



**FIRST LOOK:** The full image of Ram Lalla idol became public Friday as anticipation built up for the consecration ceremony at the Ayodhya temple January 22. The 51-inch idol, carved by Mysore-based sculptor Arun Yogiraj, has been placed in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple

## 8 KILLED IN SEPARATE ACCIDENTS IN STATE

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** Eight persons were killed in separate road accidents in Ganjam, Balasore and Angul districts, police said Friday.

In the first incident, five persons, including two employees of the electricity department, were killed following a head-on collision between a scooter and a motorcycle in Sorada in Ganjam district, late Thursday night.

Police said that three persons including two outsourcing employees of the electricity department were returning to Sorada on their scooter after finishing some maintenance work at Keshariapatna village. Meanwhile, three daily wagers coming from the opposite direction hit their scooter head-on midway. The locals rescued the injured persons and rushed them to the Community Health Centre at Sorada where doctors declared three brought dead.

Two others succumbed to injuries while undergoing treatment at the Sorada hospital. The other injured labourer, rescued in a critical condition, was shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur, police said.

In another incident, two persons were killed and another was injured as their motorcycle collided with a truck in Balasore district, late Thursday night. The three youths belonging to Basta area had gone for a picnic to Digha and were returning home when their motorcycle rammed into the rear end of a stationary truck. Locals spotted the trio in a pool of blood and informed the police who rushed them to a hospital where the doctors declared two of them dead and sent the critically injured to the district headquarters hospital in Balasore.

In the third incident, an ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) died on the spot on National Highway-55 after a truck hit her while she was crossing the road at Angul Friday morning.

## BILKIS CASE CONVICTS SC denies more time to surrender

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 19** Eleven convicts in the case of gangrape of Bilkis Bano and the murder of seven of her family members during the 2002 riots in Gujarat will have to surrender January 21 as the Supreme Court Friday dismissed their plea seeking an extension of time to surrender.

Observing that the reasons cited by the convicts have no merits, a bench of justices BV Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan refused to grant them relaxation. The convicts had moved the apex

court Thursday seeking more time to surrender. The top court had January 8 annulled the remission the Gujarat government granted to the 11 convicts in the high-profile case while slamming the state for being 'complicit' with an accused and abusing its discretion. It ordered the convicts, who were released prematurely on Independence Day in 2022, to go back to jail within two weeks.

"We have heard senior counsel and counsel for the applicants and the counsel for the non-applicants also. The reasons cited by applicants to seek postponement of surrender and report back

to jail have no merit inasmuch as those reasons in no way prevent them from complying with our directions. Hence the miscellaneous applications are dismissed," the bench said.

The reasons seeking extension of the deadline to surrender included failing health, impending surgery, son's marriage and harvesting ripe crops.

The first five convicts who had sought relief are Govind Nai, Pradeep Mordhiya, Bipin Chandra Joshi, Ramesh Chandana and Mitesh Bhatt.

Later, the remaining convicts also moved a similar plea.

## ASSEMBLY BUDGET SESSION FROM FEB 5

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** The Budget Session of the Odisha Assembly will begin February 5, a notification said Friday.

The session, which will continue till February 13, will have five working days. It will begin with the address of Governor Raghuraj Das, an official of the Parliamentary Affairs Department said.

Finance Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha will present the vote-on-account or interim budget for the first four months of 2024-25 fiscal February 8. The appropriation bill for the vote-on-account will be tabled February 9.

## Orphanage horror

Minor girls stripped, hung upside down and forced to inhale smoke in MP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Indore, Jan 19:** Minor girls at an Indore orphanage narrated tales of abuse and alleged horrifying ways of punishment, including branding with hot tongs, hanging upside down and forcing to inhale smoke from burning red chillies, prompting the local administration to seal the facility and the police to file an FIR against five women.

As the shocking tales, recounted by the inmates before a Child Welfare Committee (CWC), surfaced an FIR was registered against the five women associated with the facility for allegedly ill-treating children in the name of punishment, a police official said Friday.

The facility, described by officials as an orphanage, was sealed by the local administration. However, the NGO running the children's facility said it was a hostel and not an orphanage, and filed a habeas corpus petition in the Madhya Pradesh High Court challenging the administration's action of keeping the children, who were moved out of the shelter, allegedly under illegal detention.

A habeas corpus plea is filed before a court to ascertain whether a person has been detained legally. The NGO also denied all allegations mentioned in the FIR filed on the basis of a complaint by the local CWC. The administration sealed the facility, 'Vatsalyapuram', located in Vijayanagar area January 12 for illegal operation and shifted the inmates, girls aged between four and 14 years, to the

## HEADMASTER HELD FOR RAPING 2 MINOR GIRLS

**KENDRAPARA:** A 45-year-old headmaster of a private school in Kendrapara district was arrested Friday for allegedly raping two minor girls, police said. The accused allegedly sexually assaulted the two girl students January 16 in the school. Both the 13-year-old girls are students of class 7, police said. The incident came to light when the girls refused to go to school, prompting their parents to inquire about the reason for their decision. After being pressured by their parents, both girls confided in them about the sequence of sexual torture inflicted upon them by the accused teacher, police added.

state-run Child Protection Home and another institution, the official said.

The girl inmates told the CWC that they were tortured in the name of punishment on the premises, he said. In the FIR lodged on the night of January 17, it was mentioned a four-year-old girl was beaten up for wearing dirty clothes, locked in the bathroom for several hours and not given food for two days. It was also alleged in the FIR that children were hung upside down and forced to inhale smoke from red chillies kept on a hot pan below.

Two children were branded with hot tongs at the hands of a minor girl and one girl was taken to a furnace after being stripped in front of other kids and warned of being burnt, the official said, citing the document.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



He indeed is a godman. He got convicted for rape and murder but gets parole every other month

## World's richest family owns 700 cars, 8 jets



AGENCIES

**Dubai, Jan 19:** The world's richest family owns a ₹4,078 crore presidential palace (three times the size of Pentagon), eight private jets and a popular football club, according to a report by GQ.

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, also known as MBZ, heads the family and has 18 brothers and 11 sisters. The Emirati royal also has nine children and 18 grandchildren. The family owns about six per cent of the world's oil reserves and the

the UAE. Spread across nearly 94 acres, the large domed palace houses a chandelier made of 350,000 crystals and several prized artefacts.

MBZ's brother Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan heads the family's chief investment company whose value has gone up by almost 28,000 per cent over five years. The firm, presently valued at \$235 billion, owns agriculture, energy, entertainment and maritime businesses and employs tens of thousands of people.

Apart from the UAE, the family also owns luxury properties across the world including in Paris and London. The family's former head was nicknamed the 'landlord of London' for the vast array of properties owned by him in UK's most posh neighbourhoods.

### BLESSED TO BE ILLUMINATING THE HOLY PARIKRAMA AROUND SHREE JAGANNATH MANDIR.

With the blessings of Lord Jagannath, we feel privileged to be lighting up this holy path at the newly inaugurated Shree Mandira Parikrama.

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

## CREDIT OUTREACH PROGRAMME

Chief Guest

### Shri Dharmendra Pradhan

Hon'ble Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Government of India

Guest of Honour

### Shri Pankaj Chaudhary

Hon'ble Minister of State for Finance, Government of India

20th January, 2024 | 2:30 PM

At Pallishree Mela Ground, Dhenkanal, Odisha



## SHARON OSBOURNE RULES OUT THE X FACTOR RETURN

Sharon Osbourne has said TV show *The X Factor* did damage to people's lives as she confirmed she's not interested in a return. The former judge said things must change if the programme was ever to return, admitting she wouldn't want to have 'responsibility' again as it is not fair to be laughing at people.

## SALMA HAYEK SETS INSTAGRAM ON FIRE

Actress Salma Hayek sent fans wild after sharing a carousel of unearthed nude photographs on her social media. The *Frida* actress left little to the imagination as she uploaded the throwback snaps on her Instagram account, sharing the saucy collection with her 27.7million followers on the platform.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

You may cause some heart-breaks today, so be careful! Apart from this, Ganesh says, your love life is stable and you are ready to make a commitment to your loved one. If you are married, your relationship will become more intense and attachment will strengthen.

#### TAURUS

Unless you mind your moods and manners today, you are likely to hurt, and lose, a lot of friends, fears Ganesh. Your thoughts and feelings will be unduly unsteady and unpredictable. It may not always be possible to maintain your calm, to stay in control. A change of scene could be the right way to deal with the situation.

#### GEMINI

You will be able to divide your attention between personal and professional life. Workplace will become pretty exciting during the afternoon. By evening, you will get plenty of opportunities to shower your affection on your loved ones, says Ganesh.

#### CANCER

In all likelihood, today, you are likely to strike a balance between your professional and personal life, predicts Ganesh. The work will be interesting and stimulating, while your time with family will be peaceful and soothing.

#### LEO

You will be in the mood to play the role of a guide today. The day will be filled with fun and frolic. There will be many occasions to have a good time, throughout the day. You will experience some mental stress, however, it is likely to be short-lived, says Ganesh.

#### VIRGO

Ganesh foresees a strong probability that you will keep your feet firmly planted on the ground in the face of adversity. The afternoon sun may bring some good returns or much awaited results for you. Love and affection will bring tranquility in your family life. There is a distinct possibility of new relationships developing later in the day, says Ganesh.

#### LIBRA

Ganesh forecasts mostly superficial and thin-skinned issues as the likely cause of your unease and nervousness today. Matters relating to government rules and regulations will be on the table today at your workplace. But evening promises a lighter fare; your fine taste in arts shall receive applause from all quarters.

