



Nayanthara in soup

Actress Nayanthara lands in trouble after an MP-based outfit lodges FIR against her for hurting religious sentiments

LEISURE | P2



China-Maldives ties

China and Maldives sign 20 key agreements and elevate their bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Oil binge slows

Indian purchases of Russian crude fall to an 11-month low as the price tag on the discounted oil rises

BUSINESS | P11



India face Afghans

All eyes will be on skipper Rohit Sharma when India take on Afghanistan in the first T20 International today

SPORTS | P12

Woman Maoist carrying ₹1L bounty surrenders

AGENCIES

Malkangiri, Jan 10: A woman Maoist involved in several criminal cases including IED blast in Odisha and carrying a cash reward of ₹1 lakh on her head surrendered before the police here Wednesday.

The Maoist, identified as Ungi Madvi alias Rosni, was an active member of the CPI (Maoist) and hailed from Sukma district of Chhattisgarh. She joined the banned CPI (Maoist) in 2016 and presently operated as a party member of Mahupadar Kanger Ghati of Darbha division of Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC).

Ungi was carrying a cash reward of ₹1 lakh on her head for her involvement in at least 48 cases in Odisha, said Malkangiri SP Nitesh Wadhvani.

"It is a good achievement as the woman Maoist was actively involved in a series of incidents in Odisha for the last eight years. Apart from Odisha, she was also active in neighbouring states," said Wadhvani.

The SP also claimed that 21 active Maoists and hundreds of sympathisers have surrendered in Malkangiri district in a span of two years.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



In fact, I boycott all foreign destinations. I don't have a passport

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VAR.
SENSEX	71657.71	↑ 271.50
NIFTY	21618.70	↑ 73.90
DOLLAR	83.09	↓ ₹0.10
EURO	91.00	↓ ₹0.01
GOLD	₹62,101	↓ ₹78
SILVER	₹71,837	↓ ₹210

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	28.5°C	27.4°C
Min Temp	17.2°C	17.0°C
Humidity	94%	94%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

FORECAST: DRY WEATHER VERY LIKELY



KISSING THE SKY: People take part in the International Kite Festival at Rajkot in Gujarat, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

Shinde-led group real Shiv Sena: Maha Speaker

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 10: In a relief to Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar Wednesday held that the Shiv Sena faction led by him was the "real political party" when rival groups emerged in June 2022.

In his 105-minute long reading of the key points of the ruling, Narwekar also rejected Uddhav Thackeray faction's petition to disqualify 16 Shiv Sena MLAs including Shinde. As Narwekar finished reading the order, celebrations broke out among Chief Minister Shinde's supporters, who burst firecrackers, while Sena (UBT) leaders Sanjay Raut and Aaditya Thackeray said their party will approach Supreme Court against the Speaker's order. NCP leader Sharad Pawar said Uddhav Thackeray will have to approach the apex court against the ruling of the Speaker, who gave precedence to the legislature party.

Narwekar said no party leadership can use provision of 10th schedule of Constitution for dissent or indiscipline within party. In his order on disqualification petitions filed by Shinde-led Sena and the rival faction led by Uddhav Thackeray against each other's MLAs, Narwekar said Sunil Prabhu of the Sena (UBT) ceased to be the whip from June 21, 2022, and Bharat Gogawale of the Shinde group became the authorised whip.

SAND THIEVES BITE DUST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 10: In a fresh blow to the sand thieves who are causing wanton damage to river ecosystems and endangering lives of motorists by carrying out deep mining in prohibited areas of riverbeds, a two-judge bench of the Orissa High Court Wednesday stayed the December 21 notification of the Steel and Mines department allowing 'mechanised mining'.

A division bench of HC, comprising acting Chief Justice BR Sarangi and Justice Murahari Sri Raman, ordered the stay till the next hearing of the issue February 1.

Significantly, the HC had come down heavily on former Cuttack Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayani while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by social activist Prasanta Kumar Jena alleging rampant sand mining in the Millennium City December 2.



Although guidelines restrict use of machines for sand mining, the Mines dept allowed 'mechanised' sand lifting in case of 'utmost necessity'

Terming the affidavit filed by Chayani on the issue as 'fake', the court had observed that the then district Collector had been facilitating illegal sand mining by collecting meagre penalties. The court was also of the view of initiating criminal proceedings against the former Cuttack Collector.

Later, the state government December 19 filed a fresh affidavit informing the court that as many

as 14 sand ghats were sealed.

The Mines department, however, came out with a new notification on sand mining December 21. Although guidelines restrict use of machines for sand mining, the Mines department, in its notification, allowed 'mechanised' sand lifting in case of 'utmost necessity', sources in know of the development said, adding that the department, however, didn't elaborate on usage of

machines. In the PIL, Jena informed the court that illegal sand mining and transportation are rampant in many parts of the state, especially in Cuttack.

"The administration has turned a blind eye to the sufferings of people and losses to the environment just to help some unscrupulous sand miners mint money. Though sand should be transported between 10pm and 7am, dishonest elements have been transporting sand day in and day out. Transportation of sand in rush hours has been leading to road mishaps and loss of precious lives," advocates Sukant Kumar Dalai and Siddhant Kumar Jena said quoting the PIL.

Suspected gangrape, murder in Bargaon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 10: Bargaon area in Sundargarh district remained tense Wednesday when the body of a minor girl was found hanging from a tree in a nearby jungle, raising suspicion of gangrape and murder.

Police recovered the body from the forest near Bagbud village and sent it for post-mortem. The recovery of the body sparked

furor in the area as family members cried foul over the death. They alleged that the girl was gangraped by three youths before being killed and hanged from a tree to give it a shape of suicide.

Police also suspected that the girl was raped before being killed. According to sources, the girl had left home Tuesday informing her kin that she was going to pluck greens. Family members frantically searched for her as she did

not return home till late in the evening. Finally, they lodged a complaint with the local police Tuesday night. A villager informed them to have seen her going with a youth of the village.

Following the complaint police launched a manhunt to find the girl and finally traced her to the jungle where her body was found hanging from a tree. Police have detained a youth and launched an investigation.

Sonia, Kharge to skip Ram temple event

THE RSS AND BJP HAVE TURNED THE TEMPLE IN AYODHYA INTO A POLITICAL PROJECT, SAYS CONG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 10: The Congress Wednesday announced that party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury have "respectfully declined" the invitation to attend the Ram Temple consecration ceremony, alleging that it has been made into a "political project" by the BJP and the RSS for "electoral gain".

In a statement, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh questioned the motive behind the inauguration of the "incomplete" temple by the leaders of the BJP and the RSS.

Last month, Congress President and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Gandhi and Leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha Chowdhury received the invitation to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Ram temple at Ayodhya to be held January 22, 2024.

"Lord Ram is worshipped by millions in our country. Religion is a personal matter. But the RSS



& BJP have long made a political project of the temple in Ayodhya. The inauguration of the incomplete temple by the leaders of the BJP and the RSS has been obviously brought forward for electoral gain," Ramesh said.

"While abiding by the 2019 Supreme Court judgement and honouring the sentiments of millions who revere Lord Ram, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury have respectfully declined the invitation to what is clearly an RSS/BJP event," the Congress general secretary in-charge communications said.

Pak top court decrees to hang dead Musharraf

IT IS FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT A FORMER MILITARY DICTATOR HAS BEEN AWARDED PUNISHMENT FOR SUBVERTING THE CONSTITUTION

AGENCIES

Islamabad, Jan 10: In a landmark and strange judgement while hearing a high treason case of 2013, Pakistan's Supreme Court Wednesday upheld the death sentence awarded to former military ruler Pervez Musharraf, who has already breathed his last in Dubai February 5, 2023 after a prolonged illness.

In December 2019, Musharraf was sentenced to death in absentia by the special court which found him guilty of high treason, for imposing a state of emergency November 3, 2007, by keeping the constitution in abeyance.

However, the Lahore High Court (LHC) in January 2020 had declared the special court and its proceeding as unconditional.

The issue of his sentence and the LHC judgement were before the apex court where a four-member bench headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justices Mansoor Ali Shah, Aminuddin Khan and Athar Minallah conducted the hearing.

"The impugned order passed January 13, 2020 by the Lahore High Court (LHC) [...] is not sustainable and accordingly set aside," Chief Justice Isa said while announcing the short order. During the hearing, Hamid



Khan and Musharraf's counsel Salman Safdar appeared before the court.

"Musharraf's legal heirs did not follow the case even on multiple notices," the apex court remarked while rejecting the for-

mer president's appeal.

It is for the first time that a former military dictator has been awarded punishment for subverting the Constitution.

Musharraf, the architect of the Kargil War in 1999 and the coup-prone country's last military ruler, died February 5, 2023 in Dubai after a prolonged illness. The 79-year-old former president was undergoing treatment for amyloidosis in Dubai. He was living in the UAE since 2016 in self-exile to avoid criminal charges back home.

The then prime minister Nawaz Sharif had initiated a treason trial against Musharraf in 2013.



SELENA TAKES EXIT FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

Singer-actress Selena Gomez is stepping back from social media. She recently revealed in an Instagram Story that she was "focusing on what really matters" alongside a video of record producer boyfriend Benny Blanco having a playful moment with two young children.

50 CENT GIVES UP PHYSICAL INTIMACY TO FOCUS ON GOALS

Rapper 50 Cent through a post in which he shared a "new big idea," told his fans that he has been practicing abstinence in 2024 so that he can stay focused on his goals.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Today, you may want to wear your power suit, says Ganesha. If you notice people bending and bowing a bit, understand that your hard work has paid off! If not, then you need to get more organised. Either way, there's work to be done.

TAURUS
This is not a day when you should be fooling around with your health. Do not take your health and fitness for granted, warns Ganesha. You will be feeling lazy and listless all day long. Chances are that you could fall ill on account of carelessness.

GEMINI
An auspicious and progressive day awaits you. Along with your daily work you will also be able to tackle your personal issues as well. You will establish an emotional bonding with some person, or will feel the need to. It is a good day to ponder over issues such as partnership or marriage.

