# HERE. NOW



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

LEISURE | P2 VOLUME 13. ISSUE 281 | www.orissapost.com



China–Maldives ties

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

INTERNATIONAL | P10

**BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY JANUAR** 



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

SHORT TAKES

Pan-India jobs racket

Bhubaneswar: Bhubaneswar:

The Economic Offences Wing

(EOW) of Odisha government

claimed to have busted a pan-

India jobs racket Wednesday, and

arrested three people for their al-

leged involvement in it, officials

said. Members of the gang operating the "racket" were active

in several states, including

Odisha, Jammu & Kashmir,

Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya

Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, they

said. However, it was being run mainly from Delhi, Mumbai and

Hyderabad. Two of those ar-

rested hail from Hyderabad. while the other belongs to Odisha,

I-T unearths ₹1K-cr

unaccounted sales

the EOW said.

busted; 3 arrested

SPORTS | P12

12 PAGES | ₹5.00

# **Woman Maoist carrying** ₹1L bounty surrenders

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 Wadhwani.

"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 Wadhwani.

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



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

New Delhi: The Income Tax (I-T) department has detected "unaccounted cash sales" of about ₹1,000 crore after it recently raided the Polycab group, a prominent wires, cables and electrical items manufacturer, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) and official sources said Wednesday. Unaccounted cash of more than ₹4 crore was seized and more than 25 bank lockers were put on restraint after the searches were launched against the group December 22 last year, the CBDT said in a statement. It said a total of 50 premises in Mumbai, Pune, Aurangabad and Nashik in Maharashtra, Daman,

Halol in Gujarat and Delhi were

# **IRREGULAR** by MANJUL



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

SENSEX **71657.71**  271.50

₹62,101

₹71,837

**21618.70 1** 73.90

**VARIATION** 

CTC

27.4°C

**MARKET WATC** 

DOLLAR **83.09** 

EURO

GOLD

SILVER

WEATHER

Max Temp

Min Temp

**Humidity** 

Rainfall

DRY WEATHER

VERY LIKELY

# 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 read-

ing 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

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 au-

# 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

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

The Mines department, however, came out with a new notification on sand mining December 21. Although guide lines 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.

Although guidelines restrict use of

machines for sand mining, the Mines

dept allowed 'mechanised' sand lifting

in case of 'utmost necessity'

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.

# Review plea in SC over **Article 370 abrogation**

New Delhi: A review petition has been filed in the Supreme Court against the recent Constitution Bench ruling upholding the revocation of Article 370 as valid. The review petition, filed under Article 137 of the Constitution against the decision rendered December 11, said that impugned judgement should have not left the question open whether Parliament can extinguish the character of statehood by converting a state into one or more

# 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 furore 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.

Ram temple event THE RSS AND BJP HAVE TURNED THE TEMPLE IN AYODHYA INTO A POLITICAL PROJECT, SAYS CONG PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sonia, Kharge to skip

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

"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 fourmember bench headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justices Mansoor Ali Shah, Aminuddin Khan and Athar Minallah conducted the

"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 former president's appeal. It is for the first time that a for-

mer 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.

On December 17, 2019, a threejudge special court, comprising Justice Waqar Ahmad Seth, Justice Nazar Akbar and Justice Shahid Karim sentenced Musharraf to death - who was sentenced in absentia due to illness and being out of the country - under Article 6 of the Constitution of Pakistan.

The Article states that "any person who abrogates or subverts or suspends or holds in abeyance, or attempts or conspires to abrogate or subvert or suspend or hold in abeyance the Constitution by use of force or show force or by any other unconstitutional means shall be guilty of high treason."



# leisure



#### **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.



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 care

An auspicious and progressive day awaits you Alongwith 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, savs 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

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 challeng ing project, you have been unable to find

# **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 manage rial abilities will be enhanced by your deci sion-making and reasoning abilities.

# 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 roman tic 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 coopera 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 don 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, inheri tance, receipts, etc. will keep your packets 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 vou 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**

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

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

> 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

that the sentiments of Hindus have

been hurt by making inappro-

priate comments against the

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

> 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 as piring chef.

AGENCIES



Kaur, known for her roles in Netflix's  $\operatorname{\it CAT}$  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 reper-

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.



Mumbai: The screenplay of the Manoj Bajpayee-star-rer film Joram has been acquired by the Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences for its

The Academy adds the screenplays to its core col-lection which are accessible to students, filmmakers from the field of cinema are for the purpose of re

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 sion and commitmen from a small army of brilliant people. We are thrilled to see the Library's Permanent Core Collection. This recogni tion from such a prestigious institution is rare, precious and humbling. Our sincere thanks to the Academy Joram has been produced by Zee Studios in collabo-

ration 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

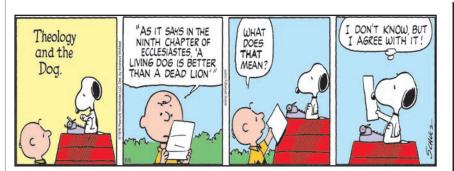
media. Her last release, 12th Fail, directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra, brought her immense appreciation and attraction for her stellar portrayal of IRS Shraddha Joshi alongside Vikrant Massey. While the film has been enjoying accolades and appreciation from audiences, the actress also took centre stage following the film's success. Additionally, Medha's fan following on Instagram has also cata-The sweet and innocent representation of Shraddha 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

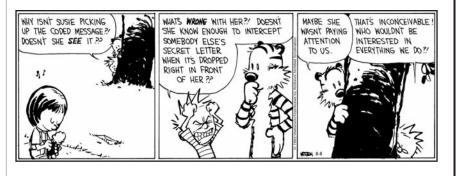
directorial put her into the spotlight, and she has been ruling the internet. From critical acclaim for her compelling and nuanced acting to snippets of her scenes, she is setting social media Medha stepped into the Hindi film industry in 2021 with

*haddisthan*. Directed by Rai 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 HOBBES**



# BREVITY



# FUN

# 12

Copyright @2024 PuzzleJunction.com

30 Mold-ripened

Relative of old

4 Tent material

5 Boisterous

offering

6 Taqueria

cheese

2 Boredom

<u>Down</u>

#### Across 28 Domestic fowl 29 Boxer

- 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
- 7 Small islands 8 Pace

**CROSSWORD** 

13 Craze

15 Apprentice

some winks

18 New Zealand

coverings

25 Nymph chaser

22 Hard to pin

down

26 Freshwater

17 Catching

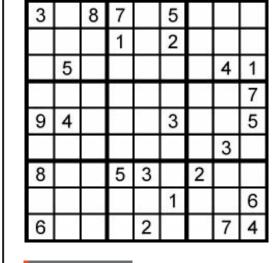
parrot

20 Ermine

21 Window

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.

SUDOKU



# SOLUTIONS



SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



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 trans-

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

forming Puri into a world-class heritage city. Puri is an international tourist destination. The idea of creating the Blue Flag beach by earceived 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 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 amneties 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

air to the visitors.

While care has been taken to maintain the quality of bathing water, the facility has its own grey water treatment, 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

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.



marking

a portion of

the golden sands

to provide space to beach



THURSDAY | JANUARY 11 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAR

**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 catalvsts of change, contributing to the intellectual and social growth of our state, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said in his address while hailing the newly-recruited teachers. A total of 512 Assistant Professors, Assistant Training Officers, and Junior Assistants joined the state government in an induction programme at the Convention Centre in Lok Seva Bhawan here, Wednesday.

While 158 Assistant Professors joined the Higher Education Department, 10 Assistant Professors, 194 Assistant Training Officers and 150 Junior Assistants joined the Skill Development & Technical Education Department.

The Chief  $\rm \bar{M}inister$  further said that Higher Education plays

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

He urged the professors to equip their students with appropriate academic knowledge along with critical thinking skills, creativity and a global perspective.

Stating that Higher Education has always been a major focus area of his government, he informed that in the last few years, close to 5 thousand Teaching and Non-teaching staff has been recruited in the last few years.

The state government has also decided to open Government Degree colleges in the arts stream in the 18 uncovered blocks of Odisha to ensure equity and promote higher education in all parts of the state, he informed.

It may be mentioned that in the last few years, record numbers of Teaching and Non-teaching staff (4941) has been recruited for

both Government and Non-Government Aided Colleges. 556 Assistant Professors have been appointed in Govt. Degree Colleges, 332 Assistant Professors appointed in Teacher Education Training institute and 308 nonteaching staff has also been recruited. Furthermore, 3745 Lecturer in Non-Government Aided colleges have been recruited in the last few years.

Speaking to newly-appointed persons of Skill Development & Technical Education, the CM said that along with higher education, the realm of skill has become predominantly significant for the future of our youth. His government has embarked on a transformative journey towards a skilled and empowered Odisha, he added.

He further said that this recruitment underscores the commitment of my government under the 5T framework, towards nurturing skill development.

He underscored that this induction represents a significant stride towards realizing our vision for a technologically advanced and adaptive workforce.

