



Kriti at helm

Actor Kriti Sanon says she has enjoyed all aspects of her journey as a producer

LEISURE | P2



Major attack

Russia fires scores of missiles and drones at Ukrainian capital Kyiv and the northeastern city of Kharkiv

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Oil prices jump

Oil prices rise more than 2% boosted by potential disruption to Middle East supply amid Red Sea crisis

BUSINESS | P11



Acid test for India

Lots will be at stake for the Men in Blue when they face South Africa in the 2nd test beginning Wednesday at Cape Town

SPORTS | P12

SHORT TAKES

Three killed, 20 hurt in bus-truck collision

Bhubaneswar: At least three persons were killed and 20 others injured after the bus they were travelling in collided head-on with a truck on Cuttack-Chandbali road Tuesday, police said. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed grief over the death of three persons in the accident and announced an ex gratia of ₹3 lakh to the next kin of each deceased. The accident took place on Cuttack-Chandbali road near Katarapada around 7:30am in Nischintakoili block of Cuttack district when the bus with 60 passengers on board collided with the goods vehicle, a senior officer said. P3

Parents of 'bore-well baby' identified

Sambalpur: Twenty-two days after her rescue from an abandoned bore-well in a forested area of Sambalpur district, the police Tuesday said the biological parents of the baby girl were identified. The girl's mother is married and the baby is her second child, an officer said adding that the details of the incident are not yet clear as the woman has been hospitalised in a compromised mental state. The baby, who is now named as 'Bijayini' by doctors, was found trapped 13 ft deep in the bore-well at Laripali December 12 last year. The villagers had first heard the cries of the baby from inside the bore-well and informed the authorities leading to her rescue. P5

S Pandey to return Magsaysay award

New Delhi: Social activist Sandeep Pandey has announced his decision to return the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award, bestowed upon him in 2002, as a mark of protest against the 'role' of the US in the Israeli attack in Gaza. Pandey, associated with the Socialist Party (India), has also chosen to return his dual Master of Science degrees earned from US universities. The Magsaysay award, funded primarily by the Rockefeller Foundation, raised concerns for Pandey due to its association with American foundations.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



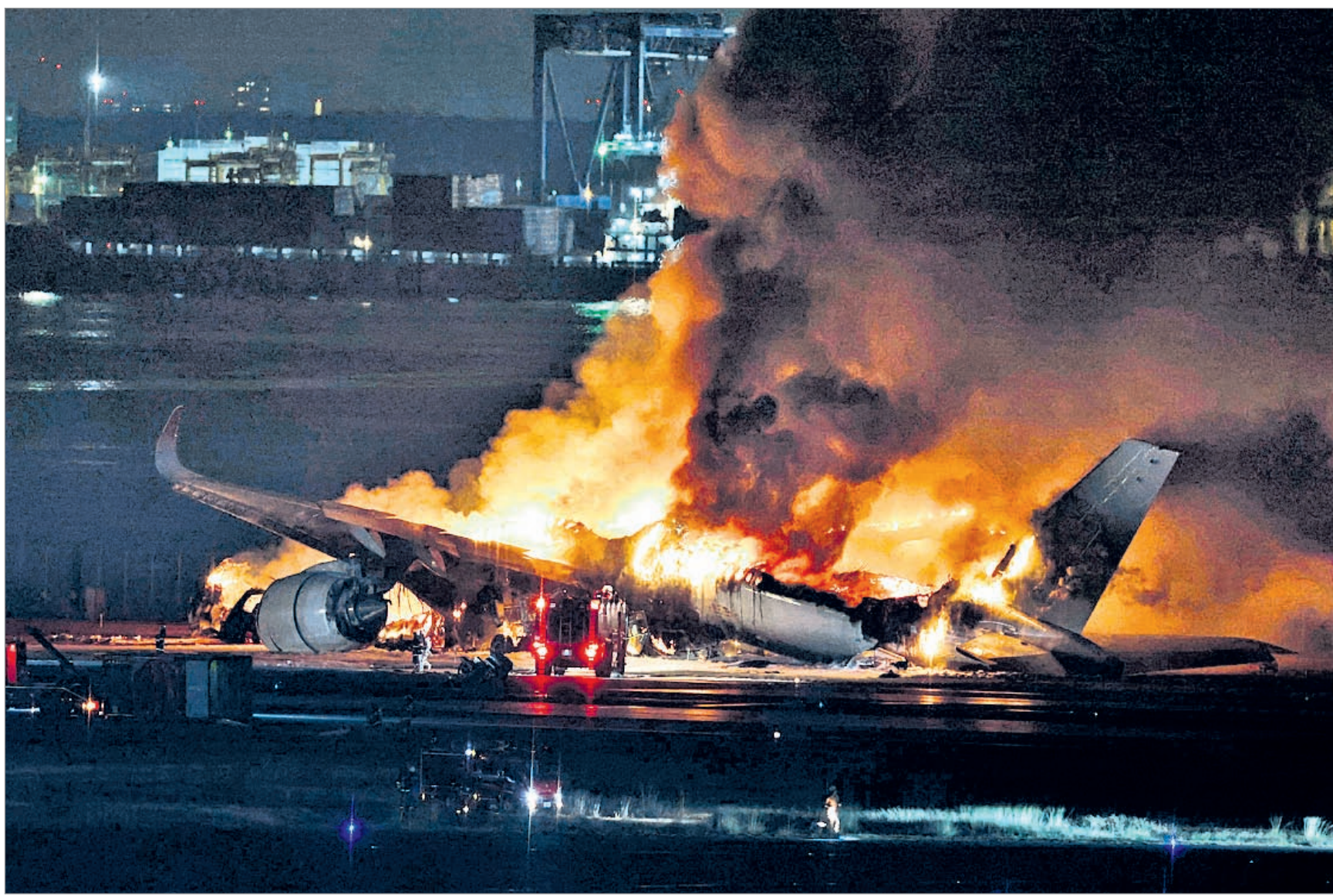
Believe me, we never encourage our members to outrage a woman's modesty...offline

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	CHANGE	PERCENTAGE
SENSEX	71892.48	↓ 379.46	-0.53%
NIFTY	21665.80	↓ 76.10	-0.35%
DOLLAR	83.40	↑ ₹0.11	+0.13%
EURO	91.71	↓ ₹0.42	-0.46%
GOLD	₹63,185	↓ ₹135	-0.21%
SILVER	₹74,182	↓ ₹208	-0.28%

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	27.0°C	26.5°C
Min Temp	16.0°C	16.0°C
Humidity	90%	89%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST	DRY WEATHER VERY LIKELY	



UP IN FLAMES: A Japan Airlines plane collided with another plane and burst into flames at Tokyo's Haneda Airport, Tuesday, killing at least five people of the other aircraft

Centre plays down W Odisha bench plea

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: Union Law and Justice Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal Tuesday said the demand for setting up a permanent bench of the Orissa High Court in the state's western region has lost its importance after the introduction of e-Court facilities. E-courts will provide the same facilities to the people, which will be given by a permanent bench of the high court, Meghwal said on the sidelines of a function here.

Later, the Ministry clarified that what Meghwal wanted to convey was due to the availability of Virtual Benches under e-Court Project, the need for separate permanent benches of the Orissa High Court is no longer there.

The clarification note also said that the Union government is yet to receive a complete proposal from the Odisha government with the consent of the Chief Justice of Orissa High Court for establishment of such permanent benches as per the recommendations of Jaswant Singh Commission. Senior BJD leader Prasanna Acharya said the people of Western Odisha have been demanding a permanent bench of the Orissa High Court for a long time.

"We hope that the Centre will fulfil the hopes and aspirations of scores of people of western Odisha," he said.

Apex court seeks details on 'Kavach'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: Hearing a petition regarding non-implementation of 'Kavach' system in the railways in the aftermath of horrific triple-train crash near Bahanaga Bazar station in Balasore district, the Supreme Court Tuesday sought to know from the Centre about the protective measures implemented or proposed to be implemented, including the automatic train protection system 'Kavach', to prevent train accidents.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and KV Viswanathan was hearing the petition which raised the issue of safety measures to prevent train accidents. The bench asked petitioner Vishal Tiwari to hand over a copy of his plea to the office of the Attorney General.

It said the Attorney General shall apprise the court about the protective measures which are implemented or proposed to be implemented by the government, including the 'Kavach' scheme. The bench posted the matter for hearing after four weeks. "Is there any kind of exercise undertaken that how much financial implication will be there on the 'Kavach' system in case it is introduced on a pan-India basis," the bench asked.

"Everything has co-relation with financial aspect because ultimately the burden will be passed on to the passengers," it observed.

LAXMANANANDA MURDER

Why not CBI probe: HC

PNN & AGENCIES

Cuttack, Jan 2: The Orissa High Court Tuesday asked the state government to show cause as to why a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) should not be ordered into the sensational murder of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati at his Jalespata ashram in Kandhamal in August 2008 that triggered riots in the district killing at least 38 people.

While hearing a plea filed by advocate Debasis Hota seeking a directive to the state for a CBI investigation into the brutal assassination, Justice Chittaranjan Dash directed the Odisha government to submit a report by March 5 this year.

In his plea, Hota had informed the court that Saraswati along with four of his aides was killed at his ashram in Kandhamal August 23, 2008. "Swamiji was working against the illegal conversion of innocent and simple minded people by the Christians through force, inducements and fraudulent means. Swamiji was also strongly opposing the cow slaughter, supporting the Orissa Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act 1960. Although the state government had ordered a Crime



HEARING A PLEA FILED BY ADVOCATE DEBASIS HOTA, THE HC DIRECTED THE STATE GOVERNMENT TO SUBMIT A REPORT BY MARCH 5 THIS YEAR

Branch probe into the incident, it failed to unravel the mystery behind the murder while the masterminds of the heinous act are still at large," Hota said, demanding a CBI probe into the murders.

The murder of the VHP leader and his associates led violent communal clashes in the district. At least 38 persons were killed and hundreds rendered homeless. Police blamed the murders on the Maoists, it was learnt. Two commissions of inquiry were set up to investigate the

ROW OVER BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA

Return to work: MHA to truckers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: Buckling down to the pressure of the All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) which staged agitation in several states for the second day Tuesday protesting 'stringent punishments' under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Centre, following a discussion with AIMTC, appealed to all the agitating truck drivers to return to work.

Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla said the decision to invoke the new hit-and-run cases-related penal provision, which has sparked protests by truckers, will be taken only after consultation with the AIMTC.

"The government wants to point out that these new laws and provisions have not yet come into force. We would also like to point out that the decision to invoke Section 106 (2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita will be taken only after consultation with the All India Motor Transport Congress," he said after a meeting with a delegation of the AIMTC.

Bhalla said the government has taken cognisance of the concerns of truckers regard-

AIMTC CHAIRMAN, ORGANISING COMMITTEE, BAL MANKIT SINGH URGED TRUCKERS TO CALL OFF THE AGITATION

ing the provision of 10 years imprisonment and fine and held the detailed discussion with the representatives of the AIMTC over the issue.

According to the new BNS provision, "Whoever causes death of any person by rash and negligent driving of vehicle not amounting to culpable homicide, and escapes without reporting it to a police officer or a magistrate soon after the incident, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description of a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine."

"Ye kanoon abhi tak laagu nahi hai (This law has not been implemented yet) ... Ham ye kanoon laagu nahi hone denge (We will not allow these laws to be implemented)," AIMTC Chairman-organising committee Bal Mankit Singh said. Singh also asked truckers to call off the agitation.

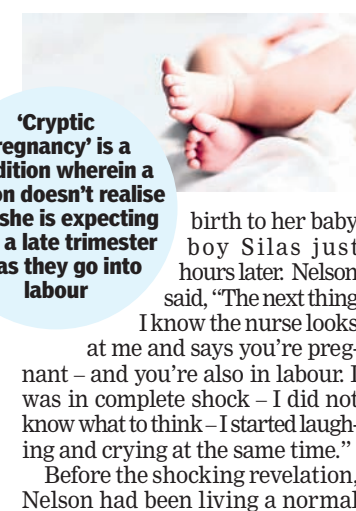
Teen with stomach pain finds self in labour

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 2: In a rare case of 'cryptic pregnancy', an 18-year-old girl in the US was left stunned after she walked into a hospital with stomach pain, and then learned she was having a rare pregnancy, as per a report.

As per a report by Metro, Laren Dawn Nelson was suffering from stomach pains, which she assumed were related to a virus she had suffered from a year before. However, doctors at the hospital told her she was pregnant and that she was about to become a mother.

After being in labour, she gave



'Cryptic pregnancy' is a condition wherein a person doesn't realise that she is expecting until a late trimester or as they go into labour

birth to her baby boy Silas just hours later. Nelson said, "The next thing I know the nurse looks at me and says you're pregnant - and you're also in labour. I was in complete shock - I did not know what to think - I started laughing and crying at the same time." Before the shocking revelation, Nelson had been living a normal

teenage life. She graduated from high school, attended her senior prom, and celebrated her birthday, unaware of her pregnancy.

Nelson recounted how her friend took her to the hospital when she suspected something was wrong with her health. At the hospital, a nurse suggested she take a pregnancy test as a precaution.

She said, "I took the pregnancy test that the nurse asked me to and I made my friend wait in the waiting room. This nurse came out she has a look of shock on her face, she told my friend to get a wheelchair and told me to sit down. I sat down and I was like, oh, no, what is happening - because I was having these pains every couple of minutes,

which I didn't know at the time that they were contractions."