#### SCORPIO

There are chances that you may easily get irritated and infuriated today, predicts Ganesh. Keep a lid on your anger or it may lead to irreconcilable differences. Avoid confrontations and unnecessary complications at work as well. You will spend a lot of time in finding out solutions to pending problems.

#### SAGITTARIUS

When Ganesh says - Perfect - He is talking about your planning skills and implementation. Today, due to systematic planning you will be able to deliver as per expectations and achieve great results. Your intelligent quotient may just impress someone from the opposite sex.

#### CAPRICORN

Work pressure may take a toll on you today, but you will overcome all impediments and excel in whatever work you undertake, says Ganesh. Support and motivation await you at home as family members will be exceedingly tolerant of your actions and endeavours.

#### AQUARIUS

Action is your forte, so seize the initiative and you will come out a winner! The afternoon sees you happy, but heavy-duty work may take a toll on you. Relax a bit - listen to music, play with your pet, or simply don your best attire and step out to socialise!

#### PISCES

You are likely to be sweating today at work, and it is neither the weather nor an ill-fitting suit that is the cause, says Ganesh. You will try your best to get your views across, and the post-afternoon lunch siesta is probably the best time to hammer your point home because that is when your boss will have all the energy to argue against.

### POST-NATIONAL AWARD HONOUR

## Kriti on feeling pressured

Mumbai: At the trailer launch event for *Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya*, Kriti Sanon shared insights into her feelings of pressure following her National Award win. The actress, set to make a comeback on the big screen with the film, expressed gratitude for the recognition but dismissed any added pressure, particularly in collaborating again with Maddock Films after her National Award-winning performance in *Mimi*.

Addressing the media, Kriti stated that she is not pressurised. "I feel every film is very different," she said. She emphasised her appreciation for the diverse challenges Maddock Films presents, expressing enjoyment in the process with the production house. While acknowledging the honour of the National Award, Kriti mentioned that she believes there's still a long journey ahead in her career.

For context, Kriti received the Best Actress award at the 69th National Film Awards for her performance in *Mimi*, a 2021 film that revolves around a young dancer who becomes a surrogate to fund her aspirations.

On the other hand, *Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya* features Kriti as a robot and Shahid Kapoor as a robotic expert. Produced by Jio Studios and Dinesh Vijan's Maddock Films, the romance drama, written and directed by Amit Joshi and Aradhana Sah, is scheduled to hit theaters February 9.



## Curtains come down on Mukteswar Dance Festival

Bhubaneswar : The three-day Mukteswar Dance Festival, organised by the Odia Language, Literature & Culture Department in association with Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi, at the magnificent Mukteswar Temple here ended Friday with spellbinding performances of Odissi by renowned dancers of national and international repute.

The first programme of the evening was a chorus in honour of Lord Shiva eulogising his glory, presented by eminent music director Matru Prasad Das and his group (Bhubaneswar). Then renowned Odissi dancer Jagyandatta Pradhan from Bhubaneswar presented *Abhinaya Karnata*. The dance was scripted by Srinivas Ghatuuri, while its music was composed by Guru Ramahari Das. Guru Dhaneswar Swain

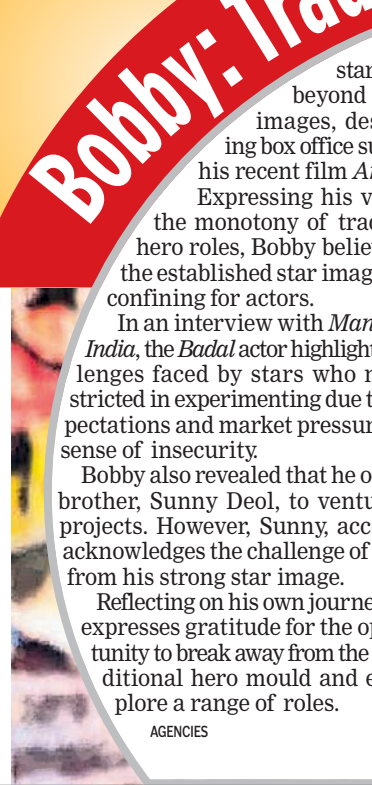


composed the rhythm of the dance, choreographed by Guru Bichitrananda Swain. In the duet, Swarnamayee Behera and Sweekruti Das presented *Pallavi*.

The concluding presentation was a group Odissi presentation by the students from Nritya Nilaya (Angul), led by Swapnarani Sinha. The troupe performed two shows, which were conceptualised and choreographed by Guru Dhaneswar Swain and Guru Swapnarani Sinha. The script and music were composed by Guru Sukanta Kumar Kundu and Guru Ramahari Das.

Among the dignitaries, OSNA President Aruna Mohanty, Secy Prabodh Rath, Culture Department Joint Director Subodh Acharya, and Odissi Research Centre Chief Executive Sikata Das were present at the event.

## Bobby: Traditional roles were boring



Mumbai: Actor Bobby Deol acknowledges the challenges faced by big stars in navigating their careers beyond their established images, despite achieving box office success with his recent film *Animal*.

Expressing his views on the monotony of traditional hero roles, Bobby believes that the established star image can be confining for actors.

In an interview with *Man's World India*, the *Badal* actor highlighted the challenges faced by stars who may feel restricted in experimenting due to audience expectations and market pressures, leading to a sense of insecurity.

Bobby also revealed that he often advises his brother, Sunny Deol, to venture into diverse projects. However, Sunny, according to Bobby, acknowledges the challenge of breaking away from his strong star image.

Reflecting on his own journey, Bobby expresses gratitude for the opportunity to break away from the traditional hero mould and explore a range of roles.



## Rakul spills beans on her relationship

Mumbai: Actress Rakul Preet Singh and actor-producer Jacky Bhagnani have been in a relationship for a few years. And now their wedding is the talk of the town. Between all the rumours, she has opened up about her relationship with Jacky.

In a chat with a media agency, the *Thank God* actress said, "Everybody likes stability, and I am glad that we have found that in each other. I think we are two similar people, and that is the most comforting part of it, as we don't have to bring any change into one another. It was very uncanny to know that there's another person who is exactly like me. We bond over the same food, the same films, the same travel destinations, workouts, and a lot of other stuff."

In October 2021, Rakul and Jacky Bhagnani made their relationship official on Instagram. For weeks now, there has been buzz about their wedding.

The couple's pre-wedding celebrations will take place over two days, February 19 and 20, and the wedding will take place February 21.

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

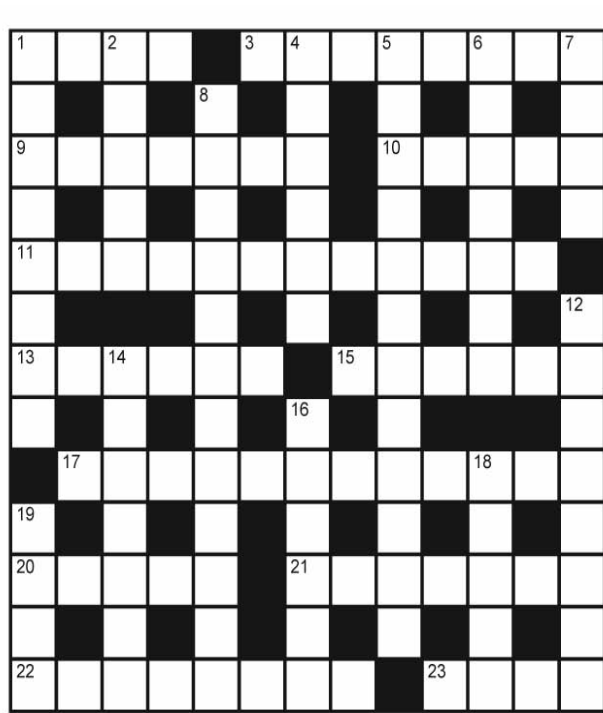


### BREVITY



### FUN post

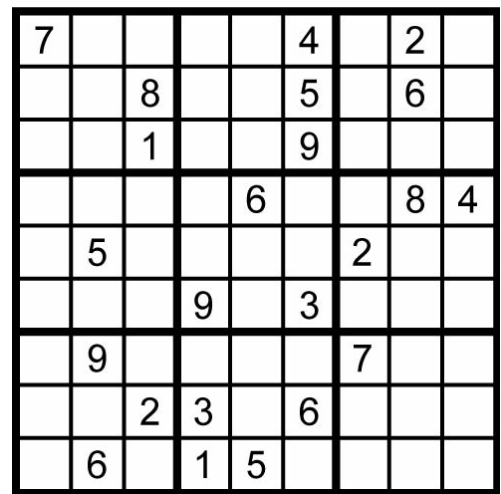
### CROSSWORD



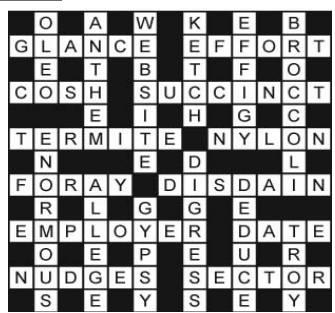
- Across
- 1 Peppy
  - 3 Floating organisms
  - 9 Sources
  - 10 Some entrances
  - 11 Clay pigeons sport
  - 13 Concert finale, hopefully
  - 15 Food shop machine
  - 17 Swimming move
  - 20 Boredom
  - 21 Enduring
  - 22 Flabbergast
  - 23 Scottish hillside
  - 5 Jammies and such
  - 6 Immense
  - 7 Cozy retreat
  - 8 Treatise or thesis
  - 12 Loyal (4-4)
  - 14 Small crown
  - 16 Where Plato lived
  - 18 Title holder
  - 19 Greek cheese
- Down
- 1 Footwear preserver
  - 2 Indian side dish
  - 4 Classwork

### SUDOKU

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

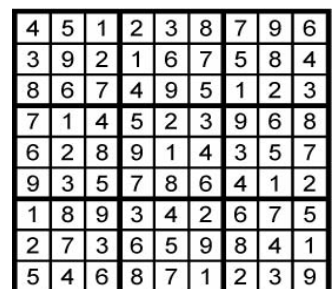


### SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

## Naveen was ready to sacrifice govt for Puri Prakalpa: Pandian



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** Five-time Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik was ready to forgo his 24-year-old government, but determined to complete the Srimandir Parikrama Prakalpa or temple heritage corridor in Puri, BJD leader and Chairman 5T and Nabin Odisha, Kartik Pandian revealed here, Friday.