Together, he said, we aim to elevate the "Skilled-in-Odisha" initiative to unprecedented



POOR VISIBILITY: Commuters had a tough time as a thick blanket of fog engulfed Bhubaneswar reducing visibility on City roads and the highway, Wednesday

# 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, Delhi-based Skye Air has secured a major mandate to enhance healthcare accessibility in the eastern region.

Skye Air emerged as the preferred choice after a rigorous evaluation. Among the others in fray were competitors such as TSAW, TechEagle and RedWing.



Skye Air's expertise positioned them to address healthcare challenges, enhance infrastructure, and elevate care standards for eastern state communities.

The competitive tender process

led to Skye Air's collaboration with the Regional Leprosy Training Research Institute in Aska, focusing on healthcare advancements.

With this mandate, Skye Air will partner with the leprosy institute to employ innovative strategies and advanced technologies to provide healthcare. The goal is to ensure the timely and efficient delivery of essential medical supplies, diagnostics, and emergency services to remote and underserved areas. The collaboration marks a significant leap forward in healthcare accessibility and delivery,

bringing together Skye Air, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the Regional Leprosy Training Research Institute in Aska. Guided by a crucial initiative,

the collaboration with the institute in Aska will enable all the stakeholders overcome specific

# 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 Wednesday and reviewed the progress of various developmental works in these districts. He also interacted with students and general public.

Pandian participated in the Nua-O programme at Haveli Padia in Khurda and interacted with students of all colleges of the district. He discussed with the students on Nua-O programme providing a platform for youngsters to showcase their talent and helps achieve overall personality development in addition to their academic achievements. He asked them to work hard with self-confidence to achieve success.

He visited Maa Bhagabati Temple at Banapur and reviewed the ongoing developmental works at a cost of ₹33 crore. He also reviewed the ongoing developmental works of Maa Ugratara Shatipitha

CLASSIFIED

I, NILOFAR NASRIN wife

Galapolo Road, Aradbajar,

PS- Sahadevkhunta, Dist-

Balasore, Odisha, Pin-

756001 declare by this

10.01.2024 that now

all future purposes.

affidavit No.240, Dated

onwards I shall be known

as NILOFAR NASRIN for

I SHAYAN UJ ZAMA, Son

of Sk. Samsuj Zama, At-

Galapolo Road, Aradbajar,

PS- Sahadevkhunta, Dist-

Balasore, Odisha, Pin-

756001 declare by this

16.11.2023 that now

affidavit No- 7837, Dated

onwards I shall be known

as SK. SHAYANUJ ZAMA

for all future purposes.

of Sk. Samsuj Zama, At-

**AFFIDAVIT** 



Temple at a cost of ₹32 crore.

The 5T Chairman also reviewed the progress of Major Projects in Khurda district -Establishment of 100 Bedded Sub-Divisional Hospital (SDH) at Begunia, Establishment of Odisha Paika Academy and Research Centre at Khurda and development of 5 vending zones with 266 kiosks at a cost of ₹8.80 crore in Khurda municipality.

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: The

National Bank for Agriculture

and Rural Development

(NABARD) conducted the State

Credit Seminar for 2024-25 here

Wednesday. During the seminar,

the 'State Focus Paper for Odisha'

was released. The paper pro-

jected an overall credit poten-

tial under priority sector at

The seminar was chaired by

Development Commissioner-

cum-Additional Chief Secretary

Anu Garg in presence of

Principal Secretary, (Finance)

Vishal Kumar Dev; Agriculture

and Farmers' Empowerment

Principal Secretary Arabinda

Kumar Padhee RBI regional di-

rector SP Mohanty, SLBC con-

venor Goutam Patra and con-

trolling heads of banks and other

dignitaries from banking and

state government departments

and district development man-

₹2,00,608 crore for FY 2024-25.

POST NEWS NETWORK

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

He also reviewed the progress of 3 Major ISS Projects - ISS across River Kuakhai in Pandara village, ISS across River Daya in Basantapur villages and ISS across River Kushabhadra in Ramachandrapur village being implemented at a total cost of

Odisha's credit potential at over 2L crore

agers belonging to NABARD

Sudhanshu KK Mishra CGM

NABARD emphasised on the

concerted efforts required for

achieving the set targets for the

current fiscal and increasing

the credit flow to priority sector

in Odisha. He added the impor-

tance of resilient agriculture in

shaping the future of agri econ-

tivities taken up by NABARD

like canopy management in col-

laboration with Central

Horticulture Experiment Station

(CHES). Farmers from all over

the state have been trained for

He also highlighted the ac-

omy in the state

Welcoming the dignitaries,

from various districts

Pandian visited Mission Shakti Café at Banapur where he interacted with the Mission Shakti members managing the café. He appreciated their efforts in providing hygienic food at affordable rates to the customers.

In Nayagarh, he reviewed other major projects – Kusumi Barrage at a cost of ₹328 crore; Mega Piped Water Supply to different blocks and NACs at a cost of ₹1782 crore; Development of Nilamadhav Temple, Kantilo at a cost of 31 crore; other major temple development projects at a total cost of ₹40 crore; and major roads and bridges projects. Some of the projects have been taken up after the previous visit of Pandian in July 2023 to Navagarh when he attended the grievance meetings and took feedback from the locals.

During the day, he interacted with the public at Paltan Padia, Banapur in Khurda district and Jail Chowk Ground, Ranpur in Nayagarh. He received the grievances on various issues and assured early resolution.

developing 100 nurseries, wa-

tersheds and WADIs promoted

Gupta also stressed that

NABARD will make an all-out ef-

fort to have a partnership with

Odisha government for the de-

for completing the credit plan-

ning exercise on time and stated

that it has been a major part-

ner for the state government in

implementation, creation of

rural infrastructure and scal-

ing up operations. She advised

stakeholders to ensure that efforts

are made to achieve the poten-

tial plan that has been presented

Dev said that credit flow from

banks to the priority sector in

Odisha has been good so far.

However, there is need for urgent

improvement and attention as

the credit plan for the state should

be 40 per cent of GSDP which is

Garg congratulated NABARD

velopment of the state.

by NABARD.

by NABARD.

# **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, approved 14 projects worth ₹1,713.65 crore that world create employment opportunities for 5,134 individuals, Wednesday.

The SLSWCA approved Anand Exports' proposal for expansion of its ferrochrome unit in Jajpur. With an investment of ₹628.00 crore, the comprehensive expansion initiative will provide employment to 2,828 individuals.

Neo Industries Metal Processing Private Limited's proposal to set up chrome plating. grinding and texturing for steel unit in Jajpur got the SLSWCA approval. With an investment of ₹72.00 crore, the initiative will provide jobs to 50 individuals. Among other proposals, Asoka Sky Metals Private Limited has got the SLSWCA nod to establish a metal downstream unit in Jajpur with an investment of ₹101 crore. The unit will provide jobs to 105 individuals.

# 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. The BJP MP said that Bhawanipatna is a central point of KBK region and is also at the middle of Western and Southern Odisha. The MP said that setting up of a High Court bench in Bhawanipatna will help eight districts of KBK region. People of the area will have access to justice, Panda said, adding that this will also help in development of the region. The Kalahandi MP told the minister that he has raised the issue on several occasions in the Lok Sabha and demanded a bench of Orissa HC in Kalahandi.

# iob racket; three held mobile phones and ATM cards,

EOW bust pan-India



Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) claimed to have busted a pan-India jobs racket, Wednesday, and arrested three people for their alleged involvement in it, officials said.

The accused were identified as Mohammad Sanaullah, his wife Sakshi Jain, hailing from Hyderabad and their local agent Surat Dalai, resident of Balasore, the EOW said in a statement.

Members of the gang operating the alleged racket were active in several states, including Odisha, Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, they said.

However, it was being run mainly from Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad, the officials said.

"These accused were camping in Odisha since last few months and had been living in a rented accommodation," it said.

Many 'incriminating' documents and items like laptops,

besides ₹1 lakh cash have been seized during a search operation, the EOW said.

The case is based on a suo motu enquiry by the agency in connection with the advertisement published in the local daily on December 18 and December 22 last by Aided Schools Welfare Society, the EOW sources said.

The gang members duped people by putting up advertisements, seeking applications for nonteaching posts in some schools in Odisha, the officials said. The salary offered was from

₹28,000 to ₹40,000 per month. The organisation also runs a website www.modelschools.ac. The website and advertise

ment were so carefully designed that it resembled the government website for misleading and duping the unemployed youth to believe that it is a bona fide government website.

The accused used to collect ₹1,000 as application fee from each candidate and were reportedly planning to fleece the candidates by charging heavy amounts as Interview fee, security fee and verification fee.

The scammers used various mule bank accounts to collect the fees so that they can fool the law enforcement agencies.

