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**BHUBANESWAR | SUNDAY JANUARY 28 | 2024** 

12 PAGES + SUNDAY POST | ₹5.0

## SHORT TAKES Biker collides with Oram's car, dies

Dhenkanal: A motorcyclist was killed and BJP MP Jual Oram suffered injury Saturday in a collision between the latter's vehicle and a two-wheeler in Dhenkanal district, police said. The accident took place at Rekula Chhak in Kamakhyanagar. "The MP's driver was arrested and his car seized," Kamakhyanagar Police Station Inspector In-Charge Sarat Kumar Mahalik said while identifying the deceased as Sarbeswar Choudhury.

3 girl students die in Nayagarh accident | P5

#### **Bopanna triumphs**

Melbourne: Rohan Bopanna became only the third Indian to win a men's doubles Grand Slam title, taking the Australian Open crown with partner Matthew Ebden following a commanding win over Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori, here Saturday. In a high-quality game of tennis, second seeded Bopanna and Ebden won 7-6(0) 7-5 in the final that lasted one hour and 39 minutes.





I'm trying to find out when you'll switch sides. Let me ask the media

# Naveen dedicates SAMALEI to people



HERITAGE BOOST: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurates the historic SAMALEI project at the Maa Samaleswari shrine in Sambalpur, Saturday

Amid chanting of hymns, the Chief Minister inaugurated the historic transformation project at Maa Samaleswari temple in Sambalpur under 5T initiative

PNN & AGENCIES

Sambalpur, Jan 27: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday inaugurated and dedicated to people the historic Samaleswari Temple Area Management and Local Economy Initiatives (SAMALEI) project, aimed at transforming the precincts of Maa Samaleswari temple - one of the most revered shrines in western Odisha - at a grand ceremony in Sambalpur amid chanting of hymns and a string of cultural programmes.

The 16th-century shrine, an important Shakti Peeth on the banks of river Mahanadi, has undergone transformation on over 39 acres of its peripheral area under the ₹200-crore project.

nder the ₹200-crore project.
Patnaik unveiled the SAMALEI

project after offering prayers at Maa Samaleswari temple in the presence of dignitaries, temple priests and servitors. The Chief Minister also joined the yagna.

In a video message to the people, the CM said Odisha will always remember those who volunteered to sacrifice their land for the SAMALEI project.

He also said that the SAMALEI project would help boost tourism and local economy in the western region of the state.

Naveen said the project could be completed with the blessings of Maa Samaleswari despite the obstacles created due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The work for the project started in February 2021.

Amenities such as a boarding house for pilgrims, a park, a

cafeteria, new Trust Board office and a museum have come up under the project which is a part of the 5T initiative of the state government.

The Odisha Bridge and Construction Corporation Limited, which implemented the Heritage Corridor Project in Puri, was also assigned the transformation work under the SAMALEI project.

Earlier Friday, hundreds of women participated in the Kalash Shobha Yatra. The water brought in pitchers during the yatra was used for the holy bath of the deity. Worth mentioning here that Saturday's programme at Maa Samaleswari temple came 10 days after the grand opening of the Srimandir Parikrama Prakalpa.

### Ancient lake sediments found on Mars

REUTERS

Los Angeles, Jan 27: NASA's rover Perseverance has gathered data confirming the existence of ancient lake sediments deposited by water that once filled a giant basin on Mars called Jerezo Crater, according to a study.

The findings from groundpenetrating radar observations conducted by the robotic rover substantiate previous orbital imagery and other data leading scientists to theorise that portions of Mars were once covered in water and may have harbored microbial life.

The research, led by teams from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and the University of Oslo, was published in *Science Advances*, Friday.

It was based on subsurface scans taken by the rover over several months of 2022 as it made its way across the Martian sur-



face from the crater floor onto an adjacent expanse of braided, sedimentary-like features resembling, from orbit, the river

deltas found on Earth.

Soundings from the rover's RIMFAX radar instrument allowed scientists to peer underground to get a cross-sectional view of rock layers 65 feet deep, 'almost like looking at a road cut,' said UCLA planetary scientist David Paige.

The findings reinforced what previous studies have long suggested - that cold, arid, lifeless Mars was once warm, wet and perhaps habitable.

### Nitish likely to resign today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna/New Delhi, Jan 27: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was Saturday poised to dump the Mahagathbandhan he had joined less than 18 months ago and deal a body blow to the Opposition bloc INDIA, with a source close to him saying that the JD(U) president was likely to resign Sunday.

The source, who requested anonymity, told PTI that Kumar was "likely to address a meeting of JD(U) legislators around 10 am

Sunday before going to Raj Bhavan to submit his resignation" and formation of a new government, with the BJP's support, was "expected by the evening".

"Offices, including the Governor's secretariat, have been ordered to remain open Sunday in view of the likelihood of hectic activities", said the source, even as Kumar's imminent return to the BJP-led NDA fold made a rattled RJD hold a meeting of its leaders to take stock of the situation and chalk out a future course of action.

OIPR-29001/13/0187/2324





# leisure



### **DREW CATFISHED ON DATING APP**

Actress Drew Barrymore was deceived on a dating app. The 48-year-old actress has been single since 2016. So, she tried her luck on the dating app and was left unsure what to make of the situation when it turned out the man was actually a musician and not a footballer she was thinking.

### **ROSAMUND: ACTING IS THE BEST JOB IN THE WORLD**

Gone Girl star Rosamund Pike believes she has the 'best job in the world.' The London-born 45year-old told OK! Magazine, "It was like having a recipe for life, being an actor."



Your ability to let go things will reflect in your personal as well as your professional life. Today could be a significant day for you, and Ganesha advises you not to forget your special abilities. Make good use of them so that others too can benefit.

### **TAURUS**

This day you will be prone to be stubborn and uncompromising in your business and professional dealings and thereby inviting unnecessary problems. Ganesha urges you to guard against this tendency and conduct yourself cordially and amiably with your colleagues and clients. The day will turn out well for executives and

### **GEMINI**

You need to break free from the shackles of your daily routine. Trying to finish all your tasks as per your schedule will give rise to unnecessary worry. To manage your time creatively is the best way to beat the stress. Talking to your elders is a good way to calm your shot nerves, says Ganesha

### CANCER

Your social prestige will go up. People will praise your personality traits and try to emulate you. You will be a role model, too. Ganesha feels that this will be highly

#### **LEO**

You will try to take up new projects to the best of your abilities today. You will be able to successfully tackle all your tasks your personal relationships, but will be able to solve all issues successfully,

Today you will feel monetarily much stronger than you have ever felt, says Ganesha. You will realise the need to make monetary arrangements for some unforeseen financial instability that may occur in the future. Your leadership qualities will be appreciated by people around you

Ganesha says today you will use your mental competency to complete all your work on time. You may not give complete attention to your family as you will be spending time in the office or at work Your extraordinary intelligence will be showcased at work today. Ganesha says do not forget your family which has played a huge role in your success.

### **SCORPIO**

Be vigilant; keep your eyes and ears open for all the events happening around you, says Ganesha. Your intuition is trying to tell you something, trust it. Think and act positively, the rest would fall in place.

### **SAGITTARIUS**

Keeping all the work aside, you may be painting the town red today. Falling in love is exciting, isn't it? However, for all those who are already in a relationship. Ganesha shows a red signal. Avoid arguments with your loved one. He suggests Impress 'the special one' with a bouquet of red roses and make up for all the petty fights during the day.

### CAPRICORN

Opportunities don't knock on the door twice. Today, you'll answer the door and utilise the opportunity to the most, predicts Ganesha. Positive results will be visible and you'll stand a chance to overtake your competitors. Even if the competition is fierce and opponents try everything to pull tle. Socially, you will be very popular today

### AOUARIUS

You have changed your approach towards life from materialism to mysticism. Your friends and family members are pleasantly surprised to see this change Later on the day, you may plan to visit a temple or other religious places, foresees Ganesha. You are on the right track, keep on going, you'll find the solace your have been seeking.

### PISCES

You are striving hard to influence your destiny. You are not going to kneel down without a fight against heavy odds. With persistent efforts you will succeed in achieving your goals. While victory is a given, hard work will be necessary. In brief, today will be a challenging day for you, says Ganesha.

# Kriti navigating uncharted waters

performances including *Mimi* which won her a National Award, Kriti Sanon is once again proving her mettle by stepping into uncharted territory. Her upcoming film Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya sees the talented actress take on a groundbreaking role - that of a robot named Sifra. In doing so, Kriti not only pioneers a unique character but also becomes the first female actor in the Hindi film industry to portray a robot on the silver screen.

One notable aspect of Kriti's performance is her ability to seamlessly execute the finer nuances of a robotic persona. She showcases her dexterity by effortlessly cooking with two hands, acing a lifeless demeanor, emoting with a straight mechanical face, bending backward and several other moments that maintain the authenticity of a robot. All these only go to showcase her commitment to pushing bound-

aries and embracing the chal-

lenges that come with por-

unique as a robot.

In an industry where female actors often find themselves confined to stereotypical roles, Kriti's choice to play a robot speaks volumes about her versatility. It is refreshing to see an Indian actress taking on a character that breaks away from the conventional narratives, and Kriti's portrayal of Sifra is a testament to her commitment to diversifying her repertoire, which was also evident when she chose to play a surrogate mother this early in her career with



### IFFB: Day 6 witnesses screening of 6 movies

Bhubaneswar: Saturday was the sixth day of the ongoing 13th Indian Film Festival of Bhubaneswar (IFFB), here at Odissi Research Centre.

The weekend of the event, organised by Film Society Bhubaneswar (FSB), began with the screening of two short films, A Lullaby for Yellow Roses by Rahul Roye and Nothing Grows *Under the Pine Trees* by Sachin Rana.

The first film tells the story of a migrant working-class couple who, after losing their child to an ill-fated destiny. seeks friends in each other. Nothing Grows Under the Pine Trees is the story of a family beginning to fix a marriage for one of two daughters as one rejoices while the



FSB president Subrat Beura and Tiwa film director Bobby Sharma Baruah(R) during an interactive session

other suffocates under the weight of a society divided by rigid caste lines.

The day continued with the screening of a Tiwa film, Sikaisal by Bobby Sharma Baruah, that criticises the 'babu' culture among government officials, followed by Family by Don Palathara and *Jhilli* by Ishaan

The Malayalam film Family is a story where religion, custom, and abuse collide, while Jhilli, a 93-minute Bengali film, explores the life of a worker in Calcutta's biggest dumpyard.

Day's last movie was The Water Station by Abhishek Majumdar. It is an adaptation inspired by Japanese playwright Ota Shogo's childhood experiences of walking long distances with refugees as his family migrated from China to

### Dev Patel new action hero on the block

Mumbai: Inspired by the legend of Lord Hanuman, Hollywood studio Universal Pictures' *Monkey Man* is set in Mumbai.

The movie features Dev Patel as a man on a quest for vengeance

against the corrupt leaders who murdered his mother and continue to systemically victimise the poor and powerless.

The actor plays Kid, an anonymous young man who ekes out a meagre living in an underground fight club where, night after night, wearing a gorilla mask, he is beaten bloody by more popular fighters for cash.

"After years of suppressed rage, Kid discovers a way to infiltrate the enclave of the city's sinister elite. As his childhood trauma boils over, his mysteriously scarred hands unleash an explosive campaign of retribution to settle the score with the men who took everything from him," the official logline read.

The film also stars popular Indian actors Sobhita Dhulipala. Vipin Sharma, Ashwini Kalsekar, Adithi Kalkunte, Sikandar

Kher, Pitobash and Makarand Deshpande, along with Sharlto Copley. The trailer portrays the ion actor in an action avatar.

It sees him fighting in a ring, engaging in hand-tohand combat with Kher and also taking on multiple criminals in a style reminiscent of Keanu Reeves' retired assassin from *John Wick* movies. Patel, a co-producer of the movie, has developed it from his original story. He wrote the screenplay along with Paul Angunawela and

9

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### Mrunal leaves netizens upset Mumbai: After ruling she said, "I don't know, I am not popular

TV industry for years, Mrunal Thakur forayed into movies to take the big screen

> The actress has been making headlines for some shocking revelations she made during her latest interview.

Speaking to an entertainment portal. when Mrunal was asked if she would work in Hindi romantic movies.

enough to get a love story yet. I am just tired of proving to filmmakers now. I just want it to happen organically, I am done asking them.

Mrunal's statement has angered social media users, and here's what they have to say.

A user commented on the video, "I was surprised when I found out Mrunal was not that popular in B-Wood. Her roles in *Sita Ramam* and *Hi* Nanna were truly exceptional."

Another said, "Good for her. The biased people in Bollywood will actively try to sideline her, like they do to all talented non-nepos. Her roles in Telugu have been amazing.

A third one wrote, "Mrunal is going to be a superstar in Telugu and Tamil. There's just no way that she doesn't. She's given two back to back brilliant performances and hits in Telugu cinema and that too love stories. There are too many gangs in Bollywood that will prevent her from ascending to the top," read another comment.

SUDOKU

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SOLUTIONS

CROSSWOR

9

3

3

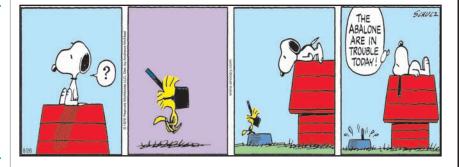
### John Collee.

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a

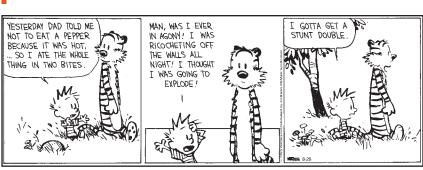
manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains

the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any

### **PEANUTS**



### **CALVIN AND HOBBES**

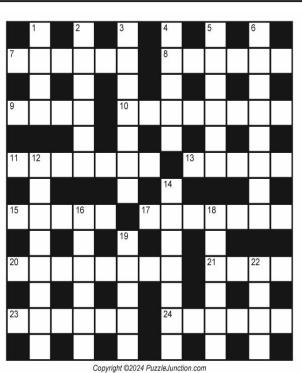


### BREVITY



### FUN

### **CROSSWORD**



#### Copyright ©2024 PuzzleJunction.com 20 Turnabout is

21 Hazard

23 Golf shot

24 Justification

(4,4) (idiom)

	7	Accolade
	0	Caribbla

Across

- 9 Dugout, for one
- 10 Leeway 11 Light yellow
- 13 Reef material
- 15 Stringed

- instrument
- 17 Squander (away)
- <u>Down</u>

  - tricks (2-2)
  - 2 Derrière 3 Addiction

4 Cherish

- 1 Toy that does

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

- - jumping rodent

22 Presently

5 Vichyssoise

ingredient

12 Bill of fare

(1,2,5)

16 Mouselike

14 Swiss cheese

6 Military action

- 18 Kind of sauce 19 Swift

1 5 2

CHEETAH TYMPAN 8 6 3

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

SUDOKU

**OrissaPOST** 

## SAMALEI PROJECT

SUNDAY | JANUARY 28 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAR



# Makeover to draw huge crowd

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Jan 27: With Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurating the ₹200-crore Samaleswari Temple Area Management and Local Economy Initiatives (SAMALEI) Prakalpa, Saturday, the temple trust board has pinned hopes of a staggering increase in daily footfall of the devotees that may cross 20,000 on normal days.

According to sources, hundreds of devotees from the entire western Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand throng the shrine for darshan of Maa Samaleswari every day. On days when special pujas are scheduled, the shrine sees footfall of over 5,000. However, the temple trust board is now anticipating a daily footfall of over 20,000 on normal days and 50,000 to 1 lakh on special days. The huge footfall of devotees will not only give further push to the tourism industry of western Odisha, it will also boost local economy.

The redevelopment of the shrine is expected to help augment the earnings of artisans, artists and weavers through opening up of new opportunities.

### **CM felicitates Padma awardees**

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, on the occasion of public dedication of SAMALEI Prakalpa, felicitated seven Padma awardees who have contributed to the promotion and propagation of language, culture and heritage of western Odisha. Poet Haladhar Nag,

singer Jitendra Haripal artisan Chaturbhuja Meher, singer Krishna Patel, composer Mitrabhanu Gountia, painter Kailash Chandra Meher and lyricist Binod Pasayat, all Padma Shri

awardees,

were hon-

oured by

Patnaik.

