

## ED officers attacked during raid in Bengal

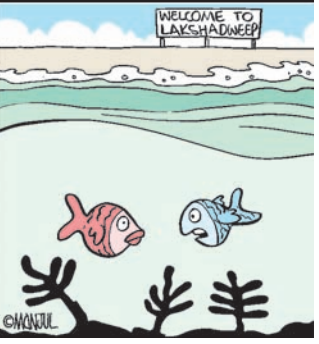
AGENCIES

**Kolkata, Jan 5:** Enforcement Directorate (ED) officers were attacked by the loyalists of a TMC leader during a raid in West Bengal, triggering a political showdown with Opposition baying for the imposition of President's Rule and Governor CV Ananda Bose signalling his intent to explore constitutional options and take appropriate action.

The BJP has characterised the incident at Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district as a direct assault on the federal structure, leading to an urgent call from the Congress for the imposition of President's Rule.

The ruling TMC, however, rejected the charges and accused the central agency officials of inciting locals. The incident occurred when ED officers executed a raid on the residence of TMC leader Sheikh Sajahan, where they faced attacks from his supporters, resulting in substantial damage to the officers and their vehicles. At least two officers suffered serious injuries.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I wanted a selfie, but he was entertaining only big fish

# Navy rescues 15 Indians

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 5:** Indian Navy's elite marine commandos (MARCOs) Friday rescued 21 crew members including 15 Indians from a bulk carrier in the North Arabian Sea and sanitised it in a swift operation while responding to attempted hijacking of the Liberian-flagged vessel by around five-six armed personnel.

The Navy deployed a warship, maritime patrol aircraft, helicopters and P-8I and long-range aircraft and Predator MQ9B drones following the incident involving MV Lila Norfolk.

"All 21 crew including 15 Indians onboard the vessel were safely evacuated from the citadel," Indian Navy's spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said. "Sanitisation by MARCOs commandos has confirmed the absence of the hijackers. The attempt of hijacking by the pirates was probably abandoned with the forceful warning by Indian Navy's maritime patrol aircraft of interception by naval warship," he said. Madhwal said Indian ship INS Chennai is in the vicinity of MV Lila Norfolk and it is rendering support to restore the power generation and



MV Lila Norfolk, a cargo ship, which was hijacked near Somalia's coast in the Arabian Sea. PTI PHOTO

**ALL 21 CREW INCLUDING 15 INDIANS ONBOARD LIBERIAN-FLAGGED VESSEL, WHICH WAS HIJACKED BY ARMED PERSONNEL, WERE SAFELY EVACUATED**

propulsion in the vessel besides assisting her commence voyage to next port of call.

Earlier in the day, the Navy diverted INS Chennai from her anti-piracy patrol and it intercepted the hijacked vessel at 3:15 pm. The vessel was kept under continuous surveillance using maritime patrol aircraft P-8I and Predator MQ9B drones.

"The Indian Navy's marine commandos present onboard the mission deployed warship, boarded the merchant vessel and have carried out the sanitisation operation," Madhwal said.

MV Lila Norfolk sent a message on the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations portal indicating that five to six unknown armed personnel boarded

the vessel Thursday evening. Earlier, the Navy said the overall situation is being 'closely monitored' in coordination with other maritime agencies in the region. The hijacking incident comes amid growing concerns over Houthi militants stepping up attacks on merchant vessels in the Red Sea amid the Israel-Hamas conflict.

## Death goof-up leaves hosp in eye of storm

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 5:** Tension prevailed at Hi-tech Medical College and Hospital here Friday after authorities announced that Dillip Samantaray, who was declared dead December 30, is still alive.

Dillip's wife had died by suicide four days ago after coming to know of her husband's 'death'. Ahalya Samantaray, mother of Dillip, couldn't hold back her tears after she learnt that her son is still alive. "The authorities refused to show us the body as we demanded to see December 30. As we made attempts to reach near the body, the authorities thwarted us from going closer," she said. Locals staged an agitation on the hospital premises Friday.

Bhubaneswar DCP Prateek Singh said an ACP rank officer will investigate the matter.

"So far, we have not received any case of medical negligence. Action will be taken if negligence is found. The four persons were critically injured and they were identified by the contractor," he added.

Hospital CEO Smita Padhi said, "The four persons who were



The kin of Jyoti Ranjan Mallik

injured in the incident were staffers of an outsourcing agency, not regular employees of the hospital. After the blast, a staffer of the agency identified them, on the basis of which, we maintained the records. The kin of the victims also identified them."

Dillip along with Simanchal Biswal, Sritam Sahoo and Jyoti Ranjan Mallik were repairing the AC compressor kept on the roof of the hospital December 29 evening when the compressor went off suddenly.

On the other hand, Mallik's family members, who were hopeful of his recovery, are now demanding his body. But hospital authorities have handed over his body to the family of Dillip and it has been cremated. Doctors said the confusion was because the men's faces were beyond recognition due to the blast.

## Spiders may be more scared of you than you are of them

**Nottingham, Jan 5:** Spiders have evolved creative strategies to allow them to thrive in habitats across the globe. The one thing that seems to elude them though, is the ability to charm the humans that they encounter. But what about the spider's perspective of humans when they find a new home near us? It's not possible to read a spider's mind, but research has uncovered some surprising insights about how they behave around humans. Take the Joro spider, *Trichonephila*



*clavata*. News reports have spread alarm about the palm-size Joro spider recently settling in parts of the US. This spider is native to part of eastern

Asia but over the last decade has established itself in the US, following its cousin, the golden silk spider *Trichonephila clavipes*, which arrived around 160 years ago.

But its behaviour suggests it may be more worried about us than the other way around. The Joro spider has a tendency to play dead. This ploy is known as thanatosis among scientists. It is a response to threats used by many creatures in the animal world,

including other arachnids such as scorpions. What is unusual about the Joro spider though, is just how long it keeps up the act. Joro spiders lay motionless for more than an hour.

People are also almost certainly more dangerous to spiders than the other way around. This is because our food production systems rely on insecticides that are lethal to spiders and are probably contributing to their widespread decline.



**Odisha's Development: Modi Government's Commitment**

"Indian Railways is a good example if one has to see how India is changing and how dreams can come true."  
Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Inauguration of

### Nuagaon Road-Daspalla Section of Khurda Road-Balangir New Rail Line & Daspalla Railway Station Building

and

Flagging off of

### Extension of 4 Train Services to Daspalla

**Benefits**

Three line Station with Two looplines	Long cherished demand of the region fulfilled
Two high-level platforms with Platform Shelters	Direct train connectivity to Puri, Bhubaneswar and Bhadrak
Foot Over Bridge connecting both platforms	Unconnected hinterland areas of the region will be benefited
Circulating area with parking facility	Boost to the Socio-Economic development of the region

by

**Ashwini Vaishnav**  
Minister of Railways, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology, Govt. of India

**Date:** 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 | **Time:** 0930 hrs. | **Venue:** Daspalla Railway Station

All are cordially invited



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(A Joint Venture of Tata Power and Government of Odisha)

**SHORT TAKES**

**New Maldivian Prez to visit China**

Beijing: The new Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu will visit China for the first time Monday for talks with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, it was announced here Friday, with a senior official saying the meeting between the two top leaders will provide "strategic guidance" for the bilateral relations to reach a new height. Muizzu and First Lady Sajidha Mohamed will visit China from January 8 to 12 at the invitation of President Xi, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying announced Friday. Muizzu, who is seen as a pro-China politician, took oath as the eighth President of the Maldives after defeating the India-friendly incumbent Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in the presidential runoff held in September. President Xi will host a welcome ceremony and a welcome banquet for President Muizzu.

**Japan quake toll spikes to 94**

Tokyo: The death toll has risen to 94, with the number of people unaccounted for reaching nearly 250 in the central Japanese prefecture of Ishikawa earlier this week after a series of earthquakes of up to 7.6 magnitude struck the prefecture and its vicinity, raising concerns of escalating damages as rescue and search efforts intensify.

**'Iraq prepares to close down US-led coalition's mission'**

REUTERS

Baghdad, Jan 5: The Iraqi government is forming a committee to prepare the closing down of the US-led international coalition's mission in the country, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani's office said Friday. Sudani's statement came a day after a US strike killed a militia leader in Baghdad, prompting anger among Iran-aligned groups which demanded the government end the presence of the coalition in Iraq. "Government is setting the date for the start of the bilateral committee to put arrangements to end the presence of the international coalition forces in Iraq permanently," a statement from the prime minister's office said. The committee would include representatives of the military coalition, a government official said. The US military launched

Thursday's strike in retaliation against recent attacks on US personnel, the Pentagon said. The United States has 900 troops in Syria and 2,500 in Iraq on a mission it says aims to advise and assist local forces trying to prevent a resurgence of Islamic State, which in 2014 seized large parts of both countries before being defeated. Iran-aligned militia groups in Iraq and Syria oppose Israel's campaign in the Gaza Strip and hold the U.S. partly responsible. Sudani has limited control over some Iran-backed factions, whose support he needed to win power a year ago and who now form a powerful bloc in his governing coalition. "We stress our firm position in ending the existence of the international coalition after the justifications for its existence have ended," Sudani was quoted as saying in the statement.

**5 killed as passenger train catches fire in B'desh**

Dhaka: Five people were killed in Bangladesh after a passenger train caught fire Friday, with police suspecting an arson attack during unrest ahead of national elections boycotted by the opposition. Fire service officer Rakjibul Hasan said at least four coaches caught fire on the Benapole Express, arriving in the capital Dhaka from the western city of Jessore. "We have recovered five bodies," police commander Khandaker Al Moin told reporters. Witnesses said the train caught fire at Gopibagh, in an old part of Dhaka near the megacity's main rail terminal. An unnamed rescuer told private broadcaster Somoy TV that hundreds had rushed to pull people out of the burning train. "We rescued many. But the fire spread quickly," he said. Somoy TV said some Indian citizens were also traveling on the train. "We suspect the fire incident was an act of sabotage," police chief Anwar Hossain told AFP, without giving more details.