Pandian, the close aide of Patnaik and a bureaucrat-turned-politician, said this while addressing a programme of the International Conclave on Urban Transformation, attended by representatives from 11 countries and 20 Indian states.

"I will take risk, I will forgo my government, but I will get this (project) done," Pandian said quoting Patnaik.

Pandian was addressing the audience on the Rs 800-crore Srimandir Parikrama Prakalpa or the heritage corridor around Puri's Jagannath Temple, which was opposed by many since its beginning in 2021. However, Patnaik remained determined and completed it with full determination.

Recalling a recent history, Pandian said, "Somebody very important had asked the CM whether he was sure to do it (project)? In so many years, many people have not done anything. The CM said I am pretty serious about doing this."

"He (the man who spoke to the CM) said there is a huge political risk involved in it. Because I (the man who spoke to the CM) have seen chief ministers who started the projects with full en-

thusiasm, stopped it after 15 days or a month because they knew that they were getting into troubled waters which might finish their political career and government might fall," Pandian told the audience.

Noting that this is the kind of attachment of people with the temple, Pandian said, "For one mistake, your political career may be finished. You (CM) are actually playing with fire. This was the feedback to the Honb'le CM." According to Pandian, Patnaik told that person, "I am in my fifth term. People have bestowed so much love and affection on me. They have reposed faith on me. The people also love and have great respect for Lord Jagannath. If I do not do it for the people who have trust in me, I think history may judge me very wrongly. I will take risk. I will forgo my government, but will get this done."

The BJD leader said this is the conviction of the man behind the success of the Srimandir Parikrama Prakalpa. He is ready even to forgo the government for doing a 'larger good' for the people of Odisha.

Pandian said Puri Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb has categorically said something for the 12th century shrine has been done after 700 years. "Gajapati is the titular king of Puri and also the 'karta' of the temple," Pandian said.



**AT LORD'S ABODE:** Office bearers, artists and devotees at Srimandir in Puri, Friday, for inviting Goddess Bimala to the inaugural ceremony of SAMALEI (Samaleswari Temple Area Management and Local Economic Initiative) Project in Sambalpur, January 27

## BRIDE HUNT COSTS MAN ₹3.18 LAKH; CONMAN ARRESTED

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** A con artist, who fleeced a man to the tune of ₹3.18 lakh by posing as a prospective bride on a matrimonial website, was arrested by the Commissionerate Police, Friday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Prateek Singh said the accused, Nrusingha Biswal, a resident of Bhatakudi village in Puri district, was arrested by the Cyber Crime and Economic Offences Wing (CC&EOW) sleuths following over two months' investigation. Three mobile phones, ₹1,61,190 cash, five debit cards and two SIM cards have been recovered from Nrusingha who was booked under Sections 419 and 420 of IPC following his arrest.

Singh said Biswal spread his con spell by creating a fake profile using his relative Dipa Pradhan's credentials, including her photographs. Matters came to the light after the Cyber Crime police station received a complaint from Manas Ranjan Pradhan November 15 last year claiming that he had been duped by Dipa who he came across on a matrimonial site May 15 while searching for a prospective bride. Biswal allegedly knocked out money from him on several occasions on various pretexts, Pradhan alleged.

An officer at the Cyber Crime police station said the sleuths tracked down the payment IDs of online transactions done by Pradhan before identifying the e-KYC details of Biswal, eventually leading to his arrest.

## State inks pacts of over ₹23,300cr with 11 cos

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** The state government inked pacts with 11 companies for different projects to the tune of ₹23,389 crore during the Enterprise Odisha Summit held at Jharsuguda Friday.

These projects, which will be set up in Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Sundargarh districts, will create employment for 15,168 people, officials said.

The pacts were inked in the presence of senior officials of the state government and various companies.

- Epsilon Carbon Private Limited will set up a unit in the integrated carbon complex (ICC) in Jharsuguda with an investment of ₹10,000 crore
- Ind Barath Energy Utkal Limited will set up an 800-MW ultra super critical coal-based thermal power plant at Jharsuguda with an investment of ₹6,012.46 crore

Energy Utkal Limited, which will set up an 800-MW ultra super critical coal-based thermal power plant at Jharsuguda for ₹6,012.46 crore.

Epsilon Carbon Private Limited will set up a unit in the integrated carbon complex (ICC) in Jharsuguda.

"Jharsuguda's industrial ecosystem, availability of skilled labour, robust infrastructure and industry-friendly policies make it an ideal location for the upcoming mega projects," said Epsilon Carbon Private Limited managing director Vikram Handa.

DSPL-559

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# ୪ର୍ଥ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟରେ ୫ଟି ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ୩୭୧ ରୂପାନ୍ତରିତ ଉଚ୍ଚ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ

ମୟୂରଭଞ୍ଜ ୧୦୫ ଉଚ୍ଚ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ

ସମ୍ବଲପୁର ୬୩ ଉଚ୍ଚ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ

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ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ମାନ୍ୟବର ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ

## ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ନବୀନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଲୋକାର୍ପଣ

୨୦ ଜାନୁଆରୀ ୨୦୨୪

### ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଓ ଗଣଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଭାଗ





“Yoga means union with the Divine, but it also means awaking first to your inner self and then to your higher self – a movement inward and then a movement upward”



SRI AUROBINDO

## Repatriation Riddle

The abrupt recall of senior IAS officer Sanjay Bandopadhyay from his role as Chairman of the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWA) has sparked speculation among observers and babus about the underlying reasons for this unforeseen move. Bandopadhyay, previously occupying a secretary-equivalent position at the Centre, has been swiftly reassigned to his parent cadre in Madhya Pradesh, effective immediately.

Within MP's babu circles, murmurs suggest that his recall may be tied to a potential appointment as the next Chief Secretary of the state. However, uncertainties arise given the impending retirement of the current chief secretary Veera Rana in March of this year, with the prospect of her tenure extension remaining uncertain.

Adding complexity to the situation is the recent change in leadership with a new Chief Minister in Madhya Pradesh and a fresh electoral mandate, all transpiring under the Centre's watchful eyes. The circumstances surrounding Rana's appointment before the Assembly polls further contribute to the uncertainty surrounding her continued role as Chief Secretary.

An alternative perspective posits that the consecutive placement of Bandopadhyay under shipping secretaries junior to him might have played a role in this decision. Despite this, as one of the senior-most officers in the cadre, and with a service tenure extending until August 31, 2024, Bandopadhyay remains a potential contender for the Chief Secretary post in Madhya Pradesh.

### Outsider babu's strategic return to J&K

The Centre has reaffirmed its faith in retired IAS officer Satish Chandra by appointing him as the Chairperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Real Estate Regulatory Authority (J&K RERA). Chandra, who concluded his term as chairman of the J&K Public Service Commission initiated in June 2021, steps into a significant role that has remained vacant since September 2022, following the abrupt resignation of the first RERA chairperson, Parimal Rai, within 50 days of his appointment.

The decision to bring back an outsider babu—Chandra is from the Andhra Pradesh cadre—into another pivotal position indicates the Centre's endorsement of Chandra's abilities, utility and effectiveness in this sensitive region. Sources have informed DKB that appointing an outsider can enhance an administrator's efficacy. Chandra's consecutive appointments, first as chairperson of the J&K PCS and now as RERA chairperson signal a deliberate effort to infuse fresh perspectives and administrative expertise to address the unique challenges facing the J&K region.

As the Centre grapples with the intricate governance issues in Jammu & Kashmir, not the least of which is to possibly hold assembly elections a few months after the Lok Sabha polls, Chandra's appointment reflects a need to leverage experience, competence and an outsider's viewpoint to steer the administration.

### Hunt for new UT Advisor in Chandigarh

The Centre is reportedly taking a fresh approach to providing the Chandigarh Administrator with a regular advisor. Departing from its initial proposal to transfer Puducherry Chief Secretary Rajeev Verma to Chandigarh, the focus has now shifted to considering another IAS officer for this post.

Sources have informed DKB that Manish Kumar Gupta, a 1991-batch UT cadre officer, the former DDA Vice Chairperson and the current Additional Chief Secretary of industries in the Delhi government, has emerged as the frontrunner for the Chandigarh assignment. The position of UT Advisor has been under ad hoc arrangements since the retirement of Dharam Pal in October last year.

There are some insiders, however, who are sceptical about the feasibility of this new approach. Some argue that the additional charge arrangement is working fine for the administration, with Administrator and Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit reportedly expressing satisfaction with Nitin Kumar Yadav, the incumbent Principal Secretary, Home, who is also serving as the interim Advisor.