Later that day, she gave birth to a baby boy. She added, "Next thing I knew, I was pushing and then I had a baby - it was crazy. I heard the cry and I started crying and then I looked over at him and he looked perfect. His name is Silas, and he is the sweetest baby in the whole world, he's perfectly healthy and he is living his best life." She has now embraced motherhood with the support of her family and friends.

Notably, such a pregnancy is called a cryptic pregnancy wherein a person doesn't realise that she is expecting until a late trimester or as they go into labour. Cryptic pregnancies, such as Laren's, are relatively rare.

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TONI BRAXTON SLAMS MARRIAGE RUMOURS WITH RAPPER BIRDMAN

Singer-songwriter Toni Braxton has clarified that there are no secrets in her love life. The R&B icon, 56, cleared up rumours on Instagram that surfaced over the weekend that she and her former fiancé Birdman were married in a private ceremony.

VOICE OF DISNEY'S MAMA COCO ANA OFELIA PASSES AWAY AT 90

Mexican actor Ana Ofelia Murguía, who voiced the role of Mama Coco in Disney's two-time Oscar-winning animated feature film *Coco*, has died at the age of 90. She received the Golden Ariel lifetime achievement award, the highest honour given by the Mexican Academy of Cinematographic Arts and Science.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Good news may bring cheer to you today! A job, a wedding, some profit... it could be personal or professional. Giving your best is almost a habit with you, says Ganesh, and it will pay off today.

TAURUS
Ganesh predicts that today, you will be successful in money matters. There is, at best, only an outside chance that any stimulating event or thrilling escapade will occur today. In short, the day may be boring. Fret not as the dreary day may change into an exhilarating evening, feels Ganesh.

GEMINI
You will long for some privacy today, says Ganesh. You may end up earning a large amount of money, mostly through some private venture. The day will be a greatly profitable one for cashiers, money lenders and those in retail business. Keep working hard to achieve success.

CANCER
Today, there is a strong possibility that you may face unexpected job changes. You are likely to spend lavishly to please family and friends. You may feel we make money to spend on loved ones. Still it would probably be a good idea to count every penny before using it, says Ganesh.

LEO
Being good to oneself is not vanity. To Ganesh, it seems as if you take this statement to heart, since it looks quite possible that you make your personal care number one priority today. On the flip side though, you become aware of the fact that the harder you try the more it seems you have to.

VIRGO
The time today is ripe to venture into a new business. Projects that have been put-off will finally be completed. Looking into the week ahead, you are most likely to give yourself an energy zap. Parties will be all fun and entertainment. Your kids will bring home joy and pride and this will brighten the mood even more, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
The Bhagavad Gita says, "Do your duty without expecting the fruit." Remember this important lesson and strive hard to put in extra efforts to finish off whatever you undertake to do. Worrying about results will only hamper your progress. Go with the flow and let results come to you. You may want to discuss some urgent matters with your close friend today, says Ganesh.

SCORPIO
Life is the best teacher, they say. And today, you even experience this. You may learn to survive the neck-tight competition in the market. This may invite a lot of envy, but nothing shall bother you. Ganesh reminds you of the adage, 'To err is human, to forgive is divine', so, it's fine even if you commit some errors.

SAGITTARIUS
Today shall be a rather decisive day, speculates Ganesh. Situations that have pushed you into a corner will force you to make rash decisions. But take stock of the situation and assess the long-term consequences of your actions beforehand, advises Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Mark this date on the calendar as today is going to be one of the most important days of life, the reason being you are going to meet somebody who is will stay with you through out your life. Though it may seem time bore you, but your relationships will keep you busy today. Visits to religious places are on the cards for you. Most of the day you will spend time with your friends and family.

AQUARIUS
You may rave and rant, but all you'll get from colleagues or juniors are wishy-washy excuses for a job not done. Ganesh advises that you take care to finish your own work before you help others. The stars say that your beloved will smoothen your creased brow.

PISCES
You will need broad shoulders to deal with the added responsibilities which will be heaped on your plate today. And while the work will be draining, the satisfaction of a job well done will more than ease your stress.

Kriti shares Sonu turns the voice for specially-abled

Kriti shares journey as producer

Mumbai: In a recent interview, actress Kriti Sanon shared insights into her journey as a producer, a role she embraced with her production venture, Blue Butterfly Films.

Reflecting on her experience as a producer, the Mimi actress remarked, "As an actor, you're more involved in your character, whereas in *Do Patti*, I've enjoyed turning it into a script-going through various drafts, music and other aspects of its journey."

This statement highlighted her active involvement in the creative process of shaping a project from its inception.

Emphasising the importance of content, Kriti shared her belief that good content is the key factor contributing to the success of films, whether in theatres or the digital space. She said, "Theatres are back and are not going anywhere. Digitally too a lot of films have done well. The common factor for these projects has been good content. The audience looks for something unique or larger than life."

With her maiden production venture, *Do Patti*, already wrapped up, Kriti Sanon looks forward to delivering more engaging content to the audience. Additionally, fans can anticipate her presence in upcoming projects like *The Crew* and an untitled romantic drama alongside Shahid Kapoor, scheduled for a theatrical release in February.

AGENCIES

Mumbai: Actor Sonu Sood has become the voice of the specially-abled, and urged concerned authorities and state governments to reconsider and enhance the basic gratuity and minimum pension for individuals with disabilities.

In yet another demonstration of his unwavering commitment to philanthropy, Sonu continued to champion the cause of the specially challenged.

The actor took to social media, and shared a video with

a specially-abled man sitting by the roadside. In the video, he can be seen saying, "Today I am with Dharmendra, who has come from Bihar. I just found out that the government gives Rs 400 to any specially-challenged person in the country. Just imagine how a person can run his expenses in Rs 400. I am urging governments to increase the amount of the financial support under this scheme."

The post was captioned as: "My New Year Resolution 'RIGHTS FOR THE DISABLED' I Humbly request the concerned authorities and state governments to suitably revise and increase the basic gratuity and minimum pension of the disabled, to help them meet their basic needs.. The inherent challenges they face should be prioritised to alleviate financial strain, so

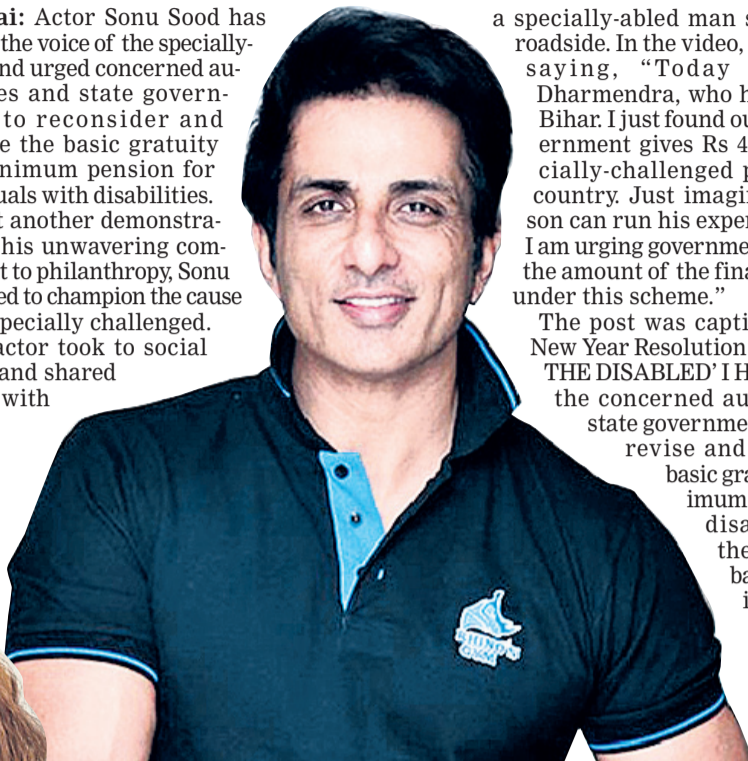


Actor Sonu Sood with a physically challenged man from Bihar at the roadside

they too can lead more fulfilling lives. @cmobiharnitishkumar #pmo #pmoindia #disabled."

On the film front, he will be next seen in *Fateh*, which is being co-produced by Zee Studios and his production company, Shakti Sagar Productions.

IANS



Aditi makes relationship with Siddharth official

Mumbai: Actress Aditi Rao Hydari has shared a love-struck picture with Siddharth from their New Year getaway, sharing how blessed, happy, and grateful she is with the Rang De Basanti actor.

Aditi and Siddharth have been reportedly in a relationship for the past few years, but they have not made it official. They worked together in the Telugu romantic action drama *Maha Samudram*.

However, on the occasion of the New Year, Aditi dropped a picture with her beau, leaving

everyone in awe of the couple. The *Murder 3* actress wrote, "Happy blessed, grateful to magic, happiness, love, laughter, unicorns, rainbows, and fairy dust. #happynewyear to you all in 2024."

Fans took to the comment section and wrote, "So, it's official now."

One user said, "Perfect ones," while the other said, "You look like magic. Both of you."

Meanwhile, on the work front, the actor was last seen in the Tamil movie *Chithha* and has *Indian 2* and *Test* in the pipeline. Aditi also appeared in the Tamil movie *Hey Sinamika* while she next has *Gandhi Talks* and *Lioness* in her kitty.

IANS



Ankita rakes up SSR issue again

Mumbai: Actress Ankita Lokhande, who can currently be seen on the reality television show *Bigg Boss 17*, again spoke about her ex-boyfriend Sushant Singh Rajput. During the recent episode, the actress spoke with Munawar Faruqui, and got teary-eyed recalling SSR's death.

Ankita recalled moments after Sushant's death. She said that she had received an image which was heartbreaking.

She said, "When I saw him, I felt everything was over. So many films he watched, and everything was over. There was this one picture of him which was very bad. It looked like he was sleeping. I just kept looking at that picture and thought there was so much in his brain. I knew him very well. He must have had so much in his brain but all was vanished. You are nothing, you're just a body then".

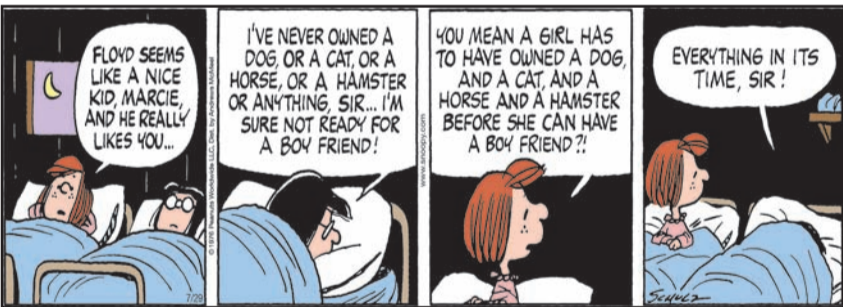
She also shared the reason behind the actor's death as she told Munawar, "He was broken because of something. This shouldn't have happened."

Ankita also revealed that following Sushant's demise, she blocked a lot of people on social media because they were targeting her.

IANS



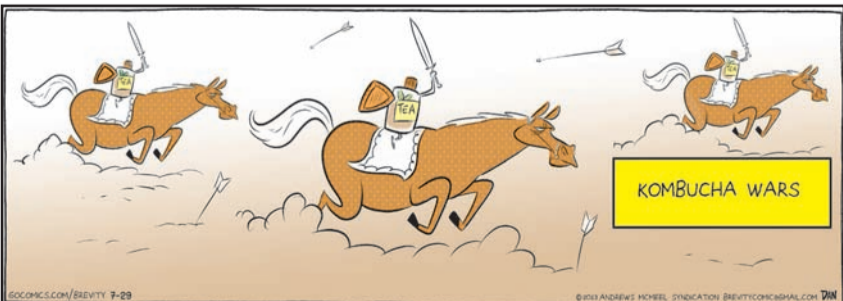
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

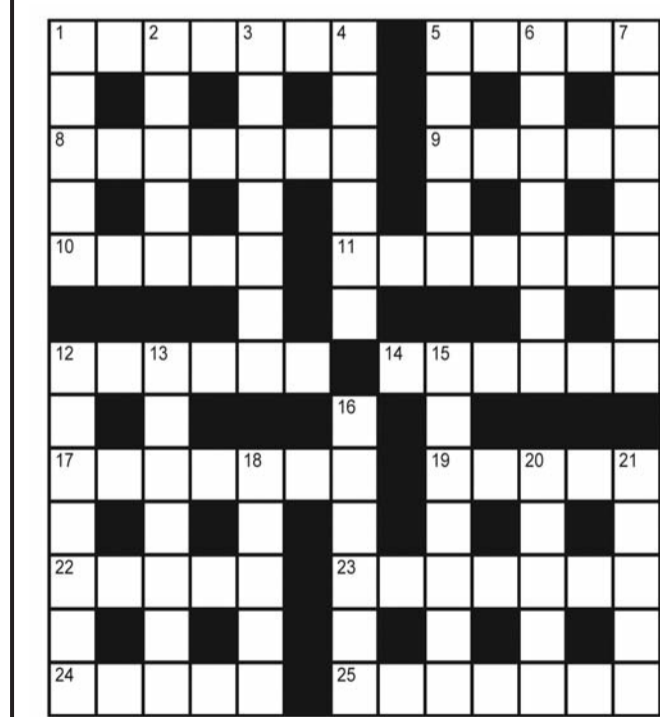


BREVITY



FUN post

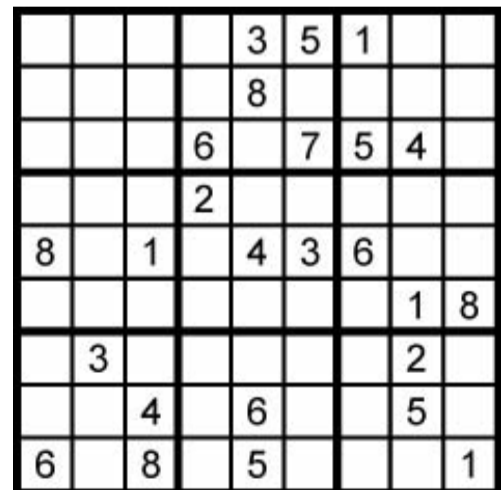
CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2024 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Betrayer
 - 5 Stares
 - 8 Paving material
 - 9 Malicious burning
 - 10 Scoundrel
 - 11 Art movement
 - 12 Gun dog
 - 14 Statue defiler
 - 17 Italian dumplings
 - 19 Reddish brown
 - 22 Lifeless
 - 23 Discovered
 - 24 Spring chicken
 - 25 Strike
 - 6 Army ant
 - 7 Sleep inducer
 - 12 Indicate
 - 13 Walden Writer and social critic
 - 15 Set up
 - 16 Osier
 - 18 Capture
 - 20 Spotted horse
 - 21 Scrutinize the books

