

leisure



JACKMAN GOT TOLD OFF FOR GOING TOO CLOSE TO A CHRISTMAS TREE

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 York's Rockefeller Center.

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!"



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

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. Ganesh 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.

GEMINI

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 satisfaction out of it and to ease the boredom of your daily schedule, says Ganesh.

CANCER

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

LEO

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 Ganesh.

VIRGO

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, Ganesh says, it is an optimistic and happy day, so go ahead and get the best out of it.

LIBRA

Ganesh 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. Ganesh 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 Ganesh 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 entertainment. 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 will motivate others also to put in their best, feels Ganesh. 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 Ganesh.

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 beau Shikhar Pahariya.

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, accidentally confirmed her romance while on the show with her younger sister Khushi Kapoor.

The promotional clip, released 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 revealing that the hunk is in fact her beau, but also revealing his pet name - Shikhu.

While on the hot seat, Janhvi was also asked to give her sister some words of advice,

especially on matters of the heart.

When prompted to offer advice about sharing screen space with Ananya Panday, she jokingly advised, "Just make sure you don't end up liking the same guy."

Janhvi was rumoured to be in a long relationship with Ishaan Khatter while they shot their movie *Dhadak* together. Later, Ananya was linked to Ishaan while they were in the film *Khaali Peeli*.

AGENCIES

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 family.

The singer, who was enjoying 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 royalty.

"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 risqué neckline, she also shared some goofy photos of herself lying around her safari tent in a bathrobe. "Anyone else do this after 5 new-growni'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 family, 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.

AGENCIES

Rakul-Jackky to wed February 22

Mumbai: Rakul Preet Singh and Jackky Bhagnani might be the first celebrity couple this year to get married.

"Rakul and Jackky are getting married on February 22, in Goa. They are being really hush-hush about it, as they want to keep the affair very intimate," says a source.

The insider adds, "They are really private people and want to keep the wedding also private." In fact, they are enjoying a break before getting busy with the wedding festivities. "Jackky is currently in Bangkok (Thailand) for his bachelor party. In fact, Rakul is also in Thailand, enjoying the break," adds the source.

The couple made it official 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 the ac-

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

Jackky also penned a special note for his girlfriend, as he wrote: "On your 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 moment."

AGENCIES

Manana's state-level 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 to its President Manoj Pattanayak.

"Five prominent theatre troupes, including the host organisation, will present some of the famous contemporary plays of our time during the event at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar," added Pattanayak, a Sangeet Natak Akademi award winner.

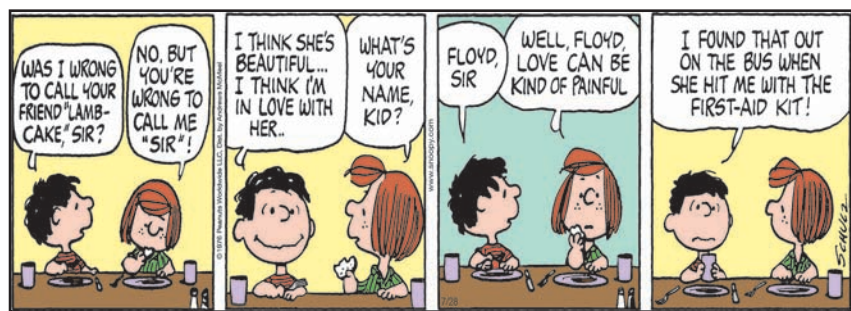
On the inaugural evening Manana will perform Odia play *Pasanda Palabhuta*. Written by Sudhansu Nayak, the play is directed by Manoj Pattanayak.

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, director- Debananda Nayak (Sonu)) by Expressions of Bhubaneswar, *April-27* (writer and director - Subash Chandra Pradhan) by Mirror Theatre of Belpahar and *Trishanku* (playwright- Ashis Kumar Sonar, director- Satya Ranjan Behera) by Shree Cultural Association of Sambalpur.

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.

