

BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY JANUARY 4 | 2024

VOLUME 13. ISSUE 274 | www.orissapost.com

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ADR: BJP bagged 70% of electoral trust donations

LEISURE | P2

the ADR stated.

nations.

or 24.56 per cent of the total do-

the ADR stated.

Prudent Electoral

2021-22, while Samaj

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 3: With ₹259.08 crore, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) bagged 70.69 per cent of total donations received by all political parties from electoral trusts in 2022-23, according to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), the NGO working for electoral reforms.

According to the ADR findings, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) received about 25 per cent of the donations.

According to an analysis of contribution reports of electoral trusts for 2022-23, there are 39 corporate and business houses that contributed over ₹363 crore to

electoral trusts. Thirty-four corporate and business houses contributed

over ₹360 crore to Prudent Electoral Trust, one company contributed ₹2 crore to Samaj



to four political parties - the BJP, LEAP OF FAITH: A Sikh devotee displays martial arts skills during a religious procession ahead of the birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Sikh guru, in Jammu, Wednesday

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Since the govt relented, the boss has been very excited. I'am worried he might hit someone



report by the ADR said.

Prudent Electoral Trust donated

BRS, YSR Congress and the AAP.

Long wait over NAVEEN DEDICATES ₹2,723CR LOWER SUKTEL IRRIGATION PROJECT IN BOLANGIR 23 YEARS AFTER IT WAS CONCEIVED

PNN & AGENCIES

Bolangir, Jan 3: Bringing an end to 23-year-long wait, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday inaugurated the ₹2,723 crore worth Lower Suktel Irrigation Project in Bolangir district which will help irrigate over one lakh acre of agriculture land and benefit over 80,000 farmers, besides providing drinking water to 70,000 people in Bolangir and Subarnapur districts.

The dedication of the 5.284kn irrigation system of Suktel river, considered the lifeline of Bolangir district, by the CM is set to benefit the people of around 203 villages. Patnaik, during his visit to Bolangir, also inaugurated 69 other projects worth ₹305 crore and laid the foundation stones of 112 infrastructure projects worth ₹2.220 crore

crore

>The 5,284km irrigation system will help irrigate

over one lakh acre of agricultural land and benefit over 80,000 farmers, besides providing drinking water to 70,000 people in Bolangir and Subarnapur districts

projects worth

₹2,220 crore

Wrap up Adani probe in 3 months, SC tells SEBI

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 3: In a big relief to the embattled Adani Group, a Supreme Court bench Wednesday ruled that the fraud allegations against the apples-toairport conglomerate do not need more probes either by a special investigation team or CBI, as it gave capital market regulator SEBI three more months to conclude its over twoyear-old investigation.

Disposing of pleas seeking a third-party investigation into allegations of accounting fraud and stock manipulation levelled by US short seller Hindenburg Research, the three-judge bench of the top court comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoi Misra, said SEBI was conducting a 'comprehensive investigation' and its conduct 'inspires confidence'.

into two-dozen cases against the Adani group by August 14, 2023. In August that year, SEBI had sought 15 more days to complete the investigation into seven of the 24 issues that remained pending.

In November last year, SEBI told the court it will not seek any extension and that its investigation into 22 issues was complete.

The SC Wednesday asked the market regulator to wrap up the two pending investigations expeditiously, preferably within three months. Rejecting the pleas brought by public interest litigants, it said, the facts of this case 'do not warrant' ordering an in-

in separate barracks while inmates belonging to other castes lodged in different cells. The petition filed by Sukanya Shantha contended that the prison manuals of various states sanction such discrimination and forced labour on the ground of caste. The petitioner submitted that

the Odisha government amended its prison manual in the year 2020 and replaced the 78 year old prison manual, in line with the Model Prison Manual. "Clauses relating to banning management of kitchens or cooking food on caste or religious basis, acting on the basis of caste or religious prejudices are included. It also restricts the right of criminal tribe prisoners from availing extramural employment. While Odisha adopted the Model Manual, it continued to retain the discriminatory provision against criminal tribes," the petition reads.

SC notice to state on 'caste bias' in jails

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Jan 3: A threejudge bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud Wednesday issued notice to the Union government and 10 states, including Odisha on a petition alleging that the jail manuals of these states encourage caste based discrimination.

The SC bench move came on a public interest litigation (PIL) that claimed that jail manuals of these states discriminate in allocation of work in the prisons. The apex court also called upon solicitor general Tushar Mehta to assist court.

The other respondents include Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Punjab, Jharkhand, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. "This is a very important issue which has been raised. We request SG Mehta to assist this court. Let all the state manuals be put in a tabulated chart," the bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, directed.

Senior advocate S Muralidhar, appearing for the petitioner, submitted in the court that inmates are being lodged on the basis of their caste. He submitted that there have been several instances when Dalits have been lodged

BOURSE	SENSEX	71356.60	➡	535.88
	NIFTY	21517.35	₽	148.45
CURRENCY	DOLLAR	83.20		₹0.16
CURR	EURO	90.86	₽	₹0.24
NOI	GOLD	₹62,613	₽	₹644
BULLION	SILVER	₹72,435	₽	₹1660

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	26.6°€	26.0°(
Min Temp	15.9℃	14.5°(
Humidity	84%	83%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST		M
DRY WEATHER VERY LIKELY	Ż	2

the project. The work for the Lower Suktel Irrigation Project faced several hurdles over the years. It was conceptualised in 1998 and Patnaik laid the foundation stone for the project in 2001. The initial estimated cost of the project was ₹217 crore, which subsequently escalated to about ₹3,000 cubic metres of water.

would place Bolangir in the fore-The project took over two decades to see light of the day as front of next level of transforit was initially opposed by vilmation in the farm sector," lagers. As many as 29 villages Patnaik said, adding that the were displaced to make way for project would go a long way in

During his Bolangir visit. the CM inaugurated 69 other projects worth

Farmers are the chariots of the state's economy and the state government is ₹305 crore and laid taking them towards development. Lower foundation stones of 112 infrastructure Suktel Project will bring a new chapter in the development of Bolangir

0

NAVEEN PATNAIK | CHIEF MINISTER

mitigating the plight of farm-After inaugurating the project, ers of the region by providing Patnaik praised the people who them with reliable irrigation fasacrificed their land for it. The cility. Noting that that tour to Bolangir was his first visit in project work was expedited only after it was included in the 5T 2024, Patnaik said he was opti-(transformational) initiatives. mistic that the project will resolve the water-related problems of The 31-metre-high dam has a capacity to hold about 320 lakh people.

"Farmers are the chariots of 'The Lower Suktel Project the state's economy and the state government is taking them towards development. Lower Suktel Project will bring a new chapter in the development of Bolangir," Patnaik said

The SC had originally May 17 directed SEBI to complete a probe

103 KILLED IN IRAN BLASTS PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Jan 3: Two bombs exploded minutes apart Wednesday at a commemoration for a prominent Iranian general slain in a US drone strike in 2020, officials in Iran said, killing at least 103 people and wounding at least 188 as the Middle East remains on edge over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for what appeared to be the deadliest militant attack to target Iran since its 1979 Islamic Revolution. The blasts shook the city of Kerman, about 820 kilometers (510 miles) southeast of the capital, Tehran, and sent shrapnel hurtling into a screaming crowd fleeing the first explosion.

The gathering marked the fourth anniversary of the killing of Gen Qassem Soleimani, the head of the Revolutionary Guard's elite Quds Force, in a US drone strike in Iraq in January 2020. The explosions occurred near his grave site as long lines of people gathered for the event. Iranian state television and officials described the attacks as bombings, without immediately giving clear details of what happened. Ahmad Vahidi, the Interior Minister, told state television that the first bomb detonated around 3pm with the other going off some 20 minutes later.

vestigation by an SIT or CBI even though the court had the powers to transfer the probe.

Opposition Congress, which has been leading the attack on Adani, said the Supreme Court has been 'extraordinarily generous' to SEBI and asserted that the party's fight against crony capitalism will continue.

SHORT TAKES

CM okays stipend hike of nursing students

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday approved a hike in the stipend amount for students of nursing, pharmacy other related categories, officials said. The move followed a request by the students in this regard, they said. Students of Diploma in Pharmacy will now get ₹500 per month from the earlier amount of ₹250, ANM ₹2,000 from



₹1,000, BSc (Nursing) internship course ₹5,000 from ₹2,500, M. Phil in Clinical Psychology and M.Phil in Psychiatric Social Work ₹10,000 from ₹7,000, an official release said. "The decision was made taking into account the importance of services being rendered by them," it said.

7 Odisha products get GI tag

Bhubaneswar: In a good news, eight more Odisha products have received Geographical Indication (GI) tag. They include Kai Chutney (Mayurbhanj), Magii sweet (Dhenkanal), Kanteimundi brinial (Navagarh), Kalajeera Rice (Koraput), Date Palm Jaggery (Gaiapati), Dungaria Kondh Embroidered



Shawl (Rayagada), and Idital painting of Lanjia Saura Odisha, the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises(MSME) department informed Wednesday. **P3**

Sambalpur tense after bus runs over schoolboy



Sambalpur: Tension gripped Sambalpur after a speeding bus mowed down a Class IX Kendriya Vidyalaya student in Kacheri Chowk area in the heart of the city, Wednesday. The incident occurred in front of Frezer Club at Pattanaik Pada in the evening hours when a passenger bus rammed into a scooter rode by Dishant Nayak, 14, a

resident of Ambedkar Nagar in Mudipada area in this district, killing him on the spot. The police have registered a case of unnatural death and seized the bus. Irate locals staged a protest in front of the Town police station demanding compensation to the victim's family and strict implement of rules prohibiting entry of heavy vehicle into the city. The police later brought the situation under control.

UK teen 'gangraped' in Metaverse game

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 3: Police in the United Kingdom (UK) are investigating the first case of an alleged gangrape of a 16-year-old girl's avatar - her digital character - in online virtual reality game, 'Metaverse'

According to a report in the New York Post, the teen was wearing a virtual reality headset in an immersive game when she was allegedly raped by a group of men. Though she was not physically attacked, officers investigating the case said she received the same emotional and psychological traumas as someone who has been raped in the real world.

The case is believed to be the first virtual sexual offence investigated by the police.

"This child experienced psychological trauma similar to



leged offence.

The investigation into the landmark case has now prompted questions about whether police should be pursuing virtual offences, given police and prosecutors are currently struggling with an enormous backlog of actual rape cases.

However, UK Home Secretary James Cleverly has defended the virtual reality rape probe saying that the child has gone through 'sexual trauma'.

"I know it is easy to dismiss this as being not real, but the whole point of these virtual environments is they are incredibly immersive," Cleverly told news outlet LBC.

"It's also worth realising that somebody who is willing to put a child through a trauma like that digitally may well be someone that could go on to do terrible things in the physical realm," Cleverly added

There have been several reports of virtual sex crimes in Horizon Worlds — a free VR game operated by Facebook's

"The kind of behaviour described has no place on our platform, which is why for all users we have an automatic protection called personal boundary, which keeps people you don't know a few feet away from you," a spokesperson for Meta said.

Meta responds



that of someone who has been

physically raped. There is an

emotional and psychological im-

pact on the victim that is longer

term than any physical injuries,'

a senior officer familiar with

"It poses a number of chal-

lenges for law enforcement given

current legislation is not set up

However, it remains unclear

what game the teenage girl was

playing at the time of the al-

for this," the officer added.

the case told the news outlet.













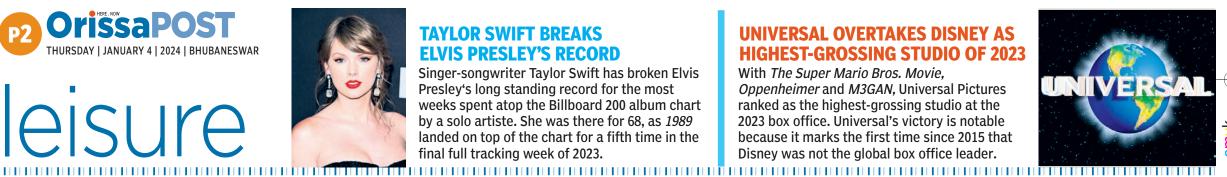
leisure

TAYLOR SWIFT BREAKS **ELVIS PRESLEY'S RECORD**

Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift has broken Elvis Presley's long standing record for the most weeks spent atop the Billboard 200 album chart by a solo artiste. She was there for 68, as 1989 landed on top of the chart for a fifth time in the final full tracking week of 2023.

UNIVERSAL OVERTAKES DISNEY AS HIGHEST-GROSSING STUDIO OF 2023

With The Super Mario Bros. Movie, Oppenheimer and M3GAN, Universal Pictures ranked as the highest-grossing studio at the 2023 box office. Universal's victory is notable because it marks the first time since 2015 that Disney was not the global box office leader.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You may feel empty, and completely down-and-out today. Ganesha says that this may make you feel a hit more inclined to spirituality. Meditation and prayer will engage more of your attention. You will also make considerable material progress

TAURUS

You are likely to be in a moo to get away from the daily grind and take a much need break. You would naturally try to stay free from future concerns and commitments and keep all your woes and worries aside for the day. An adventurous and fun filled outing or a trip to some happening resort along with your friends and family members is a near certainty, assures Ganesha. Don't miss out on this opportunity

GEMINI

Today, you may encounter unusual challenges, says Ganesha You will come un with new thoughts and tactics, which will bring about positive changes and results. Avoid any confrontation with those living around you. Ganesha advises you to keep your cool during the day.

CANCER

Financially, you may be in a bit of a bother today. Payment of bills, taxes and loans may keep you busy for most part of the day. You may even contemplate borrowing money to meet the demands. However, you are likely to receive one of your pending payments, which will be enough to get you out of the fix.

LEO

Today, Ganesha advises you to keep the Bhagavad Gita's verses in mind, and persist in fulfilling your duties without bothering about the fruits of your labour. Put in some extra effort to finish off whatever you undertake today. Patience bears its fruits and they are always sweet.

VIRGO

You better identify your worth in the realms of emotions feelings and sentiments. You shall warm up to and about everything from play to colleagues to family. Simultaneously, you may realise where your limitations are. Ganesha predicts that the artist in you will flourish beginning today.



Well, today is just not your day. The prospects sure aren't looking too good. However, there's no point in getting anxious over this triviality. Remember, 'not

Dear Purusha on NYC's **Times Square billboard**



Bhubaneswar: Standing as a testament to an Odia film's universal resonance. Jhilik Motion Pictures *Dear Purusha* has featured on the Times Square billboard in New York City, according to the makers. The develop-

ment is viewed as a remarkable feat for the regional film industries in India.

Directed by Jiit Chakraborty, the movie showcases the twists and turns in the lives of

six couples. At the narrative's core is Chitrangada, a valiant warrior advocating for men's perspectives, leaving audiences in suspense about the unfolding quest for justice.

Producer Jhilik Bhattacharjee, who plays the central character Chitraganda, said, "Being featured on Times Square is not just a win for Dear Purusha but a triumph for the entire film fraternity of Odisha. It's a testament to the power of storytelling to break barriers and connect with diverse audiences worldwide.

The film boasts an ensemble cast featuring renowned actors, including Choudhury Jayprakash Das, Maheswata Ray, Siddhant Mohapatra, Jhilik Bhattacharjee, Nitu Singh, Samresh Routray, Pinky Pradhan, Bobby Mishra and BM Baisali, Partha Sarathi Ray, Ananya Mishra, Kuna Tripathy, Sukanth Rath. and others.

Iswar Barik is the director of photography, while Gaurav Anand scores the music for the movie. Dear Purusha is set to hit the big screens across

Odisha January 11.

her candid and open nature, recently shared insights into her approach to life and her career in a video interview with Forbes India. When asked about

Mumbai: Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan, known for

her openness and transparency Kareena expressed, think that is also what has kept me alive

and kept me in the industry for so long. It is because I have always been very open, very candid, about whatever I have done personally, professionally.' The Jaane Jaan actress

emphasized that her authenticity is evident in everything she does, both personally and professionally. She believes in letting people know that when she commits to something, she does it wholeheartedly. Kareena said, "I just like people to know that if she's doing it, I will do it with my heart and that's the way my fans also know me."

The actress is set to ap pear in Rhea Kapoor's upcoming project, The Crew, where she will be joined by stellar co-stars Tabu, Kriti Sanon, and Diljit Dosanjh. Furthermore, her The Buckingham Murders had its premiere at the opening night of the MAMI Film Festival in Mumbai earlier this year. cementing her presence in the world of cinema. AGENCIES

Janhvi opens up on her rumoured beau

Mumbai: Actress Janhvi Kapoor, who is set to appear on the upcoming episode of the streaming chat show Koffee With Karan along with her sister Khushi Kapoor, has opened up about her rumoured boyfriend Shikhar Pahariva.

Janhvi Kapoor and Shikhar Pahariya have been papped together at numerous occasions and also engage on social media with their comments.

Talking about it, Karan Johar asked: "You have had an interesting path of love, you were dating Shikhar, and then

you dated someone else and now

you are dating Shikhar again.