**Tensions in Korean Peninsula**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, Jan 5: The rival Koreas fired artillery rounds into the sea as part of provocative drills along their disputed sea boundary Friday, in violation of the fragile 2018 inter-Korean military agreement. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said North Korea fired 200 rounds in the waters north of their western sea boundary Friday morning. It was North Korea's first front-line maritime firing exercise in about a year. Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesperson Lee Sung Joon told a televised briefing that the North's artillery firing was "an act of provocation that threatens peace and heightens tensions on the Korean Peninsula." Lee said South Korea suffered no damage. In a tit-for-tat step, South Korea had its troops on two border islands fire artillery rounds south of the sea boundary later Friday, but North Korea's military didn't immediately respond. South Korea's Defense Ministry said the military will maintain a firm readiness to strongly punish any provocations by North Korea. North Korea's state media haven't made any comments. Ahead of the South Korean drills, authorities blared broadcasts via street loudspeakers and sent text messages to residents on the five major border islands, asking them to evacuate to safe places. They worried North Korea could conduct a new round of



The firing exercises are expected to escalate tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Experts say North Korea will likely intensify a run of weapons tests and its warlike rhetoric ahead of South Korea's parliamentary elections in April and the US Presidential election in November.

firing training in response but lifted the evacuation order a few hours later as they detected no suspicious activities by the North's military, according to local officials. The Koreas' poorly marked western sea boundary witnessed bloody naval clashes in 1999, 2002 and 2009. The North's alleged torpedoing of a South Korean warship killed 46 South Korea's Defense Ministry said the military will maintain a firm readiness to strongly punish any provocations by North Korea. The 2018 agreement requires the two Koreas to halt live-fire exercises and aerial surveillance in buffer and no-fly zones that they established along their border. But the deal is in danger of collapsing after both Koreas took steps to breach the accord amid bickering over the North's first successful military spy satellite

launch in November. South Korea resumed front-line aerial surveillance in protest at the North's satellite launch. North Korea responded that it would deploy powerful weapons at the border and won't abide by the 2018 deal any longer. South Korea later accused North Korea of restoring front-line guard posts that it had dismantled under the 2018 deal. South Korea has previously accused North Korea of having already breached the deal numerous times with firing drills at the buffer zones, including one as recently as December 2022 off the Korean Peninsula's east coast. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un fired off fierce, derisive rhetoric against South Korea in a

key ruling-party meeting at the end of December. He said South Korea must not be considered as a partner for reconciliation or unification, and ordered the military to use all available means — including nuclear weapons — to conquer South Korea in the event of a conflict. Earlier Friday, North Korea's state media said Kim ordered authorities to increase production of mobile launch vehicles for missiles during a visit to a munitions factory. Kim said the role of the factory producing transport erector launchers, or TELs, is "very important" in bolstering North Korea's national defense because of a looming military showdown with its rivals.

## SISIR SARAS 2024

### ଶିଶିର ସରସ ୨୦୨୪

National Exhibition on  
Handloom, Handicraft, Food & Spices

26

STATES

400

STALLS

2000

PARTICIPANTS

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& RURAL PRODUCERS

ORMAS

Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Department  
Government of Odisha

INAUGURATION

by  
**SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

Date : 6<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2024,  
Time : 11:30 AM to 9 PM

Biju Patnaik Play Ground,  
Baramunda, Bhubaneswar

6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024, 7:30 PM

DSPL-513

I&PR-19004/13/0026/2324

## Srimandir Heritage Corridor opening to be live-streamed

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, Jan 5:** The inauguration ceremony of the ambitious Srimandir Heritage Corridor Project in the Holy City here January 17 will be live-streamed, a high-level delegation, led by Chief Secretary PK Jena, said Friday.

In a meeting after reviewing the progress of various development works being carried out here, the Chief Secretary asked the officials to complete all the works by January 11.

"As programmes for the mega event is scheduled to begin January 12, development works should complete by January 11. By January 14, the police administration will take control of the project to ensure safety and security," Jena said.

As lakhs of devotees from across the state are expected to donate fistful of rice and betel nuts as well as throng Srimandir to have a darshan of the Trinity after the inauguration ceremony, the delegation reviewed arrangements for the same.

The police administration has been asked to ensure devotees have a hassle-free darshan of the sibling deities and take back pleasant memories from Puri.

Apart from the safety and security of devotees, Puri Police will



make special arrangements to ensure devotees don't face parking and traffic issues. After dropping devotees at Jagannath Ballav, vehicles will have to head straight to Samang, where a dedicated parking facility has been created. Route charts will be put up at strategic locations of the Pilgrim City to help devotees navigate through the city lanes. At least 120 temporary toilets have been put in place for devotees' convenience. Special arrangements, including resting sheds, will be in place from Samang to Srimandir.

At least 20 mutts near Srimandir will be provided with 2-kv DG sets. The meeting also discussed at length deployment of adequate health teams, lighting and CCTV arrangements.

Earlier in the day, the delegation reviewed the progress of various development works, in-

cluding Jagannath Ballav Parking Centre and Sri Setu.

Mission Shakti and Odia Language, Literature and Culture departments' Commissioner-Cum-Secretary Sujata R Karthikeyan, Development Commissioner Anu Garg, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water department Principal Secretary Sushil Kumar Lohani, Finance department Principal Secretary Vishal Kumar Dev, Works department Principal Secretary Vir Vikram Yadav, Rural Development and Information and Public Relations (I&PR) departments' Principal Secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh, I&PR department Director Saroj Kumar Samal, SJTA chief administrator Ranjan Kumar Das, Puri Collector Samarth Verma and SP Kanwar Vishal Singh were among the senior officials present during the review meet.

## ALL ABOUT PARIKRAMA PRAKALPA



Come January 17, a new chapter will be added to the history of the 12th century shrine in Puri when the ambitious Srimandir Heritage Corridor Project (Parikrama Prakalpa) will be flagged off after a three-day-long yajna. With five days left for the unveiling of the historic project, **Orissa POST** takes a sneak peek into the various aspects of the mega transformational initiative...

### Lord Jagannath

is the presiding deity in every Odia household and revered by millions of Hindus across India and abroad. Thousands of devotees throng Puri every day for a darshan of the holy Trinity at Srimandir and visit the pristine beaches.

The foundation for 75-metre corridor around Srimandir was laid by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in 2021 with a view to providing expansive and unobstructed corridors around the Meghanada wall. It will give an opportunity to devotees and pilgrims to have visual connect with the temple, Neelchakra and the shrine peripheries. The project is nearing completion in record time. It will also serve as a venue for providing amenities to pilgrims and strengthening the safety and security of the temple as well as devotees.

The project abutting Meghanada



wall is divided into nine zones on the western, northern and southern sides of the shrine.

The seven-metre green buffer zone adjacent to Meghanada wall includes a five-metre terraced landscape. The remaining section, accessible by staff mem-

bers, includes a two-metre hard-scape area abutting the wall.

The deities' ceremonial procession will be conducted in the 10-metre 'Antar (inner) Pradakshina' — pedestrian-only path — all year round. The general public can also use it for

'parikrama' (clockwise circumambulation).

A 14-metre landscape zone consists of gardens of local varieties of shrubs and trees important in Jagannath Culture. Trees line up the eight-metre outer circumambulation path. It also boasts of a 10-metre public convenience zone comprising drinking water fountains, restrooms, and information-cum-donation kiosks. The project has a queue management facility that can handle 6,000 people, along with security checking facility. Side by side, mutts and temples within the 75-metre corridor are being redeveloped in the Kalingan style in general and specific 'matha' traditions.

The project is part of the state government's Augmentation of Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture Scheme that aims to develop Puri as a world-class heritage city.

DSPL-514



## Chief Minister's Award

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Cash Incentive for Each Category

FIRST PRIZE

₹5 Lakh

SECOND PRIZE

₹3 Lakh

THIRD PRIZE

₹2 Lakh

Finance Department



Chief Guest

**Shri Naveen Patnaik**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

Venue: Convention Centre, Lokaseva Bhawan

6th January 2024, 5.00 PM



## Vocational edu on wane in Jajpur

None of the 12 vocational schools in the district are properly using the funds allotted by the HE dept for development and modernisation



Attraction to pursue vocational courses is waning rapidly. The institutes at Sahaspur Higher Secondary School in Balichandrapur and the BS Higher Secondary School at Sayeedpur are two cases in this point.

Recently, the Higher Education department had sanctioned ₹4,50,000 towards development of Sahaspur vocational school. However, no one has any knowledge about how the funds have been spent.

Principal Dillip Kumar Samal feigned ignorance when asked about the utilization of funds. He shifted responsibility to another person. It should also be added that the school currently has 40 students. However, there is only teacher to cater to their needs.

A similar situation exists at the Sayeedpur school which has nine students. Not a single resource person has been appointed to attract more students to the school. These are two primary examples how the vocational edu-

cation system is functioning in this district.

This apart, the Higher Education department has sanctioned ₹2.25 lakh each for Kharasrota School in Singhpur, PK Vidyalaya on Baitarani Road and Indira Gandhi Women's College at Jajpur Road. The department has also sanctioned ₹4.5 lakh for the vocational school at Baba Bhairabananda HS School at Chandikhole.

Sources however, alleged that funds are often not used properly and that is one of the main reasons for the decline in the number of vocational students. The lack of teachers is another reason for the waning number of students, they added.

When contacted, assistant district education officer Rajesh Kumar Swain said that he has no knowledge about the sanctioning of funds to these vocational schools. He however, said he will follow up on the matter by talking to the presidents of the respective schools.

## 3 SOG personnel injured in IED blast

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 5:** Three jawans of the elite Special Operation Group (SOG) Friday suffered injuries in an IED blast plated by suspected Maoists at Batepanga forest on the border of Boudh and Kandhamal districts, a police officer said.

The incident took place when an SOG team was conducting a combing operation following a

tip-off regarding movement of Maoists in the area.

"All the three jawans have suffered minor injuries and they have become part of the operation after first aid," IG Operations, Dev Dutta Singh, told PTI.

Boudh Superintendent of Police (SP) Raj Prasad said that the operation has been intensified as it is suspected that the Red rebels were present in the forest.

Immediately after the incident, more reinforcements have been rushed to the area to flush out the Maoists from the region, police sources said.