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

MICE OFFSHOOT
A O S I E B R
C A V E M A N D U S T Y
A E O T E G C S
R B U R B O T R E S U L T
R T I R R
E R G H A V E N E T A
A Y I N
M E L O D Y S M Y R N A
A L R E B O L
N I E C E B A L C O N Y
G O A O E K S
O R N A M E N T I S L E

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Dignitaries, including Orissa High Court acting Chief Justice BR Sarangi, unveil a calendar and diary of Orissa HC Bar Association in Cuttack, Tuesday



downtown

3 KILLED IN CUTTACK BUS-TRUCK COLLISION

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: At least three persons were killed and 20 others suffered injuries after the bus in which they were travelling collided head-on with a truck in Cuttack district Tuesday, police said.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed grief over the death of three persons in the accident and announced an ex-gratia of ₹3 lakh to the next kin of each deceased.

The accident took place on Cuttack-Chandbali Road near Katarapada around 7:30am in Nischintakoili block when the bus with 60 passengers on board collided with the goods vehicle, a senior officer said.

"Drivers of both the vehicles and a passenger were killed in the accident," Cuttack Collector Narahari Sethy said.

The deceased were identified as Anasuya Barik, 21, Badanka village under Aul police limits and Nalinikanta Gahana, 22, Odigiria village under Rajkanika police limits of Kendrapara and Mohan Lal, the truck driver from Rajasthan, an official said.

Teams of fire brigade stations and police personnel rushed to

the spot and rescued the passengers trapped inside the damaged bus.

The injured passengers were admitted to Nischintakoili hospital, and 11 of them, who were critically-injured, were shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, an official said.

Several passengers, who sustained minor injuries, have been discharged from Nischintakoili hospital, while three persons are still under observation, the Collector said.

"Despite dense fog with low visibility, the bus was running at a high speed. My sister and I were near the driver's seat. My sister was trapped inside the bus and died when she was being shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital," Archana Barik, a passenger, said.

Speaking to reporters, Transport Commissioner Amitabh Thakur said the preliminary investigation revealed that the accident happened due to dense fog.

Transport department officials and the SP are on the spot and conducting an inquiry, he added.

Transport Commissioner Amitabh Thakur blames it on dense fog



COURTESY CALL: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and 5T Chairman Kartik Pandian with Mission Shakti SHG members from Hinjili Assembly constituency, at Naveen Niwas in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

Tourism boost for Debrigarh, Khinda

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary in Bargarh district and the Khinda village, birthplace of legendary freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai, in Sambalpur district have been brought under the Union government's Swadesh Darshan (SD) scheme to enable their development as tourist destinations.

The two sites, popular tourist places in Western Odisha, have been included in the scheme after Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's request in this regard to Union Culture and Tourism Minister G Krishan.

Ministry recently revealed that the competent authorities have given their approval to the development of the Debrigarh sanctuary and the Khinda village under the SD 2.0 scheme.

Pradhan, in his letter in December 2023, argued that Veer Surendra Sai, a freedom fighter, had led a revolt against the British Empire in 1857 and was later imprisoned for more than 40 years. Khinda is an important destination for history enthusiasts who can learn about his life and struggle for Indian independence," Pradhan's letter read.

Nestled between the Hirakud dam and the reservoir, Debrigarh sanctuary is not only a pictur-

KHINDA VILLAGE DEBRIGARH SANCTUARY

Khinda village is the birthplace of legendary freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai in Sambalpur district. Sai had led a revolt against the British Empire in 1857 and was later imprisoned for more than 40 years. Khinda is an important destination for history enthusiasts to learn about the life and struggles of Sai towards India's independence.

Nestled between Hirakud dam and the reservoir, Debrigarh sanctuary is not only a picturesque location that attracts tourists but is also of historical significance. During his rebellion against the British, Veer Surendra Sai had made his base at 'Badapathara,' a place that falls within the sanctuary. The sanctuary is known for its easy sightings of animals, particularly the Indian Bison, wild boars, Sambhars and peacocks.

esque location that attracts tourists but is also of historical significance as during his

rebellion against the British, Veer Surendra Sai had made his base at 'Badapathara,' a place

that falls within the sanctuary. The sanctuary is known for its easy sightings of animals, particularly the Indian Bison, wild boars, sambhars and peacocks, Pradhan said.

Pradhan had written that the development of tourism infrastructure and promotion of these destinations can significantly boost the local economy, create job opportunities and help preserve the cultural and natural heritage of the region. Pradhan said that keeping in mind the massive untapped potential for tourism at these two sites, the Tourism minister should initiate action for their inclusion in the Swadesh Darshan scheme.

Naveen: Make Odia language conference a grand success

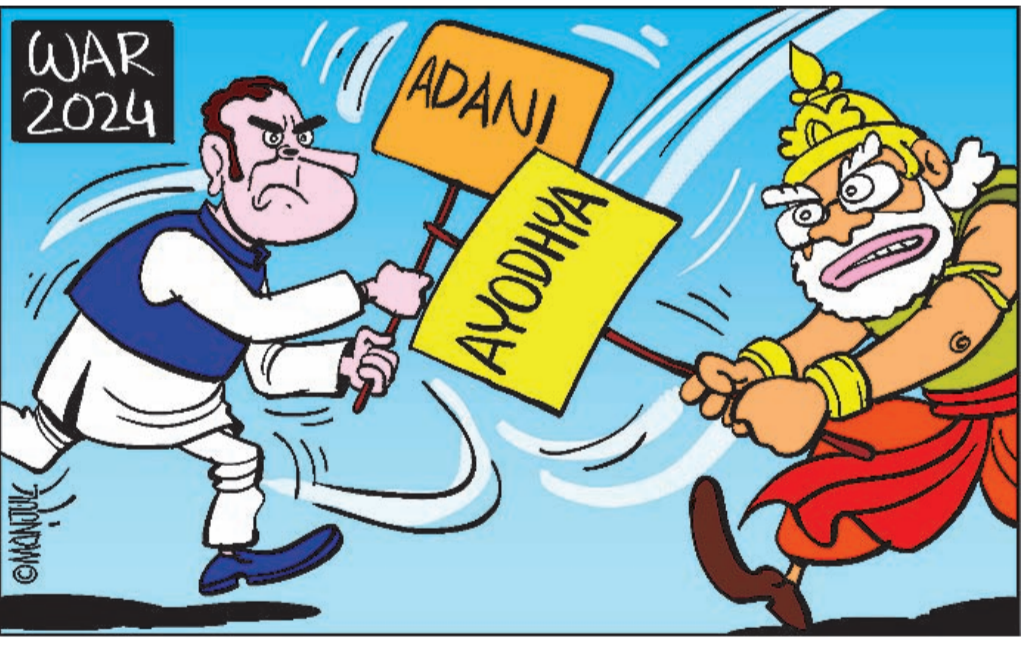
ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday instructed officials of all concerned departments to coordinate with the Odia Language, Literature and Culture department to make the 'Biswa Odia Bhasha Sammilani' (World Odia Language Conference), 2024 a 'grand success.'

First of its kind, the Biswa Odia Bhasha Sammilani (World Odia Language Conference) will be organized for three days from February 3 to 5, 2024. The decision to host this conference was taken in a Heritage Cabinet meeting

chaired by the CM December 19. The CM has directed all the concerned departments to work in coordination with Odia Language, Literature and Culture department to make the conference a grand success as the conference will play a major role in popularizing the Odia language. "In today's ever-changing times and in the age of technology, this language conference will attract youth towards the language. The conference will provide a vibrant platform for logical discussion and interoperations on the uniqueness of Odia and its antiquity and future relevance," said an official.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



2 street crimes rock City on New Year Day

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: Two audacious street crimes on the first day of the New Year have once again raised serious question marks over the law and order situation in the Capital city.

In the first incident, 10 to 12 unidentified armed miscreants barged into the Kalinga Youth Club in Sailashree Vihar area, under Chandrasekharpur police limits, here Monday midnight and assaulted a youth with sharp weapons. The victim, identified as Sangram Singh, who does odd jobs, received serious injuries on his right elbow and arms after being sliced several times with swords and daggers. He was later shifted to a hospital by some of his friends.

Witnesses said no one resisted

the miscreants when Sangram was being attacked as they were heavily armed and came in a large group. They later allegedly ransacked the club premises before leaving, they said.

Chandrasekhar police station IIC, Prakash Chandra Majhi said the attack was the fall out of a long standing dispute between two groups.

He said the attackers were at loggerheads with Sangram Singh and his friends since a long time. Matters became worse over the New Year feast at the club which the rival group wanted to organise.

The police claimed to have identified one of the suspects, Shalu, who had earlier been arrested in another case. However, no arrests have been made so far. In the other incident at



Sibananda Barik
Damana village, two-masked criminals looted a shopkeeper in the wee hours of Tuesday by

threatening him with a razor.

The victim, Sibananda Barik, who runs an Omfed booth, said the duo showed up when he stepped out of his house to open his shop in the vicinity, at around 4 am. "They suddenly demanded money from me. When I refused, one of them pulled out a razor and put it on my throat," Barik said adding that the duo then took away ₹6,000 from his pocket. Before escaping, the miscreants tried to slice Barik's throat with the blunt razor. Barik has received minor scratches on his throat in the attack.

An officer from Chandrasekharpur police station said that an investigation into the case has been launched following the registration of an offence. The attackers are yet to be identified, he said.

Eat breakfast, dinner early to reduce heart attack risk

STUDY SUGGESTS EATING THE FIRST MEAL OF THE DAY AT 8AM AND DINNER BY 8PM TO AVOID RISK OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

London, Jan 2: Are you one of those people who skip their first meal of the day or eat a late breakfast and dinner? Beware, you may be at risk of heart attack, warns a study.

The study suggested eating the first meal of the day at 8am and dinner by 8pm to avoid risk of cardiovascular disease.

Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death in the world according to the Global Burden of Disease study, with 18.6 million annual deaths in 2019, of which around 7.9 are attributable to diet. This means that diet plays a major role in the development and progression of these diseases.

The study by French research institute INRAE - National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment showed that having a first meal later in the day (such as when skipping breakfast) is associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular disease, with a 6 per cent increase in risk per hour delay.

For example, a person who eats for the first time at 9am is 6 per cent more likely to develop cardiovascular disease than



someone who eats at 8am. When it comes to the last meal of the day, eating late (after 9pm) is associated with a 28 per cent increase in the risk of cerebrovascular disease such as

stroke compared with eating before 8pm, particularly in women. Finally, a longer duration of night-time fasting -- the time between the last meal of the day and the first meal of the following day

-- is associated with a reduced risk of cerebrovascular disease, supporting the idea of eating one's first and last meals earlier in the day.

For the study, published in Nature Communications, the scientists used data from 103,389 participants to study the associations between food intake patterns and cardiovascular disease.

The findings, which need to be replicated in other cohorts and through additional scientific studies with different designs, highlight a potential role for meal timing in preventing cardiovascular disease.

The team suggest that adopting the habit of eating earlier first and last meals with a longer period of night-time fasting could help to prevent the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Stern action against landlords soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: Taking into account the low collection of holding tax, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has decided to initiate stern action against landlords, especially the ones who have rented out premises for commercial purposes by registering those as residential property.

BMC Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange said those found willfully flouting norms for property valuation to evade taxes shall be charged with hefty fines.

The civic body here Tuesday held a review meeting, chaired by Kulange, to assess the overall progress made in the collection of tax at every ward and zone. Taking note of the drop in

the collection, Kulange instructed officials to spread awareness for payment of holding tax on the digital portal (Bhubaneswar.me).

A BMC official said three vehicles will be soon be flagged off to spread awareness on holding tax dues. This apart, social media campaigns will also be launched in this regard, he added.

As per official records, BMC had set an annual target of ₹115 crores revenue collection in FY 2023-24. However, only 26 per cent of the target has been achieved so far. The civic body has issued an ultimatum to business establishments to pay up holding tax by January 15, failing which their trade licenses will be revoked.