True or False?



Bhubaneswar: Members of City-based theatre troupe Manana Natya Sanstha Wednesday presented Odia play Pasanda Palabhuta on the first evening of a five-day state-level theatre festival here at Rabindra Mandap. The event is part of the 45th Foundation Day celebration of the troupe.

Written by Sudhansu Nayak, the play was designed and directed by Manana's president Manoj Patanayak.

Legislature, executive, judiiarv and the media are known

tems raising questions about several burning issues.

Niranjan Sahoo, Anuj Pattanaik, Ayaskanta Swain, Kalpana Rout, and Seema Sahu were among the actors who performed on stage.

Among the luminaries, Dilip Routray, Director, Odia Language, Literature and Culture Department, Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi President Padma Shri Aruna Mohanty and Amaresh Das. Assistant Genera

he is, not just for me, but for her (Khushi), for dad and everyone in our family, he has been there from the start as a friend. Not in a way that made me feel like he is expecting anything or he is a pushover or any of those things. "He was just there in a very selfless dignified way and in a

way that I have not seen many men capable of being there for another human being," said the Mili actress. Koffee With

won't say that but I will say this

Karan streams on Disney+ Hotstar. AGENCIES

good' does not necessarily mean bad. In any case, if it's a stressful day you have had, be sure to have an equally enjoyable evening. Ganesha guesses that you may want to discuss certain intimate issues with your sweetheart today!

SCORPIO

A creative thought or an innovative idea may spice up your routine work. Apparently, you may seem all worked up and disorganised, but actually you may be quite systematic when it comes to your work. Keep the enthusiasm in you alive to make life happier, tips Ganesha

SAGITTARIUS

Going to private parties is a high probability today. All in all, make the most of it as you get nostalgic with old friends and make plans with new ones Moreover, relatives will be pleased to meet vou after a long time.

CAPRICORN

Whatever field you are in, your career matters will top your priority list. You will put your personal life on the back burner for a while. This change of places will surely bring you great rewards as your performance will drastically improve and everyone will appreciate your efforts. Credit goes to your family members and well-wishers for believing in you in the toughest of times and supporting you along the way, says Ganesha.

Aim. Shoot. Achieve. Today, you will concentrate your energies to execute your plans with precision. Naturally, your work progresses by leaps and bounds By sundown, you will achieve far more than everyone's estimation. That's the way to go, says Ganesha.

PISCES

You will have difficulty in interpreting the behaviour o vour life partner today. It is better to bring transparency in your relationship rather than to doubt it. Speak freely about your problems and communi cate with your spouse.

as the four pillars of the democracy in India. But in today's times, these pillars, more often than not, fail to complement

A scene from Odia play Pasanda Palabhuta

each other putting the very foundation of democracy under scathing attack on today's sys-

OP PHOTO threat. The play launched a

FUN

Manager (Marketing & Communication) graced the occasion as guests.









"9:35- FIRST TIGER ABSTAINS FROM VOTE . MOTION FAILS .

9:36- PATRIOTISM OF FIRST

IGER CALLED INTO QUESTION

9:37-PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION

10:15 - BANDAGES ADMINISTERED

DICTATOR-FOR-LIFE REBUKED

OR BITING

IS THIS

CLUB,

OR WHA

GREAT

10:16 - FORGOT WHAT

DEBATE WAS ABOUT

MEDALS OF BRAVER

PARTIES

NARDED

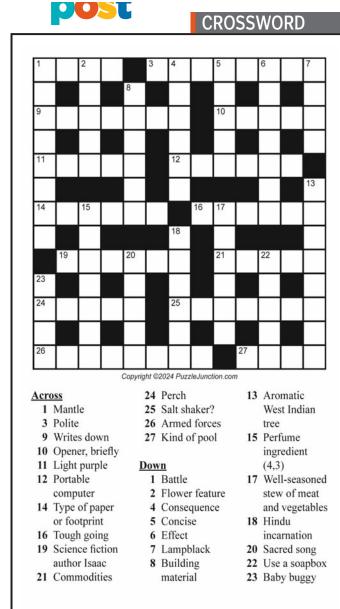
CALVIN AND HOBBES





AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE AT WORK? YOU'VE BEEN PRACTICING THAT NONMANUAL TRANSMISSION FOR HOURS!





CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

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

			5			1		
		4	6	7	1		5	
6			4					
2				3				1
			1				6	61
4	8					7		
3	2			6	a la companya da companya d			
	4	6	8					5
		7						



	R		L		R		Е		U	
\cap	Α	S	Ρ	н	Α	L	Т		Α	R
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SSWO					Ζ		Е			
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S	Ν		R		Α		L		Т	
CRO	1	Ν	Е	R	Т		L	Е	A	R
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	4	1	6	7		9	3	5	5	1
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SUDOKU



THURSDAY | JANUARY 4 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAR downtown

OrissaPOST

RICH TRIBUTES

Dignitaries pay tribute to freedom fighter Biswanath Pandit on his 105th birth anniversary at Chandnichowk in Cuttack, Wednesday



CM gave global identity to Sundargarh: Pandian

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has given a global identity to Sundargarh as it is his strong determination that led to the construction of world's largest fully seated hockey stadium - Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium – in the tribal-dominated district in a record 15-month time, 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian said, Wednesday.

Addressing the public in Sundargarh Sadar and Balisankara block during his visit to the district for reviewing several development projects of the state government there, Pandian said in 2019, when Odisha was chosen by FIH (International Hockey Federation) to host the hockey world cup 2023, the CM insisted on organising the mega event at Sundargarh's Rourkela.

"FIH expressed concern over



CM's decision to organise the event at Rourkela as the Steel City then

lacked hockey stadium, hotels and airport. The CM, however, said

we're committed and we'll get it done. Despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, we managed building Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium - world's largest fully seated hockey stadium - in a record 15-month time. Apart from the stadium, a 225-room accommodation and an airport were also built in a record time," Pandian said.

Pandian added, "The CM said that it was a tribute to Sundargarh for its contribution towards hockey in India.

The 5T Chairman reviewed major development projects, including mega lift irrigation projects at Semina, Riughat, Khairidihi and Satara and mega piped water supply schemes.

He also attended meetings in Sundargarh Sadar and Balisankara block and received grievances on various issues and assured early resolution to the issues.

Cybercriminal gang busted in City; 8 arrested was defrauded of Rs 14 lakh.

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: An interstate gang that stole mobile phones and then transferred money from the victims' accounts using SIM cards in them was busted in Odisha with the police arresting its eight members Wednesday, officials said.

The 'Pahadi Gang', which operated professionally, used to "employ" thieves for stealing mobile phones in public places by creating artificial crowds and paid them a monthly salary of Rs 10,000

to 15,000, they said. These thieves would hand over the stolen mobile phones to the leader of the gang who would transfer money online from the victims' accounts using the SIM cards.

Nine cases were detected Bhubaneswar DCP Prateek only in Bhubaneswar, Singh Singh said the gang came said, adding that 22 mobile onto their radar after a perphones, 25 SIM cards, 20 memory chips and Rs 1.3 son registered a case at Capital police station, alleging he lakh in cash were seized.

"Since then, we have been

tracking the movements of

the gang members. Arresting

them was a challenging task

as the gang members oper-

ated individually and very

frequently changed their lo-

cations," he said.



7 state products get GI tag **Govt issues rules** for school buses

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Keeping in view non-compliance of guide lines issued by the Supreme Court by several school buses, the state Transport department Wednesday issued a fresh set of regulations.

As per the department, the Supreme Court has issued these rules but these are being largely flouted across the country.

According to the guidelines, the term 'School Bus' must be prominently written on rear and front of the van/private bus. If it is a hired bus/van, 'On School Duty' should be prominently displayed. The vehicle must have a first-aid box and fire extinguisher. Windows must be fitted with horizontal grills. The driver should not exceed a speed of 50 kmph.

Moreover, the name of the school and its telephone number must be written on the bus. The doors of the bus should be fitted with reliable locks. The driver should have a valid licence and at least five years of heavy vehicle driving experience.

There should be at least one conductor in a school bus. There should be space under the seat to keep bags. The vehicle should have an escort from the school. All vehicles should possess valid annual fitness certificates. The

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

tag.

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: In a New Year gift for Odisha, the Geographical Indication Registry (GIR) in Chennai has accorded GI tag to seven more items of the state, taking the total count of such tagged items to 25.

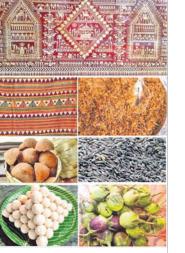
The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) department Wednesday said that Gajapati Date Palm Jaggery (Khajuri Guda), Dhenkanal Magji, Mayurbhanj Kai Chutney, Nayagarh Kanteimundi brinjal, Dongria Kondh Embroidered Shawl of Rayagada, Koraput Kalajeera Rice and Painting of Lanjia Saura have got the GI

Kendrapada Rasabali had got GI tagged in October last year.

Chennai-based GIR - the national body for GI registrations - has recently advertised applications for the seven unique products of the state. "All these products are categorised under food, handicrafts and agriculture categories and the GI applications were filed between 2020 and 2021, sources said.

Kalajeera Rice is grown in Koraput district's Tolla, Patraput, Pujariput, Baliguda and Mohuli areas. According to ancient text, Kalajeera Rice improves memory and controls diabetes as well.

Dongria Kondh Embroidered



Gajapati Date Palm Jaggery, Dhenkanal Magji, Mayurbhanj Kai Chutney, Nayagarh Kanteimundi brinjal, Dongria Kondh **Embroidered Shawl of** Rayagada, Koraput **Kalajeera Rice and Painting of Lanjia Saura**

group (PVTG) who live in Niyamgiri Hills of Ravagada and Kalahandi dis-

have got the GI tag

of respect and affection.

'Idital' painting art belongs to 'Lanjia Saura' (or 'Lanjia Savara/Sabara) tribe, one of the PVTGs of Rayagada district. These paintings were originally in forms of exterior murals (wall painting) of the tribal homes.

In Mayurbhanj, red weaver ants are consumed in the form of chutney known as 'Kai Chutney'. It is known to serve medicinal purposes apart from being a delicacy.

Kanteimundi brinjal, grown in Kantilo area of Nayagarh, are loaded with seeds and have prickly thorns. This brinjal variety is said to have originated in Badabanapur and Ratnapur areas of Nayagarh. Grown in a sandy soil, it is known to have a unique taste among brinjal genotypes

Odisha Khajuri Guda (jaggery) of Gajapati district is a natural sweetener obtained from sweet juice (neera) of date palm trees. The jaggery prepared in trapezoidal form called 'Patali gur' traditionally, is purely organic. Dark brown in colour, it has a unique taste.

Magji, a sweet made of buffalo milk cheese, is unique to Gondia block of Dhenkanal and is being made for over 100 years now.

Kendrapara Rasabali owes its origin to the 262-year-old Sree Baladevjew temple in the coastal district. The presiding deity of the

driver and conductor should wear proper uniforms.

Shawl are mostly crafted by women of particularly vulnerable tribal

tricts in Odisha for their own use and to present to guests as a mark

shrine is offered Rasabali as 'bhog', it was learnt.

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ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India

TRANSLOCATION PLAN 70 deer shifted from Cuttack park to Chandaka sanctuary

PNN & AGENCIES

a closure.

According

to a top official

Corporation

(CMC), nearly

70 out of the

290-odd deer

in the park have already

been shifted to

Municipal

Cuttack, Jan 3: In deference to an order issued by the Orissa High Court, about 70 deer from Tulsipur Deer Park in Cuttack have already been relocated to Wildlife Chandaka Sanctuary on Bhubaneswar outskirts, even as the facility is heading for

park for the herbivores **Deer Park** authorities said it has become of imperative to

of Cuttack shift the deer to the large enclosure at Ambilo due to congestion issues

the new enclosure at Ambilo in Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary in the last three days. The official also added that the deer are being shifted safely to the destination.

The Deer Park authorities said it has become imperative to shift the deer to the large enclosure at Ambilo due to congestion issues owing to rapid increase in the deer population. The new enclosure is spread over 3.5 ha of forest land within Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary and will have ample space to accommodate the entire pop-ulation of the deer park.

The relocation of the deer comes in the wake of an order issued by the High Court four years ago directing the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) to set up another

> The Deer Park in Cuttack was established on 2.5 acres land on Mahanadi River banks way back in 1981. The park which was established with only five deer now has a population of 296. Meanwhile, many in Cuttack have expressed

their unhappiness over the closure of the Deer Park

As per Central Zoo Authority (CZA norms), a maximum of 15 deer can be accommodated within 2.5 acre of land. The civic body's move came following Central Zoo Authority (CZA)'s warning with regard to providing adequate space and proper environment for the deer population.

The CZA had withdrawn its recognition for Cuttack Deer Park citing lack of adequate space for the animals in 2021.

AM/NS



AM/NS India is proud to once again sponsor the Odisha Juggernauts as they continue their strong run in Season 2 of Ultimate Kho Kho.

DISHA





December 24, 2023 - January 13, 2024 J. N. Indoor Stadium, Cuttack



OrissaPOST THURSDAY | JANUARY 4 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAR

downtown

HI-TECH HOSPITAL BLAST

Seriously injured man dies as toll rises to 2

EXPLOSION OF A CYLINDER USED FOR FILLING REFRIGERANT GAS IN **AIR-CONDITIONERS AT THE HOSPITAL INJURED FOUR PEOPLE, DECEMBER 29**



PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Another man who was seriously injured in an explosion in a private hospital here December 29, died Wednesday, the police said.

With the death of Sritam Sahu (23) who hailed from Delang village in Puri district, the toll in the blast rose to two.

Two other injured persons are under treatment at the same hospital and their condition is stated to be stable, the police said.

The explosion of a cylinder used for filling refrigerant gas in air-conditioners at the hospital left four people injured.

Dilip Samantaray, an AC mechanic, died two days after the

blast. His wife Somvashree had gone into depression following her husband's death and allegedly died by suicide, Monday. "Our AC maintenance work is

carried out every year through a third party agency. On that day, the mechanics were working on the rooftop. Due to a short circuit, the explosion occurred and four workers suffered serious burn injuries," said Jvotiranjan Panda, chief operating officer of the hospital.

All the injured workers were admitted to the hospital and of them, two died, he said. It is to be mentioned that at

least three persons were injured after a cylinder used for filling refrigerant gas in air-condi-

tioners exploded at the Hi-Tech Hospital at Pandara, December 29. There was no patient and outsiders on the floor when the cylinder exploded.

The injured people were admitted in the ICU.

Two day after the blast, the injured Dilip Samantaray died sending shockwaves to his wife Soumyashree, 24, who ended her life by suicide at Nuagaon Gandhinagar under Jatni Municipality.

She was found hanging from a ceiling fan by her father Sadashiv Jena who took her to Jatni community health centre where doctors declared her dead. According to sources, Soumyashree didn't respond when her father knocked on the door repeatedly Monday morning following which Sadashiv had to break open the door. Jatni police registered a case (01/24)of unnatural death and sent the body to Capital Hospital for postmortem.

Notably, Soumyashree was staying at his paternal place following the death of her husband Dillip. Soumvashree and Dillip. a resident of Harirajpur Banga village under Delang police limits, had tied the nuptial knot in 2022.

the prize in two events on be-

half of OOA from IOA president.

Orthopaedics department of



Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: With an aim to provide clean drinking water to the people, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) distributed water purifiers to 273 Anganwadis here, Wednesday. In the next phase, the corporation will

ensure distribution for another 56 Anganwadis, said a BMC official. The BMC's move is a part of ICICI bank's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

Speaking at the programme organised on this occasion, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das said, "The initiative will safeguard the health of children, who fall sick due to consumption of unhealthy water."

The bank has also taken the responsibility to reimburse the maintenance charges of the purifiers, in case they go defunct.

The programme was attended by BMC Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange, Additional Commissioner Survavanshi Mayur Vikas and Deputy Commissioner Priyabrata Padhi along with corporators and Anganwadi workers



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Jan 3: The Odisha Protection of Interest of Depositors (OPID) court Wednesday ordered competent authorities to confiscate and sell movable and immovable properties of a firm associated with the Artha Tatwa (AT) Group which was involved in fraudulent revenue schemes.

The court ordered the confiscation of property, including 110 acres of prime land, 11 luxury cars and ₹2.17 crore deposited in several banks. The proceeds from the sale will be distributed equitably among the depositors in the chit fund

State Cong proposes 3 routes for Rahul's Yatra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: The state unit of Congress has prepared three routes for senior party leader Rahul Gandhi-led 'Bharat Nyay Yatra' that is expected to pass through Odisha.

State Congress president Sarat Pattanayak said the three proposed routes would be put before the AICC, which would finalise one, considering time, geography and security.

Pattanayak was speaking to reporters before travelling to Delhi to attend the All India Congress

Committee (AICC) meeting to discuss strategies for the Lok Sabha elections and the assembly polls which usually coincide, besides the 'Bharat Nyay Yatra'.

He said that as per schedule Gandhi is likely to travel from West Bengal to Bihar and then to Jharkhand, and from there he will enter Odisha and head to Chhattisgarh.

