

**Challenging role**  
Bhumi Pednekar shares her experience of stepping into the shoes of a journalist in film 'Bhakshak'

LEISURE | P2

**More trouble**  
Former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi have been handed down 14 years of imprisonment in a corruption case

INTERNATIONAL | P10

**Core sector growth dwindles**  
The growth of eight key infrastructure sectors slows to a 14-month low of 3.8 per cent in December 2023

BUSINESS | P11

**Historic achievement**  
Vishnu Saravanan becomes the first Indian sailor to qualify for successive Olympics as he achieved the feat at World Championships

SPORTS | P12



**BSKY NABIN CARD**

REGISTRATION FOR BSKY NABIN CARD EXTENDED UPTO 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024

FOR ANY SUPPORT, COMPLAINT & GRIEVANCE RELATED TO REGISTRATION PROCESS, APPLICANT CAN CALL

BSKY CARD HELPLINE: 155369

"EVERY LIFE IS PRECIOUS"



Chief Minister, Odisha

DSPL-596

**SHORT TAKES**

**10-year-old raped while returning from school**

**Cuttack:** A 10-year-old girl, who lives in an orphanage, was allegedly raped in Cuttack when she was returning from school, police officials said Wednesday. The incident happened in College Square area near Cuttack railway station Monday afternoon, they said. She is, at present, undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College and Hospital, Railways SP BP Dehury said, adding she has been living in the orphanage after the death of her mother as her father is in jail. After the incident, she somehow managed to return to the orphanage and narrated her ordeal. A four-member police team is investigating the case.

**Garland of slippers on Tipu statue; K'taka town tense**

**Raichur, (Karnataka):** Karnataka's Sirwar town in Raichur district was tense following the violation of the statue of the erstwhile ruler of Mysuru, Tipu Sultan, Wednesday. Some miscreants garlanded the statue of Tipu Sultan with slippers in the wee hours of Wednesday and people came to know about it in the morning, leading to widespread anger. A large number of people came out in the open condemning the incident and staged a protest at the Tipu Circle. They also blocked the road demanding immediate arrest of the people behind the vandalism.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**



Do watch news on TV, you'll realise economy is doing very well

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	71752.11	↑ 612.21
NIFTY	21725.70	↑ 203.60
DOLLAR	83.13	↓ ₹0.07
EURO	90.18	↓ ₹0.11
GOLD	₹63,010	↑ ₹378
SILVER	₹72,559	↑ ₹217

**WEATHER**

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	31.6°C	29.5°C
Min Temp	16.9°C	17.0°C
Humidity	89%	89%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

**FORECAST**  
DRY WEATHER VERY LIKELY

## Court allows puja in Gyanvapi

VHP WELCOMES ORDER; MUSLIM SIDE COUNSEL MUMTAZ AHMED SAYS THEY WILL CHALLENGE IT IN THE HIGH COURT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Varanasi, Jan 31:** The district court here Wednesday ruled that a priest can perform prayers before the idols in a cellar of the Gyanvapi Masjid here, a significant development in the legal battle over the mosque adjacent to the Kashi Vishwanath temple. The prayers will be conducted -- apparently at regular intervals -- by a pujari nominated by the Kashi Vishwanath temple trust and the petitioner who has claimed his grandfather offered puja at the cellar up to December 1993.

While the VHP welcomed the order, Muslim side counsel Mumtaz Ahmed said they will challenge it in the high court. The judge has said the plaintiffs can submit their objections before the court February 8. The court has directed the local administration to make arrangements within seven days



People celebrate in Varanasi after the court's order

for prayers in the cellar. This will involve 'proper arrangements' with metal barricades at the complex. According to Hindu side counsel Madan Mohan Yadav, the barricades before the Nandi statue facing the mosque's 'wazukhana' will be removed to make way. The order by judge AK Vishvesha comes days after an Archeological Survey of India (ASI) report on the mosque complex was made public. The ASI survey, ordered by

the same court, in connection with a related case, suggested that the mosque was constructed during Aurangzeb's rule over the remains of a Hindu temple. Wednesday's order was delivered on the plea of Shailendra Kumar Pathak who claimed that his maternal grandfather, priest Somnath Vyas, offered prayers till December 1993, advocate Yadav said. He said the puja was stopped during the tenure of chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav after the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya was demolished December 6, 1992. The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya welcomed the 'historic decision'. The BJP refrained from commenting on the development, saying the matter is sub-judice.

## RBI blow to Paytm bank

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 31:** The RBI Wednesday barred Paytm Payments Bank Ltd from accepting deposits or top-ups in any customer account, prepaid instruments, wallets, and FASTags, among others after February 29, 2024. The Reserve Bank's action against Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) follows a comprehensive system audit report and subsequent compliance validation report of the external auditors. These reports revealed persistent non-compliances and continued material supervisory concerns in the bank, warranting further supervisory action, the RBI said in a statement. "No further deposits or credit transactions or top ups shall be allowed in any customer accounts, prepaid instruments, wallets, FASTags, NCMC cards, etc. After February 29, 2024, other than any interest, cashbacks, or refunds which may be credited anytime," it said. The central bank further said withdrawal or utilisation of bal-



ances by its customers from their accounts including savings bank accounts, current accounts, prepaid instruments, FASTags, National Common Mobility Cards are to be permitted without any restrictions, up to their available balance. The RBI in March 2022 had directed PPBL to stop onboarding new customers with immediate effect. Meanwhile, according to reports, Paytm app will continue to operate as usual, except for those linked to Paytm Payments Bank. These will operate till February 29, or until the balance is exhausted. Simplified, it will mean customers can continue to use Paytm as a digital payment option so long as their account is linked to an external bank.

## Hemant Soren in ED custody

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ranchi, Jan 31:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Wednesday arrested Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader Hemant Soren after over seven hours of questioning on money laundering charges in an alleged land fraud case, official sources said. Before his arrest, Soren tendered his resignation as Jharkhand chief minister to Governor CP Radhakrishnan at the Raj Bhavan and was then taken to the ED office here. Sources claimed 48-year-old Soren was 'evasive' in his replies during his questioning and hence was taken into custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The ED is expected to produce Soren before a special PMLA court here and the agency will seek his remand for custodial interrogation, the sources said. The sources said the agency put across 15 questions to Soren during the second round of questioning in the case. He was first quizzed January 20. The JMM leader was shown the typed statements he recorded with the agency and before taking him in custody, his signatures were sought on these documents. It was, however, not clear if he signed them. The allegations of money laundering against the JMM leader pertain to the alleged illegal possession of certain immovable assets apart from his purported links with members of the 'land mafia'.



FRIEND INDEED

Dog squad of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) display their skills during the inauguration of 'Interactive Museum Exhibits' at Shivaji Park Metro Station, in New Delhi, Wednesday

## LAccMI covers 3 more districts

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 31:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday launched affordable bus services in Deogarh, Angul and Dhenkanal districts under the flagship scheme - Location Accessible Multi-modal Initiative (LAccMI) - which aims at connecting panchayats to blocks and blocks to district headquarters. A total of 101 buses were made operational in these three districts that will connect 440 panchayats to the block headquarters, officials said. The affordable bus service under LAccMI in the three districts will benefit more than 27 lakh people, they added. While 17 buses will operate in Deogarh, 29 will ply in Angul district and 55 buses will operate in Dhenkanal, they said. The Chief Minister said the bus service was aimed at reducing the daily hassles of people and commuting costs. The buses will take children to schools and colleges, patients to hospitals, and farmers to markets, he said. Patnaik said his government was working to transform the villages. Notably, the scheme was first launched in Malkangiri district October 12, 2023.

## Mandela artefacts auction put on hold

Items listed for the auction included Nelson Mandela's iconic Ray-Ban sunglasses & 'Madiba' shirts

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Johannesburg, Jan 31:** The planned auction of dozens of artefacts belonging to Nelson Mandela has been suspended pending a court application to completely halt it, the body that protects South Africa's cultural heritage said. The online auction had been scheduled by New York-based Guernsey's auction house February 24, in conjunction with Dr Makaziwe Mandela, the eldest daughter of the anti-apartheid icon and South Africa's first democratically elected president who died in 2013.



It had received widespread criticism from the public and the South African government,

which is supporting a court application by the South African Heritage Resources Agency, or SAHRA, to appeal an earlier court judgment that gave the auction the go-ahead. Items listed for the auction include Mandela's iconic Ray-Ban sunglasses and 'Madiba' shirts, personal letters he wrote from prison, as well as a blanket gifted to him by former U.S. President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle. A champagne cooler that was a present from former U.S. President Bill Clinton was also on the list, with bidding for it starting at \$24,000. Also among the

items is Mandela's 'book' — his identification document following his 1993 release from prison. On its website, Guernsey's described the planned auction as 'nothing short of remarkable,' and said that proceeds would be used for the building of the Mandela Memorial Garden in Qunu, the village where he is buried. A note on the auctioneers' website Tuesday indicated that the auction had been suspended without providing any further details. SAHRA said in statement that the suspension is a result of its engagement with Dr Mandela and the auction house.



# leisure



## SNOOP DOGG TO HOST SUPER BOWL AFTER-PARTY

Rap legend Snoop Dogg will host a Super Bowl after-party in Las Vegas. He is preparing to co-host an after-party alongside Dr Dre February 11, following the Super Bowl final between the San Francisco 49ers and the Kansas City Chiefs at Allegiant Stadium.

## SHEERAN PLAYS MUSIC FOR FELINES AT CAT CAFE

Singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran performed for a tough crowd in Japan. The *Shape of You* hitmaker, 32, recently returned to the same cat cafe where he sang *Thinking Out Loud* to a group of uninterested felines in 2014.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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

**ARIES**  
You will understand that being generous with your knowledge is a very satisfying thing. Ganesh says when you give something, it will be returned to you nine-fold in the future. Since you have decided to be more open-minded and considerate, you will gain a lot by way of respect.

**TAURUS**  
Ganesh promises you a bright, eventful day ahead. The day is likely to commence with a series of important meetings and conferences. Later, you will be motivated to take up something extraordinary, something challenging and rewarding. You are assured of success in whatever you take up this day.

**GEMINI**  
You face a hectic and challenging day up ahead. You will be busy trying to complete long pending projects at the office and in trying to fulfill all your responsibilities. This will leave you feeling tired and listless. You will feel at ease during the later half of the day and will be able to indulge in some fun and frolic.

**CANCER**  
For some reason you will remain very alert, in fact quite hyperactive, during the day. Do not pay much heed, if your colleagues find you and your approach a bit hysterical. Relax, though! The same people will applaud you and your efforts, later in the evening.

**LEO**  
To fulfill your stated goals and aspirations you will work harder than usual today. You will take on more responsibility, and will garner praise for your business acumen. Going out to lunch or dinner with friends is a distinct possibility and you will in all probability generously offer to bear all the resulting expenses, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
You will be unstoppable today, no one will be able to defeat you in any task. However, Ganesh says you will spend most of your time today running after illusions. Unknowingly, you may attract unwanted anxiety related to current work.

**LIBRA**  
Today, it is rather unlikely that you will get whatever you wish for. Internal strife with people around you may dominate your workplace, but you shall be able to negotiate this tough state of affairs with deftness, predicts Ganesh. Patience is your key to get over psychological turmoil.

**SCORPIO**  
Flaunt your sunny side up as the day begins on a cheerful note. Ganesh says, you will enjoy cordial relations with people around you. Overall, the day seems to be good. You spend quality time with your beloved. Passion and love may rejuvenate your love life.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Cash transactions will 'flow' your way. Money comes easy to itching palms, says Ganesh, and you will enjoy the green scene as you take stock of your finances with precision. Beware of people with a negative attitude as it might inflict worry on your fortunes, says Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
You're not somebody who would do something just for the sake of doing it. In fact, your desire to achieve your dreams will lead you towards putting your best foot forward and probably setting up a new business venture. Today, you'll also get done with some old assignments or projects, says Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
Your creativity will come to the fore today. Music will give an outlet to your emotions and creativity, says Ganesh. You will aim for the bull's eye, and to everyone's surprise, you'll hit it, too. The day is expected to go well; however, some unforeseen events in the evenings may spoil your mood, and may even create some confusion.

**PISCES**  
With Ganesh's blessings you will be successful in executive meetings and appointments with high level bureaucrats. You will make contacts with the right people due to luck being on your side today. This will directly affect your capabilities and fame at work.

# Bhumi on being in a journo's shoes

**Mumbai:** The trailer for Bhumi Pednekar's next film, *Bhakshak* (literally translating to predator) was released. In the film, the actress will be essaying the role of an investigative journalist, who is out to expose those involved in a case of sexual assault of girls at a shelter home.

Sharing her experience of stepping into the shoes of a journalist, Bhumi said, "Journalism is a difficult career...it needs a lot of courage to ask the right questions, especially to the people who are in power. I salute the journalists out there for doing their job with integrity and fearlessness. I have learned a lot by working on this film. I feel honoured."

The *Thank You for Coming* actress also talked about the challenges of working on

*Bhakshak* which is based on a sensitive and hard-hitting topic.

"The film asks questions at a core level that is bound to shake one's conscience. I hope the film sparks conversations that lead to meaningful change. The film sheds light on the crimes against the children," she also added.

*Bhakshak* also stars Sanjay Mishra, Sai Tamhankar and Surya Sharma. It is backed by Gauri Khan and Gaurav Verma under the banner of Red Chillies Entertainment.

AGENCIES



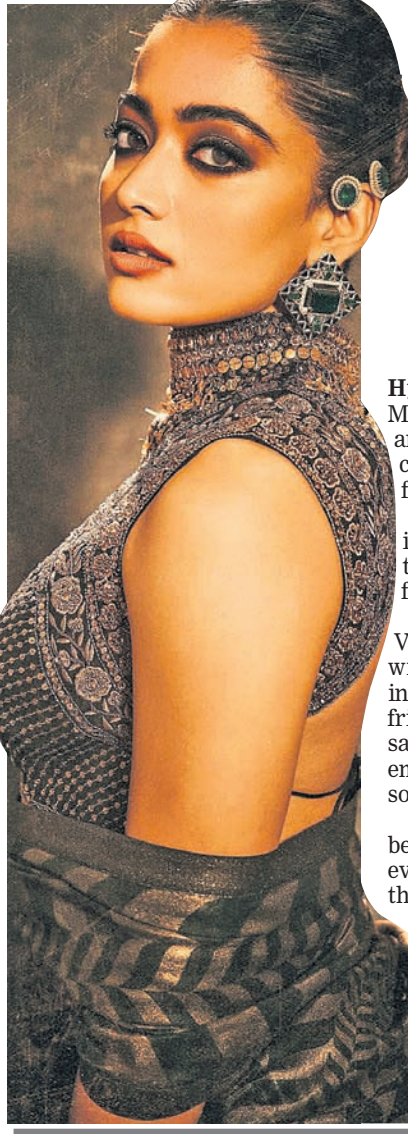
# 'I HAVE TO KEEP PROVING MYSELF'

**Mumbai:** Four years and counting, Alaya F is enjoying her run in front of the camera. The actress made her debut on the big screen with *Jawaani Jaaneman* in 2020 and despite the pandemic playing spoilsport, Alaya transitioned to OTT and has got her name on some big hits.

Alaya, when asked if she still finds it difficult to get offers even after making her debut four years ago, said, "More than the offers, I feel I have to consistently keep proving myself. For example, there's a project I really want, I try to get a meeting with the director or the producer. I go to them and I say, 'I want to do this. Tell me what I need to prove to you to get this project.' I pursue filmmakers, am doing my auditions, a part of which people don't know."

Alaya is not too often seen partying like other star kids. On this she explained, "The thing is, when work comes, I have my blinders on and I don't have the physical or mental capacity to go out. So when I'm actively working, I disappear."

She went on to add, "I'm not averse to partying, just that I feel like everything in its right amount is always healthy and wonderful." AGENCIES



# Rashmika addresses her dating rumours

**Hyderabad:** Dating rumours between Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda have been a hot topic among fans. Recently, their engagement rumours got circulated which came to an end after Vijay clarified them as untrue.

There have also been reports about the couple being in a live-in relationship currently and having no intention of tying the knot anytime soon, keeping their focus on their uprising career.

Rashmika, speaking about her relationship with Vijay, recently expressed that she shares a strong bond with the *Liger* actor. She revealed that despite having essentially grown up together in the business, their friendship is not just on the silver screen. Rashmika said she had complete faith in Vijay's judgement, emphasising that he is not just a 'yes' man but rather someone who offers insightful and honest feedback.

Rumours of Rashmika and Vijay's romance have been going on since their movie together in 2018, even though the two have never openly disclosed their relationship. From a beach vacation in the Maldives to recent sightings in Vietnam, their strong relationship has been clear to see.

Rashmika, when asked about the dating rumours, called them 'cute.'

The south star has become one of the leading ladies in the Hindi film industry after her back-to-back appearances in mainstream movies.

AGENCIES

# Big B once sent a truck full of roses to woo Sri

**Mumbai:** In the golden era of the Hindi film industry, Sridevi and Amitabh Bachchan were iconic actors. While many dreamt of sharing the screen with Big B, Sri was different. She wanted to be a part of movies that put women in the spotlight. So, when the *Sholay* actor wanted her for the 1992 film *Khuda Gawah*, he had to come up with a creative way to convince her.

A delightful incident unfolded on the film set, as revealed in the book *Sridevi: The Eternal Screen Goddess* by Satyarth Nayak.