Realising heart and soul to the successful the role of transformation of Samaleswari other artitemple, the Chief Minister resans, artists warded and encouraged them. and labour-The personalities who were felicitated iners who had put

clude Lingaraj Maharana, Sisir Sahu,

Meher, Somnath Sahu, Nirmal Maharana, Harihar Pradhan, Shubha Charan Behera and Santosh. Patnaik also made rounds of the Mission Shakti Cafetaria and lauded the efforts of the SHG women.

#### **Mutt seer lauds CM's efforts**

The CM felicitated Hrusikesh Das, the seer of Gopalji mutt on the occasion. Das expressed his happiness over the mega transformational initiative and thanked the CM for redeveloping the mutt without hampering its glory. Das was delighted to see his suggestions about arrangements for Goshala and guest houses for saints on mutt premises taking shape. He appreciated the arrangements made by the government for seamless darshan of the deity and the devotional ambience created in and around the shrine.

Meanwhile, 5T Chairman Kartik Pandian, MLA Snehangini Chhuria and others offered prayers at the shrine.



is quite captivating. A 31-metre long robust platform has been built to perform Arati rituals. A 37-metre long and 6-metre high foot overbridge connecting the Mahanadi **Captivating** Arati ghat with the 16th century riverfront shrine is a new addition under the historic SAMALEI project. Developmental works have also

been carried out on 6 acres of land on the tem-

he view of **⊥** decked up 350-metre long and 25-metre wide

ple premises. These include a 'Bhoga Mandap', restrooms for priests, cloak room, room for partaking prasad, Bhoga sale centre, tourist information centre and a cafeteria serving traditional Sambalpuri dishes. A Parikrma corridor has been built over 1-km area outside the temple premises. Khondalite stone has been extensively used in all constructions. A parking lot for 200 four-wheelers and 20 buses will add to the convenience of motorists visiting the important Shakti Peeth. The CM went around the temple and watched all the newly built projects. He also expressed pleasure over the renovated pond, clock tower, Parikrma corridor and the enchanting Mahanadi riverfront.





## **Guv unfurls Tricolour** at R-Day celebrations

A total of 64 contingents in-

After the parade, various cul-

tural troupes presented colour-

ful programmes including tribal

dance by Baipariguda, Koraput, Jodisankha/Ranapa by

Sahijata/Medhanacha by Puri

district and Sambalpuri dance

Apart from that, four cul-

tural groups, a skating team

from Odisha Skating Academy

and Dare Devils also partici-

by Padmapur, Bargarh.

pated in the parade.

Ganjam,

Bhanjabihar,



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

cluding the ITBP, CRPF, BSF, Bhubaneswar, Jan 27: The Fire, ODRAF, Odisha Home 75th Republic Day was observed Guard, RPF, Sainik School Police Band participated in the in the Capital city with the unstate-level parade at the Gandhi furling of the National Flag by Governor Raghubar Das Friday. Marg in Bhubaneswar.

The Governor unfurled the Tricolour in the presence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and other dignitaries. Das also received the guard of honour while IPS officer AB Shilpa led the parade on the occasion.

Das was welcomed by Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena, Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Deoranjan Kumar Singh, DGP Arun Kumar Sarangi and Deputy Director General, NCC

### Guv, CM condol Samal's demise

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 27: Governor Raghubar Das, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and a number of state ministers condoled the demise of freedom fighter Nilamani Samal who died at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack at the age of 101, Saturday.

He is survived by a son.

Samal, a resident of Balipadia village near Balichandrapur in Jajpur district, was suffering from old-age-related complications for several days.

"The Hon'ble Governor has expressed deep grief over the death of freedom fighter and president of the State Freedom Fighters Association Nilmani Samal and expressed his condolences to the bereaved family", a post on X said.

### Man held after 3 yrs in assault case

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN.OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan27: The Commissionerate Police Saturday arrested a man three years after he and his aides assaulted a person over past enmity under Lingaraj police station limits. The attack had caused serious injuries to the victim.

The accused, Papuni Navak had been evading arrest after committing the crime, while his accomplices - Mithun Bhoi, Pikun Behera, Babu Bhoi, Sunil Bhoi and Bhakta Sahu - had earlier surrendered before the court, police said

Papuni was booked under IPC Sections 452, 294 and 379 and a host of others provisions and produced before a local court for remand following arrest.

Lingaraj police station IIC Purna Chandra Pradhan said a case had been lodged August 25 by the victim, Guru Prasad Bhoi. a resident of Old Town area of Bhubaneswar.

### WEATHER

26.0°C 27.6°C **Max Temp Min Temp** Humidity Rainfall

Fog or Mist would

occur in early morning



12 key departments of the Odisha government including agriculture, health, education, Panchayati raj and drinking water, works department. Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts department, Tourism, OSACS, OMC and fire department were displayed highlighting various initiatives.

A three-tier security arrangement was put in place at the parade ground. About 160 police officers, 300 constables, 90 section police force and 150 home guards were deployed in and around the Gandhi Marg during the Parade. Apart from that QRT, ATS and canine squads were also deployed to deal with any untoward situation.

Among others Development Commissioner-cum-ACS Anu Garg, Secretaries of different departments, Principal Secretary, I&PR Sanjay Kumar Singh, Director I&PR Saroj Kumar Samal, Director (Technical) I&PR Surendranath Parida along with senior officers were present in the

### State urban centres to celebrate World Odia Language Conference



Bhubaneswar, Jan 27: Urban and Housing Development department (H & UD) has decided to celebrate the first World Odia Language Conference in all urban centres of the state as the event is of significance for promotion the language and culture, informed an official here Saturday.

The World Odia Language Conference, being organised at Janata Maidan in City between February 3 and 5, will bring together students, lecturers, researchers and intellectuals from various fields to deliberate on heritage of the classical language and set goals for its propagation.

"A wide range of programmes are being organised to promote the language and create interest. At this time, it has been decided by the department to celebrate the event in all the urban areas," said the official. As per sources, Municipal

Administration director Sangramjit Nayak has written a letter to all Municipal Corporation commissioners and executive officers of municipalities and NACs in this regard, discussing the necessary steps to be taken by these concerned authorities

In his letter, Nayak has suggested a list of programmes that could be oragnised on the occasion. One such programme is competition among students for portraits of famous poets, writers and linguists who have contributed to development of

Odia language and culture. Other programmes include increasing the number of Odia researchers, scholars and intellectuals in these urban centres and debate and Essay competitions among college students on relevant topics.

To ensure organisation of such programmes, Naik has requested the officials to share pictures of the events during a virtual discussion on the

### Republic Day POST NEWS NETWORK

**SOA** observes

Bhubaneswar, Jan 27: Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) observed the 75th Republic Day Friday with the unfurling of Tricolour by Chancellor Amit Banerjee.

Speaking on this occasion, Banerjee said, "The citizens of India, particularly the youth, have a vital role to play in the process of national building and you have the power to shape it."

He said nation building is not the sole responsibility of the government but the collective duty of all citizens. "It is not a burden but a privilege," he said.

SOA VC Pradipta Kumar Nanda spoke about India's achievements during the past year including the success of the Chandrayan venture and progress made towards making the country digital.



contribution to the state by expanding healthcare facilities, he said while referring to inauguration of the second campus of IMS and SUM Hospital at Phulnakhara recently.

Students of different institutions under SOA, a contingent each of NCC and NSS volunteers. Institute of Higher Secondary Education, a Plus II science college under SOA and security wings participated in the parade. The contingent of Plus Two Science College, the Institute of Business and Computer Studies (IBCS) and the NSS were awarded the first, second and third prize in the parade

### Permanent facility for tribal products soon in City: Min

HONOURED: Governor Raghubar Das, in presence of CM Naveen Patnaik, Friday awarded medals to 50 personnel of Odisha Police, Fire Brigade, Home Guard,



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 27: To provide market access for tribal ernment is planning to build a permanent facility in the Capital city, said ST and SC Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare Minister Jagannath Saraka on inaugural day of Adivasi Mela, 2024 here Friday.

Inaugurating the annual fair, which gives urban residents a glimpse into tribal culture, tradition, narratives and products, Saraka said that a permanent centre in the Capital would help tribal self help groups (SHGs) to elevate their business to an advanced level.

Department Commissioner-

cum-Secretary Roopa Roshan Sahoo and director of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI) and member secretary of Academy of Tribal Language and Culture (ATLC) Indramani Tripathy joined the event along with other senior government of ficials.

On the occasion, talents from the tribal belt, who have excelled in different fields, were honoured with ₹10,000 cash and citation as part of the 'Adivasi Pratibha Samman.

In her speech, Sahoo said, 'The annual Adivasi Mela has thrived through an eventful 70 years, since its journev that started in Cuttack in

Capital in 1954."

She informed that on sidelines of the World Odia Language Conference in the City, a multilingual drama festival by various tribal troupes will be organised between February 3 and 5 at the Adivasi Mela Ground.

'This year for the visitors, Adivasi Mela has on offer a variety of tribal products like Kandhamal 'haldi,' millet, minor forest produce from different tribal pockets and freshly procured strawberry from Sunabeda," said a department

The official also claimed that last year the Mela had done business worth over ₹5 crore and this year the business is expected

### Chilika a pilgrimage for over a million winged visitors: CM

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 27: Chilika Lake, Asia's largest brackish water lake, is a pilgrimage site for over a million winged visitors of varied species who undertake flights to the mighty but calm destination every year, said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurating the 4th National Chilika Birds Festival Saturday.

Patnaik applauded efforts of the department of Tourism, Forest, Environment and Climate Change and the Chilika Development Authority for organising the event which promises to add another feather in Odisha's hat.

The festival, which kicked off in grandeur with inauguration of a captivating photo exhibition, gave the audience an opportunity to witness a visual spectacle that showcased the talents of renowned photographers such as Shakti Nanda, Umakanta Biswal, Dhritiman Mukheriee and others

The gallery unfolded an array of photographs, capturing the diverse avian wonders that inhabit the Chilika region. The images not only reflected the skill of the photographers but also served as a powerful testament to the rich biodiversity of Chilika Lake.

Speaking on the occasion, Tourism Minister Aswini Kumar Patra said, "While the elusive wildlife deep within our forests evade our sights, Odisha can proudly claim to be a birding hub thanks to pioneering efforts in wetland and bird conservation and special initiatives like the National Chilika Birds Festival.'

'This year's census has revealed a total count of 11.37 lakh birds from across over 187 species," he said and wished all the participants, birders, photographers, and delegates a great time in Mangalajodi and Nalabana.

OTDC Chairman Lenin Mohanty praised Odisha Tourism for its effective handling of tourism ecosystem through promotion and publicity. "Mangalajodi in Chilika is a trailblazing example of community-led conservation, establishing itself as an unmatched birding destination," he said adding that our collective goal should be to position Odisha as the most sought-after birding hub in the Asia-Pacific region.

the occasion, Nandankanan director and chief executive of Chilika Development Authority Manoj Nair said that the soul of Odisha Tourism resides in Chilika adding that the conservation efforts will continue to be synergised with tourism development efforts.



## Cong president Kharge to visit state January 29

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 27: Congress president Mallikariun Kharge will address the 'Odisha Bachho Samabesh' (Save Odisha Conference) here January 29. OPCC chief Sarat Pattnayak said Saturday.

Addressing a press conference here, Pattnayak said that the party's state committee has been making all-out efforts to make Kharge's maiden visit to the state as Congress president a 'grand success'

He said a massive rally will be held at the Lower PMG Square in Bhubaneswar. Kharge's visit is expected to give an impetus to party workers and leadership before carrying out a full-fledged election campaign in the state, Pattnayak said.

Stating that the AICC has



been giving top priority to Odisha. Pattnayak claimed the political situation in the state is 'favourable' for the Congress as both the ruling BJD and opposition Congress have 'joined hands' to 'mislead' the people here.

As both the parties are 'hand in gloves with each other', the Congress is the lone opposition party before the people of Odisha, he claimed.

"Kharge ji is coming to show the way on how to defeat both the BJD and BJP and change the political landscape in Odisha. He will reach here January 29 to address the Odisha Bachao

Samavesh", Pattanayak said. Apart from addressing the rally, Kharge will also will meet senior party leaders. The Congress president will also meet leaders of other parties in

the INDIA bloc. Pattnayak said Kharge would hold discussions with state party leaders about the routes of the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra of Rahul Gandhi in the state and review its preparation.



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# Int'l cybercrime syndicate busted; 5 held

Rourkela police in touch with the MHA for further help in the case; more arrests likely

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 27: The police in Rourkela have successfully busted a cybercrime syndicate with international links which could have severe ramifications for national security. Five persons have been arrested from different parts of the country in this connection so far, police sources said Saturday.

Speaking about the arrests, Rourkela SP Mitrabhanu Mohapatra informed that the gang's activity was deleterious to national interest. "They were operating at international level from Cambodia," informed the SP, who has been promoted to the rank of DIG recently. Explaining



MITRABHANU MOHAPATRA | SP, ROURKELA

their activities, the officer said, "They were involved in cyber slavery, stock fraud -- otherwise known as pig butchery and passport forgery, and were a threat to national security through terror funding." Rourkela police is in touch with the Ministry of



Home Affairs (MHA) for further help in the case, "as they have the expertise required to further know about their antecedents",

The main accused is Ujwal Utkarsh (45), from Bhillai in Chhattisgarh, and he is helped by Sonu aka Navin Rao (35), Asperiking aka Nasim aka Md Nassimudin (45), Rio aka RNB James aka Panku (33) from Bhillai and Sandip Jain (40) from Raipur, Chattisgarh.

"Our teams went to several places and arrested them. A few more arrests will be made and a team has been sent to Chennai in this regard," informed Mohapatra. They have been booked under cybercrime and economic offence U/S 420/419/465/471/120(B)/34 IPC, R/W-66(C)/66(D) of IT Act 2000.

Notably, a case of cyber fraud to the tune of ₹67,70,000 was filed December 12 last year by a Central government officer. Prima facie investigation revealed the involvement of an international crime syndicate. Soon a team was formed under DSP Upasana Padhi and help was taken from the Indian Cyber Crime Branch under the MHA and state Crime Branch as there were many technicalities involved in the case, informed

"They were part of a top-level international crime syndicate and were doing cyber slavery, pig butchery with technical expertise," the SP said. There were more than 210 complaints against them as per the data of JCCT Management Information Centre of MHA. There are cases filed

against them in Maharashtra, Telangana, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Kerala, Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

Ujwal and Pankaj went to Cambodia. There they stationed themselves and procured over 200 Indian SIM cards and rented bank accounts in the name of Sandip Jain. "They created a fake app called Indira Securities and persuaded people to invest through it. It convinced the people because they were showing real time stock trading, informed SP.

Elaborating further about their modus operandi, he said, "They would adopt pig butchery and would give the investor double the return. And once the persons get lured and invest a huge amount then they would close that account and vanish." They use mule accounts, digital advertisements, money laundering and cross border crime

They used the 2D/3D payment processing platforms, Western Union, USDT-Crypto Currency exchange, PayPal, and were found to be actively involved in Telegram app for their fraudulent activities.

"I request all of you to take note of this and spread the message that one should not go for such investment activities through the Telegram app," cautioned Mohapatra.

Md Nassimudin was involved in the Mahadev betting app scam and was arrested in 2022. Ujwal, the main accused, would frequently create betting apps through his acquaintances and was a frequent traveler to Sri Lanka, Dubai and Cambodia, informed the SP.

"Our embassy in Cambodia in 2023 had issued an advisory about criminal syndicates actively involved in financial scams and cyber slavery. Ujwal was in touch with an Indian manpower supplier in Cambodia to supply freshers for setting up a suspected fake call centre in Cambodia," further revealed the officer.

The investigation is in its nascent stage. Besides, the police have asked the SIM card operators to take note of it. Also the banks and crypto operators have been asked to give further information. "The head of the entire syndicate has been identified and he is a foreign national. Necessary steps will be taken at the appropriate level," in-

Initial investigation reveals that the gang has swindled over ₹15 crore. Besides, another fraud to the tune of ₹20 lakh in crypto currency has cometo notice.

PNN & AGENCIES

Balasore, Jan 27: Special Judge EOW Court Biswajit Das Saturday convicted two fraudsters and sentenced them to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) along with a fine of ₹3 lakh each in a cheating case.

The convicts will further undergo imprisonment of two years each in default of fine, the judge ordered.

The convict duo identified as Bijay Bharadwaj and Himanshu Bhandari of Noida, Uttar Pradesh were tried by the court under different sections of IPC, Sections 66 (C) & 66 (D) of IT Act and found guilty. The court after examining eight witnesses and 41 exhibits pronounced the verdict. Both the convicts would undergo different jail terms under different sections which would run concurrently.