Last month, the security forces had an encounter with the Maoists in the forest under Boudh district. Two SOG Jawans were also injured in Kandhamal district when the Maoists triggered a land mine explosion during the search operation.

## One dead, 20 injured as pick-up overturns

**Sundargarh:** One person died and 20 others sustained injury after a pick-up van carrying a Sankirtan Mandali team overturned at Gulatha village under Bhasma police station limits in Sundargarh district, Friday afternoon. The deceased was identified as Subal Patel, 60, a resident of Kenapali village in this district. As per reports, a Sankirtan Mandali team was on its way to Talapatia village in neighbouring Jharsuguda district in the ill fated pick-up van when the accident occurred. On being informed, Bhasma police reached the spot, rescued the injured persons and took them to Mangaspur CHC for treatment.

## BJP'S 'CHINTAN BAITHAK' ENDS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, Jan 5:** The two-day 'Chintan Baithak' of state BJP here, which coincided with the five-day-long 'Chintan Shivir' of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), concluded here Friday. The meeting specially focused on preparation for the upcoming general elections this year.

The meeting saw the participation of national general secretary BL Santosh, regional observer Sunil Bansal, state co-observer BPS Tomar, state president Manmohan Samal, other senior party leaders and leaders from different morchas.

The media cell of the party informed that a detailed road map for the upcoming general election was prepared. State unit president Samal expressing his confidence said, "This time BJP will form government at the Centre and the state also."

## WARDEN'S DEATH Tribal body observes Rayagada bandh again



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, Jan 5:** Yet another bandh was observed in Rayagada district on the call of a tribal outfit 'Zilla Adivasi Mahasangha' Friday demanding CBI probe into the death of a tribal warden.

The bandh was called in protest of police inaction and failure to nab those responsible for the death of 'Maa Gruha' warden Laxmi Majhi.

Notably, Majhi's partially charred body was found in the 'Maa Gruha' located on the premises of Chandrapur hospital December 21. She was allegedly set ablaze by unknown miscreants and an FIR was filed at the Chandrapur police station by

her father December 22 alleging murder.

The tribal outfit which had earlier called for a 12-hour bandh however ended the strike before time at 2:30pm. During the bandh, barricades were put up by the tribal body at FCI Chowk, Kapilas Chowk, Majhighariani Temple Chowk and Siriguda on the national highway passing through Rayagada town.

All the shops and market complexes were shut down and bus movement was completely halted during the bandh. Various political parties like the BJP and the Congress supported the bandh call and participated in the protest.

The tribal outfit also took out a mega bike rally in which thousands of tribals participated under the leadership of Zilla Adivasi Mahasangha president Appalswami Kadraka, general secretary Jagannath Mandangi and assistant secretary Manjula Miniaka.

### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIAION
SENSEX	72026.15 ↑ 178.58
NIFTY	21710.80 ↑ 52.20
DOLLAR	83.2225 ↓ ₹0.10
EURO	90.91 ↓ ₹0.41
GOLD	₹62,985 ↑ ₹345
SILVER	₹ 73,137 ↑ ₹801

### WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	28.2°C	27.5°C
Min Temp	15.0°C	15.0°C
Humidity	85%	81%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

FOG/MIST IN THE MORNING



## Modi Government's Big Gift to Jute Organisations, Jute Artisans and Farmers

### PATSAN BHAWAN

Inauguration by  
**Shri Piyush Goyal**  
Hon'ble Union Minister of Commerce & Industry,  
Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles  
Govt. of India

August presence  
**Smt. Darshana Vikram Jardosh**  
Minister of State for Railways & Textiles, Govt. of India

Venue :  
**CF Block, Action Area - I,  
New Town, Kolkata - 700156  
on 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 at 10:30 AM**




### Patsan Bhawan features

- A state of the art building ■ Head Quarters of the office of Jute Commissioner, National Jute Board and The Jute Corporation of India Ltd. ■ Seamless service to the jute industry benefitting 40 lakh jute farmers, 4 lakh workers and other stakeholders from a common premise ■ Welfare measures for Jute Mill workers, their girl children with better coordination
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- Over Rs. 12000 Crores worth of Jute Bags being procured by Central Govt. every year now ■ Highest ever MSP of raw Jute during 2023-24 ■ More than 4 Lakhs farmers supported under I-CARE ■ More than 800 jute artisans/WSHG imparted training of Jute diversification ■ Production of Jute Goods, more than 12 lakh MT ■ Jute goods export more than Rs. 3500 Crores ■ Jute diversified products exports more than Rs. 1500 Crores

**Spirituality is indeed the master key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinitive is native to it.**  
**SRI AUROBINDO**



# Suspenseful Build-up

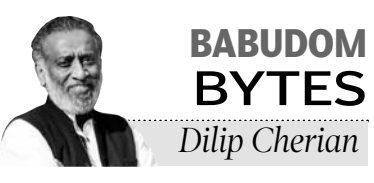
Word coming in is that the Centre is gearing up to unleash a seismic shake-up across key Delhi government departments, promising a dramatic remix of the administration. Insiders hint at a game-changing overhaul involving crucial appointments within the Delhi government and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), among other power hubs.

The suspenseful build-up, supposedly orchestrated to sync with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appearance at the 3rd National Conference of Chief Secretaries (CS) adds an extra layer of intrigue to the impending reshuffle. Rumour has it that the reshuffle will feature strategic relocation and elevation of several IAS officers within the AGMUT or central cadre. Insiders are branding this exercise as potentially the last blockbuster move before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Apparently, it is a direct response to the retirement spree among top-tier IAS officers in the AGMUT cadre.

Sources have indicated to DKB that the reshuffle's shockwaves will spill out of Delhi's borders and are poised to rip through the union territories of Puducherry and Chandigarh. Notably, the latter has been cruising without an Advisor to the Administrator since the departure of 1988-batch IAS officer Dharampal in late October.

The reshuffle will also tackle the imminent retirement of Delhi Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar and J&K Chief Secretary Arun Kumar Mehta, both from the same batch and cadre. While Kumar dodged a bullet with a six-month extension following a legal showdown in the Supreme Court, the J&K handover saw 1989-batch AGMUT cadre IAS officer Atal Dulloo step into the limelight.

But it is the enigma surrounding Chandigarh Advisor's post, currently held by 2000-batch Haryana cadre IAS officer Nitin Yadav, that will undoubtedly add a dash of unpredictability to the remix.



**Telangana: Women SHOs initiative loses momentum**  
The acclaimed initiative by the Telangana police department to appoint women as station house officers (SHOs), within the Hyderabad police commissionerate limits appears to have run out of steam, as several of them have been reassigned to different responsibilities.

Initially, five women were designated as SHOs in various police stations at the launch of the programme in early 2023. However, by the end of the year, only two stations are currently led by female officers. At the time of the launch of the initiative, CV Anand, the former Commissioner of Police in Hyderabad, appointed the first woman as SHO. Madhulatha made history as the first woman SHO when she assumed charge of the Lalaguda police station on International Women's Day in 2022, in the presence of Commissioner Anand.

By March of the same year, the count of women SHOs had increased to five. Yet, a booklet distributed during the Hyderabad City Police's annual news conference still listed all five as SHOs, even though three had been transferred.

Where did these trailblazing women go? Lakshmi Madhavi, stationed at the Bollaram police station, was later moved to the Central Crime Station (CCS). Madhavi Latha, the SHO of Langar House, was reassigned as a security officer at the Secretariat, while Chitti Burra, the former SHO of Afazalgunj, saw a transfer to the task force of the city police. A senior police officer says that numerous rural police stations are now headed by women. However, he attributed the transfer of the women SHOs to factors such as political pressure, track record, or requests stemming from work-related pressures.

### Central police forces get new leadership

Just last week, this column pointed out the growing concern among babus about the delays in announcing top appointments in key central police organisations. The Centre seems to have heeded these concerns and made significant changes in the final days of 2023. Nina Singh, an IPS officer of the Rajasthan cadre, has been appointed as the full-fledged director general of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). Notably, she is the first woman IPS to attain the DG rank in Rajasthan.

Similarly, Anish Dayal Singh has been appointed as Director General of the CRPF, and Rahul Rasgotra, currently the Special Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) is the new Director General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force. Additionally, Vivek Srivastava, who many observers consider a "hardcore" IB officer has been named the DG of Fire Service, Civil Defence & Home Guards until June 2025, aligning with the date of his superannuation.

Though delayed, these appointments signal a strategic reshaping of leadership within these vital security forces. These officers bring a wealth of experience, indicating a focus on strengthening and adapting these forces to meet evolving national security demands.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthercherian@twitter.com](mailto:dilipthercherian@twitter.com). Let's multiply the effect

### WISDOM CORNER

- One individual may die for an idea, but that idea will, after his death, incarnate itself in a thousand lives. **NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE**
- Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends? **ABRAHAM LINCOLN**
- It is in your hands, to make a better world for all who live in it. **NELSON MANDELA**

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1759:** George Washington, the future first president of the United States, married Martha Dandridge in Virginia.
- 1878:** American poet, historian, and folklorist Carl Sandburg, whose Abraham Lincoln: The War Years won the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1940, was born.

### LOL

#### The amazing flying dog

A woman is out looking for a pet, and so she's trying the local pet shops. She walks into a small pet shop and explains her need to the attendant. He thinks for a moment and then says, "I've got just the thing for you madam. I'll just get him." With that, he disappears into the back of the shop, and returns a few seconds later with a cute little puppy. "This dog is a special dog," he tells her. "It is able to fly," he explains, and with that throws the dog into the air. It immediately begins to float gracefully around the shop. "There is one problem with him, however. Whenever you say 'my', he'll eat whatever you've mentioned. Watch. "My apple!" The lady watches in astonishment as the dog zooms over to the shop attendant and furiously devours an apple he has produced from his pocket. "He's cute, and so unusual. I'll take him," she says, and a few minutes later she is on her way back home with dog to show her husband. "Darling, look what a clever pet I bought today!" she exclaims when she gets back home. "He can fly!" The husband peers at the dog, and then remarks, "Fly eh? Ha! My foot!"