Chance for Bargarh weavers to show talent

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP



"The event will felicitate handloom awardees from Odisha and celebrate our handloom heritage while hosting over 50-plus_ exhibitors from 20 states across the country especially from the east and the northeastern states. Among the exhibits on display will be the globally famous bandha kala (tie and dve) work

OOA bags 1st prize in Orthopaedics conference

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Odisha Orthopaedics Association (OOA) got the first prize in the annual conference of the Indian Orthopaedics Association (IOA) held in Luckow recently. For the first time, OOA bagged first prize in two events.

OOA received the honour for doing several academic activities to train young surgeons and post-graduate students by holding CME workshops and Cadaver workshops throughout 2023 in medical colleges and hospitals. In addition, it conducted for

ASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I, Brundaban Panda. S/o



one week an awareness programme for strengthening bones and joints, preventing osteoporosis and maintaining good health by daily exercise.

OOA president Saskar Rao (Brahampur), Honorary Secretary Basanta Kumar Behera (KIMS), NC Mohapatra (HOD, SCBMC), Biswajit Sahu received

KIMS, SCB Medical College, SUM Hospital, MKCG Medical College, Brahmapur, Padmini Hospital, Cuttack and MCL Talcher among others actively participated in academic

activities. This year, OOA has decided to train traffic police, police on duty, ambulance drivers and college students about basic life

dent spots.

support to road accident victims so that they can save lives of many people dying on the acci-

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Weavers are all set to unfurl the vibrant tapestry at the National Handloom Summit which will be held January 4 and 5 in Bargarh town. It will be right platform for them to exhibit the rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship

ficials said. After considering an appeal made by the competent authorities, the OPID court ruled in its favour and issued the order. Several companies associated with the AT Group, led by its chief Pradeep Sethy, had de-

scheme, the court said.

The company associated with

the AT Group had collected ₹600

crore from over 1,000 investors.

Earlier, the economic offences

wing (EOW) of the state police

had attached these properties, of-

ceived depositors by promising them land. However, the companies reneged on their promises, leaving the unsuspecting investors in a difficult situation.



4-day NCERT event begins

it would contribute to the realisation of a self-reliant India. Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: The four-Narayan emphasised the imday All-India National Role portance of National Council of

Jagannath Panda and Husband of Bhagyalata Panda, Resident of At-Panda Street, P.O./Dist./ P.S.- Ganjam, Odisha-761026 do hereby solemnly affirm and state as follows: 1. That, I am the deponent of this affidavit. 2. That, my son's actual and correct name is Anil Panda and his Date of Birth is 10.06.1974 and it has been recorded in this Aadhaar Card bearing No. xxxxxxx1269. 3. That in this Passport, bearing No. K3840710, his name has been wrongly recorded as Anil Brundaban Panda instead of actual and correct name Anil Panda.

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Chandbali, dated: 28.12.2023, I Lija Khatua, D/o Jitendra Khatua, Vill. Khamarsahi, P.O.-Panchutikri, P.S. Bansada, Dist.- Bhadrak, Odisha declare that I have changed my name from Lijarani Khatua to Lija Khatua. Henceforth, I shall be known as Lija Khatua for all purposes. Sd./- Lija Khatua

Playing and Folk Dance competition commenced Wednesday at the Regional Institute of Education here. Students from 29 states/Union Territories and four Demonstration Multipurpose Schools are par-

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

ticipating in the programme. Speaking at the inaugural session, CSIR- IMMT director Ramanuj Narayan, who was present as chief guest, described the festival as a celebration of this nation and expressed optimism that

Educational Research and Training (NCERT) as a knowledge hub. He asked students to utilise books published by NCERT, rather than relying solely on the internet or mobile devices.

Narayan also pointed out India's linguistic diversity and talked at length on the National Education Policy-2020. He passionately asserted that mothers are the greatest teachers and scientists for children and asked them to guide the kids in a proper manner.

prevalent in the district.

The summit is a joint initia tive by the Bargarh district administration, the Handlooms, Textiles & Handicrafts department and Western Odisha Development Council. The handloom summit is conducted on the 4E model for impact: 'Engage, Educate, Enable, Empower'.

Known for its commercial viability, mature trade practices and growing popularity, the handloom industry in Western



Odisha, particularly in Bargarh, plays a vital role in the local economy. It has earned recognition for its unique craftsmanship and designs. These hand-woven textiles and fabrics are not only popular in Odisha but are also in demand across India and abroad, making them an essential part of the region's cultural and economic heritage.

of Bargarh. The product is renowned for its intricate patterns and vibrant hues. Bargarh alone is home to more Banerjee informed than 40,000 weavers and allied "The summit is not just a plathandloom workers and the

form for display but a marketplace for opportunities. The summit will enable interactions that transcend geographical boundaries, resulting in the signing of MoUs to drive the growth of the handloom industry in the district,' Banerjee stated.

Ancient maritime lamp post found in Puri village Khurda Road-Dasapalla rly section inspection by ECoR General Manager

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 3: A team from Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) Cuttack Chapter has stumbled upon the ruins of an ancient maritime lamp post at Telikuda village under Kakatpur block of Puri district. The broken lamp post was seen in a neglected condition over a sand dune on the bank of Kadua River near its estuarine point.

The existence of the lamp post was reported to INTACH's Cuttack Chapter by a local heritage enthusiast Satyajit Swain, said sources

The remnants on the top of the sand dune were found when the place was cleared of vegetation for making a temple. An INTACH team led by Deepak



Kumar Navak which also included Anil Dhir, Biswajit Mohanty and Bikram Nayak had gone to Telikuda to document this historical site. The lamp post was constructed

using burnt bricks and stone



slabs. The post had collapsed a few decades back which was repaired by locals using cement plaster and bricks. However, the old bricks and stone slabs are still present in the foundation and lower portion of the fallen tower.

According to Deepak Nayak, coconvener of INTACH's Cuttack Chapter, "The finding of this ancient light post can throw light on the maritime history of

Odisha. Information gathered from the locals revealed that there was a pillar like abandoned structure on the top of the sand dune since ancient times. The post was nearly 15 ft

in height and was known

igation beacon for the boats that

passed through Kadua river on

the way to the sea in ancient

days. Kadua, a distributary of

ancient Prachi River, was in ancient times navigable and had a flourishing maritime activity."

artists create 'Ikkat' hand-woven

sarees that are globally

The District Magistrate and

Collector of Bargarh, Monisha

Banerjee, called the summit an

ideal opportunity for talented

weavers to showcase their talent.

2024 | Jan 4-5

A Weave of Culture and Legacy

recognised.

He also said that the accounts of both 'Prachi Mahatmva' The and 'Kapila Samhita' remnants on the mention River Chitrotpala which top of the sand dune flowed on the were found when the same path as the present day place was cleared of "7th Kadua. vegetation for CE Century Chinese traveller making a temple Hiuen Tsang possibly went through these waterways to reach the port of 'Che-li-to-la' close to Konark.'

as the 'Alua Khunti'. A fire would be lit on the platform atop the Nayak added pillar which used to act as a nav-

According to Dhir, this find further establishes the rich maritime activity which was prevalent in the Prachi Valley in ancient days.

Bhubaneswar: East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Manoj Sharma inspected Khurda Road-Dasapalla railway section of Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project, Wednesday. He also reviewed the safety and passenger amenity works along with ongoing infrastructure-related works in the railway section. During his inspection, Sharma took stock of progress of various passenger amenities works, development of parking area, circulating area and landscaping and also reviewed the status of various infrastructurerelated works at Dasapalla railway station. The Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project is a prioritised public-centric project, which is being monitored by Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on regular basis.

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OrissaPOST THURSDAY | JANUARY 4 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAR

DANGER IN WAITING

Tourists take rickety boats to Hukitola as admin sits pretty



POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapara, Jan 3: With winter setting in, tourists have been thronging the historically important Hukitola island for picnics and to enjoy the picturesque location in the lap of nature.

This island falls under the jurisdiction of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary which is famous for the nesting of the rare Olive Ridley turtles.

However, visitors are forced to take perilous rides in rickety country boats operating sans registration to reach the island in the absence of government boats. These private boats lack essential equipment like life jackets in case there is any mishap. With owners eyeing big bucks, these boats are always overloaded being even more prone to accidents.

The administration does not seem to have learnt a lesson from the tragedy in which 10 tourists, including eight children, drowned after the boat they were travelling in overturned in Nipania Khola river while returning from Hukitola

island, January 2, 2019. The boat was overloaded with 50 picnickers from Kujang area in nearby Jagatsinghpur district. The ban on using fishing

GIRL KILLS SELF AFTER LOVER THREATENS TO MAKE PHOTOS VIRAL

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, Jan 3: A 22-year old girl has allegedly committed suicide after her boyfriend threatened to make their obscene photos and videos viral on social media.

boats and unsafe vessels for ferrying tourists to Hukitola is-

land is flouted with impunity. It is alleged that the district administration and the Forest department are aware of the unsafe boat rides and the lurking danger but have done little to safeguard the lives of

the tourists. A week back, some picnickers of Ramnagar area were returning home in a private fishing boat which got stuck mid-sea after the boat's engine developed technical snag. They finally got a new lease of life after a joint team of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary personnel and Jambu police personnel rescued and brought them to the shore along

with the defunct boat. Reports said that the famed Hukitola island is situated under Mahakalapara block in Kendrapara District located close to Jambu island in the Bay of Bengal. The historic building here has a plinth area of over 7,000 sq ft and was constructed on the island during the British rule in 1866-67 during the infamous 'Naanka' famine.

This large building was used to store rice imported from Burma and other places through sea route and it bears testimony to the advancement made in architecture in the 19th century.

The monument, a majestic building, has an underground rainwater harvesting system and is a symbol of the state's glorious past in maritime trade. The place attracts students, scholars, and history and nature lovers throughout the year and particularly during the winter season owing to its scenic location and historical significance.

The port and the palace started losing importance in 1924 when the Britishers established a port at false point. This island witnesses maximum footfall mostly during Christmas to New Year day. The vast expanse of mangrove forests here, dolphin sightings in the blue waters of the sea and the sight of red and horseshoe crabs on the sandy beach fascinate the nature lovers and picnickers.

However, one has to take a boat from Jambu jetty and travel for 10 km to reach Hukitola. Similarly, one can also travel by a boat via Ramnagar, Kharinasi and Paradip river mouth to reach Hukitola. The tourists and picnickers while travelling by boats get to enjoy the scenic beauty of mangrove forests, spotted deer, colourful migratory birds and the dreaded crocodiles basking on the river islets.

However, the tourists are forced to endanger their lives by travelling in registrationless private boats to get to the island.

Social activists Lakhsmikanta Swain. Biranchi Naravan Das and Nath Kumar Bhol have demanded the state government to intervene and provide registered boats with all life saving equipment to ferry the tourists to Hukitola.

Gahirmatha forest ranger Pradosh Kumar Moharana assured that the safety check of the tourist boats will be intensified in coming days

BJP for CBI probe into VHP leader's murder Opposition Jayanarayan Mishra

ALL SET: A giant arch has been put up as the entrance to the three-day district-level Lok Mahotsav scheduled to start Thursday, as some workers wrap

6m16

The opposition party's demand came a day after the Orissa High Court issued a notice to the state government to file a counter affidavit by March 5 on a petition seeking a CBI probe into the killing of Saraswati and four of his disciples in 2008.

tice, Mishra said, "Three judicial commissions have probed the Saraswati murder case. However, the state government did not make these reports public for some unknown reasons, might be to shield the culprits.'

Saraswati, who was strongly opposed to religious conversions, was gunned down along with four disciples August 23, 2008 at his Jalespata ashram in Kandhamal district. They were celebrating Janmashtami when the armed men opened fired at them, Mishra said

Dad, son killed in road mishap; locals protest

PNN & AGENCIES

Sonepur, Jan 3: A man and his son were mowed down by a speeding truck in Subarnapur district, officials said Wednesday, adding that the area witnessed

the latter's tuition classes ended Tuesday evening when a speeding Hyva truck entering into Subarnapur town ran over the father and son duo at Block Square.

The leader of Opposition also

lashed out at the state govern-

ment for not 'providing' secu-

rity to Saraswati even after he

faced a murder attempt

Mishra alleged that person-

nel providing security to

Saraswati were on leave on the

night when he was targeted. He

said almost 15 years after

Saraswati's killing, the state gov-

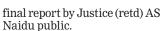
ernment is yet to make the in-

terim report submitted by Justice

(retd) Sarat Mohapatra and the

December 25, 2007.

The Hyva driver fled from the spot leaving the vehicle near the Police Reserve Line at around one kilometre distance fearing public anger," said a local police official.



He alleged that there was a major conspiracy behind not making public the reports of the inquiry commissions. The main culprits and conspirators of the case are still roaming freely. The government must expose them through a CBI probe, Mishra said

Senior BJD leader and former minister Padmanav Behera said the state government as per the HC direction will certainly put its views on the investigation done by the Crime Branch of police.

The allegation that the commission reports have been suppressed is baseless, Behera claimed. The murder of the seen had led to large-scale communal violence in Kandhamal and some other parts of the state, claiming around 40 lives, besides destruction of hundreds of houses

EAST COAST

: SBP-FLEC

the work: A) ELECTRICA WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH CONSTRUCTION OF 08 UNITS TYPE-II STAFF QUARTERS (G+1) AND 12 UNITS OF TYPE-II STAFF QUARTERS (G+2) A AMBODALA STATION. B) ELECTRICA WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH CONSTRUCTION OF 04 UNITS OF TYPE **II STAFF QUARTERS AT MAHASAMUND** STATION. C) ELECTRICAL WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH "CONSTRUCTION OF PROPOSED ROAD OVER BRIDGE ROSSING (LC) NO. RV-71 ON NH-217 II SAMBALPUR DIVISION pprox. cost of the work: ₹41.75.263.50 EMD/Bid Securiy Deposit: ₹ 83,500.00. Completion period of the work : 06 (Six onths from the date of issue of Lette of Acceptance (LOA). Tender closing Date & Time: Upto 150 hrs. on 01.02.2024 No manual offers sent by post/courie Fax or in person shall be accepted agains such e-tenders even if these are submittee on firm's letter head and received in time All such manual offers shall be considere nvalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Blast rocks steel plant in Keonjhar POST NEWS NETWORK



THE DEMAND CAME A at a press conference here. **DAY AFTER THE ORISSA HC ISSUED A NOTICE TO THE STATE**

up the preparations at Birsa Maidan in Sambalpur, Wednesday

Welcoming the high court no-

The girl committed suicide as she feared that her family members will be embarrassed if the videos and osbscene photos become viral on social media.

According to Chandol police outpost in-charge Soumya Ranjan Panigrahi, the victim girl had developed a romantic relationship with one Rudra Das of Khardasahi village under Chandol police outpost.

The youth had captured intimate photos and videos of the girl and later blackmailed her. The girl committed suicide by hanging herself on the New Year day, Panigrahi said. The police later seized the body of the girl and sent it for autopsy to district headquarter hospital, Kendrapara.

The family members of the deceased girl lodged an FIR at Sadar police station. The Sadar police registered a case and conducted an inquiry.

tially damaged following an explosion at the induction furnace of the steel plant at Barapada under Rugudi police limits in Keonjhar district, Wednesday.

Barbil, Jan 3: Workers at the

KJS Ahluwalia Steel Plant had

a close shave as a truck was par-

Except for the truck carriage which was damaged after molten iron fell on it, no casualty, however, was reported in the mishap. The iron ore laden truck was parked near the blast furnace when the accident occurred.

Rugudi police have reached the spot and launched an investigation, sources said adding that the reason behind the blast is yet to be ascertained. Rugudi PS IIC Taranisen Bag said that no casualty has been reported during the mishap as per the plant authorities.

The mishap occurred when a container loaded with molten iron was being brought down when the induction furnace developed a puncture. The container exploded with a deafening

sound and the molten iron fell on the carriage of the truck which was parked nearby.

The truck driver escaped death by a whisker as he ran outside leaving the truck behind after hearing the deafening sound of the blast. Plant authorities started an inquiry to find the possible cause behind the explosion.

Informed by the company officials, the fire service personnel rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

When contacted, the plant's Human Resources personnel Charu Chandra Navak said the blast occurred due to a puncture in the blast furnace. However, no casualty has been reported during the blast while the truck carriage has been partially damaged.

als in Bhadrak district Wednesday, officials said. The incident took place in

GOVERNMENT TO FILE

A COUNTER AFFIDAVIT

SEEKING A CBI PROBE

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3:

Opposition BJP Wednesday

asked the state government to

make the judicial commission

reports on the murder of VHP

leader Swami Lakshmanananda

Saraswati public and hand over

the case to the CBI for a de-

The demand was made by sen-

ior BJP lawmaker and Leader of

Viksit Bharat Sankalp

Bhadrak vandalised

Bhadrak, Jan 3: A Viksit Bharat

Sankalp Yatra vehicle, meant to

showcase the success of the Modi

government's schemes, was van-

dalised by unknown individu-

Yatra vehicle in

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ON A PETITION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

tailed probe

Dhamnagar around 11am when BJP supporters led by party MLA Suryabanshi Suraj were conducting a public programme, they added.