The emergence of this point of view raises questions about the strategic considerations behind the potential appointment and the nuances involved in selecting the right candidate. Of course, it is for the Centre to take the final call, but until then babus will continue to speculate.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

### WISDOM CORNER

“A thousand words will not leave so deep an impression as one deed.”  
HENRIK IBSEN

“Everywhere across whatever sorrows of which our life is woven, some radiant joy will gaily flash past.”  
NIKOLAI GOGOL

“You cannot catch a child's spirit by running after it; you must stand still and for love it will soon itself return.”  
ARTHUR MILLER

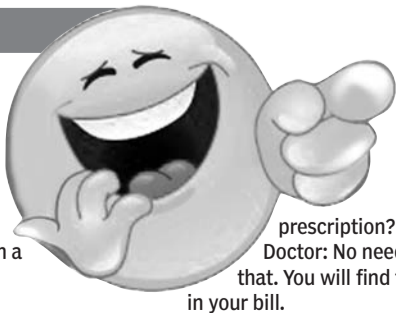
### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- **1768:** British explorer James Cook landed at Waimea, on Kauai island, becoming the first European to visit Hawaii. The cartographer and naval officer was famous for his three voyages between 1768 and 1779 in the Pacific Ocean and to New Zealand and Australia in particular.
- **1892:** The first official basketball game was played in Springfield, Massachusetts, by YMCA students of the game's inventor, James A. Naismith. Two teams of nine players each compete against each other, with the objective to throw a soccer ball into a peach basket attached to a balcony 10 feet above the floor.
- **1961:** U.S. President John F. Kennedy, in his inaugural address, said, "And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."
- **1993:** Belgian-born actress Audrey Hepburn—who created unforgettable film roles as the epitome of sophistication and glamour while paradoxically bewitching audiences and critics with her sprightly mannerisms and elfin charm—died in Switzerland.

### LOL

#### PUT ME INTO A FIGHTING MOOD

Patient: Doctor, what I need is something to stir me up; something to put me in a fighting mood. Did you put something like that in this



prescription? Doctor: No need for that. You will find that in your bill.



Kaushik Basu

WHAT TRULY SET SOLOW APART WAS NOT JUST HIS MODESTY BUT HIS TOTAL LACK OF PRETENSE, AND HIS NATURAL HUMAN WARMTH

### SPECTRUM SOCIAL SECURITY

# NPS: The insecurity dimensions



P Madhava Rao

THE NEW PENSION SCHEME WOULD OPERATE ON A DEFINED CONTRIBUTION BASIS THAT PROMISED CREATION OF HUGE POST-RETIREMENT WEALTH

With the assurance to offer the population a comprehensive social security scheme the government of India had introduced New Pension Scheme (NPS) in January 2004. Two decades after this, the beneficiaries started feeling the pinch of it. None heeded to the economists' hints and analytical advice at that time. Old beneficiaries were not affected, new entrants were yet to become eligible for it. There was a point for the government to push it because the private sector strongly lobbied to make a quick buck out of the employed class' retirement funds. However, it was pointless for the trade unions to remain silent. Thus, it was more political than mathematics.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, launched Project OASIS (Old Age Social and Income Security) in August 1998, claiming its stake as a provider of old-age security to the population as a measure of social justice. The original mandate of the Project OASIS was on the ninety per cent of workers who were not covered by any pension scheme in India; however, it made a 'paradigm shift' in advising reforms to civil service pensions in India on the premise that the government's finances are under pressure due to an ageing civil serv-

ice. The project work was assigned to a privately managed economic foundation in Mumbai, that had interest in financial and capital market education in India. Playing with huge pension funds in the market was only the goal as some economists then felt.

The foundation believed that the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment recognised that poverty alleviation programmes aimed at the elderly alone cannot solve our elderly's income and social security problems; the problem must be addressed through thrift and self-help, in which people save for old age during their working lives. The government's role in this endeavour could be to build the necessary institutional infrastructure in collaboration with the private sector to enable and encourage each citizen to take on this task. Based on the foregoing, Project OASIS proposed an individual contribution-based, non-benefit guaranteed, non-return guaranteed, non-accumulation guaranteed pension scheme for the unorganised sector, to be managed by private fund managers, in which contributions of ₹5 to ₹10 per day per worker flow into the system were expected to generate wealth for their old age.

It required to rally support

from informal workers, collect their shares, invest in the markets, earn profits, and ask them to wait until they reached the age of sixty. It was a herculean task. Instead, the foundation targeted government employees across the country, where money could flow into their investment businesses with a single government order; and they were successful in convincing the government to replace the old defined benefit social security pension with contribution-based NPS for civil servants hired on or after January 1, 2004.

The New Pension Scheme would operate on a defined contribution basis that promised creation of huge post-retirement wealth. The government employees must contribute 10% of their basic pay, Dearness Pay, and Dearness Allowance, which will be deducted from their monthly salary bill. At exit, he must invest 40% of his pension wealth in an annuity (from an IRDA-regulated Life Insurance Company), which will provide pension for the employee and his dependent parents/employee for the rest of his life. If a government employee leaves the scheme before reaching the age of 60, the mandatory annuitisation would be 80% of the pension wealth. The quantum of benefit is not defined.

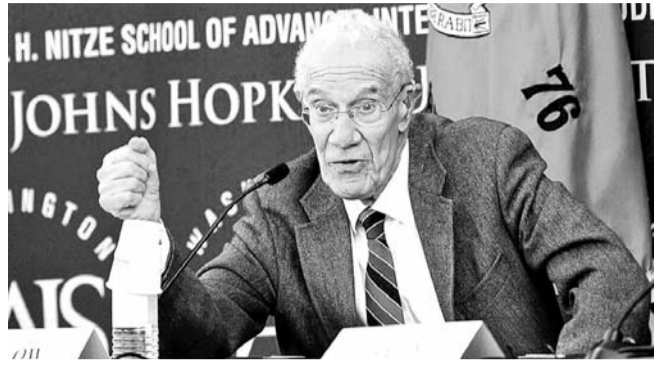
This is a departure from a defined benefit pension scheme. In the old system, government employees knew that their pension would be 50% of their last salary if they served at least 25 years or proportionate to the service. The benefit in NPS is unknown. Neither the return on accumulated capital nor the return on investment is guaranteed. In addition, there is no family pension. According to the original proposals, employee contributions would be invested in the market of their choosing. Employee financial literacy issues were ignored.

The funniest part in the new systems is that, under the old system, the government paid pensions to employees only after they retired. The burden of all employees was not immediate, and it did not feel the burden. It was treated as deferred wages. In the new system, government pays a monthly contribution to private fund managers under NPS, in addition to a pension to the old cohorts. The burden on the exchequer has increased rather than decreased. Only the central government knows how wise the decision to carry two burdens at once under guise of reducing the burden on the exchequer.

The author is a former International Senior Advisor at UNDP

### FOCUS ECONOMICS

# REMEMBERING SOLOW



Robert Solow's growth model, which he developed in the 1950s, illustrated how 'continuous technological progress' could increase economic output, encouraging governments around the world to invest in research and development

The recent passing of legendary MIT economist and Nobel laureate Robert Solow at the age of 99 has triggered a wave of tributes honouring his pioneering research, which deepened our understanding of the relationship between investment, technology, and economic growth. His monumental contributions to the field are widely acknowledged, but for me his passing creates a profound and unexpected sense of personal loss.

During the 2001-02 academic year, I was a visiting professor at MIT, where I taught micro-economics and was expected to give a few other lectures. Olivier Blanchard, then-chair of the economics department, explained that due to limited space, I would have to share a cluster of three offices, the other occupants being Solow and Paul Samuelson. Although the thought of being in a cluster with two Nobel laureates was somewhat discomfiting, my trepidation was unwarranted; my neighbours turned out to be lovely people. I got to know both Samuelson (who died in 2009), and Solow well during that academic year.

By then, Solow had established himself as a towering figure, renowned for his extensive contributions to the field, particularly his groundbreaking research on the drivers of economic growth. Over his illustrious career, he received every major economics award, culminating in the Nobel in 1987.

Solow's work has had a profound impact on global policymaking, especially on East Asia's so-called "tiger" economies during their take-off. As the Nobel Committee noted, Solow's growth model, which he developed in the 1950s, illustrated how "continuous technological progress" could increase economic output, encouraging governments around the world to invest in

research and development.

Unlike many other economists of his generation, Solow did not begin his academic journey in mathematics, physics, or economics. Instead, he initially studied anthropology and sociology, with Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons as his mentor. Interestingly, Parsons himself had made the opposite decision, starting his career in economics before moving to sociology. Solow's studies were interrupted when, at the age of 18, he joined the United States Army, serving in North Africa and Sicily until the end of World War II in 1945.

Upon returning to Harvard, Solow studied under the famous Russian economist (and future Nobel laureate) Wassily Leontief. He also married Barbara Lewis, beginning a lifelong partnership that lasted until her death in 2014.

While Solow was already a seminal figure by the time I met him, it was his extraordinary character that struck me the most. What truly set him apart was not just his modesty but his total lack of pretense, and his natural human warmth.

During our first meeting, Solow asked about the Indian students he had supervised at MIT, wondering if I was familiar with any of them. Remarkably, his interest was not limited to those who had achieved professional success. He was equally interested in those who, though brilliant, had not reached their full potential due to personal circumstances or misfortune, asking thoughtful questions about their lives and families. During the year, my wife and I developed a friendship with Bob and Barbara, inviting them to our home for dinner and meeting them at various Cambridge establishments to talk about economics, sociology, and life.

Solow was a person of remarkable integrity. The model of economic growth he is most known for, the Solow-Swan model, is a case in point. While Solow first published his model in the prestigious Quarterly Journal of Economics in 1956, a similar model was developed independently by the Australian economist Trevor Swan, who published his work in the lesser-

known Economic Record that same year.

Swan, being an economist from a less renowned institution, did not receive the same recognition as Solow for his contributions. I was deeply impressed by Solow's consistent acknowledgment of Swan's work on the many occasions when we discussed his groundbreaking research.