LOW COLLECTION OF HOLDING TAX

Anti-drug declaration must for students now



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: In order to ensure responsible behaviour among students, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has made it mandatory for students to sign an anti-drug declaration form. A notification in this regard was issued by the government, Tuesday.

Henceforth, the students will have to sign the form at the time of taking admission in educational and vocational institutions. After receiving a letter from Centre, Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disability Principal Secretary Bishnupada Sethi wrote to departments of Higher Education, School and Mass Education and Skill Development and Technical Education.

Higher educational institutions should take action at the institutional level to sensitise the campus and other possible sur-

during studies. Sethi said, "Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has communicated a letter regarding implementation of Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) for drug demand reduction in the country. The students and youth are particularly vulnerable to the menace of substance use. More than 3.3 crore youth have participated in the activities organised under NMBA and have spread the message against substance Use."

A joint meeting, chaired by secretaries of Higher Education and Social Justice and Empowerment departments, was held in May last in which action points for higher educational institutions had been decided.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is committed to implementing the NMBA for drug demand reduction in the country. The programme coordinates and monitors all aspects of drug abuse prevention, assessment of the extent of the problem, prevention action, treatment and rehabilitation of users, dissemination of information and public awareness.

Notably, students and youth are vulnerable to the menace of substance use, making them primary stakeholders for the NMBA. So far more than 3.3 crore youth have participated in the activities organised under NMBA and have spread the message against substance use.

An anti-drug declaration at the time of admission can be taken to invoke a commitment from the students to have responsible behavior during studies

rounding locations through their faculty, NSS volunteers and students clubs through regular interventions and activities, the letter said.

Institutions may create common clubs with various activities relating to ragging, non-use of substances and following safety measures among other things.

An anti-drug declaration by the student at the time of admission can be taken to invoke a commitment from the students to have responsible behavior



SAFETY PRIORITY: Women cops take part in a state-level awareness rally being organised by Commissionerate Police as part of Road Safety Week 2024, in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

Social change message through 'Nukkad Natak'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: Gobinda Gaipai, a 24 year old from Sukinda block of Jajpur district, has dedicated himself to initiate behavioural and social change through 'Nukkad Natak.' With his team of 10, he has traveled to over 150 panchayats of the state to educate the people and raise awareness about drug abuse through street performances.

Gobinda's journey began with a tragedy—the loss of his brother to alcohol abuse. The devastating experience fuelled his determination to prevent others from suffering a similar fate.

Despite facing financial constraints, Gobinda's family sustained themselves through goat farming and agriculture. His educational journey was supported through the Jyoti fellowship by the Tata Steel



Foundation (TSF), which he received in 2008 and continued to benefit from until his graduation. During this time, his passion for cultural performances and plays caught attention of TSF, leading to an opportunity for him to create awareness about

important issues among the communities.

The onset of the pandemic in 2020 disrupted Gaipai's plans to secure a job after completing his education. However, this setback only strengthened his resolve to combat alcohol abuse

and harmful substances. With the support of TSF, he assembled a team of 10 individuals and embarked on a mission to educate and raise awareness through 'Nukkad Natak' performances.

Speaking about the initiative, Gobinda says, "After losing my brother, I felt an immense determination to raise awareness against alcohol and harmful substances. Through 'Nukkad Natak,' I strive to reach out to as many souls as possible. If only someone had reached out to my brother, maybe I wouldn't have to mourn."

Gobinda's story is one of resilience, determination, and a deep commitment to empowering change within his community. His work serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration for those striving to make a positive difference in the world.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I, Sayed Jawaid Hossain, S/o- Late Sayed Iqbal Hossain, resident of Plot No.-141/970/1285, Shaikh Sahi, Jadupur, Bhubaneswar, Bhubaneswar(M.C), Khorda, Odisha-751019, declare by this affidavit No.- 65AA 108626, dtd. 02.01.2024 that now onwards I shall be known as Sayed Jawid Hossain for all future purposes.

I Kedar Nath Mallick, aged 44 years, S/o- Dhruba Charan Mallick, resident of Plot No.335, Jharpada, near Divine Public School, Bhubaneswar, Dist.- Khurda, Odisha-751006, my actual name Kedar Nath Mallick (as per my Aadhaar Card) which has been mentioned as Kedar Nath Malik in my 10th HSC Certificate bearing Roll No.65AD020, declare by this affidavit No.- 68AA911223 date-02 Jan 2024, that now onwards Kedar Nath Malik and Kedar Nath Mallick is one and same person belongs to my name.

By virtue an affidavit sworn before Notary Public, Bargarh, I, Gunnam Bhaskar Rao, Son of Late Gunnam Ramchandra Rao, resident of Amsada (Ramkrushna Nagar), P.O- Barahguda, PS/Dist.- Bargarh do hereby solemnly declare that the Registered Sale Deed 1956 & ID No.1988 of 1975 dated 01.03.1975 of DSR Bargarh which was purchased by my father Late Gunnam Ramchandra Rao. Gunnam Bhaskar Rao Deponent

ECoR GM inspects Bhub Bhadrak rly section

Bhubaneswar: East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Manoj Sharma Tuesday inspected the Bhubaneswar-Bhadrak Railway Section, reviewing the safety and traffic management facilities and taking stock of the ongoing infrastructure works in the railway section. During the inspection, Sharma spoke with officials about traffic facility works along with infrastructure and passenger amenity projects at stations between Bhubaneswar and Bhadrak. He advised the officials to take necessary precautions to ensure safe and smooth train operations and emphasised on timely completion of infrastructure related projects and facilities. During his inspection at Bhadrak station, Sharma took stock of progress on several passenger amenities works, development of parking area, circulating area and landscaping. He also reviewed the status of Bhadrak Amrit Station.



EVICTION DRIVE: An excavator deployed by BDA razing down unauthorised constructions in Chandrasekharpur area of Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

Rooftop solar panels, an initiative by TPCODL

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: In its commitment to promoting sustainable energy solutions for a more environment-friendly and enduring future, TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL) has facilitated installation of 828 solar panels on rooftops through Net Metering arrangement, collectively generating a capacity of 28,003.684 kilowatt-peak (KWp). Rooftop solar power offers numerous benefits for consumers, making it a smart and responsible choice.

TPCODL CEO Arvind Singh said, "Solar solutions installed on your roof or grounds are perfect for harnessing the sun's energy. They not only reduce your electricity costs but also em-



power you to fulfil your role as a responsible citizen by positively contributing to the environment." He said that rooftop solar systems produce substantial energy during daylight hours, maximizing the use of abundant sunlight.

"By harnessing solar power, customers can significantly reduce their electricity bills, resulting in substantial long-term savings. Generating solar energy for six hours a day can reduce electricity bills by 25 per

cent to 50 per cent. Also, it contributes to the reduction of global warming, paving the way for a greener and more sustainable future," he added.

It is to be noted that excess solar energy can be returned to the grid for credits from local utility companies through net metering, ensuring maximum benefits. Rooftop solar systems efficiently utilize available vacant spaces for power generation, minimizing any impact on existing infrastructure.

Singh further said that customers can tap into conventional grid-based energy during periods when direct sunlight is not available, such as at night, during winter, or during off-peak hours when electricity rates are lower.

Getting better body among top New Year resolutions

Increasingly visual and digital culture has led us to believe that how we look is intrinsic to our self-worth, said researchers as improving body image again tops New Year resolution list.

A YouGov Poll revealed that for the last four years in a row, the top three New Year's resolutions people intended to make were about getting a better body, namely doing more exercise, losing weight and improving diet.

Researchers from the University of Warwick warned about 'lookism' and the toxic resolutions in a social media-fueled body-critical era.

"Doing more exercising, losing weight and dieting are common New Year's resolutions which

might be undertaken under the guise of improving one's health, but it is often for beauty," said Professor Heather Widdows, a leading beauty philosopher at the varsity. "We used to think we had to change what's on the inside to be better, we now increasingly judge ourselves and others on looks or how we present ourselves to the world. What we value and what matters to people has dramatically shifted in recent years with the advent of social media.

"Looks matter to us this shift is radically changing our identity and our sense of self-worth, and we are barely recognising it," Widdows said.

She believes this shift in our self-worth has given rise to an epidemic of body image anxiety.



"We are starting to see body image anxiety affect people at a younger age and continue as they get older," she said. "Because this is something that is affecting so many of us, it is becoming normalised but it doesn't make it any less harmful."

Moreover, in the case of New Year's resolutions, Widdows is clear that they don't deliver what they promise.

"We think if only we could lose weight, get the right body then other things in our life would change - maybe we would be able to get a better job, a better relationship or being happy - but body change is illusory and having a 'better' body doesn't deliver these things, and so the well-meaning resolutions,

end up being completely counterproductive," Widdows said.

She coined the phrase "lookism" and set up an #everydaylookism campaign, in a bid to stamp out appearance discrimination - the most prevalent form of bullying. "It is vital to reduce this pressure to be perfect if we are going to look after our physical and mental health as a society," Widdows said.

"We should be calling out lookism, and helping people to feel less ashamed when their bodies don't measure up. There's lots of work to be done to recognise and address appearance bullying because despite being the most prevalent, it is the one we do least about," she noted.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-977682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

390 die in rail premises mishaps in five years



reported while the figure rose to 69 in 2021. In 2022, 106 deaths were registered at the GRP station. Out of them 43 persons died in accidents and 33 died by suicide while the remaining were run over.

In 2023, 93 cases of unnatural deaths were registered at the GRP station. Out of them 64 were related either to accidents or suicides.

The Railways through advertisements has continuously urged people not to sit or stand near the door of coaches while travelling. However, people continue to endanger their lives by sitting or standing near the door. Hence the chances of accidents increase, said an official. He added that at most times, vast stretches of tracks remain unmanned. Hence these spots are preferable for those who want to take the drastic step, the official added.

When contacted, GRP IIC Bikash Kumar Polai said that the mishaps will decline and death toll will decrease only when people become aware of their responsibilities and the dangers involved while trespassing on railway tracks. Polai pointed out that at times many people try to use the tracks as a short-cut to their respective destinations. In the process they fall victims to on rushing trains.

strict vigil a number of people have died by suicide by throwing themselves in front of trains. Out of the 390 unnatural deaths from 2019 to 2023, a total of 177 persons have perished after being run over by trains. On the other hand, 121 persons have committed suicide on the railway tracks.

The Berhampur GRP station has a jurisdiction of 120km which starts from Chilika in Khurda district and extends upto Ganjam, Sompeta of Andhra Pradesh, Gajapati district and till Gumupur in Rayagada district.

In 2019, 67 death cases have been registered at the GRP station. Out of them 26 either slipped while trying to board trains or were run over on the tracks. An equal number of people also died by suicide on the tracks. In 2020, 55 cases of deaths were

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Jan 2: The railway tracks running through the Berhampur railway station has turned into deathtraps for people. Approximately 70 trains pass through the station on a daily basis. A total of 390 persons have lost their lives in accidents related to train tracks and for other reasons in the last five years, officials informed here Tuesday. Most of the deaths have taken place due to negligence and trespassing, officials pointed out. In 2023, 93 lives have been lost due to mishaps on tracks.

The Government Railway police (GRP) and Railway Protection Force (RPF) are in charge of the security of passengers visiting the railway station. Despite the police personnel maintaining a



FOLK DANCE: Artists from Rajasthan performed 'Ghumar' a traditional dance on the second evening of 'Jatara' the district level festival of Sundargarh, Tuesday

Mystery shrouds deaths of sheep

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 2: The mysterious deaths of eight sheep at Mahulpada village have sparked concern among the people of the area, sources said Tuesday. It is quite clear to the locals that the sheep were killed by carnivores. Forest department officials are now trying to ascertain whether the sheep were killed by wolves or hyenas.

"We have installed cameras in and around the village where the night attack took place two days back. We are not sure whether the sheep have been killed by a pack of wolves or hyenas. We are examining the teeth mark found on the dead animals. Both hyenas and wolves are found in this forest," district forest officer of Bonai division Lalit Kumar Patra said. He added that Forest staff is patrolling the area on a regular basis to find out the reason behind the death of a large number of sheep.

Patra also informed that families which have lost sheep will be given ₹5,000 as compensation for each livestock.

Residents of Mahulpada village however are sure that the sheep were killed by hyenas. "We are sure that it was a pack of hyenas. Five families have lost their domestic pets. We are now keeping a close watch over the situation," informed a villager.

It is clear however, that the Forest department is not taking the matter lightly. That is why it has increased surveillance and patrolling. "From the injury marks we are sure that it was not the attack of a single animal. It was a pack that attacked and killed the sheep," the DFO asserted.

Bore-well baby's parents identified

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Jan 2: The district police here have identified the parents of the baby girl 'Bijayini', who was rescued from an abandoned borewell from a jungle near Laripali village under Rengali block of this district, cops said Tuesday. The baby girl was rescued from an abandoned well December 12.

The baby, after her rescue, has been undergoing treatment at VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla. The doctors and staff at the hospital named her 'Bijayini' while celebrating her 21st-day, Monday.

Giving this information here Monday, Sambalpur superintendent of police Mukesh Kumar Bhamoo said Tuesday that the baby is recovering well. "The mother of the baby girl was identified within three days of her rescue and brought to the police station for questioning. The woman



FILE PHOTO

admitted to have given birth to the baby girl. The woman hails from close to the area from where the girl was rescued," Bhamoo said.

Bhamoo however, added that the woman was physically and mentally unstable. "She has been admitted to the SCB Medical College and Hospital at Cuttack for treatment," Bhamoo said. "The probe will continue once the woman recovers and is discharged from hospital," he added.