## FOCUS ECONOMY

# CHINA'S DOWNTURN

China's economic performance over the last year has been disappointing – so much so that some observers argue that growth has already peaked, and that it is all downhill from here. But it is far too soon to write off China's economic resilience.



A key imbalance that China's government is attempting to reduce lies in the real-estate sector, which is simply too large, accounting for about a quarter of all fixed investment between 2013 and 2021



**IF CHINA HAS LEARNED ANYTHING FROM THE US, IT IS THAT EXCESSIVE FINANCIALIZATION CAN DESTROY A COUNTRY'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR**

As 2023 began, the lifting of draconian "zero-COVID" restrictions fueled a kind of domestic euphoria, reflected in soaring consumption. But the picture soon darkened, with the second quarter bringing declining exports, stagnating retail sales, shrinking corporate profits, local-government spending cuts, and a weakening housing sector. Chinese business confidence plummeted, and foreign businesses were spooked. In November, China recorded its first-ever quarterly deficit in foreign direct investment.

Even so, China's economy will probably grow by at least 5% this year – a respectable rate, by international standards. More important, China's economy still has a lot of fuel in the tank: a record-high savings rate means that it still has plenty of cheap finance for investment and innovation.

Already, China is investing heavily in the technologies – such as renewable energy, electric vehicles, and artificial intelligence – that will shape the global economy in the coming decades. China is also rapidly developing its capacity in emerging technologies like fusion nuclear, quantum computing, quantum communication, and photonic semiconductors. We know that this strategy works: other successful economies, such as Japan in the 1970s and 1980s, have proved as much.

But China does face growth headwinds. Geopolitical tensions – in particular, the United States-led effort to "decouple" from China economically – are discouraging FDI and spurring companies to diversify their production away from China. But rather than leaving China

altogether, many foreign firms are adopting a "China+1" strategy, opening new facilities in a third country, while maintaining their Chinese operations.

The reason is simple: with 30% of the world's total manufacturing value-added – about the share of Germany, Japan, and the US combined – China still offers firms a massive cost advantage. Add to that huge excess capacity, and China's manufacturing sector will continue to thrive. In fact, the only thing America's decoupling effort will ultimately achieve is to spur China to accelerate the development of its own overseas manufacturing capabilities, much as Japan has done since the 1980s.

The likely impact of unfavourable demographic trends on long-term growth is similarly overstated. Yes, China's population is aging and shrinking rapidly. But as AI enables the automation of a growing number of tasks, productivity will increase, and demand for human labour will fall. Together with improved education, this should more than compensate for the contraction of the labour force – possibly even creating the opposite problem: too few jobs.

So, what explains China's slow recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic? The answer lies in

government policy.

Over the last several years, the central government has been working to tackle imbalances that threaten China's long-run growth prospects – beginning with massive debts held by state-owned enterprises, private companies (such as real-estate developers), and local governments. If China has learned anything from the US, it is that excessive financialization can destroy a country's manufacturing sector. That is why the Chinese authorities are committed to deleveraging.

Local governments are a top priority on this front. Since 2010, China has pursued two major rounds of fiscal and monetary expansion, each of which led to a surge in the commercial debts of local governments. After the first round, in 2014-18, the central government allowed local governments to issue long-term bonds worth CN¥8 trillion (\$1.1 trillion), so that they could repay their commercial debts – a kind of debt-swap program. But local governments were again forced to borrow heavily during the COVID-19 pandemic, accumulating yet more debt that the authorities are still working to address.

Another priority for the cen-

tral government is unwinding the excessive commercialization of some sectors. Consider the tutoring industry: families pay private education companies for after-school classes, in the hope of giving their children an advantage over their peers. But these companies charge high prices, which parents struggle to pay, and provide little benefit to students, who are already working hard in school. So, in 2021 – with the private tutoring industry having ballooned to \$120 billion – the authorities banned for-profit after-school tutoring in core subjects.

The third key imbalance that China's government is attempting to reduce lies in the real-estate sector, which is simply too large, accounting for about a quarter of all fixed investment between 2013 and 2021. With some major property developers now struggling to service their debts, stabilizing the sector has become a top priority for policymakers.

None of these imbalances poses an imminent threat to Chinese growth. But reducing them will bolster China's long-term economic health. That is why China's government is taking bold action, despite the short-term costs. For example, housing sales have plummeted by about 40% since mid-2021, owing largely to government efforts to rein in the sector.

The good news is that the government has set growth as its main goal for this year and has rolled out new expansionary monetary and fiscal policies. Notably, with the monetary authorities encouraging banks to resume lending to real-estate developers, it is hoped that the housing sector will return to normal this year.

The writer is Liberal Arts Chair Professor at the China Center for Economic Research and the National School of Development at Peking University.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

## SPECTRUM INDO-RUSSIAN TIES

# Issues India needs to address in 2024

The External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar made a year-end visit to Russia to enhance ties. He had extensive discussions with his counterpart Sergey Lavrov and other stakeholders in India-Russia bilateralism that has been strongly continuing since 1971. In addition to the usual trade and diplomatic exchanges, it would be interesting to decipher the strategic line the EAM would have taken for the New Year.

Jaishankar in his visit met Russian President Vladimir Putin, held discussions with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Industries, and with his counterpart Sergey Lavrov. His interactions centred on bolstering the Special and Privileged Partnership. As usual, the exchanges covered multiple sectors such as trade and economics, energy, defence, connectivity, cultural and people-to-people. Global and regional developments also featured in their discussions. President Putin invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Russia in 2024. Putin said to EAM, "We will be glad to see our friend Mr. Prime Minister Modi in Russia".

From the available accounts of the visit, not much substan-

tially accrued from EAM's interactions with several leaders, officials and a cross-section of agencies. A plenty of shibboleths and usual hyperboles was on display. Even the tangled issue of India buying military gear after the US sanctions following the Ukrainian war was not resolved. On the contrary, the indication got reconfirmed that India's traditional dependence on Russia for military supplies is steadily declining. There were tight-lipped statements both from EAM and Russians about the prospect of military trade between the two countries.

Notably, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said that Russia was 'respectful' of New Delhi's need to 'diversify' military procurement and sources for other technical requirements. It seems the decoupling between New Delhi and Moscow on military ties is sinking in faster in Russia than in India.

Perhaps it is in order that New Delhi reviews its military trade policy with Russia. Objective observers have long contended that India has been at a loss in more than one way in its defence relations with the Soviet Union/Russia. Speaking of the present, India is await-

ing the delivery of several defence equipments from Russia.

There are quite a few logistical and transactional issues currently in the India-Russia military trade that may or may not get resolved quite soon. Besides these, Russia's defence industrial complex faces a few challenges at the moment. Moscow needs to focus on manufacturing and supplying defence products to the Russian army. Some Russian companies have offered alternative formats of cooperation in the global arms market. This gave a clear message to Russia's overseas clients, including India, that Russian defence companies would not be able to meet the needs of overseas requirements due to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The second challenge for the Russian defence industries stems from sanctions imposed by the West on Russia following the war. Third, the setbacks and stalemate in the war put a question mark on Russian military capability, as many observers believe that the Russian army is struggling with sub-standard defence material. Indian military experts are suggesting that it is high time India ends its dependence on Russian military

supplies and instead becomes self-reliant or finds alternative suppliers.

The declining Russian military power as well as trade fore-grounds India's need to align with the strategy being conceived by US leadership, as is evident from the utterances of one of the candidates mentioned above. His rating in the opinion polls has apparently increased after he outlined his foreign policy. There is a concern in Indian circles that while Washington wants India to disengage from Russia, it continues to patronise Pakistan and offers to make-up with China.

This is where Indian diplomacy has to weigh in. New Delhi needs to drive home the strategic point that Russia is not the USA's main adversary; it is China, which is a threat not only to the US but to many other countries, and if we recall catastrophic Covid, then to the entire world. This could perhaps be one significant writing on the wall that New Delhi should be cognizant of from the EAM's last week's five-day visit to Russia. **INFRA**

The writer is Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism



**WHILE WASHINGTON WANTS INDIA TO DISENGAGE FROM RUSSIA, IT CONTINUES TO PATRONISE PAKISTAN AND OFFERS TO MAKE-UP WITH CHINA**

### Change to ballot system

Sir, Looking at the manner in which the Election Commission (EC) has been acting in such a partisan manner in favour of the ruling dispensation in the past ten years, one really wonders whether the request of the opposition INDIA Bloc that there should be a 100% match of VVPAT slips and the EVMs would be accepted by the EC. Considering the thin margins with which many ruling party members have been declared winners in the just concluded Assembly elections in MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, much against the expectations of the people and exit poll predictions, one doubts the veracity of the election results in these states. In the other two states of Mizoram and Telangana, where the anti-BJP sentiments and anti-incumbency factor were so high, the results were to the expectations of the people, as any different result would have confirmed the doubt that the EVMs are being tampered with in favour of the saffron party, as alleged by the opposition parties. While the most advanced countries like the US, UK, Japan, and Germany depend only on the ballot system, being aware of the fact that the EVMs can be easily tampered with, it is high time we switched over to the time-tested ballot system to allay any doubt about the fairness of the Election Commission.

Tharcus S Fernando, CHENNAI

### Testing time in Test cricket

Sir, Many ups and downs from both sides were witnessed at the Capetown Test, and the first crackdown came when South Africa, batting first, was bundled out for 55, and in reply, Team India, in a breakdown, lost six wickets for no score, creating yet another record of sorts. And finally, SA lost the second test match by seven wickets in less than two days, and the Test series ended at 1-1. Earlier, the T20 series was also drawn 1-1, while SA had lost the ODI series 1-2. In all, in this particular Test match, 464 runs were scored in 108 overs, with 33 wickets falling in the shortest Test ever. Both Bumrah and Siraj achieved a six-wicket haul, and Andrien Makram is the only century maker. The result of the Test series has baffled many. Is it the overdose of T20 cricket that is gradually killing the longest format of the game? It's time for the experts to ponder over the issue.