One of my last interactions with Solow occurred shortly after I became the Chief Economic Adviser to the Indian government. During my first few months in the role, as I struggled to deal with politicians and business leaders, I found myself longing for the intellectual environment of academia. While corresponding with Solow on some policy issues, I told him that I was not enjoying my current job and that I missed the world of research and writing. In his typically avuncular manner, he responded with a handwritten letter, emphasizing the importance of effective policymaking and urging me to dig in my heels and do my best, despite the personal sacrifices this might involve.

Solow was speaking from personal experience, having been a member of US President John F. Kennedy's Council of Economic Advisers from 1961 to 1962. He was right: over time, I grew to enjoy my policymaking work, particularly my discussions with then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on some of the minutiae of policy design. I am deeply grateful to Solow for offering much-needed encouragement when I needed it most and for his enduring friendship. He was not just an exemplary scholar; first and foremost, he was an exemplary human being.

The writer is a former chief economist of the World Bank and chief economic adviser to the Government of India.

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## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

### Doctors' prescriptions

Sir, Following a recent directive from the Orissa High Court, the Odisha government has asked both government and private doctors to write prescriptions in a legible manner or in typed form. The High Court's dictum also applies to hospitals in the state to write medico-legal and post-mortem reports legibly, in capital letters, or in typed form. Reasons like time pressure, volume of work, and the patients-in-waiting are what have contributed to the community of doctors for their scrawled or unreadable writing. However, doctors must know that their indecipherable notes and prescriptions at times lead to serious implications, and even to deaths. There are cases that pharmacists and healthcare workers gave the wrong medicines and administered erroneous medications because of doctors' illegible handwriting in prescriptions. It is time that other states in India follow suit Odisha's government order, since the problem of doctors' bad handwriting is universal. Nevertheless, it is puzzling that living in the digital age why doctors still stick to the age-old practice of hand-written prescriptions. To put it on a lighter note, 'a doctor's font sometimes leads to a patient faint.'

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

### Education reform

Sir, The Indian Ministry of Education's recent introduction of guidelines for the registration and regulation of coaching centres in 2024 is a commendable decision. This initiative is aimed at creating a framework to govern these centers, ensuring minimum standards to protect the interests of enrolled students. The main objective of these guidelines is to shield students from prevalent scams and false promises within the coaching industry. The exploitation of students, particularly those under 16, has led to undue pressure and stress, impacting their mental well-being. This move shows the need for a more holistic approach to education, encouraging co-curricular activities for overall development. This decision is timely given the increasing trend of coaching centres exploiting students, often failing to deliver quality education despite substantial fees.

Preetiyukta Mohakud, BHUBANESWAR





American flamingos are pictured in a pond surrounded by snow at the Paire Daiza zoo in Brugelette, Belgium



Palestinians wait to receive food cooked by a charity kitchen in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip



Participants pray as they take an ice-cold bath during a ceremony to purify their souls and to pray for the New Year at the Teppozu Inari shrine in Tokyo, Japan



A man casts a net in a canal near Vellayani Lake in Thiruvananthapuram



People stand near the long icicles formed after leak of a water pipeline at Tangmarg in north Kashmir



A kitesurfer loses control of his board, on a sunny day at Bloubergstrand beach in Cape Town, South Africa



An armed security personnel keeps vigil ahead of the consecration ceremony of the Ram Mandir, in Ayodhya



Members of tribal community with bow and arrows, 'Nagada' and 'Mandaar' stage an 'Aakrosh Rally' against the Enforcement Directorate's summon to Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, in Ranchi

REUTERS/PTI PHOTOS





The schemes of the previous Congress government were such that they were discussed and appreciated not only in the state but in the entire country

ASHOK GEHLOT | FORMER RAJASTHAN CM

## R-DAY PREP: FLIGHTS RESTRICTED IN DELHI

There will be no flight arrivals or departures at the Delhi airport from 10:20 am to 12:45 pm every day till January 26 in connection with the Republic Day preparations and celebrations, according to an official



## of the day quote

The 'Business Blasters' programme will be introduced in Delhi government-funded colleges and grants for the curriculum are being sanctioned

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

I don't think there is any delay in seat sharing. They are already talking about it. It takes time.

FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

Power corridors have been sanitised from corrupt elements under the Narendra Modi government and this is why some people are upset as they believed the law would never be able to catch up with them

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

## SHORT TAKES

### Fresh ED summons to Lalu, Tejashwi

Patna: The ED has issued fresh summons to RJD chief Lalu Prasad and his son and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav to appear for questioning at its Patna office in connection with the alleged railways land-for-jobs money laundering case, official sources said Friday.

### Sharad Pawar's kin summoned

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate has summoned Maharashtra MLA Rohit Pawar, a grandnephew of NCP supremo Sharad Pawar, for questioning January 24 as part of its money laundering probe into the alleged Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank (MSCB) scam, official sources said Friday.

### Air India staffer shot dead

Noida: A 30-year-old crew member of Air India was allegedly shot dead by unidentified bike-borne assailants near a market here Friday, police said.

### R-Day parade to be women-centric

New Delhi: The 75th Republic Day celebrations at the majestic Kartavya Path January 26 will largely be 'women-centric' with the central theme of India's democracy and its resolve to become a developed nation.

# Cong opposes simultaneous polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 19: The Congress Friday strongly opposed the 'undemocratic' idea of holding simultaneous elections in the country and said it goes against the guarantees of federalism and the basic structure of the Constitution.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge also demanded that the idea be abandoned and the high-powered committee formed to study it be dissolved.

In a letter to the secretary of the committee on one nation, one election, he requested former President Ram Nath Kovind, who heads the panel, "not to allow his persona and the office of the former President of India to be abused by the Union government to subvert the constitution and parliamentary democracy in this country".

"The Indian National Congress is strongly opposed to the very idea of 'One Nation, One Election'. For the sake of maintaining a thriving and a robust democracy, it is imperative that the entire idea must be abandoned and the high-powered committee dissolved," Kharge said in his letter to Niten Chandra, the secretary of the committee.

His letter came in response to Chandra's letter October 18 whereby he had invited suggestions for consideration of the committee. He said the committee seems to have "already made up its mind and seeking a consultation seems to be an eye wash".

"The government, parliament and ECI should work together to



The government, Parliament and ECI should work together to ensure people's mandate is respected rather than divert their attention by talking about undemocratic ideas like simultaneous elections

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS CHIEF

ensure people's mandate is respected rather than divert their attention by talking about undemocratic ideas like simultaneous elections," Kharge said.

He said the composition of the committee is "biased" as it was formed without giving substantial representation to the Opposition parties that head various state governments that would be affected by the recommendations of this committee.

"When the committee is headed by no less than the former President of India, it is distressing when even common voters feel the consultations of the committee are likely to be a pretence since minds have already been made up. Firm views in support of the proposal have already been expressed in public

and a dispassionate analysis of pros and cons is not being attempted in a serious and systematic manner," the Congress chief said in his response.

He said that in the last 10 years the only instances where the Chief Ministers have lost the confidence of the House have been when one particular party has abused the government machinery at its disposal and subverted the anti-defection law to "steal" people's mandate.

"There is no place for the concept of simultaneous elections in a country that has adopted a Parliamentary system of government. Such forms of simultaneous elections that are being floated by the government go against the guarantees of federalism contained in the Constitution," Kharge asserted.

He said the government and this committee should have been honest in stating at the outset that what they are attempting goes against the basic structure of the Constitution and will require substantial changes to the basic structure to implement.

"The holding of simultaneous elections would require the dissolution of several legislative assemblies which are still halfway (or less) through their terms. This would be a betrayal of the electorate in those states," the Congress chief claimed.

He said the Chief Minister or the Prime Minister holds office for as long as he or she enjoys the confidence of the House and if a Chief Minister loses confidence of the House and no other party is able to form a government.

## SP, RLD announce Lok Sabha alliance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 19: The Samajwadi Party and the Rashtriya Lok Dal Friday announced their alliance for the Lok Sabha polls, with the RLD saying that the other party will leave seven seats in western Uttar Pradesh for its nominees.

SP president Akhilesh Yadav and RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary announced the tie-up on social media for the elections later this year. "Congratulations to everyone on the alliance of RLD and SP. Let us all unite for victory," Yadav said in a post on X.

Reposting this tweet,



Chaudhary said, "Always ready to protect national and constitutional values. We expect all workers of our alliance to move forward together for the development and prosperity of our region."

He also posted pictures of the two leaders shaking hands. An RLD spokesperson said that the seat-sharing deal was finalised at a meeting between the two leaders.

"The RLD will contest seven seats in western Uttar Pradesh," he said. But the spokesperson did not name the specific seats.

Uttar Pradesh has 80 Lok Sabha seats.

# Moitra vacates govt bungalow

Thursday, Moitra failed to get any relief from the Delhi High Court which refused to stay the DoE notice and asked her to vacate the government bungalow

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 19: Expelled Lok Sabha MP Mahua Moitra Friday vacated her government bungalow here, a day after the Delhi High Court dismissed her plea for a stay on eviction proceedings.

The former TMC MP's counsel Shadan Farasat said that house number 9B on Telegraph Lane was vacated by 10 am Friday morning before the authorities arrived. "No eviction took place," the counsel said.

The Directorate of Estates (DoE), which comes under the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, in the morning sent a team to get the bungalow vacated and the area around it was barricaded. Earlier this week, the DoE issued an eviction notice to Moitra.

"The possession of the bungalow has officially been handed over to the Directorate of Estates. We are assessing if there is any damage to the property," an official said. Thursday, Moitra failed to get any relief from the Delhi High Court which refused to stay the DoE notice and asked her to vacate the government bungalow.

Justice Girish Kathpalia said no specific rule has been brought before the court which dealt with the eviction of MPs from government accommodation



after they cease to be lawmakers. The TMC leader, who was expelled from the Lok Sabha December 8 last year, was earlier asked to vacate the house by January 7 after her allotment was cancelled.

