a turn for the worst. "We had sent our explanation to the ministry that we have not flouted any rules. We are still awaiting a reply. We will wait for a day or two. If they do not want to engage with us, we are not also not interested then. Our federation does not recognise this

suspension.' Indian wrestling has witnessed unprecedented power struggle in the last one year. In protest against Sanjay, who is a close aide of sexual harassment accused Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, becoming WFI president Bajrang Punia returned his Padma Shri and Vinesh Phogat returned her Arjuna Award and Khel Ratna. Sakshi Malik had quit wrestling the day Sanjay won the WFI president's election.

WFI 'does not recognise' Kohli does extensive simulation for Burger

paper in

his trouser

pocket and

Australia ad-

mitted to ball-tam-

pering during the

South Africa in 2018.

to be done in public.

Cape Town Test against

Following an amendment to

Cricket Australia's Code of Conduct

for players and staff in 2022, the left-

handed batter was to appeal against

the ban but later decided not to

do so as he apparently found out

that the review panel hearing was

can be handled differently. But

I think Nick (Hockley, Cricket

Australia's chief executive) did

his ultimate best to put that for-

ward to the board and the deci-

sion was made, and I'm happy

with that. I've moved forward

from that," said Warner.

'When I look back at that, it

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cape Town, Jan 1: Virat Kohli looked a million dollars as he did extensive simulation for South Africa's left-arm pacer Nandre Burger but Shreyas Iyer's problems seemed to continue while facing a barrage of short balls at nets here Monday.

On the New Year's Day, it was business as usual for Kohli, who had an extended session lasting close to an hour. First, he was at the centre nets against bowlers and then he faced high-intensity throwdowns for about 20 to 25 minutes at outside nets.

Kohli is known to come to nets with specific purpose and Monday, it seemed he wanted to extensively bat against a leftarm pacer.

Since the Indian team's pace bowling roster doesn't include a left-armer, a net bowler was summoned and Kohli faced a good 25 to 30 deliveries from him in between playing against Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, R Ashwin and Avesh Khan.

Kohli was repeatedly seen putting in a big stride forward and at times walking a couple of steps to whip the bowler through mid wicket.

However, the only problem here was that the youngster provided by Cricket South Africa (CSA) was at least 15 clicks lesser in terms of pace compared to



Burger, who took seven wickets on debut in the opening Test at Centurion.

The net bowler's lack of pace allowed Kohli to read the inswing and then walk down a couple of steps to flick him through mid wicket. In match situations, Kohli won't get so much time to come on the front foot.

IYER'S SHORTCOMING Shreyas Iyer's weakness

against short ball is well documented. But the Mumbaikar wasn't amused one bit when the question cropped up during the ODI World Cup at home. However, the Centurion Test once again exposed his shortcomings against bounce. He continues to have serious

issues while facing anything that's remotely above his waist line. He looked iffy while batting and as Nuwan Senaviratne, the Sri Lankan left-arm sidearmer, bowled one from 18 yards, Iver reacted late while trying to pull the delivery and was hit on the fleshy part of the stomach.

For a brief period, he stopped batting, looked in pain and was given water before he resumed his job. All three throwdown specialists bowled to him from 18 yards, and he didn't for once look solid and display enough confidence even though he is an automatic choice in this playing XI.

SHARDUL BATS IN NETS

After being hit on the left shoulder during Saturday's throwdown session at Centurion, Shardul Thakur was back at training, albeit strictly as a batter. Shardul wasn't seen bowling but he did bat at centre net as well as throwdown nets. He didn't seem in any discomfort and was looking good as he tackled the

Osaka wins her 1st match after return to tennis

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brisbane, Jan 1: Motherhood has helped give Naomi Osaka a new mindset when things are getting tough on court. In her first competitive match since September 2022, the four-time major winner was broken while serving for the match and needed three match points in the tiebreaker before converting a 6-3, 7-6(11-9) victory over Tamara Korpatsch Monday at the Brisbane International.

Osaka didn't play the Australian Open last year and later revealed she was pregnant. She and her partner, rapper Cordae, became parents to daughter Shai in Los Angeles in July.

Every time she missed an opportunity to win the match Monday, she composed herself and focused on giving herself another hance.

Osaka will play a fellow former No.1, three-time Brisbane International champion Karolina Pliskova, in the second round.

In the men's draw, top-seeded Holger Rune rallied to beat Australian Max Purcell 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 after third-seeded Ben Shelton, the 21-year-old American who reached the US Open semifinals last year, lost 6-3, 6-7(5-7), 6-3 to Roman Safiullin.

Aashirwad, Tanmayee awarded

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 1: Aashirwad Swain and Tanmayee Behera claimed the 'Emerging Players of the Year' honours in the men's and women's categories respectively, Odisha Cricket Association (OCA) informed in a media release, Monday.

The award winners were presented the prizes at the OCA's Annual Felicitation Ceremony 2023-24, which took place at the Barabati Stadium here, December 31.

Member of Parliament and the founder of KIIT & KISS, Achyuta Samanta graced the occasion as the chief guest. Ashok Parija (Advocate General of Odisha), Rajendra Kumar Sahoo (MLA), Pinak Mishra (DCP, Cuttack) and Asirbad



Behera (Secretary, FAO & OAA) graced the occasion as Guests of Honour.

Besides them, OCA office-bear-

AWARD WINNERS

ate PVR Murthy was awarded with the "Lifetime Achievement" award, his grandson P Vikram received the award on behalf of him

ate Kamal Ganguly was conferred with the "Cricket Guru" award, Nikunja Mohanty Treasurer of Sahid Sporting Club, Bhubaneswar received the award on behalf of him

Tanmayee was awarded with "Emerging Player of the Year (Female)" award, his father received the award on behalf of her

ashirwad was awarded with Ashirwau was awai asa "Emerging Player of the Year (Male)" award

ers – vice-president Pankaj Lochan Mohanty, Sanjay Behera (secretary) and the treasurer Bikash Pradhan were present at the ceremony.

Odisha roll ball teams shine at Nat'l East Zone U-14 C'ship



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Odisha roll ball teams had impressive outings at the 3rd National East Zone U-14 Championship, which concluded Saturday in Tata, Jamshedpur. The state girls secured silver medal, while the

boys had to settle for bronze. During the pool matches, the boys' team defeated Assam 4-3, Bihar 12-1, lost to Jharkhand 12, tied with Chattisgarh 2-2. They defeated Chattisgarh 3-2 for the third position.

The girls' team, on the other hand, defeated Jharkhand 2-1, routed Bihar 8-0, lost to Assam 1-7 before going down to Assam 1-5 to settle for silver.

The Odisha boys team captain Pratik Arnav Jena scored 18 goals, most in the tournament, and he was adjudged the 'Player (of the Tournament'.

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