CANCER
Be ready to get into the shoes of a juggler today, says Ganesha. Multi-tasking is the need of the hour, my friend! But, no worries for you will be energetic and deft. Pending pile of work will be finished with ease. Seemingly impossible tasks will be finished in a blink of an eye.

LEO
You will be in a very good mood today. You will inspire others to achieve substantial things in life. While you have been looking to take on an extremely challenging project, you have been unable to find the right opening so far.

VIRGO
Your driving force will be a single-minded desire to take your destiny in your own hands. Your organisational abilities will be flawless, and a burning desire to succeed will motivate you to keep pegging at your tasks. Ganesha says your managerial abilities will be enhanced by your decision-making and reasoning abilities.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that you will be able to spend more time with your friend circle. You will be attracted to someone of the opposite sex. In the evening today you will be able to take out your beloved for a romantic evening combined with a drive and dinner at a restaurant.

SCORPIO
A happening day where a lot may happen today, suggests Ganesha. Grey hairs will teach valuable lessons, so keep your ears open to bosses and elders. Seniors will extend their best possible cooperation to you. Stay clear of courtrooms, warns Ganesha, lest the legalities sink you deep.

SAGITTARIUS
A paradigm shift in your temperament and your looks is on the cards today. Your personality will get better as you do some chic attire, jewellery and a rather loud perfume today. You're a magnet today, says Ganesha, and will charm your way through a crowd of admirers who will clamour for your attention.

CAPRICORN
Your investments, inheritance, receipts, etc. will keep your pockets filled with cash. No sooner you try to put them in safe; there will be more than one reason for some expenditure. Keeping a watch on incomes and expenses both will help you avoid any monetary problems, advises Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
You are ambitious, and quite unapologetic about the way you pursue your goals! You will work hard and push your way through if you have to. Not just that, you will see to it that you have all the skills and competency required to make it big.

PISCES
For those in the creative, marketing or advertising fields, today will likely bring about an important milestone on their path to progress, says Ganesha. Your creativity and ingenuity will be at their peak. Remembering that confidence is the key to success will keep you from shying away from challenges, which when surmounted will bring you substantial gains.

Nayanthara lands in legal trouble

Chennai: *Jawan* actress Nayanthara has landed in legal trouble. An FIR has been lodged against her by the Hindu Seva Parishad for hurting religious sentiments.

In a complaint registered at Jabalpur in

Madhya Pradesh, the organisation alleged that the actress insulted Lord Ram in the movie *Annapoorani: The Goddess of Food*. Atul Jeswani of the outfit has said that there are many such scenes in the film, which insult Lord Ram. He also added that the sentiments of Hindus have been hurt by making inappropriate comments against the deity in the film.

According to Jeswani, 'Love Jihad' has also been shown in the film. While terming the film *Annapoorani* as anti-Hindu, Jeswani also mentioned that one of the artistes in the movie showed that Lord Rama used to kill animals and eat meat during his exile.

Meanwhile, the MP police have registered the case under relevant sections against the actress, director Nilesh Krishna, and producers of the movie. Earlier, a man named Ramesh Solanki, in Mumbai, also filed an FIR against the movie.

Solanki shared a statement on X asserting that the movie 'promoted Love Jihad'. Speaking about the movie, *Annapoorani: The Goddess of Food* features Nayanthara, essaying the role of an aspiring chef.



Hasleen roped in for int'l project

Mumbai: Actor Hasleen

Kaur, known for her roles in Netflix's *CAT* and *Tu Jhoothi Main Makkar*, is set to take up a new challenge in the global entertainment landscape with her latest project. After earning acclaim and positive reviews for her recent work, Kaur has delved into an international venture.

Her latest cinematic journey led her to the scenic locales of Canada, where she embraced the action genre in the independent American/Canadian film titled *Ruthless Bastards*. In this film, Kaur assumes the role of a cold-blooded assassin, adding a new dimension to her acting repertoire.

Portraying the character Ishanna Sidhu, who represents an Indian gang, Kaur engaged in the role of the main assassin and fighter. Her character faces formidable challenges, particularly against Hollywood heavyweights Casper Van Dien and Sean Patrick Flanery. The clash of these powerful characters in *Ruthless Bastards* is anticipated to bring an intense narrative to the screen. The film is slated for a tentative release in April or May, and industry insiders are keen to see how Kaur's performance resonates with global audiences.

Ruthless Bastards is expected to be a significant chapter in Hasleen's career. The project marks another step forward for the actor as she continues to explore diverse roles and contribute to the global cinematic landscape.



Oscar library acquires screenplay of Joram

Mumbai: The screenplay of the Manoj Bajpayee-starrer film *Joram* has been acquired by the Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences for its Permanent Core Collection. The Academy adds the screenplays to its core collection which are accessible to students, filmmakers, writers, actors and others from the field of cinema, are for the purpose of research.

Over the years, this collection has grown to include scripts for more than 11,000 films produced from 1910 to the present.

Commenting on the same, writer-director Devashish Makhija said: "Creating *Joram* took endless passion and commitment from a small army of brilliant people. We are thrilled to see the film's screenplay become a part of the Academy Library's Permanent Core Collection. This recognition from such a prestigious institution is rare, precious, and humbling. Our sincere thanks to the Academy."

Joram has been produced by Zee Studios in collaboration with Anupama Bose and Makhijafilm.

MAGIC OF 12TH FAIL Sharp spike in Medha's Instagram following

Mumbai: Medha Shankr has been the current buzz on social media. Her last release, *12th Fail*, directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra, brought her immense appreciation and attraction for her stellar portrayal of IRS Shradha Joshi alongside Vikrant Massey. While the film has been enjoying accolades and appreciation from audiences, the actress also took centre stage following the film's success. Additionally, Medha's fan following on Instagram has also catapulted.

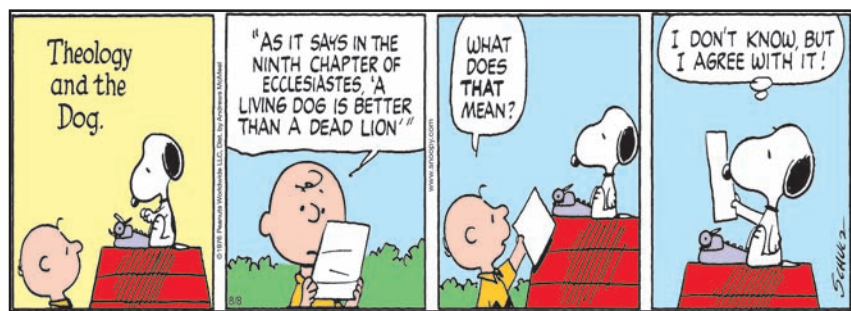
The sweet and innocent representation of Shradha Joshi by Medha Shankr opposite Vikrant Massey in *12th Fail* has been well-received by the fans. The actress had nearly 300,000 followers on Instagram. However, the film has been becoming a rage, owing to which Medha's popularity on social media also skyrocketed as she hit more than one million followers on the platform, and that too within a week.

Hands down, her incredible performance in Vidhu Vinod Chopra's directorial put her into the spotlight, and she has been ruling the internet. From critical acclaim for her compelling and nuanced acting to snippets of her scenes, she is setting social media ablaze.

Medha stepped into the Hindi film industry in 2021 with *Shaddishan*. Directed by Raj Singh Chaudhary, the film was a musical drama that revolved around a road trip. The film also featured Kirti Kulhari, Nivedita Bhattacharya, and others in the lead roles.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

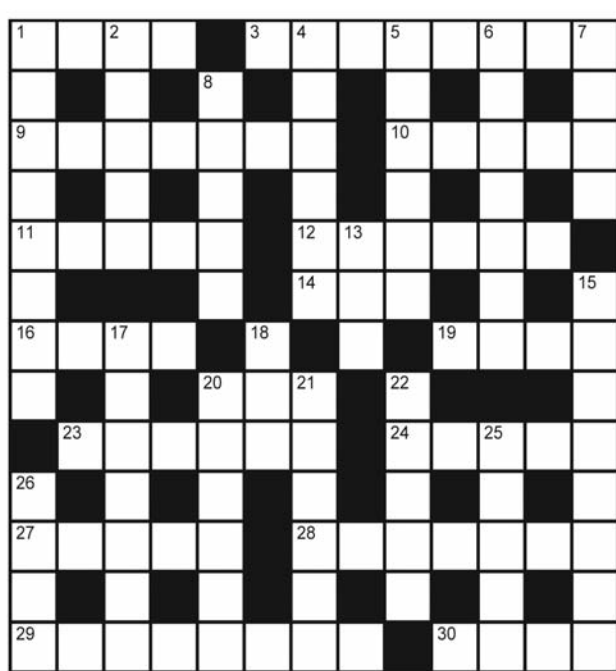


BREVITY



FUN post

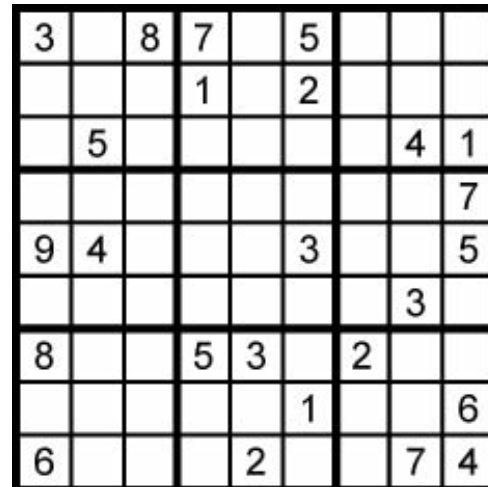
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Elderly
 - 3 Type of guitar
 - 9 Doom
 - 10 Hazardous
 - 11 Cut corners
 - 12 Solvent
 - 14 Articulate
 - 16 Farm sound
 - 19 Bakeshop buy
 - 20 Tie the knot
 - 23 Seem
 - 24 Fable writer
 - 27 Not quite right
 - 28 Domestic fowl
 - 29 Boxer
 - 30 Mold-ripened cheese
- Down**
- 1 Relative of old
 - 2 Boredom
 - 4 Tent material
 - 5 Boisterous
 - 6 Taqueria offering
 - 7 Small islands
 - 8 Pace
 - 13 Craze
 - 15 Apprentice
 - 17 Catching some winks
 - 18 New Zealand parrot
 - 20 Ermine
 - 21 Window coverings
 - 22 Hard to pin down
 - 25 Nymph chaser
 - 26 Freshwater fish

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



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Blue Flag beach FUN BY THE BAY



Puri is not just an important pilgrimage centre. The coastal town is also known for its golden beaches which attract millions of tourists from home and abroad around the year, along with the other popular destinations in its periphery, like the world famous Sun Temple at Konark and Asia's largest brackish water lagoon Chilika which is endowed with nature's bounty.