CK Subramaniam, NAVI MUMBAI

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



## Modern update to Rajasthan's traditional 'tankas'

TRADITIONAL 'TANKAS' ARE EARTHEN RAINWATER STORAGE TANKS CONSTRUCTED BY THE PEOPLE OF BARMER DISTRICT AND OTHER PARTS OF WESTERN RAJASTHAN TO COLLECT WATER RECEIVED DURING SHOWERS BETWEEN JULY AND SEPTEMBER

**Barmer (Rajasthan), Jan 5:** The Centre has adopted western Rajasthan's traditional rainwater harvesting system 'tankas' by constructing a large number of such storage tanks with reinforced concrete cement near PMAY houses to battle water scarcity in the arid region. "However, the water stored in the traditional 'tankas' gradually becomes contaminated due to its earthen structure and does not last for the entire year." "So, the Centre has adopted the method under MGNREGA (Rural) scheme but instead of earthen tankas, is constructing water storage spaces made of reinforced concrete cement to provide uncontaminated water to the people for a longer period of time," Barmer Collector Arun Purohit told PTL. A total of 1,84,766 such tanks have been constructed since 2016, with 41,580 built in the current 2023-24 fiscal, he said. Each tank, measuring 13.5 ft by 13.5 ft, has the capacity to store 35,000 litres of water and is constructed at a cost of Rs 3 lakh, Purohit said.



The district has 2,971 villages, locally called 'dhanis', and respective gram panchayats are the implementing agencies. He said other measures are also being adopted to ensure water supply to far-flung villages in the district that shares a 228-km-long international border with Pakistan. These include the supply of water from the Indira Gandhi Canal and the Narmada Project along with the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) scheme. "We are targeting to reach out to 4.25 lakh households under the JJM scheme. Of these, we have already covered 1.25 lakh households," the collector said. After the JJM scheme is completely implemented, every household will have tap connection and surface water will be available to all households in the district, he said. Head of Kurla village, Devaram Choudhury, said water scarcity is a major problem in the region and sources are few and far-flung. He said the issue has been raised by people over the years and local representatives had urged the authorities to provide each household with permanent storage spaces. "The construction of 'tankas' under MGNREGA has benefited us. We can now consume potable drinking water throughout the year," Choudhury said. Thirty-six-year-old Dhammi Devi of the village said women have particularly benefited from these structures as they no longer have to walk around 4-5 km daily to fetch water from sources. "Earlier, we used to spend five to six hours daily collecting water, which was still not enough. It was an arduous task and we used to get tired. Now, we can utilise that time for other work," she added.

## Five lakh lamps to glow Jan 22 in Jaipur



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

The Municipal Greater Corporation here has started its preparations. Special illumination (decoration) will be done at temples, major government buildings and intersections. For this, an appeal will also be made to trade bodies and social organisations to illuminate the markets

**Jaipur, Jan 5:** Diwali-like decorations will be held in Jaipur on the auspicious occasion of Ramlala's Pran Pratistha Mahotsav January 22 in the Ram temple of Ayodhya. On this day, more than 5 lakh lamps will be lit at major intersections, government buildings and temples across the city. The Municipal Greater Corporation here has started its preparations. Special illumination (decoration) will be done at temples, major government buildings and intersections. For this, an appeal will also be made to trade bodies and social organisations to illuminate the markets. Municipal Greater Corporation Mayor Dr. Soumya Gurjar Monday held a meeting with the officials of all the committees of the corporation and the officials and decided the outline for the preparations. For this, he gave instructions to start a special cleaning campaign from January 2. It will start from the Statue Circle. The Mayor said that first of all, the statues of great men installed at major intersections of Jaipur and their surroundings will be cleaned and beautified. After this, a special cleaning campaign will be started in major religious places and their surrounding areas from January 3. The Mayor said that for the special cleanliness campaign in the entire Jaipur city, cooperation will be sought from all the trade unions, social organisations and religious leaders of the city. Along with this, an appeal will be made to trade bodies and social organisations to decorate their respective institutions and public places with special lighting January 22. Along with this, Rangoli will be made and lamps will be lit at all the major intersections January 22. Sunderkand recitations will also be organised at some places in the city.

## J&K power plant to supply electricity to Raj for 40 years

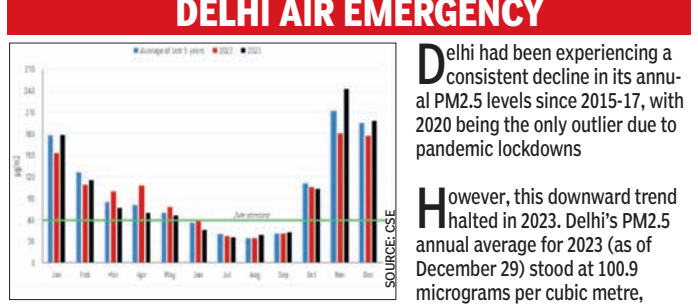
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 5:** Ratle Hydro Electric Power Corporation Limited (RHPCL), a joint venture company of NHPC Limited and Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation, has entered into a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for supplying electricity to Rajasthan Urja Vikas and IT Services Limited, the Union Power Ministry said Thursday. The 850 MW Ratle Hydroelectric Project in J&K's Kishtwar will provide power to Rajasthan for a period of 40 years from the Commercial Operation Date (COD) of the project and as per power allocation to be notified by the Union Ministry of Power. The PPA was signed in Jaipur on Wednesday in the presence of senior officers of RHPCL & Rajasthan Urja Vikas and IT Services Limited.

## 2023 ended on a high pollution note: CSE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 5:** Delhi-NCR recorded the longest spell of 'very poor' or worse air quality and the maximum number of smog episodes in November and December 2023 in the last six years, according to a new analysis. The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), an independent think-tank that analysed pollution data for Delhi-NCR, said the gradual long-term improvement in annual PM2.5 levels since 2015-17 halted in 2023. This occurred despite cleaner-than-usual summer and monsoon seasons and significantly reduced intrusion of smoke from farm fires in northern states. However, this winter witnessed unusually low surface wind speeds, trapping high levels of local pollution. Due to the impact of unusual winter levels, the overall annual levels have plateaued and worsened, reversing the gains of the long-term downward trend, the CSE said. Despite a decrease in stubble burning contributing to



In 2023, the summer months (March to June) were significantly less polluted (14-36 per cent) than in 2022

CONVERSELY, THE WINTER MONTHS OF JANUARY, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER WERE MUCH MORE POLLUTED IN 2023 (12-34 PER CENT) COMPARED TO THE SAME MONTHS IN 2022, THE REPORT SAID

Delhi's pollution this year, coupled with increased rainfall in November and milder winter conditions, the annual level should have improved. Instead, adverse meteorological conditions, specifically lower wind speeds, exacerbated the situation due to persistently high local pollution, it added. Delhi had been experiencing a consistent decline in its annual PM2.5 levels since 2015-17, with 2020 being the only outlier due to pandemic lockdowns. However, this downward trend halted in 2023. Delhi's PM2.5 annual average for 2023 (as of December 29) stood at 100.9 micrograms per cubic metre, marking a 2 per cent increase against 2022 and 6 per cent higher than the remarkably clean 2020.

The average annual PM2.5 concentrations were 115.8 micrograms per cubic metre in 2018, 109.2 in 2019, 95.1 in 2020, 106.2 in 2021, 98.6 in 2022, and 100.9 in 2023, according to the data. In 2023, the summer months (March to June) were significantly less polluted (14-36 per cent) than in 2022. Conversely, the winter months of January, November and December were much more polluted in 2023 (12-34 per cent) compared to the same months in 2022, the CSE said. It said the maximum number of smog episodes occurred in November-December 2023, surpassing the last six years' corresponding periods. A smog episode is defined as at least three or more consecutive days with air quality in the 'severe' category. "Delhi typically experiences two smog episodes in November and December. In 2023, by December 24, there were three episodes, and December 30, Delhi was witnessing its third continuous day of 'severe' air quality, marking the city's fourth smog episode," the CSE said.

## Raj tourism gears up to ensure safety for tourists

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, Jan 5:** Rajasthan Tourism called an online meeting which focused on sensitizing and fostering collaboration among stakeholders to craft comprehensive strategies aimed at ensuring a secure environment for tourists exploring the landscapes of Rajasthan. Gayatri Rathore, Principal Secretary Tourism, Government of Rajasthan shared insights into the imminent launch of a campaign by the Tourism



Department. This initiative aims to propagate awareness regarding appropriate conduct towards travelers, with a specific focus

on ensuring the safety of women tourists. Emphasizing the importance of proactive measures, Rathore outlined the campaign's multifaceted approach. Central to this initiative is the plan to conduct sensitization workshops tailored for various stakeholders and service providers. These include integral members of the tourism ecosystem, ranging from auto-taxi drivers, souvenir shop operators, tourist guides, to elephant mahouts and camel safari operators.

## State to ensure PWDs aren't harassed with transfers: HC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 5:** The Delhi High Court has overturned the transfer of an orthopaedically handicapped railway employee to Chhattisgarh, saying that the state must ensure persons with disabilities (PWDs) are not subjected to unnecessary harassment by being transferred to locations unsuitable for their working conditions. Justice Chandra Dhari Singh pointed out the legal provisions for equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, stating that office memorandums mandate transfers and job postings in a manner that allows employees to choose their preferred location, with possible exemptions from rotational transfers.

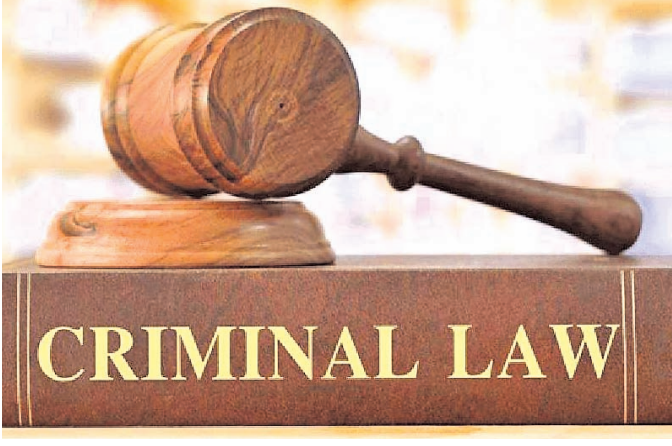
The petitioner, an employee of IRCON International Ltd, cited his knee-length prosthetic, requiring regular maintenance in Delhi, and his need for medical supervision in the city. The court noted that the petitioner's transfer to another state would hinder access to necessary healthcare, especially given his special medical condition. The court stressed the need for sensitivity and empathy towards individuals with disabilities, ensuring that constitutional values are protected. Citing Section 20 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, the court stressed the government's obligation to provide reasonable accommodation and a conducive environment. The court set aside the transfer orders, stating that the respondent disregarded the petitioner's special needs and violated Article 14 of the Constitution. The orders transferring the petitioner to the Chhattisgarh Rail Project were consequently annulled.