# 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. The new route was commissioned after the Commissioner Railway Safety (CRS) inspected the project



January 7 and gave his nod, the official said. The section is part of the ongoing 164km Koraput-Singapur Road (Rayagada) doubling project. Sources said altogether 33.50km rail line work has been commissioned. In the last fiscal year, 18.9km of doubling work from Koraput to Damanjodi was commissioned. "Further plans include the commissioning of a 21.75km stretch doubling from Laxmipur to Tikiri in the current year. Steps are also being taken for the construction of 45.86km of doubling work between Bhalumuska to Tikiri, which lies in hilly and jungle areas," the official said. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw is actively monitoring the progress of the project in Odisha, an East Coast Railways press release said.

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# **Tuberculosis threat for** pollution-hit Jajpur dist

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

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jaipur, Jan 10: The rapid industrilisation 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, Jaipur 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 distributary Kharasrota 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 breathingrelated 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

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 pollutionrelated 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-yearold drug peddler in Sekhbard 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



"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 Wadhwani.

"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 Wadhwani.

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," Wadhwani said.

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

Wadhwani added that currently very few Maoist cadres are active in the district. "Many of them are also waiting for an opportunity to surrender," Wadhwani 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 Wadhwani 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 depersonnel of partment Bhitarkanika National Park will carry out a three-day enumera tion 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 sonnel and researchers will actively participate. The coastline of Bhitarkanika National Park is considered as the most favourable habitat place for Irrawaddy dolphins.Gahirmatha Bhitarkanika off Kendrapara coast have emerged as two ideal habitats

# **ROURKELA AMONG TOP 15**



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.

The 'Streets for People and India Cycles for Change' was one of the programmes. However, we successfully overcame the challenges,' Mohapatra stated.

The CEO expressed happiness over the development. "The challenge started virtually February 22, last year. The competition was tough because more than 50 cities participated," Mohapatra informed.

"We did several things to be part of this unique challenge and boost Rourkela's image. We constructed roads, pavements, pedestrian and cycle tracks, beautification of various places. These

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** 

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Ph.: 022-66387680, FAX: 022-22044336. Website: www.centralbankofindia.co.in RECRUITMENT OF SAFAI KARMACHARI CUM

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 16.01.2024 (Tuesday)

SUB-STAFF AND/ OR SUB-STAFF 2024-25

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

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.

DATE: 09.01.2024

**DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER (HCM)** 

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No walk-ins will be allowed.





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

# World's largest lamp for Ram Temple consecration

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 diva. "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 15foot 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 Raipal Yadav and former captain, of the Indian cricket team MS Dhoni. "We are waiting to get confirmations from them," Santosh said.



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The Borrower/Guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with

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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.	as on 08.01.2024	07.09.2023	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Land and Building standing in the name of <b>Manasa Patro</b> , W/o.: Sadananda Patro, Mouza: Puruna Berhampur,PS/

Sabita Sahu, W/o: Sri Pradeep Kumar + other charges Tahasil:Berhampur, Dist.: Ganjam, Khata No.: 365/2791, Plot Sahu, 2) Smt. Gita Palo, W/o: Sri Simanchal Palo, 3) Smt. Rashmita No.: 337/4505, Area: Ac0.049Dec., Kissam: Gharabari 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

08.01.2024

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.



Ian Buruma

**Pro-Palestine** 

with the US,

demonstrators

associate Israel

because they view

both countries as

symbols of white

people of colour

oppression of

# The Culture War

laudine 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

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

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

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 unedifying mess of accusations and counter-accusa tions. Still, Gay's ouster - along with that of the University of Pennsylvania's pres ident, Liz Magill, who also walked into Stefanik's trap - does reveal something interesting about the changed perception

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

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

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 trick 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.

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







FOCUS PIRACY

# **SECURING THE SEAS**



Padmalochan Dash

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

n 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 cuttingedge 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 counteract maritime threats worldwide. Implementing an effective early warning system is pivotal to pre-



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

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, longterm 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 longterm 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 dedi cation 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 dis tressed cargo vessel MV Lila Norfolk off the coast of Somalia. Involving warship INS Chennai, maritime patrol aircraft P-81 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 ex amining 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 chal lenges in combating maritime piracy underscore the need for sustained global cooperation. A swift and coordinated response is paramount in ad dressing 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



P Madhava Rao

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

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 re-

garding 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.

oliticians throughout the 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 policymaking 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 rightsbased 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.

mulation. 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 nonstate 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

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.

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

# rissaPOST

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# 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 voungest 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

All-tribe panel soon to

decide if 'Chin Kukis'

# No snow in Kashmir; tourists disappointed

PEOPLE ASSOCIATED WITH THE TOURISM **INDUSTRY A WORRIED LOT IN THE VALLEY** WITH LIVELIHOODS **AT STAKE** 

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Jan 10: Scores of tourists returned home from Kashmir without getting a feel of snow. The lack of snowfall in the valley this winter will not only hit tourism and related activities, but also badly affect agriculture and allied activities

A large number of tourists, who arrived here on the New Year's Eve in the hope of enjoying skiing and other snowrelated activities in the Gulmarg bowl, had to go back disappointed due to the lack of snowfall.

"We had booked a seven-day package from January 3 to January 9 in order to enjoy the snow in Gulmarg. But there is no snow. We had expected a white landscape all over the place but it is brown like any other region of north India," Pankaj Singh, a Delhi resident, told PTI

Singh, who had come to the valley with his wife and three kids, had plans of introducing his children to skiing and jet-ski rides but all the plans came a



There is no forecast of any active Western Disturbance or snowfall till January 25

December 2023 saw 79% deficit rainfall, while the first 10 days of January this year have also been dry

If the IMD's forecast holds good, it will put into jeopardy the fourth Khelo India National Winter Games to be held at Gulmarg from Feb 2

"I have been a frequent visitor to Kashmir since 2005 and this year, I had brought my family along, hoping to teach skiing to my kids. With no snow, we will have to try again," he said.

People associated with the tourism industry are worried that no snowfall in Kashmir in winter would adversely affect the livelihood of thousands of people in the valley.

This winter has been a very bad advertisement for our trade. Although Kashmir is not the only place that witnessed a lack of snow, our winter tourism mostly depends on snowfall. May Allah have mercy on us,

Muzaffar Ahmad, a tour operator from the city, said.

National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah, an avid skier, expressed his concern on the lack of snow in the mountains, which can lead to problems for the valley residents in the summer.

"I've never seen Gulmarg so dry in the winter. To put this into perspective, here are a couple of photographs from previous years, both taken on the 6th of Jan. If we don't get snow soon the summer is going to be miserable. Not to mention skiers like me who can't wait to get on the slopes but

there's nothing to ski on,' Abdullah posted in X.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister also posted two pictures of himself taken January 6 of 2022 and 2023 in Gulmarg with plenty of snow everywhere.

According to local farmers, with very little snowfall even in the higher reaches of Kashmir this winter, the agricultural produce in the valley can be severely affected, while there will also be problems for the residents as they will not get sufficient drinking water.

The melting of snow at the onset of summer in the higher reaches of Kashmir is the main source of water for our rivers and streams. With no snow on the mountains, people in the plains will suffer. Crops will take a hit as there will be water scarcity for irrigation,

A the transfer the second

farmer from Nowgam, said.

Another X user posted a video of a wildfire sweeping through the Gulmarg golf course - a phenomenon hitherto unthinkable in the month of January.

Amidst a prolonged dry spell, a wildfire has swept through a section of Gulmarg Golf Course. The fire service is actively managing the situation, and currently, it is under control, Farhat Naik wrote in his post.

An official of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said there has been a large deficit in winter snowfall in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Ladakh this year and the situation is unlikely to change before Republic Day.

There is no forecast of any active Western Disturbance or snowfall till January 25. The satellite image from the MeT centre at Leh shows a grim picture of rapid melting of glaciers, which are our priceless natural resource, Sonam Lotus, Director, IMD Leh Centre, said.

According to the IMD's data, December 2023 saw 79 per cent deficit rainfall, while the first 10 days of January this year have also been dry.

If the IMD's forecast holds good, it will put into jeopardy the conduct of the fourth Khelo India National Winter Games, which are scheduled to be held at Gulmarg from February 2.

will remain ST: Biren

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, Jan 10: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh has said that an all-tribe committee would be formed to decide on whether the Chin Kuki community would remain on the Scheduled Tribes

The chief minister's statement comes in the wake of a letter by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs seeking the state government's views on the demand for deletion of the nomadic Chin Kuki community from Manipur's ST list.

The demand was made by Maheshwar Thounaojam, national secretary of the Republican Party of India (Athawale), who claimed that members of that community are not indigenous people of India but immigrants.

They were included in the (ST) list of Manipur but how they were included needs to be re-examined. Before making a comment, we have to form a committee consisting of all tribes (of the state), Singh told reporters here Tuesday.

After getting the panel's recommendations, the state government will be able to send its view on the matter, he said. Kuki is a collective name of

residents of neighbouring Manipur has been rocked by ethnic violence since May last year and over 180 people were

various tribes of Manipur and

Chin is one of those. The Chin

community people also share

ethnicity with the Mizos of

Mizoram and a section of the

The violence erupted May 3 after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for

Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley, while tribals, which include Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40 per cent and reside mainly in the hill districts.