The two accused had duped one Pramod Kumar Rout, a businessman of Joda, Keonjhar of ₹2.35 crore on the pretext of paying him ₹3 crore, under 'Pradhan Mantri Rahat Kosh Yojana' against his insurance policy with Max New York Life, using the forged and manipulated documents.

Pramod Kumar Rout had one policy in Max New York Life Insurance Company. In 2019, he received a call from the fraudsters who impersonated AK Walia,

7 KILLED IN 3 ROAD ACCIDENTS

the Fund Releasing Head of Ministry of Finance.He told Pramod that his insurance policy has been selected for reward under 'Pradhan Mantri Rahat Kosh Yojona' and an amount of ₹3 crore will be released in his account.

2 UP-based fraudsters

sentenced to 10-yr RI

Being induced, the victim transferred around ₹2.35 crores in instalments believing that after these procedures he will get the reward money.

When no amount was received under 'Pradhan Mantri Rahat Kosh Yojana', Pramod realised that he had been cheated by the fraudsters. The fraudsters had sent many fake letters on WhatsApp to the informant issued by the Ministry of Finance, RBI, Income Tax department and images of two bank demand drafts in favour of the informant amounting to ₹1,27,73,000 and ₹70,81,800. These letters and documents were found to be fake and forged.

During investigation it was found that out of the fraud amount of ₹2.35 crore, ₹63,09,896 and ₹79 lakh had been transferred to the accounts of accused Himansu Bhandari and Bijay Bharadwaj respectively and they misappropriated the money.

Himansu Bhandari and Bijay Bharadwaj were arrested March 15, 2022 and November 9, 2022 respectively from Uttar Pradesh



RARE BIRD: People rescued a rare species of vulture from Shinkulipadar riverbed near Telapali village in Kandhamal district, Saturday. Informed, Forest officials rescued the ailing vulture and took it for treatment stating that it will be released in Nandankanan Zoo in Bhubaneswar after its recovery

### just after flag hoisting

POST NEWS NETWORK

Titilagarh, Jan 27: In a tragic incident, a high school teacher collapsed on the stage and died iust after hoisting the Tricolour during Republic Day celebration on the school campus at Sihini under this block in Bolangir district, Friday morning.

The deceased teacher was identified as Guru Bariha, 37, a resident of Odiapalli village under Khaprakhol Bolangir district.

According to sources, Guru saluted the National Flag during the hoisting ceremony along with other teachers and students of the school. He was normal and busy in clicking photos when he suddenly collapsed on the ground. He was then rushed to Titilagarh Sub-Divisional Hospital where the doctors pronounced him 'dead' on arrival.

Police then seized his body and after a post-mortem, handed it over to the family members. The family members of Guru then conducted his last rites at his native place.

### **Elephant tramples 2** women to death

Deogarh: A wild tusker reportedly trampled two women to death at Tipirisingha village of Laimura forest section under Deogarh forest range in this district, late Friday night. The deceased were identified as Surubali Kisan and Khairi Kisan. both residents of Tipirisingha village. As per reports, a wild tuske strayed into Laimura area late Friday night. The pachyderm then wreaked havoc in the area and suddenly broke the walls of a house in the village where the duo was residing. The duo then raised an alarm in and tried to flee the spot However, the elephant chased and trampled the two to death before the arrival of locals at the scene.

### Teacher collapses, dies Padma Shri spotlight on just after flag hoisting Odisha's hidden talents

Bhubaneswar/Berhampur, **Jan 27:** 105-year-old Gopinath Swain, the oldest among all the Padma awardees this year, said the prestigious award is the recognition of his over nine decadelong dedication towards the practice of 'Krishna Leela' folk dance.

Swain was singing the 'Krishna Leela' when his family members informed him that he had been selected for the Padma Shri He was among the four per-

sons from Odisha to get the Padma Shri award this year. The three others were Bhagabat Pradhan, Binod Maharana and Binod Kumar Pasavat.

'Krishna Leela', is a form of narrating the activities of Lord Krishna through singing in the backdrop of local music. Swain, well known as 'Guru'

(master) in the locality said he was humbled for being selected for the prestigious civilian award of the country. 'This is the recognition of my

over nine-decade-long devotion towards the practice of the Krishna Leela," said Swain. "Age will not deter me from pursuing knowledge. I will continue to learn till my last breathe",

Several people Friday thronged his residence at Gobindapur in Sheragada block, about 35 km from Berhampur town to felicitate him."We are very much happy and also proud of him as he will receive such a prestigious award at this age," said Nibedita Pradhan, a Zilla Parishad

Born in 1918, Swain started learning Krishna Leela at the age of 10 from his father's elder brother. Initially, he was singing



then became the main singercum-director of the folk dance.

He had established an Akhada (traditional dance school) in the village and had imparted song and dance training to several young people in the rural villages. He was singing at least five classical ragas during the performance while mixing some modern ones to attract the younger generation.

Lyricist and dramatist Binod Kumar Pasayat of Sambalpur town is happy and thanked the Central government for the award. "I did not believe it when I heard the news. My daughterin-law later confirmed the news. Many thanks to the Modi government," he said.

A school dropout and a barber by profession, Pasayat has written many Sambalpuri dramas and songs. He rose to fame with his Sambalpuri play, 'Mui Nai Mare' (I will never die).

"Recently I gave up my profession as a barber due to failing health but I continue to write,' Pasayat said, adding that his small saloon is his laboratory where he experimented with words and created literature.

Though he was born in Tikrapada in Bolangir district, Pasayat moved to Sambalpur town to open a saloon where he worked as a barber as well as a

writer in Sambalpuri language Pasayat's saloon was considered as the temple of Sambalpuri language, He has also written playback songs for Odia films 'Samarpan', 'Adivasi', 'Para-Stree'

and 'Chini'. 'Hai Hai Krushna

Boli Jau Mo Jiban' was his alltime hit in Odia cinema songs. Bhagabat Pradhan (85), an exponent of 'Sabda Nrutya' folk dance from Bargarh was also chosen for the prestigious award. He is credited for "expanding the scope of Sabda Nrutya dance

from temple premises to the

wider platforms. Pradhan has dedicated over five decades of his life to preserve and popularise the art that is linked to the dance of Mahadev (Lord Shiva). His lifelong efforts contributed significantly in sustaining this dance form.

He started his career as a teacher in a Lower Primary School in the 1960s and has trained more than 600 dancers.

Bhubaneswar-based Binod Kumar Maharana, popularly known as 'Shilpi Guru' is a painter and Pattachitra artist. aharana is a recipient of national awards like All India Handicrafts Board, New Delhi in 1974, Viswakarma Citation in 1983 and the State Lalit Kala Akademi, 1983. He was born in 1945. "I have received many awards throughout my career as a traditional painter, but this one is special and dear to me,' Maharana said

seven persons including three girl students were killed and 18 others were injured in separate incidents of road mishap in Nayagarh, Koraput and Dhenkanal districts, Saturday.

Bhubaneswar, Jan 27: At least

POST NEWS NETWORK

Three girl students were killed and six persons including four girls were injured when a bus carrying students of a private coaching centre collided with a truck in Nayagarh district, Friday night. The accident took place at Saalabhanga jungle under Banigochha police limits in Daspalla area when the bus with 50 students onboard was heading towards Bolangir district for a picnic. The deceased students were identified as Amita Sahu of Class IX, and Chinmayee Priyadarshini and Lopamudra Pradhan of Class X.

Two of them died on the spot while another girl succumbed to injuries on the way to hospital, sources said. The injured students are undergoing treatment. Police have launched an inquiry into the accident and detained the driver and the helper of the truck. In the second incident, a motorcyclist was killed Saturday in a collision between

### **ALL INDIA POWER LIFTING CHAMPIONSHIP**

### 5 members of a family win gold

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jevpore, Jan 27: In what can be called a rare feat, five members of a family here in Koraput district have won gold medals in the All India Power Lifting Championship recently held at Bhubaneswar, a re-

port said Saturday. The winand Radhamohan

ners were identified as Biswanath Nayak, Vivek Navak. Vaibhavi Rabindra Nath Nayak

Nayak of this town. They won gold medals by defeating their nearest rivals in the championship. Contestants from as many as seven states in the country participated in this championship.

Moreover, Ajay Kumar Jani, posted as a junior engineer at Jeypore Municipality brought laurels for Jeypore by winning twin gold medals in the championship held at Bhubaneswar.

Jeypore MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati, municipality executive officer Siddharth Pattanaik, civic body chairman Narendra Mohanty, assistant engineer Biswanath Patra and BDO Shakti Mohapatra have congratulated him on his success.

Sundargarh BJP MP Jual Oram's vehicle and a twowheeler in Dhenkanal district, police said. The lawmaker also suffered injuries in the accident which took place at Rekula Chhak in Kamakhyanagar, a senior officer said. 'The MP's driver was arrested

and his car was seized," Kamakhyanagar police station inspector in-charge (IIC) Sarat Kumar Mahalik said. The deceased was identified as Sarbeswar Choudhury.

"The motorcycle came in front of our vehicle suddenly and we collided. I have sustained minor injury," Oram told reporters at the police station. The MP was on his way to Rourkela from Bhubaneswar when the accident took place. Oram alighted from his vehicle and took the motorcyclist to the Kamakhyanagar Hospital where he was declared 'brought dead', the police said.

In the third incident, three persons including two women were killed and eight were injured after an SUV collided with an auto-rickshaw at Bijapur Square on National Highway-63 under Borigumma police limits in Koraput district, Friday.







Ph.: 022-66387680, FAX: 022-22044336, Website: www.centralbankofindia.co.in

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

RECRUITMENT OF SAFAI KARMACHARI CUM SUB-STAFF AND/ OR SUB-STAFF 2024-25 In continuation to our earlier paper publication regarding recruitmen

notification dated 21.12.2023 & 11.01.2024, we bring to the public notice that further process to be initiated pursuant to the notification for RECRUITMENT OF SAFAI KARMACHARI CUM SUB-STAFF AND/ OR SUB-STAFF 2024-25 stands cancelled by the virtue of the order passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Bombay Bench at Aurangabad in Writ Petition No.: 379 of 2024. Applications fees paid by the candidates will be refunded in due course. This is for information of the Public.

GENERAL MANAGER (HCM) DATE: 25.01.2024

#### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION-I, GANJAM, BERHAMPUR Phone- 0680-2291405, E-mail: eerw\_gm1@yahoo.co.in **Government of Odisha e-Procurement Notice** Bid Identification No. Online Tender // 12 // SERWDG-I/2023-24

Letter No. 441/RWDG-I/BAM//Date: 24.01.24

Repair to Road work Rs.6.06 to Rs.21.85 Lakhs Period of completion 20 (Twenty days) as shown in Column No.06 of Annexure 4 Date & time of availability of From 30.01.2024 at 11.00 A.M. to bid documents in the portal Last date / time for receipt 05.02.2024 upto 6.00 P.M. 05.02.2024 upto 6.00 P.M. of bids in the portal Name and address of the Superintending Engineer, Ganjam officer inviting bid Works Division-I, Berhampur

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal website https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in Sd./- Superintending Engineer R.W. Division-I, Ganjam, Berhampur OIPR-25085/11/0018/2324

### OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, KHARIAR

### "e" Procurement Notice

Bid Reference No. 2024\_ORULB\_99916 Tender Call Notice No. 190

No. C-2418: Bid documents consisting of specification the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the Govt. website i.e www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

Period of Completion Date and time of availability of the documents in the

Nature of Work

Estimated cost

Last date/time for receipt of : Upto 5.30 P.M. of Dt.03.02.2024

Bids in the portal Offline submission of Bid

Online Opening of Bid Name and address of the

Officer Inviting Bid Further, the details can be seen from the 'e' procurement porta

P.M. of 07.02.2024 11 A.M. of Dt.08.02.2024 Executive Officer, Khariar NAC District: Nuapada

ww.tendersodisha.gov.in. Sd./- Executive Officer, NAC, Khariai

OIPR-13136/11/0014/2324

Civil construction works as

Rs.4.44 Lakh to 16.90 Lakh

5.30 P.M. of Dt.03.02.2024

10.00 A.M. of Dt.20.01.2024 to

10 A.M. of Dt.05.02.2024 to 5.30

mentioned in website

As per DTCN



In concentration and silence we must gather strength for the right action.

THE MOTHER



### Party & Philosophy

n the third page of its constitution, the Bharatiya Janata Party lays out its conditions for membership. "Any Indian citizen of 18 years or above who accepts Articles II, III and IV of the Constitution shall, on making a written declaration... become a member" of the BJP. What are these things that are important enough to make a written declaration? Article II of the BJP constitution concludes with the lines "the Party shall bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established and to the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy...." Article IV says the party commits itself to "Gandhian approach to socio-economic issues leading to establishment of egalitarian society free from exploitation." It goes on to say that the "party stands for decentralisation of economic and po-

Where do any of these stand in the way the party today actually conducts itself? This would be interesting to see, but that is for another time. Article III, the subject of today's column, is a single line which reads "Integral Humanism shall be the basic philosophy of the party." Integral Humanism is the text of four lectures in Bombay given by Deendayal Upadhyaya between 22 and 25 April 1965. Upadhyaya held

a bachelor's degree in arts and was a journalist at the RSS house publication, Panchjanya. He was about fifty when he gave these lectures and became president of the Jana Sangh (the BJP's precursor) a couple of years after he delivered them. The following is a summary of the argument that Upadhyaya presents in the Bombay speeches: The cause of the problems facing Bharat is a neglect of national identity. The nation is like an individual and becomes ill if its natural instincts are disregarded or suppressed. Seventeen years after independence, India was still undecided about the direction it would take to realise development. Independence is meaningful only if it is the instrument to express culture. The focus in India was on episodic problems: economic, social and political. This was because India adopted a Western way of looking at economic, social and political doctrines along with Western science. Westernisation was synonymous with progress for Indians. However, the West was unable to reconcile nationalism, democracy and socialism. These were essentially Western ideals and they were all in conflict with one another. These ideologies were not universal and not free from the limitations of the particular people and cultures which gave birth to these isms. Ayurveda said that we



Aakar Patel

One wonders how many BJP members who sign written declarations saying they accept Integral Humanism as their 'basic philosophy' actually understand what it is that they have accepted

need to find local cures to local diseases. Could Bharatiya culture provide a solution for the world? Dharma is given foremost place in Bharatiya culture. Dharma is the natural law that is eternal and universally applicable. Dharma is ethics teaching us not to lie, not to fight. When nature is channelled according to the principles of dharma, there is culture and civilisation. Dharma is higher than the executive, legislative and the judiciary, and it is also higher than the people. If out of 450 million Indians, all except one voted for something it would still be wrong if it was against dharma. The people have no right to act against dharma. The words 'secularism' and 'dharmnirpeksh' (the Hindi phrase for secularism meaning 'that which is not dependent on dharma') used in the Constitution are wrong and bad because dharma is a necessary condition for the State. That which is not based on dharma is unacceptable and therefore secularism was fatally flawed. National unity is India's dharma and so diversity was problematic. For this reason India's Constitution needs to be changed from federal to unitary with no legislative powers for the states, only for the Centre.

Conflict between individuals and institutions of society is a sign of decadence and perversion. The West was wrong to see the adversarial relationship between the individual and the State as the reason for progress. The individual was made up of body, mind, intelligence and soul. A human being is born with a soul. Personality, soul and character are different from one another. The person's soul is unaffected by personal history. Similarly, national culture is continuously modified by history. Culture includes all the things held as good and commendable, but they do not affect 'chiti', the national soul. India's national soul is fundamental and central. Chiti determines the direction of cultural advance. It filters out what is to be excluded from culture.

Societies are animate and a society has a body, mind, intellect and soul. Some Westerners were beginning to accept this truth. One of them, William McDougall said that a group had a mind and a psychology, its own methods of thinking and action just

as an individual did. Societies have an inborn nature that is not based on its history. Events do not affect it. This group nature is like the soul in individuals, which was also unaffected by history. This group mentality is like mob mentality but developed over a longer period. The nation needs both an ideal and a motherland and only then is it a nation. And the State exists to protect this nation, which has an ideal and a motherland.

This was the message of the four lectures. It is not easy to figure out what the meaning of it all is. What, for instance, is the difference between mind and intelligence? What is a soul? How are these three separate from a body? What does the sentence that personality, soul and character are all distinct from one another mean? And what is the role of a political party and of government in any of this? The national soul, chiti, and group mind are not scientific phenomena and the works of William McDougall are not science (he thought, like Upadhyaya did, that the mind influenced evolution).