Despite the information provided by Bhamoo, it came as a surprise to many. Many ques-

tioned as to why it took so long for the police to provide information when they had learnt the identity of the mother within three days of the baby's rescue.

When questioned whether the woman will raise the child, the police official said that they will talk to the mother before taking any decision. Police will also try to find out what prompted the mother to throw the baby into the abandoned well. He warned that stringent action will be taken if anybody is found involved in the dumping of the baby.

Youth killed, girl critical in road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Jan 2: A youth was killed after he fell from 20 feet high an overbridge after being hit from the rear by a speeding car at Bhadrak-Charampa locality on National Highway-16 in this district, Tuesday.

The deceased was identified as Alok Mohanty, 27, of Palasahi village under Dhamnagar block in the district. A girl of the same village, who was pillion riding with the youth suffered serious injuries during the mishap. She was initially admitted to a local hospital here before being transferred to the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack after her condition deteriorated.

The mishap occurred when Alok and the girl was travelling to Charampa. Meanwhile, a Kolkata-bound speeding car from Puri hit the bike from rear. The girl fell down from the pillion on the road and sustained critical injuries while Alok with the bike fell 20 feet below. He died on the spot due to the impact.



Croc carcass found in Bhitarkanika



PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, Jan 2: The decomposed carcass of an eight-foot long salt water crocodile was found Tuesday in Brahmani river close to the Bhitarkanika National Park in this district, Forest department officials said. The carcass of the croc was found at Panchupali village. It is close to the national park which is home to the endangered salt water crocodiles, Forest officials said.

The Forest staff retrieved the carcass of the reptile from the river and sent it to the veterinary

hospital at Rajnagar for autopsy, said Manas Das, Forest range officer of the national park.

The vast tract of forest and saltwater swamp in the Bhitarkanika Park is home to 1,793 saltwater crocodiles according to the reptile census report of January 2023. The villages on the fringes of the national park are often witness to man-crocodile conflict. Tuesday's incident was the 33rd case of crocodile death in the park in the past 12 years, Forest officials said.

Saltwater crocodiles are covered under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The forest and environment ministry in collaboration with UNDP launched a crocodile breeding and rearing project at Dangamal in Bhitarkanika National Park, a Ramsar site, in 1975.

Trawler seized, 10 fishermen held

Kendrapara: Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary personnel on the wee hours of Tuesday intercepted a fishing trawler and arrested 10 fishermen for unauthorized entry into the prohibited zone. The trawler was allegedly being used to catch fish in the 'No Fishing Zone' within the sanctuary. All the 10 arrested fishermen belong to Balasore, Bhadrak and this district. They were booked under Sections 27, 29, 31 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. They were later produced before the JMFC court in Rajnagar which remanded them into jail custody after rejecting their bail pleas. Ranger Pradosh Moharana said the 45 quintals of fish, 10 nets and 3 VHF sets were seized from the trawler.

Annual bird census at Chilika from today

LAKE CLOSED FOR TWO DAYS TO FACILITATE THE COUNTING OF WINGED GUESTS



PNN & AGENCIES

Berhampur, Jan 2: Asia's largest brackish water lagoon Chilika will remain closed for visitors January 3 and 4 for the annual bird census, officials said here Tuesday. The mid-winter survey of birds in the lake will be carried out by the Chilika Wildlife Division January 4, while training will imparted to enumerators on January 3, they informed.

"We have decided to stop the entry of visitors to the lake for these two days to conduct an undisturbed bird

Thousands of birds, mostly from Russia and central Asian countries, visit Chilika Lake every winter to escape the biting cold in their homelands and in search of food. They start their homeward journey before the onset of summer.

Nayak said over 100 people, including ornithologists, wildlife activists and researchers of different organisations, including the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), will participate in the census.

"We will form 21 teams, with five persons in each team headed by an expert, for the bird count. Each team will be provided with instruments such as binoculars," Nayak stated. He said not a single poaching case has been registered in the division this year due to the strict patrolling at the lake.

In last winter's survey, a total of 11,31,929 birds of 184 different species were counted at the 1,100 sq km blue lagoon. These included 10,93,049 feathered guests of 105 various species, and 38,859 of 79 species of resident birds, sources said.

Boy drowns in Balasore

Balasore: The body of a three-year-old boy was fished out from a pond near his house in this district Tuesday, a day after he went missing, police informed. The deceased has been identified as Subham. The child went missing while playing with his sister in front of their house in Soro municipality Monday morning, police said. After being informed, policemen, along with fire brigade personnel, launched a search operation and found the boy's body in the pond, an official said. Balasore Sadar (SDPO) Sasanka Sekhar Beura said the body has been sent for post-mortem examination, and further investigation is underway. Police said that the boy must have slipped and fallen into the pond. They added that the girl did not raise an alarm which led to the kid's death.

SCHEDULE I FORM A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT (Regulation 14 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Voluntary Liquidation Process) Regulations, 2017)	
FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE STAKEHOLDERS OF KRISHNA RESIDENCY PRIVATE LIMITED	
1. Name Of Corporate Person	KRISHNA RESIDENCY PRIVATE LIMITED
2. Date Of Incorporation Of Corporate Person	05/02/2009
3. Authority Under Which Corporate Person Is Incorporated/Registered	Registrar Of Companies, Cuttack
4. Corporate Identity Number	U55101OR2009PTC010598
5. Address Of The Registered Office Of Corporate Person	Vedanta Road Sarbahal, Jharsuguda, Orissa, 768201
6. Liquidation Commencement Date Of Corporate Person	29th December, 2023
7. Name, Address, Email Address, Telephone Number And The Registration Number Of The Liquidator	Mohan Ram Goenka goenkamohan@gmail.com 9831074332 46 B.B. Ganguly Street, 4th floor, 406, Kolkata-700012, West Bengal
8. Last Date For Submission Of Claims	30th day from EGM
Notice is hereby given that KRISHNA RESIDENCY PRIVATE LIMITED has commenced voluntary liquidation on 29th December, 2023. The stakeholders of KRISHNA RESIDENCY PRIVATE LIMITED are hereby called upon to submit a proof of their claims, on or before 27th January 2024, to the Liquidator at the address mentioned against item 7. The financial creditors shall submit their proof of claims by electronic means only. All other stakeholders may submit the proof of claims in person, by post or by electronic means. Submission of false or misleading proofs of claim shall attract penalties.	
Date : 02.01.2024 Place : Kolkata	Sd/- (Mohan Ram Goenka) (Liquidator)

UTKAL GRAMEEN BANK
(Sponsored by State Bank of India)
Regional Business Office: Region-V,
Bhawaniapatna-766001, Dist.: Kalahandi, Email: ro.bhawaniapatna@ukgb.in

POSSESSION NOTICE
(For Immovable Property)
[See Rule-8-(1)]

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Utkal Grameen Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrowers and Guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest and expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrowers/Guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealing with the said properties will be subject to the charge of the Utkal Grameen Bank for the amount stated below with interest, cost and incidental expenses thereon.

BRANCH NAME / Name & Address of the Borrowers / Guarantors	Description of the Security Interest taken over possession	Liabilities due on the specified date as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Possession Notice
DABUGAON BRANCH / Borrower: Malla Reddy Bulu Rao, S/o.: Malla Reddy Narasing Rao, At: Nuaguda, PO.: Dabugaon, Dist.: Nabarangpur-764072 / Guarantors: 1) Laxmidhar Panka, S/o.: Sadan Panka, At: Borigam, PO.: Borigam, Dist.: Nabarangpur-764072, 2) Dhanurjaya Mali, S/o.:	All that Part & Parcel of the immovable property consisting of Mouza: Dabugaon, Tahasil: Dabugaon, Khata No.: 254, Plot No.: 880, Area: Ac.0.08, Kissam: Gharabari, in the name of Malla Reddy Bulu Rao	₹ 6,89,271/- as on 28.12.2023 + interest & expenses thereon	30.09.2023 / 28.12.2023
DABUGAON BRANCH / Borrower: M/s. Mahaveer Bakery, Prop.: Sri Narendra Nath Jena, S/o.: Late Ramesh Jena, At/PO.: Dabugaon, Dist.: Nabarangpur-764072 / Guarantor: Suresh Kumar Jena, S/o.: Nakula Charan Jena, At: Dhanasara, PO.: Junaani, Dist.: Nabarangpur-764072	All that Part & Parcel of the immovable property consisting of Mouza: Dangariguda, Tahasil: Dabugaon, Khata No.: 460/697, Plot No.: 836/2402, Area: Ac.0.10, Kissam: Gharabari, in the name of Suresh Kumar Jena	₹ 3,96,081/- as on 28.12.2023 + interest & expenses thereon	30.09.2023 / 28.12.2023
RAIGHAR BRANCH / Borrower: M/s. Maa Pendrani Modern Rice Mill, Prop.: Sri Harendra Kumar Mishra, S/o.: Shibraj Mishra, At/PO.: Ganjapara, Dist.: Nabarangpur-764074 / Guarantors: 1) Smt. Rajkumari Mishra, W/o.: Sri Harendra Kumar Mishra, 2) Dharamvir Yadav, S/o.: Maliram Yadav, Both are At: Kodavata, PO.: Raighar, Dist.: Nabarangpur-764074	1) All that Part & Parcel of the immovable property consisting of Mouza: Ganjapara, Tahasil: Raighar, Khata No.: 61/167, Plot No.: 377, Area: Ac.0.94, Khata No.: 61/112, Plot No.: 385/508/586, Area: Ac.0.70, Khata No.: 61/156, Plot No.: 385/508, Area: Ac.0.70, Kissam: Gharabari, in the name of Sri Harendra Kumar Mishra, 2) All that Part & Parcel of the immovable property consisting of Mouza: Raighar, Tahasil: Raighar, Khata No.: 90/630, Plot No.: 356/838/1014/1119, Area: Ac.0.05, Kissam: Gharabari, in the name of Smt. Rajkumari Mishra	₹ 15,18,744/- as on 29.12.2023 + interest & expenses thereon	18.08.2016 / 29.12.2023
UMERKOTE BRANCH / Borrower: Shaik Awesh Raza, S/o.: Shaik Nawab, At: Tikra Street, Main Road, PO.: Umerkote, Dist.: Nabarangpur-764073 / Guarantors: 1) Naresh Solanki, S/o.: Santosh Kumar Salanki, At: Kusumguda, PO.: Umerkote, Dist.: Nabarangpur-764073, 2) Imran Raza, S/o.: Haji Seikh Nawab, At: Tikra Street, Main Road, PO.: Umerkote, Dist.: Nabarangpur-764073	All that Part & Parcel of the immovable property consisting of Mouza: Umerkote, Tahasil: Umerkote, Khata No.: 87/1636, Plot No.: 387/4/717, Area: Ac.0.04, Kissam: Gharabari, in the name of Imran Raza	₹ 6,82,972/- as on 29.12.2023 + interest & expenses thereon	08.06.2023 / 29.12.2023

Place: Bhawaniapatna, Date: 02.01.2024

Sd/- Authorised Officer, Utkal Grameen Bank

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

NO VALUE ADDITION



Left unreformed, mineral processing may add some economic value for some countries in some cases, but at great social and environmental cost

spective. A recent report calculated that more than 95% of GDP generated by increased nickel-processing in one of Indonesia's two key nickel-producing regions, Morowali, did not remain there. So, local communities are not only bearing the massive environmental costs of nickel extraction; they are gaining almost nothing from the revenues. None of this should be considered "value-added" by the EU.

And then there is best practice. Mineral processing, as a sector, is relatively under-scrutinised compared to, say, mining. Experts consider "green" refining – if such a thing can exist – an emerging field, at best. And, so far, advances in mineral processing have been focused mostly on mitigating financial and geopolitical risks for firms, rather than improving social and environmental outcomes.

To be sure, the electric vehicle-maker Tesla claims to have devised an "innovative" lithium-processing technique that is "designed to consume less hazardous reagents" than the conventional process and create "usable" byproducts. "You could live right in the middle of the refinery and not suffer any ill effects," Tesla CEO Elon Musk boasts. But the firm has not provided any details publicly. The Heinrich Böll Foundation reached out to Tesla requesting more information, but received no response.

Left unreformed, mineral processing may add some economic value for some countries in some cases, but at great social and environmental cost. Unless the EU looks beyond narrowly economic metrics, its investments in this area will merely perpetuate the wrongs of the current fossil-fuel-based system, damaging human health, destroying ecosystems, and exacerbating the "decarbonization divide." No amount of rhetoric about "adding value" will change that.

The writer is a former member of the United Nations Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

A factory might appear economically valuable, but if it is polluting so much that it destroys the surrounding ecosystem, it is not adding value at all. This principle should be central to the European Union's policy decisions, as it races to secure access to the 34 raw materials considered "critical" to the EU's renewable-energy, digital, space and defence, and health sectors.

The process of extracting critical minerals from raw ore – before smelting, refining, or otherwise changing them into usable forms – is highly concentrated within global supply chains, and not in Europe. In 2021, China processed 50% of the world's lithium, 56% of its nickel, 80% of its gallium, 60% of its germanium, and 69% of its cobalt. As a result, these supply chains are prone to bottlenecks and highly vulnerable to economic and geopolitical shocks. If a mineral-processing power like China decides to use critical-mineral supplies as leverage or punishment, the EU will be at a significant disadvantage. In July, China announced it would restrict exports of gallium and germanium, both of which are needed to manufacture semiconductors. That decision had ramifications for national security in Europe, where demand for gallium is expected to grow 17-fold by 2050.