Suraj alleged that workers from the ruling BJD party were responsible for the attack and staged a dharna in front of Dhamnagar police station, demanding action against them. He alleged that BJD members also created chaos during a medical checkup for women

In response to the allegations, local BJD leader Ashok Nayak said, "The BJD never indulges in violence and believes in progress '

After receiving information, the police arrived at the scene and arrested two men, said Fanindra Bhusan Nayak, IIC of Dhamnagar PS

a protest and tension prevailed after the incident.

The accident happened late Tuesday evening when a 46-yearold high school teacher and his minor son were hit by the truck.



The deceased were identified as Rajkumar Mahakud and his 17-vear-old son Ompreet, residents of Baladi village under Tarabha police station area in the district.

Deceased Rajkumar was returning home with his son after

Alleging negligence by traffic cops present at the accident spot, the locals staged a road blockade and vandalised the vehicle of Sonepur Sub-Divisional Police Officer Pratap Tripathy. "As the scooter was dragged

along the road for nearly one kilometer, it caught fire which subsequently engulfed the hyva,' said SDPO Tripathy.

The police also reportedly resorted to mild lathi charge to disperse the protesters.

Locals removed the road blockade after they were pacified by Bolangir MP Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo and senior officials of Subarnapur district administration.

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ilding, Piramal Agastya

Is BJP planning something big for 2024?

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, Jan 3: Is there a big political plan afoot for Odisha by the BJP and its parent organisation RSS? The answer to this question seems to be in positive keeping in mind the unfolding of the situation here.

Suddenly, Rourkela, which is generally not in the map of any political party for any activity has found itself in the middle of it.

The Steel City has hosted RSS supremo Mohan Bhagawat for the last two days and will continue to do so for the next two days. Speculation is rife in the media circle that most of the top functionaries of the organisation are here to participate in a five-day 'Chintan Shivir'.

When such camps are generally held at Nagpur, why Rourkela this time, is the question every one has in mind. And adding to that, this



is his second visit within a year. As usual there is no media briefing in this regard. The RSS meet ends January 5.

Adding to that, now the BJP state unit is going to hold its 'Chintan Baithak' for the 2024 general elections. The meeting will start January 4 evening and will continue till next day evening. Top saffron leaders like Sunil Bansal. Ashwini Vaishnaw, Dharmendra

Pradhan, Bishweswar Tudu, Aparajita Sarangi and not to forget, state president Manmohan Samal will be present in the meet. The meeting will also host most of the MPs and some MLAs.

With everybody being tightlipped about the meet, a source confirmed the duration of the 'Chintan Baithak' and the names of the leaders coming here.

The meeting was originally

With everybody being tight-lipped about the meet, a source confirmed the duration of the party's 'Chintan Baithak' and the names of the leaders attending the meeting

scheduled to be held in the picturesque location of Khandadhar. However, in the last minute, it has been shifted to Rourkela and will be held at Hotel Mayfair. The source added that the party is taking the state elections very seriously.

A party functionary requesting anonymity commented, "Two very important developments taking place at one venue just cannot be coincidence." Meanwhile, mobile phones of most of the leaders were found switched off.

G Piramal Corporate Park, Kamani Junction, Opp Fire Station, LBS Marg, Kurla (West), Mumbai- 400 070. CIN: L65910MH1984PLC032639, Webside:www.piramalfin Branch Address : Dhiraj Baug, Building "A" Ground & 1st Floor, Beside Axis Bank, Opp. Monalisa Building, Agra Road, Hari Niwas Circle, Naupada, Thane (West) – 400 602. <u>DEMAND NOTICE</u> Under Section 13(2) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (JOHFL)] under Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (JOHFL)] under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (JOHFL)] under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (JOHFL)] under Securitisation and Reconstruction Of Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (JOHFL)] under Securitisation and Reconstruction Of Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (JOHFL)] under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (JOHFL)] under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (JOHFL)] under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (JOHFL)] under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (JOHFL)] under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (JOHFL)] under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (JOHFL)] under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Limited (PCHFL)] [formerly k Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 33(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Autorised Office has issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to PCHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with the bacterized behavior.

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27-11-2023 /₹ 4008320 /-(₹ Forty lakh Eight Thousand Three Hundred Twenty Rupees) NPA (09-10-2023)	Khata No- 238/229, Plot No-735/858/1103 Mouza- Bijipur, Tahasil- Bhubaneswar Bhubaneswar Bhubaneswar Khurda Orissa :- 751015
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power post

FOCUS ELECTIONS

The practice of Yoga brings us face to face with the extraordinary complexity of our own being. SRI AUROBINDO



Road To Autocracy

Following Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election in 2016, many pundits predicted a worldwide breakdown of democracy, and some warned of civil war. But, aside from Africa's Sahel region, military coups remain rare, and civil wars rarer still. Instead, democracies have tended to break down through civilian coups.

Such coups have been of three types in the post-Cold War era. Two have attracted much media attention; the one that should worry us the most, especially given the spectre of Trump's return to power in early 2025, has not.

The first model of democratic retreat is exemplified by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Having passed a draconian media law after returning to power in 2010, Orbán and his political party, Fidesz, have used every major outlet to manipulate fear of immigrants and LGBT activists and to portray the prime minister as a national savior. Orbán also exploits regional tensions, such as the war in Ukraine, to squeeze sponsors – both Russia and the European Union – for resources to fund lavish social spending.

Finally, Fidesz has rewritten Hungary's election rules to ensure it an unassailable parliamentary majority. This model thus relies not on force, but on spin and the ability to dis-

mantle checks and balances through the

political process.

When the right-wing American media personality Tucker Carlson started openly celebrating the Orbán model, many feared that the Hungarian system would appeal to conservatives worldwide. But it didn't, because few Orbánists beyond Hungary have been able to wield all three weapons, especially the power of a mass party.

The second form of democratic retreat is more common, and can be found in big countries, like Russia under Vladimir Putin, and in small ones, like Nicaragua under Daniel Ortega. In this model, a dramatic national crisis gives rise to a strongman, not a movement, to lead the country and create a patronage network in his image.

In both Russia and Nicaragua, the opportunity came from an economic implosion. The strongman will hyperventilate about threats, especially from America, and use isolation to cement power. Putin, for example, has been expropriating foreigncompany assets to distribute to friends like feudal war booty, while relying on thuggery to muzzle domestic dissent.

The result is a web of cronies who depend on the caudillo and ritualistic, low-turnout elections. Instead of relying on an institutionalised party like Orbán's, they turn the state into a family-and-friends business protected by geops in SUVs when per

ness, protected by goons in SUVs when necessary.

This second model has also been rarer than many previously feared. A successful family-and-friends strategy implies that democratic institutions were already weak, and the opposition feeble. The private sector depends on the state, and the latter – especially the judicial system – is vulnerable to capture. With few alternative political forces or institutional bases of power, the caudillo has plenty of room to maneuver.

True, checks and balances can degrade gradually and tilt fortunes in favour of a caudillo. But mostly, they tend to hold, partly because would-be caudillos in a well-institutionalised system motivate opposition coalitions that rise up to thwart them, as happened to Trump in 2020. Trump and his backers will have heeded that lesson, which is why we must be mindful of the third form of autocratic advance. It relies on neither dominant parties nor domineering kleptocrats, but it does still exploit national emergencies (real or manufactured). A contemporary exponent of this approach is El Salvador's strongman, Nayib Bukele, who has devised a playbook that should worry democrats.



Jeremy Adelman

Exploiting a state of exception is a handy script for ruling in uncertain times. It allows extreme measures without ending formal democracy TEST FOR DEMOCRACY

tion year, when democracy will undergo a major test with elections in approximately 70 countries including the US, India, Mexico and South Africa. More than 3.7 billion voters will head to the polls, and their results may have global impact and ramifications. The current year will be the greatest year for democracy and democratic institutions worldwide. The greatest power in the world (the US), the mostpopulous country (India), the biggest trading bloc (the European Union), the largest Muslim country (Indonesia), the largest Spanish-speaking country (Mexico) and the territory that is the most contentious one between the two superpowers of this century (Taiwan), all will hold elections in 2024.

The verdict of these polls may have profound consequences on the lives of people and on a world that is going through a turbulent time, with on-going brutal wars in Ukraine and Gaza, as the West seems falling into decline, with no clear alternative. Major disruptive results include the return of Donald Trump to the White House, a third consecutive victory in Taiwan by candidates that Beijing considers hostile, or a consolidation of the extreme right in the EU, all of which could lead to farreaching consequences. In addition to these, other elections to watch out for include the potential presidential elections in Venezuela to those in Ukraine, from Indonesia to South Africa and Mexico, besides the UK -where a substantial change of course would not be expected regardless of the outcome.

However, what might be the worrisome aspect of these elections is the litmus test which democracy will undergo. Surveys by different international think tanks and institutes indicate dissatisfaction with the present-day working of democratic institutions - a sentiment common throughout the nations of the West - meaning, the US and Europe - even though they see themselves as democracy's home ground. A



The geopolitical and economic impacts of so many ballot box battles, occurring more or less at once, may combine to further destabilise an unstable world -- for good or bad

recent Ipsos opinion poll in Western countries found a widespread belief that current democratic systems favour the rich and powerful and ignore everyone else. Freedom House, the independent US-based watchdog concluded in its 2023 report that the Global Freedom Index declined for the 17th consecutive year. The principle of free speech, essential to a fully functioning democracy, is also under attack. Paradoxically, this unprecedented vote-fest comes at a moment when classia forms of lib

ment when classic forms of liberal democracy are under existential attack from authoritarians and dictators such as China's Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir Putin, far-right nationalist-populist parties such as in Austria, Hungary and Scandinavia, and military coup plotters and Islamists from Venezuela to Chad. Yet the report said while 35 countries experienced declines in political rights and civil liberties, 34 saw overall gains. Autocrats were neither infallible nor unbeatable. The geopolitical and economic impacts of so many ballot box battles, occurring more or less at once, may combine to further destabilise an unstable world -- for good or bad.

The European continent will see elections in Austria, Belgium, Croatia and Finland, as well as for the European Parliament in June. The pervasive fear is that they may accelerate advances by nationalist-populist, anti-migrant, xenophobic parties of the far right, matching those seen recently in Italy, the Netherlands and Slovakia. The results will shape the new chamber, with possible new legislative majorities that will influence the leadership of the EU. One wonders how high the far-right wave may rise.

For India, which itself will be holding the general elections, in which incumbent Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to score a hat trick, will watch closely elections in its neighbourhood in Pakistan and Bangladesh which may have a major regional and strategic impact.

Pakistan is plagued by a serious economic crisis and high political tensions, including arrests and attempted assassinations of political leaders. Following the dissolution of Parliament back in August, elections should have been held within 90 days, but have been postponed twice. They are now scheduled for February. The country -- with some 240 million inhabitants -- has enormous strategic depth, not only due to its nuclear arsenal, but also due to its close relationship with China. The Beijing-Islamabad axis is New Delhi's biggest concern.

The first election of 2024 could be one of the most contentious. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the ruling Awami League have dominated Bangladeshi politics for the past 15 years. Over that time, they have increasingly eroded Bangladesh's democracy. The US has been pressing Sheikh Hasina for months to hold freeand-fair elections. That pressure has yet to pay off.

At the global level the US elections and those of the EU may have a major bearing on India's foreign and defence policies with some overlap on its internal politics, too. The US presidential elections in November have immense disruptive potential. The possibility that Trump will be the Republican candidate and return to the White House is still not ruled out. A Trump-return to the White House would represent a major shake-up with associated risks. It would be a step towards American isolationism at a time when rival powers are questioning the world order that Washington has created.

Trump would embody a break with 'America for the world' scenario; his 'America first' doctrine means limiting efforts and expenses in distant horizons. It's doubtful whether he would commit to supporting Taiwan if it comes under attack, or whether he would maintain financing and security guarantees made to Ukraine and NATO. New trade wars would be likely, as would a withdrawal of commitments against climate change.

In addition, the elections in 2024 will further highlight the manner in which our lives have become slaves to the social media and this will have an impact on the election processes too. As Kay Spencer, programme director of elections at the Washingtonbased National Democratic Institute puts it, the year 2024 is a big year for social media plat forms and it will be important to monitor how they will manage all the elections that are coming up. Indeed 2024 might prove to be a year which consolidates the liberal democratic principles and institutions, or leads to their further erosion.

The writer is a Delhibased senior political and international affairs commentator. @IANS

SPECTRUM POLITICS

Asad Mirza

VOTE-FEST

COMES AT A

OF LIBERAL

EXISTENTIAL

UNDER

ATTACK

UNPRECEDENTED

MOMENT WHEN

CLASSIC FORMS

DEMOCRACY ARE

THIS

Real issues getting eclipsed

After years of trouble, El Salvador's economy is buoyant, with remittances and lavish public spending powering private consumption.

Moreover, the country's infamous gang warfare is a thing of the past. A combination of payoffs to gang leaders and mass incarceration has pacified the country's neighbourhoods. In March 2022, Bukele suspended certain civil liberties, notably due process for alleged criminals. The police have arrested almost 70,000 people, mainly men aged 16 to 30, on suspicion of gang membership.

As a result, Bukele enjoys approval ratings that make him the envy of politicos everywhere. He has swatted aside constitutional restrictions barring him from a second term, and current polling suggests he will win re-election in February with a staggering 68.4% of the vote.

This regime-of-exception model formally accepts the importance of rules and checks and balances, and even tolerates domestic discord and dissent, up to a point. In fact, exceptionalists point to them to justify their regime. The argument is that while constraints are vital to republics in normal times, emergencies require their suspension. "See? Congress doesn't work. See? Our borders are sieves for the unwashed. See? Wokeism has swept our most cherished institutions." By turning emergency powers into semi-permanent rule, Bukele has established a new regime, one that exempts itself from constraints in the name of restoring the republic.

This is the road to autocracy that we should be worrying about as Trump's run for the White House shifts into high gear. If he wins, his governing playbook won't come from Hungary. The Republican Party is too riven, the Democrats are too strong, and the US states are too resilient for that. Nor will Trump have the option of turning government into a friends-and-family business; the US private sector is too autonomous and complex, and his earlier attempts at thuggery backfired in Lafayette Square and on January 6.

Still, the perception of danger at the border, fragile norms in cultural institutions, Ukraine war fatigue, and a quagmire in Congress would embolden Trump to adopt a more muscular approach. Exploiting a state of exception is a handy script for ruling in uncertain times. It allows extreme measures without ending formal democracy. It shifts attention to security (especially at borders) without martial law. And, above all, it preys on disenchantment with democracy without repudiating it.

The writer is Director of the Global History Lab at Princeton University. ©PROJECT SYNDICA

WISDOM CORNER

- There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.
- There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow men. True nobility lies in being superior to your former self. ERNEST HEMINGWAY

To have faith is to trust yourself to the water. When you swim you don't grab hold of the water, because if you do you will sink and drown. Instead you relax, and float.



VOTER FEEL USELESS

AND SMALL

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TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST

(200 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

requested to send their contact numbers and full

columns (between 750-1250

imicry and sarcasm in various forms has be-L come a part and parcel of Indian politics, especially in recent times. Sarcasm over something said which goes against societal norms may not be considered offensive and can be taken with a pinch of salt. But certain kind of mockery that is seen today is quite nasty in nature and is unacceptable in an educated and civilised society. Mention may be made of instances of the powerful flinging mockery down at the powerless, men taking pot shots at women, the 'savarna' rich laughing at people from lower castes or with less money, the mainstream sneering at marginalised groups. Even references criticising others' religious sentiments and habits can be viewed as in poor taste.

The recent controversy triggered during the winter session of Parliament with TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee mimicking Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankar outside the House did hit headlines alright, and at the same time raised questions over the correctness of the latter's reaction. The Opposition rightly pointed

out that the entire Modi ecosystem was galvanised on the socalled mimicry non-issue, while it remained silent on the real issue of security lapse in Parliament and why and how a BJP MP from Mysuru facilitated entry of two intruders into Lok Sabha on December 13.

The present type of mimicry witnessed nowadays by politicians, particularly during the election season is distasteful, and needs to be curtailed. Unfortunately, resorting to sarcasm or mimicry is increasingly getting cheers from the crowds, the uneducated masses and the politicians revelling in it. The moderate section of the BJP, say someone like Atal Behari Vajpayee may have eschewed the mode due to his elegant outlook and concern for ethics in politics and society. Living as we currently are in a mimicry of democracy with a mimicry of hollowed out checks and balances, with not even a pretence of a free media in existence across most of the country, perhaps the only choice we have is to keep enacting sharply revealing mimicries.