One wonders how many BJP members who sign written declarations saying they accept Integral Humanism as their 'basic philosophy' actually understand what it is that they have accepted.

### WISDOM CORNER

The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts: therefore, guard accordingly, and take care that you entertain no notions unsuitable to virtue and reasonable nature.

To practice five things under all circumstances constitutes perfect virtue; these five are gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity,

Life is a pilgrimage. The wise man does not rest by the roadside inns. He marches direct to the illimitable domain of eternal bliss, his

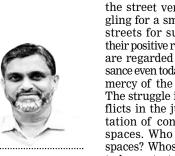
### THIS DAY **IN HISTORY**

ultimate destination.

- 1813: Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice was published anonymously and enjoyed immediate success
- 1958: Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, whose father founded the company LEGO in Denmark, filed for a Danish patent (later granted) for a toy building block that became
- 1986: The US space shuttle Challenger exploded after liftoff from Florida, killing all 7 aboard, including a teacher who had been chosen as first US civilian to travel in space.

FOCUS STREET VENDING

## STRUGGLING FOR SPACE



DV Ramana

**DESPITE THEIR POSITIVE ROLE, STREET VENDORS ARE** REGARDED **AS A PUBLIC NUISANCE EVEN TODAY** 

¶en years have passed since the promulgation of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act. 2014. Still the street vendors are struggling for a small space on the streets for survival. Despite their positive role, street vendors are regarded as a public nuisance even today. They live at the mercy of the people in power. The struggle is due to the conflicts in the judicial interpretation of control over public spaces. Who controls public spaces? Whose interests need to be protected while controlling public spaces? The Supreme Court (SC) and courts in general have played an important role in bringing clarity on this issue.

One of the most important judgements of the SC was in the year 1989. According to the judgement, street vending is a fundamental right guaranteed under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution. In fact, the SC elaborated the positive contribution of street vendors. It said, "If properly regulated, the small traders on the sidewalks can considerably add to the comfort and convenience of the general public, by making available ordinary articles of everyday use for a comparatively lesser price.

Though the right to carry on business on streets cannot be denied on the ground that the streets are meant for commuting, the highest court also recognised the need for streets for movement of citizens in the city. Accordingly in 2006, the apex court ruled that street vending cannot compromise the fundamental right of citizens to use public spaces. The judgement said no hawker can claim a right to defeat the rights of other citizens. To protect the needs of both street vendors and other citizens, the local gov-



Centralised decision-making cannot address the problems of street vendors. It is time to transfer the power to manage street vendors to Ward **Vending Committees** 

ernments were entrusted with the responsibility of creating the necessary ecosystem for street vending.

The National Policy on Urban Street Vendors was adopted in 2004 with the objective of providing and promoting a supportive environment for street vendors to earn livelihoods, while at the same time reducing congestion and maintaining sanitary conditions in public spaces. The policy was revised in 2009, and for the first-time street vendors were recognised as a legitimate part of the urban business milieu.

The policy became an Act in 2014. It stressed the importance of protection of livelihood and regulating street vending. The Act is legally binding on all state governments and governs all matters relating to the rights and duties of the street vendors in India. It reiterates that street vending is a legitimate livelihood source under the Constitution.

One of the important contributions of the Act is the creation of Town Vending Committees (TVCs) to act as the institutional framework for negotiation between vendors, local authorities, local citizens, and police. TVCs are expected to reduce harassment of vendors and improve the relationship between street vendors and the local community.

Most of the states have formed TVCs in several municipal jurisdictions. But creation of the committees is half work done. The Act, both in spirit and letter, can be implemented only through proper functioning of TVCs. But the ground realities are different. In most of the states, TVCs are yet to meet the expectations of the people. The reason for the poor functioning lies in the very structure of TVCs. There is a need to make

the committees vibrant and work in the spirit of ensuring ground level democracy. With the present structure and full control by the local authority, TVCs may remain as an ineffective body of individuals.

Bhubaneswar is said to have more than thirty thousand street vendors operating all over the city Less than 10% of the street vendors operate in the approved vending zones. In such a situation, we cannot expect the TVCs in the present form to address the problems of the vendors in the right spirit. The gap between the TVCs and the street vendors is too wide. To make TVCs a vibrant and truly democratic organisation, there is a need to shift the management of TVCs to the municipal wards. It is time to create Ward Vending Committees to manage the business on the streets.

Wards must emerge as active governance institution in the city governance. Centralised decision-making cannot address the problems of street vendors. It is time to transfer the power to manage street vendors to Ward Vending Committees. The Ward Vending Committees will have the local knowledge and the incentive to look for solutions for the local problems involving local stakeholders.

Involvement of citizens in the process of delivery of goods and services makes the state more effective. Ward Vending Committees may emerge as a strong democratic body to improve local governance. The presence of several Ward Vending Committees competing for creating vibrant business on streets with the active involvement of local citizens would be a welcome change from centrally managed TVCs.

> The writer is a professor at XIMB. Views are personal.

### SPECTRUM ISRAEL-PALESTINE

### Extremism from the river to the sea



Carl Bildt

THE PROBLEM. OF COURSE, IS THAT THE **TWO-STATE SOLUTION** IS NOT THE ONLY **GAME IN TOWN** 

he reported death toll among Palestinians in Gaza now exceeds 25.000. and still there is no end in sight for the fighting, nor any clarity on Israel's strategic objectives. Debates about what should eventually follow the war are intensifying. The United States has been increasingly vocal in its call for renewed efforts toward a two-state solution, which has been the policy of the European Union and most of the international community for years. The Arab Peace Initiative also aims to establish two states for the two peoples who reside between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

But Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has once again explicitly declared his opposition: "I will not compromise on full Israeli security control over all the territory west of Jordan – and this is contrary to a Palestinian state." That confirms what many had long suspected: for years, his policies have sought to block all movement toward a two-state solution, and they have largely suc-

ceeded. Unfortunately, proponents of a two-state solution do not hold a dominant position in the current public discourse, either in Israel or in Palestinian. With the war raging, emotions are high, and extremists on both sides have benefited politically. There is a deepening sense of mutual enmity, and scant attention has been paid to longterm possibilities for peace. But that eventually will change, potentially allowing for more constructive forms of discourse.

To be sure, moving from the current war toward a two-state future will not be easy. Border issues must be sorted out, along with the status of Jerusalem (perhaps the most sensitive aspect of the dispute for both sides). The extensive illegal Jewish settlements on occupied territory remain one of the largest and most obvious impediments to progress.

But an eventual two-state solution is not as unimaginable or as inconceivable as critics suggest. On the contrary, numerous blueprints are available. Some years ago, the US think tank RAND published a visionary research brief featuring "an arc" of Palestinian cities linked by modern rail to both Gaza in the south and the port of Haifa in the north.

The problem, of course, is that the two-state solution is not the only game in town. On the extreme ends of both the Israeli and Palestinian political spectrum, the preferred option is to create one state "from the river to the sea." Depending on which side prevails, this would either be a Palestinian state that replaces (and thus extinguishes) the state of Israel, or it would be a Jewish state that has rejected the very idea of Palestinian statehood in the area.

Yes, in theory, one also could envisage a single state of Jews and Palestinians living peacefully together under a democratic political system that guarantees equal rights for everyone. In practice, however, that outcome would probably take centuries to achieve. Since we don't have that kind of time, it really isn't relevant.

Hamas' version of "from the river to the sea" is also a nonstarter. Not only does Israel have a right to defend itself, but its existence is firmly supported by the international community, as well as much of the Arab world. While Hamas' military wing continues to advocate its fanciful option, its political leaders have sometimes spoken of accepting a longterm ceasefire ("hudna"), implying de facto recognition of the "Zionist entity."

The extreme Israeli version of "from the river to the sea," now explicitly favoured by elements of Netanyahu's government, calls for measures to "encourage" the more than five million Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank to leave. With the few who remain being deprived of political rights, the result

would be a state built on a combination of ethnic cleansing and explicit apartheid. But this path most likely would lead to renewed outbursts of violence and conflict, plunging the region into

While Netanvahu has voiced his opposition to a two-state solution, he has not made it even remotely clear what outcome he would favour. Lacking direction and stumbling from one crisis to the next, he – deliberately or not – is taking Israel down the onestate road favoured by his most extreme allies, and thus ever further away from a possible peace.

Given the alternatives - which cannot even be called "solutions" a two-state outcome remains the only viable option for peace. Once the current fighting ends, all diplomatic and reconstruction efforts must concentrate on putting the region back on the twostate path. There will be resistance from the respective extremists chanting "from the river to the sea," but one hopes that moderates on each side can eventually prevail with support from key players like the US, the EU, and the Arab states. They, and they alone, can credibly claim to know which path will lead to peace.

The writer is a former Prime Minister of Sweden.

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



Reliable partner

Sir, This refers to "Modi holds talks with Macron," Orissa POST, January 26. France President Emmanuel Macron's talks with PM Narendra Modi has reinforced France's special place in India's strategic calculus. The two countries have adopted a roadmap for defence industrial production. This cooperation aims to create supply chains that fulfil New Delhi's security needs and provide it with the necessary bandwidth to negotiate partnerships with other countries. At the same time, the traditional importance that Paris attaches to its strategic autonomy vis-a-vis Washington has earned New Delhi's trust. France recognised India's strategic importance at a time when other Western powers turned their back on it. In 2019, France blocked China from raising the Kashmir issue at the UN Security Council after the abrogation of Article 370. French domestic procedures on defence deals have made the country a reliable defence partner. While pacts with the US are dogged by unpredictability due to Congressional interventions and export control regimes, French deals have no such strings attached. However, with Trump's return to the White House becoming imminent, fears that the US will be a less engaged player on the global stage may not be unfounded. Indo-French collaboration could be among the keys to ensuring stability in a complex geopolitical environment.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

### Ethanol blending

Sir, India achieved a very progressive feat of blending 10 per cent ethanol with petrol way back in 2022. This has helped a populous country like ours to cut down greenhouse emissions by almost 3 lakh tonnes. India is also eyeing to double this ethanol blending in petrol in the next 4-5 years. It is great to see India leaping in success but we all know ethanol blending with petrol is a very cost-effective method and blending ethanol with petrol must have saved us a lot of millions. The government could have been dearer to us by reducing the cost of petrol per litre but it is seen that many places in India are still paying over ₹100 for a litre of petrol. The government can think of slashing the petrol prices by 5% as it would help the working middle class.

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR

### SUNDAY | JANUARY 28 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAR

# **SP may offer Cong 11 seats**

AKHILESH YADAV SAYS HIS PARTY'S ALLIANCE WITH CONGRESS IS 'OFF TO A GOOD START'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 27: The Congress Saturday said constructive seat-sharing talks are on between senior party leader Ashok Gehlot and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, and it will inform when a formula is finalised.

The Congress' assertion came soon after Yadav said his party's alliance with the Congress is 'off to a good start' with 11 'strong' Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh.

The state sends 80 members to the Lower House of Parliament and elections are due in April-May.

Asked about Yadav's remarks at a press conference, Jairam Ramesh said Gehlot is in direct contact with the SP chief and talks are going on in a positive and constructive manner.

"When a seat-sharing formula is finalised we will inform you. But today Akhilesh ji has spoken on this that talks are on and he is happy with the talks. I would say from my party's side, talks are on between Ashok Gehlot and Akhilesh Yadav ji and they will meet soon," Ramesh said.

The seat-sharing pact that will happen will be beneficial for the Congress, the SP, and the Indian National Developmental



Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), he as-

Asked if the seat sharing was not final, Ramesh said, "It is final only when it is final."

Ramesh's remarks came minutes after Yaday, in a post in Hindi, on X said, "Our cordial alliance with the Congress is off to a good start with 11 strong seats. This trend will move forward with the winning equation. 'INDIA' team and 'PDA' strategy will change history."

Elaborating further on the developments, SP chief spokesperson Rajendra Chaudhary told PTI, "We (Samajwadi Party) have offered 11 seats to them (the Congress), so that there is a respectable mutual coordination among us, and we defeat the B.IP."

Chaudhary also said the party's top leadership is in continuous touch with the Congress.

He said the number of seats offered, which stands at 11 now, is not likely to go up in the future. "We have given 11 seats to the Congress (in UP) and seven seats to the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD). This comes to 18 seats. The SP will contest 62 seats in the Lok Sabha election," the chief

spokesperson of SP said.

In the current Lok Sabha, the Samajwadi Party has three MPs and the Bahujan Samaj Party has 10 MPs. Sonia Gandhi is the lone Congress MP from the state representing the Rae Bareli constituency. The Apna Dal (Sonelal) has two MPs. The BJP has 64 MPs from the state.

Earlier, January 19, the SP and the RLD announced their alliance for the Lok Sabha polls, with the latter saying that the other party will leave seven seats in western Uttar Pradesh for its nominees.

Saturday's development comes amid strong indications that Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) president Nitish Kumar may do yet another volte-face and return to the BJP-led NDA.

### BJP brings Ram Mandir to centre of narrative

THE SAFFRON PARTY CLEARLY VISUALISED AND PUSHED THE TEMPLE PLANK TO THE DOORS OF THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS AND A HOST OF PROGRAMMES WILL BROADEN THE OUTREACH

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 27: It is a perfect recipe – more perfect than what the BJP had imagined it to be. With careful planning, the BJP has managed to bring the Ram temple in Ayodhya to the centre of the electoral narrative and the response from the common man will make sure that it stays there till the elections are held, sometime in April-May.

The 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony reached every household in India through live telecast and streaming January 22.

Temple memorabilia is on sale across the country, making sure that there is a bit of Ram Lalla in every heart, every house.

The surging crowds that reached Ayodhya after the consecration ceremony, was more than what the BJP expected.

The Yogi Adityanath Government had to stop bus services, appeal to the people to wait longer for 'darshan', increase darshan timings and even reschedule Ayodhya-bound trains.

Crowds that are pouring into the holy city from all parts of the country, will, perhaps, make sure that the BJP reaches its target of 50 per cent vote share – or maybe even more.

The manner in which the BJP has built up the temple narrative, has put the Opposition in the anti-Hindu camp.

"It is clear – if you have declined the invitation to the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony, you are perceived as anti-Ram. For the moment, the BJP and Ram are almost synonymous and you cannot separate the two. Even the VHP which spearheaded the entire Ayodhya movement seems to have taken a back seat. VHP

leaders' presence was not very

visible at the ceremony," opined

a political analyst.
A senior BJP Legislator said,
"If this is so, then we have toiled
for it. Yogi Adityanath put infrastructure development in
Ayodhya on the fast track and ensured that the development of

sured that the development of the holy city took place faster than the temple construction. Prime Minister Modi also ensured that the airport, railway station and other facilities came up in record time. Those who are going to Ayodhya, are seeing

the magnificent temple and also

a new Ayodhya."

The BJP is now planning to take groups of devotees from every Assembly constituency to offer prayers at the Ram temple. The campaign will continue till Holi, which falls March 25.

After a gap of about a week, Ayodhya will start celebrating Chaitra Navratri which will culminate in Ram Navami April 17 – celebrations for which will again be on a grand scale.

The BJP clearly visualised and pushed the temple plank to the doors of the Lok Sabha elections and a host of programmes will broaden the outreach.

These include the likes of the Kalash Yatra, Ayodhya Darshan, Mandir Deep Jyoti, distributing booklets among the people on the history of the Ram temple movement, and reaching out to

people to sport the Ram flag in their homes and vehicles.

Besides, the BJP has also unveiled a 'Gaon Chalo' campaign as part of the party's bid to go to the rural parts of India.

The Opposition, on the other hand, has not only failed to counter the temple narrative set by the BJP but has even started imploding.

The INDIA bloc seems to be cracking up sooner than expected with JD-U, Trinamool Congress and AAP baring their fangs. In this situation, the road to victory in 2024 seems to be getting smoother for the BJP.

The Ram temple has been fed into the BJP's cultural-nationalism discourse and 'Jai Shri Ram' is the all-important war cry for the upcoming general elections.



Women near the Taj Mahal during a cold and foggy winter day, in Agra, Saturday

PTI Photo

# Manipur CM silent on reports of Art 355 imposition in state

ARTICLE 355
MANDATES THE
UNION GOVERNMENT
TO SAFEGUARD
STATES AGAINST
EXTERNAL
AGGRESSION AND
INTERNAL
DISTURBANCE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, Jan 27: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh Friday maintained silence on reports of imposition of Article 355 in the

strife-torn state.