Saroj Khan, the late choreographer working with Sridevi, recounted the day when Bachchan sent a truck full of roses to woo her. The truck tilted, showering Sridevi with flowers. It was a stunning sight, but the actress remained unconvinced. She felt there wasn't enough substance for her in the film.

Sri then made an interesting demand - she agreed to star alongside the *Coolie* actor only if she could play the roles of both his wife and daughter in the movie.

Filmmakers Manoj Desai and Mukul Anand accepted her condition, and the result was the movie proved to be a massive hit in both actors' careers.

Interestingly, before *Khuda Gawah*, Ramesh Sippy had plans to cast Sridevi and Bachchan in his film *Ram Ki Seeta Shyam Ki Geeta*, where they would have double roles.

The famous song *Jumma Chumma* was initially intended for this film. Saroj Khan shared that the sequence involved Amitabh, a cop, catching Sridevi, a pickpocket, red-handed, and the humorous demand for a 'chumma' (a kiss).

However, the film never materialised, and the song found its place in the 1991 film *Hum*, featuring Amitabh Bachchan and Kimi Katkar.

The last time fans witnessed the magic of Bachchan and Sridevi on-screen was in the 2012

film *English Vinglish*, directed by Gauri Shinde. In this film, Bachchan made a special appearance, creating a memorable cinematic moment for film enthusiasts.

AGENCIES



Amitabh Bachchan and Sridevi in Khuda Gawah

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

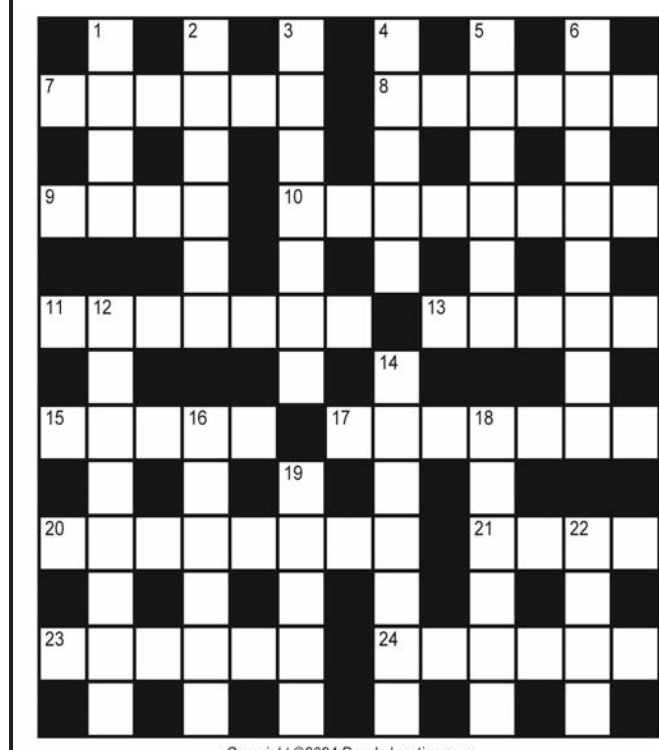


### BREVITY



### FUN post

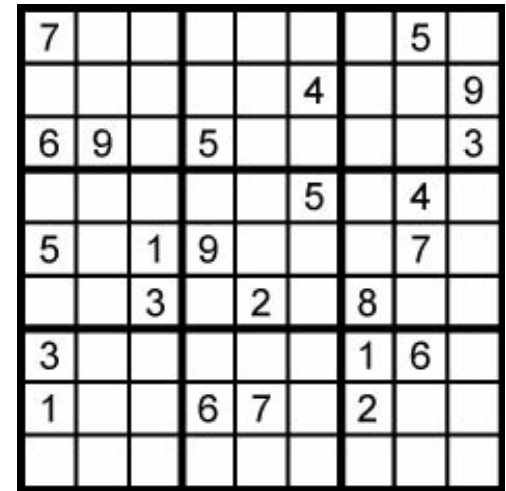
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Field of activity
  - 8 Grooms with care
  - 9 Abysmal test score
  - 10 Sarcastic
  - 11 Repugnant
  - 13 Latin dance
  - 15 Extreme
  - 17 Stronghold
  - 20 Scotch dairy cow
  - 21 Dutch treat
  - 23 Radio dial
  - 24 Old wives' tale?
  - Down**
  - 1 Abbey area
  - 2 Larger-than-life
  - 3 Schoolwork
  - 4 Cathedral topper
  - 5 Felt hat
  - 6 Type of position
  - 12 Hype
  - 14 Penny-pinching
  - 16 Type of mission
  - 18 Get even
  - 19 Female fox
  - 22 Female relative

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



# downtown

## NEW DCP TAKES CHARGE

Kanwar Vishal Singh takes charge as the deputy commissioner of police, Cuttack, Wednesday



## IIMC gets deemed univ status, can offer doctoral progs

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 31: The Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), a 58-year-old institution known for its journalism and mass communication courses with a campus in Dhenkanal, was Wednesday granted the status of a deemed-to-be university, empowering it to award degrees rather than just diplomas, according to the Union Ministry of Education.

The newly-awarded status will also empower the IIMC to offer doctoral programmes.

The institute, established under the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in August 1965, is one of the country's premier institutions of its kind, providing quality training in journalism and undertaking meaningful research in media and mass communication.

"On the advice of the University Grants Commission (UGC), the Ministry of Education, in exercise of powers conferred under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956, hereby declares the Indian Institute of Mass



**IN LORD'S ABODE:** Devotees from several parts of the state arrive in Puri to witness the recently inaugurated Srimandir Parikrama Prakalpa in Puri, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

# Jagannath Consciousness to figure in Language Conference

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: The First World Odia Language Conference 2024, which is scheduled to be held from February 3 to 5 at Janata Maidan here, will witness an array of topics put up for discussion including the one on Jagannath Consciousness.

According to sources, the conference is a celebration of the antiquity and continuity of Odia, which is one of the six classical languages of India. The conference will have 16 academic sessions on various topics connected to Odia language, literature and cultural heritage.

There will also be special session on Jagannath Consciousness. A session on future aspect and opportunities for Odia language will be discussed in the session named 'Odisha @2036: A Space for Tomorrow'.

Many international scholars like Padma Shri Herman Kulke, Uwe Skoda, Arlo Griffiths, Annette Achmiedchen and many scholars with national repute will participate in the deliberations.

Eminent linguist Debiprasanna Pattanayak will be felicitated with Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to Odia language and linguistics.

This apart, Jnanpith Award winners, Padma awardees, Sahitya Academy awardees, Kabir Samman Awardees, winners of highest awards of state academies will also be felicitated.

The conference will showcase a well-curated exhibition of



**International scholars like Padma Shri Herman Kulke, Uwe Skoda, Arlo Griffiths, Annette Achmiedchen and many scholars with national repute will participate in the deliberations**

Odisha's glorious past, its transformative present and the aspirational future. The exhibition is organised on three broader themes and time-lines namely - Ancient, Medieval and Modern.

In the exhibition, the evolution and development of Odia Language & Script; ancient rock edicts, copper plate, palm leaf manuscripts, Kalinga style of temple architecture, maritime and trade contacts of Odisha will be highlighted with artefacts and paintings.

The renaissance of Odia Literature during the medieval period will be showcased. The Art & Craft Traditions, Dances and Music traditions will be highlighted.

The arrival of printing press and the impact it created in the spread of Odia language will be highlighted with appropriate artefacts and photos. The role

played by newspapers and periodicals and modern thought leaders will be highlighted.

Since the current age is driven by science & technology, Odia language and script have to be ready to face the challenges of the fast-changing world. The conference will not only deliberate on this issue but also give a glimpse of initiatives being taken to take Odia language to the global stage.

The initiatives the state government is taking includes showcasing Odia Virtual Academy, plans for increasing pages of Odia in Wikipedia and Odia fonts. Odia's Journey towards digital age will also be on display.

Moreover, a special tribute will be paid to Utkal Gaurab Madhusudan Das February 4. In order to promote reading habits among schoolchildren and youngsters, a concept of "Asa Padhiba" will be highlighted through a mobile library bus and mobile book cart.

## 2 bike lifting gangs busted; three held

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: Commissionerate Police Wednesday claimed to have busted two bike lifting gangs and arrested three persons in this connection. The police have confirmed seizure of 21 bikes that were lifted from public places.

Bhubaneswar deputy commissioner of police (DCP) Prateek Singh said a complaint was registered at Capital police station by Rajesh Kumar Patra alleging that a Yamaha FZ motorcycle was robbed from Forest Park parking area January 27, 2024.

The police swung to action and arrested Rakesh Kumar Nayak, a native of Kandhamal, in connection with the case, he added. The police seized a total of 15 motorcycles, 20 duplicate keys and a cellphone from the possession of Rakesh, said Singh.

Moreover, it has come to notice that Rakesh is the owner of a momo stall who robs motorcycles whenever he finds opportunities.

In the second case, Pahala police have arrested two individuals, Amitabha Swain and Rajendra Nayak, both from Jagatsinghpur, in connection with bike theft, and seized six motorcycles from their possession.

About the modus operandi, the DCP said the accused have expertise in lifting bikes that do not have double-locking system and are usually old.

Later, they sell the bikes at below market prices in interior parts of the state.

The entire operation is managed by more than 4 to 5 people, who are tasked with robbing the bikes and later selling the booty to potential customers.

## Hemant in ED custody; Champai to be new CM



AGENCIES

Ranchi, Jan 31: Jharkhand Transport Minister Champai Soren, who was unanimously elected as the JMM legislative party leader by the ruling alliance in the state after Hemant Soren's resignation and subsequent arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), has staked his claim before Governor CP Radhakrishnan to form the new government, Wednesday.

The ruling alliance proposed the senior Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader's name as the new chief minister.

Earlier, Hemant Soren tendered his resignation to the Governor at Raj Bhavan, where he went along with alliance legislators.

"Hemant Soren has resigned as the chief minister of Jharkhand. The ruling JMM-Congress-RJD alliance has proposed the name of senior JMM leader Champai Soren as the new CM," state Congress president Rajesh Thakur said.

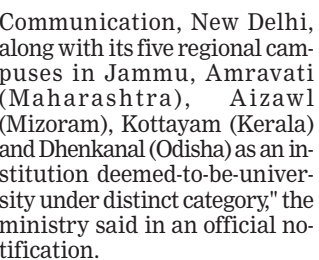
Champai Soren was key in the movement for the creation of a separate state of Jharkhand. He has been a legislator from

## Tribal outfits call Jharkhand bandh

Protesting the arrest of former CM Hemant Soren, several tribal outfits gave a call for Jharkhand bandh Thursday. Speaking to PTI, Kendriya Sarna Samiti president Ajay Tirkey said 15-20 tribal organisations from across the state will join the shutdown. "Despite cooperating with the ED in the investigation, Hemant Soren was arrested. We protest this," he said. Tirkey said that emergency services would not be hampered by the shutdown. "We will not disturb schools if they were opened Thursday," he added.

Seraikela Assembly constituency for more than three decades since 1991 and is known to be a loyalist of JMM supremo Shibu Soren.

Born in November 1956 at Jilinggora village in Jharkhand's Seraikela-Kharsawan district, Champai is a matriculate and father of seven children. He is the son of a farmer and is not related to the Hemant Soren family.



Communication, New Delhi, along with its five regional campuses in Jammu, Amravati (Maharashtra), Aizawl (Mizoram), Kottayam (Kerala) and Dhenkanal (Odisha) as an institution deemed-to-be-university under distinct category," the ministry said in an official notification.

"IIMC, New Delhi, shall become compliant with the UGC (Institutions-deemed-to-be-Universities) Regulations, 2023, within a period of six years from the date of issuance of the notification. The entire moveable and immovable assets will be legally transferred in the name of IIMC, New Delhi, within one year," it said.

IIMC shall not indulge or engage in any activities that are of commercial and profit-making in nature, the notification added.

The institute currently offers postgraduate diploma in journalism courses in English, Hindi, Urdu, Odia, Marathi, Malayalam, radio and television, and advertising and public relations. Headquartered at the full-fledged campus in New Delhi, IIMC has regional campuses in Dhenkanal (established in 1993), Aizawl (established in 2011), Amravati (established in 2011), Jammu (established in 2012) and Kottayam (established in 1995) to provide quality media education in the respective regional languages, in addition to various courses offered at the national level.



**TAKING STOCK:** Newly-appointed RDC (Central Division) Ranjan Kumar Das and Cuttack Collector Vineet Bhardwaj, along with senior officials, visit Netaji Birthplace Museum at Odia Bazar in the Silver City, Wednesday

## 'Budget should focus on all-round devpt'

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: As Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is set to present her sixth consecutive Budget February 1, surpassing the five-budget streak of her predecessors, including Manmohan Singh, Arun Jaitley, P Chidambaram and Yashwant Sinha, Orissa POST takes time out to speak to a cross-section of citizens and experts about their expectations from the Interim Budget - the last before the general elections 2024.

Basudev Bhatt, an educationist, expects more allocation for National Education Policy (NEP) for this academic year. "We need huge funds for implementation of education schemes in India," Bhatt said adding that Odisha needs more than Rs 2 lakh-crore budget for infrastructure development. This is a crucial period for education, especially when general elections



are round the corner, he added.

Srusti Mishra, a student, said, "I truly believe the government will look into easing the financial and regulatory challenges revolving around the expansion of higher education institutes. The Budget for education should focus on empowering our youths to be ready for a fast-evolving world." The Budget may also put emphasis on skill development, online learning platforms, teacher training, and initiatives for affordability and accessibil-

ity, particularly for marginalised communities, she added.

Amrit Pattajoshi, a doctor by profession, opined that the government should provide more funds for research in healthcare. There should also be increased deduction for health insurance premiums and some social security schemes for the high taxpayers.

Similarly, environmentalist Jaya Krushna Panigrahi said, "Expectations from the Union Budget, especially when the

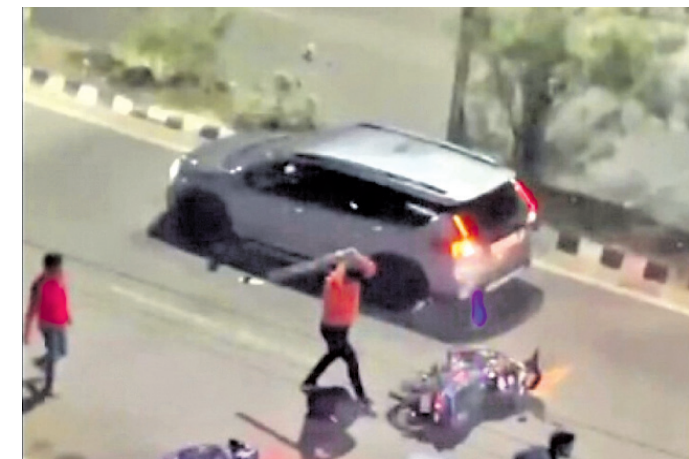
general elections are knocking at the door, remains sky-high in each and every field. While low- and middle-income groups have strong hopes of tackling price rise, improving public health facility and creating jobs, the nation needs to explore further economic potential and sustainable infrastructure development focusing on future security." However, environment enthusiasts are keen to see in the Budget ambitious climate mitigation and adaptation measures and enhanced scope for green businesses, jobs and infrastructural developments, he added.

Alok Ranjan Behera, an economist, felt that the Interim Budget is going to be crucial. He said that the Centre should focus on agriculture and rural economy keeping in mind the elections. "Moreover, the government will try to impress the voters with incentives and freebies. "MSMEs will get incentives in the Budget," he added.



# GROUP CLASH LEAVES FOUR INJURED IN CITY

Eight persons from Pandara area in the Capital city had visited a food stall at Jagamara when a group of miscreants attacked them, triggering a street fight



ately against the five members of the rival group with swords, machetes and iron rods. The situation became tense as both members of the gang were caught up in a chase in the middle of the road, leading the pedestrians ran amok to save themselves from the conflict.

Several gang members were seen assaulting the general public, as they tried to make their way to safe place. The gang members pelted liquor bottles and stones at each other, causing damage to the vehicles parked in the area.

Prima facie, it has come to notice that the 12 members of the gang belong to the infamous KBN group. The members of the group had previously been booked by several police stations in Capital city on charges of extortion, dacoity and hooliganism. This apart, the group in the past, had made its criminal act go public, such as firing gun in the public and attempting dangerous stunts in the main road.

The police have confirmed of quizzing the injured gang members at hospital to obtain more details about the absconding ones. Meanwhile, the police have stated that a likely past enmity between both the gangs is behind the assault.

As per reports, eight persons from Pandara area in the Capital city had visited a food stall at Jagamara when a group of miscreants suddenly attacked them, triggering a street fight.

The street resembled a war zone as the miscreants allegedly targeted passersby and their vehicles.

As the latest report came in, the police have launched search operations to nab the absconding criminals, while five motorcycles of the gang members have already been seized.

Sources said, nearly 12 members of the notorious gang after arriving at the spot around 9pm with bikes, charging immedi-



**TEACHERS HONOURED:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik presents Mukhyamantri Shiksha Puraskar to teachers in presence of ST Chairman Kartik Pandian, School and Mass Education Minister Sudam Marndi and Forest Minister Pradip Kumar Amat at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

## Pact inked with BMVSS for artificial limbs

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 31:** A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between state Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department and Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS), Jaipur Wednesday for supply of artificial limbs.

As per the provision of the MoU, BMVSS will provide services of artificial limbs for a pe-

riod of five years to the differently-abled people of the state.