This vulnerability partly explains why the European Commission is committed to getting the Critical Raw Materials Act passed by early 2024. Along with strengthening the EU's own mineral-processing capacity and forging "strategic partnerships" with mineral-rich countries, the CRMA is a key component of the EU's strategy for securing the supplies it needs.

To boost the appeal of strategic partnerships – while distancing itself from its extractivist past – the EU has incorporated into the CRMA commitments to "value-addition" in the countries where critical raw minerals will be mined and processed. While we can guess some of what is meant by that – for example, supporting the development of min-

eral-processing capacity in countries where it is lacking – neither the CRMA nor any other documentation published so far clearly defines how value-added would be measured.

As a new study by the Heinrich Böll Foundation points out, this leaves citizens of mineral-producing countries, as well as Europeans, unable to make informed decisions about these strategic partnerships, which are, in any case, legally non-binding. As one expert interviewed in the study observed, "unless it is clearly defined, value-added becomes a political slogan that can be wielded. For it to mean anything in practice, it is a concept that needs to be unpacked."

The European Commission has offered some clues as to what such "unpacking" would reveal. During last month's EU Raw Materials Week in Brussels, public statements by Commission representatives suggested that value-addition would be economic in nature, with a focus on creating jobs and generating revenues for local communities. But while jobs and revenues are obviously desirable, this approach fails to account for the vast environmental and social costs of mineral processing.

In Namibia, a major copper-smelting operation in Tsumeb has, in the past, contaminated the local air, soil, and water, to the point that residents showed

elevated levels of lead and arsenic. In Chile, lithium extraction has caused severe water shortages, as it consumes 65% of the Atacama Desert region's supply and contaminates freshwater sources. Local communities have barely been consulted, if at all, about these activities – a violation of the principles enshrined in International Labor Organization Convention 169 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

If you poison the local people in order to create jobs for them, can those jobs really be considered "value-added"? What about the mineral revenues that were made possible by the destruction of local ecosystems? Does the local economy truly benefit from activities that drain it of vital ecological and social resources?

It should be obvious that short-term economic gains generated by mineral extraction and processing mean little if they have devastating environmental and health effects (which of course carry longer-term economic costs). That is why the European Commission must incorporate environmental and social considerations into assessments of value-addition linked to the CRMA and similar initiatives.

But that is just the beginning. Even in strictly economic terms, the concept of value-addition demands a more nuanced per-



Sophia Pickles

IF YOU POISON THE LOCAL PEOPLE IN ORDER TO CREATE JOBS FOR THEM, CAN THOSE JOBS REALLY BE CONSIDERED 'VALUE-ADDED'?

Take Truth for your force; take Truth for your refuge.

THE MOTHER



Begum in Bangladesh

Bangladesh will go to the polls on January 7. Of the 44 parties registered in the Election Commission, 27 are participating in the elections this time for 300 seats. This may create an impression that it will be a participatory, competitive and contested election. But, with the main Opposition parties, including the biggest Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), boycotting the poll and many of their leaders jailed it will, in all likelihood, be a one-sided affair and the ruling Awami League is all set to be re-elected for a fourth straight parliamentary term. These parties say they have no faith that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hold a free and fair election for which they have demanded the election be held under a neutral caretaker government. The Awami League has rejected the demand out right, calling it unconstitutional since an amendment passed a few years back scrapped the provision of election overseen by a caretaker government. The candidates who have filed their nominations are from the Awami League, its allies or independents.

In such a scenario the BNP has predictably asserted that "democracy is dead in Bangladesh" and the election is going to be "fake."

This is rather a sweeping statement since the reality in Bangladesh is that the BNP has become alienated from a large number of people both due to the ailment of its leader Begum Khaleda Zia, who is serving jail term, and weak organisational strength. At the same time country-wide arrests of Opposition leaders and activists by a coercive police force have lent credence to the charge that Sheikh Hasina has increasingly turned autocratic. There is, however, no denying the fact that Bangladesh under Hasina has achieved, since 2009, a good measure of economic success while being once dubbed one of the world's poorest countries. Now, it is one of the fastest-growing economies in the region, surpassing even its giant neighbour India. Its per capita income has tripled in the last decade and the World Bank estimates that more than 25 million people have been lifted out of poverty in the past two decades. One of the key achievements is the Hasina government's huge infrastructure projects, including the flagship \$2.9bn Padma bridge across the Ganges. The bridge alone is expected to raise GDP by 1.23 per cent. At the same time Bangladesh is still reeling under the impact of intensified cost of living crisis. Inflation was around 9.5 per cent in November, while its foreign exchange reserves have dropped from a record \$48bn in August 2021 to around \$20bn now - not enough for three months of imports. Its foreign debt has also doubled since 2016.

The US has asked the Sheikh Hasina government to make sure the Opposition takes part in the election that alone would legitimise the exercise. But, the government has made it clear that the country's Election Commission is an independent body and the government should not be blamed for the Opposition's boycott of the polls. A group of UN special rapporteurs have also expressed concern over the "weaponisation of the judicial system" to target Opposition activists, journalists, human rights defenders and civil society leaders. The government has categorically denied the charges.

India of course does not see eye to eye with the US assessment of the situation in Bangladesh and it has extended its support to the holding of the elections. This is only natural given the regional political dynamics as also the debatably democratic character displayed by the Indian government. Delhi wants road and river transport access for its seven north-eastern states through Bangladesh. India is also concerned about the "chicken's neck," a 20km land corridor that runs between Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan, linking its north-eastern states to the rest of India. Officials in Delhi are afraid it is strategically vulnerable in any potential conflict with India's rival, China. Hasina has been a strong ally of India and helped the latter tackle the insurgency problem in the north-east by reining in militant groups operating along the border after coming to power in 2009. Moreover, India can ill afford to excessively arm twist Bangladesh which could push Dhaka towards China. Beijing is already keen on bringing Bangladesh into its orbit as it vies with India for regional supremacy.

Similar to Hasina's example, India has also been consistently supporting the military dictatorship in neighbouring Myanmar (Burma). That government has lost complete public support and has, in the meanwhile, veered more towards China. In any eventuality if there is a change in Myanmar and somewhere down the line democracy returns to that country, New Delhi's support for the Junta could prove counterproductive to Indian interests in the long run.

The way things are moving, there is hardly any fear of any upset election results. As long as Hasina is there, India has a steady, autocratic and trustworthy ally in her.

WISDOM CORNER

- If you plan on being anything less than you are capable of being, you will probably be unhappy all the days of your life.** ABRAHAM MASLOW
- If you're going to do something tonight that you'll be sorry for tomorrow morning, sleep late.** HENNY YOUNGMAN
- You are always free to change your mind and choose a different future, or a different past.** RICHARD BACH

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1521:** Martin Luther excommunicated by pope. Pope Leo X issued the papal bull Decet Romanum Pontificem, excommunicating Martin Luther, the German priest whose questioning of certain Roman Catholic practices initiated the Protestant Reformation.
- 1938:** US President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the National Foundation of Infantile Paralysis (later called the March of Dimes) to find a cure for polio, a disease he had been stricken with in 1921.
- 1962:** Pope John XXIII excommunicated Fidel Castro, who had transformed Cuba into a communist state; at the time, the Roman Catholic Church opposed communism.
- 1977:** Apple was incorporated by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, and it later became one of the most valuable companies in the world, known for innovative computer and electronic products.
- 1990:** After undergoing 10 days of psychological warfare—which included U.S. forces blasting rock music at the Vatican embassy, where he had sought refuge—Panamanian military leader Manuel Noriega surrendered to the United States.

LOL

Two men camping

Two young men were out in the woods on a camping trip, when they came upon this great trout brook. They stayed there all day, enjoying the fishing, which was super. At the end of the day, knowing that they would be graduating from college soon, they vowed that they would meet, in twenty years, at the same place and renew the



experience. Twenty years later, they met and travelled to a spot near where they had been years before. They walked into the woods and before long came upon a brook. One of the men said to the other, "This is the place!" The other replied, "No, it's not!" The first man said, "Yes, I do recognize the clover growing on the bank on the other side." To which the other man replied, "Silly, you can't tell a brook by its clover."

IN JEST THIS

'Stupid' punishments for 'stupid' crimes

I've never committed a crime that required me to go before a judge—and I hope I never do. But if I ever have to face a judge, I hope it's a judge who doesn't just want to throw me in prison.

I hope it's someone who is creative—someone like Municipal Court Judge Gayle Williams-Byers of South Euclid, Ohio, US.

About a decade ago, Williams-Byers sentenced a 62-year-old man named Edmond Aviv to sit on a street corner for five hours with a sign that read: "I AM A BULLY! I pick on children that are disabled, and I am intolerant of those that are different from myself. My actions do not reflect an appreciation for the diverse South Euclid community that I live in."

Aviv was punished for harassing and insulting his neighbours, who had adopted two black children with developmental disabilities, according to a UPI article. Aviv was also sentenced to 15 days in jail, seven months on probation, and

100 hours of yoga.

Actually it wasn't 100 hours of yoga, but 100 hours of community service. Yoga would have been better—it's the perfect punishment for inflexible people. (If you love yoga, please don't take offense. Yoga is a pleasure for many people, but it's not easy for beginners, especially 62-year-old beginners.)

The judge also ordered Aviv to undergo counseling and take anger management classes. Unfortunately, we don't know whether the sentence actually made Aviv a better human being. That's partly because newspapers don't print articles with headlines such as "Man bakes cookies for neighbours" and "Man sings 'Kumbaya' with neighbours."

Prison is certainly a good punishment for serious crimes, but when judges have the ability to be creative in their sentencing, I hope they do so more often. Not only will the wrongdoer learn a lesson, it will benefit society as a whole, giving society some much-needed

entertainment.

Providing entertainment to society should never be a judge's primary motivation, of course. It's just a side benefit.

Few judges have provided as much entertainment in their careers as Judge Michael Cicconetti, who also worked in the state of Ohio. Before retiring in 2019, Cicconetti served for 25 years as municipal court judge in the city of Painesville.

"The message I want to send to the defendant is, 'Look, you did something stupid and you're going to pay for it by doing something stupid,'" Cicconetti told The News-Herald. "Hopefully that clicks. I can't say we didn't have a little fun doing it over the years. We have. I've entertained myself by doing it. But there's always been a point to doing it."

After a young woman was convicted of stiffing a taxi driver of a \$100 fare after a 30-mile drive, Cicconetti sentenced her to repay the driver and walk the 30-mile distance within 48

hours wearing a monitor.

After another woman was convicted of abandoning 35 kittens in the woods, Cicconetti sentenced her to spend one night in the woods without water, food or entertainment. It was part of a longer sentence that included 14 days in jail, 15 days under house arrest, a \$3,200 donation to the Humane Society, and a \$500 donation to the park rangers who found the kittens.

Perhaps my favorite sentence of Cicconetti's was this: after a man and a woman, both 19, vandalised the statue of a baby Jesus from a nativity scene, the judge ordered them to walk through their town with a donkey from a petting zoo while carrying a sign that said, "Sorry for the jackass offense."

Judge Cicconetti also sentenced them to 45 days in jail, drug and alcohol treatment, and 100 hours of yoga.

No, he didn't sentence them to yoga. As far as I know, Cicconetti never considered yoga a punishment.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Long overdue

Sir, This refers to "Dress code a must at Srimandir" (Orissa POST January 2). This step was long overdue as a good number of tourists had taken it for granted to make their entry into the sanctum sanctorum with indecent clothes as if no sanctity needs to be maintained inside the 12th century temple. The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) deserves to be praised for banning plastic bags inside the temple which were clogging the drains, besides making the pathways slippery. The SJTA on its part also has to ensure a hassle free darshan which becomes a headache for senior citizens. Their entry into the temple should be well arranged.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

On seventh heaven

Sir, Renowned Mysore-based sculptor Arun Yogiraj Shilpi must be on seventh heaven after the authorities chose his Ram Lalla idol for consecration at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. Yogiraj and his team used a unique Krishna shila (stone) from Bujjigoudanapura village in HD Kote taluk of Mysore district to sculpt the idol. His fame skyrocketed when PM Modi unveiled his 12-foot-tall idol of Adi Shankaracharya in Kedarnath in 2021. Standing tall at Amar Jawan Jyoti near Delhi's India Gate is Yogiraj's 30-foot statue of Subhas Chandra Bose. More power to his elbow!

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Digital initiatives

Sir, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud is known for promoting digital initiatives at the Supreme Court like live streaming of select court proceedings, digitalisation of records and digital courts. As per a latest report, the SC has disposed of 52,191 cases as of December 15, 2023, the number stood at 39, 800 in the preceding year. The Integrated Case Management Information System software, introduced in 2017 to address relative urgency of different types of cases, seems to have helped in fixing a timeframe for urgent verification and listing of sensitive matters. Linkage of the SC to the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) has helped the top court as well as the common man to quickly access judgements. In September, Justice Chandrachud had announced that the SC was 'on-board' the NJDG, another step forward in ensuring judiciary's transparency and accountability.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Over 400 juveniles nabbed since '21 for violent crimes

NEW DELHI, Jan 2: More than 400 juveniles were arrested in Delhi, 121 of them for murder, by three districts' and the metro and railway units of police in the last three years, according to the official data.