However, a senior official, who refused to be named, said the Article, which grants the Centre the authority to assume control of the state's law and order without dismissing the government,

had not been imposed.
Interacting with reporters



after the Republic Day function here, the Chief Minister did not comment on the issue when asked about it.

This comes days after Manipur Congress president Keisham Meghachandra claimed that Singh had told him during a meeting that Article 355 had been imposed in the state

been imposed in the state. Article 355 mandates the Union government to safeguard states against external aggression and thority to assume control of a state's law and order without dismissing the state government.

The confusion over imposition of Article 355 has been in

internal disturbance. This pro-

vision grants the Union the au-

tion of Article 355 has been in place since violence broke out in the state in May last year. It had even led a Manipur

It had even led a Manipur High Court lawyer and a student to file two separate RTIs in October and November last.

In response, deputy secretary to the government of India, Narendra Gautam, had informed "...Article 355 is not imposed, and accordingly the state government of Manipur only is responsible for the maintenance

of law and order."
More than 180 people were killed since the violence erupted May 3 last year after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe

# Want to teach black pottery to more youths: Machihan Sasa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, Jan 27: Manipur's Machihan Sasa said his dream is to train the unemployed youths so that the legacy of black pottery can be passed on to generation after generation.

Sasa has been chosen for the Padma Shri award this year. The 74-year-old Sasa said he has dedicated more than five decades to preserving the art of black potters.

"Tlearnt the art from my father when I was 20 years of age. I have trained some 70 youths of which four five have received state-level awards. However, my greatest regret is not being able to teach more due to the economic hardship," Sasa told PTI through his personal secretary Themreichan Sharon.

"I would like to train the unemployed youths as long as I have strength. My only dream now is to train them with full set of infrastructure as well as to establish a museum at my place to display all types of pottery items so that the legacy of black pottery can be passed down to generation after generation," Sasa said.

Talking about the much-needed



unique clay which goes on to make the signature Longpi black pottery, Sasa, a resident of Longpi Kajui in Ukhrul district, said in earlier days, the clay was taken freely from a place called Salah at Nungbi Khullen village but these days with rising demand and commercialisation, the clay has to be purchased at Rs 700 per tin

He said it is a 'risky task' to get the clay during the rainy season.

"How much we earn depends on the number of demands we receive. During the right season, we could earn around Rs 75,000. However, the income during the rainy season, would be none," Sasa said. The finished potteries are sold at Dilli Haat, in district

"Potteries in Manipur are not made with potter's wheel like in other parts of the country. Instead, the special clay mixed with black rock is moulded into a desired shape with the help of a wooden hammer and a polished stone," he said, adding "it is a laborious task."

The popularity of Longpi black pottery has gone up in the last two decades. There is a general belief that the taste of food especially meat is enhanced if cooked in this black earthenware.

Sasa was awarded the State award for Master Craftsman for the year 1986-87 and is also a recipient of the prestigious SHILP Guru award in 2010.

### Decline in migratory birds worries ornithologists

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Imphal, Jan 27: Ornithologists conducting a head count of migratory water birds at Manipur's Loktak Lake, the largest freshwater lake in South Asia, have expressed disappointment over spotting fewer winged guests

this time.

The census, organised by the Bombay Natural History Society and supported by Manipur's Environment and Climate Change Department and Loktak Development Authority, covered Loktak and the Keibul Lampao National Park (KLNP) last week.

KLNP, the largest floating park in the world and home to the rare and endangered browantlered deer, locally known as Sangai, served as the focal point of the head count.

"We conducted the census exercise at 50 spots across Loktak and Keibul Lamjao and each spot was manned by four ornithologists using telephoto cameras and binoculars," Raj Kumar Birjit Singh, state coordinator of Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN), said.

Students and researchers also supported the head count, he said.

Although the final census report is pending, Singh anticipates the total bird count to be



less than 12,000, with a significant drop in species by around 10.

This decline is disheartening compared to previous figures, when over 20,000 birds of more than 20 species were spotted, and in some years, even over 30,000 birds were witnessed.

However, Singh noted that all the resident waterfowl species, such as lesser whistling ducks, coot, pheasant tail jacana, were still observed.

The census included certain migratory bird species like coot, ferruginous pochard, gadwall, but

baer's pochards from Mongolia, seen in previous years at Keibul Lamjao, were notably absent.

Singh attributed the dwindling figures of migratory water birds at Loktak to factors such as construction of private fish farms along the lake shores disturbing shoreline birds, an increase in the number of fishermen, poaching, and the use of LED bulbs by fishermen at night.

Famous for its floating islands and picturesque landscape, Loktak Lake in Manipur's Bishnupur district is the largest Three of northeast India's most important ecosystems - Rudrasagar Lake in Tripura, Deepor Beel in Assam, and Loktak Lake in Manipur - are categorised as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. Held in February 1971 at Ramsar in Iran, the Ramsar Convention provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and

sustainable use of wetlands and

their resources.

freshwater lake in South Asia.



Students pour water on each other as they take a holy bath during a ceremony organised to resemble the annual month-long Hindu religious festival of Magh Mela, held during the Hindu month of Magh, in Ahmedabad



 ${\it Tri-service bands perform during rehearsal for the upcoming Beating Retreat ceremony in New Delhi}$ 



A child forms angel wings as other children romp on a court blanketed with foam, during a summer activity in Tongoy, Chile



Russian President Vladimir Putin listens to rector of the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University Alexander Fedorov as he looks at a scale model of the proposed campus at Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University in Kaliningrad, Russia



Revellers march during a traditional carnival to celebrate the departing winter and forthcoming spring in the village of Hamry, Czech Republic



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inspects the Guard of Honour during Prime Minister's NCC rally, at Cariappa Ground in New Delhi



- Farmers gather before blocking a highway near Ableiges, north of Paris. Protesting farmers shut down long stretches of some of France's major motorways, using their tractors to block and slow traffic and squeeze the government ever more tightly to cede to their demands that growing and rearing food should be made easier and more lucrative



French President Emmanuel Macron with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during a visit to Dargah Nizamuddin Aulia in New Delhi REUTERS/PTI PHOTOS

# national



The Congress position is very very clear. The Congress party members are free to have their own religion and religious beliefs, and everyone's religion is respected by the party. So I go to temples to pray, and not to political events

### **CONGRESS LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN**

The Congress Saturday launched a 'Donate for Nyay' crowdfunding campaign for the ongoing Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra under which people will get a Rahul Gandhi-signed letter or merchandise in return for their donation



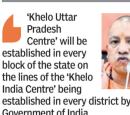
Digi Yatra is voluntary for air passengers and personnel at airports have been directed to collect data for the application only with the consent of passengers

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | CIVIL AVIATION

Thousands of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, especially for jobs in war-torn

replacements for Palestinian workers. Let us leave aside the ethical, moral and political issues that have gained significance in light of the interim judgment of the International Court of Justice. Does this not reflect the grim unemployment situation in our own country and does it not make a mockery of claims of a booming job-

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER



established in every district by the Government of India

YOGI ADITYANATH UP CM

### SHORT **TAKES**

### J&K cops bust terror module

Srinagar: Police have busted a terror module operating from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir by arresting five terrorist associates in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district, officials said Saturday."The Kupwara Police has busted a terror module by arresting five terror associates in Karnah area of the district and recovered a cache of arms and ammunition," a police official said. Acting on credible information, police arrested a suspect who was involved in smuggling of arms and ammunition sent to this side by two Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) handlers based in PoK.

### Army gets first woman Subedar

New Delhi: Havildar Preeti Rajak, who is a champion trap shooter, has become the first woman to hold the rank of Subedar in the Indian Army after she was promoted Sunday. Subedar Rajak joined the Army in the Corps of Military Police in December 2022."In a proud moment for the Indian Army as well as women of the country, today Havildar Preeti Rajak, trap shooter, was promoted to the rank of Subedar." the Army said."Subedar Preeti Raiak is now the first woman Subedar of the Indian Army, Her achievement is an extraordinary display of Nari Shakti." it said.

## AAP MLAs offered ₹25cr to quit party: Kejriwal Jarange ends fast as

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 27: AAP Saturday alleged that the BJP has offered ₹25 crore each to seven of its MLAs in Delhi to quit the party while also threatening to topple the Kejriwal government.

The Delhi BJP, however, rubbished the allegation and challenged AAP to name the MLAs and the people who allegedly contacted them with the offer. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) claimed that the recording of a person who contacted one of the party MLAs was available and which will be shown later.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal posted on 'X' that seven of his party MLAs had been contacted by "them" and warned that the AAP convener would be arrested soon. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva hit back saying, "This shows how much politically desperate Kejriwal has become. This unfounded allegation by him is an attempt to keep himself politically alive. The allegation that the BJP wants to break away MLAs of the ruling AAP, having 62 out of 70 MLAs in Delhi, shows his mental bankruptcy.'

the party.

alleged liquor scam to bring

down the AAP government in

Delhi, Several conspiracies

were hatched in the past nine

years to topple the AAP gov-

ernment in Delhi but they all

### LS polls: BJP appoints

election in-charges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 27: The BJP Saturday appointed election incharges and co-in-charges for 23 states and Union territories in view of the Lok Sabha polls this year.

BJP national general secretary Vinod Tawde has been made the election in-charge for Bihar, while BJP Rajya Sabha member and former Jharkhand unit chief Deepak Prakash will be the co-in-charge, according to a party statement. Tawde is the BJP's in-charge for political affairs in Bihar.

The BJP has appointed vice president Baijayant Jay Panda as the election in-charge for Uttar Pradesh and national general secretary Dushyant Kumar Gautam as that of Uttarakhand. BJP national vice president and Rajya Sabha member Laxmikant Bajpai will be the election incharge for Jharkhand, the statement said.

The appointments have been made by BJP president JP Nadda in view of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, it said. BJP Raiva Sabha member and former Tripura chief minister Biplab Kumar Deb has been made the election in-charge for Haryana. BJP leader Surendra Nagar will be the co-in-charge for elections in the state.

Former Bihar minister and BJP's in-charge for West Bengal Mangal Pandey has been appointed the election in-charge for the state. BJP leaders Amit Malviva and Asha Lakra will be the co-in-charges

Nadda has appointed Mahendra Singh, an MLC in Uttar Pradesh, who has been a state minister in the past, as the BJP's election in-charge for Madhya Pradesh. Satish Upadhyay will be the co-in-charge



HOWEVER, RUBBISHED THE ALLEGATION AND CHALLENGED AAP TO NAME THE MLAS AND THE PEOPLE WHO ALLEGEDLY CONTACTED THEM WITH THE OFFER

ACCORDING TO **KEJRIWAL, THE** CALLERS CLAIMED THEY WERE IN **CONTACT WITH** 21 AAP MLAs

According to Kejriwal, the failed, Kejriwal said. callers claimed they were in con-"God and the people always tact with 21 AAP MLAs. The supported us. This time also MLAs were allegedly promised these people will fail in their ne-₹25 crore and a BJP ticket each farious intentions," he said. In the long post on X, Kejriwal also to contest the elections after the toppling of the Delhi governsaid, "These people know our ment, the AAP leader charged. government has done so much Kejriwal added that all the seven work for the people of Delhi. AAP MLAs refused to quit Despite all the obstacles created by them, we have accomplished He also claimed that attempts so much. The people of Delhi were being made to get him arlove AAP hugely. It is not in their power to defeat AAP in the elecrested in connection with the

> liquor scam. At a press conference here, Delhi minister Atishi alleged

tions. So they want to topple the

government through the arrest

on the pretext of a fake

that the BJP has launched "Operation Lotus 2.0" in Delhi. "They had made a similar attempt to poach AAP MLAs last year by offering them money but failed," she claimed. She said similar conspiracies

were hatched by the BJP in the past also. In 2022, they tried to break away AAP MLAs and get them join the BJP by promising them money, she added. The Delhi minister charged that the BJP undertook "Operation Lotus" in states where it failed to form its government. Such operations were conducted in the past in states like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa, she alleged.

Atishi claimed that the recording of one caller who contacted an AAP MLA is available and it will be brought into public domain at the right time.

Refuting the allegation, Delhi BJP secretary Harish Khurana challenged Atishi to name the MLAs contacted and also those who reached out to them with the offer.

He said AAP was trying to shift focus from Kejriwal skipping ED summons for questioning in the liquor scam.

govt accepts demands



Jarange had launched his fast at Vashi in Navi Mumbai, a satellite city of Mumbai, Friday, in the presence of thousands of his supporters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 27: Activist Manoj Jarange Saturday called off his indefinite fast for Maratha quota after the Maharashtra government accepted his demands, with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announcing that till Marathas get reservation, they will be given all the benefits enjoyed by the OBCs.

But a draft notification issued by the government following negotiations with Jarange, stating that blood relatives of a Maratha person, who has records to show that he belongs to the agrarian Kunbi community, would also be recognised as Kunbi, evoked criticism from senior minister Chhagan Bhujbal who questioned the "backdoor entry" of Marathas into the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis tried to assuage concerns of the OBCs, stating that Marathas would not get Kunbi caste certificate without any proof.

Jarange had launched his fast at Vashi in Navi Mumbai, a satellite city of Mumbai, Friday, in the presence of thousands of his supporters. He had set out on a protest march from his native Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district last Saturday. The 40vear-old activist originally

planned to stage a hunger strike at Azad Maidan in South Mumbai from January 26.

On reaching Vashi on Friday morning, the 'morcha' made an overnight halt but Jarange warned that they would enter Mumbai on Saturday for their planned protest if their demands were not met. The government then came out with a draft notification which fulfilled one of Jarange's key demands. It said that all blood relatives of a Maratha person, whose Kunbi caste records have already been found, would also be recognised as Kunbi.

Kunbi, an agrarian community, falls in the OBC category, and Jarange, who is spearheading the agitation for reservation for the Marathas since last August, has been demanding Kunbi certificates for all Marathas.

In the morning, Jarange said he was withdrawing his agitation as the government had accepted all his demands. CM Shinde reached the protest venue around 10.45 am. Jarange accepted a glass of juice offered to him by the CM and ended his fast.

Speaking on the occasion, Shinde said, "Till the Marathas get reservation, they will get all the rights and benefits enjoyed by the OBCs." The Justice (retd) Sandeep Shinde committee, set up to find Kunbi records of Marathas, will be given extension, the CM said, adding, "camps have been set up to collect affidavits from the community members and committees have been\_ formed at the taluka level to identify and verify Kunbi lineage of Marathas.

### Artists take part in a procession during the 100th Akhil Bhartiya Marathi Natya Sammelan in Solapur Kerala Guv gets Z+ cover after roadside standoff

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram/Kollam , Jan 27: High drama played out in this Kerala district Saturday when state Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, facing SFI's black flag protest, got off his car, took on the agitating Left student wing members, sat on the roadside and hit out at the Chief Minister in what seemed to be yet another chapter in the Raj Bhavan vs the ruling LDF

Meanwhile, the Centre Saturday extended Z+ security cover to Khan, who lashed out at Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for "promoting lawlessness." A visibly irked Khan, on his way to Kottarakkara for an event,

got out of his car at Nilamel, took on the agitating members of the Students Federation of India and sat on the roadside demanding police action against the activists of the CPI-M-affiliated SFI for staging a black flag protest against him.

While the BJP threw its weight behind Khan, State General Education Minister V Sivankutty said that no Governor of any state in the country has behaved in this manner.

The Congress-led UDF on the other hand said that this was all part of the ongoing political drama of the state government and the Governor.

Accusing Vijayan of "promoting lawlessness in the state", Khan said, "as head of the state,



Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan stages a sit-in protest at a tea shop at Nilamel against the police's alleged failure in preventing black flag protests by the Students Federation of India (SFI), in Kollam district, Saturday

lawlessness shall not be tolerated". The Governor also said that the "attacks" against him were being organised "to divert attention from the Left government's failures and provoke some drastic action (from him)".

"I am not going to oblige them," he said. The Governor also termed the SFI activists as "goondas" and "daily wagers" of the Marxist veteran and the Left party. "You go and show black flag, hit the car, come back and take your payment," he said.