BMVSS is the main body of Jaipur Foot which uses indigenous technology only. It is the world's largest organisation for rehabilitation of PwDs and has rendered over 2.2 million services.

The MoU signing ceremony was held in the presence of SSEPD Minister Ashok Chandra Panda and principal secretary of the department Bishnupada Sethi. SSEPD director Niyati Pattanaik was the signatory on

behalf of the department.

The minister said, "The department and BMVSS will collaborate closely in public private partnership (PPP) mode to provide Jaipur Artificial Limbs/Callipers from permanent centres, camps or mobile workshop to persons with disabilities across the state expeditiously."

Several PwDs have been provided aids and appliances including Orthosis and Prosthesis provided by Biju Mahaveer Jaipur Food Centre at Khurda.

The principal secretary said that the Khurda centre of Biju Mahaveer Jaipur Food Centre which was inaugurated by Chief Minister April 19, 2022 will continue to fabricate and fit Jaipur foot prosthetic limbs and callipers and will serve as a base for undertaking camps and providing services in other parts of state of Odisha.

Among others senior officers from SSEPD department, District Officers from Khordha and Representatives of BMJFC were present in the programme.

## Workshop focuses on achieving Net Zero

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 31:** Vasudha Foundation, New Delhi and Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) jointly organised a national conference to seek stakeholders' perspectives and inputs on the possible pathways that the Odisha could embark on towards becoming a Net Zero economy and specifically on the issue of opportunities, challenges, and potential solutions that the state could implement towards becoming Net Zero.

The programme was presided over by chief guest, Member Secretary of Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) and Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Director K Murugesan.

The other dignitaries present were Malay Kumar Pradhan, Deputy Director of Directorate of Factories and Boilers, and Advisor to ICC ESH Committee, JB Pany, Chairperson, Indian Chamber of Commerce State Council, NR Sahoo, Convenor



**RESILIENT LIVELIHOOD:** Guests attend a state-level workshop on ICARDA-OIIPCR Collaborative Project, supported by World Bank, at a hotel in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

## Medicos to cough up ₹10L for violating 2-yr bond rule

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 31:** To overcome the dearth of doctors in government-run hospitals, the state government modified the existing policy for execution of an agreement in shape of bond with an objective to retain the passing out doctors to utilise their services for two years.

Candidates leaving before completion of the course leading to lapse of a seat shall be liable for monetary penalty of ₹10 lakh.

The Health and Family Welfare department, in a notification, said, "As there is a dearth of doctors in the state and there is a reluctance on part of the doctors to serve the state after completion of course, the state government, after careful consideration, have been pleased to modify the existing policy for execution of an agreement in



shape of bond with the objective to retain the passing out doctors to utilize their services in the greater interest of the State."

This earlier resolutions/orders/ executive instructions/guidelines issued or notified in this regard shall stand modified accordingly.

As per the notification the bond conditions shall be applicable for all candidates taking admission in government medical colleges, either under State Quota or All India Quota in PG Diploma

Diplomate National Board (DNB) / Doctorate National Board (DrNB) MD/MS/ MDS/ DM/ M.Ch. courses or any other courses as may be adopted in state and notified from time to time.

No admission of any kind shall be done without submission of bond and shall be ensured by DMET, Odisha.

After completion of any of the above courses, the candidates shall have to serve in any health institution of the state for two years.

## Ekamra Utsav, a rich tapestry of Odia language & culture

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 31:** The Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) has announced the launch of the Ekamra Utsav, a vibrant festival celebrating the rich tapestry of Odia language and culture. Scheduled from February 3 to 9, 2024, the event coincides with the 'Biswa Odia Bhasha Sammilani' as planned by the state government.

This gathering holds special significance as it marks the inaugural World Odia Language Conference, highlighting the state's dedication to preserving and showcasing its linguistic heritage.

A press conference in this regard was today held in the Convention Centre at Lokseva Bhavan. The press conference was attended by Mayor of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Sulochana Das, BDA VC, Balwant Singh, Director, Fisheries-cum-Officer

on Special Duty, BDA for Ekamra Utsav, Siddique Alam, BMC Commissioner, Vijay Amruta Kulange and Secretary BDA, Kabindra Kumar Sahoo.

BDA VC urged city residents to participate in the festival in large numbers while BMC Mayor sought co-operation from citizens to make this event a grand success.

Comprising three distinct components, the Ekamra Utsav promises a diverse array of experiences. The main event, Sangitara Murchana, will take place at IDCO Exhibition ground, featuring captivating performances by acclaimed artists from across the nation and region. This cultural extravaganza will enchant attendees with live music, band performances, and various other forms of performing arts. All the performances will be based on Odia language and culture.

(Opening) 3rd February - Smruti Tume Akshay Mohanty Evening  
4th February - Sangitara Tale



Tale Anuradha Paudwal, Suresh Wadkar

5th February - Abhula Atita Ananaya Sritam Nanda

6th February - Bhasa Hi Bhabisyata Padma Shri Aruna Mohanty, Kuna Tripathy

7th February - Basantara Swara Raturaj Mohapatra & Sona Mohapatra

8th February - Murchana Ra Bhinna Eka Sandhya Sonu Nigam

9th February - Tume Chanhila Boli Jubin Nautial

In addition to Sangitara Murchana, the festival will include the Food Festival - "AMA BYANJAN," offering attendees the opportunity to immerse themselves in the vibrant traditions and flavors of Odisha.

The Food Festival - "AMA BYANJAN" aims to showcase the diverse and flavorful regional cuisine of Odisha. Hosted at the

IDCO Exhibition Ground, this gastronomic extravaganza will feature delicacies representing various districts of the state, tantalizing visitors with authentic local delicacies. The food area will serve as a vibrant community hub, complete with experience zones and a bustling flea market, inviting attendees to savor, explore, and connect. Visitors can also enjoy other cuisines including continental in the food area.

The Ekamra Haat (Night Flea Market of Ekamra Utsav) is scheduled from 3rd to 9th February 2024 and will take place at the Ekamra Expo Area in Bhubaneswar. This event promises to showcase the cultural vibrancy of Odia heritage against the city's lively backdrop, running from 4:00pm to 11:00pm daily.

Besides, a drone show will be held February 7, 8 and 9 on Odia language, art and culture. As many as 200 drones will be used for this purpose. In order to promote language, the Madhusudan

Marg leading to the venue will also display designs based on Odia language, art and culture.

Ekamra Utsav will honour the profound legacy and ancient roots of the Odia Language through a captivating and all-encompassing exhibition centred on the Odia alphabet. This event, designed to celebrate the rich heritage of Odisha, encapsulates the essence of the state's cultural mosaics, including its cinema, language, literature, and all facets that define the Odia identity. Through thoughtful curation, the exhibition will serve as a vibrant demonstration of Odisha's diverse and enduring heritage, inviting visitors to explore and appreciate the multifaceted layers of this ancient classical language and the culture it represents.

Additionally, the third edition of the Bhubaneswar Kahani Utsav (Bhubaneswar Festival of Storytelling, BhuFesto) will unfold its enchanting tales from February 3 to February 5.

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# Police crack ATM loot case; five arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nabarangpur, Jan 31:** The police arrested Wednesday five persons for their alleged involvement in stealing money from an ATM near the block of office here. The breakthrough came less than 12 hours after miscreants decamped with cash from an ATM, late Tuesday night. Police said that the miscreants had broken open the ATM at around 2.30AM Wednesday morning before fleeing with the cash.

Police launched a manhunt all through the night and arrested the five accused from Sikil reserve forest in Dabugaon. Among them, four are residents of Haryana while the fifth belongs to Raipur in Chhattisgarh. Sources said that immediately after getting news of the loot, Nabarangpur SP Rohit Verma directed the district police to form a team and arrest the accused. Swinging into action, a special team of the district police visited the spot. They found out that miscreants had broken the ATM with gas

**Police nabbed the accused when the car they were fleeing in suffered a puncture forcing the miscreants to hide in a forest**

cutters. They also found some half-burnt cash lying on the floor.

Later, police stations at Papdahandi and Dabugaon were also alerted and the district borders were sealed to prevent the miscreants from escaping. Policemen on patrol saw a white car speeding away. They chased the car which suffered a punctured tire following which the miscreants got down and ran into the Sikil forest in Dabugaon. However, police surrounded the forest area and easily nabbed them.

While the police have recovered some cash from the accused till now, the exact amount looted from the ATM is still not clear. The accused have been taken for interrogation, the SP said.



# IIM-Sambalpur signs MoU with NSE Academy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sambalpur, Jan 31:** IIM-Sambalpur signed Wednesday an agreement with NSE Academy to offer joint certification programmes, tailored for working professionals, a statement released here said.

This collaboration is strategically designed to introduce specialised certification courses addressing the needs of the financial and technology sectors, the statement informed. IIM-Sambalpur director Mahadeo Jaiswal and NSE Academy CEO Abhilash Misra signed the MoU.

As part of the agreement, IIM-Sambalpur will launch programmes, including the first MBA in financial technologies and a post-graduate programme in management (PGPM) at the Sambalpur and Delhi ISID campuses. These programmes will be facilitated jointly by faculty members of IIM-Sambalpur and NSE Academy, the statement said.

"The collaboration with NSE Academy Limited aligns with IIM-Sambalpur's ethos of fostering industry-relevant education and expanding global outreach," Jaiswal said in the release.

Mishra said the collaboration presents a unique synergy, leveraging the academic excellence and collective wisdom of IIM-Sambalpur's academicians, professors and researchers. This will certainly help aspiring students to fulfil their goals, the statement added.

# 'NOTA' a cause for concern

MORE THAN 6,500 PEOPLE SHOWED THEIR ANGER BY NOT VOTING FOR CONTESTANTS IN 2019 LS POLLS IN KENDRAPARA



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, Jan 31:** The sharp increase in NOTA (none of the above) votes witnessed in the last Lok Sabha elections in Kendrapara have become a hot topic of discussion. In the last Lok Sabha elections there were 6,588 persons who pressed the NOTA button. In fact NOTA registered more hits than SP's Rabindra Nath Behera (5,138 votes), Srikanth Samal of Krupa Party (1,868) and independent candidate Santosh Kumar Patra (2,281). Sources informed here Wednesday that other than the BJD, BJP and the Congress, NOTA registered the maximum number of hits on the EVM machines.

Political analysts are concerned with this development. They said it is a simmering discontent among the electorate for the political leaders. They opined that with problems galore in the district and no efforts to solve them, the NOTA votes will only increase in the upcoming polls.

The Kendrapara Lok Sabha

segment comprises of five Assembly constituencies in Kendrapara district and two - Salipur and Mahanga - in Cuttack district. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections a total of 12,38,488 persons pressed the button on EVM machines to exercise their electoral rights. Sources said that in most of the seven Assembly constituencies, NOTA had received more hits than the fringe parties and independent candidates.

Voters have the right to press the NOTA button, if they find none of the candidates suitable. With more than 6,500 votes cast in NOTA's favour, it just shows that people are losing faith on the various political parties and their leaders, locals opined. Advocate Bidhu Bhushan Mohapatra said this development indicates the ire of the people towards politicians.

Social activist Ganesh Chandra Samal pointed out that

a large chunk of the people who pressed the NOTA button in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections were from Aul, Rajnagar and Rajkanika. He pointed out that people in these areas have been demanding proper roads for many years. As it did not happen, they vented their anger by pressing the NOTA button.

Many others pointed out that Kendrapara since the past decade has been besieged with a lot of problems, the major ones being migration from Bangladesh, lack of irrigation facilities and the improper implementation of government welfare schemes. They added that the number of people using the NOTA button will substantially grow.

**The NOTA button on EVMs received more hits than most fringe parties and independent candidates contesting from Kendrapara**

Prasant Kumar Nayak, a social activist stated that people who get less votes than NOTA should be barred from participating in polls in the future. "They contest the elections as a gimmick to achieve instant fame. However, they do not realise that they increase the electoral costs. Hence such people should be prevented from contesting the elections," Nayak said.

Whatever it may be, the NOTA votes will certainly lead to creased foreheads of the contesting candidates in the upcoming elections. It remains to be seen, the solutions they have to offer.

# 42 remote Similipal villages get electricity



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, Jan 31:** In a significant development, power supply has been provided to 42 remote villages in Similipal. TP Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL), a joint venture of Tata Power and the government of Odisha, has successfully provided power to over 2,300 families residing in mountainous and inaccessible villages across Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts. This is part of the 'Biju Gram Jyoti Yojana' (BGJY), an initiative aimed at bringing illumination to every home.

Through dedicated efforts and a commitment to leveraging solar energy, both the state government and TPNODL have ensured electricity access to these remote areas. On the occasion of Republic Day, Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik virtually dedicated the service to the public.

The ceremony was graced by Ashok Chandra Panda, Minister of Science and Technology, Vineet Bhargava, Collector and District Magistrate of Mayurbhanj district, Diptiman Bal, advisor, Rural Electrification (ODSSP) and many other dignitaries including Bhaskar Sarkar, CEO of TPNODL.

More than 6,000 residents across 42 villages of Astakuanara, Gudagudia and

Barejpani gram panchayats, are expected to benefit from this electrification drive. "I am extremely pleased to announce the dedication of 18 new power grids to the people of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts under the 'BGJY' scheme, positively impacting over 2,300 households," Pattnaik said in his inaugural address.

Worth mentioning that solar power arrangements have been implemented for the tribal communities residing in Similipal. TPNODL is actively working on the 'Solar Microgrid and Standalone' project with an expenditure of ₹32 crore under the 'Biju Gram Jyoti Yojana' to take the supply of electricity to remote areas in Odisha. Pattnaik also commended TPNODL's efforts in ensuring electricity reaches the most remote areas.

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
Tender Notice No. MSM-ROH-SLRA-1-24  
NAME OF WORK : ROUTINE OVERHAULING (ROH) AND REPAIR OF WAGONS INCLUDING OPERATION & MAINTENANCE OF ROH DEPOT AT SARLA FOR A PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS.  
Approx cost of the Work (₹) : 29,16,40,191.61, EMD (₹) : 16,08,200/-  
Cost of Tender Document (₹) : 11,800/-  
Completion period of the work: 48 Months  
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 19.02.2024.  
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.  
Complete details and Tender documents will be available at website <https://www.ireps.gov.in>  
Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Sambalpur, PR-1042/O/23-24

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to bring the notice of the general public one ID Card of Mr. Tusharkanti Nayak issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. having ID card no. 2341596 has been found missing and/or lost on 10.01.2024. Anyone, who finds that said ID card, is requested to return the said ID card to the Manager Dept Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Limited, Bhubaneswar.  
Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorised person holding the said ID card no. 2341596.  
Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and peril and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.  
Date : 16.01.2024  
Place : Kendrapada  
Sd/-  
For ICICI Bank Limited



**GLITTERING DISPLAY:** Samaleswari temple dazzles Wednesday after being decked up as part of the celebrations to mark the public dedication of SAMALEI project in Sambalpur

# JSP Foundation's park unveiled at Pallahara

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Angul, Jan 31:** JSP Foundation, the social arm of Jindal Steel & Power (JSP), in association with the Angul district administration inaugurated the Biju Patnaik Park at Pallahara in this district. The community park, which has been a long-standing demand by the locals, was inaugurated by Pallahara MLA Mukesh Kumar Pal and former Angul Collector and District Magistrate Siddharth Shankar Swain.

Extending his good wishes to



the people, JSP Foundation's chairperson, Shalju Jindal, said, "JSP Foundation always strives to improve the quality of lives of the community. I am hopeful that the Biju Patnaik Park at Pallahara will contribute to this vision by promoting healthier lifestyles and community engagement."

Swain on the other hand said that people will benefit from JSP Foundation's initiative. "This park exemplifies a sustainable public-private partnership (PPP) to enhance civic amenities for the people. I am sure people of Pallahara will benefit from such initiatives carried out by JSP Foundation." Swain stated.

Pal thanked Jindal Steel & Power and JSP Foundation for taking the initiative and constructing the park, fulfilling a longstanding demand by the community.

# Conclave to popularise Odia starts in FM Varsity

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, Jan 31:** The three-day 'Bishwa Odia Bhasha Sammilani' conclave was inaugurated Tuesday at the Fakir Mohan University here Tuesday. The conclave which has been organised to recognise the tradition and uniqueness of Odia as a language, is sponsored by the state government.

The opening ceremony was conducted under the chairmanship of the Vice-Chancellor of FM University, Professor Santosh Kumar Tripathy. Balasure Sadar MLA Swarup Das was also present as chief guest. Among others attending the function were Registrar Kukumina Das, chairman of Graduate Council, Prof Sabyasachi Pattnaik, programme coordinator Dr Debashis Patra and co-coordinator Dr Asim Amitabh Pradhan.

Speaking on the occasion Das said that the Odia as a language must be protected at all costs because of the sacrifice of many eminent personalities. He asserted that the glory of Odia must be restored to protect the identity of the people of Odisha. Das added that it is the responsibility of the youths of Odisha to protect their mother tongue.

In his address, Tripathy expressed concern about the contemporary use of Odia language. He pointed out that while other states have taken various steps to protect their mother tongues, Odisha is still struggling to do so.

# Sundargarh student makes district proud

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, Jan 31:** The academic achievements of Pratik Nayak, a resident of Balishankara block in Sundargarh district have created a sense of pride among the other residents of his locality. In the Indian Statistical Service examination, the results of which were announced recently, Pratik has secured eighth rank. Locals said, Pratik, a brilliant student from his childhood days, has brought glory to Sundargarh district.