For political culture to develop there is a genuine need for educated and dedicated personalities. An example could be of Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, who has the vision and capacity to take prompt decisions and is interested in serving the masses. The state is a classic case which has been transformed from a food deficit one to a food surplus state with its economy growing over 18 times in a little over two decades from around ₹47,000 crore in 2001-02 to ₹8.6 lakh crore in 2022-23. Moreover, it may be pointed out that the Eastern region's educational hub has shifted from

Kolkata to Bhubaneswar. How has this been accomplished? Perhaps, he brags less than his counterpart in West Bengal, who too has a penchant for indulging in mimicry against rival BJP and humouring the masses. But such political manoeuvres may not last long as awareness is growing, and people want results. Political change is necessary, and this can come about if there is professional ethics among party cadres. Moreover, fanaticism by the political establishment that they preach to gain false popularity among the uneducated masses must come to an end.

Indian politics has reached a vicious stage where the situation is making the voter feel useless and small. There is little bondage amongst the community and animosity, narrow-mindedness and jealousy in society is dangerously rising. Our struggle today cannot be limited to one political party or its affiliates. The question is whether a change in government may make a fundamental difference.

Political transformation is called for and this can be accomplished by leaders who are qualified, sincere, honest, and earn the confidence of the common people. Mimicry, as is being indulged in can evoke a few laughs alright but it can't hide reality that the government must perform and serve the people. The polity must remember Abraham Lincoln's famous words: "You can fool all people some of the time and some people all the time. But you can never fool all people all the time.' INFΔ

Acting tough

tough on terror players. The sentencing of dreaded terror mastermind and Lashkar-e-Taiba founder Hafiz Saeed in 2020 and 2022 had the unmistakable imprint of the Pakistan government. This was aimed at placating global bodies like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Islamabad never acceded to New Delhi's requests to extradite Hafiz Saeed. That's why its rejection of India's fresh request to hand over Hafiz Saeed has not come as a surprise. As is its wont, Pakistan has cited the absence of a bilateral treaty for its 'decision'. It is worthwhile to remember that both the LeT and the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), another Pakistan-bred terror group, are in the Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) list of the United States since 2001. So, while Islamabad is trying all tricks of the trade to protect its big-time terror players like Hafiz Saeed, countries like the US and India have made sure that it is systematically isolated.

Sir, When it comes to the crunch, Islamabad tries acting

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Diplomatic victory

Sir, The verdict of an appellate court in Qatar commuting the death sentence of eight former Indian Navy personnel, arrested in an alleged espionage case in that country, comes as a huge relief to the anxious families and the nation as a whole. The commutation of the death sentence is indeed a victory of India's foreign policy and diplomatic efforts taken by the concerned ministry. It goes to show that the meticulous moves made by the ministry and also the strength of India's foreign policy under the leadership of PM Modi who has been in good terms with all Gulf nations and the West Asian nations and the various power blocs around the world. The Prime Minister had met the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, on the sidelines of the COP28 Summit in Dubai some weeks ago. The PM said then that they discussed the well-being of the Indian community in Qatar. The government will now have to push for further diplomatic tactics so that the eight who are in Qatar's custody could bebrought to their motherland.

M Pradyu, KANNUR

















'SOMETIMES ONE WAITS FOR Namibian cheetah Aasha bears 3 cubs at Kuno **CORONATION, BUT GETS EXILE'**



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Jan 3: Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said sometimes one ends up in 'vanvas' while waiting for 'rajtilak' (coronation)

After the BJP's landslide victory in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly polls held in November 2023, the party chose Mohan Yadav as the chief minister, replacing Chouhan who served as the state's CM for four times.

Chouhan, while addressing a gathering in Shahganj town under his Budhni Assembly seat Tuesday evening, got emotional and said he will continue to be among the people, especially his sisters.

"I will not go anywhere. I will live here and die here,' Chouhan said when a couple of women sitting in the audience shouted, "Bhaiyya (brother), don't go anywhere leaving us alone.

The former chief minister said all the works started by the previous BJP government, including the Ladli Behna Yojana (for women's welfare), housing scheme for beneficiaries of the Ladli Behna scheme, a

scheme of one job in each family and promises made to farmers, will be fulfilled by the present government.

The new government will take forward all these works. There must be some big objective somewhere, sometimes by the time 'rajtilak' takes place, one even ends up in 'vanvas' (exile). But all this happens to fulfil some or the other objective, Chouhan told the gathering.

He said the present ruling dispensation will implement all these schemes as there is BJP's government in the state and not of the Congress. The former CM also noted

that children who were among the audience had come to show their love for mama (maternal uncle - as Chouhan is popularly referred).

Earlier, a large number of BJP workers and women welcomed Chouhan on his arrival in Shahganj.

Chouhan won the election from Budhni assembly seat by a margin of more than 1.04 lakh votes over his Congress rival

Vikram Mastal. In the November 2023 state elections, the BJP bagged 163 of

Shivraj names house 'Mama Ka Ghar', says its doors open for all

🗨 enior BJP leader and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Wednesday named his house, a government bungalow in Bhopal, as 'Mama Ka Ghar' and said its doors were open for everyone. Chouhan's government accommodation is located off Link Road No. 1 in the posh 74 Bungalows locality in the state capital where he moved after vacating the Chief Minister's house on relinquishing the top post last month. On Wednesday,

Chouhan (64) shared photos of the naming of his bungalow as 'Mama Ka Ghar', nearly a month after he resigned as Chief Minister following the BJP's decision to select threeterm MLA Mohan Yadav as his successor on winning the November 17 Assembly polls. Sharing the pictures on his official X account, the BJP stalwart, who is the MLA from Budhni in Sehore district, said his relationship with his sisters, brothers, nephews and nieces was one of love, trust and affection. The address has changed, but 'Mama Ka Ghar' is still mama's house. "I will remain connected to you like a brother and maternal uncle. The doors of my house will always be open for you," he said.

the 230 assembly seats, posting a resounding victory and retaining power in the central state.

The opposition Congress was relegated to a distant second spot with victory in 66 assembly segments, while one seat was won by the Bharat Adivasi Party.

IT IS THE SECOND TIME CHEETAH CUBS HAVE BEEN BORN AT THE PARK SINCE THE FIRST BATCH OF 8 NAMIBIAN CHEETAHS WERE BROUGHT TO INDIA INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, Jan 3: The New Year began with good news for Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh as the Namibian cheetah Aasha gave birth to three cubs Wednesday. All three cubs are reported to be healthy.

Union Forest Minister Bhupendra Yadav shared a video on his social media account, expressing his happiness on the

Don't need invitation for Ayodhya: Digvijaya

Indore: Veteran Congress leader Digvijaya Singh Wednesday said he does not need an invitation from anyone to visit the newly-

constructed temple in Ayodhya as Lord Ram resides in his heart. He also said that the distrust in the minds of people towards the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) was gradually growing. "I do not need anyone's invitation to have darshan of Lord Ram. Lord Ram is in our hearts, Singh said in response to reporters' guery whether he has received an invitation for the idol consecration ceremony being organised January 22. The Rajya Sabha MP alleged that the Election Commission has failed to give time to the opposition India bloc since the last six months for a meeting to discuss the issue of EVMs. The distrust in the minds of people towards EVMs is gradually growing due to the Election Commission's attitude on the questions being raised regarding the software and chip technology of these machines, he claimed.

PURRS IN THE WILD!



birth of the cubs at KNP. He said their birth was a sign

of success of India's ambitious 'Project Cheetah' introduced in MP September 17, 2022.

"Purrs in the wild! Thrilled to share that Kuno National Park has welcomed three new members. The cubs have been born

Modi tears into Left, Congress in Kerala, terms them as 'one'

to Namibian Cheetah Aasha.

This is a roaring success for

Project Cheetah, envisioned by

PM Modi to restore ecological bal-

ance. My big congrats to all ex-

perts involved in the project, the

Kuno wildlife officials, and

wildlife enthusiasts across India,"

Yaday said.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kochi, Jan 3: In what is believed to be the launch of BJPled NDA's Lok Sabha election campaign, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday addressed a large public rally of women at Trissur, where he tore into Kerala's ruling CPI-M-led Left and the Congress-led opposition, describing them as 'one' with the same ideology as they both are part of the INDIA bloc.

The Prime Minister arrived at the rally venue where about two lakh women were present after holding a roadshow, with thousands of people lined up on both sides of the road.

Unlike in Kochi recently, where he walked for more than a kilometre, in Trissur he rode on a special vehicle brought from Gujarat, accompanied by state BJP chief, K. Surendran, superstar Suresh Gopi, and Mahila Morcha leader Nivedida.

Addressing the rally, the Prime Minister said the traditional rival political fronts in Kerala have done nothing for the women

Guv not invited to Vijayan's Xmas-New Year lunch -

The customary lunch hosted by the CM is an nnual affair where the Guv,



of the state, as he emphasised on how the 'Modi guarantees' have benefited the women of the coun-

"The Left and the Congress never gave importance to women power, while the BJP-led NDA government gives utmost importance to the same. Hence, I request you to support us," Modi said.

The Centre is also giving equal importance to the farmers, youth, and the poor, he said

"When the development of women takes place, the state and the country progress. The 'Modi guarantees' are there for you." "The 'Modi guarantees' were given to numerous projects which

the total number of cheetahs at KNP to 18, further giving a boost to India's cheetah conservation project.

Asha was pregnant at the time

The new cubs have pushed

of translocation from Namibia

as well but had miscarried, prob-

ably due to stress.

Five-year-old Aasha, known as 'F1' before she was renamed, had ventured out of the park a couple of times, but returned on her own

Importantly, it is the second time cheetah cubs have been born at the park since the first batch of eight Namibian cheetahs were brought to India.

Notably, earlier in March last year, Namibian cheetah Siyaya had given birth to four cubs, however, they died due to heat stroke after two months of their birth and only cub survived who is now healthy.

benefited women, including subsidised gas connection, water connection, sanitary pads, Mudra loans and several other womencentric schemes," Modi said.

He then said that a strong NDA government at the Centre has helped in bringing back people from the conflict areas, including nurses from Kerala who were stuck in Iraq.

"Would it be possible had it been a weak Congress or Left led government at the Centre,' Modi asked.

The Prime Minister also slammed the Vijayan-led state government for not adhering to the rules after getting Central assistance.

"When we ask for the utilisation of funds provided by the Centre, we don't get answers,' Modi said.

He also referred to the meeting he had with Christian leaders on Christmas Day last week, terming it as very fruitful.

"I thanked them for their blessings and they appreciated the works being done by the Centre," Modi said.





VARM WELCOME: Supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi gather to welcome him as he arrives for the 'Sthree Shakthi Modikkoppam' Mahila Sangamam, in Thrissur, Kerala, Wednesday PTI PHOTO

MP CM transfers collector who questioned 'aukat' of truck driver

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal. Jan 3: The Madhva Pradesh government has removed Kishor Kanyal from the post of Shajapur district collector after he questioned the 'aukat' (status) of a driver amid a protest by truckers.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, while sharing the decision of removing Kanyal from the collector's post, Wednesday said such type of language will not be tolerated under his government.

According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Kanyal was removed from the post of Shajapur collector on Yadav's directives.

The state government Wednesday issued an order shifting Kanyal to the post of state deputy secretary. Narsinghpur's collector Riju Bafna has been made the new collector of Shajapur.

During a meeting with representatives of a drivers' union Tuesday, Kanyal lost his cool and later expressed regret if anyone



"I believe that officers who

speak such language don't de-

serve to be in the field posting.

I expect that the officer posted

there (as Shajapur collector)

will keep a check on such be-

A video clip, which went viral

Tuesday, showed the collector ask-

ing drivers and others not to take

the law into their own hands when

a representative of divers asked

haviour. I am pained by this,'

the CM said.

was hurt by his words.

Reacting to the episode, CM Yadav said, "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we work for the uplift of the poor. No matter how big an officer is, he should respect the work and feelings of the poor. As a human being, this kind of language will not be tolerated under our government.'

Yadav said he himself is the son of a labourer.

him to talk nicely.

Kanyal got angry and asked the person concerned, "Kya karoge tum, kya aukat hai tumhari?' The man replied saying they are fighting this battle for the very reason that they don't have any "aukat" (social standing). A policeman then whisked away the man from the spot.

Kanyal later posted a video on the district collector's official X account saying a meeting of about 250 truck and bus drivers was convened Tuesday, a day after many of them created a ruckus and staged protests.

"The meeting was held to tell them to raise their issues democratically but one of them was trying to incite others and threatening to intensify the stir, because of which I used these words. I express regret if anyone is hurt by my words," he said.

However, nobody will be allowed to take the law in his hand, he added.

state ministers, top leaders and personalities, besides top officials are invited INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 3: The standoff between Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan continues unabated, as the latter did not invite the former for the customary Christmas-New Year lunch here Wednesday.

While Khan was not invited, the Congress-led Opposition that was invited to the lunch by the Chief Minister boycotted it as

part of its protest against his high-handedness and style of functioning. The customary lunch hosted by the Chief Minister is an annual affair where the Governor, state ministers, top leaders of various political parties, important personalities, besides top officials are invited.

The standoff between Khan and Vijayan has taken several twists

and turns in the past and has now touched rock bottom with the two veterans slamming one another publicly.

Things have come to such a pass that last Friday the two refused to greet each other when Vijayan arrived at Khan's official residence to take part in the swearing-in of two new ministers.

Let		e-Procurement fo	nail: eerwkoraput@yahoo.cor or Building Works Online-09/2023-24, Dtd.0/		
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	Name of teh Work Total Numbers of Works Approximate Estimate Cost Class of Contractor Period of Completion Other Details	: 7 Nos.	rks in the district of Koraput for Lakhs (Approximately)	the year 2023-24.	
	Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online Bidding		
	Procurement Onicer	Bid Identification No.	From	То	
1	Superintending Engineer, R.W. Division, Koraput	Online Tender/09/RWD- KPT/2023-24	08.01.2024 at 11.00 A.M.	17.01.2024 upto 5.30 P.M.	





PHOTO POST



OrissaPOST

THURSDAY | JANUARY 4 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAR

A devotee poses for a selfie with Yakshagana artistes during the 'Ayyappa Swamy Utsav' procession in Chikmagalur, Karnataka



Tourists visit the Taj Mahal on a cold winter day in Agra, Uttar Pradesh

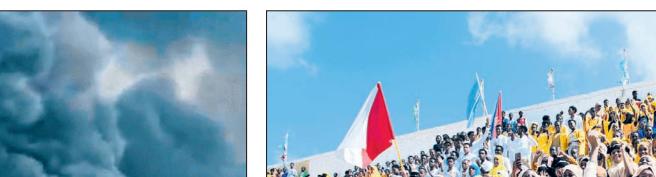


Vice Admiral Sanjay Jasjit Singh inspects a guard of honour during a ceremonial parade before officially taking over as the FOC-in-C Western Naval Command from Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi at INS Shikra, Colaba, in Mumbai, Maharashtra



P8

A performer dressed as a Stormtrooper break-dances during the London's New Year's Day Parade event in London, Britain





Smoke billows during a fire at a flyover on national highway at Khana in Ludhiana district, Punjab. An oil tanker caught fire after an accident on the national highway in Khanna, about 50 km from Ludhiana, police said



Thousands of people attend a protest rally in Mogadishu, Somalia after being angry with an agreement signed between Ethiopia and the breakaway region of Somaliland to give landlocked Ethiopia access to its shoreline



Artistes perform 'Kulvi Naati' dance during the Manali Winter Carnival 2024



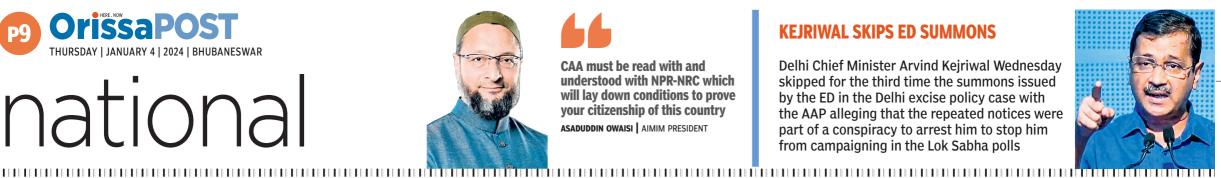


national



KEJRIWAL SKIPS ED SUMMONS

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Wednesday skipped for the third time the summons issued by the ED in the Delhi excise policy case with the AAP alleging that the repeated notices were part of a conspiracy to arrest him to stop him from campaigning in the Lok Sabha polls



uote

A useful conversation with FM @DmytroKuleb of Ukraine today Discussed adva our bilateral

cooperation in the year ahead S JAISHANKAR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

Hypothetically Tomorrow a government could argue that religion will be the basis of Citizenship even territorially not

place of birth or the other criterion for citizenship in the Constitution of India or the Citizenship Act

MANISH TEWARI CONGRESS MP

Every life is precious. It is the duty of the government to protect everyone The purpose of the law is to make the

life of the common person easy, safe and fair and not to push millions of people towards oppression extortion, imprisonment and financial bankruptcy

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

EAM to embark on 2-day visit to Nepal

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will pay a two-day visit to Nepal beginning Thursday with an aim to boost cooperation in an array of areas including hydro-power, connectivity, digital payments and trade. It is expected that both sides will sign an agreement on the modalities that would facilitate Nepal exporting 10,000 megawatt of power to India in the next 10 years in line with a decision taken by the leadership of the two countries in June.