The Blue Flag beach in Puri came up with a view to provide a cool retreat to the visitors and, over the years, the decked up sea front has given a special place to the Holy City in world tourism map. The world-class amenities available at the Blue Flag beach have made it a favourite among tourists of all classes round the year. Needless to say, the Blue Flag beach has been a catalyst in giving shape to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's dreams of transforming Puri into a world-class heritage city.

Puri is an international tourist destination. The idea of creating the Blue Flag beach by ear-



marking a portion of the golden sands to provide space to beach going tourists on the otherwise crowded sea front

was conceived in 2018. It was identified as the pilot Blue Flag beach by the Society of Integrated Coastal Management (Sicom) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC). However, the CRZ rules came on the way. Finally, the work began after the Odisha Coastal Zone Regulatory Management Authority obtained the necessary clearances.

The 860-metre stretch between Hotel Mayfair and Gandhi Ghat was developed into the Blue Flag beach by Sicom at a cost of ₹8.5 crore.

FEE recognition
The golden sands of Puri beach received the prestigious Blue Flag tag from Copenhagen-based Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) after fulfilling 33 conditions set by the international jury body October 11, 2020. It came as recognition to one-and-a-half-year of persistent efforts by the state as well as Central governments.

Services available
The high quality infra at the Blue Flag beach is equipped to provide all modern amenities to the visitors.

The sprawling parking area at the entrance, clean golden sands with specks of greenery in the surroundings, shacks, bathing zone, changing room, modern toilets, pure drinking water, joggers track, first aid... the Blue Flag beach has them all along with special kids' play zone. The key feature of the beach is its

greenery which provides fresh air to the visitors.

While care has been taken to maintain the quality of bathing water, garbage recycling and solar plants. Bamboo has been extensively used in the structures at the beach keeping in mind environmental concerns. A watch tower, CCTV surveillance cameras, 10 lifeguards along with deployment of a posse of security personnel has been made for the safety and security of the visitors.

The multi-cuisine cafeteria run by OTDC serves the choicest of refreshments to the visitors.

22 lakh footfall in 3 years
Tickets for visitors were issued starting September 1, 2020. While it is priced at ₹20 (for three hours) for tourists, ₹300 monthly passes are issued for locals. In the last three years (till December 31, 2023) the Blue Flag beach registered a footfall of 22,19,540 people.

ARPANA RATHS TRAVERSE STATE



Mutts have long been the vanguards of religious and cultural heritage of Odisha. Various ancient monasteries within the 75-metre perimeter of Srimandir in Puri are being redeveloped as part of the state government's ambitious Parikrama Prakalpa that will be dedicated to people by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik January 17.

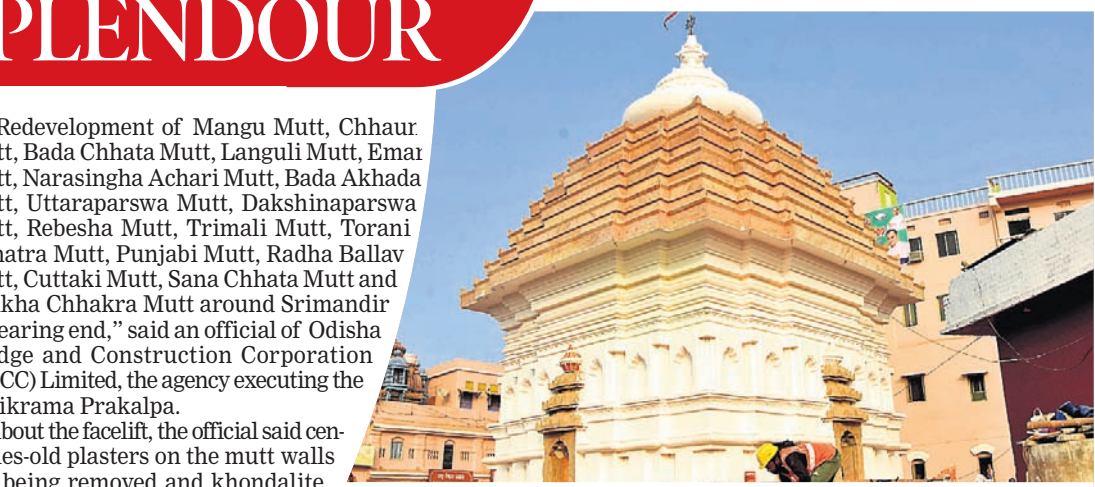
Structures in the premises of as many as 17 mutts and temples, connected with the rituals of Srimandir from time immemorial, had been cleared to create open space around the 12th century shrine for developing the heritage corridor.

AMPLIFYING SRIMANDIR SPLENDOUR

"Redevelopment of Mangu Mutt, Chhaur Mutt, Bada Chhata Mutt, Languli Mutt, Emari Mutt, Narasingha Achari Mutt, Bada Akhada Mutt, Uttaraparswa Mutt, Dakshinaparswa Mutt, Rebeshha Mutt, Trimali Mutt, Torani Chhatra Mutt, Punjabi Mutt, Radha Ballav Mutt, Cuttaki Mutt, Sana Chhata Mutt and Sankha Chhakra Mutt around Srimandir is nearing end," said an official of Odisha Bridge and Construction Corporation (OBCC) Limited, the agency executing the Parikrama Prakalpa.

About the facelift, the official said centuries-old plasters on the mutt walls are being removed and khondalite stones are used as replacement. Expert artisans are burning the midnight oil to complete the renovation at the earliest. The refurbished mutts will add to the grandeur and beauty of Srimandir, he said.

5T Chairman Kartik Pandian has been reviewing the progress of the redevelopment work on a regular basis.



NIJUKTI PARBA

TEACHERS CATALYST OF CHANGE: NAVEEN

Chief Minister hails teachers as 512 new recruits join state government



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: You are not merely teachers; you are catalysts of change...

a pivotal role in shaping the future of our state. The youth of Odisha are our greatest asset.

both Government and Non-Government Aided Colleges. 556 Assistant Professors have been appointed in Govt. Degree Colleges...



POOR VISIBILITY: Commuters had a tough time as a thick blanket of fog engulfed Bhubaneswar...

DRONES TO FACILITATE HEALTHCARE IN STATE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: In a key development spearheaded by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare...



Skye Air's expertise positioned them to address healthcare challenges, enhance infrastructure...

led to Skye Air's collaboration with the Regional Leprosy Training Research Institute in Aska...

and underserved areas. The collaboration marks a significant leap forward in healthcare accessibility...

5T Chairman reviews projects in Khurda, Nayagarh

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: As per the direction of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, 5T & Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian visited Khurda and Nayagarh...



Temple at a cost of ₹32 crore. The 5T Chairman also reviewed the progress of Major Projects in Khurda district...

All these projects have been taken up based on grievances received by Pandian during the visit to Khurda in August 2023.

₹277 crore. Pandian visited Mission Shakti Café at Banapur where he interacted with the Mission Shakti members...

SLSWCA approves ₹1,713cr proposals

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: The State-Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA), chaired by Chief Secretary PK Jena...

EOW bust pan-India job racket; three held



GENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) claimed to have busted a pan-India jobs racket, Wednesday...

mobile phones and ATM cards, besides ₹1 lakh cash have been seized during a search operation, the EOW said.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, NILOFAR NASRIN wife of Sk. Samsuj Zama, At-Galapolo Road, Aradbajar, PS- Sahadevkhunta, Dist-Balasore, Odisha, Pin-756001 declare by this affidavit No.240, Dated 10.01.2024...

Odisha's credit potential at over 2L crore

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) conducted the State Credit Seminar for 2024-25 here Wednesday...



agers belonging to NABARD from various districts. Welcoming the dignitaries, Sudhanshu KK Mishra CGM NABARD emphasised on the concerted efforts required for achieving the set targets...

developing 100 nurseries, watersheds and WADIs promoted by NABARD. Gupta also stressed that NABARD will make an all-out effort to have a partnership with Odisha government...

Panda demands HC bench in Kalahandi

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Jan 10: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Basant Panda has written to Union Law and Justice Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal requesting him to take steps for establishment of a bench of Orissa High Court at Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi district.

Damanjodi-Baiguda doubling rly project commissioned

Bhubaneswar: Railways Wednesday commissioned the 14.60 km newly-laid doubling broad gauge rail line between Damanjodi and Baiguda in Koraput-Singapur Road (Rayagada), official sources said.



FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530...

Tuberculosis threat for pollution-hit Jajpur dist

Large number of TB cases reported from mining and industrial areas of district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Jan 10: The rapid industrialisation of many parts in Jajpur district has been a catalyst to the spread of the deadly tuberculosis disease. The mining areas and places where industrial units have come up, have seen a 55% rise in tuberculosis (TB) cases in the past few years, sources pointed out Wednesday. This has created panic among the residents of the district, they added.