Pratik's parents Pratima Choudhury and Bijaya Bihari Nayak are teachers by profession. Family members said that from his childhood days Pratik was brilliant in academics. He studied at the Saraswati Vidya Mandir be-



fore joining the Giringkela High School. Pratik secured more than 90 per cent marks in his Class X exams.

Later Pratik joined a private institution in Bhubaneswar for Plus II, before shifting to BJB Autonomous College and completed his graduation with

Statistics (Hons) as his main subject. He completed his post-graduation from the Banaras Hindu University.

Pratik has appeared for the Indian Statistical Service examination twice and in his second attempt he achieved the eighth position. "I was sure

that I will qualify this time and I am doubly happy that I have finished among the top 10," Pratik said Wednesday.

Pratik, who prepared for the examination in Lucknow, said that he studied a minimum of seven hours daily. "Sometimes, I used to study even for 14 hours," he added. When asked about his future plans, Pratik said that he wants to concentrate and work with devotion in whichever field he gets a job.

Pratik's parents are very happy. "Words cannot express my feelings. My son has realised his and our dreams," Pratima said. Bijaya on the other hand said that Pratik's hard work has paid off. "He has always been very meticulous. I am sure he will achieve great things in life," Bijaya stated.

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER BHUBANESWAR (R&B) DIVISION NO.III, BHUBANESWAR**  
bbsrrandb03@yahoo.com  
60Estg.No.-502 Date:29.1.2024  
No.B-1705: Government of Odisha  
"e"-Procurement Notice No (76) of 2023-24  
Bid Identification No. C.C (R&B) 03

1 Name of the Work	Road Work
2 Total No. of Works	2 Nos. Work
3 Estimated Cost	i) Rs.37,40,000.00 ii) 48,53,000.00
4 Class of Contractor	i) "C" & "B" Class Contractor ii) "B" Class Contractor
5 Period of Completion	3 (Three) Calendar Months
6 Type of Tender	Single Cover System (Online)
7 Date & Time of availability of Bid document in the Portal	From 31.01.2024 at 1.30 P.M. to 08.02.2024 upto 5.30 P.M.
8 Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids in the Portal	08.02.2024, upto 5.30 P.M.
9 Name & Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Er. Gayatri Patel, Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No.III, Bhubaneswar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>.  
N.B.: Subsequent corrigendum/addendum if required shall be available in the website as indicated above.  
Sd./-Superintending Engineer  
OIPR-34089/11/0040/2324 BBSR (R&B) Division No.III, BBSR





It is not God who made man wicked. It is man who makes himself wicked by separating himself from God.

THE MOTHER



## 2024 & 1933

On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany. To his supporters, it was a day of "national revolution" and rebirth. Germany, they believed, needed the restorative force of an authoritarian strongman after 14 years of the liberal-democratic Weimar "system."

It was also a triumphant moment in the history of popular deception. Since the Weimar Republic's early days, its politics had been defined by disinformation campaigns, including the lie that Weimar democracy was the work of a cabal of Jews and socialists who had "stabbed Germany in the back" to ensure its defeat in World War I.

Today, few people dispute that Hitler's arrival was a turning point in world history, the start of a political process that would lead to World War II and the Holocaust. But Hitler did not "seize power," as the Nazis later claimed. Instead, as his biographer Ian Kershaw has explained, he was "levered into power" by a small group of influential men.

One of those men was Franz von Papen, who served as chancellor in 1932. He (infamously) thought that Hitler and the Nazi Party - by far the largest party after the Reichstag elections of 1932 - could be used to advance a conservative agenda. Similarly, Germany's president, former Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, wanted to use Hitler to restore the monarchy.

But these conservatives' plans were soon swept away by Hitler's ruthless leadership, Nazi violence, and the German public's rush to join the regime and become a part of the promised national reawakening. The liberals and social democrats who opposed Hitler were either subjected to violence or caught up in their own optimistic escapism. As bad as things got, they assured themselves, Hitler's rule would eventually collapse. Nazi infighting would surely bring an end to the new government.

Beyond liberals and socialists, a wider section of German society assumed that Hindenburg, who had promised to be president of all Germans, would keep Hitler on a leash, while others expected the army to do so. All had been fooled by Hitler's ability to look respectable in the final years of the Weimar Republic.

Within 100 days of Hitler becoming chancellor, as historian Peter Fritzsche has shown, the Nazis' ruthless drive for power became all too clear. By the end of the summer of 1933, German society had been brought into line. There were no more independent political parties, trade unions, or cultural organisations. Only Christian churches retained some degree of independence.

A year later, in the summer of 1934, Hitler ordered the murder of his internal party rivals and, following Hindenburg's death on August 2, declared himself German Führer. His dictatorship was complete. By then, the first concentration camps were already up and running, and the economy was being put on the path to war.

This period of history remains all too relevant today. Hundreds of millions of people will vote in pivotal elections this year, and even though the warning signs are there, few commentators are prepared to say it out loud: 2024 might be the new 1933.

Just imagine the world a year from now, with disinformation having taken down democratic majorities around the world. President Donald Trump ends the United States' support for Ukraine. NATO is no longer a restraint on Vladimir Putin's dreams of building a new Russian Empire across Eastern Europe. A critical mass of far-right parties in the European Parliament blocks a unified European response. Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia are on their own. With the war in Gaza having expanded into a regional conflict, Putin seizes the opportunity to launch another blitz, accompanied by long-range missiles. And amid the chaos, China decides to seize Taiwan.

The prospects for 2024 are so bleak that many refuse to contemplate them. Just as liberals in 1933 predicted that Hitler would quickly fail, wishful thinking today is clouding our judgement. We are sleepwalking - to borrow Christopher Clark's apt metaphor for the onset of World War I - into a new international order.

In her masterful two-volume history of the interwar era, Zara Steiner refers to 1929-33 as the "hinge years," when idealism in international relations was replaced by the "Triumph of the Dark." But as late as 1926, liberals had seemed to be winning: French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand and his German counterpart, Gustav Stresemann, shared the Nobel Peace Prize for their work on Franco-German reconciliation, and Germany joined the League of Nations. Extreme nationalism seemed to be isolated in Mussolini's Italy.

Faced with today's global crises, there is no room for optimism. We are potentially in another hinge year. If liberals act now, they can still prevail.

In a promising sign, hundreds of thousands of Germans recently took to the streets to support democracy and diversity, and to denounce the far right. But demonstrations in one country are not enough. German liberals must be joined by others across the continent. A continent-wide demonstration would send a powerful message. The sense of urgency must extend upward, particularly to business leaders like JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon, who, hedging his bets, has already started cozying up to Trump.

Not so long ago, European leaders came together and did whatever it took to save the euro, because they recognised that the single currency's failure would end the European Union itself. Europeans now must demand the same urgency to meet this year's threats. The EU needs a plan for a world without NATO. It needs new tools to deal with member-state leaders like Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico, both of whom would rather kiss Putin's ring than defend democracy. It is simply unacceptable that Orbán still wields a veto over EU decision-making.

In the US, political mobilisation is the big variable. Trump's opponents must set aside their differences and unite behind President Joe Biden. We know all too well where disunity and naive optimism can lead.

The writer is Assistant Professor of History at University College Dublin.

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### WISDOM CORNER

Imagination is not only the uniquely human capacity to envision that which is not, and therefore the fount of all invention and innovation. In its arguably most transformative and revelatory capacity, it is the power to that enables us to empathize with humans whose experiences we have never shared.

JK ROWLING

There are two kinds of teachers: the kind that fill you with so much quail shot that you can't move, and the kind that just gives you a little prod behind and you jump to the skies.

ROBERT FROST

You can become blind by seeing each day as a similar one. Each day is a different one, each day brings a miracle of its own. It's just a matter of paying attention to this miracle.

PAULO COELHO

## FOCUS WORLD ORDER

# BRIC(S) BY BRICK



Avilash Roul

THE BRICS+ IS AN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP OF COUNTRIES THAT HAVE DIFFERING VIEWS BUT HAVE A SHARED VISION FOR A BETTER WORLD



Mark Jones

Just as liberals in 1933 predicted that Hitler would quickly fail, wishful thinking today is clouding our judgement

From BRIC to BRICS and now BRICS+, the emerging economic group of Global South has been gradually expanding with the addition of new member countries. On January 1, out of six countries who had expressed interest in joining the group, five countries except Argentina - Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arab and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have officially joined the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). Dozens of more countries are in waiting to join the group. Can the BRICS+, as termed popularly after the addition of new members, ensure its relevance in a geopolitically and economically complex world? Can it be a counterbalance to the dollar-dominant economic order?

Jim O'Neill, the former chief economist of Goldman Sachs, who coined the acronym BRIC in 2001, suggests that the group must expand and work together to counter the dollar dominance. BRICS gradually shaped during the 2008 global financial crisis as an economic group to reform the West-controlled multilateral financial institutions (such as World Bank and International Monetary Fund). Hence, the New Development Bank (NDB) was established in Shanghai in 2015 by the founding members. Thereafter, an increasing shift has been witnessed in the objectives of the group tilting towards geopolitics as leading founding members have their geopolitical ambitions. After the second expansion, the BRICS+ drew the world's attention for its rationale in what role it would be actively playing in the present fluid and unpredictable world order. In fact, after the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg in August 2023, the absence of Russian President Putin due to his arrest



The US sanctions on Russia have pushed countries including India, the UAE and Saudi Arabia to consider 'de-dollarisation' in trade

warrant and the approval of new countries into the fold, most of the Western countries and their legion think tanks have been pointing towards the constraints and challenges of BRICS+ and its future.

The next round of expansion will happen later this year. Despite not having any specific guidelines for accepting new members as criticised by Western commentators, the founding members and new members would like to continue to practice consensus-based approval of a member into their fold. The Johannesburg Declaration in 2023 itself acknowledges its commitment to inclusive multilateralism and true to the spirit, BRICS countries reached a consensus on the guiding principles, standards, criteria and procedures of its expansion process. Countries who are 'friends of BRICS' and emerging markets and developing countries will be welcomed to attend the dialogues and eventually become members. Russia, the present

presidency of BRICS+, says that 30 new countries have formally submitted their request to join it this October during the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia. It must be reminded that BRICS+ is not a formal international organisation yet like G20 and G7. Therefore, questions of formal institutional policies and the venue of its headquarters can wait.

Similarly, experts have written off BRICS+ role in restructuring the world financial order. Under its presidency in G20, India prioritised, formalised and submitted recommendations for reforming multilateral financial institutions to the G20. In his speech at BRICS Summit, Brazil President Lula da Silva acknowledged that the group's agenda to reform the global economic order will continue to be pushed by BRICS members at the Brazil-led G20 in 2024. South Africa will be hosting G20 in 2025 which is expected to continue the agenda of BRICS+ for world economic restructuring. The establishment

of the NDB, which has been financing in priority climate-smart, disaster-resilient, technology-integrated and socially-inclusive projects amounting to \$34.7 billion as of 2022 through local currencies and US dollar, serves one of the objectives of the group - to reform the Western dominated economic structure. The NDB, besides its five founding members, has added three new members - Bangladesh, UAE and Egypt and will add Uruguay soon.

Replacing dollar dominance by BRICS+ is not completely desirable but is underway. Whereas India, South Africa, Saudi Arab, Egypt and the UAE may not wish for a complete replacement of the US dollar as they have a strong trade relationship with the US, other leading members who are anti-US like Russia, China, and Iran have already started trade in local currencies. However, the US sanctions on Russia have pushed countries including India, UAE and Saudi Arabia to consider 'de-dollarisation' in trade. After signing an agreement with Iran on trade in local currency, Russia has declared that de-dollarisation is irreversible.

The BRICS+ is an equal partnership of countries that have differing views but have a shared vision for a better world. Writing off or questioning the rationale of the BRICS+ due to the estranged relationship between members like India-China, is not logical. Notwithstanding criticism against BRICS and its expansion, the success of BRICS+ presents a unique platform for discussion, debate and dialogue on issues close to three continents - South America, Asia, and Africa - the continents of historical exploitation.

The writer is a scientist at IIT-Madras.

### SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS

## Beijing's poaching in Taiwan



Rupa Narayan Das

WITH NAURU'S SHIFTING OF DIPLOMAT TIES TO BEIJING, TAIWAN IS LEFT WITH ONLY 12 DIPLOMATIC ALLIES

Taiwan, the tiny island nation of 23 million people situated on the backyard communist China, fulfils all the attributes of statehood - a definite geographic territory, population, edifice of governance and sovereignty - but is bereft of international recognition, the icing on the cake. Ever since the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) came to power in 2016 in Taiwan, which is the world leader in semiconductor, the country is losing its diplomatic allies one by one at the behest of China. Beijing does this through allurements, which is euphemistically touted as 'check book' diplomacy or 'dollar diplomacy'. Since 2016, seven countries - the Republic of Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, Republic of El Salvador, Republic of Panama and Republic of Sao Tome and Principe - have shifted diplomatic ties from Taipei to Beijing. One of the effects of the victory of the Presidential candidate of DPP William Lai is the Beijing's attempts to coerce Taiwan's diplomatic allies to switch side to its favour. The latest being Nauru. Now Tuvalu is also toyng with the idea of ditching Taiwan in favour of China.

Taiwan is facing an existential crisis ever since Chiang Kai-shek fled to the island, earlier known as Formosa, after the defeat of the KMT in the civil war in China, and proclaimed the Republic of China in 1949. It continued to be the member of the United Nations with the support of the USA until 1971. With the shift of geopolitics and China's rise, US facilitated China's entry to the world body in place of Taiwan, preparatory to its diplomatic recognition in February 1979. The dwindling of diplomatic allies of Taiwan prompted the US Congress to enact the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative Act during President Trump's tenure in 2020. The legislation envisages US support for Taiwan's diplomatic alliances around the world and Taiwan's participation in international organisations. The Act, however, has failed to deter Honduras to switch sides in favour of China last year even though Vice-President William Lai, who has now been elected as President of Taiwan, attended the swearing in ceremony of President Xiomara Castro of Honduras last year. The latest is Nauru, a micro state which snapped diplomatic

ties with Taiwan and switched over to China on January 15 immediately after the victory of the DPP in the Taiwan polls two days earlier. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan said that Nauru government had asked a large sum of money prior to the switching of ties; Taipei, however, didn't oblige. With Nauru's shifting of diplomatic ties to Beijing, Taiwan is left with only 12 diplomatic allies.

The growing popularity of DPP and its steadfast espousal of Taiwan's independence and democracy have created a hiatus between Beijing and Taipei unlike the rival KMT party which was favourably inclined towards Beijing. During Ma Ying-jeou's tenure, Beijing even allowed Taiwan's participation in World Health Assembly in 2009. President Ma also signed the instruments of ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In fact during the Presidency of Ma, there was a 'diplomatic truce' between Beijing and Taipei which enabled Taiwan to increase the tally of its diplomatic allies to a record number of 23. Beijing's strategy is, "as long as the DPP is in power, sooner or later,

Taiwan will have zero diplomatic allies."

The root of this diplomatic sluffest is what China calls its 'one China principle' meaning there is but one China and Taiwan is a part of China as per the UN resolution 2758 of 1979 which recognises the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the sole legal government representing the whole of China. Meaning if a country recognises PRC, it cannot recognise Republic of China (Taiwan) and vice-versa. The UN Resolution on China is, however, contested by Taiwan. It argues that the UN Resolution does not make a determination on the status of Taiwan and it does not preclude countries from having diplomatic relations with Taiwan and it does not preclude its participation in the UN system. It is atrocious that 23 million people who have zealously guarded, preserved and promoted democracy are deprived of their representation in the UN and participation in UN bodies like WHO, WHA and Interpol.

The writer, a Delhi-based China scholar, was a Taiwan fellow at the National Chung Shing University in Taiwan in 2022. Views are personal.

### Coalition woes

Sir, It is said, running a coalition government is like walking on a taut rope. Therefore, sometimes political parties have to compromise with their declared principles. But the way political upheaval has taken place in Bihar is strange. Nitish Kumar has once again broken ties with RJD and joined hands with BJP with whom he had broken ties seventeen months ago and had said that going with the BJP was the biggest mistake of his life. Differences in political alliance are nothing new, but what were the differences he had with RJD, due to which he decided to part ways with it, remains a mystery to many. In fact, his party's relations with RJD looked absolutely smooth and normal. If anyone has definitely benefited from Nitish Kumar changing sides, it is the BJP. General elections are near and the challenge which was considered to be tough for BJP in Bihar will now become easier. The biggest thing is that BJP was also facing problems due to Nitish Kumar's activism in the Opposition INDIA alliance. Since this alliance was formed on the initiative of Nitish Kumar, it was believed that it could give competition to BJP in the next Lok Sabha elections. After Nitish Kumar joining hands with BJP, that alliance has become somewhat weaker. TMC and AAP have already expressed their objection to seat sharing and have decided to contest the elections independently. **Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR**

### Multidimensional role

Sir, Recently, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) celebrated its 150th year of establishment and service to the nation. Over the years, the IMD has been playing a significant and substantial role in weather forecasting and monsoon predictions. In fact, it plays a multidimensional role in the country's major affairs like conducting general elections, launch of ISRO missions, and growth of infrastructural and agricultural sectors. The IMD faces a lot of challenges posed by changing climates and the ever-increasing demand for accurate and timely weather information. As the country navigates the complexities of its diverse weather patterns, perhaps the fusion of AI and traditional meteorological methods may well be the key to a more adaptive and efficient forecasting system, ultimately safeguarding lives and livelihoods of the people of the country. **Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI**

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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HANUMAN FLAG ROW ESCALATES

Guv sends ordinance back to govt

AS OF NOW, THE LAW REQUIRES THE USE OF KANNADA LANGUAGE IN THE UPPER HALF OF SIGNBOARDS, DISPLAYING THE NAMES OF BUSINESSES

60% USE OF KANNADA IN SIGNBOARDS



Kannada Language Comprehensive Development Act that mandates 60 per cent use of the state's language in signages.