DELHI. KNOWN FOR ITS PERSISTENTLY HIGH AIR POLLUTION LEVELS DURING WINTER. RANKED AS THE EIGHTH MOST POLLUTED CITY IN THE CREA REPORT



New Delhi, Jan 10: Byrnihat in most polluted cities in India in 2023, closely followed by Begusarai in Bihar and Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh, according to a report released Wednesday.

Delhi, known for its persistently high air pollution levels during winter, ranked as the eighth most polluted city, the report by independent think tank Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA)

Sunil Dahia, South Asia's analyst at CREA, said 227 cities with air quality data available for over 75 per cent of the days in 2023 were studied.

Among these cities, 85 were included under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). The data showed that 78 out of

microgrammes per cubic metre). aims for a 20-30 per cent reduction in PM2.5 and PM10 concentration by 2024 in 131 cities that hadn't met prescribed air quality standards from 2011 to

the 85 NCAP cities had PM10

levels exceeding the NAAQS (60

The government has now set a new target of achieving a 40 percent reduction in particulate matter concentration in these cities by 2026.

After five years of the NCAP implementation, only 44 cities out of the 131 non-attainment cities have concluded the source apportionment studies, Dahia said.

Due to the absence of these studies, 64 per cent of the funds allocated under NCAP have been utilised solely for dust mitigation and ineffective solutions like smog guns, resulting in inefficient use of public funds,

The CREA report revealed that only 37 NCAP-covered cities achieved PM10 levels below the annual targets set by the programme. Interestingly, in 2023, 118 cities not yet part of NCAP breached the national air ambient quality standards for PM10.

This indicates that cities not included in NCAP aren't necessarily cleaner, Dahia empha-

Only seven of the 20 most polluted cities in India are currently under NCAP.

Byrnihat, covered under ICAP, registered the highest an nual average PM10 concentration at 301 microgrammes per cubic metre, while Silchar in Assam reported the lowest PM10 level at 29 microgrammes

per cubic metre in 2023. Begusarai in Bihar (average annual PM10 level of 265 microgrammes per cubic metre) and Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh (228 microgrammes per cubic metre) secured the second and third positions among

the most polluted cities. Among the top 50 polluted cities, 18 are in Bihar, eight in

Haryana, and eight in Rajasthan. The report highlighted that PM10 concentration in the top 10 polluted cities was notably 3-5 times higher than Indian NAAQS and exceeded WHO limits by 13-



BRICK BY BRICK: Labourers work at a brick kiln during a cold winter day, on the outskirts of Agartala, Wednesday

# Bird census begins at over 100 wetlands of Kaziranga

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Golaghat (Assam), Jan 10: The fifth census of migratory birds and a festival on conservation of winged species at Kaziranga National Park in Assam have begun with participation of hundreds of enumerators, students and volunteers, a senior official

said Wednesday. The two-day festival, which started Tuesday, is celebrating the avian diversity, conservation efforts and the collective excitement of bird enthusiasts, enumerators and volunteers from diverse backgrounds, Kaziranga National Park Field Director Sonali Ghosh

told PTI. The bird count will take place at more than 100 identified wetlands in the Eastern Assam, Nagaon and Biswanath wildlife divisions of Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve (KNPTR), she added.

Assam Environment and Forest Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary inaugurated the Bird Conservation Festival at the UN-ESCO World Heritage Site Tuesday.

Talking about the methodology of the 5th Migratory Bird Census, the official said it is a combination of science and conservation outreach as it aims at sensitising college students and forest frontline staffers for bird identification.

Support of ornithologists, scientists, researchers and forest officers is being taken for the overall enumeration. As a sampling strategy, all wetlands above 10 hectares and within 1 km of the buffer of KNPTR boundary have been selected for the enumeration, Ghosh added. Certain wetlands of importance but smaller in area have

In the Eastern Assam Wildlife Division, 53 enumerators are engaged for 71 wetlands. At the Nagaon Wildlife Division, 23 are surveying 22 wetlands, while 31 have been conducting the exercise for 25 wetlands of the Biswanath Wildlife Division, she added. During the 4th enumeration in 2021-22, 66,776 wetbirds were spotted in KNPTR, the field director stated.

also been selected.

# THE WHITE OWL LITERATURE FESTIVAL

# First-of-its-kind literature fest in Nagaland

The organiser will also host what is touted to be Nagaland's first book fair on the sidelines of the fest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 10: In good news for bibliophiles, two publishers Penguin Random House India (PRHI) and Cambridge University Press will come together for the first time to host a one-of-its-kind literature festival and book fair in Nagaland, starting February 9.

The White Owl Literature Festival and Book Fair, to be held at the Zone Niathu by The Park in Chumoukedima, Nagaland, aims to celebrate the Northeast's history, culture and geography.



Organised in collaboration between The White Owl Book Lounge, PRHI and Cambridge University Press, the two-day literary extravaganza designed around the theme 'Echoes of Narratives' will cover myriad topics, ranging from the legacy of Northeast India to the world of graphic novels, commercial fiction, and discussions on the econ-

omy, environment and wellness. 'Our publishing house has been actively curating a powerful portfolio of writing from the region and we take immense pride in our list of books and voices that we publish. This festival is a perfect way to pay homage to one of the richest literary hubs in our country," said Gaurav Shrinagesh, CEO of Penguin Random House India (PRHI) and South-East Asia, in a statement.

Several bestselling authors, including the likes of Vivek Shanbagh, Taslima Nasreen, Sarnath Banerjee, Durjoy Dutta, Viju B. Vasudha Rai, Nikhil Gulati, and Lavanya Karthik,

will be attending the festival. Representing the local voice at the festival are eminent authors Mmhonlumo Kikon, Avinuo Kire, Shelmi Sankhil and more.

Nagaland, along with the other northeastern states of India, is a vibrant tapestry of storytelling. Literature, oral and now written, has kept us grounded in our roots and given

us the ability to collaborate with other strengths.

Penguin and Cambridge University Press, as partners, will enable this one-of-a-kind event in the region to reach out to a wider audience and invite new and fresh interest in the Northeast, said Viketuno Rio. festival director and proprietor

of The White Owl. Along with the literature festival, the organiser will also host, what is touted to be Nagaland's first book fair, showcasing a diverse collection of books covering a variety of gen-

res to readers of all ages. In addition to literary delights, attendees can immerse themselves in cultural performances and indulge in an eclectic food service, adding a sensory dimension to the overall festival experience. The entry fee of the festival, set to conclude February 10, is ₹ 50.

# Won't indulge in politics on Ram Temple consecration, says Omar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Jan 10: National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah Wednesday refused to comment on the consecration of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya, saying he does not want to indulge in politics on the issue.

"I will not comment on the Ram Mandir. This is neither the first inauguration nor the last. We have seen inaugurations in the past as well. If you want to bring politics into it, it is up to you, I am not indulging in politics over the issue," Abdullah

told reporters here. Asked if he would attend the consecration ceremony of the temple if he gets an invitation, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said he was sure he will not be invited. "Why are you asking me whether I will go or not? Who goes uninvited? I



were to be invited, they have already got an invitation. The industrialists, cricketers, film stars and others," he said. "Everyone knows their names. Have you seen my name in the list? No. When they do not have an intention to invite me, why should we go into ifs and buts?" he said.

Asked about the allegation of some opposition-ruled states' tableaus for the Republic Day function getting rejected, Abdullah said it was unfortunate and the government needs

to rethink its decision "This is not something new. (UT) is not given an opportunity every year. The Centre chooses who to give it or not. If your question is that only the opposition-ruled states have been left out, then I will say this is unfortunate."

"January 26 is not the BJP's programme. It is not even the  $\rightarrow$ programme of the Central government, but of the whole country. While it is true that you cannot give the opportunity to each state or UT every year, but there is a need to have a rethink onleaving out only opposition-ruled states," he said.