Senthil Balaji moves city court for bail

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Minister V Senthil Balaji, arrested by the ED last year in a money laundering case, Wednesday moved a city Court seeking bail.Principal Sessions Judge S Alli, before whom the bail petition filed by Balaji came

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Golaghat/Jorhat (Assam), Jan 3: At least 12 people, including three children, were killed and 38 others suffered injuries in a head-on collision between a coalladen truck and a bus in Golaghat district of Assam Wednesday, officials said.

The accident took place at Balijan near Dergaon on National Highway-715 when the bus with 49 people on board collided with the goods vehicle. Golaghat District Commissioner P Uday Praveen told PTI. "Out of the 12 people who

died, six were women. All of them were from Basa Bharaluwa village," he said.

A total of 31 people are undergoing treatment at Jorhat Medical College and Hospital (JMCH), while seven others with minor injuries have been admitted to Dergaon Community Health Centre, Praveen said.

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the loss of lives in the accident, and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured

"The news of the death of many people in a road accident in Golaghat, Assam is extremely sad. I express my deepest condolences to the bereaved families and pray for the speedy recovery of those injured," Murmu said in a post in Hindi on X.

Modi announced an ex gratia of ₹2 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased, and ₹50,000 each for the injured.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Transport Minister Parimal Suklabaidya also expressed deep anguish over the

GYANVAPI MOSQUE CASE ASI urges court not to make survey report public for four weeks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

incident.

Varanasi (UP), Jan 3: The Archeological Survey of India (ASI) Wednesday urged a Varanasi court not to make its Gvanvapi mosque complex survey report public for at least four more weeks, according to the lawyer for the Hindu side

Assam: 12 killed in bus-truck collision SC seeks LS SG's reply on Moitra's expulsion

CAA must be read with and understood with NPR-NRC which

will lay down conditions to prove

your citizenship of this country

ASADUDDIN OWAISI AIMIM PRESIDENT

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar

Datta refused to pass any order on an interim prayer of Moitra to let her attend the

proceedings of the House, saying, allowing it would be like allowing the main petition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: The Supreme Court Wednesday sought a reply from the Lok Sabha secretary general on Trinamool Congress leader Mahua Moitra's plea challenging her expulsion from the Lower House.

"We will consider your plea for interim relief in March," Justice Khanna told Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, who appeared for Moitra.

The current Lok Sabha will have one more session- the Budget Session-before the general elections are held. Justice Khanna said he is not

going into these questions at present. The bench, he said, is leaving all issues open to be adjudicated at a later stage.

It listed the matter for resumed hearing in the week commencing March 11.

Singhvi said contrary to things floating around, Moitra has been expelled for sharing her parliamentary log-in details. Justice Khanna asked

whether Moitra has admitted to having shared her log-in credentials to which Singhvi replied in the affirmative. "Now, the second question.

Can the court go into the merit of the matter?" the bench asked Singhvi to which he replied that an opposition MP cannot be dis-

SNIPPETS

HC dismisses plea by Neelam seeking release

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court Wednesday dismissed a petition by Neelam Azad, an accused arrested in the December 13 Parliament security breach case, seeking her release on the grounds that her police remand was illegal. A bench headed by Justice Suresh Kumar Kait said the petition, which alleged that Azad was not allowed to consult a



he top court refused to issue notice to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and the Committee on Ethics of the House

qualified on such flimsy

grounds. Singhvi added, "If you pick every irregularity and start expelling people, then there will be no democracy left."

On December 8, after a heated debate in the Lok Sabha over the panel report, during which Moitra was not allowed to speak, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi moved a motion to expel the TMC MP from the House for "unethical conduct". The motion was adopted by a voice vote.

The ethics committee found Moitra guilty of "unethical conduct" and contempt of the House as she had shared her Lok Sabha members' portal credentials user ID and password -- with unauthorised people, which had an irrepressible impact on national security, Joshi had said.

The committee had also rec ommended that in view of the "highly objectionable, unethical, heinous and criminal conduct' of Moitra, an intense legal and institutional inquiry be initiated by the government with a set deadline.

The motion moved by Joshi said Moitra's "conduct has fur-

🚬 olicitor General Tushar Mehta, **O**urged the bench not to issue a formal notice and said he will file a reply to Moitra's petition

ther been found to be unbecoming as an MP for accepting gifts and illegal gratification from a businessman (Hiranandani) to further his interest, which is a serious misdemeanour and highly deplorable conduct" on her part. Earlier, ethics committee

Chairman Vinod Kumar Sonkar had tabled the first report of the panel on a complaint filed by Bharatiya Janata Party MP Nishikant Dubey against Moitra.

In October last year, Dubey, on the basis of a complaint submitted by Supreme Court lawyer Jai Anant Dehadrai, alleged that Moitra had asked questions in the Lok Sabha in exchange for cash and gifts from businessman Darshan Hiranandani to mount an attack on industrialist Gautam Adani and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In an affidavit to the ethics committee October 19, 2023, Hiranandani claimed that Moitra had shared with him her log-in ID and password for the Lok Sabha members' website. The CBI has already filed a preliminary FIR in the case.

ADANI-HINDENBURG ROW Cong slams SEBI over SC verdict

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 3: The Congress Wednesday said the Supreme Court judgment on certain matters relating to transactions by the Adani Group has proven to be "extraordinarily generous" to SEBI and asserted that the party's fight against crony capitalism and its ill-effects on prices, employment and inequalities will continue.

In a statement on the judgement, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh hit out at Adani, saying "truth dies a thousand deaths when we hear Satyameva Jayate from those who have gamed, manipulated and subverted the system this past decade"

CPI (M): Judgement is disappointing

New Delhi: The Communist Party of India (Marxist) polit bureau Wednesday called the Supreme Court judgement in the Adani case "disappointing" and said the apex court has not enhanced its credibility with this verdict.

Ramesh said the Supreme Court judgment on certain matters relating to transactions by the Adani Group has proven "extraordinarily generous" to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), not least by extending its original investigation deadline of August 14, 2023 by another three months to April 3, 2024.

It is noteworthy that SEBI has "failed" to complete its investigation into the violation of securities laws and stock manipulation by the Adani Group and its associates ten months after the Supreme Court's ex-



pert committee asked it to do so, Ramesh said. "It is unclear what will change in the next three months other than the Model Code of Conduct for the Lok Sabha elections coming into effect," he said. Meanwhile, a series of exposés from credible news sources has turned the glare on the Adani Group's "illicit activities" conducted under SEBI's "benign gaze", Ramesh said.

Chang Chung-Ling and Nasser Ali Shaban Ahli held 8-14% of benami holdings in Adani Enterprises. Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, Adani Power and Adani Transmission, he alleged. This was via shell companies in Mauritius, UAE and British Virgin Islands in blatant violation of SEBI's minimum shareholding laws.

Ramesh claimed. "It is also worth noting that, regarding the Modani MegaScam, SEBI's mandate is limited to violations of securities regulations. It will not, for instance, look into how the Modi government manipulating bidding conditions over the objections of the NITI Aayog and Finance Ministry to hand Adani a complete airports monopoly, and has misused the ED and CBI to force critical national assets into the hands of

the PM's cronies," he alleged.

up for hearing, posted to January 8, further hearing of the case, after ED's counsel N Ramesh sought time to file a counter affidavit.

ED raids J'khand CM's press advisor, others

Ranchi: The Enforcement Directorate Wednesday raided premises of Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren's press advisor, officials of Sahibganj district and a former MLA as part of a money laundering probe into alleged illegal mining in the state, sources said. About a dozen locations in the state, including in state capital Ranchi and a premise in Rajasthan, are being raided by the central agency under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said.

Varanasi district court judge A K Vishvesh then adjourned the matter till Thursday, Hindu side counsel Madan Mohan Yadav said.

According to the lawyer, the ASI requested the court for four more weeks before the sealed survev report is opened. Yadav said the ASI referred to a recent judgment of the Allahabad High Court while seeking four weeks' time.

The Allahabad High Court had December 19 dismissed several pleas from Muslim sides challenging the maintainability of a suit seeking restoration of the temple where the Gvanvapi mosque now stands in Varanasi.

In its observation, Justice Rohit Ranjan Agarwal had said the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 did not define religious character and this can only be determined through evidence presented in the court by opposing parties.

lawyer of her choice before the trial court at the time of remand, was not maintainable. "Petitioner has already moved bail application before the trial court. Present petition is not maintainable and is dismissed accordingly," the bench, also comprising Justice Manoj Jain, said.

Soren to remain CM: Coalition lawmakers

Ranchi: Legislators of the ruling coalition partners in Jharkhand expressed solidarity with the Hemant Soren government Wednesday and said the JMM leader will continue as the Chief Minister. After a meeting in Ranchi to discuss the current political scenario in light of the Enforcement Directorate's summons to Soren, the lawmakers said they stand united and firmly support Soren, assuring that there is no threat to the current government. Mithilesh Thakur, a senior JMM leader who holds the Drinking Water and Sanitation portfolio, said Soren will continue as the CM and that JMM will contest the 2024 Lok Sabha and state assembly elections under his leadership. The meeting was chaired by Soren himself.

Shramjeevi train blast: 2 more get death penalty

Jaunpur (UP): A sessions court Wednesday sentenced to death two men, including one from Bangladesh, for carrying out the Shramjivi Express train blast in 2005 that left at least 14 people dead and 62 injured. Two other convicts were given the death penalty in the case in 2016 and their appeals are pending in the high court, while two of the accused were killed in an encounter and one has been absconding. "The court of additional sessions court judge Rajesh Kumar Rai awarded death sentences to Hilal alias Hilaluddin and Nafikul Vishwas convicted in the Shramjivi train blast case," District Government Counsel Satish Pandey said Wednesday.



Indian Navy continues to monitor the maritime security situation in North/ Central Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden

Court orders Sanjay Singh to pay ₹1L

Lucknow: A court here Wednesday directed AAP leader Sanjay Singh to pay ₹1 lakh in damages to former Uttar Pradesh minister Mahendra Kumar Singh in a defamation case. In an order. Civil Judge (Senior Division) Kamla Kant Gupta directed the AAP MP to pay the damages within two months, following which an interest of six per cent will be imposed on the amount.

Top Cong leaders to meet today

New Delhi: Top Congress leaders will meet here Thursday to discuss the party's strategy for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and preparations for the Manipur to-Maharashtra Bharat Nyay Yatra, beginning January 14.

India sees 2nd highest cancer deaths in Asia: Study

Researchers found that India, along with China and Japan, were the three leading countries in Asia in terms of number of new cases and deaths, where they say cancer has become a more significant public health threat with 94 lakh new cases and 56 lakh deaths in 2019

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 3: India registered about 12 lakh new cancer cases and 9.3 lakh deaths in 2019, becoming the second highest contributor to the disease burden in Asia for that year, according to a new study published in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia journal. Of these, while China contributed the most with 48 lakh new cases and 27 lakh deaths, Japan recorded about 9 lakh

new cases and 4.4 lakh deaths,

the international team of re-

searchers including those from

the National Institute of

Technology Kurukshetra and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Jodhpur and Bathinda, said. We examined the temporal

patterns of 29 cancers in 49 Asian countries between 1990 and 2019 using estimates from the Global Burden of Disease, Injuries and Risk Factors 2019 Study (GBD 2019)," they wrote in their study. They found that in Asia, the

leading cancer was that of tracheal, bronchus, and lung (TBL), resulting in an estimated 13 lakh cases and 12 lakh deaths. It was also found to be most frequent in men and third most frequent in women.



Specifically among women, cervical cancer is ranked second or among top-5 cancers in several Asian countries. The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, introduced in 2006, has proved to be effective in preventing the disease and reducing HPV-related deaths, the researchers said

AI may be effective

New Delhi: Researchers have developed a new artificial intelligence (AI) tool that interprets medical images with unprecedented clarity and may help clinicians diagnose and better treat cancers that might otherwise go undetected. The tool, called iStar (Inferring Super-Resolution Tissue Architecture), and developed by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania, US, provides both highly detailed views of individual cells and a broader look at the full spectrum of how people's genes operate.

Overall, in the continent and individual countries, TBL, breast, colon and rectum cancer (CRC), stomach and non-melanoma skin cancer were among the top five most frequent cancers in 2019 with few countries having leukemia, prostate, liver and pancreatic cancers in the list, they said in their study. Further, smoking, alcohol con-

sumption and ambient particulate matter (PM) pollution remained dominant among the 34 risk factors for cancer, they said. 'The rising cancer burden due to increasing ambient air pol-

they wrote.

Five of the top 10 countries with regards to populationweighted annual average of PM2.5 in 2019 are present in Asia - India, Nepal, Qatar, Bangladesh and Pakistan, they said quoting the State of Global Air Report, produced annually in collaboration with the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation's (IHME's) GBD project.

The researchers said that the primary reasons for increasing air pollution in Asia were industry-led economic growth along with urbanisation, ruralto-urban migration and increasing usage of motor vehicles.







lution is concerning in Asia,"





international



If he (Lai Ching-te, ruling DPP's presidential candidate) is elected, you cannot rule out the possibility of a military clash across the Taiwan Strait. We need to be fully aware of this WANG ZAIXI | FORMER DEPUTY HEAD, CHINA'S TAIWAN AFFAIRS OFFICE

BIGGEST AND BADDEST

China's third aircraft carrier 'Fujian', the heaviest and most advanced compared to its two previous warships, is gearing up for sea trials, official media reported Wednesday. It also includes next generation launch tracks that can catapult a wider range of aircraft from its deck





Twin blasts rock Iran US national debt

Palestinian land and will remain Palestinian land, with Hamas no longer in control of its future and with no

Gaza is

terror groups able to threaten Israel MATTHEW MILLER STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON, US

The state of Israel will appear befor the International Court of Justice at the Hague to dispel South Africa's absurd blood libel

EYLON LEVY OFFICIAL IN THE PM'S OFFICE, ISRAEL



deterrence and focusing on their joint military drills, bringing the fate of South Korea to the brink

KIM YO JONG SISTER OF NORTH KOREAN LEADE

SHORT TAKES

Nordic nations shiver

Copenhagen: Temperatures fell below minus 40 degrees Celsius (minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit) in the Nordic region for a second day in a row Wednesday, breaking a 25-year-old record for the coldest January night in Sweden as a cold spell gripped the area. In Kvikkjokk Årrenjarka in Swedish Lapland, the mercury dropped to minus 43.6 C (minus 46.5 F), the coldest temperature in the country in January since 1999, Sweden's TT news agency reported. On Tuesday, Nikkaluokta, a village inhabited by indigenous Sami people in northern Sweden, recorded a temperature of minus 41.6 C (minus 42.8 F). The village is in Lapland, which stretches from northern parts of Norway through Sweden and Finland to Russia.

4 borders reopened

.....

AT LEAST 103 PEOPLE KILLED, 188 WOUNDED IN BLASTS AT CEREMONY HONOURING SLAIN GENERAL

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, Jan 3: Two explosions minutes apart Wednesday in Iran targeted a commemoration for a prominent general slain in a US drone strike in 2020, killing at least 103 people and wounding at least 188 others as the Middle East remains on edge over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for what appeared to be the deadliest militant attack to target Iran since its 1979 Islamic Revolution. The blasts shook the city of Kerman, about 820 kilometers (510 miles) southeast of the capital, Tehran, and sent shrapnel hurtling into a screaming crowd fleeing the first explosion.

Sunni extremist groups including the Islamic State group have conducted large-scale attacks in the past that killed civilians in Shiite-majority Iran, though not in relatively peaceful Kerman.



Iran also has seen mass protests in recent years, including those over the death of 22-yearold Mahsa Amini in 2022. The country also has been targeted by exile groups in attacks dating back to the turmoil surrounding its 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The blasts struck an event marking the fourth anniversary of the killing of General Qassem Soleimani, the head of the Revolutionary Guard's elite Quds Force who died in a US drone strike in Iraq in January 2020. The explosions occurred near his grave site in Kerman.

Iranian state television quoted Babak Yektaparast, a spokesman for the country's emergency services, for the casualty figure. Authorities said some people were injured while fleeing afterward. Footage suggested that the second blast occurred some

15 minutes after the first. A delayed second explosion is often used by militants to target emergency personnel responding to the scene and inflict more casualties.

Kerman's deputy governor, Rahman Jalali, called the attack 'terroristic," without elaborating. Iran has multiple foes who could be behind the assault, including exile groups, militant organisations and state actors. Iran has supported Hamas as well as the Lebanese Shiite militia Hezbollah and Yemen's Houthi rebels

WHO WAS SOLEIMANI?

Soleimani was the architect of Iran's regional military activities and is hailed as a national icon among supporters of Iran's theocracy. He also helped secure Syrian President Bashar Assad's government after the 2011 Arab Spring protests against him turned into a civil, and later a regional, war that still rages today. Relatively unknown in Iran

until the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, Soleimani's popularity and mystique grew after American officials called for his killing over his help arming militants with penetrating roadside bombs that killed and maimed US troops.