As of now, the law requires the use of Kannada language in the upper half of signboards, displaying the names of businesses.

The government had decided to take the ordinance route in the wake of violent protests by pro-Kannada organisations targeting businesses and establishments in Bangalore for not giving prominence to Kannada.

Speaking to reporters, Siddaramaiah said, "The Governor said place it (a Bill) before the Legislature and get it passed, as by the time the ordinance came to him, the Assembly session was called. Though we (government) had sent the ordinance much earlier, by the time it came before him (Governor) for signing the session was called. So he has sent it back. He has not said anything else. It will be passed in the Legislature."

However, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah Wednesday said the Governor has sent the ordinance back to the government, and wants a Bill to be placed before the Legislature and passed, considering that the Legislature session is round the corner.

The Karnataka Cabinet had January 5 given its approval to an ordinance to amend the

However, speaking to reporters, Shivakumar Wednesday requested the Governor to reconsider the decision and give his assent to the ordinance.

"The Governor should not wait until the Assembly passes it (in the form of a Bill). In the Assembly we will pass it, no one will have any opposition to it. I appeal to the Governor to clear it as it is a sentimental issue. You are the Governor in Karnataka, you should not pick holes in such issues. Has anyone from the public or political parties objected to it? No, no one has objected," he said.

Further noting that the Cabinet had approved the ordinance before the Assembly session scheduled was announced, he further said, "It is a matter of the state's pride and protecting our language and culture is our duty. Also, we did not want any confusion regarding it as there were protests (against Kannada being neglected). So, it was sent to the Governor for assent, and I don't know why he sent it back."

The Budget session of the Karnataka Legislature is scheduled to be held from February 12 to 23.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Jan 31:** Karnataka Governor Thawarchand Gehlot has sent back an ordinance mandating 60 per cent use of Kannada in signboards of businesses and establishments to the state government. This was revealed by Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar Tuesday.

"We (the government) approved an ordinance on signboards. The Governor has sent it back saying it should be passed in the Assembly. He could have given his assent now. Giving protection and respect to Kannada is our government's commitment," Shivakumar said.

New species of burrowing frog found in B'lore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Jan 31:** Researchers from various national and international organisations have discovered a new species of burrowing frog in Bangalore.

Named as 'Sphaerotheca Varshaabhu', this previously unknown species of frog has been thriving amidst the urban landscape of Bangalore.

The discovery marks a significant milestone in biodiversity research and underscores the resilience of wildlife in unexpected urban ecosystems, Chetan Nag KS, Associate Professor, Jain University said in a statement.

The newly unearthed amphibian exhibits distinctive characteristics that set it apart from known frog species, he said.

Sphaerotheca Varshaabhu, meaning a genus of frog which welcomes rain, has been attributed to its behaviour of coming out of burrows during the early showers.

Sphaerotheca Varshaabhu has adapted to its urban surroundings in surprising ways, displaying behaviours and physical attributes that enable it to navigate the challenges posed by urbanisation.

The discovery emphasises the need for continued exploration of urban ecosystems and the preservation of biodiversity in areas heavily impacted by human activities, the statement read.

The lead researcher Deepak P stumbled upon the new frog species during a routine biodiversity survey conducted within Bangalore city's urban environment. The team utilised advanced genetic analysis, morphological studies and bioacoustics to confirm the distinctiveness of this newly discovered amphibian.

After Marathas, Jarange-Patil eyes reservation for Muslims, Dhangars

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Raigad (Maha), Jan 31:** Rattling Maharashtra's political landscape, Shivba Sanghatana leader Manoj Jarange-Patil Tuesday said that he favours reservations for the Muslims and a change of category for Dhangar community.

Fresh from his victory over the Maratha quotas issue January 27, Jarange-Patil visited the historic hilltop Raigad Fort, the capital of the Maratha Empire and paid respects to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Interacting with media persons, he said that presently, the Maratha quota is still a burning issue, and after it is resolved, he would pay attention to Muslim and Dhangars.

"After the Marathas get their due, I will see how Muslims and Dhangars also do not get their reservations," declared



Jarange-Patil, with a steely resolve. The Muslim community has been demanding a revival of the 5 per cent quota given over 10 years ago, but stuck up owing to certain legal-technical issues, and opposition leaders like state Congress working president M Arif Naseem Khan, Samajwadi Party state president Abu Asim Azmi and others Muslim groups raising it

regularly with the government. Interestingly, during his long march from Jaina to Navi Mumbai from January 20-26, en route, the Muslim community had warmly welcomed and hosted Jarange-Patil at various locations, including once in a 'madrassa', and even took good care of the large number of Marathas marching with him.

The nomadic shepherds, Dhangars, who get reservation under Nomadic Tribes (C) category of 3.5 per cent, have been clamouring to be categorised as Scheduled Tribes (STs) which are entitled to 7 per cent, and have organised several agitations in the past.

The Dhangar leaders claim that 'Dhangar' and 'Dhangad' are the same and a typographical error here had deprived them of the benefits to get quotas under ST category as in some other states.



TAKING TO STREET: Activists of Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) and Students Federation of India (SFI) during a protest march over unemployment and other issues, in Mumbai, Wednesday

Objections on green flags in public put K'taka govt in fix



Vikas Vikki, another social media user asked Congress leaders in his post on X to answer which religion the green colour belonged to.

"Don't you have the capacity to remove green coloured flags? Your atrocities are only targeted towards Hindu villagers," he slammed.

BJP MLA Yatnal, addressing the police department, criticised the hoisting of a flag that has the colour of an enemy nation at a public place, stating it is against the rules regarding flag guidelines. He emphasised that Shivajinagar locality is situated in India and not in Pakistan.

Following the backlash, police removed the green flag from Chandini Chowk and hoisted the Tricolour there.

Sources in the Congress party explained that the leaders were in a fix as to what should be done if demands start coming to clear religious flags from public places across the state.

The removal of the Hanuman flag from the 108-foot-tall flag post in Keragodu Village in Mandya district has triggered a huge row in the state, resulting in a major confrontation between the ruling Congress and Opposition BJP and JD-S.

While the BJP launched major protests, the Karnataka Vishva Hindu Parishad unit has declared that it will launch a Hanuman Dhvaj campaign in the state and saffron flags will be hoisted on every road and house of the state.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, Jan 31:** The removal of a Hanuman flag from a public place in Mandya district of Karnataka has taken a turn for the worse, with demands being raised Wednesday for the removal of green flags installed in public places in the state. The Karnataka Government is in a fix over the development.

In one social media post that went viral, one Shashank JS has questioned Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, asking them why there was a green flag opposite the JJ Nagar police station in the Chamrajpet Assembly constituency of Bangalore city.

In the post, he also tagged BJP state president, BY Vijayendra and BJP MLA

The removal of the Hanuman flag from the 108-foot-tall flag post in Keragodu Village in Mandya district has triggered a huge row in the state, resulting in a major confrontation between ruling Cong and Oppn BJP and JD-S

Basanagouda Patil Yatnal. Objections were also raised by BJP state leaders over the hoisting of a green flag at Chandini Chowk in Shivajinagar in Bangalore. A picture of the flag has also gone viral on social media.

Political tongues wag in Maha as Raghuram Rajan meets Uddhav

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Jan 31:** Well-known economist and ex-Governor of the Reserve Bank of India Raghuram Rajan called on former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, at his house late Tuesday night, setting tongues wagging in political circles in the state.

The meeting, described as a "courtesy call", nevertheless fueled intense political speculation, though Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders and other Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) bigwigs remained tight-lipped about it.

Rajan, 60, was welcomed warmly with a bouquet of flowers by Uddhav, wife Rashmi and their children, Yuva Sena chief and Worli MLA Aditya besides environmentalist Tejas, at the family home, 'Matoshri' in Bandra east.



Central Gandhi university bars event on Gandhiji's martyrdom

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Wardha (Maha), Jan 31:** In a strange development, the Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya (MGAHV) here allegedly barred a programme organised by students to pay homage to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, on his 76th death anniversary.

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated January 30, 1948 and the day is observed as 'Martyrs Day' all over India. President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other top leaders across the political spectrum had paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat Tuesday.

Simultaneously, the students of the MGAHV here also planned a small memorial event in front of Babu's statue at the Gandhi Hill on the sprawling campus, but they were reportedly halted midway by the varsity management.

It was a solemn event held at 6pm Tuesday (Jan 30), but the university administration abruptly trooped in there and ordered us to stop the homage ceremony. They had brought the campus security personnel in large numbers and prevented

us from honouring Babu's martyrdom, ironically, at a Central University named in Gandhiji's memory," a senior student pursuing Gandhian studies, told IANS, requesting anonymity.

When the students' gathering sought the reasons for stopping the memorial event, an administrator claimed that they had not taken permission.

"However, we had submitted a letter to the administration a day in advance (January 29) about the Gandhiji tribute event which is also organised all over the world. Besides, we held it in the Student Corner of the campus where such restrictions should not have been placed," said a student activist Akshay Krantiveer.

Another activist Chandan Saroj alleged that the MGAHV reportedly has a long record of an anti-student mindset, which has led to frictions on the serene campus of the 27-year-old Central University, dedicated to the cause of fulfilling Gandhiji's dreams for the Hindi language.

Wishing to avoid another fracas on the Shaheed Divas, the students quietly moved out of the varsity premises and held a small tribute ceremony to Babu outside the campus gate later.

Maha rejoices as Maratha forts nominated for UNESCO tag

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Jan 31:** Maharashtra heritage lovers welcomed the Centre's decision to nominate 12 Maratha forts for the UNESCO World Heritage List 2024-2025, as 'Maratha Military Landscapes of India', announced by the Ministry of Culture.

The list includes forts at Raigad, Salher, Shivneri, Lohagad, Khanderi, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg (Maharashtra) and one Gingee Fort in Tamil Nadu, all representing the extraordinary fortification and military system envisioned by the Maratha rulers.

These forts - included in the UNESCO's tentative list of 2021 - are distributed across diverse geographical and physiographic regions and showcase the strategic military prowess of the Maratha rule, between the 17th-



19th centuries. "This extraordinary network of forts, varying in hierarchies, scales and typological features, is a result of integrating the

landscape, terrain and physiographic characteristics distinctive to the Sahyadri mountain ranges, the Konkan Coast, Deccan Plateau and the Eastern

Ghats in the Indian Peninsula," said the Ministry of Culture. A majority of these are linked with the life and times of the legendary Chhatrapati Shivaji

Maharaj (1630-1680), whose 350th anniversary of Coronation (June 6, 1674) is being celebrated this year.

Experts and fort lovers like Umesh Zirpe, the President of Akhil Maharashtra Giryarohan Mahasanga (AMGM), Ramnath Amberkar, Sunil Deodhar and others warmly welcomed the Centre's decision.

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Ministry of Culture for the UNESCO nomination.

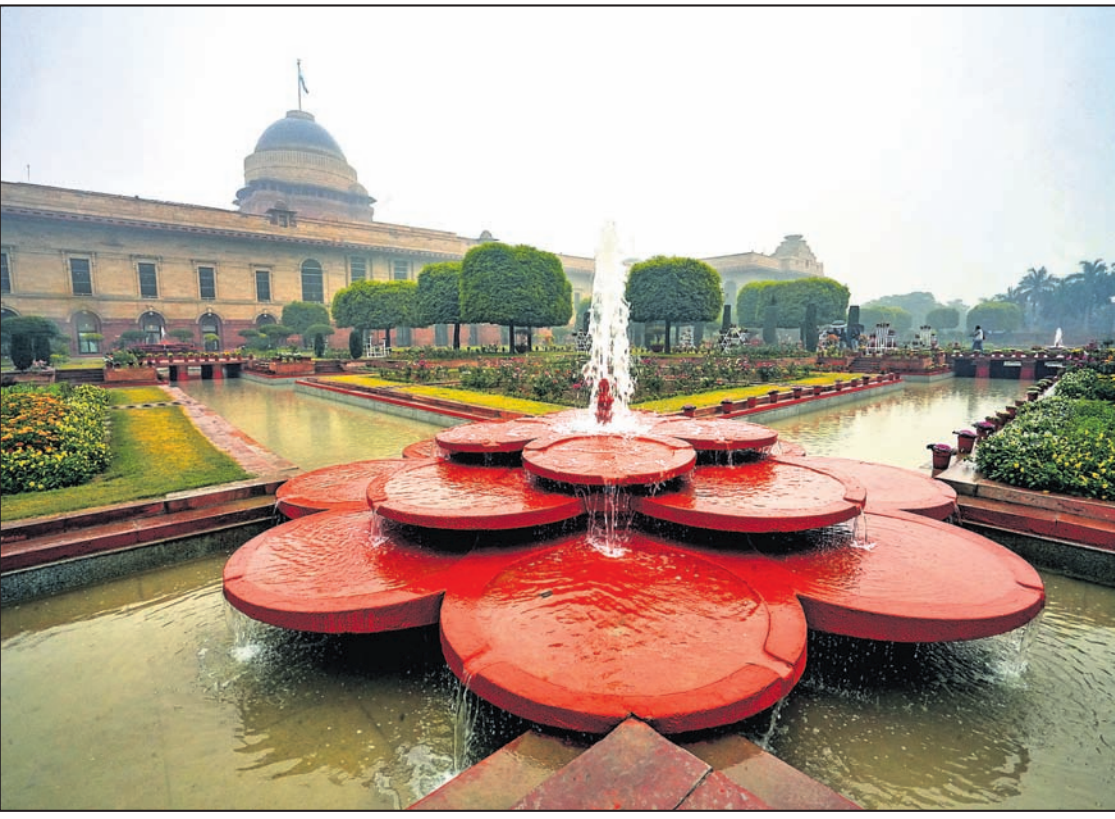
"The Government of India has submitted a proposal to UNESCO to include the area of the Maratha military landscapes, forts during the time of our idol Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in the UNESCO World Heritage List. This proposal has been submitted for the year 2024-25," Fadnis said.

Maharashtra has more than 390 forts, of which only 12 have been selected under the cultural category and of these eight are under the protection of Archaeological Survey of India.

India presently has 42 World Heritage Sites of which 34 are cultural, 7 are natural and one is a mixed location.

From the 42, Maharashtra has six sites - five cultural and one natural - comprising Ajanta Caves (1983), Ellora Caves (1983), both in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, the Elephanta Island Caves (1987), Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) (2004), Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai (2018), all in Mumbai, and the Western Ghats of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, which falls in the natural category (2012).





A fountain at 'Amrit Udyan' on the premises of Rashtrapati Bhawan, during a media preview, in New Delhi. Formerly known as Mughal Gardens, 'Amrit Udyan' will open for public from February 2



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the 'Bharat Jodo Nyaya Yatra' in Katihar of Bihar



Ships of India Coast Guard (ICG) during Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan's 'Day at Sea' event organised as part of the 48th Raising Day celebrations of ICG



Priests perform 'Ganga Aarti' during the annual 'Magh Mela' at Sangam in Prayagraj



Displaced Palestinians fleeing Khan Younis due to the Israeli ground operation, sit on a vehicle as they move towards Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with Ministers of State Pankaj Chaudhary and Bhagwat Karad and her team of officials a day before presentation of the Interim Budget 2024, at her North Block office in New Delhi



Police along with fishermen secure a crocodile to hand it over to Forest department after it was caught by fishermen from the Bhairav Ghat of the Ganga river in Kanpur



Tourists ride horses during snowfall at Kufri in Shimla



# national

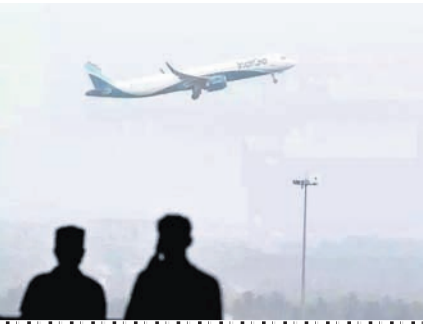


I will never forgive the CPI(M). I will also not forgive those who support the CPI (M). Because by doing so they actually support the BJP. I have seen that in the last panchayat elections

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

## 100 FLIGHTS DELAYED

Flight operations were significantly impacted at the Delhi airport Wednesday as around 100 flights were delayed, at least five were diverted and many were cancelled due to bad weather



## of the day quote

We want social justice. After we come to power at the Centre, we will conduct a countrywide caste census to find out the number of Dalits and people from other backward communities

RAHUL GANDHI | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

It is a matter of happiness. The Varanasi court order in the Gyanvapi case will in a way prove to be a milestone. For the Hindu religion, no place is better than Varanasi. Today is a very important day for the Hindu community

MOHAN YADAV | MADHYA PRADESH CM

The Modi government rebuilt Jammu and Kashmir, ending an era of terrorism and violence

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

## C'GARH MAYORAL ELECTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

# AAP to move top court

Chandigarh, Jan 31: The Aam Aadmi Party Wednesday failed to get any interim relief from the Punjab and Haryana High Court on its plea for setting aside the Chandigarh mayoral election and said it will approach the Supreme Court for an early hearing.