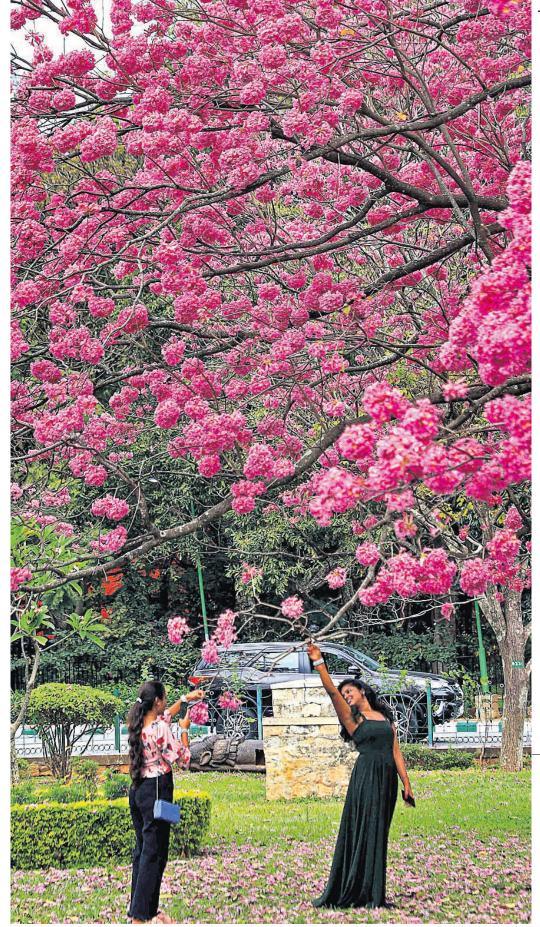


 $\hbox{A group of school students celebrates Pongal, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, Wednesday} \\$ 

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



Pink Tabebuia flowers in full bloom at Cubbon Park premises in Bangalore, Wednesday РТІ РНОТО



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

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



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

# national



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

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

#### **DRESS CODE IN K'TAKA TEMPLES**

A consortium of Karnataka temples, maths and religious organisations has mooted the idea of implementing a dress code in accordance with Indian culture in more than 500 temples all over the state, including 50 in Bangalore



encroachers. We have cleared 8,000

hectares of land from suspected Bangladeshi people and more than 48,000 houses have been evicted

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA CM, ASSAM

I appeal to the BJP leaders not to make false the people and also not to create hurdles in the way of the government for getting financial

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU CM, HIMACHAL

The sense of commitment and duty among the citizens towards society and their respective panchavats will

improve the quality of life and pave the way to prosperity

MANOJ SINHA LT GOVERNOR, JAMMU AND

#### SHORT **TAKES**

#### ED summons **Faroog Abdullah**

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate has summoned National Conference (NC) president Faroog Abdullah Thursday for questioning in a money laundering case, official sources said Wednesday. The 86-vear-old politician is understood to have been called in connection with the federal agency's investigation into alleged irregularities in the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA). The MP from Srinagar Lok Sabha seat was charge-sheeted by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the case in 2022. The case relates to siphoning off the funds of the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association by way of transfer to various personal bank accounts of unrelated parties, including those of JKCA office bearers. and by way of unexplained cash withdrawals from JKCA bank accounts, the ED had said.

## 4 missing, fresh firing in Manipur

Imphal: Four men from Manipur's Kumbi assembly constituency, who had gone for collecting firewood near the hill ranges adjoining Bishnupur and Churachandpur districts, went missing Wednesday, police said. Their whereabouts are still not known. Sources said the possibility of them being held captive by militants cannot be ruled out and help from central forces have been sought. Meanwhile, militants launched fresh gun and bomb attacks at Haotak village in Bishnupur district prompting more than 100 women, children and elderly to flee to safer areas, officials said.

# SENA VS SENA VERDICT

# Huge win for Shinde; no MLA disqualified



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 10: In a big political win for 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, and did not disqualify any MLA from the two camps, a verdict that adds another chapter in the Sena legacy war.

In his 105-minute-long reading of the key points of the muchawaited ruling on the cross-petitions by Shiv Sena factions seeking disqualification of each other's MLAs following a split in the party in 2022. Narwekar also rejected the Uddhav Thackeray faction's petition to disqualify 16 MLAs of the ruling group, including Shinde.

The ruling cemented Shinde's place in the top job, 18 months after his rebellion, and added to his political heft in the ruling coalition which also consists of the BJP and the NCP (Ajit Pawar group) ahead of the Lok Sabha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

mated in the Karnataka

capital Wednesday as it

emerged in investigations by

the Goa police that it may

have been a pre-planned

A teary-eyed Venkat

band of the 39-year-old

Suchana Seth, hailing from

West Bengal, performed the

low, according to officials.

Raman, the estranged hus-

Bangalore, Jan 10: The four-year old boy al-

legedly killed by his mother, CEO of a Bangalore-

last rites at Harishchandra Ghat at Rajaji Nagar here.

bottles of a cough syrup in a room where the CEO

of Mindful AI allegedly killed the boy, indicating

she might have given a heavy dose of the medicine

to him and that it was pre-planned murder, an of-

ficial said. The post-mortem has revealed the child

was smothered to death either with a cloth or a pil-

Seth, who was reportedly upset with the ongo-

ing divorce proceedings with her husband, al-

legedly killed her son in the apartment at Candolim

in Goa and stuffed the body in a bag before taking

it to neighbouring Karnataka in a taxi, police said.

arrested from Chitradurga in Karnataka Monday

night on the instructions of Goa police and

Seth, who was on her way to Bangalore, was

Meanwhile, the Goa police have found two empty

polls in summer and assembly elections in Maharashtra, which

are due in the second half of 2024. As Narwekar finished reading the order, celebrations broke out among Chief Minister Shinde's supporters, who burst firecrackers, while Sena (UBT) leaders Uddhay Thackeray. Sanjay Raut and Aaditya Thackeray said their party will approach Supreme Court against the Speaker's order. Narwekar said no party lead-

ership can use provisions of 10th schedule of Constitution (antidefection law) for dissent or indiscipline within a party. In his order on disqualification petitions filed by Shinde-led Sena and the rival faction of Thackeray against each other's MLAs, Narwekar said Sunil Prabhu of the Sena (UBT) ceased to be the whip from June 21, 2022, (when the party split) and legislator Bharat Gogawale of the Shinde group became the authorised whip.

"All the petitions seeking disqualification of MLAs are rejected. No MLA is being dis-

Child killed by CEO mom cremated;

police suspect pre-planned murder

based artificial intelligence (AI) startup, was cre- (one big and another small) of a cough syrup.

brought to Goa Tuesday.

gle," he said.

death," the official said.

Enquiries with

the service apart-

ment staff revealed the

woman had asked them to

buy a small bottle of a cough

syrup claiming she was hav-

ing a cough, he said, adding

the bigger bottle might have

"It looks like a pre-

planned murder," the of-

ficial said. According to

police sources, the accused

has denied her involve-

ment in the crime during

the interrogation and

claimed the child was al-

ready dead when she got up

from sleep

been carried by her.

A senior police officer told PTI that during the

"The post-mortem conducted on the

body has indicated the possibility that

the child might have been smothered to

death and there were no signs of strug-

'We are examining the possibility of the

woman giving a heavy dose of cough

syrup to the child before putting him to

inspection of the service apartment room where

the woman stayed, they found two empty bottles

qualified," Narwekar said. The Speaker also held that the Shiv Sena 'pramukh' (chief) did not have the power to remove any leader from the party. He also did not accept the argument that the will of the party chief and the will of the party were syn-

The 1999 party constitution submitted to the Election Commission was the valid constitution for deciding the issues, and the Thackeray group's contention that the amended constitution of 2018 should be relied on was not acceptable, he added.

The 1999 constitution made the 'Rashtriya Karyakarini' (national executive) the supreme body, he said. Narwekar said he could not accept petitioner's (Uddhay faction) contention that the 2018 party constitution should be relied upon. The Shiv Sena constitution of 1999, provided by the Election Commission is the real constitution.

The Shinde group had an over whelming majority of 37 out of the total 54 Sena MLAs when the rival factions emerged in

June 2022, the Speaker noted. The verdict came as a huge setback for Thackeray and the faction led by him. The Shiv Sena (UBT) chief reacted an grily to the verdict and termed it as a murder of democracy, and his party will move the Supreme Court against it.

Speaking at a press conference shortly after the ruling, Thackeray said the apex court had given clear guidelines, but those were ignored by

#### KERALA PROFESSOR'S PALM CHOPPING

# **NIA** nabs main accused 13 yrs after incident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kannur/New Delhi, Jan 10: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Wednesday arrested the key and last absconding accused, who had been in hiding for over 13 years, in connection with the mutilation of a college professor's hand in Kerala, allegedly for blasphemy.

The right hand of TJ Joseph, professor of Newman College in Thodupuzha in Idukki district, was chopped off by activists of the now banned radical Islamic outfit Popular Front of India (PFI) July 4, 2010.

The accused -- Savad -- had been on the run for the last 13 years and was carrying a reward of ₹10 lakh for his arrest, an NIA spokesperson said.

He was nabbed from Mattannur in the northern Kerala district of Kannur Wednesday morning following sustained efforts, the spokesperson said.

Reacting to the development, Joseph said that he was not concerned much with the arrest of the prime accused in the case as he still believes that the main culprits, the masterminds behind the attack on him, were still in hiding.

The investigation has not reached them. It indicates that our legal system has not grown to that extent, he told reporters outside his residence in Thodupuzha in Idukki district of the state.

# 'BJP creating hurdles for Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 10: The BJP is trying to create hurdles for the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra because the party is scared of it, the Congress alleged Wednesday and asserted that the Rahul Gandhi-led march will begin on its scheduled date from Manipur.

Earlier in the day, the opposition party at a press conference here had said that the BJP government in Manipur had declined permission for starting the yatra from the Hapta Kangjeibung ground (Palace grounds) in Imphal.

However, the Manipur government, in an order issued later in the day, said it had approved the venue for starting the Congress' Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra with limited participants.