PNN

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

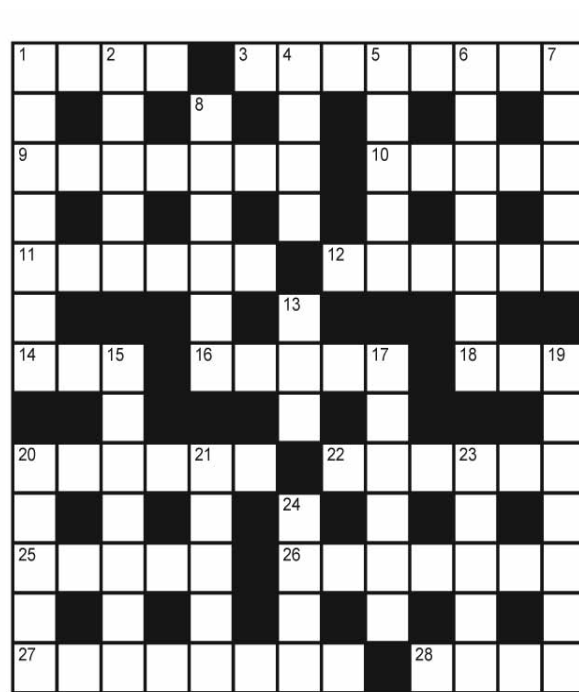


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

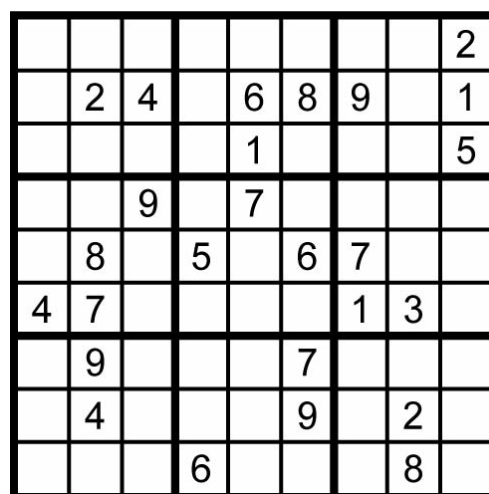


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- Across**
- 1 Cheese nibblers
 - 3 Branch
 - 9 Neanderthal (4,3)
 - 10 Covered in dirt
 - 11 Codfish
 - 12 Aftermath
 - 14 Unit of energy
 - 16 Any port in a storm
 - 18 Airport posting (Abbr.)
 - 20 Tune
 - 22 Turkish port city
 - 25 Heiress, perhaps
 - 26 Mezzanine
 - 27 Decoration
 - 28 Capri, for one
 - Down**
 - 1 Gruesome
 - 2 Blanket
 - 4 Penalty, at times
 - 5 Marsh plant
 - 6 Vague
 - 7 Rendezvous
 - 8 Polished
 - 13 Common vine
 - 15 Sailing vessel
 - 17 Light-footed
 - 19 Examine
 - 20 Chutney fruit
 - 21 Chimera
 - 23 Movable castles
 - 24 Black, to poets

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.

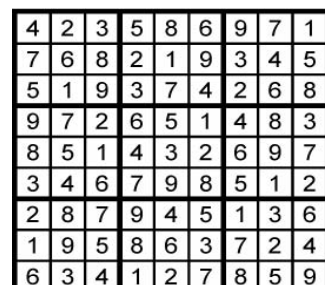


SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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



AGENCIES

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 Jagannath 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 the NYD.

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 Trust Board.

According to SJTA sources,



New Year moments in twin cities



OP PHOTOS

Govt unveils SOP for picnic, pilgrimage vehicles

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

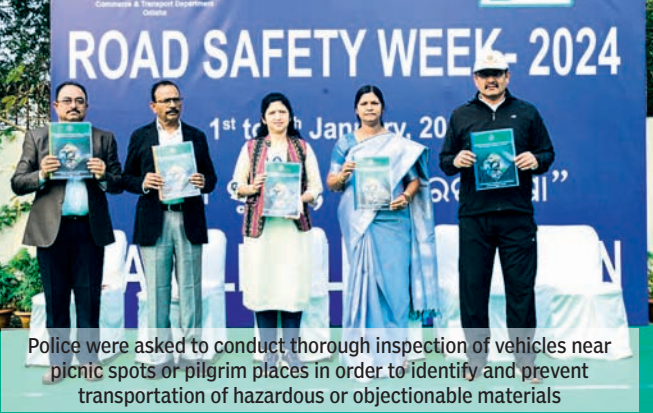
Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Launch of a standard operating procedure (SOP) for vehicles going on picnics and pilgrimages, and a walkathon were among the host of events that marked the inauguration of state-level Road Safety Week 2024 here, Monday.

Commerce and Transport (C&T) Minister Tukuni Sahu inaugurated the seven-day state-level 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



Police were asked to conduct thorough inspection of vehicles near picnic spots or pilgrim places in order to identify and prevent transportation of hazardous or objectionable materials

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 con-

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

Man dies in explosion; wife kills self in Jatni

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.

OTDC PURE VEG RESTAURANT IN PURI

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 to 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."

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.