A decade and a half later, Soleimani had become Iran's most recognizable battlefield commander, ignoring calls to enter politics but growing as powerful, if not more, than its civilian leadership.

Ultimately, a đrone strike launched by the Trump administration killed the general, part of escalating incidents that followed America's 2018 unilateral withdrawal from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

His death has drawn large processions in the past. At his funeral in 2020, a stampede broke out in Kerman and at least 56 people were killed and more than 200 were injured as thousands thronged the procession. Otherwise, Kerman largely has been untouched in the recent unrest and attacks that have struck Iran. The city and province of the same name sits in Iran's central desert plateau.

hits record \$34tn



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Jan 3: The federal government's gross national debt has surpassed \$34 trillion, a record high that foreshadows the coming political and economic challenges to improve America's balance sheet in the coming years.

The US Treasury Department issued a report Tuesday logging US finances, which have become a source of tension in a politically divided Washington that could possibly see parts of the government shut down without an annual budget in place. Republican lawmakers and

the White House agreed last June to temporarily lift the nation's debt limit, staving off the risk of what would be a historic default. That agreement lasts until January 2025. Here are some answers to questions about the new record national debt.

The national debt eclipsed \$34 trillion several years sooner than pre-pandemic projections. The Congressional Budget Office's January 2020 projections had gross federal debt eclipsing \$34 trillion in fiscal year 2029.

But the debt grew faster than expected because of a multiyear pandemic starting in 2020 that shut down much of the US economy. The government borrowed heavily under then President Donald Trump and current President Joe Biden to stabilise the economy and support a recovery. But the rebound came with a surge of inflation that pushed up interest rates and made it more expensive for the government to service its debts.

Indian-origin family death in US ruled murder-suicide

The autopsy results revealed that Teena and her daughter Arianna were victims of homicide by gunshot by Rakesh who later killed himself

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Jan 3: The deaths of a wealthy Indian-origin couple and their daughter in the US state of Massachusetts last week have been ruled a murder-suicide by medical authorities after autopsy

Rakesh Kamal, 57, his wife However, the firearm was not Teena Kamal, 54 and their colregistered in Rakesh's name and lege-going daughter Arianna "he was not licensed to possess Kamal. 18 were found dead in it," the release added their \$5 million mansion in Dover, Massachusetts State Police Massachusetts December 28. have contacted the Bureau of 2023.Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and A firearm was found near Explosives for assistance in de-Rakesh Kamal. termining the origin of the A press release issued by the firearm. The incident remains office of Norfolk District under investigation by Dover Attorney Michael Morrissey and Massachusetts State Police. Tuesday said that autopsy re-Last week, Morrissey said that sults issued by the Office of the the initial investigation indi-Chief Medical Examiner concated the incident was a case of firm that Teena and her daughdomestic violence and did not initer Arianna were victims of tially indicate the involvement homicide by gunshot. of outside parties.



Rakesh died from a "gunshot wound consistent with being self-inflicted". The final autopsy in the coming weeks.

The release further said that while full forensic and ballistics testing of the gun has not been finalised, the firearm found with Rakesh is consistent with a .40 calibre Glock 22.

transcripts of fatal jet crash REUTERS

Tokyo, Jan 3: Japanese authorities said Wednesday that a passenger jet that collided with a Coast Guard turboprop at a Tokvo airport was given permission to land, but the smaller plane was not cleared for takeoff, based on transcripts of conversations with the control tower.

All 379 people aboard the Japan Airlines Airbus A350 had a miraculous escape after it erupted in flames following Tuesday's crash with a De Havilland Dash-8 Coast Guard turboprop shortly after landing at Haneda airport.

But five died among the six Coast Guard crew who were due to depart on a flight responding to a major earthquake on the west coast, while the captain, who escaped the wreckage, was

Gaza war spills to Beirut

ISRAEL ON HIGH ALERT FOR POSSIBLE HEZBOLLAH RESPONSE -(AFTER SENIOR HAMAS LEADER KILLED IN BEIRUT STRIKE

We are more

powerful and

after them

any scenario



Hamas was spreading across the region, drawing in the occupied West Bank, Hezbollah forces on the Lebanon-Israel border, and even Red Sea shipping lanes.

Arouri, 57, who lived in Beirut, was the first senior Hamas political leader to be assassinated since Israel began its offensive against the militant group in response to its deadly rampage into Israeli towns October 7.

Hamas politburo member Hossam Badran said in a eulogy for Arouri: "We say to the criminal occupation (Israel) that the battle between us is open.

Israel had long accused him of orchestrating attacks on its



report is likely to be completed

Japan releases

reopen four legal US-Mexico border crossings Thursday as high levels of illegal immigration have receded and freed up personnel, US border authorities said Tuesday. The US will resume operations at an international bridge in Eagle Pass, Texas, two crossings in Arizona and another near San Diego, California, US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said in a press release, adding that it will continue to prioritize border security "as necessary."

badly injured. Authorities have only just begun their investigations and there remains uncertainty over the circumstances surrounding the incident, including how the two aircraft ended up on the same runway. But transcripts of traffic control instructions released by authorities appeared to show the Japan Airlines plane had been given permission to land.

HOW ISRAEL COULD LOSE THE

REUTERS

Beirut, Jan 3: Israeli forces intensified their bombing of the Gaza Strip Wednesday and told civilians to leave a refugee camp in the north of the Palestinian enclave after the war stretched into Lebanon with the killing in Beirut of the Hamas deputy leader.

Israel has neither confirmed nor denied that it killed Saleh al-Arouri in a drone strike in the

Palestinian death toll reaches 22,313, Gaza health ministry says

Lebanese capital Tuesday. But military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said Israeli forces were in a high state of readiness and prepared for any scenario.

The assassination was a further sign that the nearly threemonth war between Israel and citizens. But a Hamas official said he was also "at the heart of negotiations" conducted by Qatar and Egypt over the outcome of the Gaza war and the release of Hamas-held Israeli hostages.

Hezbollah chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah was due to make a speech in Beirut afternoon. Wednesday Previously he had warned Israel against carrying out assassinations on Lebanese soil, vowing a "severe reaction".

No relief for Khan

Islamabad: Pakistan's top election body Wednesday indicted iailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his Chaudhry in a contempt case. Khan, 71, is the founding chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) and Chaudhry, a senior former member of his party. The two leaders were booked in 2022 for using foul language against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja. He was ousted through a vote of noconfidence in April 2022. More than 150 cases have been registered against him since his ouster from power.

ex-information minister Fawad

EXISTENTIAL PERILS WITHOUT RECOURSE TO US MILITARY VETOES, ISRAELI POLICYMAKERS MUST CHANGE TACK

Longest-ever strike

London: Thousands of doctors walked off the job in Britain Wednesday, the start of a sixday strike that was set to be the longest in the history of the state-funded National Health Service. Managers said tens of thousands scheduled appointments and operations will be cancelled during the walkout across England and Wales by junior doctors, those in the first years of their careers

TO AVOID A FUTURE IN WHICH ISRAEL IS FORCED TO RESIST ARSENALS OR UNSC

he most massive intelligence and operational failure in Israel's 75-year history has left the country's citizens still in shock. Israel's long-standing belief that Hamas would be controlled by 'smart fences' and the influx of foreign funding has come undone. Almost 1,200 people were killed and over 240 taken hostage in the Hamas' raid on southern Israel October 7.

Following the attack, the Israeli government mobilised the Israel Defense Forces on an emergency basis. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged to 'finish' a war that the Israeli people 'didn't want.' According to Netanyahu, the campaign's objectives are to destroy Hamas, rescue every Israeli person who has been abducted, and make sure that Gaza's terrorist organisation never poses a threat to Israel. However, neither the timeline nor the details of a workable conclusion for Gaza are clear. Nor are the goals of the massive IDF offensive.

What is abundantly clear, however, is that Israel's latitude to pursue its stated war objectives would be vastly constrained were it not for the emphatic support of the United States. As the fighting persists and gaps emerge between the US and the Israeli positions, Israel has strong reasons to invest in keeping its primary alliance intact. To ensure that its bond with the US survives this war, Israel must not only manage the current military campaign judiciously but also tackle domestic political problems and determine once and for all how it plans to settle its conflict with

Palestinians. The Biden administration has made no secret of its dissatisfaction with Netanyahu's choice of coalition partners from Israel's extreme right-



most notably, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich—promising to hold the prime minister personally accountable for the actions of his government.

Clashes between the Netanyahu government and the Biden administration over the intended transformation of Israel's judiciary also spilled regularly into public view. In January 2023, Secretary of State Antony Blinken—on his first trip to Israel since the country's November 2022 electionadded quality time with civil society representatives to his itinerary, giving a morale boost to critics of Netanyahu's agenda and delivering a not-so-subtle hint of US concern about the fate of Israeli democracy.

Despite early frictions, the Biden administration's support for Israel since October 7-expressed in words and deeds-has been uncontestable. US civilian and military officials have been constant fixtures in Israel, often participating in consultations with Israel's war cabinet.

Israelis have always attributed staunch US support for their country to a set of shared values-including freedom, pluralism, and democracy-and interests, such as the promotion of peace and stability. That ground is shifting now, especially as younger Americans express dramatically less affinity for Israel than older generations. Joe Biden, who has asserted often that "you don't have to be a Jew to be a Zionist," may well be the last Democratic president with impeccable pro-Israeli credentials.

This trend should, and does, worry Israel. Hedging its bets, as other Middle Eastern countries have done, by building relationships with China and Russia—permanent members of the UN Security Council that have both taken the side of Hamas—is not an option for Israel. And lately, even Biden himself has begun to qualify his statements about the war in Gaza. In a speech December 12, he affirmed that "Israel's security can rest on the United States," but he added that Israel is "starting to lose" its support in other parts of the world.

To avoid a future in which Israel is forced to resist existential perils without recourse to US military arsenals or UN Security Council vetoes, Israeli policymakers must change tack. First, they must take care in prosecuting the Gaza campaign.

The inclusion of opposition party members in the war cabinet was a responsible step in that direction. As the war proceeds, the IDF should pursue its aims-which Israelis overwhelmingly endorse-as quickly as possible while minimising collateral damage and the injury of innocents. To that end, the IDF chain of command should be meticulous in identifying legitimate operational targets, authorising attacks only when those standards are met.

Israel desperately needs to prioritise national security over politics. A supplementary 2023 budget passed December 14, which was meant to cover the unanticipated expense of the war in Gaza, diverted precious funds to unrelated bureaucracies-including the Ministry of Jerusalem and Heritage and the Ministry of Settlement and National Missions-to satisfy kev constituencies of the Netanyahu coalition instead.

Finally, and most urgently, Israel needs to formulate a clear position on the Palestinian issue. When the state of Israel was created 75 years ago, it had to fight off threats to its survival; today, Israel's stewards must articulate a coherent vision of its ultimate destination. Otherwise, they will struggle to convince the US and other countries to remain by Israel's side.



business



We are in highly turbulent situation. There are two areas on the global map which are in conflict situation. God forbid, if there is further challenge or there is a disruption. vou see an impact HARDEEP SINGH PURI | OIL MINISTER

EU TARGETS WORLD'S TOP DIAMOND MINER

The European Union imposed sanctions on the world's biggest diamond mining company and its chief executive officer on Wednesday as part of what it called its "unwavering commitment" to Ukraine in the war against Russia. The move targeted Alrosa, which accounts for about 90% of Russia's diamond production, and CEO Pavel Marinychev



In a first, India ropes in SpaceX for sat launch uote

11 players have submitted expressions of interest for the ₹41,000-crore international transhipment port project at Great Nicobar Island SARBANANDA SONOWAL PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS MINISTER

Since the last 3-4 years we have been growing at 30 per cent. We will grow at

30 per cent or at high double-digit given the growing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the country

ASHISH MODI PRESIDENT, HONEYWELL

Characterised by a shift towards more expensive properties, the residential market continues its onward march to achieve another watershed year in 2023

SHISHIR BAIJAL CMD, KNIGHT FRANK

SHORT TAKES

Govt scraps SAIL SSP privatisation

New Delhi: The government Wednesday said it has decided not to go ahead with the privatisation of SAIL's Salem Steel Plant (SSP). For strategic disinvestment of Tamil Nadu-based SSP, global Expressions of Interest (EoIs) were invited July 4, 2019, by SAIL. "Multiple EoIs had been received and bidders were shortlisted. However, due to lack of interest of shortlisted bidders to proceed further with the transaction, Government of India, with the approval of Alternative Mechanism (Empowered Group of Ministers) has decided to annul the current EoI thereby terminating the present transaction," the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) said on its website.

ISRO'S NSIL TO LAUNCH **COMMUNICATION SATELLITE ON SPACEX'S FALCON 9**

ROCKET

AGENCIES

nership with a venture led by billionaire Elon Musk who also wants to expand his other businesses in the country. The high-capacity satellite aims to boost India's broadband

rocket this year, its first part-

communication, especially in remote and unconnected regions of the country, state-run NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL), the commercial arm of India's space agency, said in a statement Tuesday.

New Delhi, Jan 3: India will The launch is scheduled for launch a communications satelthe second quarter of this year, lite using SpaceX's Falcon-9

The lack of fresh

over valuation

sidelined. Weak global

concerns about global

VINOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH,

GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

China & Euro zone

influenced investors to stay

triggers and concerns



NSIL said. The satellite weighs 4,700 kg, which exceeds the current highest spacecraft launching capacity of 4,000 kg of India's space agency ISRO.

Musk, who is the chief executive of SpaceX and Tesla, is keen to bring his Starlink satellite broadband to India and is also discussing an investment proposal for Tesla to set up a factory there to make electric vehicles. But he is facing a pushback from some in the country's domestic industry.

NSIL said it will fully own, operate and fund the GSAT-20 high-throughput satellite, of-

18-MONTH LOW

fering capacity of 48 gigabits per second.

said.

The GSAT-20 communica-New Delhi, Jan 3: India Ratings tions satellite is aimed at meeting the country's broadband, in-flight and maritime communications (IFMC) and cellular backhaul services needs, it

FACTORY

PMI DIPS FROM 56 IN

THREE-AND-

The GSAT-20, which will be renamed as GSAT-N2, will have Ka-Ka band high throughput satellite (HTS) capacity with 32 beams having pan-India coverage, including Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

and Research Wednesday upped GDP growth estimate for current fiscal to 6.7 per cent, from 6.2 per cent, citing resilient economy, sustained government capex and prospect of a new private corporate capex cycle.

Ind-Ra raises India FY24 growth hopes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

It flagged weak global growth and trade as risks which weighed down the growth estimates, besides volatile geopolitical situation. "All these risks will continue to

weigh on and restrict India's GDP growth to 6.7 per cent in FY24. The quarterly GDP growth, which came in at 7.8 per cent YoY and 7.6 per cent YoY in 1QFY24 and 2QFY24 respectively, is slated to slow down sequentially in the remaining two quarters of FY24,' Ind-Ra Principal Economist Sunil Kumar Sinha said.

The RBI also expects a sequential slowdown in the GDP growth in the remaining two quarters and expects the overall FY24 GDP to come in at 7 per cent. The Indian economy grew 7.2

per cent in 2022-23 fiscal.

LIC gets GST demand notice of ₹663crore

New Delhi, Jan 3: Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) Wednesday said tax authorities have slapped a demand notice of about Rs 663.45 crore on it for short payment of Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The corporation has received communication/demand order for interest and penalty from Office of the Commissioner of CGST & Central Excise, Chennai North Commissionerate on January 1, LIC said in a regulatory filing.

The demand pertains to wrong availment of Input Tax Credit (ITC) and non-payment on tax on turnover wrongly declared as non-GST supply in GSTR-1 for 2017-18, and 2018-19, it said.

The corporation shall file an appeal before the Commissioner (Appeals), Chennai against the said order within the prescribed timelines, it said. There is no_ material impact on financials, operations or other activities of the corporation, it added.

Weak global trends **Factory activity dips** drag Indian indices

Manufacturing sector growth plunges in Dec on softer rise

New Delhi, Jan 3: India's manufacturing sector growth fell to an 18-month low in December amid softer increase in factory orders and output, despite minimal inflation, a monthly sur-

HSBC India The confidence towards the yearahead outlook strengthened.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell from 56 in November to an 18-month

In Purchasing Managers³ Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes con-

HSBC India The

"India's manufacturing sector continued to expand in



previous month. Growth of both output and new orders softened, but on the other hand, the future output index rose since November," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist

at HSBC Despite a loss of growth momentum, the sector still expanded strongly in December.

New business gains, favourable market conditions, fairs and expositions collectively induced another sharp increase in manufacturing production during December, according to panellists.

The December data showed a 21st consecutive increase in international order receipts at goods producers in India.

"Companies noted gains from clients in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America. New export sales expanded at a

Growth of both output and new orders softened, but on the other hand, the future output index rose since November

moderate pace that was the jointslowest in eight months," the

survey noted. On the prices front, input costs rose at the second-slowest rate in nearly three-and-a-half years and charge inflation softened to a nine-month low.

Among the items reported to have been up in price were chemicals, paper and textiles. Littlechanged from November, however, the rate of inflation was negligible by historical standards and was the second-weakest in just under three-and-ahalf years, as per the survey.