## Delhi Police sets up committee to study new criminal laws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 5:** The Delhi Police has set up a 14-member committee to study the three new criminal laws and prepare study material for its personnel, officials said in a statement. The three laws - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam and Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita - have been cleared by President Draupadi Murmu and are likely to be notified later this month. The panel will be headed by Special Commissioner of Police Chhaya Sharma and comprises Deputy Commissioner of Police Joy Turkey, Additional DCP Uma Shankar, Assistant Commissioner of Police Hari Singh, Inspectors Rajiv Kumar, Rajeev Bhardwaj, Naresh Malik, Devender Singh, Arun Kumar, Suresh Kumar, Anil Berwal and Sanjeev Kumar and two sub-inspectors Somveer and Rajni Kant. The committee, under the chairmanship of Sharma, will have to prepare course material for the investigating officers of the force for practical understanding and study of new provisions and changes in the pro-



**The three laws -- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam & Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita -- have been cleared by President Draupadi Murmu and are likely to be notified later this month** Headquarters said the committee may rope in lawyers and retired police personnel to fine-tune the course material to ensure that it is in sync with the judicial process. The co-opted members will also be useful later in conducting classes for Delhi Police personnel and train them in practical applications of BNS, BSA and BNSS, the order said. According to officials, the Delhi Police has appointed retired ACPs Rajender Singh and Ram Singh and criminal lawyers Raunak Singh and Akhand Pratap Singh as the co-opt members. cedures, an official said. An order dated January 2 from the Delhi Police

**Bank of India** AUCTION SALE OF VEHICLE  
ZONAL OFFICE: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Ph.: 0674-2362249  
Branch Name: IIT ARGUL BRANCH, Name of the Borrower: Mrs. Manorama Routray, Vehicle Details: MARUTI SUZUKI WAGON R VXI Regd. No.: OD-02-AM-3634 Year of Manufacturing: 2017, Reserve Price / Bid increment Amount: ₹ 3,17,675/- ₹ 5,000/-  
Date of Auction: 25.01.2024 from 11.30 AM to 12.30 PM, Auction Venue: M/s. City Investigation & Detective, Santoshi Maa Mandir Backside, Patrapada, Bhubaneswar, Contact: 8908502936  
Parking Yard Address: M/s. City Investigation & Detective, Santoshi Maa Mandir Backside, Patrapada, Bhubaneswar  
Terms and Conditions: Interested bidders can inspect the vehicle after obtaining prior appointment from the Concerned Authority at the parking yard as mentioned above. The bidders are informed to be present at the venue positively. The successful bidder has to deposit 25% of bid amount as upfront amount and the balance amount within 7 days from the date of auction, failing which the money deposited by the successful bidder would be forfeited. The cost of transfer of ownership and statutory dues/all misc. charges, if any is to be borne by the successful purchaser. Vehicle will be auctioned on "AS IS WHERE IS & AS IS WHAT IS" basis. However the Bank reserves the right to accept/reject/cancel the auction sale process of the vehicle at its own discretion at any point of time. Auction will be done through offline mode. For further information regarding Inspection & Details of the Vehicle contact at Ph. No.: BOI- 9776687307, 8337911737, Parking Yard- 8908502936.  
Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 06.01.2024 Zonal Manager, Bank of India

**Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya National Institute for Persons with Physical Disabilities (Divyangjan)**  
Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) (Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment)  
4, Vishnu Digamber Marg, New Delhi-110002  
**VACANCY CIRCULAR**  
Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya National Institute for Persons with Physical Disabilities (Divyangjan) is an autonomous Institute under administrative and financial control of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India. The Institute invites ONLINE APPLICATIONS for the various posts on Deputation Basis & Direct recruitment basis.  
S. No. Name of the Posts No. of Posts Pay Matrix Mode of Recruitment Reservation point in case of Direct Recruitment  
1. Administrative Officer 01 (One) Pay matrix level-7 Direct Recruitment Basis UR  
2. Demonstrator (OT) 01 (One) Pay matrix level-6 Direct Recruitment UR  
3. Occupational Therapist 02 (Two) Pay matrix level-6 Direct Recruitment UR-01 OBC-01  
4. Physiotherapist 01 (One) Pay matrix level-6 Direct Recruitment EWS  
5. Jr. Caliper Maker cum PO Technician Gr. III 01 (One) Pay matrix level-2 Direct Recruitment EWS  
6. Staff Car Driver 01 (One) Pay matrix level-2 Deputation Basis failing which by Direct UR  
7. Lower Division Clerk 01 (One) Pay matrix level-2 Direct Recruitment ST  
8. Jr. Limb Maker cum PO Technician Gr. III 01 (One) Pay matrix level-2 Direct Recruitment UR  
Total 09 (Nine)  
For detailed advertisement, educational qualifications, experience etc., visit www.iphnewdelhi.in. The last date for receiving the applications online will be 21 days from the date of publishing the advertisement in Employment Newspaper.  
(Dr. Jitendra Sharma) Director  
cbc 38103/12/0012/2324



Inspectors work near the wreckage after the collision between two trains in Cicalengka, West Java, Indonesia. The trains collided on Indonesia's main island of Java Friday, causing several carriages to buckle and overturn, officials said



Women perform 'Kulvi Naati' dance during the Manali Winter Carnival in Manali



Students visit the 13th State-Level Philatelic Exhibition 'KARNAPEX 2024: A festival of stamps', organised by the Karnataka Postal Circle in Bangalore



Security personnel perform during the 144th Foundation Day celebrations of Jharkhand Armed Police in Ranchi



Palestinian children wait to collect drinking water amid shortages, as the conflict between Israel and Hamas continues, in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip



ITBP band members after the rehearsal for the Republic Day celebration during a cold morning in New Delhi



Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala speaks during a protest march organised by the farmers under the banner of 'Karshaka Congress' outside State Secretariat, in Thiruvananthapuram



Deer inside their enclosure at a zoo on a cold morning in Bikaner



# national

## of the day quote

First of January, we launched PSLV XPOSat. The satellite is doing very well. All its instruments are now slowly switched on and working. We will get to know about the results soon

S SOMANATH | ISRO CHIEF

Five years back the Modi government decided to sell off three units of SAIL: the Alloys Steel Plant at Durgapur, the Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Plant at Bhadravati and the Salem Steel Plant. Now it appears that the privatisation has been called off. It is a victory no doubt for the workers who agitated against the sale and for parties like the Indian National Congress that had stoutly opposed the ill-thought move

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

In 2023, Assam saw a record investment proposal of over Rs 11,000 crore with proposed generation of more than 10,000 jobs due to our path-breaking customised incentive policy

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

## SHORT TAKES

### Babri litigant Ansari invited

**Ayodhya:** Iqbal Ansari, a litigant in the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case, Friday, received an invitation for the consecration ceremony at the upcoming Ram temple in Ayodhya and said he will attend the grand event. "This is Ayodhya nagari, it is a city of religion, deities of Hindu and Muslim communities are present here. There is brotherhood and unity among the Hindus and Muslims of Ayodhya and there is no unease. Whether it is a temple, a mosque or a gurdwara, there is no discrimination. There is a feeling of harmony for those coming to Ayodhya," he said soon after receiving the invitation.

### Terrorist killed

**Srinagar:** A Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist, who was involved in the abduction and killing of Army officer Lieutenant Ummer Fayaz in 2017, was Friday killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district, police said. Acting on specific information about presence of a terrorist in Chotigam village of the south Kashmir district, a cordon and search operation was launched in the early hours by security forces, a police spokesman said.

## ED raids company linked to Pawar's kin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 5:** The Enforcement Directorate Friday searched the premises of a company owned by MLA Rohit Pawar, the grand nephew of Rajya Sabha MP Sharad Pawar, and its linked entities as part of a probe into the alleged Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank scam, official sources said.

At least six locations in Baramati, Pune, Pimpri and Aurangabad were searched, they said.

The office of Baramati Agro in Baramati town was also covered. Rohit Pawar (38) is a first-time MLA from the Karjat-Jamkhed seat in Maharashtra and is the owner and CEO of Baramati Agro.

He belongs to the Sharad Pawar faction of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). Rohit Pawar is the nephew of Baramati MP Supriya Sule and Ajit Pawar - the state's deputy chief minister and Baramati MLA.

The Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank money laundering case stems from an August 2019 FIR of the Mumbai Police's

## MHA orders CBI probe into supply of 'substandard' medicines in Delhi hosps

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 5:** The Union Home ministry has ordered a CBI inquiry into the alleged supply of 'substandard' medicines in Delhi government hospitals and whether the drugs were also distributed through mohalla clinics, sources said Friday.

The CBI probe was ordered following a recommendation by Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena on the matter in December last year. Saxena said the drugs allegedly "failed quality standard tests" and had the "potential of endangering lives" in hospitals run by the Delhi government.

Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj welcomed the immediate suspension of the health department secretary. "I had given directions for carrying out an audit of medicines immediately after assuming office in March last year but the (Delhi government) health secretary did not follow the directions. I welcome the CBI inquiry into the matter, but why is the Centre shielding the official? He should be immediately suspended," Bharadwaj said.

The Delhi government's Directorate of Vigilance had written to the home ministry requesting the probe. "It also needs to be investigated whether the same drugs which have been procured by the Central Procurement Agency (CPA) are also being distributed to the patients through the 'Mohalla



Clinics' or not," the communication read.

The letter said any action for supplying 'Not of Standard Quality' drugs should not be confined to the CPA and there is need to investigate the entire supply chain - the role of the suppliers who procured from manufacturers and provided supply to the end users, that is, hospitals (patients).