Prior to industrialisation, Jajpur district was predominantly an agriculture-oriented district. It witnessed mining activities in Sukinda much earlier than the industrialisation which started in Kalinganagar from 1995. Fifteen steel and cement plants as well as captive power units have been established on the banks of Brahmani river and its tributary Kharasota river in little less than three decades. Some major steel plants are also undergoing expansions while mineral extraction is on in 10 chromite mines of Sukinda block and black stone mines in Dharmasala block. This has led to the rapid atmospheric pollution in these areas paving the way for spread of TB in the last 15 years.

According to a report by the district Health department, 1,700 TB patients were identified in these industrial and mining



A view of the Manpur bridge, the most polluted landmark in Kalinganagar

areas in 2022. In 2023, another 1,635 persons were diagnosed with TB, taking the total tally to 3,335. Out of these, 938 patients or 57 per cent were from mining and industrial areas. This fact clearly demonstrates the rampant destructive effects of pollution. Sources said that dust and small particles of various minerals are the main reason behind the spread of tuberculosis and also other breathing-related ailments.

In 2022 a total of 1,626 patients recovered while 74 succumbed to the disease. The fatality and recovery rate for 2023 is not yet available.

Among the 106 most polluted cities in the country six from Odisha feature prominently. The Kalinganagar industrial area in this district is the second most polluted place in Odisha. The National Green Tribunal has time and again expressed concern over the pollution level in Kalinganagar.

It has been alleged that 90 per-

sons from Manpur village under Dhuligad panchayat of Danagadi block near Kalinganagar have fallen prey to various pollution-related diseases. Sources said that the main reason for this is because many industrial units switch off their electro static preceptors (ESP) during holidays and at night. These plants are also releasing killer toxic fumes leading to the spread of tuberculosis, they added.

Residents of these localities had been hoping that the Odisha government and the district administration will take proper steps to reduce pollution. However, with nothing happening they have demanded rehabilitation to a cleaner place.

When contacted, Pramod Kumar Behera, regional officer of SPCB at Kalinganagar said the air quality index at Kalinganagar is more than 100 which is not a good sign. The national clean air programme and other measures have been implemented to control pollution.

Cops attacked while nabbing drug peddler

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jaleswar, Jan 10: Police were attacked by locals when they went to arrest a 19-year-old drug peddler in Sekhbarid village of Balasore district late Tuesday night. Villagers including women attacked the police in large numbers.

Police had visited the village after arresting another drug peddler with 283gm of brown sugar worth ₹28.30 lakh earlier in the day from a locality close to the State Highway No 57. Police also seized three mobiles from the accused. After grilling the peddler, police came to know about his associate. Despite being attacked, police managed to nab the second person. Now a manhunt has been launched for all the others involved in the attack on the police contingent.



"All the persons involved in the attack will be arrested soon. We are searching for them," SP Sagarika Nath stated at a press conference here Wednesday evening. She however, did not disclose the identity of the arrested persons as the probe is still on.

The SP also informed that 10 check points have been set up in various places of the district to prevent those accused in the police attack from escaping. All the check points have been set up at places close to the border with West Bengal.

Lady Maoist with ₹1 lakh bounty on head surrenders

PNN & AGENCIES

Malkangiri, Jan 10: A woman Maoist involved in several criminal cases including IED blast in Odisha and carrying a cash reward of ₹1 lakh on her head surrendered before the police here Wednesday, an official said.

The Maoist identified as Ungi Madvi alias Rosni was an active member of the CPI (Maoist) and hailed from Sukma district in Chhattisgarh. She joined the banned CPI(M) in 2016 and was currently operating as a member in Mahupadar belonging to the Darbha division of DKSZC (Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee).

Ungi was carrying the huge cash reward on her head for her involvement in at least 21 cases in Odisha, said Malkangiri SP Nitesh Wadhvani.

"It is a good development as the woman Maoist was actively involved in a series of incidents in Odisha for the last eight years. Apart from Odisha, she was also active in neighbouring states," informed Wadhvani.

The senior cop also explained the reasons behind the 20-year-old woman's surrender. "Recent appeals made by Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and DGP SK Bansal to Maoists to leave the path of violence and become a part of the mainstream for peaceful development of these areas encouraged Rosni to surrender," Wadhvani said.

The SP informed that 21 active Maoist cadres and hundreds of sympathisers have surrendered in this district in the last two years.

Wadhvani added that currently very few Maoist cadres are active in the district. "Many of them are also waiting for an opportunity to surrender," Wadhvani said.

"Rosni was also planning to surrender for a long time after becoming disillusioned with the Maoist ideology. However, she was not being allowed to leave the party by senior leaders. She was forced into various activities," the SP added.

After surrendering, Rosni said that she saw various developmental activities un-



The woman Maoist was actively involved in a series of incidents in Odisha for the last eight years. Apart from Odisha, she was also active in neighbouring states

dertaken by the state government and realised the futility of the violent path followed by Naxalites.

"Maoists themselves are standing in the path of development of the region through their subversive activities. For that purpose, they are forcing innocent tribals to fight and take the path of violence. Once their utility is over, they are being branded as police informers and being killed mercilessly," Rosni said.

Meanwhile Wadhvani once more appealed to the active Maoists to surrender and added that Rosni will be rehabilitated in a proper manner. "We again appeal to Maoist cadres and militias to join the mainstream of the society," he said.

"Rosni will be properly rehabilitated and will receive monetary assistance as per the surrender and rehabilitation scheme of the government of Odisha. She will also get financial assistance for building a house, pursuing studies. She will get training in a vocation of her will," the SP added.

Dolphin census to start Jan 20

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, Jan 10: Forest department personnel of Bhitarkanika National Park will carry out a three-day enumeration drive of dolphins from January 20. The census will end January 22 and will be conducted from Dhamara to Mahanadi river mouth within the Bhitarkanika mangrove wetlands and also in rivers within Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary.

Pradosh Moharana, Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary ranger informed that the Forest personnel will carry out dolphin status surveys in Bhadrak division, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur coasts.

A total of nine teams will be formed to carry out the dolphin population survey in which cetacean experts, Forest department personnel and researchers will actively participate. The coastline of Bhitarkanika National Park is considered as the most favourable habitat place for Irrawaddy dolphins, Gahirmatha and Bhitarkanika off Kendrapara coast have emerged as two ideal habitats for dolphins.

ROURKELA AMONG TOP 15 PIONEER CITIES IN INDIA



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 10: Rourkela has emerged among the top 15 pioneer cities within the country in the 'Streets for People and India Cycles for Change' programme. This programme has been conducted by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and ended recently.

CEO Rourkela Smart City Limited and ADM Rourkela, Dr Subhankar Mohapatra gave this information here Wednesday. "There were several challenges for Rourkela to feature as one of the smart cities in the country.

aspects gave us good mileage and a head start. Rourkela now has found a place amongst the top 15 pioneer cities in the country. This is a very good achievement and we wanted to share this with all of you," said the CEO.

Also, the different activities held during the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup helped in image building of the city, Mohapatra pointed out.

The award function will be held at Pimpri-Chinchwad town of Maharashtra during the National Workshop to be held January 12 and 13. "Besides, the Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) is going to receive the Swachh Bharat Award tomorrow (Thursday)," informed the CEO.

Recently, two Bloomberg officials had visited the city to assess the situation. The city had received USD 1 million from 'Bloomberg Philanthropy' for the development work carried out and the unique work done by RMC in providing cold storage facilities to small businessmen during Covid.



ILA PANDA

26th Oct 1932 - 11th Jan 2005



In loving memory

Baijayant 'Jay', Paramita, Nivedita, Subhrakant Jagi, Braja, KG, Shaifalika Raie, Reva, Anuva, Aditya, Raisah Ila, Raemana Relatives, Members & Associates of IMFA Group

Tel: +91 674 2611000 | Email: memoriam@imfa.in

World's largest lamp for Ram Temple consecration

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 10: This city is gearing up to celebrate the consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya in a huge manner. The world's largest 'diya' (lamp) is being made here. It will be lighted January 22 evening in this city.

"The previous record for the biggest diya (lamp) was 3.3 metres. We have ordered a lamp measuring over 12 feet in circumference at the top and over 5.5 feet in height," said Santosh Kumar Biswal of 'Smile Foundation'. "We have contacted the publishers of 'Guinness World Records' to verify the earlier record and we are on the way to break it," added Santosh.

Jayram Pandit alias Prajapati of Tilak Nagar and five of his associates have been entrusted with the responsibility of building the diya. "I have been making idols for the last 50 years. When this offer came to us 15 days back, we accepted the challenge. My son Sambhu and my main craftsman Babul Pal is helping me out on this job," informed Jayram.



The lamp is being constructed using 500 kilograms of clay, 100kg of hay, 50 bamboos and two sacks of putty. "Fifty per cent of the job has already been done and we will hand over the diya to the customers by January 17," informed Jayram.

Santosh meanwhile said that they have also ordered for a statue of Lord Ram which will be 12 feet in height. "We will take the statue and diya to different parts of Rourkela January 19 onwards. On the evening of January 22, the lamp will be lighted. It will be an awesome sight," he informed.

The lamp will have a capacity to store 6,000 litres of ghee and a 15-foot wick will be attached to it for lighting.

However, both Jayram and his daughter-in-law Nitu Pandit refused to disclose the cost involved in making the world's largest 'diya'. "Please do

not ask about the cost," Nitu said.

Santosh is trying his best to celebrate the occasion with glam and glitz. Invitations to attend the programme January 22nd have been sent to renowned actors Govinda and Rajpal Yadav and former captain, of the Indian cricket team MS Dhoni. "We are waiting to get confirmations from them," Santosh said.

Central Bank of India
75th Anniversary
Chander Mukhi, Nariman Point, Mumbai - 400021
Ph: 022-66387680, FAX: 022-22044336, Website: www.centralbankofindia.co.in

RECRUITMENT OF SAFAI KARMACHARI CUM SUB-STAFF AND/ OR SUB-STAFF 2024-25

In term of Notification dated 19.12.2023 applications were invited for 484 vacancies wherein last date for submission of online application was 09.01.2024. It has been decided to extend the last date of submission of application as under to provide more time/opportunity to maximum number of candidates to apply for the said post.