A division bench of justices Sudhir Singh and Harsh Bunger, which was hearing a plea filed by Kumar, issued notices to the Chandigarh administration, the municipal corporation, presiding officer Anil Masih and new mayor Manoj Sonkar, among others, to file their replies within three weeks and adjourned the matter till February 26.

Chandigarh administration senior standing counsel Anil Mehta told reporters that the court refused to give any interim relief to the petitioner. "We have been given a three-week time to file a response and we will do so," said Mehta. He added that the issue regarding the maintainability of the petition was still pending. Kumar in his plea has sought fresh elections under the supervision of a retired high court judge, alleging tampering with ballot papers by the presiding officer. Both the officer and BJP have rubbished the allegations.

The petitioner has also sought an investigation by an independent investigation agency into the "entire fraud" committed during the election process. "We will move Supreme Court. We will seek an early hearing in the matter. There is a video of the whole thing," AAP leader and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant



The Congress, AAP held a protest and a complaint was also filed on behalf of their joint mayoral candidate and AAP councillor Kuldeep Kumar against the presiding officer, accusing him of tampering with ballot papers

Mann told reporters and wondered why the Chandigarh administration required three weeks to prepare a report.

The party announced a protest outside the BJP headquarters in Delhi February 2 in which AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Mann will participate. The petitioner's counsel, Gurinder Singh, said the high court issued notices and gave three weeks to respondents to file their replies. "Our prayer's ambit was that the mayoral poll result be set aside and free and fair elections be held," said Singh who is also the Punjab Advocate General.

According to the plea, the "election was not held in a free and fair manner and there was

a gross violation while counting of votes, with tampering of the ballot papers".

The petitioner sought directions to respondents to seal, preserve and present before the HC the entire process of the election, including the record of ballot papers and proceedings of the election process and videography done on Tuesday.

BJP candidate Manoj Sonkar had defeated AAP's Kuldeep Kumar for the mayor's post, polling 16 votes against 12. Eight votes were declared invalid. The plea sought directions to restrain Sonkar from discharging the functions of mayor of the Chandigarh municipal corporation as the entire process of election was "vitiated by fraud."

## PARLIAMENT BREACH

### Given shocks to confess to Oppn links: Accused

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: Five of the six people arrested in the Parliament security breach case Wednesday told a court that they were allegedly being tortured by Delhi Police to accept their association with Opposition parties.

The submission was made before Additional Sessions Judge Hardeep Kaur, who extended the judicial custody of all the six accused till March 1. Five of the accused -- Manoranjan D, Sagar Sharma, Lalit Jha, Amol Shinde and Mahesh Kumawat -- told the court that they were forced to sign about 70-odd blank papers. "Accused persons were tortured/given electric shocks to sign and confess (to) the commission of crime under the UAPA and their association with national political parties," they told the court.

The court sought a reply from police in the matter and fixed February 17 for hearing the application. The sixth accused in the case is Neelam Azad.

In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack, Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan D jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour December 13 last year, released yellow gas from canisters and shouted slogans before they were overpowered by some MPs.

Around the same time, two other accused -- Amol Shinde and Neelam Azad -- sprayed coloured gas from canisters while shouting "tanashahi nahi chalegi" outside the Parliament premises. These four were taken into custody from the spot, while Lalit Jha and Mahesh Kumawat were arrested later.

# Rahul's car vandalised

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Malda (WB), Jan 31: The Congress Wednesday said that the rear windscreen of Rahul Gandhi's car was shattered when sudden brakes were applied during his ongoing yatra in West Bengal's Malda district, contradicting its state unit president Adhir Chowdhury's allegation that the vehicle was "pelted with stones".

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, however, claimed the incident happened in the Katihar area in adjoining Bihar, not in West Bengal. The Congress, on its official X handle, said the window pane was damaged when sudden brakes had to be applied due to a woman coming in front of the vehicle during 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' in Malda district. However, Gandhi was unharmed in the incident. Television footage showed him inspecting the damaged window pane after arriving at a designated halt.



Earlier in the day, state Congress chief Adhir Chowdhury, who was seen seated in the backseat of Gandhi's car, had alleged that the "stone-pelting" occurred in Malda's Harishchandrapur area as the yatra re-entered West Bengal from Bihar.

"The rear window pane of the vehicle in which Rahul Gandhi was travelling was smashed after being pelted with stones. This is unacceptable," Chowdhury remarked. Speaking at a programme in neighbouring Murshidabad district, Banerjee said the incident took place in "Katihar area in Bihar, bordering West Bengal".

## SHORT TAKES

### ED summons Kejriwal again

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued a fresh and the fifth summons to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for his questioning in the Delhi excise policy linked money laundering case, official sources said Wednesday. Kejriwal, also the national convener of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), had skipped four earlier summonses issued by the federal agency over the last four months. While it is understood that the fresh summons was for February 2, an official confirmation was awaited. The 55-year-old politician, a former IRS officer, was called on earlier dates like January 18 and January 3 and December 21 and November 2 in 2023.

### Kerala's PC George merges party with BJP

New Delhi: Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, Kerala Janapaksham (Secular) chief P C George merged his party with the BJP Wednesday. George along with his son Shaun and other Kerala Janapaksham (Secular) leaders joined the BJP here in the presence of the saffron party's in-charge for political affairs in Kerala Prakash Javadekar and other senior leaders.

### 109 students fall ill at school

Thane: As many as 109 students of a private ashram school, including 63 girls, were rushed to a government hospital in Thane district when they showed symptoms of food poisoning after consuming the mid-day meal Wednesday, an official said. The Sant Gadge Maharaj Primary and Secondary Ashram School (residential schools for tribal children), where the incident took place, is located at Bhatsai in Shahapur taluka on the outskirts of Mumbai. The school houses 200 students from Classes 1 to 10. Shahpur tehsildar Komal Thakur told PTI that barring four students, all were discharged from the Sub-Division Hospital in Shahapur after treatment.

### Bombay HC split on IT rules on fake news

Mumbai: In a split judgement on petitions challenging the amended Information Technology (IT) Rules on fake news, one judge of the Bombay High Court Wednesday held that they amounted to censorship, while the other judge said the Rules do not have any chilling effect on free speech. A division bench of Justices Gautam Patel and Neela Gokhale delivered different judgements, necessitating the placing of the petitions before a third judge.

# Security personnel uncover Naxal tunnel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, Jan 31: Security personnel have discovered a 70-metre-long tunnel dug by Naxalites in a dense forest along the border of Dantewada and Bijapur districts in Bastar division which is prima facie used as a bunker cum dumping place, a police officer said Wednesday.

According to police, they had received information about the existence of such an underground passage in the Bastar division in the past, but they have spotted it for the first time.

The tunnel, around 70 meters long and 6 feet deep, was spotted on Tuesday in the Bijapur district forest when a joint team of security personnel from Dantewada was conducting an anti-Naxal operation. Dantewada Additional Superintendent of Police, RK Barman, told PTI.

Personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard, Bastar Fighters, both units of the state police, and CRPF's 230th battalion were involved in the operation, he said. "During patrolling near Todopat-Uspari village, security personnel spotted the tunnel opening from a roof. Its open-



ings were covered with long woods, bushes, and soil," he said.

According to Barman, this is the first such instance in the Bastar region wherein an underground tunnel has been discovered. "Prima facie, Naxalites have dug this tunnel manually to use it as a bunker to hide from security personnel during operations in the area. They might have also been using it to dump Naxal-related materials," the police officer said. However, details will be known after the investigation, he added.

"Police had received inputs about such a tunnel being dug by Naxals in forests under the Bastar region in the past, but it was spotted for the first time," another police official said. Dantewada and Bijapur are among seven districts under the Bastar division.

## SNIPPETS

### Bill to tackle exam malpractices likely in Parliament on Monday

NEW DELHI: The government is likely to introduce a new Bill in Parliament next week to deal sternly with malpractices and irregularities in competitive examinations, with provisions for a maximum jail term of 10 years and a fine up to ₹1 crore. Sources said the Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024 may be introduced Monday but a final call is yet to be taken. The bill was cleared by the Union cabinet recently. The sources said students will not be a target of the proposed law. It will act against organised gangs, mafia elements and those indulging in malpractices and will not even spare government officials found in collusion with them. The move comes against the backdrop of cancellation of a series of competitive tests such as the teacher recruitment exam in Rajasthan, Common Eligibility Test (CET) for Group-D posts in Haryana, recruitment exam for junior clerks in Gujarat and constable recruitment examination in Bihar following question paper leaks. The bill also proposes a high-level national technical committee on public examinations that will make recommendations to make the computerised examination process more secure.

### Normal to above-normal rainfall likely in north India in Feb: IMD

NEW DELHI: After experiencing a drier-than-usual December and January, north India is expected to see normal to above-normal rainfall in February, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Addressing a press conference Wednesday, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said India may cumulatively experience above-normal rainfall in February. Northwest India recorded just 3.1 mm of rainfall in January, the second lowest since 1901, the IMD reported. North India, consisting of seven meteorological subdivisions, is most likely to receive above-normal rainfall (more than 122 per cent of the long period average) in February. "Monthly rainfall over the country as a whole during February is most likely to be above normal (more than 119 per cent of the long period average)," Mohapatra said. Based on data from 1971-2020, the long period average (LPA) of rainfall over north India and the country as a whole in February is 65 mm and 22.7 mm, respectively. North India receives about 18 per cent of its annual rainfall between January 1 and March 31. Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, in particular, receive 31 per cent of their annual rainfall during this period.

# Prez addresses joint session of Parl

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: President Droupadi Murmu Wednesday said the centuries-old desire to build a Ram temple in Ayodhya has now become reality as she listed the achievements of the Modi government over the past 10 years.

In her 75-minute address to the members of both Houses of Parliament assembled in the Lok Sabha chamber of the new Parliament building, Murmu also hailed the armed forces for giving a befitting reply to terrorism and expansionism, an apparent reference to Pakistan and China.

In her maiden address in the new Parliament building, the President listed out the economic reforms undertaken by the government that has transformed India from the group of "fragile five" to the "top five" economies in the world.

Murmu said the government's successful hosting of the G-20 summit had strengthened India's global standing and noted that Jammu



and Kashmir, and the northeastern states hosted some international meetings of the grouping for the first time.

"This is the time for India to script the future for the coming centuries. Our ancestors have bequeathed us a legacy spanning thousands of years. Even today, we remember with pride the exceptional achievements of our ancestors. Today's generation should also build a lasting legacy that will be remembered for centuries," she said.

The Lok Sabha chamber reverberated with applause and thumping of desks when the President spoke about the building of Ram temple in Ayodhya, which is witnessing pilgrims in large numbers.

"Over the past 10 years, India has witnessed several such tasks being accomplished in the national interest, for which the people of the country were waiting for decades. For centuries, there was an aspiration to construct the Ram Mandir. Today it is a reality," Murmu said.

The President said within five days of the opening of the temple, 13 lakh devotees had visited Ayodhya Dham. She termed the consecration ceremony at the Ram temple January 22 as an "epochal moment". "There were doubts regarding the removal of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir. Those are now history. This Parliament also enacted a strict law against 'Triple Taluq'," the President said.

Murmu touched on issues ranging from insurgency to inflation and said a country can progress at a fast pace only when it defeats the challenges of the past and puts maximum energy into building the future. The President said the tangible results of the government's efforts to strengthen internal security were visible.

**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT PROJECT COORDINATOR SAMAGRA SIKSHA, KANDHAMAL**  
E-mail: dpckandhssa.osepa@nic.in  
At: Main Road, Po. Phulbani, Dist: Kandhamal, 762001  
No.216/Pdgy/24 Date: 29.01.2024

**Corrigendum**

No.n-277: In inviting the tender Notice No.157, dated 19.01.2024 regarding Printing & Supply of Holistic Report Card 2023-24 for Class-I to VIII which was uploaded in the following website www.osepa.odisha.gov.in & www.kandhamal.nic.in the following corrigendum has been made. Please read tender processing fees Rs.1000/- instead of Rs.2000/- at Bid document 2.e page no.3.  
Sd./- DEO-cum-DPC, SS, Kandhamal  
OIPR-27059/11/0008/2324

**DISTRICT PROJECT OFFICE SAMAGRA SIKSHYA, KANDHAMAL**  
No.203/pdgy/2024 Dated: 25.01.2024

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)**

No.n-283: Sealed tenders are invited from the reputed & credible printers/firms/agencies for printing & supply of "Question cum Answer Sheets, Answer Key & Oral questions" for SA-II 2023-24 for Class-I to VIII Students in two bid systems (Technical & Commercial Bid) as detailed below.

Name of the Tender	Bid Processing Fees	Amount of EMD	Last Date & Time of receipt of Bids	Date & Time of opening of Technical Bid
Printing & Supply of Question cum Answer Sheet for SA-II 2023-24 for Class-I to VIII Students	Rs.2000/-	Rs.30000/-	15.02.2024, 5 PM	16.02.2024 at 3 PM

The detailed BID document is available in the website www.kandhamal.nic.in, www.osepa.odisha.gov.in. (website details to be given). Interested and eligible agency/firm may download BID DOCUMENT from the above website and apply accordingly. Corrigendum/ addendum, if required, will be uploaded in the above website. Hence potential bidders are requested to be in continuous touch with the above website. The Tender Inviting Authority (TIA) reserves the right to accept/ reject any full or part/ all BIDI/ cancel the entire selection process at any stage without assigning any reason therefor.  
Sd./- District Project Coordinator  
Samagra Sikshya, Kandhamal  
OIPR-27059/11/0009/2324

**ଓଡିଶା ପଞ୍ଚମ ପରିଷଦ, ପଦ୍ମପୁର** No.C-2958:  
**OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, PADAMPUR**  
DIST: BARGARH (ODISHA), PIN-768036  
Letter No.200 EXPRESSION OF INTEREST Date: 31.01.2024

The Executive Officer, Padampur NAC on behalf of Padampur NAC invites EOI from reputed intending Agencies or Firms for procurement of Battery Operated Vehicles of reputed brands like Mahindra, Piaggio, Tata, Honda, Atul etc. to be used for door-to-door segregated waste collection purpose to ply within the area of Padampur NAC.

Sl. No.	Description of Work	EMD	Paper Cost	Rate in Rs. per unit (including all tax) (In Figure)
01	Battery Operated Vehicles to be used for door-to-door segregated waste collection	Rs. 1,00,000/-	Rs. 10,000/-	

The rate should be including of all taxes. The sealed quotations addressed to the Executive Officer, Padampur NAC, Odisha-768036 by enclosing self-attested copy of PAN Card, Valid GST Number alongwith other relevant documents. The quotation will be received by 01.00 PM on dt.09.02.2024 through RP/Courier or Speedy Post in the Office of the Executive Officer, NAC Padampur, which will be opened at 4.00 PM on 09.02.2024 in the office chamber of the undersigned in presence of the Quotationers or their authorized representatives/agents. All the details will be available on http://bargarh.nic.in website from 01.02.2024 to 09.02.2024. The name of work shall be mentioned on sealed quotations which shall be same as in the description of work mentioned above. The details can be had from the office of the undersigned. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all the quotations without assigning any reason therefor.  
Sd./- Executive Officer, N.A.C., Padampur  
OIPR-13118/11/0036/2324

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, SUNDARGARH**  
Email:rv\_sundargarh@yahoo.co.in

**E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
**BID IDENTIFICATION NO.ONLINE-SESGN-27 OF 2023-24**

No.O-2339: 1. Name of the Work: Road Works, 2. Total No. of Works: 07 nos. 3. Estimated Cost: Rs.5.04 Lakhs to Rs.22.32 Lakhs. 4. Class of Contractor: 'D', 'C' & 'B', 5. Period of Completion: 01 Calendar Month, 6. Type of Tender: Single Cover, 7. Other details:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding	From	To
1	2	3	4	5
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Sundargarh	Online-SESGN-27 of 2023-24	01.02.2024 10.00 A.M.	09.02.2024 05.30 P.M.	

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.  
Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Sundargarh  
OIPR-25046/11/0038/2324

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** E-mail ID: eerwrairangpur@yahoo.com  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, RAIRANGPUR (MAYURBHANJ)**

Letter No.847// Date: 30.01.2024  
"e" Procurement Notice for Road Works  
Bid Identification No.-RWDRRP-26/2023-24

No.O-2343: Name of the Work: Special repair to roads for the year 2023-24. 2. Estimated Cost: From Rs.5.03 to 31.97 lakhs (approximately). 3. Class of Contractor: 'D', 'C' & 'B' Class or relevant Class of works license. 4. Period of Completion: 02 (Two) Calendar Months. 5. Tender Paper Cost: as per annexure /-.