"Besides, there is a need to lift the corporate veil to understand the gravity and motives of supplying 'Not of Standard Quality' drugs," read the Directorate of Vigilance letter. The drugs that were found to be "substandard quality" included critical life-saving antibiotics used for the treatment of lung and urinary tract infections such as Cephalixin, according to officials.



Millets can be grown even in places where rainfall and soil fertility is low. Millets are very helpful for good health. Hence, the state government is continuously organising millet fairs

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

## RAJASTHAN CM KEEPS 8 MINISTRIES

Newly appointed Rajasthan ministers were Friday allocated portfolios, with Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma keeping eight departments, including home and excise. Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari was allocated finance, tourism, art and culture, public works department and women and child development



## AAP nominates Maliwal for RS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 5:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Friday nominated Delhi Commission for Women chief Swati Maliwal as its Rajya Sabha MP and re-nominated Sanjay Singh and ND Gupta for the second term in the Upper House of Parliament.

The nominations were announced by the party's political affairs committee (PAC), chaired by AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. "DCW chairperson Swati Maliwal has been nominated for the first time. The PAC has decided to continue with Sanjay Singh and ND Gupta for their respective second term as Rajya Sabha members," the party said.



The committee decided to endorse two existing members for re-nomination, whereas Sushil Kumar Gupta expressed his intent to redirect his focus towards the electoral politics of Haryana, it said. Sushil Kumar Gupta's tenure as a member of the Rajya Sabha will end later this month. "He has conveyed his aspiration to actively engage in the vibrant electoral landscape of Haryana, and we respect his decision to pursue this path," a senior AAP leader said.

## ED conducts raids; ₹5cr cash seized



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, Jan 5:** Foreign-made rifles, about 300 cartridges, Rs 5 crore in cash and more than 100 liquor bottles have been recovered during searches conducted by the Enforcement Directorate against former INLD MLA Dilbag Singh and his associates, official sources said Friday.

The central agency had launched raids against Singh and Congress MLA from Sonapat Surender Panwar Thursday as part of a money laundering case linked to alleged illegal mining in Haryana's Yamunanagar district and some other regions. Singh is a former Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) MLA from Yamunanagar.

About Rs 5 crore cash, "illegal" foreign-made rifles, around 300 cartridges and bullets, more than 100 liquor bottles, 4-5 kilograms of gold biscuits and jewellery, and documents pertaining to assets in India and abroad have been recovered from the premises linked to Singh and his

associates, the sources said.

Around 20 locations of the two politicians and linked entities in Yamunanagar, Sonapat, Mohali, Faridabad, Chandigarh and Karnal were covered during the searches conducted under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The money laundering case stems from several FIRs registered by Haryana police to probe alleged illegal mining of boulders, gravel and sand that took place in the past in Yamunanagar and nearby districts even after the lease expiry period and a ban imposed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

The central agency is also probing alleged fraud in the 'e-Ravana' scheme, an online portal that was introduced by the Haryana government in 2020 to simplify collection of royalties and taxes and to prevent tax evasion in mining areas. The activities were being run by a syndicate allegedly linked to the two politicians, ED sources claimed.

## Foundation stone of Patanjali Gurukulam to be laid today



AGENCIES

**Haridwar (Uttarakhand):** The foundation stone of Patanjali Gurukulam, touted to be the country's largest educational institution when completed, will be laid on January 6, yoga guru Ramdev said Thursday.

The institution will come up in Haridwar in Uttarakhand on a land previously owned by Swami Darshanand Gurukul Mahavidyalaya.

The seven-storeyed main block of the institution, to be built at an esti-

mated cost of Rs 250 crore, will have the capacity to provide boarding facilities to 1,500 children, Ramdev said. A separate Acharyakulam block can accommodate 5,000 day-boarding students, he said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav are likely to attend the foundation laying ceremony, to be held on the 29th foundation day of Patanjali Yogpeeth.

## Gyanvapi: Court to rule today on ASI report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Varanasi (UP), Jan 5:** A Varanasi court is likely to give a ruling Saturday on making the sealed ASI survey report on the Gyanvapi mosque complex public and providing copies of it to the Hindu and Muslim sides.

The court of District Judge A K Vishvesh Friday said since the order on the issue has not been typed out yet, it will be given Saturday, said Madan Mohan Yadav, the lawyer for the Hindu side. The counsels of both Hindu and Muslim sides as well as that of the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) were present in court.

The ASI Wednesday urged the court not to make its report public for at least four more weeks. The judge could not take up the matter Thursday as he was busy at an event, his office said, adding that the matter was then postponed for Friday.

Following a July 21 order of the district court, the ASI carried out a scientific survey of the Gyanvapi premises, located next to the Kashi Vishwanath temple here, to determine whether the mosque was constructed over a pre-existing structure of a Hindu temple.

The survey was ordered by the court after the petitioners claimed the 17th-century mosque was constructed over a pre-existing temple. Wednesday, Yadav said the ASI requested the court for four more weeks before the sealed survey report is opened.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, MOHANA No.47 Date:02.01.2024 OFFICE ORDER No.O-2120:The tender for the work Construction of Day care sub-centre cum HWC Sub-centre at Liligada for the year 2023-24, invited vide this office Online Tender Bid Identification No. II/ MOHANA/2023-24 is hereby cancelled, as out of 2 nos bidder 1 no bidder did not furnish the scan copy of an agreement (Notarised) executed between the registered Electrical Contractor which was bound to produce during tendering & the tender became first time single tender. Sd./-Executive Engineer RW Division, Mohana OIPR-25148/11/0025/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.CAD-3579 SAMPALPUR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY SAMPALPUR Email ID: secretarysdasbp@gmail.com NOTICE INVITING TENDERS NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement Bid Identification No. SDASBP-07/2023-24 Dt.04.01.2024

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (AGRI.), KANDHAMAL DIVISION, PHULBANI Email Id: eeagrilkandhamal@gmail.com Govt. of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice Bid Identification No. :E.E (A)- KANDHAMAL DIVISION-08/2023-24 No.L-203:The Executive Engineer (Agril.), Kandhamal Division, Phulbani, Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate bids in Single cover system for the works in ONLINE MODE only

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, MALKANGIRI Odisha, Pin-764045, Ph:06861-230244, e-Mail:emalkangiri@gmail.com Dated 02.01.24 e-NOTICE BID IDENTIFICATION No.EOMKG/08/2023-24 No.C-2270:The Executive Officer, Malkangiri Municipality, Malkangiri on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites for bidders of eligible class registered with any State Govt. and bidders of equivalent grade/ class registered with Central Govt./ PSU / MES / Railways according to norm of e-procurement system in online mode for the work as per DTCN.

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice Bid Identification No.: Online-AGL-26 of 2023-2024 No. O-2114:- 1. Name of the Work : Road Work 2. Estimated Cost : Rs.5.46 Lakhs to 18.49 Lakhs 3. Period of Completion : 01 (One) Calendar Month 4. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 10.01.2024 to 17.01.2024 upto 5.00 P.M. 5. Last Date/time for receipt of bids in the portal : 17.01.2024 upto 5.00 P.M. 6. Name & Address of the OIT : Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Angul Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Angul OIPR-25096/11/0025/2324

QUOTATION CALL NOTICE No.123/Dated 04.01.2024 No.MM-390:Sealed quotations in plain paper/letter pad are invited from the intending registered firms/suppliers having valid GST and PAN in the name of the firms for supply of the following items to the Divisional Forest Officer, Athmallik Division. 01. Uniform (Khaki) Cloth. 02. Shoes and Socks 03. Blue and Green barrel cap. 04. Web Belt 05. O.F. & Star for Forester. 06. Arm Batch 07. OF&FD Cap badge for Fr 85 FG 08. OF & Star & Odisha Forest Arm Badge for Fr & FG 09. Winter Jacket. 10. Rain Coat. 11. Lathi (Forester & Forest Guard). 12. Blanket. The quotation should reach the undersigned by 19th Jan, 2024 05 PM positively and the same will be opened on 20th Jan, 2024 at 04PM in the Division Office, Athmallik for selection by the purchase committee in the presence of the quotators or their authorized representatives. The quotation received in incomplete shape without enclosing the sample item or after the scheduled date and time are liable to be rejected. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotations at any stage without assigning any reason therefor. Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer Athmallik Division OIPR-08125/11/0018/2324

# leisure



## DWAYNE WANTS TO ACT IN FILMS THAT DEAL WITH STRUGGLE, PAIN

Actor Dwayne Johnson is ready to take on more challenging and serious roles in his acting career. The former WWE star, who has been mostly known for his action-packed and comedic films, said he wants to act in movies that deal with struggle and pain.

## DAVID TENNANT TO HOST BAFTA AWARDS

Actor David Tennant is set to host the BAFTA Film Awards for the first time. The actor, who is best known for playing lead in TV series *Doctor Who*, will oversee proceedings during the UK's biggest night for film February 18, at the Royal Festival Hall in London, reports *Variety*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

A new acquaintance will make you feel happy today. You must remember that things don't have to be expressed explicitly; a word or a song from deep within can make a bigger impact. Ganesh says today is the right time to do something which will be more rewarding in the long-term.

#### TAURUS

This day, your heart is likely to rule your head. You will be driven by your moods feelings and sentiments. Most of the decisions will be based on your emotions, instead of your reason and experience. Ganesh urges you not to allow your emotionality to enter your professional activities.

#### GEMINI

You will meet someone special who is here to stay for good, predicts Ganesh. Your kind and considerate nature will benefit others. You need to understand that it's okay to spend a little on comforts and entertainment. Be ready for a busy, yet cheerful, day ahead.

#### CANCER

Sometimes acting a little eccentric and adopting an approach that you will usually not helps you redefine your style, says Ganesh. Go ahead and do that today! Although you will be open to adapt and bring in some revolutionary changes, you will make sure to follow a proper pattern.

#### LEO

Forget the weather. Today, the only thing shining bright are your chances of spending some quality time with your near and dear ones. Going along these lines, Ganesh wonders how long has it been since you last did the same. So, make the most of this lucky day.