Revised last date for submission of online application	16.01.2024 (Tuesday)
Revised last date of payment of application fees/intimation charges (only online mode)	16.01.2024 (Tuesday)

All other terms of our Notification dated 19.12.2023 remain unchanged. Please note that candidates who have already applied and paid the requisite fees after our notification dated 19.12.2023 need not to apply afresh.

MUMBAI
DATE: 09.01.2024 DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER (HCM)

AN INVESTOR EDUCATION AND AWARENESS INITIATIVE
Do join us to learn more about Mutual Funds.

Date and Venue:
Saturday, 13th January 2024; 6:30 pm onwards.
at Hotel Sarovar Court, Ispat Market, Ambagan Circle, Bank Street, Sector -19, Rourkela - 769 005, Odisha.
For registration, please contact: Ranjit Mallik, Mobile: 99370 88035.
Registration is compulsory.
The registration time will be from 9:30 am to 6:00 pm.
No walk-ins will be allowed.

AN Investor Education and Awareness Initiative

Visit [https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/key-know-how-to-know-more-about-the-process-to-complete-a-one-time-know-your-customer-\(KYC\)-requirement-to-invest-in-mutual-funds](https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/key-know-how-to-know-more-about-the-process-to-complete-a-one-time-know-your-customer-(KYC)-requirement-to-invest-in-mutual-funds). Investors should only deal with registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified on the SEBI website (www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.html). For any queries, complaints & grievance redressal, investors may reach out to the AMC's and/or Investor Relations Officers. Additionally, investors may also lodge complaints directly with the AMC's, if they are unsatisfied with the resolutions given by AMC's they may raise complaint through the SCORES portal on <https://scores.gov.in>. SCORES portal facilitates investors to lodge complaint online with SEBI and subsequently view its status. In case the investor is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaints raised directly with the AMC's or through the SCORES portal, they may file an complaint on the Smart ODR on <https://smartodr.in/join>.

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

UTKAL GRAMEEN BANK
STRESSED ASSETS RECOVERY BRANCH
At/P.O.: Dhanupali, Dist.: Sambalpur, PIN-768005

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

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of UTKAL GRAMEEN BANK, Stressed Assets Recovery Branch under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice under section 13(2) of the said Act calling upon the Borrower/Guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest and expenses within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower/Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules.

The Borrower/Guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Utkal Grameen Bank for the amount stated below with plus interest and expenses thereon.

Name & Address of the Borrower / Guarantors	Present Liabilities as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Possession Notice	Description of the Security Interest taken over possession
Borrower: Sri Siba Sankar Patro, S/o: Late Sadananda Patro and Legal heirs of Late Manasa Patro are: 1) Smt. Sabita Sahu, W/o: Sri Pradeep Kumar Sahu, 2) Smt. Gita Palo, W/o: Sri Simanchal Palo, 3) Smt. Rashmita Tripathy, W/o: Sri Durgakanta Tripathy, 4) Siba Sankar Patro, S/o: Late Sadananda Patro, All are At: Ainabandha Sahi, Old Berhampur, Nabeen, Berhampur, Ganjam-760009	₹36,56,969/- as on 08.01.2024 and further interest + other charges	07.09.2023 / 08.01.2024	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Land and Building standing in the name of Manasa Patro, W/o.: Sadananda Patro, Mouza: Puruna Berhampur, PS/Tahasil:Berhampur, Dist.: Ganjam, Khata No.: 365/2791, Plot No.: 337/4505, Area: Ac0.049Dec., Kissam: Gharabari

Place: Sambalpur, Date: 10.01.2024
Sd/- Authorised Officer, Utkal Grameen Bank

Do not give way, hold tight. It is when everything seems lost that all is saved.

THE MOTHER



The Culture War

Claudine Gay, Harvard University's first Black female president, was forced to resign after weeks of pressure to step down. But everyone involved in the controversy that pushed her out looks bad.

The ostensible reason for her ouster was sloppy academic writing – mostly the failure to credit other academics whom she quoted almost word for word in previously published work. But those discoveries followed allegations of anti-Semitism and double standards. When asked by Republican congresswoman Elise Stefanik whether student demonstrators "calling for the genocide of Jews violates Harvard's code of conduct," Gay replied that it "depends on the context."

There is little doubt that if the question had referred to the genocide of Black people, context would not have been required. But Gay was walking into a nasty trap. Stefanik had deliberately blurred the distinction between calling for genocide and supporting a Palestinian intifada (armed rebellion). The latter may involve violence, but it is not genocidal.

The right-wing activists who helped push Gay out of her job also look bad. Led by Christopher Rufo of the Manhattan Institute, they see her career as a symbol of unfair racial preference. Gay, for her part, has accused them of racism. Even if they are not racists, they are mimicking so-called progressives who seek to "cancel" people who fail to conform to their own ideological positions.

Finally, wealthy Jewish donors to Harvard, such as the hedge-fund manager Bill Ackman, also look bad for mounting an unrelenting public campaign against Gay. Donating money should not give one the right to interfere in academic matters. Ackman, too, alleges racism, arguing that Harvard tolerates hatred toward Jews.

The American obsession with race is clearly one reason for this unifying mess of accusations and counter-accusations. Still, Gay's ouster – along with that of the University of Pennsylvania's president, Liz Magill, who also walked into Stefanik's trap – does reveal something interesting about the changed perception of Jews.

There is no proof that Gay, Magill, or many of the pro-Palestinian demonstrators on university campuses are anti-Semitic. (Cheerleaders for Hamas are a different matter.) But the more fanatical defenders of the Palestinian cause are as much in thrall to the racial obsession as the right-wing agitators are to opposing "diversity, equity, and inclusion" efforts. They see the violence in Gaza and the Israeli oppression of Palestinians as an example of white supremacy.

On this view, Israelis are white people brutally tyrannising people of colour. That is why pro-Palestine demonstrators shout slogans like, "IDF, KKK, you're all the same!" – as though Israeli soldiers are like the hooded southern racists who once lynched Black people. The fact that most Israelis hail from Arab countries and are physically indistinguishable from the Arab population seems irrelevant.

This view represents a fundamental change from anti-Semitism in the past. Before the nineteenth century, Christians persecuted Jews because they were supposedly the killers of Christ. But as modern nation-states were founded, and as Jews became less religious and socially emancipated, new bogus biological distinctions were invented to justify an ancient hatred. Far from seeing Jews as fellow white people, European and American bigots singled them out as an alien race.

What anti-Semites of all political persuasions shared was the conspiratorial suspicion that Jews constituted a global cabal that exercised immense power behind the scenes. While right-wing anti-Semites saw Jews as Bolshevik conspirators bent on undermining the purity of nations, communists saw them as capitalist plutocrats oppressing the working class. The main reason why Zionism appealed to many Jews is that having their own state would free them at last from being persecuted as permanent outsiders, or as "rootless cosmopolitans," as Stalin called them. In Israel, finally, they could feel rooted.

But as some critics of Israel foresaw quite early on, this would result in Israel gradually adopting some of the very same characteristics as the nations that had persecuted Jews in the past: notions of ethnic exclusivity, chauvinism, and military swagger. Though Hannah Arendt had been a Zionist in the 1940s, she became a critic when she saw that the state for Jews was becoming a Jewish state – not a haven for persecuted refugees, but a country defined by ethno-religious nationalism and a sense of moral untouchability based on a history of victimhood.

This transformation took time. Many of the early settlers were left-wing idealists. But the current Israeli government includes ministers who are unabashed racists. Itamar Ben-Gvir, the minister for national security, has been convicted a half-dozen times for incitement. For this reason alone, Israel is now much admired by far-right politicians in Europe and the United States. In the 1930s, "America Firsters" such as Charles Lindbergh, the heroic pilot, were often anti-Semites who showed more than a little sympathy for Nazi Germany. Yet today, Donald Trump and others who call for "America First" are ardent admirers of the Jewish state, which in turn explains why so many activists on university campuses compare the Israel Defense Forces to the KKK.

Anti-Semites used to associate Jews with the US, because European nationalists viewed both as symbols of rootless cosmopolitanism. Now, pro-Palestine demonstrators associate Israel with the US, because they view both countries as symbols of white oppression of people of colour. Perhaps this was the context of which Gay spoke when she tried to answer Stefanik's tricky question. One wishes that Gay had expressed herself less clumsily. One also wishes that the US, including its highest institutions of learning, could temper their obsession with race. But that seems a very tall order at the moment.

The writer is the author, most recently, of *The Collaborators: Three Stories of Deception and Survival in World War II*.
©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something and that this thing must be attained.
MARIE CURIE

I have always believed, and I still believe, that whatever good or bad fortune may come our way we can always give it meaning and transform it into something of value.
HERMANN HESSE

To practice five things under all circumstances constitutes perfect virtue; these five are gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness.
CONFUCIUS



Padmalochan Dash

THE PERSISTENT CHALLENGES IN COMBATING MARITIME PIRACY UNDERSCORE THE NEED FOR SUSTAINED GLOBAL COOPERATION



Ian Buruma

Pro-Palestine demonstrators associate Israel with the US, because they view both countries as symbols of white oppression of people of colour

FOCUS PIRACY

SECURING THE SEAS



India's strategic location, growing economic importance, and regional power dynamics contribute to its vulnerability to maritime threats

In recent times, the global maritime landscape has witnessed an alarming surge in incidents, posing a significant threat to international security. The recent success of the Indian Navy's MARCOS commandos in a rescue mission underscores the imperative for a proactive stance in addressing maritime risks. The resurgence of maritime piracy stands out as a disquieting trend, exemplified by recent hijackings. Unified international efforts become pivotal to curtail piracy and enhance global maritime security. A comprehensive examination of the global maritime incident profile reveals challenges such as piracy, hijackings, and other security threats.