The details are as follows.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender Online for bidding	Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of opening of Tender in R.O.S.E.R.W. Division, Rairangpur, Technical Bid & Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5
S.E.R.W. Division, Rairangpur	RWDRRP-26/2023-24	02.02.2024 at 11.00 A.M.	08.02.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.	07.02.2024 upto 5.00 P.M. at 11.30 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersodisha.gov.in.  
Sd./- Er. D. Behera  
Superintending Engineer, R.W. Division, Rairangpur  
OIPR-25107/11/0029/2324



# international



Securing agreement is vital for our credibility, and not least for our commitment to provide steadfast support to Ukraine  
CHARLES MICHEL | EU COUNCIL PRESIDENT

## BIG CONSPIRACY

Hackers linked to the Chinese government are targeting critical infrastructure in the United States, preparing to cause "real-world harm" to Americans, FBI Director Christopher Wray plans to tell a House of Representatives panel Wednesday



## of the day quote

Democrats do not vote in Republican primaries here, just like Republicans won't vote in Democratic primaries  
CHAIRMAN KATON DAWSON | FORMER SOUTH CAROLINA REPUBLICAN PARTY

Any unilateral irrational action could very easily escalate tensions and sabotage stability in the Taiwan Strait region  
MAJ. GEN. SUN LI-FANG | TAIWAN DEFENCE MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON

The fact is that Haley knows she doesn't have a cogent argument or even a coherent reason for why she should be President. But what voters do know is that she's a warmonger who would rather throw America into endless wars  
STEVEN CHEUNG | TRUMP SPOKESPERSON

## SHORT TAKES

### Norway prepares for biggest storm

**Copenhagen:** Norway's central Atlantic coast battered down Wednesday as authorities warned that the country could see its most powerful storm in three decades and urged people to stay indoors. Hurricane-force winds were expected to hit the region, as air traffic companies and ferry lines predicted disruptions. Police warned that gusts of 126 to 180 kilometers per hour (78 to 112 miles per hour) were expected. By midday Wednesday, there were scattered reports of ferry lines linking Norwegian islands suspending their services, and the closing of schools, roads, tunnels and bridges across the mountainous country.

### Finland hits by massive strikes

**Helsinki:** Labour unions in Finland went on strike Wednesday, starting a three-day labour action that will affect up to 300,000 workers and severely disrupt the daily life. Trade unions are protesting revisions to labour market legislation and social security cuts proposed by the centre-right government of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo. The strikes will shut down kindergartens and pre-schools, disrupt air traffic and postal services, close public transport and shut down factories across the nation. Grocery stores, hotels and restaurants will be also hit by strikes across the Nordic country of 5.6 million from Wednesday to Friday.

## ATTACK ON PROSECUTOR GENERAL

# Blame game in Maldives

Prosecutor General Hussain Shameem was appointed by the previous Ibrahim Mohamed Solih-led Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) government. Incidentally, MDP recently initiated impeachment proceedings against the current President Mohamed Muizzu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Male, Jan 31:** Hours after the Prosecutor General of Maldives was attacked by unidentified persons Monday, a blame game has erupted between the ruling and the Opposition parties that called the attack "politically motivated," according to local media and social media reports.

"Prosecutor General Hussain Shameem was attacked on a street in Male City. He is receiving treatment for his injuries at the ADK Hospital," Sun.Mv, a news portal, said.

Former Maldivian president Ibrahim Mohamed Solih described the attack as "politically motivated," prompting the Home Minister Ali Ithusan to ask him to share information to back his claim.

In a post on X, Solih, also the interim leader of the largest opposition outfit, the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), said: "Politically motivated acts of violence have no place in a democratic society and I call on the government to be swift in bringing the perpetrators to justice."

Home Minister Ali Ithusan asked Solih to share information to back his claim that the violent attack on Prosecutor General Shameem was politically motivated.



Former Maldivian president Ibrahim Mohamed Solih described the attack as "politically motivated," prompting the Home Minister Ali Ithusan to ask him to share information to back his claim

Responding to Solih's post on X from his official designation's handle of Minister of Homeland Security and Technology, Ithusan said, "Maldives police (@PoliceMv) is currently investigating this case. Former President declaring that the attack was 'politically motivated' suggests that former President has credible information about motive and people behind this attack."

"I would like to request former President to please share the credible information referred here with the Police immediately. I have asked investigators to coordinate with former Presidents office in this regard. Police is treating this case as top priority and will bring perpetrators to justice," he said.

Meanwhile, condemning the attack on Shameem, the MDP said in a statement: "The alleged close ties between top government officials and criminal gangs were resulting in open violent assaults on top state officials."

The MDP accused President Muizzu's administration of failing to provide proper protection to officials charged with fulfilling constitutional duties and responsibilities.

"This party also notes that after having successfully driven down violent assaults in the Maldives during the former administration, such crimes have increased after President Muizzu took office," the portal reported, quoting the MDP statement.

## DRUG SMUGGLING PIO couple jailed for 33 years in UK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Jan 31:** An Indian-origin couple in the UK, whose extradition was sought by India charges of the murder of their adopted son in Gujarat, has been sentenced to 33 years in prison each after being convicted of exporting more than half a tonne of cocaine to Australia using commercial planes.

Arti Dhir, 59, and Kavaljitsinh Rajjada, 35, from Hanwell in Ealing were identified by the National Crime Agency (NCA) investigators after Australian Border Force intercepted the cocaine worth 57 million pounds upon its arrival in Sydney in May 2021, the agency said in a statement Monday.

The couple was behind a front company that had sent the drugs by plane under a cover load of metal toolboxes, according to the investigation.

Dhir and Rajjada denied exporting cocaine to Australia and money laundering. They were convicted of 12 counts of exportation and 18 counts of money laundering by a jury following a trial at Southwark Crown Court Monday. They were sentenced at the same court Tuesday.

The drugs would have been worth up to 57 million pounds when sold in Australia.

## EU aims to launch a Red Sea naval mission within 3 weeks

**Brussels:** The European Union plans to launch a naval mission in the Red Sea within three weeks to help defend cargo ships against attacks by Houthi rebels in Yemen that are hampering trade and driving up prices, the bloc's top diplomat said Wednesday. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said he wants the mission to be up and running by February 17. Officials say that seven EU countries are ready to provide ships or planes. Belgium has already committed to send a frigate. Germany is expected to do the same. Last week, US and British forces bombed multiple targets in eight locations used by the Iranian-backed Houthis.

## SNIPPETS

## Russia and Ukraine swap scores of POWs

**Kyiv:** Russia and Ukraine have exchanged about 200 prisoners of war each, the countries said Wednesday, despite tensions stemming from last week's crash of a military transport plane that Moscow claimed was carrying Ukrainian POWs and was shot down by Kyiv's forces. After the Jan 24 crash of the Il-76 plane in Russia's Belgorod region near the border with Ukraine, some Russian officials had publicly questioned the possibility of future POW swaps. Russia's Defence Ministry said the countries exchanged 195 POWs each. After the statement was released, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said 207 Ukrainians were freed. There was no immediate explanation for the different figures.

# Social media CEOs face Senate grilling

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Washington, Jan 31:** Sexual predators, addictive features, self-harm and eating disorders, unrealistic beauty standards and bullying. These are just some of the issues young people are dealing with on social media — and children's advocates and lawmakers say companies are not doing enough to protect them.

The CEOs of Meta, TikTok, X and other social media companies Wednesday, are testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee about child exploitation on their platforms, as lawmakers, families and advocates are growing increasingly concerned about the effects of social media on young people's lives.

While Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg is a veteran of congressional hearings since his first one over the Cambridge Analytica privacy debacle in 2018, it will only be the second time for TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew and the first for Linda Yaccarino, the CEO of X. Snap CEO Evan Spiegel and Discord CEO Jason Citron are also scheduled to testify.

Meta will likely be a central focus of the hearing, as the Menlo Park, California-based tech giant has been sued by dozens of states that say it knowingly and deliberately designing features on Instagram and Facebook that addict children to its platforms and failed to protect them from online

predators. New internal emails between Meta executives released by Sen. Richard Blumenthal's office show Nick Clegg, president of global affairs and others asking CEO Mark Zuckerberg to invest in hiring additional people to "strengthen our position on wellbeing across the company" as concerns grew around social media's effects on youth mental health.

In September 2021, The Wall Street Journal released the Facebook Files, its report based on internal documents from whistleblower Frances Haugen, who later testified before the Senate. Clegg circled back on the August email in late last year, proposing a scaled-down invest-

ment and telling Zuckerberg that the funding is important to ensure the company can back up its "external narrative of well-being on our apps."

The nudges encourage kids to close the app, though it does not force them to do so. But critics and child safety advocates say its actions fall short of meaningful changes that would address kids' safety.

X, formerly Twitter, said its CEO Linda Yaccarino was in Washington last week to meet with senators to talk about how the company is addressing child sexual exploitation, along with a broad range of other topics that included privacy, artificial intelligence, content moderation and misinformation.

## CHILD EXPLOITATION

# How US is preparing for a Chinese invasion of Taiwan

REUTERS

**Washington, Jan 31:** When US and Australian troops practiced amphibious landings, ground combat and air operations last Summer, they drew headlines about the allies deepening defense cooperation to counter China's growing military ambitions.

The amount of equipment, which has not been previously reported, is enough to supply about three logistics companies, with as many as 500 or more soldiers, focused on ensuring supplies reach warfighters.

US war games have concluded that China would likely try to bomb jet fuel supplies or refueling ships, crippling US air and sea power without having to battle heavily armed fighter jets or sink America's fleet of surface warships, according to current and former officials and experts.

In response, the United States is trying to spread its military logistics hubs across the region — including warehouses in Australia, as per official statement.

The United States and its allies are increasingly worried that in the coming years Chinese President Xi Jinping could order his military to seize Taiwan, the democratically-governed island China considers its own territory



## RISKS FOR THE US

The US military's logistics arm, US Transportation Command (TransCom),

So, the US military is taking a hard look at its own military readiness and trying to play catch-up in a critical area: its logistics network

has had a major success: funneling more than 660 million pounds of equipment and over 2 million rounds of ar-

tillery to the Ukrainian military in its war with Russia.

Supporting Taiwan, roughly 100 miles from the coast of China, would be orders of magnitude harder, US officials and experts acknowledge.

The US has not formally said it would intervene if China were to attack Taiwan but President Joe Biden has repeatedly suggested he would deploy US troops to defend the island.

Xi has ordered his military to be ready to take Taiwan by 2027. But many analysts see that as an attempt to galvanize his military rather than a timeline for invasion.

A senior US military official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said supplies of ammunition are at the top of the list of priorities in the Indo-Pacific, followed by fuel, food and spare parts for equipment.

US officials warn that in a major conflict Navy ships could quickly run out of missile defenses.

In a war game run for Congress in April, China prepared for an amphibious assault on Taiwan with mas-

sive air and missile strikes against US bases in the region. That included the US naval base on the Japanese island of Okinawa and the Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo.

## FROM "JUST IN TIME" TO "JUST IN CASE"

There has been a shift in the United States military's thinking. For decades, the United States has not had to worry about a foreign power targeting its logistics bases. That allowed planners to focus on efficiency, adopting the "just-in-time" logistics model common among private-sector manufacturers.

That approach led to the cost-saving decision to create mega-bases, like Ramstein Air Base in Germany. Ramstein was safe from Taliban and Islamic State attacks. But a conflict with China could make mega bases, which include Camp Humphreys near Seoul, prime targets. This risk is prompting the switch to a more costly approach to logistics that includes dispersing US stockpiles and pre-positioning supplies around the region.

# Imran, wife jailed for 14 years in graft case



AGENCIES

**Islamabad, Jan 31:** Former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi were sentenced Wednesday to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment in a corruption case, dealing another blow to the jailed leader; a day after he was handed a 10-year jail term for leaking sensitive state secrets.

The verdict by an accountability court, which comes eight days before the February 8 general elections, has added to the legal woes of the 71-year-old cricketer-turned-politician who is already serving a three-year jail term after being convicted of corruption in another case.

Khan's party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) faced numerous troubles before the election starting with the denial of its election symbol, the cricket bat, to the rejection of nomination papers of Khan, former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and several other party leaders.

Accountability Court Judge Mohammad Bashir conducted the hearing at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, where the former premier is incarcerated.

In the Toshakhana corruption case, he was accused of retaining expensive state gifts they received during his tenure as Pakistan's premier.

Khan and his wife were also barred from holding any public office for 10 years and slapped with a fine of Rs 787 million each. Bushra Bibi, 49, did not appear before the court Wednesday.

At the outset of the hearing, Judge Bashir asked Khan if he

**PTI leader shot dead Peshawar:** A leader of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party contesting the February 8 elections was shot dead while three of his supporters were injured after unknown gunmen indiscriminately fired at his poll campaign rally Wednesday in the country's restive northwestern region, officials said. Rehan Zaib Khan, who was contesting from the Bajaur constituency for a seat in the National Assembly as an independent candidate following a recent court order that banned the PTI from contesting election, was shot dead while three of his supporters were injured when they were holding their poll campaign rally in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Sidiq Abad Phatak Bazar Main Chowk area.

recorded his statement. To this, the former premier said that he would submit his statement once his lawyers came. "I have been deceived as I was only called to mark my attendance for the hearing," Khan said. Following the verdict, Bushra Bibi arrived at the Adiala jail and surrendered before the authorities. "Why are you in a hurry? Even yesterday, the conviction was announced in haste," the ex-prime minister said, referring to the verdict in the cipher case a day earlier.

"My lawyers are not here yet. I will submit the statement after showing it to them when they come," Imran said, adding that he had appeared before the court only to mark his attendance. He then exited the courtroom, after which the court sentenced the ex-premier and his wife in absentia.

The judge in the case had also convicted another former premier Nawaz Sharif in July 2018 ahead of elections. Reacting to the verdict, PTI's current chief Gohar Khan said the judgment only served to lower the respect of the judiciary.

Separately, the PTI in a statement said that these decisions, reached in haste, cannot impact the fervour, any PTI supporter talks of, around election time.

# US overhauls its annual lottery for H-1B visas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, Jan 31:** The US has announced a major overhaul of its annual lottery for the H-1B speciality occupation visas, popular among Indian IT professionals, to curtail the potential for fraud and improve and streamline the registration system.

Separately, the US on January 29 has formally launched a pilot programme to renew the much sought-after H-1B visas domestically, a move that is likely to benefit thousands of Indian tech professionals.

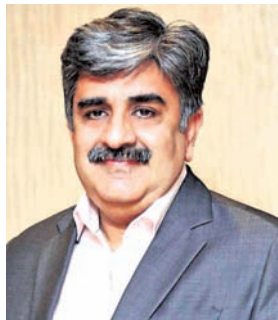
The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.



The new overhauled system, among other things, includes the provision of a beneficiary-centric selection process for registrations by employers.

As a result, unlike in the past when multiple applications by an individual often resulted in abuse in fraud of the system, the H-1B visa applications would now be counted and accepted based on individual applicants. Even if one individual files multiple applications for various companies, they would be counted as one application based on their personal credentials like passport numbers.





**Building scale, riding on low input tariffs is key to transforming India into a global hub for electronics manufacturing and exports**  
**PANKAJ MOHINDROO** | CHAIRMAN, ICEA

## META'S THREADS REACHES TOP 10

Meta's X rival Threads has witnessed growth in December last year, with downloads tripling, placing it in the top 10 most downloaded apps for the month on both the App Store and Google Play



## of the day quote

The capex thrust will continue because the private investment still remains a bit weak. And also, we need to overcome the infrastructure deficit that has plagued our economy and also the logistics cost, which are very high and can only be covered by rising public capital expenditure

**RAJIV KUMAR** | FORMER NITI AAYOG VICE CHAIRMAN

The proposed international film city near Noida airport will be the best in the world with several global-first features

**ASHISH BHUTANI** | REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER, BHUTANI GROUP CEO

Microsoft is integrating the power of AI across the entire data and tech stack, seeing increased usage from AI-first start-ups and some of the world's largest companies

**SATYA NADELLA** | CEO OF MICROSOFT

## SHORT TAKES

### Rupee rises 6 paise against \$

**Mumbai:** The rupee appreciated 6 paise to 83.04 against the US dollar on Wednesday, supported by a firm trend in domestic equities. Market participants remained cautious ahead of the interim Budget, scheduled to be presented February 1, traders said, adding that a strengthening American currency in the overseas market also capped the sharp gain in the local unit. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.11 against the greenback. The unit hit an intraday low of 83.12 and a high of 83.01.

### Gold demand dips

**Mumbai:** India's gold demand witnessed on-year decline of 3 per cent at 747.5 tonnes in 2023, and going ahead the spurt in demand could be anywhere between 800-900 tonnes, if prices hold out and are not significantly volatile, the World Gold Council said in a report. The country's total gold demand stood at 774.1 tonnes in 2022, according to the World Gold Council (WGC) Gold Demand Trends report 2023. "India's gold demand in 2023 declined by 3 per cent to 747.5 tonnes, strongly influenced by rising gold prices. Although consumer interest remained high, it lagged trade sentiment. October's price correction during Navratri stimulated a robust consumer response, boosting Diwali sales in November."

# Apr-Dec fiscal deficit at 55 pc of full-year target

**FOR 2023-24, THE GOVERNMENT'S FISCAL DEFICIT IS ESTIMATED TO BE AT ₹17.86L-CR OR 5.9% OF THE GDP**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 31:** The Union government's fiscal deficit touched ₹9.82 lakh crore or 55 per cent of the annual Budget target at December-end 2023, according to data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) Wednesday.

In the corresponding period last year, the deficit was 59.8 per cent of the Budget estimate of 2022-23.

For 2023-24, the government's fiscal deficit is estimated to be at ₹17.86 lakh crore or 5.9 per cent of the GDP.

The government's total revenue stood at ₹20.71 lakh crore (76.3 per cent of corresponding BE 2023-24 of total receipts) as of December 2023.

This comprised ₹17.29 lakh crore tax revenue (net), ₹3.12 lakh crore of non-tax revenue and ₹29,650 crore of non-debt capital receipts.

Non-debt capital receipts consist of the recovery of loans and miscellaneous capital receipts.

The CAG's monthly account data further said ₹7.47 lakh crore has been transferred to state governments as devolution of share of taxes by the Central government up to December 2023, which is ₹1,37,851 crore higher than the previous year.

The total expenditure in-



curring by the Centre was ₹30.54 lakh crore (67.8 per cent of corresponding BE 2023-24), out of which ₹23.80 lakh crore is on revenue account and ₹6.73 lakh crore on capital account.