After sitting there for over two hours, Khan left the place only after the police showed him a copy of the FIR registered against 17 SFI activists under non-bailable provisions

### **Navy responds** as Houthis attack **British tanker**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 27: The Indian Navy Saturday contained a fire onboard a commercial oil tanker with 22 Indian crew in the Gulf of Aden while swiftly responding to a distress call from the vessel after it was struck by a missile on the key shipping route that witnessed similar strikes in the

last few weeks. Following the Mayday call from the Marshall Islands-flagged vessel MV Marlin Luanda Friday night, the Indian Navy deployed its guided missile destroyer INS Visakhapatnam to assist the vessel. Navy spokesperson

# SC 'takes charge' amid tussle between 2 HC judges

Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay had accused brother judge Soumen Sen of the division bench of pandering to the interests of West Bengal's ruling party to overrule his order for a CBI probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 27: Seeking to resolve a piquant judicial situation, the Supreme Court Saturday decided to "take charge and stay all proceedings in a tussle between two benches of the Calcutta High Court over institution of a CBI investigation into alleged irregularities in issuance of caste certificates to candidates aspiring for reserved

A five-judge bench of the apex court chaired by Chief Justice -D Y Chandrachud sat on a hol $iday\ to\ address\ the\ dispute\ where$ a defiant judge overruled an order of a division bench that had quashed his direction for a CBI probe and asked the central agency to go ahead with the investigation.

Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay had accused brother judge Soumen Sen of the division bench of pandering to the interests of West Bengal's ruling party to overrule his order for a CBI probe.

The apex court, in probably an unprecedented step, taken cognisance of the unpleasant situation on Friday, constituted a five-judge bench, and decided to hold a special sitting today to resolve the issue that under-



standably caused it great discomfiture. The Supreme Court stayed all proceedings before the Calcutta High Court and execution of the orders issued by the two benches

"We will stay further proceedings. We are issuing notice to the State of West Bengal and the original petitioner before the HC. We will list the proceeding on Monday again. We will stay all further proceedings in the writ petition and the Letters Patent Appeal and the implementation of the single bench order referring the investigation to CBI," the bench, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, Surya Kant and Aniruddha Bose, said.

The top court also allowed the West Bengal government to file separately a Special Leave Petition (SLP) against Justice Gangopadhyay's order for a CBI probe into the alleged irregularities. Justice Kant joined the proceedings through video conferencing as he was out of station.

Justice Gangopadhyay had overruled the decision of a division bench of Justices Soumen Sen and Uday Kumar Ganguly which had quashed his order of registering an FIR in the case. In the course of hearing Saturday, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the West Bengal government, said the state intended to file an appeal against Justice Gangopadhyay's order for a CBI

probe Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the CBI, submitted the order of the division bench lacked jurisdiction it stayed Justice Gangopadhyay's order without even an appeal memo having been filed.

"I am more concerned about passing of an order without an appeal memo or any impugned order in place. This court had under Article 141 prohibited the same. I am not here defending either a single judge or division bench order," Mehta said and sought permission for the CBI to file a note on the issue. "We will take this up on Monday, We have taken charge now," the bench said.

Commander Vivek Madhwal said in New Delhi that after six hours of battling the fire, along with the crew of MV Marlin Luanda. the Indian Naval firefighting team has successfully

brought the blaze under control The missile attack on the vessel reportedly by Iran-backed Houthi militants came amid increasing global concerns over the security situation in the Red Sea as well as the Gulf of Aden. The vessel is operated by UKbased Oceonix Services.

The Houthis have been targeting commercial vessels in ঽ the Red Sea and adjoining areas since November."Responding to the distress call from MV Marlin Luanda, INS Visakhapatnam had proceeded to provide assistance. A US and French warship also responded to the distress call," Madhwal said.



# international



(Holocaust Day) calls out to us: Stay visible! **Stay audible! Against** antisemitism, against racism, against misanthropy — and for our democracy

OLAF SCHOLZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

### **ICON OF THE SEAS**

The world's largest cruise ship, Royal Caribbean International's 'Icon of the Seas', is set for its maiden voyage Saturday, but environmental groups are concerned that the liquefied natural gas-powered vessel - and other giant cruise liners to follow - will leak harmful methane into the atmosphere 





I can rest pretty darn assured looking at war. North Korea just is not ready for it. It's not postured for it







We consider use of peaceful technologies as our given right. Such interventionist statements (France, Germany, Britain

condemnation) will not make a dent in Iran's determination to advance in science and technology

NASSER KANAANI FORFIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, IRAN

### SHORT **TAKES**

### Cow killed for luck

Abidjan: Egyptian soccer officials have sacrificed a cow in a bid to bring the national team more luck at the Africa Cup of Nations. Team spokesman Mohamed Morad told The Associated Press on Friday the Egyptian Football Association killed the cow and distributed the meat to needy people in Cairo the day before. Egypt players reportedly sacrificed a calf during training before going on win the 2008 Africa Cup in Ghana.

### Record immigrants

Washington: Arrests for illegal border crossings from Mexico reached an all-time high in December since monthly numbers have been released, authorities said Friday, exposing a growing vulnerability for President Joe Biden in his campaign for a second term. The Border Patrol tallied 249,785 arrests on the Mexican border in December, up 31 per cent from 191,112 in November and up 13 per cent from previous all-time high. Mexicans accounted for 56.236 arrests in December. while Venezuelans were second with 46,937, erasing much of the decline that followed the start of deportation flights to Venezuela in October.

### PIO iailed for abuse

Singapore: An Indian-origin man was sentenced to 10 months in jail after he pleaded guilty of using criminal force to outrage the modesty of a woman and voluntarily causing hurt to another person with a dangerous weapon. Singaram Palianeapan, 61, followed a domestic worker into a lift where he molested the woman, keeping her trapped for nearly 90 seconds, according to a news report. Around a month later, while he was out on bail, Singaram punched a man at a bicycle shop three times with a metal chain wrapped around his fist. Four other similar charges were taken into consideration during sentencing by the court.

#### Pak seeks \$2bn loan

Islamabad: Cash-strapped Pakistan has sought financial assistance of \$2 billion from its close ally China for a year, according to a media report Saturday. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, in a letter, has requested his Chinese Premier Li Qiang to roll over the debt as soon as the deposit time for the loan from China is completed March 23. Earlier this month, the UAE rolled over Pakistan's maturing loan of \$2 billion. Apart from the UAE. Saudi Arabia has deposited \$5 billion with the

The landmark ruling by the World Court required Israel to prevent, punish any public incitements to commit genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and to preserve evidence related to any allegations of genocide there

The Hague, Jan 27: The World Court ordered Israel Friday to prevent acts of genocide against Palestinians and do more to help civilians, although it stopped short of ordering a ceasefire as requested by the plaintiff South Africa.

While the ruling denied Palestinian hopes of a binding order to halt the war in Gaza, it represented a legal setback for Israel, which had hoped to throw out a case brought under the genocide convention established in the ashes of the World War Two Holocaust that targeted European Jews.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) found there was a case to be heard about whether Palestinian rights were being denied in a war it said was causing grievous humanitarian harm. It also called for Palestinian armed groups to release hostages captured in the October 7 attacks on Israel that precipitated

# GAZA GENOCIDE Srae must stop: ICJ



The Palestinian Foreign Ministry said the decision was a welcome reminder "no state is above the law". Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters it would contribute to "isolating the occupation and

exposing its crimes in Gaza". Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu welcomed the ICJ's decision not to order a ceasefire, but rejected the claim of genocide as "outrageous" and said Israel would continue to defend itself.

#### **REPORT BACK IN A MONTH**

Israel had sought to have the case thrown out when South Africa brought it to the ICJ, also known as the World Court, this month under the legal principle that genocide is such a grave crime that all countries are dutybound to prevent it.

Pretoria accused Israel of state-

led genocide in its offensive, begun after Hamas militants stormed into Israel killing 1,200 and kidnapping more than 240.

It asked the court to grant emergency measures to halt the fighting, which Palestinian officials say has killed more than 26,000 Palestinians and displaced the majority of the population in a more than three-month campaign of intensive bombardment.

The ICJ judges ordered Israel to take all measures within its power to prevent its troops from committing genocide, punish acts of incitement, take steps to improve the humanitarian situation and report back on its progress in a month.

It did not decide the merits of the genocide allegations, which could take years. Although the ruling cannot be appealed, the court has no mechanism to enforce its decision.

ICJ President Judge Joan Donoghue described the plight of Palestinians in Gaza, singling out harm to children and quoting detailed descriptions of the humanitarian emergency

from UN officials. This, she said, justified the court's decision to take emergency action to prevent irreparable harm. She also read out calls from Israeli officials for a harsh campaign, which she said justified the court's order to Israel to punish people guilty of incitement.

Israel called South Africa's allegations false and "grossly distorted". It says it has acted in self defence against a foe that attacked first, and goes to great lengths to protect civilians, blaming Hamas for operating among them, which the fighters deny.

### **MORE PAIN TO PALESTINIANS** US, Italy halt UNRWA

n a new setback for stricken Palestinians, the United States said it was pausing funding to the UN aid agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) after Israel alleged that 12 UNRWA employees were involved in the Oct 7 attacks. UNRWA said it was urgently investigating and "any UNRWA employee who was involved in acts of terror" would be held accountable. Meanwhile Italy has decided to suspend financing of the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said Saturday. "The Italian government has suspended financing of the UNRWA after the atrocious attack on Israel October 7," Tajani posted on social media platform X, adding that some of Italy's allies had already taken the same decision.

South Africa called the court order a "decisive victory" for international rule of law and both it and the European Union said Israel must implement it immediately and in full.

The United States noted the ruling did not make a finding about genocide and said it aligned with the US view that Israel had the right to take action in accordance with international law to prevent any repeat of the October 7 attacks.

Palestinians sheltering in southern Gaza said they felt let down by the lack of a ceasefire order from the court, but also hopeful the ruling would bring accountability.

### US CAPITOL RIOT

### SC urged to rule **Trump** ineligible to be Prez again

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Jan 27: The Supreme Court should declare that Donald Trump is ineligible to be president again because he spearheaded the violent attack on the US Capitol in an effort to overturn his 2020 election loss, lawyers leading the fight to keep him off the ballot told the justices Friday.

In a filing filled with vivid descriptions of the Jan 6, 2021, violence at the Capitol, the lawyers urged the justices not to flinch from doing their constitutional duty and to uphold a first-of-itskind Colorado court decision to kick the 2024 Republican presidential front-runner off the state's primary ballot. "Nobody, not even a former President, is above the law," they wrote.

The court will hear arguments in less than two weeks in a historic case that has the potential to disrupt the 2024 presidential election. The case presents the high court with its first look at a provision of the 14th Amendment barring some people who "engaged in insurrection" from holding public office. The amendment was adopted in 1868, following the Civil War.

In their plea to the court, the lawyers said, "Trump intentionally organized and incited a violent mob to attack the United States Capitol in a desperate effort to prevent the counting of electoral votes cast against him" after he lost the election to Democrat Joe Biden.

### **HIGH-LEVEL TALKS**

### China warns US not to support Taiwan freedom

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, Jan 27: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan that Washington should stand by a commitment not to support independence for Taiwan, during their high-level talks in the Thai capital, the Chinese foreign ministry said

Wang said Taiwan's recent election did not change the fact and the biggest challenge in US-China relations is the issue of "Taiwan independence," according to a statement from the

US President Joe Biden has said he does not support Taiwanese independence, but US law requires a credible defense for Taiwan and for the US to treat all threats to the island as matters of "grave concern."

Wang also said both sides should use the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries this year as an opportunity to reflect on past experiences and treat each other as



condescending attitude.

Both sides should "be committed to mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and win-win cooperation, building a correct way for China and the US to interact," the statement quoted Wang as saying.

Wang and Sullivan met in Bangkok Friday and Saturday, with statements from both governments hailing their discussions as "candid, substantive and constructive.

The two previously met on the Mediterranean island nation of Malta and in Vienna last year before a high-profile meeting between their country's presidents, Joe Biden and Xi Jinping, in November.

In a White House statement Saturday on the meeting, Sullivan stressed the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and in recent years has shown its displeasure at political activities in Taiwan by sending military planes and ships.

Earlier Saturday, Taiwan's defense ministry said China had sent more than 30 warplanes and a group of navy ships toward the island during a 24-hour period, including 13 warplanes that crossed the midline of the Taiwan Strait — an unofficial boundary that's considered a buffer between its territory and the mainland

Apart from cross-strait issues, the officials also touched on other issues, including Russia's war against Ukraine, the Middle East, North Korea, the South China Sea, and Myanmar, the White House said.

Sullivan highlighted that though Washington and Beijing are in competition, both sides have to "prevent it from veering into conflict or confrontation," it added.

Both sides agreed that the two presidents would keep regular contact, provide strategic guidance on bilateral relations and promote exchanges between the U.S. And China in different areas and levels, the Chinese ministry said. Both sides will start a joint working group on anti-drug cooperation in the near future and hold the first meeting of the  $China-US\ dialogue\ mechanism$ on artificial intelligence this spring, it added.

### **INDIA MATTERS**

### **India cooperating with Canada amid** tensions: Trudeau aide

OTTAWA: India is cooperating with Canada and bilateral ties are improving after tensions spiked over the murder of a Sikh separatist leader in British Columbia, a top Canadian official told CTV in an interview published Friday. Diplomatic relations soured after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last year said Canada was "actively pursuing credible allegations" that Indian agents were potentially linked to the June 2023 murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian citizen. India has denied any formal government role in Nijjar's murder. "I wouldn't describe them (the Indians) as not cooperating. I think we've made advancements in that relationship," Jody Thomas, Trudeau's national security adviser, told CTV. Canada has been pressing India to cooperate in its investigation of Nijjar's killing. Last November, US authorities said they had thwarted a plot to kill a Sikh separatist in the United States. "The information that they (the Americans) revealed supported our position and our assertions with India, and India is working with us ... far more closely to resolve this," Thomas told CTV. Trudeau said in December he sensed a change in New Delhi's tone with Ottawa after the US case.

### **Except for Susta and Kalapani, no border** issue with India: Nepal

KATHMANDU: The border dispute between Nepal and India can be sorted out in a "cordial manner through dialogue" instead of making it a big political issue" between the two countries which share history and geography and are bound together by common culture, Foreign Minister N P Saud said Saturday. Saud was speaking as a chief guest at an interaction programme organised by the Nepal-Bharat Friendship Society here on the occasion of India's 75th Republic Day which was celebrated Friday. Ties between the two countries had come under severe strain after Kathmandu published a new political map in 2020 that showed three Indian territories -- Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh -- as part of Nepal. India reacted sharply, calling it a "unilateral act" and cautioned Kathmandu that such "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims would not be acceptable to it. In June 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepalese counterpart Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda' vowed to resolve the boundary dispute under the spirit of friendship during the latter's visit to India.

## What happened at US' first nitrogen gas execution?

CRITICS WHO HAD WORRIED THE NEW **EXECUTION METHOD WOULD BE CRUEL AND EXPERIMENTAL SAID SMITH'S FINAL MOMENTS** THURSDAY NIGHT PROVED THEY WERE RIGHT. **IT TOOK ABOUT 22 MINUTES** 

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Atmore, Jan 27: As witnesses including five news reporters watched through a window, Kenneth Eugene Smith, who was convicted and sentenced to die in the 1988 murder-for hire slaying of Elizabeth Sennett, convulsed on a gurnev as Alabama carried out the nation's first execution using nitrogen gas.

Critics who had worried the new execution method would be cruel and experimental said Smith's final moments Thursday night proved they were right. Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall, however, characterized it Friday as a "textbook" execution.

Here is an evewitness account of how it unfolded. Times, unless otherwise noted, are according

to a clock on the execution chamber wall at the William C Holman Correctional Facility.

The curtains between the viewing room and the execution chamber opened at 7:53 pm. Smith, wearing a tan prison uniform, was already strapped to the gurney and draped in a white sheet.

A blue-rimmed respirator mask covered his face from forehead to chin. It had a clear face shield and plastic tubing that appeared to connect through an opening to the adjoining control room. **FINAL WORDS** 

The prison warden entered the chamber, read the death warrant setting his execution date and held a microphone for Smith to speak any final words.

'Tonight Alabama causes

humanity to take a step backwards," Smith began. He moved his fingers to form an "I love vou" sign to family members who were also present. "I'm leaving with love, peace and

light. ... Love all of you." The Sennett family watched from a viewing room that was separate from the one where members of the media and Smith's attorney were seated.

THE EXECUTION IS GREENLIGHTED Marshall, the attorney general, gave prison officials the approval to begin the execution

at 7:56 pm. That was the final

confirmation from his office that there were no court orders preventing it from going forward.

A corrections officer in the chamber approached Smith and checked the side of the mask.