Statistics from January to September 2023 indicate a rise in piracy incidents to 99, surpassing the 90 recorded in the same period in 2022. Despite relatively low violence towards crews, concerns persist about crew safety. The Gulf of Guinea witnessed an increase in reported incidents, emphasising the importance of regional ownership in addressing crimes. Navigational concerns were raised in the Singapore Straits, while other regions, including the Indonesian archipelagic area and Callao Anchorage in Peru experienced heightened incidents.

Developing the best operational model necessitates a holistic approach that integrates intelligence, technology, and collaboration among different forces. The recent successful rescue mission serves as an exemplary model, showcasing the integration of elite special forces, advanced naval assets, and cutting-edge technology to neutralise maritime threats effectively.

Establishing robust international cooperation and an efficient early warning mechanism is crucial. Collaborative initiatives and timely information sharing significantly improve the capacity to pre-empt and counter-act maritime threats worldwide. Implementing an effective early warning system is pivotal to pre-

vent and mitigate maritime incidents. Timely and accurate information forms the cornerstone for proactive responses. Recent incidents highlight the need for a robust early warning system to anticipate and counter potential maritime threats effectively.

Despite the apparent decline in international maritime piracy, recent events suggest a resurgence, emphasising the need for a broader legal framework, international collaboration, and effective law enforcement. Developing comprehensive, long-term solutions ensures sustained maritime security, requiring a forward-looking approach to address the underlying causes of piracy and hijackings.

Establishing robust mechanisms at international level, including collaborative frameworks and agreements, is essential for effectively addressing maritime threats. Coordinated efforts enhance the collective security of nations. The hijacking incident prompts a re-evaluation of long-term strategies, emphasising the need for continual adaptation and the integration of advanced technologies.

Leveraging advanced technology such as surveillance systems and communication tools enhances the effectiveness of maritime security measures. Ongoing technological innovations are crucial to staying ahead of evolving threats, as seen in the re-evaluation of security

measures prompted by recent attacks in the Red Sea.

Legal frameworks and government initiatives, both at national and international levels, are essential components in safeguarding maritime interests. The Jones Act and adherence to United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) exemplify the commitment to legal protections, while legislative measures like the Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill in India underscore the ongoing efforts to combat evolving challenges.

The Indian government, in collaboration with its security apparatus and the Indian Navy, forms a robust strategy for maritime security. The Jones Act contributes to fostering a safer and more equitable maritime working environment.

Adherence to international legal frameworks, particularly UNCLOS, is crucial for reinforcing the rule of law in maritime activities. India's commitment to maritime security is demonstrated through its alignment with UNCLOS. The enactment of the Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill in 2019 further underscores India's dedication to establishing a comprehensive legal framework for maritime security.

The Indian Navy, committed to safeguarding national interests, executes comprehensive security strategies with dedication and proficiency. Recent rescue operations underscore the

importance of a well-prepared and vigilant naval force in countering threats. The Indian Navy's response showcased seamless integration, utilising warships, patrol aircraft, helicopters, surveillance aircraft, and drones, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive approach. In a prompt and decisive operation, the Indian Navy rescued all 21 crew members from the distressed cargo vessel MV Lila Norfolk off the coast of Somalia. Involving warship INS Chennai, maritime patrol aircraft P-8I, and a long-range Predator MQ9B drone, the operation showcased the Navy's rapid response capabilities. The incident raises concerns about the resurgence of piracy, prompting international attention. Analysts suggest a potential link between recent attacks and the relocation of navy ships, emphasising the need for sustained international efforts to counter threats.

Actively engaged in monitoring the maritime security situation, the Indian Navy deploys additional warships to maintain a deterrent presence. Enhanced anti-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden, announced by the government, underscore the navy's commitment to addressing evolving challenges.

Understanding the reasons behind India being a target for maritime incidents involves examining geopolitical factors and economic interests. India's strategic location, growing economic importance, and regional power dynamics contribute to its vulnerability to maritime threats. The persistent challenges in combating maritime piracy underscore the need for sustained global cooperation. A swift and coordinated response is paramount in addressing maritime incidents, ensuring a safer maritime environment through efficient communication and collaboration among naval forces.

The writer works for an independent research think tank. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM POLICYMAKING

Keeping poll promises not easy

Politicians throughout the world use the election season to make numerous promises to the electorate, and India is no exception. Voters may find election-time promises extremely alluring, but their fulfilment after elections presents obstacles for promise-makers. It is difficult to introduce and implement a new benefit programme for it involves public money general acceptance, and other priorities. Certain commitments may need to be integrated into the nation's pre-existing welfare policy, while others pertain to the country's comprehensive progress and advancement. Once in office, politicians are confronted with the difficult choice of incorporating the pledged into the current policy framework or devising an entirely new policy framework that will absolve them of criticism and censure.

The lack of awareness regarding policy-making process among both political parties endorsing these commitments and supporting bureaucrats renders the programmes ineffective or detrimental to the interests of parties that made the pledges. Formulating policies for a populous and democratic nation like India is not a simple undertaking.

The policy that is devised should aim to satisfy not only the benefit recipients but also the Opposition parties.

Therefore, the formulation of policy must commence with the identification of an agenda and progress towards it through initial consensus building, supported by a consideration of social benefits and costs. This process of establishing consensus is referred to in the jargon of public policy-making as "far and wide consultation" and it involves all relevant parties, irrespective of affiliation. The stakeholders comprise both the policy's beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, regardless of the socio-economic gains or losses that may result from the policy. An additional obstacle is the rights-based approach that governments take to policymaking. It is permissible for the beneficiary to declare, "Nothing for me without me." This means that a policy developed without involving the beneficiaries in decision-making process or considering their input may be economically sustainable but is not acceptable to beneficiaries and only serves to bolster Opposition's position. Consensus building is thus a difficult task during the policymaking process.

We shall now transition to the pragmatic phase of policy formulation. Let us assume that the political commitment made prior to elections is to provide "unemployment allowance to all unemployed individuals in the country." The policy must be devised by the winning party that made the pledge in accordance with this agenda. After extensive consultations among state and non-state stakeholders, a national policy for unemployment benefit must be formulated in accordance with principles of policy formulation. Throughout the consultations, an abundance of issues emerges. The primary one relates to targeting. The states determine the recipients. What are its administrative mechanisms? Is the state prepared to examine individuals who are employed informally while awaiting formal employment? What strategy does the government propose to tackle problems posed by the unemployment and poverty traps? Is the programme targeted or universal in scope? From where resources will originate? The consultation process entails numerous anticipated inquiries, and participants must be adequately prepared to respond to them. This

cannot be achieved without initially estimating the economic burden and identifying the sources of funding for the benefit.

All such commitments—including universal healthcare, old age pension, free housing, complimentary bus rides for women, aid to farmers, and support for widows—require national dialogue, consultation with stakeholders, enhancement of capacity of delivery institutions, establishment of conducive environment for benefit delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and documentation of lessons learned to facilitate required corrections.

Rather than making empty promises, parties should prioritise ensuring efficient and transparent service delivery, preventing corruption, facilitating citizen participation in decision-making, encouraging community audits of public expenditures, improving public mobility, safeguarding against calamities, protecting public property, and protecting individual rights. Such commitments would carry more weight than mere assurances of doles that lead citizens into debt traps.

The writer is a former senior advisor, UNDP.



P Madhava Rao

FORMULATING POLICIES FOR A POPULOUS AND DEMOCRATIC NATION LIKE INDIA IS NOT A SIMPLE UNDERTAKING

Smart learning

Sir, Education is on the brink of transformation in the coming years, with traditional institutions possibly shifting to a global, technology-driven model, reducing reliance on textbooks. Mobile phones are set to play a crucial role in spreading knowledge from urban to rural areas. The future education system transcends physical boundaries, emphasising independent problem-solving and smart citizenship. Priorities include blended education, digital curriculum, and enhanced digital skills for smart employment and skill development. The evolving curriculum focuses on practical learning, moving away from rote memorisation. Blended learning, integrating technology, ensures seamless online and offline experiences, fostering personalised learning accessible across urban and rural landscapes. Personalised education prioritises self-learning, shaping smart citizens capable of meeting global demands. Multimedia education enables deep engagement with audio-visual content, while inclusive education, supported by innovative technologies, aims for quality education accessible to all, including those with special needs. Crucially, teacher skill development promotes the adoption of smart teaching methodologies using technology. Artificial intelligence (AI) is seen as a tool to enhance, not replace, teachers. Students adept in AI align with the fourth industrial revolution.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Debutant at 12

Sir, Indian cricket is blessed to have exceptionally talented young cricketers. One such youngster is Vaibhav Suryavanshi who debuted at the age of 12 years and 284 days against Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy on his home turf Patna to become the youngest first class debutant since the legendary Sachin Tendulkar. The left-handed Vaibhav, an opener, has to be consistent to attain further heights because competition is the buzzword in Indian cricket. Confidence can take him to dizzy heights; but complacency can dump him. There are several examples of youngsters flattering to deceive; Vaibhav should learn from them. There are bound to be failures and the young Vaibhav should maintain his equanimity in tough times. He was trained under the watchful eyes of his father, and on cement tracks, to hone his skills against fast bowling.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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



A group of school students celebrates Pongal, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, Wednesday PTI PHOTO



Pink Tabebuia flowers in full bloom at Cubbon Park premises in Bangalore, Wednesday PTI PHOTO



A beneficiary poses for photos after receiving Pongal gift hamper at the Vadaserry ration shop, in Nagercoil, Wednesday. Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin has announced that the rice cardholders in the state will be given Rs 1,000 along with the gift of raw rice, sugar and a full sugarcane PTI PHOTO



Women personnel of Delhi Police during rehearsals for the upcoming Republic Day parade, in New Delhi, Wednesday PTI PHOTO



A farmer shows the paddy crop due damaged to heavy rainfall, in Puducherry, Wednesday PTI PHOTO



Palestinians gather at the site of an Israeli strike, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip January 10 REUTERS



international

of the day quote

South Korea is our principal enemy. We will have no hesitation in annihilating (South Korea) by mobilizing all means and forces in our hands