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GST collection up 15% in April-Dec



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.

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

enals' 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 of 2022.

The state generated 22.49 lakh



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

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, 2024, 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-communication (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 social 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

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: The twin city Commissionerate Police has 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 five-member 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.



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 engineers, 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.

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.

Meta said that it took down over 18.3 million pieces of content on Facebook and over 4.7 million pieces of content on Instagram in India in November, 2023



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, 2021.

"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

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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

were allegedly found constructing telephone towers in Fagunsineri village, following Uparsemi 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 a 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

them time and again to desist 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 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 appraised 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 addressed. 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 a company.



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

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 for Dr Dillip Kumar Samal

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Noted Odia surgeon Dr Dillip Kumar Samal, known for his works in the field of community healthcare, received the prestigious Panini Samman from the Geriatric Care and Research Organisation (GeriCaRe) at 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 Persons.

Bhagwat arrives in Rourkela

AGENCIES
Rourkela, Jan 1: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat arrived here Monday, on a five-day visit to the Steel City, during which he is expected to preside over several meetings of the outfit. Bhagwat reached Rourkela by road from Jharsuguda airport where he arrived from Kolkata, an RSS leader said. This is his second visit to the state in a fortnight. Bhagwat will participate in the national-level 'Chintan Shivir' of the outfit here, RSS sources said.



RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale will also take part in the shivir, along with top functionaries of its affiliated organisations, the sources said. Bhagwat will leave for Kolkata January 5.

No let up in BJP's internal squabble

POST NEWS NETWORK
Rourkela, Jan 1: The serious differences 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 WATCO office. While Dhiren was present in support, Ray was



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 same day. 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 MISHAPS CLAIM 3

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bheden/Gopalpur, Jan 1: In a tragic incident, two brothers 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 police 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 Chhatti 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.

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



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

DELAY IN MEMU TRAIN ARRIVAL FUELS ANGER

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 Keonjhar district. The Memu train had been introduced in place of the intercity express without citing any reason. The train reached Keonjhar 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 Keonjhar 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-



ple to various difficulties. Many fail to go to their villages at late night due to lack of proper conveyance facilities and have to spend the cold night on the platform. Many passengers fail to get any accommodation as there is no hotel or lodging in the vicinity 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. Besides, 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 Keonjhar 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 the matter.



The Medic has supported HIV and AIDS patients and, recently, older adults in challenging circumstances. He has also set up a number of old-age homes in Angul district. His efforts have received accolades in India and abroad.

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

into an abandoned bore well at Laripali village. After six-hour long operation by the fire service personnel, ODRAF and NDRF, she was rescued alive. She was immediately admitted to VIMSAR 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.

2 youths set out for Ayodhya on foot

AGENCIES
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. 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 1,400-km 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

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 this Bank shall not be held responsible for any inconvenience 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 date 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 interested bidders on auction date and auction venue/auction portal.

Sl. No.	A/c. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower(s)	Gross Wt. in Gram	Net Wt. in Gram	Total Dues as on 29.12.2023 (excluding unapplied interest 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 India



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 Nowrojee 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



of the day quote

I humbly honor and respect the dedication and self-sacrifices of each worker and supporter of our party

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

From New Year, the government 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

MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

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 to speak to him again soon but I don't expect him to come for talks immediately

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 hit-and-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 jawans injured, an official said. The gunfight took place at around 5pm in a forest near Mutvandi village under Ganganalor police station.

Six killed as car hits road median

Jamshedpur: Six people were killed and two others injured as their car hit a road median 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 Deybhumi 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.

JN.1 SCARE
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 sub-variant 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).

The INSACOG's data showed 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 sub-lineage, 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 as terrorist under UAPA

AGENCIES

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 Punjab 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 activities

A Red Corner Notice has been issued against him by Interpol

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.

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 Kashmir.

In a candid and free-wheeling interview with PTL, 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 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 Mrutyunjay 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."

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-by-case 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."

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

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 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.



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

international

of the day quote

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 SECRETARY

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

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

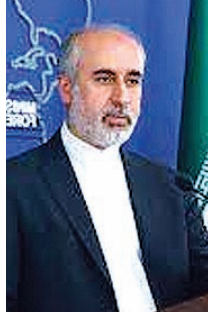
London: International students, including Indians, starting courses at British universities this month will no longer be able to bring family members on all but postgraduate research courses and courses with government-funded scholarships under tougher UK visa norms effective from Monday. The UK Home 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 agency reported.

21 arrested

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.