#### VIRGO

A mixture of the desirable and undesirable is on the cards today. Sentimental people will tend to think of you as a little immature. However, your sense of humour will be as robust as ever and you will never fall short of jokes. Ganesh advises you to pursue spiritually enriching activities in order to properly channelise your abilities.

#### LIBRA

The whole point of being a Libran is that you always have the tendency to be two separate things put together on a pair of scales that somehow balance. Ganesh feels that today, you'll bring to the scales the stability of being your own master and servant. It's a fine balance to maintain.

#### SCORPIO

Your stars indicate splurging of money today. And this time, you do it for your near and dear ones. After all, what is money without friends and family? You may even go out of your way to make them happy by entertaining them with outings and celebrations.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Staying away from home, for a long business trip may be painful. But, when you strike great deals, it's worth it. Besides good returns from business, Ganesh also has many other surprises in store for you. Be hopeful!

#### CAPRICORN

You love the people around you unconditionally and such emotions will be more visible now than ever. Today, you will want to keep yourself surrounded with your loved ones, make them happy and have a good time, says Ganesh. Your honesty and sincerity will give depth to your existing relationships.

#### AQUARIUS

If you're stuck indoors today, make the most of it. There's always carrom, checkers, chess and partying! Shake yourself a bit, and you'll come up with creative ways to spend a leisurely day. You'll find that either way, life is wonderful, says Ganesh.

#### PISCES

In spite of the hardships that you will encounter on your way, your high spirits, enthusiasm and innate confidence will overcome all obstacles. And no matter how troubled the day starts, it ought to end on a cheerful note, says Ganesh.

# Sonam believes in slow fashion

Mumbai: Actress Sonam Kapoor, known for her immaculate sense of style and sartorial choices, recently shared why she prefers slow fashion. The *Aisha* actress said in a statement, "I make sure to wear and do things that have no negative impact on anyone. I strive to make responsible choices. I have always believed in slow fashion, buying classic, beautiful pieces, and reusing vintage clothes. I don't support fast fashion, as it is wasteful and harmful to the environment. However, I understand its necessity for those who can't afford luxury vintage fashion."

She added, "I am a strong supporter of second-hand websites, despite them not being part of our culture. Indian culture embraces local tailors and artisans, which is a form of slow fashion not readily available in the West. We need a combination of both: making tailoring clothes accessible in the West and accepting the mentality of wearing someone else's clothes."

She said, "As actors, we have an impact, and people like to follow what we do. I hope people turn to vintage and adopt it as a lifestyle choice. It is imperative because our wasteful ways are hurt-

ing the environment and the planet."

Meanwhile, on the work front, Sonam was recently seen in the film *Blind*. AGENCIES



## State-level drama festival: Day 3

Members of Expressions (Bhubaneswar) staged the Odia play *Shuka Shari Katha* Friday, on the third evening of the festival organised by Manana Natya Sanstha at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar. Written by eminent playwright Kartika Chandra Rath, the drama was designed and directed by Debananda Nayak. The play's plot was centred around Odisha's dying performing art form 'Bagha Nacha'. Among the artistes, Joseph, Lucky, Sarita, Surya and Rabi performed on stage. The five-day event is being organised to commemorate Manana's 45th Foundation Day.



# Kangana's U-turn

Mumbai: Actress Kangana Ranaut who once called Vikrant Massey a 'cockroach' has heaped praises on him and called him 'beyond amazing' for his film *12th Fail*.

Sharing a poster of *12th Fail*, Kangana wrote, "What a terrific film. Coming from Hindi medium myself belonging to a rural village and being a general caste student for entry tests without reservations in my school years, I was weeping throughout the film, uff never cried so much in a flight, my co-passengers were stealing concerned glances at me. I am embarrassed."

In her next story, she added, "Vidhu sir has won my heart all over again, Vikrant Massey is beyond amazing!! In his coming years

he might just fill the void Irfan Khan saab left behind...salutations to your talent dear one." Vikrant is yet to respond to the post.

In 2021, Kangana had called Vikrant a 'cockroach' after he playfully called his friend, Himachali actor Yami Gautam 'Radhe Maa' in one of the pictures from her wedding with Aditya Dhar. Reacting to this, fellow Himachali, Kangana was annoyed at him and had called Vikrant names on Instagram, which grabbed everyone's attention. AGENCIES



# Ananya hopes to 'complete herself'

Mumbai: Ananya Panday is riding high on the success of her latest film, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan*. The actress, who played the role of Ahana, a young woman navigating love and life in the digital age, has garnered significant praise. In her recent Instagram post sharing pictures from her New Year vacation in London, Ananya in-

cluded a reflective note on the lessons

she learned from Ahana, shaping her resolutions for 2024.

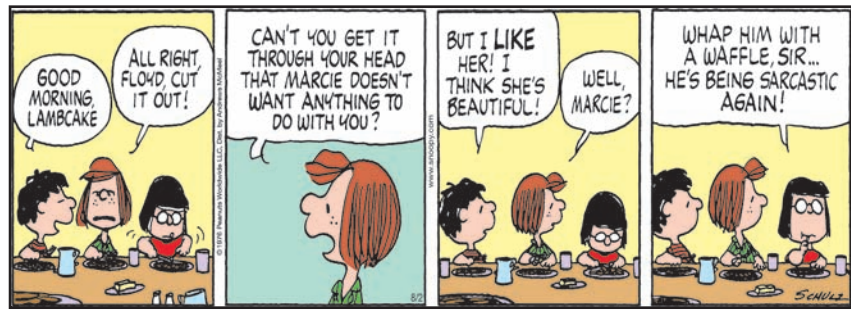
Sharing the pictures Ananya wrote, "Happy new year!!!!"

She continued: "I know I'm slightly late but like Ahana said at the end of *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* - it was time for a reboot and a couple of resolutions. Every year we try to change ourselves but this year I hope you can be completely yourself."

Previously, a picture circulated on Reddit, showcasing the actress enjoying a vacation in London with beau Aditya Roy Kapur.

The image captured the couple at an ice skating rink. Ananya was seen in a black trench coat paired with wide-legged pants and a high-neck sweater, while Aditya chose jeans, a black puffer jacket, and a grey beanie. Both donned blue ice skates and stood on the rink, creating a buzz on social media. AGENCIES

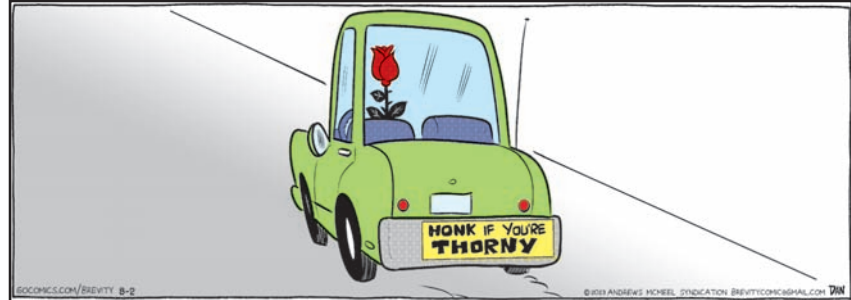
### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

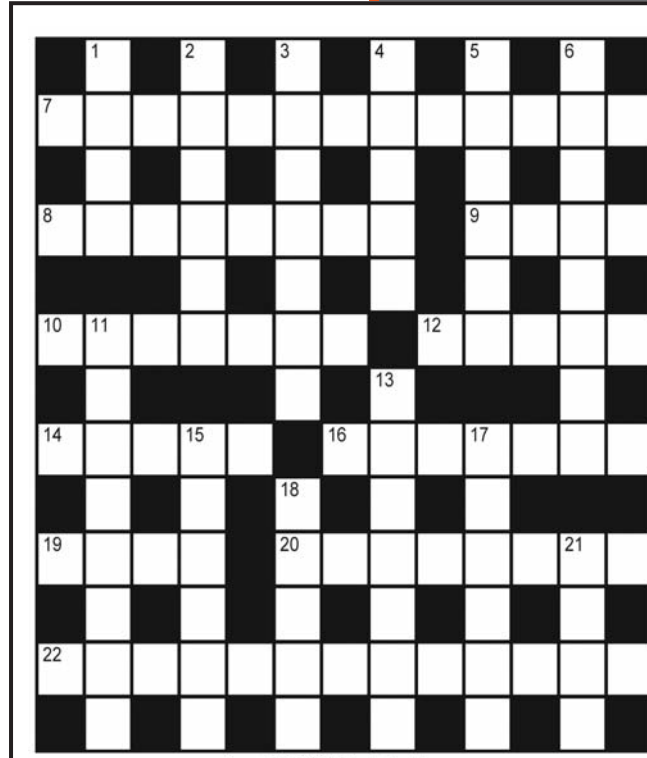


### BREVITY



### FUN post

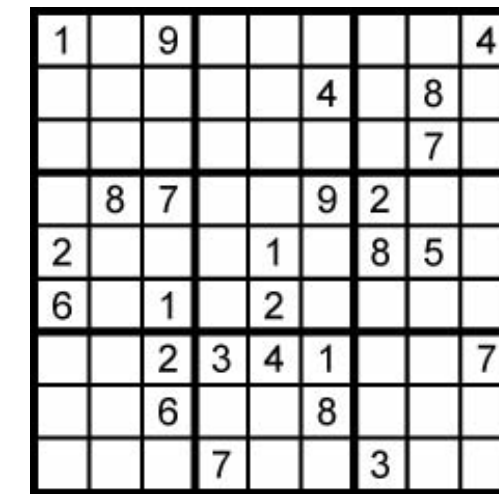
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Equipment
  - 8 With honesty and frankness
  - 9 Promise
  - 10 Dutch monetary unit, once
  - 12 Jellied garnish
  - 14 Hoard
  - 16 Candy bar covering
  - 19 Weapons
  - 20 Auditor's pile
  - 22 Salon expert
- Down**
- 1 Festive party
  - 2 Home wrecker
  - 3 Quiver
  - 4 Food servers
  - 5 Celebrated
  - 6 Thunderous verbal attack
  - 11 Like some motives
  - 13 Stoker's vampire
  - 15 Halvah ingredient
  - 17 Crash-dive
  - 18 Spiteful
  - 21 Dry run

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