January 8, the DoE issued a notice seeking her reply within three days as to why she had not vacated her government accommodation. Another notice was also issued to her January 12.

January 4, the Delhi High Court asked the TMC leader to approach the DoE with a request to allow her to continue to occupy the government accommodation allotted to her.

Moitra was held guilty of "unethical conduct" and expelled from Lok Sabha December 8 last year for allegedly accepting gifts from businessman Darshan Hiranandani and sharing her user ID and password of the Parliament website with him.

## SC judges behind Ayodhya verdict get Ram Temple invite



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 19: Five Supreme Court judges including present CJ D Y Chandrachud, who were part of the Constitution bench which paved way for the construction of the Ram Temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya, have been invited as state guests to witness the consecration ceremony January 22.

Besides the present CJ Chandrachud, former CJIs Ranjan Gogoi and S A Bobde and former judges Ashok Bhusan and S Abdul Nazeer were part of the bench which had delivered the historic verdict November 9, 2019.

The unanimous and anonymous verdict had backed the construction of a Ram temple by a government trust at the disputed site in Ayodhya and ruled that an alternative five-acre plot

must be found for a mosque in the Hindu holy town.

The Uttar Pradesh government's list of invitees also include over 50 jurists, including former Chief Justices, judges and top lawyers, as well as K Parasaran, the counsel for 'Ram Lalla'. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and former Attorney General KK Venugopal are also among the invitees.

According to the temple trust, over 7,000 people, including politicians, celebrities, industrialists, saints are slated to attend the ceremony. The invitation has been sent by the special secretary protocol of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The Ram Mandir consecration ceremony will be held January 22 with the 'Pran Pratishtha' of the idol of Ram Lalla in the still under-construction temple in Ayodhya.

## Gurmeet gets 50-day parole

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Jan 19: Dera Sacha Sauda chief and rape convict Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh has been granted 50-day parole, official sources said Friday.

The parole comes two months after the Sirsa-headquartered sect chief had walked out of the Sunaria jail in Haryana's Rohtak district November 21 last year after he was granted a 21-day furlough - his third temporary release from jail in 2023.

During his temporary release period, Singh will go to the Dera Sacha Sauda Ashram in Barnawa in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat. Singh is serving a 20-year jail term for raping two of his disciples.



The Dera chief had walked out of the Sunaria jail on a 30-day parole July 30, 2023, while he was granted a 40-day parole in January last year as well. In October 2022 too, he was granted a 40-day parole.

Before that, he had come out of prison on a month-long parole in June 2022. Besides, he was granted a three-week furlough February 7, 2022.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with folk artistes at the Sri Sri Auniati Satra during the 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' in Majuli, Assam, Friday

## SC designates 11 women lawyers as senior advocates in one go

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 19: In a first, the Supreme Court Friday designated 11 women lawyers as senior advocates in one go.

A committee headed by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud designated 56 lawyers and advocate-on-record (AoR) as senior advocates, 11 of them women.

The Apex court had on the last occasion designated 18 lawyers as senior advocates in 2021.

"The Chief Justice of India and the judges of the Supreme Court of India in a full court meeting held on Friday, January 19, 2024, have been pleased to designate the following advocates-

on record/advocates as senior advocates with effect from January 19, 2024..." said a notification issued by the Apex court. Advocates Shobha Gupta, Karuna Nundy, Swarupama Chaturvedi, Archana Pathak Dave and Shirin Khajuria are among the 11 women lawyers who have been designated as senior advocates.

# Climate change could reduce average life expectancy by six months

A 10-POINT INCREASE IN THE COMPOSITE CLIMATE CHANGE INDEX—WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR BOTH TEMPERATURE AND RAINFALL—IS EXPECTED TO DECREASE THE AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY BY SIX MONTHS, THE RESEARCHERS SAID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 19: Climate change may take six months off the average human life span, according to a study which found that women and individuals in developing nations are disproportionately affected.

The study, published recently in the journal PLOS Climate, evaluated average temperature, rainfall, and life expectancy data from 191 countries from 1940-2020.

In addition to measuring the isolated impacts of temperature and rainfall, the researchers designed a first-of-its-kind composite climate change index, which combines the two variables to gauge the overarching severity of climate change.

Results indicate that in isolation, a global temperature increase of 1 degree Celsius is associated with an average human life expectancy decrease of approximately 0.44 years, or about six months and one week.



A 10-point increase in the composite climate change index—which accounts for both temperature and rainfall—is expected to decrease the average life expectancy by six months, the researchers said.

Women and individuals in de-

veloping nations are disproportionately affected, they said. "The global threat posed by climate change to the well-being of billions underscores the urgent need to address it as a public health crisis, as revealed by this study," said Amit Roy from

Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Bangladesh and The New School for Social Research, US.

The study emphasises that "mitigation efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and proactive initiatives are essential to safeguard life expectancy and protect the health of populations worldwide," Roy added.

Temperature and rainfall—two telltale signals of climate change—cause myriad public health concerns, from the acute and direct (e.g., natural disasters like flooding and heat waves) to the indirect yet equally devastating (e.g., respiratory and mental illnesses), the researchers said.

While impacts like these are observable and well documented, existing research has not established a direct link between

climate change and life expectancy, they said. The team is hopeful that the composite climate change index will standardise the global conversation about climate change, become a usable metric for the non-scientific public and encourage collaboration and even friendly competition among countries to combat the impacts of climate change.

Mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to a changing environment are of particular importance, the researchers said. To complement this large-scale approach, they suggest localised future studies that consider specific severe weather events (e.g., wildfires, tsunamis, and floods), the impacts of which cannot be fully captured through analysing temperature and rainfall alone.

# international



**We will not settle for anything short of an absolute victory**  
BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | ISRAEL PM

## GERMANY EASES RULES TO GET CITIZENSHIP

German lawmakers Friday approved legislation easing the rules on gaining citizenship and ending restrictions on holding dual citizenship. The government argues the plan will bolster the integration of immigrants and help attract skilled workers



## of the day quote

**It's sadly no surprise that Donald Trump is back at it with more false and racist 'birther' claims**

RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY | INDIAN AMERICAN CONGRESSMAN

**When you say working, are they stopping the Houthis, no. Are they going to continue, yes**

JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT

**The Secretary-General underlines that all security concerns between the two countries must be addressed by peaceful means, through dialogue and cooperation, in accordance with the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and good neighbourly relations**

ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

# Pak, Iran agree to 'de-escalate' situation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, Jan 19:** Pakistan and Iran Friday agreed to "de-escalate the situation" and strengthen coordination on counter-terrorism as the two sides began to pick threads of tattered ties following their tit-for-tat military strikes in each other's territory.

Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani spoke with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on the telephone and expressed his country's desire to "work with Iran based on the spirit of mutual trust and cooperation," Pakistan's Foreign Office said in a statement.

"The Foreign Minister stressed that respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty must underpin this cooperation," it said.

They "agreed that working-level cooperation and close coordination on counter-terrorism and other aspects of mutual concern should be strengthened. They also agreed to de-escalate the situation," the FO said, underscoring the close "brotherly



In this photo released by the Iranian Army Friday, a missile is launched during a military drill in southern Iran

relations" between the two neighbours. The return of the Ambassadors of the two countries to their respective capitals was also discussed. In a separate statement earlier, the FO said Foreign Minister Jilani expressed Pakistan's readiness to work with Iran on "all issues

and underscored the need for closer cooperation on security issues". The positive development came after Pakistan conducted "precision military strikes" against what it called "terrorist hideouts" in Iran's Sistan-Balochistan province that killed 9 people Thursday.

The positive development came after Pakistan conducted "precision military strikes" against what it called "terrorist hideouts" in Iran's Sistan-Balochistan province that killed 9 people Thursday

The attack was seen as retaliation to Iranian missile and drone attacks Tuesday, which targeted two bases of the Sunni Baloch militant group Jaish al-Adl in Pakistan's unruly Balochistan province

was seen as retaliation to Iranian missile and drone attacks on Tuesday, which targeted two bases of the Sunni Baloch militant group Jaish al-Adl in Pakistan's unruly Balochistan province.

According to IRNA, Iran's official news agency, Amir Abdollahian urged Pakistan to assist in "foiling plots and destroying terrorist hideouts in its territories." The top Iranian diplomat also called for the

pursuit of security and military cooperation seriously, noting that Iranian forces will not allow terrorist groups to carry out sabotage in the country.

Pointing to Iran's recent attack on a hideout of the so-called Jaish al-Adl terrorist group inside Pakistani soil, he argued that intelligence documents showed that over 50 terrorists were getting ready to conduct terrorist attacks on Iran.

Pakistani foreign minister, for his part, emphasised that both nations have a common attitude in the fight against terrorism, adding that Islamabad underlines the need for maintaining constructive and brotherly ties with Tehran.

In the phone conversation, the Pakistani top diplomat officially invited his Iranian counterpart to visit Islamabad, the IRNA said.

Earlier, Jilani and his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan discussed the "ongoing developments between Pakistan and Iran", the Foreign Office said.

## JAISHANKAR HOLDS BILATERAL MEETINGS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kampala, Jan 19:** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Friday held a series of bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Bolivia, Azerbaijan and Venezuela during which he discussed bilateral ties, as well as regional and global issues.



Jaishankar is in the Ugandan capital city of Kampala to represent India at the two-day summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which began Friday.

"Pleasure to meet FM of Bolivia Celinda Sosa Lunda. Discussed development cooperation, traditional medicine and sustainable lifestyle," the minister posted on X, sharing a photograph of the meeting.