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 | IRAN FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN

DENMARK QUEEN TO STEP DOWN

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



QUAKES SLAM JAPAN



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

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

At least six homes were damaged by the quakes, with people trapped inside, government spokesman Yoshimasa Hayashi said

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. Hayashi 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

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.

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 of people who had shown up to stock up on bottled water, rice balls and bread. "We have 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 to ensure safety, Prime Minister 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.

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 tsunami 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.

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 judicial 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 on-going war against Hamas. Those divisions were largely 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 powerful military. There was no immediate reaction from Netanyahu. 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

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 GRAAMEEN BANK, WHICH HE FOUNDED IN 1983



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

while Yunus was in the dock. 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 "politically 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



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 Western-led international order, India instead wants to reform it. India views itself as a bridge between

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 self-styled 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 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

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. AGENCIES

of the day quote

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 efficiency gains

M RAJESHWAR RAO | DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RBI

India's share in cumulative global greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions has been only 4 per cent, and current emission is 7 per cent, despite its population share of 16-17 per cent

ARUN KUMAR SINGH | CHAIRMAN, ONGC

About 25,000 tonne of kharif onion has so far been procured from mandis. The procurement is underway. As a result, the all-India average retail price of onion has come down by 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 state-owned firms showed Monday. Petrol sales of the three state-owned 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 air-conditioning demand. Month-on-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 month-on-month when compared to 6.79 million tonne in November.



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



D-St kicks off '24 on flat note

IN 2023, THE BENCHMARKS CLIMBED NEARLY 20%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

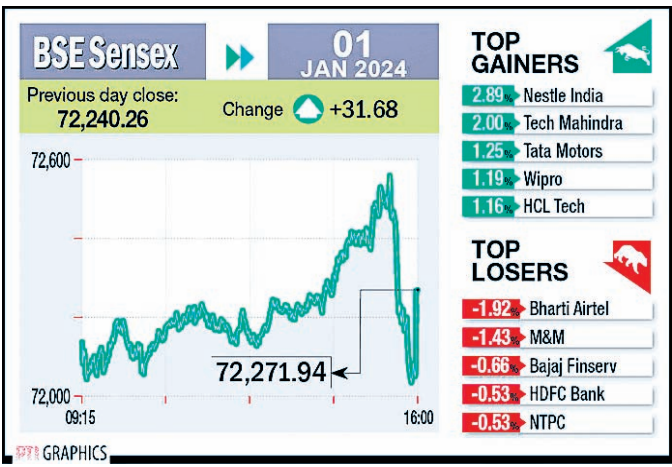
Mumbai, Jan 1: Stock markets kicked off the New Year on a flat note with benchmark Sensex closing with modest gains of 31 points in a highly volatile trading session Monday helped by buying in energy, services and telecom shares.

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, analysts said.

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



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 winners.

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).

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 the public.

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 statement.

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 RBI.

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, Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu, Kanpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, New Delhi, Patna and 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 (HML) 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 cent 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 appeal 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.



NEW YEAR EVE

Quick-comm, food-delivery firms on a roll

ZOMATO, BLINKIT, SWIGGY FOOD AND INSTAMART WITNESS RECORD ORDERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 industry executives.

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!"

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 condos peaked at 1,722 condos per hour in the morning.

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 PTI.

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.

ADIEU TO ODIs

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 batsmen 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.

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



WARNER ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT FROM 50-OVER FORMAT AHEAD OF SWANSONG TEST AT SCG, BUT KEEPS DOOR OPEN FOR 2025 ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY

scenes to allow me to do that," he said.

"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 BBL."

ALREADY MOVED ON

The controversy surrounding the lifetime captaincy ban on Warner following the 2018 ball-tampering 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

sandpaper in his trouser pocket and Australia admitted to ball-tampering during the Cape Town Test against South Africa in 2018.

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 to be done in public.

"When I look back at that, it can be handled differently. But I think Nick (Hockley, Cricket Australia's chief executive) did his ultimate best to put that forward to the board and the decision was made, and I'm happy with that. I've moved forward from that," said Warner.

India look to salvage pride in final Oz ODI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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.

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 three-match series, her scores were 9 and 5.

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-a-ball 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

WFI 'does not recognise' 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 Manjusha 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 ad-

hoc panel," Sanjay told PTI. Asked how will they organise their 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 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.

Kohli does extensive simulation for Burger

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 left-arm pacer.

Since the Indian team's pace bowling roster doesn't include a left-arm, 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 in-swing 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

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

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

Late Kamal Ganguly was conferred with the "Cricket Guru" award, Nikunjia 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

Aashirwad was awarded with "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 1-

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 chance.

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.