The Rev Jeff Hood, Smith's spiritual advisor took a few steps toward Smith, touched him on the

leg and they appeared to pray. The Department of Corrections had required Hood

to sign a waiver agreeing to stay 3 feet away from Smith's gas mask in case the hose supplying the nitrogen came loose. THRASHING AND GASPING BREATHS

Smith began to shake and writhe violently, in thrashing spasms and seizure-like movements, at about 7:58 pm. The

force of his move-The ments caused the gurney to visincident marked ibly move at the first time that a least once. Smith's new execution method has arms been used in the US since pulled against lethal injection, now the the straps most commonly used holding him to the method, was gurney. He

introduced

in 1982

the gurney and then fell back. The shaking went on for at least

lifted his head

off the gurney

two minutes. Hood repeatedly made the sign of the cross toward Smith. Smith's wife, who was watching, cried out.

Smith began to take a series

of deep gasping breaths, his chest rising noticeably. His breathing was no longer visible at about 8:08 pm. The corrections officer who had checked the mask before walked over to Smith and looked at him.

### THE EXECUTION ENDS

The curtains were closed to the viewing room at about 8:15 pm. Alabama Corrections Commissioner John Q Hamm told reporters afterward that the nitrogen gas flowed for approximately 15 minutes. The state attorney general's office declined Friday to discuss at what time the nitrogen gas began flowing, or at what time a monitor connected to Smith during the execution showed that his heart had stopped beating.

State officials said Smith was pronounced dead at 8:25 pm.

Chandler was one of five media witnesses for Smith's execution by nitrogen hypoxia. She has covered approximately 15 executions in Alabama overthe last two decades, including the state's first lethal injection.



# business



**Every partner** needs to collaborate to put India on course to becoming the third-largest economy by 2027-28, with a GDP surpassing \$5 trillion

The Indian Patent Office has granted a "record" 75,000 patents in the last 10 months and it reflects India's ability to innovate, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said. Interacting with innovators and entrepreneurs on the eve of the 75th Republic Day, the minister also said that 40,000 compliances have either been eliminated or simplified to ease the burden on entrepreneurs

**RECORD 75K PATENTS IN 10 MONTHS** 



Flipkart dominates

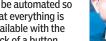
e-commerce space

WITH 48% SHARE FLIPKART LEADS E-COMM MARKET WHILE

**MEESHO BECOMES FASTEST GROWING PLATFORM** 



all interfaces with trade need to be automated so that everything is available with the click of a button



SANJAY MALHOTRA REVENUE SECRETARY

The government is working on reforms in the Special Economic movement of goods between domestic tariff area and SEZ space is carried out smoothly

SUNIL BARTHWAL | COMMERCE SECRETARY

competitiveness of goods in the

With increasing footfalls in malls and physical stores, retail consumption is likely to increase, which in turn would spur

without affecting the



VIJAY GANESH | MD(INDUSTRIAL & LOGISTICS SERVICES), NOLLIERS

### Q3 **RESULTS**

#### IGL profit shines

New Delhi: Indraprastha Gas Ltd, India's leading CNG retailer, has reported a 41 per cent jump in third quarter net profit, as the firm recorded higher sales of CNG to automobiles and piped cooking gas to households and industries. The company clocked a net profit of ₹392.07 crore in October-December the third quarter of current fiscal that started in April 2023 - compared to ₹278.26 crore in the same period in the previous year, it said in a statement. IGL operates city gas distribution (CGD) networks across 30 districts in 11 geographical areas across four states of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan.

### **SBI Card profit up**

New Delhi: SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd has reported an 8 per cent rise in net profit to ₹549 crore for the December 2023. The pureplay credit card company, promoted by SBI, had posted a net profit of ₹509 crore during the corresponding period of the previous financial year. Total income grew to ₹4,742 crore during the October-December period from ₹3,656 crore in the yearago period, SBI Card said in a regulatory filing. Total operating cost increased by 23 per cent at ₹2,426 crore for the third quarter of FY24 from ₹1,974 crore in the previous fiscal, it said. Gross nonperforming assets (NPA) rose to 2.64 per cent during the quarter under review as against 2.22 per cent a year ago. Net NPA too increased to 0.96 per cent from 0.80 per cent at the end of the December quarter of the previous financial year.

### **Yes Bank net rises**

Mumbai: Yes Bank reported a net profit of ₹231 crore for the October-December quarter of 2023-24 Saturday. The city-headquartered private sector lender had reported a post tax net profit of ₹52 crore for the year-ago period, heavily impacted by money it had to set aside following the transfer of sour loans to an asset reconstruction company. In the preceding September quarter, the bank's net profit was ₹225 crore. Its core net interest income grew 2.3 per cent to ₹1,971 crore in the reporting quarter on the back of 11.8 per cent growth in advances and a 0.10 per cent narrowing in the net interest margin at 2.4 per cent. The non-interest income grew 12.1 per cent to ₹1,195 crore. Total net income grew by 5.8 per cent to ₹3,211 crore in the third quarter of FY24 against ₹3,036 crore in the year-ago period.



NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

# INDIA GETS FIRST AI UNICORN

FINANCE MINISTER

Ola's Krutrim becomes India's first AI firm to turn unicorn after \$50mn fundraise

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 27: Ola group's AI firm Krutrim has raised \$50 million at a valuation of \$1 billion in a funding round led by Matrix Partners, the company said Friday

This makes Krutrim the first artificial intelligence unicorn from India.

"Krutrim, India's own AI company focused on building the complete AI computing stack, announced the successful closure of its first round of funding. The funding round, led by prominent investors such as Matrix Partners India and oth-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 27: The gov-

ernment has halved the amount

of equity infusion in state-owned

fuel retailers to ₹15,000 crore for

supporting their investments in

energy transition projects, the fi-

Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitharaman had February 1 last

year while presenting the an-

nual Budget for 2023-24 fiscal

(April 2023 to March 2024) an-

nounced equity infusion of

₹30,000 crore in Indian Oil

Corporation (IOC), Bharat

Petroleum Corporation Ltd

(BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum

Corporation Ltd (HPCL) to sup-

port the three state-owned firms'

Alongside, she had also pro-

posed ₹5,000 crore for buying

crude oil to fill strategic under-

ground storages at Mangalore in

Karnataka and Visakhapatnam

in Andhra Pradesh that India

has built to guard against any

supply disruptions. That plan

has also been deferred in view

of emerging trends in oil mar-

kets, the finance ministry said.

companies such as Oil and

Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)

and GAIL (India) Ltd too have

lined up billions of dollars of

investment to achieve net zero

carbon emissions, the equity

support was limited to the three

fuel retailers, who had suffered

huge losses in 2022 when they

held retail petrol, diesel and

cooking gas (LPG) prices despite

a spike in raw material (crude oil)

prices following Russia's invasion

The finance ministry in a post

on X detailing the outcome of

the budget announcements, in-

While other state-owned oil

energy transition plans.

nance ministry has said.

ers, garnered an investment of

\$50 million in equity at a valuation of \$1 billion," the company said. The funds raised will be instrumental in accelerating the company's mission to revolutionize the AI landscape, drive innovation, and expand its reach globally.

Krutrim unveiled its base

**EOUITY INFUSION** 

Budget support to oil firms cut

FinMin also deferred filling strategic oil reserves due to evolving trends in oil markets

formed about the halving of eq-

uity support and deferring of

vides ₹35,000 crore for priority

capital investments towards en-

ergy transition and net zero ob-

jectives, and energy security by

the Ministry of Petroleum and

wards capital support to oil mar-

keting companies IOC, BPCL

and HPCL for green energy and

net zero initiatives, and the re-

maining for purchase of crude

oil for caverns at Mangalore and

Finance Committee meeting

held on November 30, 2023, it

was decided a maximum of

₹15,000 crore could be provided

for equity infusion into OMCs in

FY 2023-24," the finance min-

istry said without detailing the

Industry sources said the deci-

sion may be linked to a boost in

profitability of the three firms in

the current fiscal which has partly

covered for the losses in the pre-

The board of IOC and BPCL

had last year approved rights

issues to raise up to ₹22,000 crore

and ₹18,000 crore, respectively.

The government was to partic-

reasons for the decision.

vious 2022-23 fiscal.

"During the Expenditure

Visakhapatnam, it said.

Of this, ₹30,000 crore was to-

'The Budget (for 2023-34) pro-

filling strategic reserves

Natural Gas," it said.

India has to build its own AI, and at Krutrim, we are fully committed towards building the country's first complete Al computing stack

BHAVISH AGGARWAL | FOUNDER, KRUTRIM

Large Language Model (LLM) last month. With the largest representation of Indian data used for its training, Krutrim claims to power generative AI applications for all Indian languages. Trained by a team of leading computer scientists, based in Bangalore and San Francisco, the model will also

Nirmala Sitharaman in the FY24 budget consisted of ₹30,000 crore for equity infusion and ₹5,000 crore for crude oil purchases

ipate in the rights issue.

plete them by March 31.

Sources said the two firms plan

In case of HPCL, the govern-

ment will not make any direct eq-

uity infusion as it had sold its ma-

jority stake in the company to

ONGC in 2018. The infusion is

likely to be through ONGC which

will make the preferential issue

BPCL and HPCL are targeting

to end net carbon emission from

their operations by 2040 and IOC

On plan for purchase of crude

oil for strategic storage, the fi-

"Department of Expenditure,

Ministry of Finance, has rec-

ommended that the proposal for

filling of crude oil be deferred

keeping in mind the emerging

the equity infusion and defer-

ment of crude oil filing may be

linked to the government pri-

oritising spending in a bid to

try to limit its fiscal deficit to 5.9

per cent of GDP this fiscal year

faces shortfall in revenue col-

lections particularly from sale of

stake or divestment in PSUs.

This comes as the government

Sources said the trimming of

is aiming for 2046 for the same.

STRATEGIC STORAGE

nance ministry

trends in oil markets.

ending March 31

of shares to the government.

to halve the rights issue and com-

power Krutrim's conversational AI assistant that claims to understand and speak multiple Indian languages fluently.

Krutrim is a family of Large Language Models, including Krutrim base and Krutrim Pro which will have multimodal. larger knowledge capabilities, and many other technical advancements for inference.

Krutrim last month announced that it will run an early access programme until January 2024 with a simple sign up page on the website. Additionally, Krutrim's open APIs (tool to embed it with apps) will open to all developers by February 2024.

### **Foreign fund inflow** in real estate drops

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 27: The inflow

According to Vestian data, the total institutional investments in real estate declined 12 per cent to \$4.3 billion in 2023, from \$4.9

The consultant highlighted mestic investors.

Domestic investors pumped in \$1,511 million last year, as against \$687 million in the 2022 calendar year. However, the inflow from foreign funds stood lower at \$2,733 million last year, as against \$3,926 million in 2022. Accordingly, the share of domestic investors increased to 35 per cent in 2023

Although investments reached a five-year low in 2023, Vestian expects a resurgence in 2024 on the back of robust performance of the Indian economy and a healthy pipeline of planned infrastructure developments.

of funds in Indian real estate from foreign investors fell 30 per cent to \$2.73 billion last year, but the influx jumped more than two times from domestic players to \$1.51 billion, according to real estate consultant Vestian.

billion in the previous year.

that investments from foreign funds fell 30 per cent annually because of their cautious approach, but rose 120 per cent from do-

from 14 per cent in 2022.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi, Jan 27: Walmart

group firm Flipkart continues to dominate the e-commerce segment with 48 per cent market share while Softbank-backed Meesho has emerged as the fastest growing e-commerce plat-AllianceBernstein said.

form in terms of user base in India, a latest report by According to the report, Flipkart's user base grew 21 per cent year-on-year (YoY), Meesho accelerated at 32 per cent while

Amazon lagged at 13 per cent user growth primarily due to relative premium offerings as compared to peers. "As of FY23, Flipkart was the

market leader, with a 48 per cent share in India e-commerce. Flinkart continues to grow faster than the industry... Mobile and apparel to be the largest categories for Flipkart with around 50 per cent and 30 per cent mix. Flipkart is estimated to hold 48 per cent and 60 per cent market share in online smartphone and online fashion market respectively," the report said.

#### **MEESHO MANIA**

The report attributed growth in Meesho's market share primarily to its strategic focus Tier 2 and smaller cities due to its mass positioning, operating through a zero commission model.

"In the last 12 months, Meesho's order volume grew 43 per cent YoY with revenue growth at 54 per cent through healthy take rates, repeat customers are around 80 per cent," it said. The report said that Meesho's

around 80 per cent of the sellers are retail business owners and about 95 per cent of the selection on the platform is unbranded. "Meesho is the fastest growing

e-commerce platform in India with around 120 million average monthly active users (MAUs)," the report said.



**User base rise YoY** 

**FLIPKART RISES MEESHO JUMPS** 

**AMAZON LAGS** 

According AllianceBernstein analysis, current GMV (gross merchandise value) run rate of Meesho business is over \$5 billion with around 50 per cent GMV from apparel, BPC (beauty and personal care) is around 8-10 per cent and home and kitchen con-

tributing in the range of of

13%

#### around 8-10 per cent. **FASHION MARKET**

In fashion e-commerce, Reliance owned Ajio has been acquiring users and currently holds around 30 per cent market share based on MAUs, however, Flipkart Group firm Myntra continues to hold the highest market share in terms of active users with over 50 per cent share.

"In December 2023, Myntra exhibited the highest growth rate amongst peers at 25 per cent. A closer look at the business suggests that users on the app are not transacting as much as previous trends, Myntra's GMV grew only 12 per cent in FY 23 as compared to 35 per cent in FY22,' the report said

### **E-GROCERY PLAYERS**

Amongst e-grocery players, Blinkit continues to grow the fastest driven by maturity in the

Zepto, which began its operations in April 2021, however lags as compared to Blinkit in terms of product offerings and reach, the report said.

### **JSP CELEBRATES 75TH REPUBLIC DAY**

ANGUL: Jindal Steel & Power (JSP) celebrated the 75th Republic Day Friday at the OP Jindal School ground in Jindal Nagar. JSP's Angul location head and Executive Director (In-Charge) Pankai Malhan unfurled the National Flag in the presence of Executive Director Damodar Mittal and other senior officials of the company. Malhan shared the message from Naveen Jindal, Chairman of JSP. In his message Jindal highlighted the major milestones of the company to make our country self-reliant and Viksit Bharat. "JSP Group has invested more than ₹1 lakh crore in the country creating employment for three lakh people," Jindal said in his message. On the occasion, students of OP Jindal School and DAV-Savitri Jindal School performed various patriotic programmes drawing applause from the audience.

### PATRIOTIC FERVOUR ENGULFS PPL

PARADEEP: Paradeep Phosphates Limited celebrated the 75th Republic Day with a patriotic flavor. The plant township at Paradeep was buzzed with patriotic songs and decoration. Palanisamy Velusamy, Chief Manufacturing Officer and Unit Head unfurled the National Flag and wished the employees and their family members. In his speech he highlighted PPL's overall performance in achieving excellence in environment, safety management, production figures and expansion. Arun Kanti Acharya, Head (Security and Town Administration) lead the parade. Sumit

Senapati, CGM (HR&IR) and other senior officials were present at the occasion.

### Why it's important to turn on Apple's new Stolen Device Protection

### THE THEFT PROTECTION UPDATE IS AVAILABLE IN IPHONE XS AND NEWER MODELS, INCLUDING SECOND AND THIRD-GENERATION SE MODELS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

of Ukraine.

London, Jan 27: You're in a crowded bar when a thief watches vou unlock vour iPhone with your passcode, then swipes it. That sinking feeling hits when you realize it's gone, along with priceless photos, important files, passwords on banking apps and other vital parts of your digital life.

Apple rolled out an update to its iOS operating system this week with a feature called Stolen Device Protection that makes it a lot harder for phone thieves to access key functions and settings. Users are being urged to turn it on immediately.

Here's how to activate the new security option and why it's so important: SHOULD I TURN ON STOLEN

### **DEVICE PROTECTION?**

The software update for iPhones and iPads includes the essential new feature designed to foil thieves from wiping phones for resale or accessing Apple ID or other important accounts.

Stolen Device Protection is a new setting that's included with the latest iOS release, version

Apple says the feature, buried in your iPhone's settings, adds an extra layer of security for users. It addresses a vulnerability that thieves have discovered and exploited: allowing them to lock victims out of their Apple accounts, delete their photos and other files from their iCloud accounts and empty their bank accounts by accessing passwords kept in the Keychain password manager.