NOVEMBER TO 54.9 IN DEC<u>EMBER</u> INPUT COSTS ROSE AT SECOND-SLOWEST RATE IN

> A-HALF YEARS

> > PRANJUL BHANDARI | CHIEF INDIA ECONOMIST, HSBC



TOWARDS ELECTRIFICATION

SBI garners \$1bn



71,300

BUZ

BIZ

GRAPHIC

pharma shares gained on re-**BSE Sensex** revious day close 71.892.48 71,800

Mumbai, Jan 3: Stock markets declined for a second day in a row Wednesday with benchmark Sensex closing lower by 535 points due to selling in HDFC Bank and IT shares amid

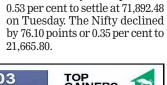
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

weak global trends. The 30-share BSE Sensex fell by 535.88 points or 0.75 per cent to settle at 71,356.60. During the day, it tumbled 588.51 points or 0.81 per cent to 71,303.97.

The broader Nifty of the National Stock Exchange dropped by 148.45 points or 0.69 per cent to 21,517.35. As many as 32 Nifty shares declined while 18

advanced. Key stock indices closed near their day's low levels due to continued fall in IT and banking shares amid weak global cues ahead of the release of the US Fed meeting minutes. Metal and commodities shares also declined while PSU bank, realty and

Maruti were the major laggards. IndusInd Bank, ITC, Bharti were among the winners.





newed buying. Among the Sensex firms, JSW Steel, Tata Steel, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, Wipro, Tata Consultancy Services.

Nestle, HCL

Technologies, HDFC Bank and

Sensex fell by 379.46 points or

Airtel and State Bank of India

indicators, like contraction in in orders, output manufacturing data, added PRESS TRUST OF INDIA economic recovery in 2024

vey said Wednesday. Manufacturing PMI survey, conducted by S&P Global, showed that there were softer, albeit sharp, increase in factory orders and output, while business

low of 54.9 in December.

traction.

Manufacturing PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in a panel of around 400 manufacturers.

from overseas

New Delhi: State Bank of India (SBI) Wednesday said it has raised \$1 billion or (about ₹8.300 crore) to cater to the domestic ESG financing market. The bank has concluded the issuance of \$1 billion (\$750 million and green shoe of \$250 million) through Syndicated Social Loan, SBI said in a regulatory filing. The loan book was closed January 2, 2024, it said. Last year too, the country's largest lender had raised \$1 billion syndicated social loan. The fund raised would would cater to domestic ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) financing market.

Foundation Day of BoI NBG Odisha

Bhubaneswar: Bank of India NBG Odisha started functioning January 02, 2023, Since its inception the bank has taken many initiatives to reach the customers from different sectors. It has played its role by uplifting the economically weaker sections by providing loans under MUDRA, PM Svanidhi, and women sections by sanctioning loans to more than 2.000 SHG arouns. For entrepreneurs, the

bank has given MSME loans to different startups as well as existing firms. It also extended funds to big industries by sanctioning more than ₹1000 crore in RAM segment. Bank of India is one institution which works as one stop solution for all the banking needs. It caters to asset, liability, credit card and other ancillary business. Apart from this, the bank also provides Insurance need and wealth management/Mutual Fund through its partners. NBG Odisha controls its 258 branches spanning across Odisha through its four Zonal Offices located in Keonjhar, Baripada, Sambalpur and Bhubaneswar. NBG odisha provides MSME and retail support to the people of Odisha through 7SMECCs and 7 RBCs respectively. For agricultural activities the bank has extended its financial assistance through 7 SKVKs (Star Krishi Vikash Kendra) located in different parts of Odisha. The bank has frequently customised both assets as well as liability products to meet diversified needs of the customers

SBI RBO Khurda new premises inaugurated

Bhubaneswar: Regional Business Office (RBO) Khurda of State Bank of India has been shifted to Khurda center from Bhubaneswar. The new premises of RBO Khurda was inaugurated January 3 at Ist Floor, Maa Barunei Hotel Building, Jemadei by the Chief General Manager of Bhubaneswar Circle Dinesh Pruthi in the presence of the General Manager (NW-I) Ponnambolam M, the Dy General Manager (B&O) Bhubaneswar Zone Sanjay Kumar Jha and the Regional Manager RBO Khurda Narendra Kumar Jena. Among others, office bearers of SBIOA, SBISA, SEWA and Chief/Branch Managers along with their teams were also present on this occasion.



Electric 2W sales up 17%

Electric two-wheeler (E2W) sales volume in India rose 17 per cent year-on-year in December as electrification improved after a recent hiatus, a report showed Wednesday. In the E2W space, Ola Electric (Ola) remained the market leader by volume and gained market share, reaching 40 per cent.

Ola gained the most market share, followed by Bajaj Auto while TVS Motor lost the most, according to BNP Paribas India EV report. "Improvement in Ola's market share was largely driven by the company's aggressive marketing campaign 'December to Remember', under which it offered aggressive discounts to customers and also reduced prices of its products," the report mentioned. Ola slashed its S1X+ escooter prices by ₹20,000 or by 18



per cent. Among the states, sales volume declined (month-onmonth) for most of the states except Delhi, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

Penetration improved the most in Delhi to 19.8 per cent from 6.9 per cent in November, almost entirely driven by Ola. EV penetration improved in December for electric passenger vehicles, electric three-wheelers and electric two-wheelers - reaching alltime highs for E3Ws and nearing all-time highs for EPVs.

2023-24 **CROP YEAR**

Wheat output may touch new record

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: Wheat production is expected to touch a new record of 114 million tonne in the ongoing 2023-24 crop year on higher coverage and provided weather conditions remain normal, a top food ministry official said Wednesday.

The last leg of sowing of wheat, the main rabi (winter) crop, is underway and will continue till next week. Till last week, wheat was planted in 320.54 lakh hectares, as per the official data.

Wheat production stood at a record 110.55 million tonnes in the 2022-23 crop year (July-June), compared to 107.7 million tonne achieved in the previous year.

"We expect that total area under cultivation of wheat will increase this year and God willingly if the climate is alright, the production will be 114 million tonne that's what the agricul-



ture ministry has indicated informally to us," Food Corporation of India (FCI) Chairman and Managing Director Ashok K Meena told reporters.

Area sown to wheat crop is also showing an increase compared to the last year. There was a deficit of one per cent in some states but that will also be made up in the first week of January,

"If that is the level of production, we are very confident

he said.

that we will be able to procure more than our requirement and also additional stocks needed for the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) for next year," he noted.

When asked if the central nodal agency plans to step up procurement considering the opening wheat balance of 76 lakh tonne to be April 1, which is just enough to meet the buffer requirement, the FCI chief said: "We will try our best to provide minimum support price (MSP)

to all farmers. Because of the open market sale, the indications are prices have stabilised and are not higher than it was last year. 'Since the wheat MSP is

higher by 7 per cent than the last year, we hope that lot of farmers will be willing to give their produce to the FCI," Meena said

Last year, the FCI's wheat procurement stood at 26.2 million tonne, higher than the annual buffer requirement of 18.4 million tonne.

This year's wheat crop will be ready for harvest from April onwards

FCI is the central nodal agency that buys rice and wheat to ensure MSP to the farmers and distributes the grains for free to 81 crore poor via ration shops. It also uses surplus grain via OMSS to boost domestic availability and check prices.

According to FCI, 5.9 million

tonne of wheat has been sold in the open market through weekly e-auction under the OMSS since June 2023, which has helped stabilise the retail prices.

"There has been hardly any increase in retail wheat prices on YoY basis." the FCI Chairman said, adding that wheat OMSS will continue only till March 15.

However in the case of rice, there is "of course an uptick in prices visible in the open market but the mere fact that we are making huge quantity of rice available through OMSS, I hope that the prices will also not increase substantially", he said.

There has been a lukewarm response for rice under OMSS and so far the FCI has been able to sell only 1.45 lakh tonnes at ₹29 per kg through weekly auctions.

The FCI is using surplus foodgrain stock of 15.6 million tonne for undertaking market intervention to stabilise the prices of two key commodities.

Vietnam's VinFast likely to set up first manufacturing facility

Vietnamese electric vehicle maker VinFast is set to open its first Indian manufacturing facility, where it will make batteries, in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, three people familiar with the matter said.

The company will make batteries for EVs at the plant in the city of Thoothukudi, one of the people said, adding that this was separate from its previously announced plans to assemble vehicles shipped in parts from Vietnam.

VinFast, which competes with carmakers such as Tesla and China's BYD, declined to comment. An announcement by the company on the new plant is expected in coming days, two people said. VinFast said in a state-



ment Wednesday that it would reveal details of its plans at "an appropriate time".

It is not immediately clear what the size of the investment is or when a VinFast factory will become operational in Tamil Nadu

ing both e-scooters and e-cars to India, the first source said.









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OrissaPOS THURSDAY | JANUARY 4 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAF

WICKETS FALL LIKE 23 PINS

Siraj's achieve career-best figures in Tests before India lose six wickets for zero run to take 98-run lead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cape Town, Jan 3: Mohammed Siraj got 6/15 in a breathtakingly menacing morning spell but to his horror found India losing six wickets in a space of eleven balls in the final session before regaining the advantage against South Africa on a rivetting day one of the second Test here.

After Siraj's career-best figures decimated South Africa for their lowest post-apartheid score of 55, India were 153/4 before losing six wickets without addition of single run in a space of 11 deliveries to end with a 98-run lead. There were six Indian batters, who failed to open their accounts and one who remained not out also didn't trouble the scorer, making it a statistician's nightmare.

Lungi Ngidi (3/30) and Kagiso Rabada (3/38) got five of those six wickets keeping the lead below 100 and gaining the necessary psychological advantage.

South Africa were more cautious despite being aggressive as they scored 62/3 in their second innings at stumps to bring down the deficit to 36 runs. Aiden

DREAMI

Markram (36 batting) looked solid in the middle. The maximum number of wickets lost on Day 1 of a Test is 27 and that happened in an England-Australia Test back in 1888.

Dean Elgar, in his last Test match, would like to forget that he got out twice in a day's play while Mukesh Kumar (2/0 and 2/25) was rewarded for consistently pitching the ball in right

areas, getting enough away movement against southpaws. Any chance of the match going into the third day looks remote.

On a Newlands track that offered steep bounce and would certainly come under the ICC match referee Chris Broad's radar, the red Kookaburra ball took off like jumbo jet from the length making it impossible for batters to survive. Between shoul-

der blades to lower abdomen. batters got hit everywhere as the bounce became variable towards the end of the day.

Rohit Sharma (39) lived dangerously but played attacking cricket. Ditto for Virat Kohli (46) and Shubman Gill (36), who also showed right intent. The rest of the batters hardly troubled the scorers. Before Siraj's special effort, the only Indian in country's 92 year

Test history to take five wickets before lunch was left-arm spinner Maninder Singh, who achieved the feat against Pakistan in Bangalore back in 1986-87.

On a humid Wednesday morning, South African batters found what a great leveller the game of cricket is with Siraj ripping the heart out of the Proteas batting with a masterclass of pace, swing and seam movement. The Proteas innings ended in just 23.2 overs.

Kyle Verreynne (15) were the only two batters to hit the double digits as the South African supporters in stands were stunned into silence. Jasprit Bumrah (2/25) also kept the pressure from the other end.

BRIEF SCORES

15; Mohammed Siraj 6/15, Mukesh Kumar 0/2, Jasprit Bumrah 2/25) & 62/3 (Aiden Markram 36 batting; Mukesh Kumar 2/25); India 153 (Virat Kohli 46, Rohit Sharma 39 Shubman Gill 36; Lungi Ngidi 3/30, Kagiso Rabada 3/38, Nandre Burger 3/42). Match to continue.





Expressing her delight at topping the all-around category, Dipa stated, "I'm competing in Senior Nationals after eight years. I feel great about it. It's really great to see the Gymnastics centre here. I would also like to thank the Odisha Government for building this centre and creating that sports culture for the athletes.'

Railways' Pranati Das (47.00) and Swastika Ganguly (45.30) finished second and third positions respectively in the all-around. Pranati recorded 12.80 on Vault, 10.60 on Uneven Bars, 11.50 on Balance Beam and 12.10 on Floor Exercise, while her teammate Swastika bagged 12.80 on Vault, 9.15 on Uneven Bars, 11.70 on Balance Beam and 11.65 on Floor Exercise.

with 164.65 points. Dipa, who is representing Tripura, cumulated a total of 49.55. She recorded 13.40 on Vault, 10.65

Protest against Bajrang, Sakshi, Vinesh Surya in line for ICC award

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Jan 3: India star Suryakumar Yadav was Wednesday named as one of the four nominees for the ICC Men's T20 Cricketer of the Year 2023

The 33-year-old Indian, who won the accolade in 2022, dominated 2023 in the shortest format with 733 runs from 17 innings at an average of 48.86 and strike rate of 155.95

Young India opening batter Yashasvi Jaiswal was also named as one of the four nominees for the ICC Men's Emerging Cricketer of the Year 2023.

The 22-year-old Jaiswal scored 283 Test runs at 70.75 average

and made 430 T20I runs at 33.07 and strike rate of 159.25 during the year. He is pitted against Rachin Ravindra (New Zealand), Gerald Coetzee (South Dilshan Africa) and Madushanka (Sri Lanka).

The other three nominees are Sikandar Raza of Zimbabwe (11 innings, 515 runs at 51.50, strike rate 150.14; 17 wickets at 14.88, economy 6.57). Alpesh Ramjani of Uganda (55 wickets at 8.98, economy 4.77) and Mark Chapman of New Zealand (17 innings, 556 runs at 50.54, strike rate 145.54).

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: The ongoing crisis in Indian wrestling took a new twist Wednesday when hundreds of junior wrestlers assembled at Jantar Mantar for a symbolic three-hour protest against the loss of one crucial year of their careers, a situation for which they blamed top grapplers Bajrang Punia, Sakshi

Malik and Vinesh Phogat. Loaded in buses, close to 300 junior wrestlers arrived from different parts of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi, catching the police unawares.

The protesters were carrying banners that read: 'UWW (United World Wrestling) save our wrestling from these 3 wrestlers'. Another banner read: 'Kar Diya Desh Ki Kushti Ko Barbaad: Sakshi Bajrang, Vinesh Phogat

Soon after the election of new office-bearers, the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) announced the hosting of the U-15 and U-20 Nationals in Gonda, UP but the ministry suspended the body, leading to the cancellation of the proposed tournament.

Several wrestlers, who

could have competed in the junior categories for one last time, lost the opportunity. "It was a symbolic protest. We are giving 10 days' time to the government to revoke the suspension of the new WFI and allow it to hold age group nationals.

"If they don't do it, we will start returning our Arjuna and other awards to the government just like Bajrang and Vinesh have done," said Greco-Roman wrestler Sunil Rana, who is an Arjuna awardee and a bronze medallist from the 2023 Asian Games

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dipa Karmakar hogged the lime-

light on day 2 of the Senior Artistic

Championship as she topped the

all-around performance with a

total of 49.55 points. Railways

emerged champions in the women's

team category with 182.60 points.

ond position with 169.95, while

West Bengal finished third with

166.80 points in the women's cat-

egory on the second day at the

Gymnastics Centre in Kalinga

Stadium, Bhubaneswar. The

hosts Odisha finished fourth

Maharashtra finished in sec-

National

JUGGERNAUTS SEE OFF WARRIORS

Gymnastics

Cuttack, Jan 3: Defending champions Odisha Juggernauts notched up a convincing 32-21 victory over Rajasthan Warriors, in Ultimate Kho Kho Season 2 here, Wednesday. The victory was built on the back of a stellar defensive performance by the Juggernauts that saw them score 10 dream run points.

In turn-1, Vishal, Gowtham MK and Dilip Khandavi stayed on the mat for six minutes and 22 seconds. scoring seven dream run points. With all three players of Juggernauts' second batch remaining unconquered, they took a 7-6 lead into turn-2. It was the first

time in UKK history that a defending team had taken the lead in a turn. Warriors set about limiting the damage in turn-2, with their first batch of Vijay Hajare, Sushant Hajare and Vrushab Wagh notching up three dream run points.

In turn-3, after losing the first batch early, Juggernauts' second batch frustrated Warriors which left Warriors with a slender 21-18 lead. Juggernauts attackers had no problems overturning that in turn-4.

Earlier, Telugu Yoddhas stamped their dominance over an off-colour Mumbai Khiladis, notching up a 40-22 victory. This was the biggest margin of victory this season.

DSPL-501





Q POST NEWS NETWORK Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Olympian

David Bedingham (12) and

South Africa 55 (Kyle Verreynne



Nua-O Fest, Boudh

Place: District Stadium, Boudh

Time: 10 AM onwards

04 January, 2024





Printed and published by Tathagata Satoathy on behalf of Navajat Printers and Media Pvt. Ltd. and printed at Navajat Printers, B-15 Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar -751010, Odisha; Phone: 7894447142 (Marketing), Editor; Tathagata Satoathy, RNI No. ORIENG/2011/37159