KIM JONG UN | LEADER, NORTH KOREA

China and the United States are the largest developing and developed countries in the world, and the future and destiny of this planet require Sino-US relations to be more stable, to be better



XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

Every day, another unspeakable atrocity is committed in Gaza. Millions of people around the world support South Africa's efforts to hold Israel to account. Why can't our government



JEREMY CORBYN | FORMER OPPOSITION LEADER, UK

SHORT TAKES

Largest-ever attack by Houthi rebels

Dubai: Yemen's Houthi rebels fired their largest-ever barrage of drones and missiles targeting shipping in the Red Sea, forcing the United States and British navies to shoot down the projectiles in a major naval engagement, authorities said Wednesday. No damage was immediately reported. A total of 18 drones, two cruise missiles and the anti-ship missile were downed by F-18s from the USS Dwight D Eisenhower, as well as by American Arleigh Burke-class destroyers the USS Gravelly, the USS Laboon and the USS Mason, as well as the United Kingdom's HMS Diamond. The attack by the Iranian-backed Houthis came despite a planned United Nations Security Council vote later Wednesday to potentially condemn and demand an immediate halt to the attacks by the rebels, who say their assaults are aimed at stopping Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Japan quake toll surpasses 200

Tokyo: As of Wednesday, 203 deaths were reported following the 7.6 magnitude quake that slammed the western coastline of Japan on New Year's. Seven of them were at evacuation centers, where rescued people died from injuries and sickness. Such deaths weren't directly caused by the quakes, fires and mudslides. They happened in alleged safety. "The pressures and stress of living in a place you aren't used to lead to such deaths," said Shigeru Nishimori, a disaster official at Ishikawa Prefecture, the hardest hit region.

UK to send warships to Indian Ocean

London: The UK government Wednesday unveiled plans to deploy Royal Navy warships to the Indian Ocean region later this year to operate and train with Indian forces, signalling what it described as the growing importance of the strategic relationship between the two countries. Defence Secretary Grant Shapps, who co-chaired an India-UK Defence Industry CEOs Roundtable with visiting Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Wednesday following their bilateral talks earlier, said the Littoral Response Group (LRG) will be deployed this year and the Carrier Strike Group (CRG) in 2025 for joint India-UK training. The deployment of the UK's "most advanced naval capabilities" has been flagged by the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) as a "decisive step" in bolstering UK-India security ties.

DIPLOMATIC RIFT WITH INDIA

Maldives, China boost ties

Maldives, China sign 20 agreements and elevate relations after Muizzu-Xi meeting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Jan 10: Chinese President Xi Jinping Wednesday held talks with his Maldivian counterpart Mohamed Muizzu after which the two countries signed 20 key agreements and elevated their bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

The two heads of state announced the elevation of bilateral ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

"20 key agreements were signed today between the Government of the Maldives and the Government of China this afternoon and both the Presidents witnessed the signing ceremony," Maldivian President's office said in a post on X.

Muizzu and his wife Sajida Mohammad were given a ceremonial welcome at the Great Hall of People by Xi and his wife Peng Liyuan at the Great Hall of People. President Muizzu was accorded a red carpet welcome and a 21-gun salute.

President Xi and Peng Liyuan later hosted a state banquet in their honour.

Muizzu's state visit to China is taking place amid a diplomatic row with India over derogatory remarks by his ministers against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Muizzu, who is regarded as a pro-China leader, is visiting China amid the row with India after some Maldivian ministers posted derogatory remarks against Prime Minister Modi leading to a spate of cancellations of reservations by Indian



China remains one of our closest allies and development partners

MOHAMED MUIZZU | PRESIDENT, MALDIVES

tourists, who constitute the largest number of visitors to the tourism-dependent island nation.

Besides talks with Xi, Muizzu is expected to meet Chinese Premier Li Qiang and other senior officials before his return to Male January 12.

Muizzu reached Beijing last night after staying in the Chinese city of Fujian for two days.

In his address to the Maldives Business Forum in Fujian Province Tuesday, Muizzu appealed to China to "intensify" efforts to send more tourists to his country.

"China was our (Maldives) number one market (for tourism) pre-Covid, and it is my request that we intensify efforts for China to regain this position," he said.

His appeal for more Chinese tourists came amid a diplomatic

row with India.

Muizzu's government suspended three deputy ministers for their derogatory posts on social media.

Also, the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI) strongly condemned the derogatory comments.

According to data released by the Maldives Tourism Ministry earlier, India has remained the largest tourist market for the country in 2023.

The highest number of visitors to the Maldives were from India, with 209,198 arrivals, followed by Russia in second place with 209,146 arrivals, and

China in third place with 187,118 arrivals.

Maldives and China signed the FTA in December 2014 during the pro-China

LONDON: The ruling coalition of Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) and the People's National Congress (PNC) deployed anti-India sentiments and attempted to spread disinformation around this theme during the on the 2023 presidential elections, according to a report issued by the European Union. The European Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to Maldives published its final report Tuesday on the two rounds of election that took place September 9 and 30 last year. Following an 11-week-long observation in the archipelagic nation in the Indian Ocean, upon the invitation of national authorities, the EU EOM found the campaign run by the PPM-PNC coalition was based on fears of Indian influences on the nation. "EU EOM observers noted instances of derogatory language, directed towards the president, on the side of PPM-PNC," reads the report. "Their campaign included anti-India sentiments, based on fears of Indian influences and anxiety regarding a presence of Indian military personnel inside the country. This theme was subject to multiple online disinformation attempts," it said. The EU mission noted that political and campaign fundraising and financial expenditure lack transparency and effective oversight. The EU EOM also recorded the political partisanship of the media, including public service media, while there were some indications of information manipulation in social media. "Both camps also engaged in negative campaigning, suggesting 'discontinued development and the return of a repressive PPM government' on the one side, and alleging 'unfulfilled government promises, corruption and foreign intervention' on the other, with accusations of allowing the presence of Indian military emphasised repeatedly," their report notes.

'Anti-India narrative by Maldives' ruling coalition during 2023 polls'

President Abdulla Yameen administration. However, his successor President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's administration did not implement the agreement, according to Maldives media reports.

26/11 MASTERMIND

Hafiz Saeed in Pak custody serving 78-year in prison

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Jan 10: Mumbai terror attack mastermind and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba leader Hafiz Saeed is in the custody of the Pakistan government and is serving a 78-year imprisonment sentence following his conviction in terror financing cases, the UN has said in updated information.

Saeed, 73, was designated as a global terrorist by the UN Security Council's Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee in December 2008.

He is in the custody of the Government of Pakistan serving a 78-year imprisonment sentence since 12 February 2020 as a result of a conviction in seven terror financing cases, the Sanctions Committee said in an amended entry posted through a press release on the UN website.

Saeed's address is listed as House No 116E, Mohalla Johar, Lahore, Tehsil, Lahore City, Lahore District, Pakistan "as of" May 2008.

In December, India asked Pakistan to extradite Saeed, the 2008 Mumbai terror attack mastermind who Indian probe agencies want in several terror cases.

Last month, the Security Council 1267 Committee enacted a few amendments to certain entries on its ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List of individuals and entities subject to assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo. Saeed is among those whose information has been amended and the updated details have been made available through the press release.

all expressed support for Noboa's government, and China closed its embassy and consulates until further notice.

The takeover of TC's studio in Guayaquil was broadcast for about 20 minutes. Men wearing black balaclavas and mostly dressed in black wielded guns and accosted staffers huddling on the floor.

Gunshots and yelling were heard and some of the invaders gestured at the camera.

"They shot one of our cameramen in the leg, broke the arm of another one. They fired bullets," added the broadcaster's Rendon. "The police came in minutes, surrounded the TV station and the tactical units intervened."

Police said they confiscated explosives and guns, and showed images of young men kneeling with their hands zip-tied.

The channel was back on-air for its evening news broadcast, with anchors saying the attorney general's office was on site collecting evidence. Two employees were injured, it said.

Gunmen in Ecuador storm TV studio

The unprecedented assault on a TV station in Ecuador came hours after a series of other attacks and police officer abductions. It also followed the apparent escapes from prison of two of the leaders of Ecuador's most powerful gangs

REUTERS

Guayaquil, Jan 10: Gunmen with explosives stormed a TV station on-air in Ecuador Tuesday during a wave of violence around the nation that prompted President Daniel Noboa to name 22 gangs as terrorist organizations to be hunted by the military.

Police arrested the 13 men who burst into TC's studio during a live broadcast, while elsewhere at least seven police officers were kidnapped and there were several explosions.

"Thank God, we are alive, because it was an extremely violent attack," said Jorge Rendon, deputy director of the news program that was interrupted.

Noboa, who took office in November promising to stem drug-related violence, declared a 60-day state of emergency Monday in response to prison violence including hostage-takings of guards by inmates - and the apparent escape of Los Chone's gang leader Adolfo Macias over



the weekend. In a revised decree Tuesday, Noboa recognized an "internal armed conflict" and identified nearly two dozen gangs as terrorist groups, including Los Chone's.

The government has said the violence is a reaction to Noboa's plan to build a new high security prison and transfer jailed gang leaders. "They have created a wave of violence to frighten the populace," said Admiral Jaime

Vela, head of the joint command of the armed forces, adding that the decree made the gangs military targets.

Prison transfers of gang leaders have historically led to violence, with hundreds of inmates killed in recent years. Gang wars over lucrative cocaine smuggling routes have also fueled the instability.

Peru declared an emergency along its border with Ecuador, while other South American nations Brazil, Colombia and Chile

YET ANOTHER CRISIS TO EXPLOIT

HOW BEIJING IS BENEFITING FROM ISRAEL'S WAR IN GAZA

China leaned in to the chaos during the past year as Western diplomats frantically travelled around the globe in an attempt to contain an ever-increasing string of wars, crises, and other calamities, from Ukraine to Darfur to Nagorno-Karabakh to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The October 7 attack by Hamas on and the military operation by Israel in the Gaza Strip have given Beijing yet another issue to take advantage of. As Beijing has carefully calibrated its response to the war, closely monitoring public opinion in the developing world, the United States discredits itself in the eyes of the Global South with its seemingly unconditional support for Israel.