In another post on X, Jaishankar said he met outgoing NAM Chair Azerbaijan's foreign minister Jeyhun Bayramov and discussed "our bilateral relationship and exchanged views on regional matters".

He also shared a photograph of the meeting held on the sidelines of the NAM summit. During his meeting with Venezuelan foreign minister Yvan Gil, the two leaders discussed economic, energy and development cooperation between India and Venezuela, and "exchanged views on regional and global issues".

Jaishankar's visit to Kampala is part of his two-nation tour to Uganda and Nigeria. From Kampala, the external affairs minister will travel to Nigeria for a three-day visit from January 21, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a press release in New Delhi on Thursday ahead of his visit.

The NAM Summit under the leadership of Uganda brings together more than 120 developing countries on a platform of crucial historic significance, it said.

# Gaza: Israeli tanks push towards biggest hospital



REUTERS

**Gaza/Doha/Tel Aviv, Jan 19:** Israeli tanks Friday mounted a new push into southern Gaza's main city, which is sheltering hundreds of thousands of Palestinians driven there by Israeli bombardment, once more approaching the enclave's biggest functioning hospital.

People inside Khan Younis' Nasser Hospital, forced to house displaced Gazans as well as patients, reported hearing shellfire from tanks advancing into the west of the city, while residents also reported fierce gun battles to the south.

The Gaza health ministry said 142 Palestinians had been killed and 278 injured in the previous 24 hours. Israeli officials have accused Hamas fighters of operating from Nasser Hospital, which staff deny.

The Israeli bombardment and ground invasion launched in response to Hamas' Oct. 7 assault on towns and villages around Gaza have largely emptied the northern two-thirds of the 46 km-long (29-mile) coastal

strip. Around 85% of the 2.3 million population have been driven to seek shelter in the south, according to the U.N. - the area that is now the focus of Israel's campaign to eradicate the Hamas movement that governs Gaza.

People's ability to monitor the latest threats, report attacks or check on relatives - along with the functioning of rescue services - has been severely curtailed by a near-total blackout on telecommunications that was now in its eighth day, the longest outage since the start of the

war. Twelve people were killed in Israeli strikes on a residential building near the largely non-functioning Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City in the north of the enclave, Palestinian health officials said. Israeli forces have made limited withdrawals from northern Gaza this month, saying operations there were largely complete. But Palestinians in the southern Gaza City suburb of Tel Al-Hawa said Israeli tanks pushed back into the neighbourhood, forcing people taking shelter in some schools there to evacuate and head south.

The Islamic Jihad militant group said it had fought with Israeli forces in the Al-Bureij and Al-Maghazi refugee camps in central Gaza and in Khan Younis, while Hamas's armed wing said its fighters had clashed with Israeli forces in several areas across Gaza overnight and Friday morning.

The Israeli military said it was continuing operations in central and northern Gaza, seizing weapons and killing "several armed terrorists".

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**NETANYAHU OPPOSED TO PALESTINIAN SOVEREIGNTY**  
Israel's onslaught on Gaza was triggered on Oct. 7 by Hamas attacks on the surrounding area in which around 1,200 people were killed and 253 taken hostage, of whom around half are still in Gaza, according to Israeli tallies. Netanyahu also restated his opposition to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state that Israel's main ally, the United States, and many powers in and beyond the Middle East advocate as the only feasible long-term solution to the conflict.

## SHORT TAKES

### Polio programme coordinator killed

**Peshawar:** A Polio immunisation programme coordinator was killed and a policeman was injured when their vehicle was attacked in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of northwestern Pakistan Friday, police said. Unidentified assailants opened fire on the vehicle of Dr Abdur Rahman in Bajaur district when he was on his way back home from the district hospital, SHO Mamond Police Station, Dilawar Khan, said. The Rescue 1122 team provided medical aid to the injured persons and shifted them to the district headquarters hospital in critical condition. The doctor, however, succumbed to his injuries at the hospital in Bajaur, an official told PTI.

### Toll in Philippine landslide rises

**Davao:** A landslide set off by days of heavy rain buried a house where people were holding Christian prayers in the southern Philippines, killing at least 10 people, including five children, officials said Friday. Two people were injured, and at least one more villager remained unaccounted for following the landslide in a remote mountain village in the gold-mining town of Monkayo in Davao de Oro province, Ednar Dayanghirang, the regional chief of the government's Office of Civil Defence, said. Three more bodies were found Friday, after the search was paused mid-afternoon Thursday due to the risk of another landslide.

### Vietnam passes amended land law

**Hanoi:** The Vietnamese National Assembly (NA) approved the amended land law at its fifth extraordinary meeting, the media reported. NA Chairman Vuong Dinh Hue said Thursday that by passing the law, the legislators had accomplished one of the most important legislative tasks of the 15th-term National Assembly.

### Pak caretaker govt moves top court

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's caretaker government Friday challenged in the Supreme Court the Islamabad High Court's verdict nullifying the jail trial of former prime minister Imran Khan in the cipher case for allegedly leaking state secrets. In its petition filed in Pakistan's Supreme Court, the federal government implored the apex court to overturn the Islamabad High Court's decision, saying that the high court did not evaluate the facts of the case properly.

# Japan's lunar lander is on the Moon, but its status is unclear

*As the spacecraft descended, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's mission control said that everything was going as planned and later said that SLIM was on the lunar surface. But there was no mention of whether the landing was successful*

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Tokyo, Jan 19:** Japan's space agency said early Saturday that its spacecraft is on the Moon, but is still "checking its status". More details will be given at a news conference, officials said.

The Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, or SLIM, came down onto the lunar surface at around 12:20 am. Tokyo time Saturday (1520 GMT Friday).

No astronauts were onboard the spacecraft.

If SLIM landed successfully, Japan would become the fifth country to accomplish the feat after the United States, the Soviet Union, China and India.

As the spacecraft descended, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's mission control said that everything was going as planned and later said that SLIM was on the lunar surface. But there was no mention of whether the landing was successful.

Mission control kept repeating that it was "checking its status" and that more information would be given at a news conference. It wasn't immediately clear when the news conference would start.

SLIM, nicknamed "the Moon Sniper," started its descent at midnight Saturday, and within 15 minutes it was down to about 10 km (six miles) above the lunar surface, according to the space agency, which is known as JAXA.



At an altitude of five km (three miles), the lander was in a vertical descent mode, then at 50 metres (165 feet) above the surface, SLIM was supposed to make a parallel movement to find a safe landing spot, JAXA said.

About a half-hour after its presumed landing, JAXA said that it was still checking the status of the lander. SLIM, which was aiming to hit a very small target,

### Maha signs investment MoUs at Davos

**Davos:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde Friday said he is resolute in leading the state to its ambitious target of becoming a \$1 trillion economy as the state government secured investment MoUs worth Rs 3.53 lakh crore (\$44 billion) this week at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting. The state also received an expression of interest for an additional Rs 1 lakh crore investment, taking the total to Rs 4.5 lakh crore (nearly \$57 billion) with a potential to create about two lakh jobs across sectors, including electronics, IT, data centres, gems and jewellery, agriculture, automobile and renewable energy, a statement said. During his visit here accompanied by Industries Minister Uday Samant and several senior officials, Shinde signed 19 MoUs.

### Boeing 747 cargo plane makes emergency landing

**Miami:** A witness saw sparks shooting from a cargo plane as it made an emergency landing at Miami International Airport shortly after takeoff. The aircraft landed safely Thursday night "after experiencing an engine malfunction soon after departure," a spokesperson for Atlas Air said in a statement Friday. "The crew followed all standard procedures and safely returned to MIA." The airplane was "shooting sparks" as it flew overhead, said Melanie Adaros, who was out for a walk with her mother and was about to turn into her home, when she heard and saw an approaching plane.

### NK tests nuclear-capable underwater drone

**Seoul (South Korea):** North Korea said Friday it has tested a nuclear-capable underwater attack drone in response to a combined naval exercise by South Korea, the United States and Japan this week, as it continues to blame its rivals for raising tensions in the region. The test of the drone, purportedly designed to destroy naval vessels and ports, came days after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un declared he is scrapping his country's long-standing goal of a peaceful reunification with South Korea and that his country will rewrite its constitution to define South Korea as its most hostile foreign adversary.

work on precision technology by JAXA.

The mission's main goal is to test new landing technology that would allow moon missions to land "where we want to, rather than where it is easy to land," JAXA has said. If the landing was a success, the spacecraft will seek clues about the origin of the moon, including analysing minerals with a special camera.

The SLIM, equipped with a pad to cushion impact, was aiming to land near the Shioli crater, near a region covered in volcanic rock.

The closely watched mission came only 10 days after a moon mission by a US private company failed when the spacecraft developed a fuel leak hours after the launch. SLIM was launched on a Mitsubishi Heavy H2A rocket in September.

It initially orbited Earth and entered lunar orbit December 25. Japan hopes a success will

help regain confidence for its space technology after a number of failures.

A spacecraft designed by a Japanese company crashed during a lunar landing attempt in April, and a new flagship rocket failed its debut launch in March. JAXA has a track record with difficult landings.

Its Hayabusa2 spacecraft, launched in 2014, touched down twice on the 900-metre-long (3,000-foot-long) asteroid Ryugu, collecting samples that were returned to Earth.

Experts say a success of SLIM's pinpoint landing, especially on the moon, would raise Japan's profile in the global space technology race. Takeshi Tsuchiya, aeronautics professor at the Graduate School of Engineering at the University of Tokyo, said it was important to confirm the accuracy of landing on a targeted area for the future of Moon explorations.



Govinda fights alone before bowlers help Odisha take control

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 19: Govinda Poddar (55, 62b, 9x4) fought a lone battle Friday as Odisha were bowled out for a paltry 130 in their Ranji Trophy Elite Group D encounter against Jammu and Kashmir at the DRIEMS Ground in Banki, Cuttack.