The data pertained to 2021, 2022, and 2023 till September and was from the south, central, and Shahdara districts, besides

According to the National Crime Record Bureau data, juveniles were found to be involved in 2,436 criminal cases reported in Delhi in 2022

- Of the total, 92 cases were related to murder and 154 attempted murder
- Eighty-six of them were involved in cases of rape
- The figures are several times higher in comparison to the other 19 metropolitan cities in India



the metro and railway unit police units.

According to the data, the five police units apprehended a total of 417 juveniles - 121 juveniles in murder, 184 in attempt to murder, and 112 in rape cases.

The south district police nabbed 58 juveniles in murder cases, the central 28, and the Shahdara district 23, the data said. When it came to rape cases, the central district nabbed 46 juveniles, Shahdara 36, south district 29, and the railways one,

it stated. The number of juveniles nabbed in murder attempt cases was 99 in the south district, 55 in the central district, 36 in the Shahdara district, and four in the metro unit.

The railway unit apprehended 12 minors in murder and attempt to murder cases, it said. On Thursday, a 34-year-old cab driver was stabbed to death allegedly by three people, including a minor, in an instance of

road rage in south Delhi's Mehrauli area.

The minor involved in the incident has been apprehended. In November in east Delhi's Welcome colony, a 16-year-old boy, apparently drunk, stabbed another teenager more than 55 times, slit his throat, dragged his body through the street, and as he did it, performed a little jig before the CCTV camera.

Himachal records 45% rain-deficit post-monsoon



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla (HP), Jan 2: Himachal Pradesh, which witnessed massive destruction due to heavy rains during the monsoon season, recorded 45 percent rain-deficit in the post-monsoon period from October 1 to December 31, the weather office said Monday.

The state received 45.2mm of rain against the normal rainfall of 82.9mm in the post-monsoon period, a deficit of 45 percent. Hamirpur and Chamba districts received normal rainfall, Una and Bilaspur received excess rainfall while the remaining eight districts of Lahaul and Spiti, Kinnaur, Kullu, Mandi, Kangra, Shimla, Solan and Sirmour received deficient rainfall. The rain-deficit in the month of December alone was 85 percent as the state received just 5.8 mm rainfall against the normal of 38.1mm. During the period, Gondla in Lahaul and Spiti received the highest snowfall of 12 cm December 1.

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The local MeT department has forecast a dry spell in the state till January 7 and warned of the possibility of dense fog in isolated pockets during the next five days in Mandi, Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Una, Kangra, Sirmour and Solan during morning hours.

There was no significant change in the minimum and maximum temperatures and Kukumseri in Lahaul and Spiti was coldest at night, recording a low of minus 8.2 degrees Celsius while Sundernagar was hottest during the day with a high 21.7 degrees Celsius.

Delhi-NCR has become India's narco trade hub



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 2: The demand for the party drug, "Malana cream" (hashish), continues to thrive in the heart of the national capital, as indicated by a recent exchange between a potential buyer and a seller.

The buyer's inquiry over a WhatsApp call, "Is there 'maal' available, brother?" elicited a swift response from the seller, confirming the product's availability upon the payment of Rs 4000 and the booking of a delivery person.

The popularity of "Malana cream" among consumers underscores the persistent challenge faced by the law enforcement agencies in curbing the illegal drug trade.

The exchange between the buyer and seller highlights a concerning trend, revealing that the narcotics trade remains active, with transactions taking place through discreet channels.

The ease with which the con-

Despite the Delhi Police's concerted efforts to dismantle inter-state drug rackets for supplying narcotics substances across the city, the roots of the drug trade seem to persist within Delhi itself

versation unfolded raises questions about the effectiveness of the ongoing law enforcement initiatives to eradicate such activities. While the Delhi Police have reported successful crackdowns on various inter-state drug rackets, the continued availability and demand for substances like "Malana cream" suggest that more comprehensive measures may be required to address the roots of the issue within the city.

Himachal Pradesh's ancient Aryan village of Malana is known the world over as a haven

for those looking for a high in the hills. An oily and aromatic strain of hashish called Malana cream is considered to be the purest form of hashish and is derived by the locals from the cannabis grown illegally in the surrounding Parvati Valley.

The international popularity of the drug brings thousands of tourists to the village.

Recently, the Delhi Police had arrested three men, including two foreign nationals and a king-pin and seized around 63 kg of fine quality hashish worth more than Rs 30 crore in the international market.

Hashish, sourced from Nepal, has made its way into Delhi, signalling a noteworthy increase in cross-border smuggling and consumption, not limited to Malana cream alone.

A senior police official said that the recent seizure of hashish suggests that the smugglers are mostly using cars after making a special cavity to smuggle drugs from Himachal Pradesh or Nepal.

According to a recent survey conducted by the anti-narcotics task force (ANTF) of the Delhi Police, Jama Masjid, Madangir, Chhatarpur, Hazrat Nizamuddin, Uttam Nagar, Taimoor Nagar, Nand Nagri and Majnu Ka Tila are among the "64 hotspots" identified by the cops for peddling narcotic substances.

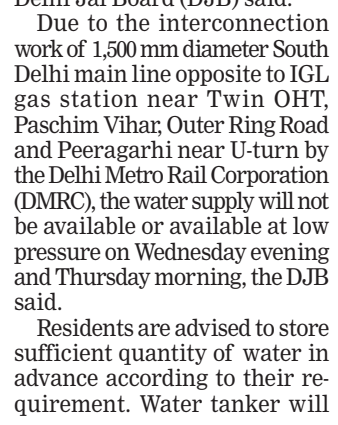
Residents are advised to store sufficient quantity of water in advance according to their requirement. Water tanker will

Water supply to be hit in parts of Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: Water supply in several parts of the city will be affected Wednesday and Thursday due to an inter-connection work by the DMRC, Delhi Jal Board (DJB) said.

Due to the interconnection work of 1,500 mm diameter South Delhi main line opposite to IGL gas station near Twin OHT, Paschim Vihar; Outer Ring Road and Peeragarhi near U-turn by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), the water supply will not be available or available at low pressure on Wednesday evening and Thursday morning, the DJB said.



be available on request, they said.

The water supply will be affected in Budella, D block Janakpuri, Sagarpur and adjoining area Delhi Cantt (MES), NDMC area, RK Puram, Moti Bagh Nanakoura, Katwaria Sarai, Ber Sarai, Vasant Vihar, Vasant Enclave, Shanti Nikaten, Westend colony, Green Park, Sufdarjung Enclave, SDA, Hauz Khass, Munirka, Kisangarh, Masjidmoth, part of Mehrauli, IIT, INU, AIIMS, Safdarjung Hospital and adjoining areas of Deer Park Reservoir, they added.

Meat shops, religious places to be at least 100m apart, says MCD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi has decided to reduce the minimum distance condition for opening a meat shop near any religious place to 100 metres from 150 metres, besides watering down other provisions.

The move comes after the civic body drew opposition from meat sellers in the city who feared that the new regulations passed in October would adversely impact nearly 6,000 meat shops under the MCD jurisdiction and may even force many to shut businesses.

The MCD, in its last House meeting of 2023 December 28, gave its nod to a revised proposal introduced as a private member bill by AAP councillors Sultana Aabid and Amin Malik that proposed to decrease the minimum permissible distance between a meat shop and a religious place to 100 metres in densely populated areas along with other changes, an official said Monday. According to the revised proposal, the fee charged for the renewal of the licence for a meat shop has been slashed to ₹ 5,000 from ₹ 7,000 proposed earlier, the official said.

"In densely populated areas such as Old Delhi, setting a minimum distance between meat



shops and religious places to 150 metres is practically not feasible. In October last year, the civic body had passed a new licensing policy for meat shops that was aimed at standardising licensing fees across the MCD zones and fixing the minimum distance between a meat shop and any religious place to 150 metres. The revised proposal brings down the fine imposed in case of violation of rules to ₹ 10,000.

In the previous proposal, the fine imposed for rule violation was set as ₹ 20,000 for the first time and ₹ 50,000 for any further rule breaks. Besides, the Corporation has also given its nod to reduce the minimum area requirement for opening a meat shop to 50 sq ft from 60 sq ft set earlier.

Traders in Delhi were also dissatisfied with the increased annual charges. The Delhi Meat Merchants Association had opposed the proposal stating that it would lead to "corruption" and threatened to move to court if the policy was not rolled back.

24 lakh liquor bottles sold on New Year eve

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: Delhi recorded sales of 24 lakh liquor bottles on New Year's Eve, registering a nearly 18 per cent on-year growth from the corresponding date in 2022.

According to official Excise department data, 3,99,60,509 (3.99 crore) liquor bottles were sold in December 2022 through a network of 520 shops. In December 2023, 4,97,80,240 (4.97 crore) bottles were sold from 635 vendors.

According to the data, 24,00,726 (24 lakh) liquor bottles were sold on New Year's Eve (December 31) - the highest single-day sales during December 2023.

December 31, 2022, witnessed sales of 20,30,664 (20.30 lakh) bottles - also the highest single-day

sales figure for that month. The second highest sales in Christmas Eve (December 24) when 19,42,717 (19.42 lakh) bottles were sold. On the same day in 2022, the data showed that 14,69,357 (14.69 lakh) bottles were sold. The data also showed that 17,79,379 (17.79 lakh) liquor bottles were sold on December 30, 2023, against 14,66,353 (14.66 lakh) on the same day in 2022. In 2023, the lowest sales were recorded on December 5 when 12,84,222 (12.84 lakh) bottles were sold against 13,81,531 (13.81 lakh) on the same day in 2022. In 2022, the lowest sales were seen December 4, with 9,03,835 (9.03 lakh) bottles sold.

Sales of liquor bottles breached the 10-lakh every day in December 2023.

HP to start phase II of solar power projects

AGENCIES

Shimla, Jan 2: The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet, under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu, Monday decided to start Rajiv Gandhi Swarozgar Start Up Yojna Phase (II), for setting up solar power projects for those aged between 21 and 45 years, besides achieving the government's 'clean energy' initiatives.

The Rajiv Gandhi Swarozgar Start Up Yojna focuses on the installation of solar plants with capacities ranging from 100 kW to 500 kW, thereby contributing substantially to the state's renewable energy targets.

This will not only provide self-employment opportunities but will also stimulate economic growth amongst the youth in times to come, an official statement said.

Under the scheme, the par-



The Rajiv Gandhi Swarozgar Start Up Yojna focuses on the installation of solar plants with capacities ranging from 100 kW to 500 kW, thereby contributing substantially to the state's renewable energy targets

and ₹ 1 lakh per month for the projects with a capacity of 200 kW and 500 kW to be set up in five and 10 bighas, respectively. The beneficiary of the scheme will have to pay just 10 per cent of the amount as security deposit whereas 70 per cent bank loan will be facilitated by the government that will also provide 30 per cent equity.

The Cabinet also approved to start Sarkar Gaon Ke Dwar from January 8 across the state during which interaction with beneficiaries of government schemes will be held at clusters of villages till February 12

HP's famed apples victims of freakish weather

Experts and growers believe that changes in precipitation patterns like frequent extreme weather events both in summer and winter have even impacted the taste, colour and texture of apples



as low as 2.75 lakh tons in 2011 and 3.69 lakh tons in 2018.

Fluctuations in temperatures from December to February, for example, every year have been preponing flowering in apple trees in spring and altering the timing of key plant physiological events like early bud break

and full bloom period.

Himachal's apple boom is credited to Samuel Evans Stokes (later named Satyanand Stokes), an American missionary who first introduced the high-quality apples in the mid-altitude hills.

From a small orchard in Kotgarh, Stokes promoted apple cultivation in other areas too, especially in upper Shimla.

Since then, the hill state has been synonymous with apples that alone constitute 89 per cent of the state's fruit economy of Rs 5,000 crore.

"We are now fighting for our livelihood as climate change reduces crop yield and increases crop failures," said Deepak Tegta, a prominent grower in Jubbal, state's apple basket in Shimla district.

Octogenarian grower Naresh Daulta of Karsog in Mandi district told IANS that changes in precipitation patterns like fre-

quent extreme weather events both in summer and winter have been impacting the taste, colour and texture of apples. Snow is considered "white manure" for the apple orchards as it not only helps in meeting the minimum chilling requirement but also sustains the required level of moisture in the soil during summer.

The weather fluctuation trend is noticeable in orchards located at an altitude of 1,500 metres, said S.P. Bhardwaj, a former Joint Director at the Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry. The weather impact is not as severe for orchards in ranges located above 2,000 metres, he said.

New low-chilling and early maturing varieties are being introduced in the lower-altitude hills. Ageing orchards too are taking a toll on apple production.

ZILLA SWASTHYA SAMITI, DHENKANAL
DISTRICT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT
NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION

Notice No.04 Date: 2.1.24
No.E-688: Sealed tenders invited from reputed Firm/Company/Society/Trust for services of Housekeeping, Security and Mechanized Laundry Services under Nirmal Scheme in the District. The details regarding application format, terms and conditions of the tender may be downloaded from District Website i.e., www.dhenkanal.nic.in. The tender will reach the office of the undersigned latest by **23.01.2024, 05.30 PM** through speed post/registered post/courier only. The tender will be opened on **24.01.2024 at 10.30 AM** in the office of the undersigned in the presence of bidders/authorized representatives of the bidders. The undersigned is not responsible for any kind of postal delay and reserves all the rights to cancel any or all tender at any stage of selection/finalization process without assigning any reasons thereof. Any typographical error may be exempted.