Since Hamas's brutal attack, the Biden administration has tried to reconcile public support for Israel with private pressure to more carefully target its attacks in Gaza and to be more open to a political settlement with the

Palestinians. Beijing, on the other hand, has been much less constrained by the need for balance. By calling for a two-state solution, refusing to condemn Hamas, and making symbolic efforts to support a cease-fire, it has taken advantage of global anti-Israeli sentiment in a bid to elevate its own standing in the Global South.

In sharp contrast, when Russian President Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine in February 2022, China took some time to find its feet. It fumbled its initial response, waiting before issuing somewhat confusing statements. By the time Hamas launched its brutal attack on Israel, however, Beijing had sharpened its approach and was able to respond rapidly. As it became clear that public opinion in the Global South was overwhelmingly weighted against Israel, China immediately sought to leverage the crisis to expose what it sees as American double standards. October 8, China's foreign ministry released a



statement calling for a cease-fire and endorsing the two-state solution. What wasn't included in the statement was any criticism of Hamas or condemnation of the massacre it carried out, even though four of the terrorist group's victims had been Chinese nationals.

And China's anti-Israeli rhetoric extends to its diplomatic outreach. On November 20, a group of Arab foreign ministers embarked on a tour to the countries that are permanent mem-

bers of the UN Security Council. Their first stop was in Beijing, where they were welcomed by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The choice to travel east before their meetings in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States was surely intentional. It can be read as evidence of China's increasing cachet in the Middle East since negotiating a detente between Iran and Saudi Arabia last March. Even though the meeting in Beijing produced no concrete results, this never seems to have been the goal. Instead, it was a way for the Arab countries to signal that they have choices apart from just the United States. And China relishes playing the role of alternative partner.

China's stance on the war in Gaza is an attempt to make a virtue of its relative isolation. China has just a single treaty ally in the entire world—North Korea. In the Middle East, the United States has been steadfast in its commitment to Israel's security since the

1973 Yom Kippur War. China, by contrast, is free to pick and choose its partners in the region depending on the issue—for example, buying Iranian oil while cooperating with Saudi Arabia on ballistic missile technology or building infrastructure in Syria while trying to bind Turkey into the Belt and Road Initiative. Thanks to this relative freedom, China has been able to prioritize the performative aspect of its response to the war in Gaza over everything else; unlike the United States, it has no long-standing ally to accuse it of betrayal.

Finally, China is not trying to unite these countries in a Chinese-led anti-Western alliance, as many in Washington seem to believe. Whereas the United States talks about how other countries should align with its positions and follow global rules, China presents itself as a champion of a "multicivilisational world" and a partner for development and sovereignty.



It is possible that we will be the third largest economy by 2027-28, and our GDP will cross \$5 trillion by that time. By 2047, it is a conservative estimate that we will reach at least \$30 trillion in terms of economy
NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

BOEING CEO ADMITS ERRORS

Boeing CEO Dave Calhoun acknowledged errors by the US planemaker as more than 170 jets remained grounded for a fourth day, telling staff the company would ensure an accident like the mid-air Alaska Airlines panel blowout "can never happen again"



of the day quote

The 7.3% growth estimate for FY24 is a very positive development. Overall economic climate is very encouraging at present

DINESH KUMAR KHARA | CHAIRMAN, SBI

In the near future, yes (on listing of airports vertical). It depends. We have a couple of triggers that we need to cross before we will do that. First big one is obviously Navi Mumbai (airport) being operationalised and having its first stable year of operations. But that is one of the triggers

JEET ADANI | VP, ADANI ENTERPRISES

We believe that as people experience the sheer brilliance of this wrist-worn innovation, the demand will soar, setting new benchmarks in the wearable tech industry

ARNAV KISHORE | CEO AND FOUNDER, FIREBOLT

We will soon launch flights to Lakshadweep as well as to Ayodhya. The latest fund infusion will help us become stronger

AJAY SINGH | CHIEF, SPICEJET

11-MONTH LOW

Russian oil binge falls

Rising prices cap India's thirst for Russian crude

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

New Delhi, Jan 10: Indian purchases of Russian crude in defiance of Western pressure over the Ukraine war have fallen to an 11-month low as the price tag on the discounted oil rises, figures show.

Since the invasion of Ukraine nearly two years ago, India has bought hundreds of millions of barrels of cut-price Russian crude, saving itself billions of dollars while bolstering Moscow's war coffers.

The purchases have catapulted it to second place among Russia's customers behind China, and Indian officials have made no secret of their decision to prioritise national interest over international sanctions against Moscow.

But the price of Russian crude has risen in the face of OPEC+ production cuts and increased demand from China, analysts say, making it less attractive to Indian customers.

Indian refiners bought 1.45 million barrels per day of Russian oil last month, their lowest amount since last January and down nearly 16 percent from November, according to global energy trade intelligence platform Kpler.

The biggest beneficiary of the change is Moscow: Russian crude has been trading above \$85 per barrel, reports say, even though a coalition of the G7, EU and Australia imposed a \$60 price



cap a year ago.

New Delhi's reduced imports will be welcomed by some European policymakers who have raised concerns over how Indian refiners have processed Russian crude into fuel for the European market, effectively bypassing the EU's sanctions.

Government officials say the change is purely pragmatic and price-driven, rather than political. "If they don't offer us a discount, why would we buy from them," Indian oil minister Hardeep Singh Puri told reporters last week. "India's leadership has only one requirement: that the Indian consumer gets the energy at the most economical price, without disruption," he added.

Moscow is itself looking to shore up its oil revenues.

China remains Moscow's biggest oil customer and tracking data from Kpler shows that over the last two months, 10 tankers of Sokol cargoes that were headed for Indian destinations either changed course or idled abruptly.

The interplay between India and China was a key driver of the change as both countries now vie for the same barrels

VIKTOR KATONA | LEAD CRUDE ANALYST, KPLER

cent of its needs.

In the 10 months after Russia invaded Ukraine, India saved \$3.6 billion by importing heavily discounted crude from Russia, according to data presented by a ruling party lawmaker in parliament. The country's imports of Russian crude peaked in June 2023 at nearly two million barrels per day, but have steadily shrunk since.

Government officials say the change is purely pragmatic and price-driven, rather than political.

"If they don't offer us a discount, why would we buy from them," Indian oil minister Hardeep Singh Puri told reporters last week. "India's leadership has only one requirement: that the Indian consumer gets the energy at the most economical price, without disruption," he added.

Moscow is itself looking to shore up its oil revenues.

China remains Moscow's biggest oil customer and tracking data from Kpler shows that over the last two months, 10 tankers of Sokol cargoes that were headed for Indian destinations either changed course or idled abruptly.

POTATO PATENT PepsiCo wins plea against India

REUTERS

New Delhi, Jan 10: An Indian court has effectively quashed a decision that removed PepsiCo Inc's patent for the potato variety used to make its popular Lay's potato chips.

India's Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPVFR) Authority in 2021 revoked the intellectual protection for the US snacks and drinks maker's FC5 potato variety, saying Indian rules did not allow seed varieties to be patented.

PepsiCo petitioned the Delhi High Court against the decision, but in July 2023 judge Navin Chawla dismissed its appeal. The company then appealed to the same court to reverse that decision.

In a judgement dated January 9 and seen by Reuters, Delhi High Court judges Yashwant Varma and Dharmesh Sharma reversed the July 2023 ruling.

PepsiCo welcomed that decision. "We remain dedicated and will continue to work along with the farming communities ensuring their benefit and overall progress," a PepsiCo India spokesperson said in an emailed statement.

PepsiCo, which set up its first potato chip plant in India in 1989, supplies the FC5 seed variety to a group of farmers who in turn sell their produce to the company at a fixed price.

In 2019, PepsiCo sued some Indian farmers for cultivating the FC5 potato variety, accusing growers of infringing its patent.

GDP to cross \$4tn in '24-25: PHDCCI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 10: India's economy is likely to surpass \$4 trillion in 2024-25 and further escalate to \$5 trillion by 2026-27, according to a PHDCCI report released Wednesday.

"The Indian economy is showing evidence of strong growth...It is imperative that there is a need to remain watchful and adaptable in the coming days to mitigate the dangers presented by the global economy through carefully calibrated policy actions," the report said.

Observing that despite global challenges, India's economy remains resilient, the report said the country is poised to attain the status of a developed economy by 2047 under the initiative of 'Viksit Bharat'.

"... India is making significant strides for its futuristic growth trajectory (Indian economy is) anticipated to surpass \$4 trillion in the financial year 2024-25 and further escalate to \$5 trillion by the financial year 2026-27," the report said.

Elaborating upon the various steps to accelerate economic growth further, Deputy Secretary General at PHDCCI SP Sharma said the government should focus more on the informal sector because sometimes the reforms are not percolated at the ground level.

He further said the banking system needs to become more robust to help small businesses so that they are able to expand



The industry chamber also expects the RBI to cut the repo rate by 100 basis points in a calibrated manner by the end of 2024

their capacities according to the demand trajectory.

The analysis is based on lead macroeconomic indicators, including GDP Growth, Export Growth, Gross National Savings, Total Investments and Debt of GDP Ratio.

The analysis for the report has been conducted for four sets of time periods, Pre Pandemic Years (2018, 2019), Pandemic Years (2020, 2021), Post Pandemic Years (2022, 2023) and Futuristic Outlook Years (2024, 2025). Ranking of the lead economic indicators has been observed in these four periods, said the industry body PHDCCI.

With regards to retail inflation, the report estimated that it is expected to be around 4.5 per cent on average in 2024.






ULTIMATE KHO KHO

SEMI FINAL

11 JAN | J N INDOOR STADIUM, CUTTACK

ALL THE BEST



VS



7:30 PM



VS



8:30 PM

LIVE ON






OIPR-29020/13/0002/2324