During the press conference at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters, Congress general secretaries Jairam Ramesh and KC Venugopal released a pamphlet and launched a website on the Manipur-to-Maharashtra yatra, which is slated to begin January 14. The Congress also launched

the 'Nyay Yodhas' campaign. Under it, people by giving a missed call on a phone number can become volunteers for the yatra. They can also be involved in disseminating the yatra's message after it ends.

The Congress is firm that the yatra will start from Imphal, Congress general secretary communications Ramesh had said and had added that details of the place from where it will start will be given later.

# यात्रा । तक

Ramesh and Venugopal had claimed that the BJP government in Manipur had declined permission to start the yatra from the Palace grounds in

Congress general secretary organisation Venugopal had said the party is looking for alternative venues and its state leaders, including former chief minister Okram Ibobi Singh and **Pradesh Congress Committee** president K Meghachandra Singh, are in touch with Chief Minister N Biren Singh on the issue. The chief minister had verbally agreed to one of the alternative venues, he had claimed.

The order issued by the Imphal East District Magistrate's Office said, "Only flagging off of the yatra with limited number of participants is hereby allowed January 14 to prevent any untoward incident and disturbance in law and order."

The number and name of the participants shall be provided in advance to this office to enable this office to take up all necessary precautionary measures, it said.

Union Bank of India RegionalOffice:Bhubaneswa

# 1.3 lakh registered for Vibrant Gujarat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI

KORAPUT, DIST-KORAPUT

QUOTATION CALL NOTICE

No.i-586: Seal quotations are invited from the Ser-

vice providers of the Koraput Dist to engagement

of vehicle in Block Office Koraput for Official use.

The detail information of which are made available

in Koraput Dist. Website i.e. http://www.koraput.nic.in

The Sealed quotation should reach the under-

Sd./- Block Development Officer, Koraput

& in DRDA Website http://www.drdakoraput.org.

signed on or before 21.01.2024 by 05.00 PM.

Gandhinagar, Jan 10: About 1.3 lakh participants from 140 countries have registered for the 10th edition of Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit, which has also emerged as a forum for discussions on global priorities and concerns, a senior government official said here. VGGS 2024 was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier in the day.

SJ Haider; additional chief secretary of industries and mines department, said that 35 countries came onboard as partner nations for the three-VGGS, up from 15 during the event in 2019. Over 125 seminars and conferences have been organised as part of the Vibrant Guiarat summit and the pre-Vibrant events that preceded

**Dated** 

"Around 1.3 lakh representatives from 140 countries representing academia and industry have registered themselves as participants for the inaugural event as well as seminars and conferences that are being held as part of the VGGS. This proves how impressive and useful the platform has emerged," the senior IAS officer said.

M/s Laxmi Nursingha Store, Mr Chittaranjan Sahoo, Mrs Suryakanti Routray, M/s Steel Tech & Mr Ashutosh Padhi) should be read as: Ashutosh Padhi) should be read as: Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6)/9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 instead of Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. Except this all the matters remain unchanged. Date:10.01.2024 Authorized Office

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, BUGUDA

E-mail: ori-buguda@nic.in

**TENDER CALL NOTICE NO. 02/2023-24** No. i-588: The Block Development Officer, Buguda, Dist.

Ganjam inviting tender call in offline mode for the works from the eligible contractors for construction of civil works as detailed Nature of works Civil works

No. of works

Value of work Class of Contractor

Sale of document

As mentioned in DTCN B&C From 10.01.2024

Last date of submission of: 19.01.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.

Date of opening of Tender: 20.01.2024 at 11.00 A.M.

19.01.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.

The bidders have to participate in Offline mode only. Further letails can seen from the website: https:tenderodisha.gov.in Any Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website

Sd./- Block Development Officer Buguda, Ganjam OIPR-19400/11/0001/2324

# Blooming tulips to welcome MPs & visitors during Budget Session

New Delhi, Jan 10: Blooming tulips will welcome the parliamentarians and visitors during the forthcoming Budget Session as 3,000 bulbs have been planted in the newly constructed Parliament House, Raj Niwas officials said Wednesday

Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena requested Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla during a conversation that tulips be planted at the new Parliament Building, they added.

The officials said the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) made 3,000 bulbs available to the Parliament Secretariat

An official said the tulips are expected to be in bloom when the Parliament convenes for the upcoming Budget Session.



The MPs and visitors alike will be welcomed by Tulips for the first time ever, he added. The NDMC had procured a record three lakh bulbs this year -- double the amount last year.

While two lakh bulbs will be adorning various sites in the NDMC area the remaining one lakh tulip bulbs will be used by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to adorn its various parks across the city apart from Baansera and Asita.

The official said that 500 tulip bulbs

have also been planted in the Raj Niwas Campus for the first time.

Tulip flowers in yellow, white, orange, purple, blue, pink and red colour shades and other varieties of seasonal flowers like Petunia, Salvia, Cineraria, Antirrhinum, Poppy, Verbena, Dianthus, Hollyhock, Nasturtium, Coreopsis, Pansy and Lianum etc will be planted soon at prominent locations for full public view

While tulips will be planted in 65 locations, other winter flowers would adorn the capital at 91 locations, the officials said.

Tulips would be planted in prominent places, including the diplomatic area of Shanti Path, Talkatora Garden, Windsor Place, Central Park (Connaught Place). Mandi House, Akbar Road. Chanakyapuri, Lodhi Garden and Nehru Park and RML round.

#### **GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** No.B-1584: **INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)** 'e' PROCUREMENT NOTICE

1. Name of Work

2. No. of Works Total (Three Nos.) Work 3. Estimated Cost

4. Period of Completion Class of Contractors

Other details as follows: 6. Date & Time of availability of bid documents in Portal

7. Last date/time for receipt of bids in portal Opening of Bid

documents 9. Procurement Officer

E-mail address Further details can tendersorissa.gov.in

OIPR-34093/11/0014/2324

OIPR-19035/11/0005/2324

Bid Identification No.S.E.JSPR (R&B)-12/2023-24 Road & Electrical Work for the year 2023-24

> Above Rs.06.00 lakhs upto Rs.15.00 Lakhs (Approx.) As per Column No-8 of this NIT As per Column No-7 of this NIT

: 11.01.2024 at 11.30 A.M.

: 20.01.2024 upto 5.00 PM

Superintending Engineer Jagatsinghpur (R&B) Division Jagatsinghpur

eerbjspr@gmail.com

: 22.01.2024 at 11.30 A.M.

seen from the Govt. Sd./- Superintending Engineer Jagatsinghpur (R&B) Division

website





DHENKANAL FOREST DIVISION At: Ganesh Bazar, P.O/Dist. Dhenkanal, PIN-759001 Phone No: 06762-226717(0), Email-dmuchiefdkl@gmail.com

SHORT TENDER NOTICE Date:09.01.2024 TECHNICAL BID DOCUMENTS/ DETAILED TENDER CALL NOTICE FOR THE WORK OF PROCUREMENT OF MACHINES/ EQUIPMENTS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF 1000 KG (NON-IBR) CAPACITY BASED RAW

CASHEW PROCESSING UNIT AT LAMBODARPUR. DHENKANAL invites Tender from eligible Bidders for procurement of machines. equipments for establishment of 1000 Kg (Non-IBR) capacity based Raw Cashew Processing Unit at Lambodarpur, Dhenkanal under Odisha Forestry Sector Development Project (OFSDP-II), Dhenkana

Interested Tenderers may obtain details of Tender Application Papers from O/o the Divisional Forest Officer-cum-DMU Chief, Dhenkana during office hours (10.00 AM to 5.30 PM on Working Days) or may download from the website (www.dhenkanal.nic.in). Filled in Tender papers complete in all respect along with photo-copy of relevant required documents in support of Tender and Bank Draft for Rs. 1000/- (nonrefundable) towards Tender Fees drawn in favour of DFO-cum-DMU Chief, Dhenkanal, payable at Dhenkanal, should reach to the O/o the Divisional Forest Officer-cum-DMU Chief, Dhenkanal through Special Messenger /Speed Post/ Courier Service on or before 5.30 PM on 30.01.2024.

OIPR-08037/11/0014/2324

Sd./- DFO-cum-DMU Chief **Dhenkanal Forest Division** 









# international



Iraq wants a quick and orderly negotiated exit of US-led military forces from its soil but has not set a deadline MOHAMMED SHIA AL-SUDANI

#### NASA DELAYS MOON LAUNCH

Astronauts will have to wait until next year before flying to the moon and another few years before landing on it, under the latest round of delays announced by NASA. It had planned to send four astronauts around the moon late this year, but pushed the flight to Sept 2025 because of technical issues. The first human moon landing in over 50 years also got bumped, from 2025 to 2026

President Abdulla Yameen ad-

ministration. However, his suc-

cessor President Ibrahim

Mohamed Solih's administra-

tion did not implement the agree-

ment, according to Maldives

'Anti-India narrative

by Maldives' ruling

coalition during

**2023 polls'** 

LONDON: The ruling coalition of

and the People's National Congress

(PNC) deployed anti-India sentiments

and attempted to spread disinformation

around this theme during the on the 2023

Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM)

media reports.