Sd./- CDM & PHO-cum-
OIPR-10059/11/0014/2324 District Mission Director, Dhenkanal

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
ROURKELA IRRIGATION DIVISION, ROURKELA
e-mail id: seridrkl@gmail.com
e-Procurement Notice

BID IDENTIFICATION NO. SERID-RKL-13/2023-24, DT. 01.01.2024
No.A-1125: The Superintending Engineer, Rourkela Irrigation Division, Rourkela on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate Bid in single cover system to be received in online mode from the eligible contractors registered with the State Government, contractors of equivalent Grade/ Class Registered with Central Government/ MES/ Railways/CPWD work as detailed below:

1. Nature of Work	: FLOOD WORKS
2. Total Number of works	: 01 (One) No.
3. Bid Identification No.	: SERID-RKL-13/2023-24 (Online)
4. Estimated Cost	: Rs. 26.64 Lakh
5. Class of Contractor	: Referred to DTCN
6. Cost of Tender Paper	: Referred to DTCN (Non-Refundable)
7. Earnest Money Deposit	: Referred to DTCN (Refundable)
8. Period of Completion	: Referred to DTCN
9. Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal	: From Dt.05.01.2024 at 10.00 AM to dt.16.01.2024 upto 05.00 PM
10. Last Date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal	: Dt.16.01.2024 at 05.00 PM
11. Date and Time of Opening of Bids	: Dt.17.01.2024 at 11.30 hours
12. Last date & time of seeking of clarification	: Dt.12.01.2024 at 5.00 P.M.
13. Place of Opening	: Office of the Superintending Engineer, Rourkela Irrigation Division, Rourkela
14. Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer, Rourkela Irrigation Division, Rourkela

The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. As Goods & Service Tax (GST) has Come into force with effective from 01.07.2027. Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

Sd./-Superintending Engineer
Rourkela Irrigation Division,
Rourkela
OIPR-32018/11/0016/2324



People make their way near a collapsed building due to an earthquake in Wajima, Ishikawa prefecture, Japan. A series of powerful earthquakes hit western Japan Monday, damaging buildings and vehicles



Tourists at the Table Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa



Artists perform during the 'National Winter Carnival' in Manali



A staffer at a manufacturing unit displays a model of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, at Faizabad in Ayodhya district



Cadets of National Cadet Corps during a winter training camp at Nagrota, on the outskirts of Jammu



Indian Coast Guard personnel during rehearsals for the upcoming Republic Day parade on a cold morning, in New Delhi



School students during the display of weapons by the Maharashtra police on its raising day in Thane



A stork with its new born chick in her nest in Nagaon district of Assam

international



If they remove Trump's name, my name is off too, and I call on Ron DeSantis, Nikki Haley and Chris Christie to do the same thing. Their words are cheap. Action speaks louder than words

MAJOR BLOW TO IMRAN
As general elections inch closer in Pakistan, for former premier Imran Khan and the top leadership of his Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party the going is getting tougher as it faces rejection of nomination papers by the Election Commission



of the day quote

A contentious immigration bill backed by the far right is imperfect and needs some fixes but is what the French wanted and is not a victory for the far right

Israeli attacks against Iranian advisers in Syria were a clear violation of the Arab state's sovereignty and territorial integrity as an independent state and a UN member and an adventurism aimed at challenging peace and security in the region

We might have a slight (Covid-19) surge, but I think more or less, we are seeing the peak of this wave

SHORT TAKES

Sri Lanka to set up Truth Commission
Colombo: Sri Lanka has taken the first step to set up the much-delayed Truth Commission, a major demand for reconciliation post-2009 with the end to the armed conflict with the LTTE in the north and east of the island nation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued the gazette for the Bill that will eventually lead to the establishment of 'The Commission for Truth Unity and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka.'

Finland, Sweden set cold records
Helsinki: Finland and Sweden recorded their coldest temperatures of the winter Tuesday when thermometers plummeted as low as minus 40 degrees Celsius (minus 40 Fahrenheit) as a cold spell grips the Nordic region. Cold and snow disrupted transportation throughout the region, including in Norway where a major highway in the south was closed due to the weather and ferry lines suspended operations. In neighbouring Finland, this winter's cold record was recorded in the northwestern town of Ylivieska where temperatures fell to minus 37.8 degrees Celsius (minus 36 F) early Tuesday, and forecasters said temperatures would be lower than minus 40 degrees Celsius in parts of the nation through the week.

Turkiye detains 33
Ankara: Turkish authorities have detained 33 people suspected of spying for Israel, Turkiye's state-run news agency reported Tuesday. Authorities were still searching for 13 others believed to have links to Israel's Mossad security service, the Anadolu Agency reported.

HUNDREDS FLEE BURNING PLANE

Local TV video showed a large eruption of fire and smoke from the side of the Japan Airlines plane as it taxied on a runway. The area around the wing then caught fire. Footage an hour later showed the plane fully on fire

Tokyo, Jan 2: A passenger plane and a Japanese coast guard aircraft collided on the runway at Tokyo's Haneda Airport Tuesday and burst into flames, with five people on the smaller plane killed, officials said.

All 379 people on Japan Airlines flight JAL-516 got out safely before the plane was engulfed in flames, Transport Minister Tetsuo Saito confirmed. The pilot of the coast guard plane escaped but the five crew members died, Saito said.

Tuesday's accident was the first time one of the Airbus A350, among the industry's newest large passenger planes, was severely damaged. It entered commercial service in 2015.

The Japan Airlines A350 had flown from Shin Chitose airport near the city of Sapporo, the transport minister said. Coast guard spokesperson Yoshinori Yanagishima said its Bombardier Dash-8 plane, which is based at Haneda, had been due to head to Niigata to deliver relief goods to residents affected by a deadly earthquake in the region Monday. The turboprop Dash-8 is widely used on short-haul and commuter flights.

The coast guard pilot reported to his base that his aircraft exploded after colliding with the commercial plane, Vice

- Japan Airlines plane had 379 passengers and crew on board
- Jet burst into flames after collision with Coast Guard plane
- Five of six-member Coast Guard crew killed
- Coast Guard aircraft was due to deliver aid to quake zone
- Passenger describes cabin filling with smoke



Commander Yoshio Seguchi told reporters.

Shigenori Hiraoka, head of the Transport Ministry Civil Aviation Bureau, said the collision occurred when the JAL plane landed on one of Haneda's four runways where the coast guard aircraft was preparing to take off. Transport safety officials were analyzing communication between aviation control officials and the two aircraft and planned to interview JAL officials

Major accident averted in B'desh

Dhaka: A major accident was averted Tuesday in Bangladesh when a train carrying 300 passengers was stopped by the driver just 200 yards ahead of a bridge where the hooks that bind railway tracks with sleepers were removed by suspected saboteurs in northern Netrokona district, officials said. Railway officials said 28 dog spikes on 14 sleepers were removed, an incident they believed could be linked to a series of train sabotages ahead of the January 7 general elections, being boycotted by the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

to determine what led to the collision. Hiraoka praised JAL for "taking appropriate procedures" to safely evacuate all passengers and crew members.

Another passenger told NHK television that cabin attendants were calm and told everyone to leave their baggage behind, then all lights went off and the tem-

Top Hamas official Saleh Arouri killed in Beirut blast



People gather at the site of the explosion, in what security sources say is an Israeli drone strike, in the Beirut suburb of Dahiyeh, Lebanon

Beirut, Jan 2: The TV station of Lebanon's Hezbollah group says top Hamas official Saleh Arouri was killed Tuesday in an explosion in a southern Beirut suburb.

Arouri, one of the founders of Hamas' military wing, had headed the group's presence in the West Bank. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had threatened to kill him even before the Hamas-Israel war began October 7. Israeli officials declined to comment.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the blast killed four people and was carried out by an Israeli drone. An explosion shook the Lebanese capital's southern suburbs Tuesday evening causing chaos in the militant Hezbollah group's stronghold, but the nature of the blast was not immediately known. It wasn't clear if the ex-

plosion inflicted any casualties in the Beirut suburb but videos circulating on social media showed serious damage and fire. The explosion came during more than two months of heavy exchanges of fire between Israeli troops and members of Hezbollah along Lebanon's southern border. Since the fighting began October 8, the fighting has been concentrated a few miles (kilometers) from the border but on several occasions Israel's air force hit Hezbollah targets deeper in Lebanon. Earlier in the day, Hezbollah said its fighters carried out several attacks along the Lebanon-Israel border targeting Israeli military posts.

The Israeli drone struck a Hamas office in Dahiyeh on Tuesday night, leaving a total of six people dead, Lebanon's state news agency reported. Security sources and medics could not immediately identify the other three killed.



FUN IN WATER: People participate in the annual New Year Day Polar Bear Dip in Oakville, Ont. Participants plunge into the frigid waters of Lake Ontario each year to raise money for charity

South Korea's Oppn leader stabbed in neck

Seoul: South Korea's tough-speaking liberal opposition leader, Lee Jae-myung, was stabbed in the neck by an unidentified knife-wielding man during a visit Tuesday to the southeastern city of Busan, police said. Lee, 59, the head of the main opposition Democratic Party, was airlifted to a Seoul hospital for surgery after receiving emergency treatment in Busan. Police and emergency officials earlier said he was conscious after the attack and wasn't in critical condition, but his exact status was unknown. The attack happened as Lee walked through a crowd of journalists and others after a tour of the proposed site of a new airport in Busan. The attacker approached Lee, saying he wanted to get his autograph, and then stabbed him in the left side of his neck with a knife, senior Busan police officer Sohn Jae-han said in a televised briefing. Sohn said Democratic Party officials near Lee quickly subdued the attacker before police officers detained him. He said 41 police officers had been deployed to the area for crowd control and traffic management.

Rishi Sunak declares success in meeting UK's asylum target

London, Jan 2: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Tuesday declared he had met his target to clear the country's "legacy" asylum backlog by the end of 2023 and also bucked the trend across Europe by cutting down arrivals of illegal migrants via small boats by 36 per cent.

The UK Home Office said that 112,000 asylum cases were processed in the past year, which exceeded Sunak's initial target of 92,000 applications pending at the end of 2022.

It claimed that fundamental changes to the decision-making process and boosting efficiency resulted in the highest annual number of "substantive" asylum decisions in a year since 2002.

"I am determined to end the burden of illegal migration on the British people. That is why we have taken action to stop the boats, return hotels to their local communities, and deter those wanting to come here illegally from doing so," said Sunak. Sunak sees curbing soaring migration figures, both legal and illegal, an important target for the government as he prepares for a general election this year.

A Biden-Trump rematch could shake American politics

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Laconia, Jan 2: US presidential elections have been rocked in recent years by economic disaster, stunning gaffes, secret video and a pandemic.

But for all the tumult that defined those campaigns, the volatility surrounding this year's presidential contest has few modern parallels, posing profound challenges to the future of American democracy.

Not since the Supreme Court effectively decided the 2000 campaign in favour of Republican George W. Bush has the judiciary been so intertwined with presidential politics.

In the coming weeks, the high court is expected to weigh whether states can ban former President Donald Trump from the ballot for his role in leading the January 6, 2021, insurrec-

tion at the US Capitol.

Meanwhile, a federal appeals court is weighing Trump's argument that he's immune from prosecution. The maneuvers are unfolding as prosecutors from New York to Washington and Atlanta move forward with 91 indictments across four criminal cases involving everything from Trump's role in the insurrection to his efforts to overturn the 2020 election and his hush money paid to a porn actress.

On the Democratic side, President Joe Biden is seeking reelection as the high inflation that defined much of his first term seems to be easing. But that has done little to assuage restless voters or ease widespread concerns in both parties that, at 81, he's simply too old for the job. And at least three serious candidates who have launched outsider presidential



bids threaten to scramble the campaign and eat into the support from independent voters who were critical to Biden's success in 2020.

Facing such uncertainty, few expect the traditional rules of politics to apply in 2024. Jim Messina, who managed former President Barack Obama's reelection, said Trump could very well defeat

though a few rivals are fighting furiously to stop Trump, he is well positioned to win the GOP nomination for the third consecutive election.

The strength of the GOP opposition to Trump will become more clear January 15 when the Iowa caucuses launch the nomination process. Trump holds a command-ing lead in most national polls, although former UN ambassador Nikki Haley and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis are fighting to stop him. Allies of DeSantis and Haley privately concede that their best chance to

most US adults overall (56%) would be "very" or "somewhat" dissatisfied with Biden as the Democratic presidential nominee in 2024, according to a poll conducted last month by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. A similar majority (58%) said they would be very or somewhat dissatisfied with Trump as the GOP's pick.

Biden next fall, even if the former president is in prison. One of the few certainties at this point is that Biden is on track to be the Democratic nominee again, facing only token opposition in this year's primary despite overwhelming concerns within his own party about his physical and mental fitness. And

ing lead in most national polls, although former UN ambassador Nikki Haley and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis are fighting to stop him. Allies of DeSantis and Haley privately concede that their best chance to

wrestle the nomination from Trump would come in a long-shot push for a contested convention in Wisconsin this July.

Public polling strongly suggests that voters do not want a rematch between Trump and Biden. Most US adults overall (56 per cent) would be "very" or "somewhat" dissatisfied with Biden as the Democratic presidential nominee in 2024, according to a poll conducted last month by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. A similar majority (58 per cent) said they would be very or somewhat dissatisfied with Trump as the GOP's pick.

While concerns about Biden are centered on his age, Trump has increasingly embraced authoritarian messages that serve as clear warnings of his plans to dismantle democratic norms if he returns to the White House.