Apple is introducing the feature as anecdotal evidence suggests phone thefts are surging. Stories of stolen phones abound on Reddit groups and in news articles in places from Los Angeles to London, where police say pickpocketing, "table surfing" and moped snatching are common

The Wall Street Journal reported last year how criminals watched people use their pass-



codes to gain access to their personal information after stealing their phones

### **HOW DOES STOLEN DEVICE PROTECTION WORK?**

Stolen Device Protection keeps track of a user's "familiar locations," such as their home or workplace, and adds extra biometric security hoops to jump through if someone tries to use the device to do certain things when it's away from those places.

It also reduces the importance of passcodes, which thieves can steal by peering over someone's shoulder or threatening and forcing victims to hand them over, in favour of "biometric" features such as faces or fingerprints that are a lot harder to duplicate.

Let's say the bar thief that snatched your iPhone tries to erase its contents and settings to sell it. With Stolen Device Protection turned on, the phone will now require a Face ID or Touch ID scan to verify that person is the rightful owner.

And that's the only way — the new feature doesn't let someone use the passcode or any other backup method.

Other actions that will trigger this feature if it's not at a familiar place include using passwords saved in Keychain or payment methods saved in Safari, turning off Lost Mode, applying for a new Apple Card or using the iPhone to set up a new device.

There's also a second layer designed to slow down thieves trying to access critical security settings. If someone tries to, say, sign out of an Apple ID account, change the passcode or reset the phone while it's in an unfamiliar location, they'll have to authenticate using Face ID or Touch ID. wait an hour, then do a sec-

ond facial or fingerprint scan. Changing an Apple ID password, updating Apple ID security settings, adding or removing Face or Touch ID, and turning off the Find My device feature or Stolen Device Protection also will trigger this feature.

"The security delay is designed to prevent a thief from performing critical operations so that you can mark your device as lost and make sure your Apple account is secure," the company said. "When your iPhone is in a familiar location, these additional steps will not be required and you can use your device passcode like normal.

#### **HOW DO I ACTIVATE STOLEN DEVICE PROTECTION?**

It's simple — if you know where to look.

First, download and update your iPhone or iPad with the latest iOS update. Then go to your settings, scroll down to "Face ID and Passcode" or "Touch ID and Passcode" and enter your passcode. Scroll down and you'll see Stolen Device Protection.

Depending on your iPhone model, you'll need to tap or toggle to turn it on or off. Make sure you've first activated twofactor authentication and Find My device for your Apple ID account, or it won't show up.

ENGLISH BATTER DEFIES HOSTS WITH GRITTY HUNDRED AS VISITORS REACH 316/6 ON DAY 3 HAVING A LEAD OF 126 RUNS

# POPE FRUSTRATES INDIA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Jan 27: Ollie Pope transformed the RGI Stadium into a gladiatorial fighting arena with a doughty hundred as England reached 316/6 to temporarily resist India's push for a win on the third day of the first Test here Saturday

Pope (148 batting, 208b, 17x4) and Rehan Ahmed (16 batting) were guarding England's second innings fort at close and the visitors are now 126 runs ahead of India, an unimaginable position at the dawn of the day. India were bowled out for 436 in their first innings after build-

It was quite remarkable how Pope, who generally resembles a cat on a hot tin roof in these conditions, mustered fortitude and technical perfection to defy the Indian bowlers, who were primed to finish the match on day three itself, reducing England to 163/5.

But Pope and Ben Foakes (34) milked 104 runs for the sixth wicket alliance to keep India at bay, stretching the match into the fourth day. It wasn't that Pope had complete command in the middle as spinners on occasions beat him for turn and pacers deceived him outside the off-

There was even a reprieve for

Back-to-back titles

Melbourne: World No.2 Aryna

Sabalenka clinched back-to-back

Australian Open titles with a 6-3, 6-2

win over Zheng Qinwen Saturday in

a lopsided women's final. Sabalenka

is the first woman since Victoria

Azarenka in 2012 and 2013 to win

back-to-back Australian Open titles,

championship here without dropping

a set — a group that includes Serena

contribution of his Australian

partner Ebden and his American

coach Scott Davidoff in his suc-

cess story. Ebden, who had won

men's doubles, too, praised the

number for this guy. He is a

champion, he is a warrior, I am

forever grateful to you and your

amazing team, thank you mate!

"Age truly really is not even a

Williams. Sabalenka now extended

her winning streak at Melbourne

Park to 14 matches.

said Ebden.

and the fifth since 2000 to win the

him on 110 when Axar Patel grassed a fairly straight chance at backward square leg off Rayindra Jadeia when the batter attempted a reverse sweep. But the 26-year-old Essex man found a way to push those distractions away from his thoughts to build on individual and the

team's score. Pope, whose main source of runs were sweeps and reverse sweeps, duly completed his first Test hundred, fifth in his career, against India off 154 balls, leading England's recovery act.

It was a massive effort from a batter who had just 384 runs from nine Tests against India at an average of 24 with a high-

est of 81 before this innings. However, credit should also be given to Foakes for playing a mature hand to support Pope in his venture.

The Indian bowlers too looked clueless in the face of this unexpected confrontation from their rivals. However, the burgeoning stand came to a close when left-arm spinner Axar (1/69) managed to slip a low grubber past Foakes' defence to rattle his woodwork. But before that fight, England resembled a rudderless ship in a storm against a set of brilliant Indian

Pacer Jasprit Bumrah (2/29) found some relevance for himself amidst the dominance of spin ners to jettison Joe Root and Ben Duckett to inflict early jolts.

Bumrah managed to sneak an in-ducker past Ben Duckett (47, 52b, 7x4) from the length as the batter was culpable of playing around the ball, while another incoming delivery that kept low gave little chance to Joe Root (2) while hitting his knee rolls.

Soon, the old firm of R Ashwin (2/93) and Jadeja (1/101) joined the party. Jadeja was the first to get into the act in the postlunch session, getting rid of Jonny Bairstow (10).

But there was more magic in store as Ashwin got the number of England captain Ben Stokes for the 12th time in Test cricket. After getting tied down by three maidens in a row by the off-spinner, the left-hander tried to release the pressure going for a forward press but the ball spun past his bat to rattle the stumps.

Before their bowlers made some early inroads into the England line-up, India had a mildly disappointing 54 minutes in the morning session after resuming from overnight 421/7. Jadeja could not bring up a muchanticipated fourth Test hundred, falling leg before to Root (4/79).

In the very next ball, Root castled Bumrah and Ahmed cleaned up Axar (44, 100b, 7x4, 1x6) as Indian innings came to a quick end, losing their last three wickets without adding any runs. But as it turned out, it was just a damp start to an exceptional day of cricket

#### **BRIEF SCORES**

England 246 & 316/6 (Ollie Pope 148 batting, Ben Duckett 47, Ben Foakes 34; Jasprit Bumrah 2/29, R Ashwin 2/93); India 436 (Ravindra Jadeja 87, KL Rahul 86, Axar Patel 44, KS Bharat 41; Joe Root 4/79). Match to continue.

Rhythm, Ujjwal secure mixed team pistol gold



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cairo, Jan 27: India picked up their first gold medal of the ISSF World Cup here Saturday when Rhytham Sangwan and Ujjwal combined to defeat the Armenian pair of Elmira Karapetyan and Benik Khlghatyan 17-7 in the 10m air pistol mixed team event.

Earlier, Ariun Babuta and Sonam Uttam Maskar won silver in the 10m air rifle mixed team event. Indian shooters have so far won one gold and two silver medals here. Anuradha Devi had opened the team's account with a silver in the women's 10m air pistol Friday evening.

Rhythm, who won her second consecutive World Cup mixed team gold in Cairo, and Ujjwal finished second behind the Armenian pair in qualifying with a total score of 580. The Armenians were a point ahead.

The Indians, however, proved far too superior in the final, going up 7-1 very quickly as Benik had a horror outing. The closest the Armenians got was when the scores read 11-7, but Rhythm picked up in the later

stages and despite low scores all around, the Indians prevailed

by a big margin in the end. In the air rifle mixed team, Arjun and Sonam had topped qualification, piping the British pair of Dean Bale and Seonaid Mcintosh by a point but then went down 3-9 at the beginning of the race to 16 points final.

It was soon 6-12, as whatever the Indians threw at the British pair, they would return in kind. But Arjun and Sonam held their composure as Dean showed nerves and soon it was 14-14.

On match point, Mcintosh showed her class and hit a 10.9 and despite solid 10s from the Indians, the British pair snatched the gold. No Indian shooter, however, was able to make the trap finals at the shotgun ranges.

Zoravar Sandhu shot 118 to finish 12th in the men's trap event as Bhowneesh Mendiratta (114) and Prithviraj Tondaiman (112) finished further down. In women's trap, Rajeshwari Kumari was 13th with a score of 110 while Manisha Keer (109) and Bhavya Tripathi (106) finished 15th and 18th respectively.

### Bopanna oldest GS Deep Grace Ekka hangs up her shoes winner among men



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne, Jan 27: Rohan Bopanna became only the third Indian to win a men's doubles Grand Slam title, taking the Australian Open crown with partner Matthew Ebden following a commanding win over Simone Bolelli and Andrea

Vavassori, here Saturday.

At 43, Bopanna also became the oldest Grand Slam champion in men's tennis. He bettered the record of Jean-Julien Rojer who, at age of 40, had lifted the French Open men's doubles trophy in 2022 with Marcelo Arevola.

In a high-quality game of tennis, second seeded Bopanna and Ebden won 7-6(7-0), 7-5 against the Italian team in the final that lasted one hour and 39 minutes.

Only the iconic Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi have won Major titles for India in men's tennis while trailblazer Sania Mirza did it in women's tennis. For Bopanna it is his second Grand Slam title, having won the French Open mixed doubles trophy with Canada's Gabriela Dabrowski

Bopanna was playing his third men's doubles final at Grand Slam events, having ended runner-up at US Open twice (2013,

Bopanna is already assured of becoming the new number one Monday when the ATP rankings will be updated. At 43, he will be the oldest player to be perched

on top of the ranking pile. Bopanna acknowledged the

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 27: Indian women's hockey team defender and penalty corner specialist Deep Grace Ekka on Saturday announced her international retirement, ending an illustrious career during which she represented India in two Olympic

"It is with immense gratitude and humility that I officially announce my retirement from International Hockey today. The journey from 2011 to 2023 has been the highlight of my life, and I am deeply honoured to have represented India at the pinnacle of the sport," Ekka said in a social media post.

The 29-year-old was instrumental in India qualifying for the 2016 Rio Olympics. She was a vital cog in the team's defence line at the Tokyo Games where India finished fourth.

Ekka was also a member of Indian team that won bronze in 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. She also represented the Indian teams that won medals in 2014 and 2018 Asian Games. She was also a member of the title-winning Indian teams in 2016 Women's Asian Champions Trophy and 2017 Asia Cup.

Ekka began her journey in in-



ternational hockey as a 17-yearold in 2011 when she made her debut in the Four-Nation Tournament in Argentina. She then went on to play in the U18 Girls Asia Cup in Bangkok, Thailand and her strong performance led her to become a reg-

ular feature in the National Camp. "To my teammates, coaches, mentors, and the entire support staff – vour presence has been nothing short of a privilege. I am grateful for your instrumental role in transforming my aspi-

rations into reality," Ekka said. "I extend my sincere thanks to Hockey India, Hockey Association of Odisha, Odisha Government, Government of India and Sports Authority of India for their unwavering sup-

Ekka, hailing from Lulkidihi village in Sundargh district of Odisha, won the bronze medal as part of the Indian squad at the 2013 Women's Junior Hockey World Cup in Germany.

She doubled up for both Junior and Senior squads that year, winning a bronze with the senior side at the Women's Asia Cup in 2013 and a silver at the Asian

Champions Trophy in 2013. Congratulating Ekka on a glorious career, Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey said: "For over a decade. Deep Grace Ekka has been a household name in women's hockey. Her success in hockey has been a huge inspi-

Muscat: India registered a thrilling 6-3 win over South Africa to advance to the final of the FIH Hockey5s Women's World Cup here. They will now face the Netherlands for the title Sunday. Akshata Abaso Dhekale (7th minute), Mariana Kujur (11th), Mumtaz Khan (21st), Rutuja Dadaso Pisal (23rd), Jyoti Chhatri (25th) and Ajima Kujur (26th) scored for India in the semifinal Friday night. Teshawn De La Rey (5th), captain Toni Marks (8th) and Dirkie Chamberlain (29th)

### **COMFORTABLE WIN**

Cape Town: The Indian men's hockey team continued their unbeaten run on the tour to South Africa, registering an easy 3-0 win over the hosts here, Cantain Harmannreet Singh (2nd minute), Abhishek (13th), and Sumit (30th) scored for the winners Friday night. India will play against the Netherlands Sunday.

ration for youngsters not only in Odisha but across the country.

"She has shown great sportsmanship throughout her career and has immensely contributed to the team's growth in the past decade. On behalf of Hockey India. I wish her the very best for the future and congratulate her on her illustrious career," added the former India captain.

### Sandeep leads Odisha fightback against Himachal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 27: Sandeep Pattnaik helped Odisha go through a tough phase leading them towards setting up a competitive target for Himachal Pradesh in their Ranji Trophy\_\_\_ Elite Group D encounter at the DRIEMS Ground in Banki, Saturday.

After the home team bowlers denied Himachal get away with the match restricting them to 176 in their first essay despite starting the second day's play at an overnight 80/1, Sandeep (78 batting, 121b, 12x4) remained unbeaten taking his team to 157/3 until the umpires called off the day's play.

Sandeep was ably supported by seasoned Govinda Poddar (41, 62b, 7x4) as the pair stitched 75 runs for the third wicket after Odisha were reduced to 54/2. Experienced Biplab Samantray (9 batting) was giving Sandeep company when the bails were drawn as Odisha already have a 119-run lead.



Earlier, Himachal bundled the hosts out for a paltry 138 in the first innings Friday after winning the toss and opting to field. Aasirwad Swain (37) was the top scorer for Odisha, while Abhishek Kumar (4/39) and senior campaigner Rishi Dhawan (3/35) shared seven wickets between them for the visitors.

In response, Himachal were cruising at 80/1 at stumps on Day 1, but they lost their last five wickets in just 11 balls without adding a single run as they were bowled out for 176. They could take only 38-run lead. Rajesh Mohanty (3/56) and Biplab (3/30) shared six wickets between them, while Debabrata Pradhan (2/28) and Sunil Roul (2/44) bagged two wickets apiece.

### Jyoshna's lift from remote region to breaking NR

Chennai, Jan 27: Every now and then, India is getting talents from very remote places, who are seemingly waiting for an opportunity to prosper. Such an example is Odisha's Jyoshna Sabar - a 15-year-old from Pekata village in Gajapati district.

A few months ago Commonwealth Games gold medallist weightlifter K Ravi Kumar was supposed to reach Pekata at around 11 am. However, he couldn't find his way through the mountainous forested region of Odisha near the Andhra border and it was already getting dark. The road wasn't exactly motorable either.

Fortunately, he spotted a man who turned out to be Jyoshna's grandfather, and the old man guided them to Pekata, a village so remote that the nearest bus stop is a few hours by foot.

Jyoshna, the daughter of a



small-time farmer father and homemaker mother, has risen from this impoverished background to become one of India's

leading junior weightlifters. After winning bronze at the

World Youth Championships in Albania last year, she shattered the national snatch record on her way to the gold medal in the 40kg category Friday at the 6th Khelo India Youth Games in Chennai. Coincidentally, it was the 75th Republic Day of India.

Jvoshna lifted a total of 130 kgs, including 60 kg in Snatch (a new national record) and 70 kg in Clean and Jerk. The target was to go after all three records -Snatch, Clean and Jerk and total.

"Unfortunately, she failed an attempt in jerk, otherwise we would have broken jerk and total too. She is upset and repeatedly saying that she has not been able to achieve her target," said coach

A shy-natured Jyoshna is still opening up to a world that she had no idea about until a couple of years ago. "She is from a very humble and from remote background. Only in the last few months she has begun to know

more about the world when she travelled for the World Championships. She does not speak much. We treat her like a delicate flower, because if you say anything to her, she gets scared,' revealed Ravi.

Jyoshna's parents have become used to her winning medals, scholarships and incentives, but aren't familiar at all with her sport. "Even after their daughter won a medal at the World Championships, they don't have much idea about weightlifting. But they are proud of their daughter," Ravi explained.

Jyoshna's talent was spotted by coach Ramesh Chandra Pandhi at the NGO-run Gram Vikas School, Kankia, a residential facility for underprivileged children about 90km from Pekata. She was then selected for the Tenvic High Performance Centre in Bhubaneswar, where she studies in 10th grade at the Kalinga Institute.

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