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



KIM JONG UN LEADER, NORTH KOREA

China and the **United States** are the largest developing and developed countries 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

#### 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 Gravely. 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 guake 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.

# Maldives, China boost ties 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

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

**China remains one** 

of our closest allies

and development

partners

MOHAMED MUIZZU

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

nation.

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 deroga tory 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.

China in third place presidential elections, according to a report with 187,118 arrivals. issued by the European Union. The European Maldives and Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to China signed the Maldives published its final report Tuesday on FTAthe two rounds of election that took place December September 9 and 30 last year. Following an 11-2014 during week-long observation in the archipelagic nation in the Indian Ocean, upon the invitation of national the pro-

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-Indian 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.

#### 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.

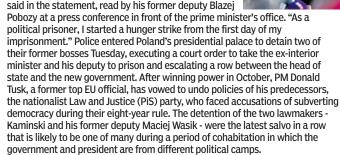
In December, India asked Pakistan to extradite Saeed, the 2008 Mumbai terror attack mastermind who Indian probe agencies want in several terror cases.

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.

# POLITICAL PROTESTS

# 1st day in jail: Ex-Polish min starts hunger strike

Warsaw: Former Polish Interior Minister Mariusz Kaminski, who was detained and sent to prison Tuesday following a conviction for abuse of power in a previous role, is starting a hunger strike, he said in a statement Wednesday, "I declare that I treat my conviction... as an act of political revenge," Kaminski said in the statement, read by his former deputy Blazei



# **Drivers strike: German railways grind to near halt**



Cologne: Hundreds of thousands of people faced train cancellations across Germany from Wednesday, as a three-day nationwide rail strike added to travel chaos in Europe's largest economy, where farmers' protests have blocked highways and snarled traffic. The strikes, called by the GDL train drivers' union from Wednesday to Friday evening,

have forced national rail operator Deutsche Bahn to run only stripped-back emergency timetables. One in five long-distance high-speed rail services were running and regional services have been "massively thinned out", a Deutsche Bahn spokesperson told reporters at Berlin's central station, empty of its usual crowds. The head of the German farmers' association DBV vowed to ramp up their protests Wednesday, after convoys of tractors and trucks blocked roads across the country earlier this week.

# 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

**WAVE OF VIOLENCE** 

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 Danie 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 pro-

gram 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 Choneros gang leader Adolfo Macias over the weekend. In a revised decree ISON CONFLICTS

Tuesday, Noboa recognized an "internal armed conflict" and identified nearly two dozen gangs as terrorist groups, including Los Choneros

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.

**∕iolent** 

deaths

rose to

nearly

double

from 2022

AND DRUG TRADE FUEL 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 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 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.

# YET ANOTHER CRISIS TO EXPLO

# **HOW BEIJING IS BENEFITING FROM ISRAEL'S WAR IN GAZA**

hina 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 members 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 détente 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 prioritise 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.

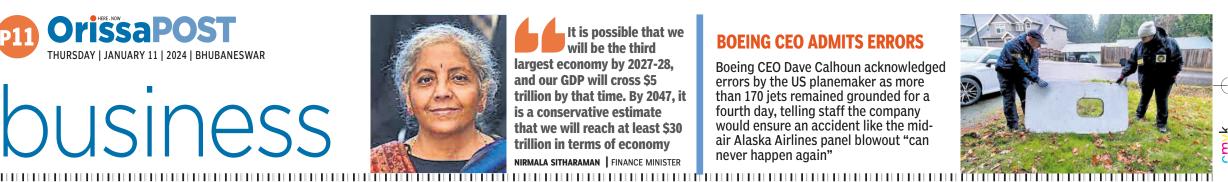
# business



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 midair Alaska Airlines panel blowout "can never happen again"





estimate for development. Overall economic climate is

very encouraging at present DINESH KUMAR KHARA CHAIRMAN, SB

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

JEET ADANI VP. ADANI ENTERPRISES

that is one of the triggers



setting new benchmarks in the wearable tech industry VDNVA KICHUDE CEO AND FOUNDER, FIREBOLTT

We will soon



CHIEF, SPICEJET



# 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.

New Delhi and Moscow have ties dating back to the Cold War. and Russia remains by far the biggest arms supplier to the world's most populous country.

India has shied away from explicit condemnations of Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, even as it pursues greater security ties with the United States.

But instead of following in the West's footsteps, it has doubled down on its historical partnership with Russia to secure cheap energy, to help it boost growth without running up its fiscal deficit.

India is the world's thirdlargest importer and consumer of oil, and imports nearly 80 per-

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

VIKTOR KATONA EAD 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 de-

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: PHDC

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 stated.

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.

**DSPL-532** 











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**KOHLI PULLS OUT OF FIRST T201** ON MATCH EVE AS MAIDEN WHITE-BALL SERIES AGAINST **AFGHANISTAN KICKS OFF TODAY** 

**OrissaPOST** 

Mohali, Jan 10: The spotlight will be only on the returning Rohit Sharma as his long-time colleague Virat Kohli pulled out of the opening T20I against Afghanistan due to "personal reasons" ahead of the first ever white-ball series between the two teams, beginning here

Kohli, though, will be available for the second and third T20Is. India head coach Rahul Dravid attributed Kohli's pull-out to "family reasons" before he addressed media.

Both the stalwarts are returning to the shortest format after 14 months and will be keenly observed in the three-match rubber, which will be India's last before the T20 World Cup in June, giving the team more clarity on where it stands ahead of the ICC event in Americas.

However, the final 15 will be picked on the basis of core group's performance in the IPL, which precedes the World Cup. Dravid said Rohit will open the batting with young Yashasvi Jaiswal against Afghanistan.

Rohit and Kohli, after he returns, are a certainty in this squad but the accomplished duo would first like to get the most out of the games against Afghanistan, who would be with out their star spinner Rashid Khan. Khan underwent a back surgery in November last year and is still recuperating.

The focus, however, will firmly be on Rohit, easily among the biggest crowd-puller. His presence on the field would be a big reason for the Mohali crowd to brave the prevailing cold wave.

Rohit, who will also captain the side, will be expected to carry on

#### **MATCHDAY**

India vs Afghanistan **1st T20 International** Time: 7 pm **Telecast: Sports18 Network** Stream: Jio Cinema



with his ultra aggressive approach in the powerplay like he showed in the ODI World Cup. The team, having returned from South Africa last week, only assembled Wednesday evening for the series.

The likes of Jaiswal and Tilak Varma remain in the squad after performing top-order duties in the drawn series against South Africa, and so is Shubman Gill. Across formats, Gill did not have the easiest of times in the Rainbow nation and will be looking to pile on the runs against Afghanistan with the others breathing down his neck.

In his toughest test yet in a blos-

soming T20 career, Rinku Singh proved his worth in the South African conditions and will be a key player for India in the middleorder, especially in the absence of the injured duo of Suryakumar Yadav and Hardik Pandya.

With Ishan Kishan interestingly left out, Jitesh Sharma and Sanju Samson are the two wicket-keeping options for the squad. Having donned the gloves in the previous two series, Jitesh is expected to start ahead of Samson, who finds himself back in the fold after the short series in Ireland last August.

Shivam Dube too is back and

pace bowling all-rounder while three specialist pace options are Arshdeep Singh, Avesh Khan and Mukesh Kumar. Kuldeep Yadav will lead the spin attack and other options to choose from are Ravi Bishnoi, Axar Patel and Washington Sundar.

India would be expected to win comfortably in their own conditions but Afghanistan will give them a run for their money. Having recently exceeded all expectations in their giant-killing run during the ODI World Cup in India, Afghanistan will be high on confidence in a format

that suits them the most. Barring Rashid's injury-forced

# Rashid ruled out, but Zadran backs his team

Mohali, Jan 10: Afghanistan will be without their trump card Rashid Khan in the T20 series against India starting here Thursday but skipper Ibrahim Zadran was upbeat about the team's chances in their strongest format.

The celebrated spinner, who underwent a back surgery after the ODI World Cup in November, has been named in the squad but will not be available for the three games as he undergoes his rehab.

"He is not totally fit. He is doing his rehab. We will miss him in the series. Without Rashid there are a few players we trust,' said Zadran in the pre-match press conference.

'We have many players like Mujeeb (Zadran) who have played a lot of cricket. We have trust in them. We will struggle without Rashid but one should be ready for any kind of situation," he asserted. Lot of expectations

The performance of Afghanistan in the ODI World Cup in India was among the highlights of the tournament. The team was very much in the running for a semifinal berth after beating defending champions England and Pakistan in the league stage

Zadran, who opens the innings, has hardly been home since the high of that tournament but knows that the fans' expectations have

India on their home soil is difficult but we are here to win, show our skills. We have lots of good players in T20 and we are good in this format, I am sure we will perform well

IBRAHIM ZADRAN

gone up significantly.

"I only went home for one day but what I heard from teammates, they said all the people were happy. Nowadays, all around the country people expect lots of things from us. It is the only thing in the country that is giving happiness to people of Afghanistan," said Zadran.