The bowlers, however, didn't back down to challenge the visiting batters as they reduced J&K to 45/4 by the time umpires called off the play for the opening day. They were still 85 runs behind Odisha's total.

The visitors were off to an impressive start with their openers adding 39 runs before Suryakant Pradhan (1/18) broke the stand dismissing skipper Shubham Khajuria (24). The wicket triggered a collapse as J&K were reduced from 39/0 to 43/4. Sunil Roul (2/8) bagged two wickets, before Rajesh Mohanty (1/18) bagged the last wicket of the day.

Earlier, home team skipper Shantanu Mishra (28) and Anurag Sarangi (11) gave Odisha a slow but steady start stitching 41 runs for the opening wicket. Once, Rohit Sharma (5/12), who bagged a five-wicket haul, broke the stand in the 24th over getting rid of Anurag, wickets fell like nine pins.

Odisha lost eight wickets in just 26 runs - from 41/0 to 67/8. However, the experienced Govinda found an able ally in Rajesh (11). The duo forged a 62-run partnership for the ninth wicket. Umar Nazir (2/27) ended their stand dismissing Rajesh before putting a full stop on Odisha's essay in his next over with Govinda's wicket.

BRIEF SCORES

Odisha 130 (Govinda Poddar 55, Shantanu Mishra 28; Rohit Sharma 5/12, Umar Nazir 2/27, Umran Malik 2/34); Jammu and Kashmir 45/4 (Shubham Khajuria 24; Sunil Roul 2/8, Rajesh Mohanty 1/18, Suryakant Pradhan 1/18). Match to continue.

PARIS DREAM SHATTERED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Jan 19: Paris will remain out of bounds for Indian women's hockey team that eschewed its crisp, short-passing game to bow of 2024 Olympic qualification race with a 0-1 loss to Japan in the third-place match of FIH Qualifiers here Friday.

Kana Urata's sixth minute strike from the penalty corner turned out to be the winner for Japan as the wheels that were set in motion for the Indian women's team, following a momentous fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, seemed to have come off after the utterly disappointing show in one of its hubs in recent years.

The top three sides from this tournament qualified for the Paris Olympics. By finishing third, Japan, booked their berth. Germany and USA, who will play in the final later in the evening, are the other two sides to have sealed their places.

Japan were the early aggressor as they exerted pressure on the Indian defence and, in the process, had the first scoring chance, but an alert Indian skipper Savita in front of the goal came out rushing to kick away the loose ball



in the second minute.

The Indians played catch-up as they failed to threaten the Japanese goal despite making some fine circle penetrations. Japan kept up the pressure and secured their first penalty corner minutes later but the Indians defended well.

Two minutes later, India conceded another soft penalty corner and this time Urata found the back of the net through the legs of Savita with a grounded flick.

The Indian backline was put under tremendous pressure by the Japanese with some defence-splitting dangerous crosses but the hosts somehow managed to hold on.

In the 12th minute, India had their first real chance. Monika created the opportunity with a fine cross from the right flank but Lalremsiami's deflection went over the bar.

As has been the case in this tournament, the Indians were guilty of not using both the flanks. It was predictable hockey from the Savita-led side as they tried to build most of their attacks from the right flank.

Japan continued from where they left in the first quarter and secured their third set piece just after the restart.

The Indian players didn't show any intent to win 50-50 balls. They also seemed to have run out

of ideas, and mostly tried to hit the ball from the 30 yard circle instead of opting for crisp, short passes, which is their strength.

Trailing 0-1, the Indians came out attacking after the change of ends and made a few good moves, but goals eluded them.

Chances came thick and fast for India in the form of penalty corners as they secured back-to-back set pieces in the 43rd minute but Udita Duhan failed to break the Japanese defence with her slap shot.

Japan were put under tremendous pressure by the Indians in the third quarter with repeated forays, but they failed to equalise. It was complete domination from the Indians after the change of ends but that did not translate into goals.

India earned as many as nine penalty corners in the entire 60 minutes but their perennial problem of conversion continued. In the last 11 minutes of the game, India secured three penalty corners but Deepika and Udita's poor record continued.

A minute and a half from the final hooter, an unmarked Salima Tete got the best chance for India to equalise but, with only the goalkeeper to beat, she shot wide.

Prannoy marches into India Open semifinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 19: India's HS Prannoy produced a valiant effort to progress to the men's singles semifinals with a thrilling three-game win over Chinese Taipei's Wang Tzu Wei at the India Open Super 750 badminton tournament here Friday. It is his first semifinal of the India Open.

The 31-year-old, who had won the bronze medal at the Asian Games and World Championships last year, recovered from a slump in the second game and showed nerves of steel in the decider to eke out a 21-11, 17-21, 21-18 win over World No.28 Wang in a 77-minute match.

Coming into the match with a 5-3 head-to-head count, Prannoy dished out an attacking game and constructed his rallies well, keeping his opponent to the back and often finishing points with steep smashes.

Wang kept the pressure on Prannoy in the third game but the Indian responded with a quick return to serve and then a net kill as they were locked 5-5 at one stage. Wang took the next five points with a fabulous

cross court smash leaving his opponent flat on the floor.

A beautiful backhand drive and then a controlled net shot followed by a smash took the Indian to 9-10. However, Wang ensured he had a two-point lead at the interval with a steep return. Prannoy kept snapping at his opponent's heels to move closer at 11-12 but two unforced errors again pegged him back.

A fighting Prannoy soon clawed back at 14-14 after unleashing a smash. Wang rained down a straight smash but sent the next one out as it was 15-15. Prannoy recovered from an awkward position to unleash a smash on the forehand corner and then produced a net kill to move into the lead at 17-16. Soon an alert Prannoy put one away at the forehand corner to gain two match points and converted it at the first chance.

Earlier, World No.1 and defending champion An Se Young of Korea retired hurt against Singapore's Jia Min Yeo after aggravating her knee injury in women's singles quarterfinals. Young was trailing 19-21 0-3 against Jia Min, when she decided to throw in the towel.

Sabalenka reaches 4th round

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Jan 19: Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka reached the fourth round of the Australian Open Friday with a 6-0, 6-0 demolition of Lesia Tsurenko.

The second-seeded Belarusian, who won her first Grand Slam title here 12 months ago, needed just 52 minutes for victory at the Rod Laver Arena. She has dropped just six games in three rounds so far.

The pair did not shake hands - as is the convention for Ukrainian players against opponents from Russia or Belarus - but Tsurenko congratulated Sabalenka verbally.

Sabalenka will play Amanda Anisimova, who continued her comeback with a 7-5, 6-4 win over Paula Badosa. Anisimova, who took seven months out of the game last year for mental health reasons, hit 40 winners on her way to the fourth round.

Men's No.4 Jannik Sinner moved into the fourth round without losing a set, thanks to a dominant 6-0, 6-1, 6-3 victory over Sebastian Baez.

Bopanna-Ebden pair advances

Second-seeded Indo-Australian pair of Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden barely broke a sweat in a straight-set victory over local hopes John Millman and Edward Winter to enter the

men's doubles third round of the Australian Open here Friday. Bopanna and Ebden strolled past the wildcards 6-2, 6-4 in a second-round match at Court 3 that lasted a little over one hour.

The 43-year-old Bopanna and Ebden dominated their rivals in all areas. They won 80 percent of the first serve against 68 percent by Millman and Winter.

Earlier, another Indian, Sriram Balaji, entered the second round of the Australian Open men's doubles in the company of his Romanian partner Victor Cornea. The Balaji-Corena duo defeated the Italian duo of Matteo Arnaldi and Andrea Pellegrino 6-3, 6-4 in the first round.

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 19: A brace from Cleiton Silva and a simple tap-in from Nandhakumar Sekar guided East Bengal (EB) past their cross-town rivals Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG) 3-1 in their final Group A fixture in the Kalinga Super Cup at the Kalinga Stadium here, Friday.

This win ensured that EB sail into the semifinals of the Super Cup, knocking the Mariners out of the competition. With the win, EB also avenged their Durand Cup final loss (0-1) to MBSG earlier this season.

MBSG opened the scoring Friday with a fantastic back-heel from Hector Yuste finding

the back of the East Bengal net in the 19th minute. The Torchbearers, however, responded strongly to the setback and fired three goals to make sure that the Mariners had no chance of coming back.

Captain Silva started the scoring off with a brilliant right-footed shot in the 24th minute. Although he was marked tightly by Raj Basfore and Brendan Hammill, the Brazilian still managed to find some space to get his shot wide of goalkeeper Anwer Sheikh.

The first half, however, ended on a controversial note as Hijazi Maher found himself conceding a penalty while trying to lunge and protect a shot inside the box. Although Dimitri

Petratos put the resultant spot-kick away, the referee was not satisfied and decreed that it had to be taken again.

In the re-take, however, the Australian hit the upright and Armando Sadiku ran the rebound wide as the scoreboard remained at 1-1.

The second half started well but EB were the stronger of the two sides. Borja reinforced EB's supremacy when a curler of his was evaded by Sheikh in the 63rd minute. Fortunately, Nandhakumar was lurking nearby to tap it in. MBSG's woes were compounded further when Silva latched onto a loose ball from a corner in the 80th minute to bag his second of the night.

Maruti Suzuki Arena advertisement for Republic Day. Features images of various car models (WagonR, Alto K10, S-Presso, Swift, Dzire, Celerio, Eeco) and promotional text: 'DRIVE NATION TOWARDS SUCCESS. Celebrate Republic Day offers at Maruti Suzuki Arena.' Includes pricing, financing options, and a QR code for more information.