"Playing against India on their home soil is difficult but we are here to win, show our skills. We have lots of good players in T20 and we are good in this format, I am sure we will perform well.'

The games will help Afghanistan fine-tune their preparations for the T20 World Cup and Zadran feels the team must improve in the batting department.

"We have one of the best spinners in the world, we have fast bowlers as well but our aim is to improve batting skills," said the 22year-old who also believes that dew won't be a factor despite the cold conditions prevailing in North India. "We have been training here last two three days, there was no dew," he pointed out.



# Satwik-Chirag through, rusty Prannoy bows out



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kuala Lumpur, Jan 10: The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty began the new season on a winning note, advancing to the second round, while Asian Games bronze medallist HS Prannoy bit the dust in his opening-round match at the Malaysia Open Super 1000 badminton tournament here Wednesday.

The World No.2 doubles combination of Satwik and Chirag overcame a tough challenge from the gritty Indonesian pair of Muhammad Shohibul Fikri and Maulana Bagas 21-18, 21-19, while world No. 8 Prannoy lost to Denmark's Anders Antonsen, a

player ranked one spot below him, 14-21, 11-21 in 43 minutes.

The second-seeded pair of Satwik and Chirag, which reached the semifinals in 2023, will look to continue the good run and go deep in the draw after the stiff 44-minute test from the World No.9 duo, which had beaten the Indians twice last year – at the Thailand Open and China Open.

Prannoy, a frontrunner in the Olympic race, had a sensational last season with maiden bronze medals at the World Championships and the Asian Games and a title-run at the Malaysia Masters super 500. But, in the season-opening match here the Indian looked rusty and couldn't match up with his opponent's speed.

can feature in the eleven as a

# Nancy, Elavenil win air rifle gold, silver

Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Jitesh

Sharma (wk), Sanju Samson (wk),

Shivam Dube, Washington Sundar,

Axar Patel, Ravi Bishnoi, Kuldeep

Yadav, Arshdeep Singh, Avesh Khan,

AFGHANISTAN: Ibrahim Zadran (C),

Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Ikram

Rahmat Shah, Najibullah Zadran,

Azmatullah Omarzai, Sharafuddin

Farooqi, Fareed Ahmad, Naveen Ul

Saleem, Qais Ahmad, Gulbadin Naib

absence, the team is at full

strength after the likes Mujeeb

Zadran, Naveen-Ul Haq and

Fazalhaq Farooqi sorted their

contractual issues with the coun-

Haq, Noor Ahmad, Mohammad

and Rashid Khan.

Ashraf, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Fazalhaq

Mohammad Nabi, Karim Janat,

Alikhil (wk), Hazratullah Zazai,

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jakarta, Jan 10: Budding shooter Nancy and Olympian Elavenil Valarivan came up with a grand performance in women's 10m air rifle, clinching gold and silver respectively at the Asia Olympic Qualifiers here Wednesday.

Teenager Nancy, the junion world team champion, shot a superb 252.8 in the final field of eight to clinch the top spot. Compatriot Elavenil was unlucky to miss the gold by a fraction of a point, aggregating 252.7.

India narrowly missed a clean sweep in the women's 10m air rifle final after Mehuli Ghosh finished fourth with 210 points, behind China's Shen Yufan. The trio also won the team gold by a distance over Singapore.

Earlier in men's 10m air rifle event, Rudrankksh Patil had clinched bronze in the individual event, with Arjun Babuta finishing sixth in the final. The duo also won the team bronze along with Sri Karthik Sabari Raj Ravishankar.

India's world champion marksman Rudrankksh settled for bronze medal after shooting 228.7 in the final, which was won by Ma Sihan of China (251.4), while Korea's Daehan Choe bagged

Rudrankksh had qualified for the eight-shooter final placed third with a score of 630.4, while Babuta (629.6) was fourth going



Elavenil Valarivan (L), Nancy (C) and Shen Yufan pose with their guns after the event, Wednesday

into the medal round.

Nancy was consistent throughout the final, not having a single below-par score, while Elavenil was unlucky to score a 9.7 in her 10th shot in the final, which finally decided her fate.

Nancy, who first shot into international prominence with a silver at the Baku World Cup last year, shot no less than 10.1 to win her first senior interna-

tional individual gold. She was in second place, 0.2 behind Elavenil, after the first fiveshot series where both posted impressive scores of 53.2 and 53.4 respectively. Two consecutive 10.9s for the eighth and ninth shots took her to the top after the second and she never looked

Elavenil too shot brilliantly, with two consecutive 10.9s of her own for her third and fourth, but a 9.7 for her 10th, proved to be the difference in the end.

Earlier, the 24-year-old Elavenil topped the qualification round with a score of 633.8, while Nancy aggregated 632.4 and Mehuli had 631.0. What the seniors could not do at the Senayan Shooting range, the junior women did, as Isha Taksale (253.1) Khyaty Choudhary (251.2) and Anvii Rathod (227.7), finished 1-2-3 in the 10m air rifle women junior competition.

The junior boys also fared better than their senior counterparts as Abhinav Shaw (250.7) and Parth Mane (229.6) won silver and bronze in the junior men's air rifle individual, as also the team silver in the event alongside Umamahesh Maddineni.

Esha. Rhythm in contention The day also witnessed the first day of qualification of the women's 25m pistol, in which India is looking to win one of the two available quota places.

The finals are slated for Thursday. Esha Singh was the best Indian at the end of the precision round, shooting 291 to be placed third. Rhythm Sangwan was fifth with 290, while Simranpreet Kaur Brar shot 287 and was 12th among the 50-strong field.

Blasters ease past Shillong Lajong

# Lamichhane gets 8-yr jail sentence in rape conviction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Jan 10: Nepal spinner Sandeep Lamichhane has been sentenced to eight years in jail by a Kathmandu court after being convicted of rape. According to 'Kathmandu Post' the Kathmandu District Court announced the verdict Wednesday after he was proven guilty of

raping an 18-year-old woman. A single-judge bench also imposed a Rs 3,00,000 fine on the 23year-old, besides ordering him to pay a compensation of Rs 2,00,000 to the victim. Lamichhane's lawyer Saroj Ghimire was quoted as saying that he "will appeal

the decision in a higher court." In September last year, an arrest warrant was issued by the Kathmandu police for Lamichhane, leading to his suspension as the Nepal captain by

the Cricket Association of Nepal. Although he was playing in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) for Jamaica Tallawahs, the franchise released him with immediate effect, as he returned to Kathmandu, where he was arrested.

However, Lamichhane pleaded innocent before his arrest and wrote on Facebook that he would "fully cooperate in all stages of the investigation and will fight a legal battle to prove my innocence", besides calling it "conspiracy and wrongful allegation".

# ODISHA FC EVES MAINTAIN WINNING STREAK IN IWL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: Odisha FC maintained their winning streak with a 1-0 victory over Hops FC in the Indian Women's League (IWL) 2023-24 at the Bhubaneswar Football Academy ground here Wednesday.

Pyari Xaxa scored the lone goal of the game in the 44th minute, while Shreya Hooda's crucial save ensured Odisha FC secured their fourth consecutive clean sheet. Odisha FC are scheduled to travel to Kolkata for their match against East Bengal FC, January 18.

The home team created some early scoring chances. In the



sixth minute, Win directed a header towards the goal from Indu's corner but the visitor's defender successfully cleared the ball off the goal line.



Another chance came calling in the 25th minute, Lynda had struck from the near post, but the keeper dived to her right, making a good save. Again in the

31st minute, Sanju and Win had combined from the corner to deliver a drilled-in cross, but the Hops FC defender cleared the ball off the goal line, preventing a score.

Odisha FC's continuous attack finally paid dividends when a brilliant cross from the right flank by Win found Pyari, who leaped high and skillfully directed the ball into the back of the net, securing the muchawaited goal for the hosts.

Four minutes into the second half, Shreya made an important save to deny HFC the equaliser, preserving Odisha FC's lead. Ultimately, the match concluded with a 1-0 scoreline.

# AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: Kerala Blasters kicked off their Kalinga Super Cup campaign in style as Kwame Peprah's brace helped the Indian Super League 2023-24 table toppers secure a 3-1 victory at the Kalinga Stadium here, Wednesday.

Peprah put the Blasters ahead in the 14th minute when he latched onto a defence-splitting from Dimitrios Diamantakos before sending the ball into the Lajong net. The Ghanaian striker doubled his tally in the 26th minute when he deflected a cross from Prabir Das past the Lajong custodian.



However, the Red Dragons refused to go down without a fight. In the 28th minute, Karim was brought down by Sachin Suresh in the box, and the referee pointed to the spot. Captain Renan Paulinho stepped up and beat the Blasters goalkeeper to bring his side back in the game.

Two minutes into the second half, Aimen, rising high in the box, met Daisuke's inchperfect cross from the right flank with a powerful header, putting the Blasters back in driver's seat.

Despite several opportunities for both the teams, the scores remained 3-1 in favour of the league leaders.