Out of the total revenue expenditure, ₹7,48,207 crore was on account of interest payments and ₹2,76,804 crore towards major subsidies.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, Icr, said the government's fiscal deficit was marginally lower than the ₹9.9 lakh crore recorded in April-December FY2023.

While net tax revenues rose by 11 per cent, non-tax revenues expanded by 46 per cent on the back of the RBI dividend, amid a marginal 2 per cent growth in revenue ex-

penditure and a robust 38 per cent year-on-year expansion in capex.

Icr, does not expect the fiscal deficit target of ₹17.9 lakh crore for FY2024 to be breached. However, a lower nominal GDP than what the Union Budget had pencilled in could result in the fiscal deficit printing at 6 per cent of GDP, Nayar said.

Continuing the path of fiscal consolidation, the government intends to bring the fiscal deficit below 4.5 per cent of GDP by 2025-26.

Finance Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to outline the details of the fiscal deficit for the current fiscal and 2024-25, along with the Centre's market borrowing programme, in her interim Budget Thursday.

## BOB MD's maiden visit to Odisha



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 31:** Rajneesh Karnatak, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Bank of India made his maiden visit to Odisha. During his visit to Bhubaneswar, as a part of Corporate Social Responsibility, the MD & CEO in the presence of Achyuta Samanta, MP, Lok Sabha and founder of KIIT Group of Institutions, handed over an ambulance to Kalinga Institute of Social Science, Bhubaneswar which adds huge support for providing emergency medical services to the needy ones.

This initiative is yet another testimony to the bank's commitment to the welfare of the society. There he made a visit to Star House Bank of India at Jaydev Vihar where he addressed the staffs of NBG (National Banking Group), Odisha and Zonal Office, Bhubaneswar and discussed in brief about the business development in Odisha and bank as a whole. Top executives of the bank from Odisha GM

NBG Odisha Vikash Krishna, DGM NBG Odisha Rabindranath Sarkar, ZM Bhubaneswar Zone S Malay Das, ZM Baripada Zone Ramesh Chandra Das, ZM Keonjhar Zone Himandri Sekhara Das, ZM Sambalpur Zone Srijit Sankar Behera and DZMs of all four zones of the state were present in this meeting. There was a corporate customer meet at NBG Odisha Board Room where he greeted and interacted with the top customers of the bank from Odisha. A Town Hall meeting was organised at Swosti Premium, Bhubaneswar where he addressed nearly 500 staffs of the Bank of India from different branches of Odisha. During his address he enlightened the staffs with his vision of development of the bank. Top performing branches and departments from the state were also felicitated by Karnatak in the meeting. There was also an interactive session with all the staffs where various staffs shared their valuable suggestions directly to the MD and CEO.

# IMPORT DUTY ON MOBILE SPARE PARTS CUT TO 10 PC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 31:** A day ahead of the interim Budget, India has slashed the import duty on spare parts, like battery cover, lens and SIM socket, used in mobile phone manufacturing to 10 per cent, from 15 per cent.

The duty cut is aimed at boosting local production and exports, as well as reducing prices in local markets.

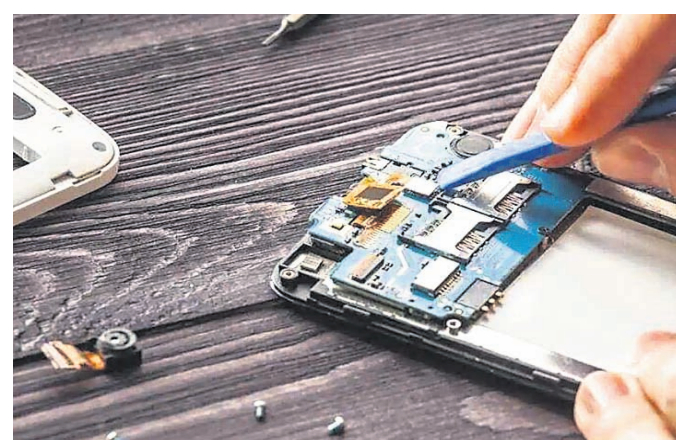
The Finance Ministry January 30 notified the cut in duty on all goods for use in manufacture of cellular mobile phones to 10 per cent.

The other components include battery cover, front, middle and back cover of phone, main lens, screw, SIM socket, or other mechanical items.

Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnav in a post on X said the duty rationalisation would strengthen the mobile phone manufacturing ecosystem through this measure.

Rationalisation of customs duties brings much-needed certainty and clarity for the industry, Vaishnav said.

GTRI Co Founder Ajay Srivastava said the duty cut



will have no impact on improving export competitiveness of mobile phones made in India as all inputs, parts, and components used in the making of mobile phones for exports can already be imported at zero duty under various government schemes like SEZ, Advance authorisation. Firms like Apple use these schemes. The government should watch out if the benefits of duty cuts are passed to domestic mobile phone buyers through price cuts, Srivastava said.

The Indian Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) Chairman Pankaj Mohindroo said this is a critical policy intervention by the government towards making mobile manufacturing competitive in India. Electronics have improved from the 9th position a few years ago to India's 5th largest export in 2024. Mobiles constitute over 52 per cent of electronics exports thanks to the Production-Linked Incentive Scheme. This is the first industry to leapfrog out of import substitution to export-led growth within the last 8 years, Mohindroo said.

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## GST collections rise to 2nd highest-ever at ₹1.72 L-cr in Jan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 31:** Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections jumped 10.4 per cent to over ₹1.72 lakh crore in January, the Finance Ministry said Wednesday.

This is the second-highest monthly collection ever and marks the third month in this financial year with a collection of ₹1.70 lakh crore or more.

The gross GST revenue collected in the month of January 2024 (till 0500 PM of 31.01.2024) is ₹1,72,129 crore, which shows a 10.4 per cent y-o-y growth over the revenue of ₹1,55,922 crore collected in January 2023 (till 0500 PM of 31.01.2023), the ministry said.

During the April 2023-January 2024 period, cumulative gross GST collection witnessed 11.6 per cent year-on-year growth (till 0500 PM of 31.01.2024), reaching ₹16.69 lakh crore against ₹14.96 lakh crore collected in the same period of the previous year (April 2022-January 2023).

The highest-ever monthly GST collection was recorded in April 2023 at ₹1.87 lakh crore.



# India's appetite for pizzas, burgers shrinks

REUTERS

**Bangalore, Jan 31:** Indians are going out less often for pizzas and burgers, third-quarter results at Domino's and McDonald's local franchisees showed Wednesday, with analysts noting that tough competition and demand-dampening inflation would strain their earnings in the near term.

Domino's restaurants operator Jubilant Foodworks, opens new tab reported a surprise profit fall, while Westlife Foodworld, opens new tab, which operates McDonald's restaurants in south and west India, posted a bigger-than-expected profit drop.

Quick-service restaurant (QSR) operators in the country have done everything from rolling out cheaper offerings and increasing discounts to cutting packaging costs in a



bid to prop up demand but have failed to get Indians to eat out more often amid high inflation.

The same companies were among the biggest beneficiaries during last year's festive session as Indians began dining out more often after several

pandemic-ridden years.

The demand slowdown after 2023's high base has not only dragged their earnings, but has also resulted in negative same-store-sales growth (SSSG) compared to the usual 5%.

While demand weakness "might be near the bottom,"

the industry is unlikely to reach earlier SSSG growth, said Karan Taurani, an analyst with Elara Capital.

The margins of the two companies are also unlikely to see a "significant recovery," according to Amnisha Agarwal, analyst at Prabhudas Lilladher, with Taurani also adding that intensifying competition from smaller players would keep margins "strained."

Jubilant's profit of 657.1 million rupees was down for a fifth straight quarter, much lower than analyst estimates of 902.6 million rupees, while its revenue growth slowed for the seventh quarter in a row.

Westlife, meanwhile, reported its first revenue fall in three years and its profit of 172.4 million rupees came in far below analyst estimates of 331.1 million rupees, as per LSEG data.

# Mkts settle nearly 1 pc higher ahead of Budget

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 31:** Benchmark equity indices recovered their previous day's losses and closed nearly 1 per cent higher Wednesday amid robust buying in HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries.

Investors are eyeing the two important events lined up ahead - the interim budget and the US Fed interest rate decision - to derive further cues from.

Reclaiming all the early lost ground, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 612.21 points or 0.86 per cent to settle at 71,752.11. During the day, it zoomed 711.49 points or 1 per cent to 71,851.39.

The Nifty climbed 203.60 points or 0.95 per cent to 21,725.70. Nifty bounced back from a



weak start and closed with gains of 204 points at 21,726 levels. Global markets will keenly await the US Fed's commentary on the rate cut timeline. On the domestic front, investor's focus will be on the Budget, said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.

Among the Sensex firms, Sun Pharma, Tata Motors, State Bank of India, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti, Bajaj

Finserv, Power Grid and UltraTech Cement were the major gainers.

Larsen & Toubro declined over 4 per cent after its December quarter earnings. Titan also ended lower from the 30-share pack. A positive build-up was reflected in Indian markets prior to the interim budget, although expectations are low, the market anticipates a lower fiscal deficit supported by buoyant tax revenues. The overall trend in the market is akin to a see-saw, and the buy-on-dips strategy is effective as of now. Global market cues are mixed ahead of the FOMC meeting, and US 10-year yields were marginally down, said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.



# Gill, Iyer 'deserve' patience

# Bumrah in 'better shape' despite Shami's absence



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

told PTI TV.

**New Delhi, Jan 31:** Jasprit Bumrah's workload might have increased in Mohammed Shami's absence but India's pace spearhead is in a much better shape right now in terms of fitness to handle the rigours of Test cricket, feels former all-rounder Irfan Pathan.

Bumrah, who had a lower back stress fracture in 2022, underwent a surgery in New Zealand and was out of competitive cricket for a period of 11 months. He returned during Ireland T20I series in August last year and has remained injury free since then.

But the absence of Shami, who is out with a left ankle injury since his stellar performance in last year's ODI World Cup, has definitely put extra pressure on Bumrah, who is leading India's attack against England in the ongoing five-match Test series.

"Obviously, Shami's absence does have an effect but that does not mean chances of injury will increase for Bumrah. His action is absolutely perfect now," Pathan

Since his return Bumrah has increased his run-up by a step and also a bigger follow through which puts less load on the back because of his slinging action. Pathan said there is definitely extra pressure on Bumrah in Shami's absence as the duo share a healthy bowling partnership.

"When there is pressure from both sides, whether it is Shami taking wickets from one side or Bumrah working quietly from one side, Bumrah is taking wickets and Shami is working quietly, their partnership not only reduces the pressure on each other but also augurs well for the team," the cricketer-turned-commentator said.

Pathan is in awe of Bumrah's dedication and attitude towards the traditional format of the game. "I have been a big fan of Jasprit Bumrah's attitude, especially in Test cricket, the way he has given priority to Test cricket despite injuries," he said. "Even if he gets injured, I will salute him because he is trying his best. We all have to always keep this in mind."

tiveness of Indian spinners but Rathour said it's not a stroke that can be added overnight to a player's repertoire.

"You need to be prepared for that by practising it. If you add more shots to your game, it's always beneficial. We played traditionally. The strength of strong areas is going straight when it comes to using our feet. "We can keep doing that, and of course, if we can add more shots and score through the square of the wicket, that's always an addition," he said.

Rathour also heaped praise on the English batters for playing brave cricket, especially Pope, effectively taking the game away from Rohit Sharma's men. However, he maintained that England's strong showing has not put his team under any additional pressure.

"They (England) were brave. They took their chances, which worked for them. The kind of innings Pope played was exceptional. I haven't seen too many playing such a knock against our bowling attack," he said.

"I don't think (there's any pressure). We are expected to win while playing in India, and the boys are used to that by now. The message to them from the support staff is to play good cricket and not bother about results too much. The other teams also come well-prepared. Since we have won Test matches in Australia, England and South Africa, we also expect them to win a Test in India."

starts here Friday. "There are young batters in our team who have not played much Test cricket. So, we need to be a bit patient with them. Batters like (Shubman) Gill, (Yashasvi) Jaiswal and (Shreyas) Iyer will eventually start getting big runs, I'm sure of it," Rathour said at a press conference here.

Although Jaiswal played a knock of 80 in the first innings of his fifth Test, Gill and Iyer failed to fire, continuing their struggles in the format. While Gill has played 21 Tests, Iyer has appeared in 13 five-day games. Gill hasn't scored a 50 in his

last nine Test innings. Iyer has been similarly off-colour. Rathour said he expects better application from the side's batters in second Test where the home team will once again miss the services of the redoubtable Virat Kohli.

"There's a difference between playing with intent and playing attacking cricket. I want them to play with intent. If there is the opportunity to score some runs, they should take it," Rathour said.

"They need to decide by looking at the surface and conditions. So, the batters need to possess that intelligence as to which is the best or safest shot

on the surface," he explained. Rathour felt India's batting performance in the second innings of the Hyderabad Test probably lacked discipline. "Could they have batted with more discipline? Maybe they could have. That's what they need to decide and come up with their plans," he observed.

"But, they need to score runs by playing their shots, as you need to back your strengths. Batting is always about scoring runs. It's not about not getting out but how many runs you put on the board," he said.

England used the sweep shot quite well to blunt the effec-

## Aisam drops hints of playing singles vs India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, Jan 31:** Aisam ul-Haq Qureshi, Pakistan's most successful tennis player, does not play singles on the ATP Tour, but when national duty demands it, he willingly takes up the responsibility, and the Indian team might have to contend with him on the opening day of the Davis Cup World Group I tie, starting Saturday.



2023. He also did the singles duty against Lithuania (2022), Japan (2021) and Slovenia (2020).

"I have always considered myself to play singles, but I don't do it every single time. I am preparing for everything, singles and doubles, and the same goes for everyone in the team. We will see. We have one more day of training," Aisam told PTI.

Aisam has 41-22 win-loss record in singles in 48 matches he has played in 44 nominations. Former Davis Cup captain Hameed ul Haq also reckons that if Aisam and veteran Aqeel Khan play the singles, the tie won't be a lop-sided affair.

"We have got some good results on grass but the Indian team is also very good on this surface. They know what is required. I feel India have better chances to win this tie but since Pakistan has two very experienced players in Aqeel Khan and Aisam ul haq Qureshi, if they play singles then the contest will be tight," he said.

For the second consecutive day, persistent drizzle disrupted Pakistan Davis Cup team's practice session, while the Indians were also forced to stay indoors Wednesday.

Tuesday also, when the Indian team was nearing the end of its three-hour session, heavens opened up, forcing an early closure of their session. Aisam said not getting to hit for two days in a row, indeed affects the preparations.

## Hameed overjoyed after meeting Zeeshan



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, Jan 31:** For Hameed ul Haq, meeting India captain and coach Zeeshan Ali in Islamabad was like reuniting with his separated brother.

More than 36 years have passed since he visited Bangalore but the former Pakistan Davis Cup captain vividly remembers how Zeeshan's father, the late Akhtar Ali, would take care of the Pakistan players.

He still remembers how he made the mistake of entering Trivandrum without a valid visa and was sent back by a DIG without causing any discomfort to him.

Hameed, now 62-year-old, still remembers the generous act of Indian player Srinivasan Vasudevan who took him home when he was struggling to find accommodation in Bangalore in 1987 when he had gone to the city to compete in a satellite tournament. He still remembers that Delhi food was as spicy



as he would get in Karachi.

Hameed, honoured with the Pride of Performance (a title in Pakistan) in 2000, is gushing about the fact that an Indian striker has come to Pakistan for playing tennis.

"Now that I am meeting the Indian contingent here in Islamabad, it feels like I have met my own brothers, who got separated. Coach Zeeshan Ali is a

very good friend of mine. His father Akhtar Ali also used to help us a lot. He was like our father and coach, he was helping the Pakistanis a lot," Hameed told PTI in an interview.

"During the Asian Cup in Dubai, I had lost the semifinal to Zeeshan. In Lahore also I met him. I knew he is coming. I was waiting with excitement for him. I want to take him home

and help him see the city, but you know, it is not possible in current circumstances."

In India and Pakistan, applicants get city-specific visa because of the diplomatic tension between the two countries. Hameed, who played Davis Cup between 1984 and 1997, had travelled to Delhi for the Asian Games in 1982, and fondly shared memories of those days.

"I don't feel I am in a foreign land when I go to India. India is like Pakistan. The language, the food, the attires, everything is similar. In 1987, I played Satellite tournaments in Bombay, Bangalore and Trivandrum. I was facing problems in getting an accommodation, and India player Vasusevan learnt about it and took me to his home.

"There was a security concern, but Vasudevan said he did not care and took me home. I felt like I am staying at my own home. Whenever there was an issue, someone would stand up and find a solution for us."

Hameed also shared how he was helped by a concerned Indian when he got carried away and dared to meet his uncle without a valid visa.

Hameed's father, Siraj ul Haq, was one of the finest tennis players in undivided India. He also played hockey. During World War II, for war fund-raising a championship was organised between the amateur and professional players. Siraj was the best professional player at that time and Ghaus Mohammad was the best amateur.

## Arsenal move to 2nd in EPL standings

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, Jan 31:** With one team scoring after just 18 seconds and another after 21 seconds, the English Premier League (EPL) made an explosive return Tuesday following the competition's short winter break.

Arsenal left it much later for their goals in a win that kept the pressure on Liverpool at the top. Just when it looked like being another frustrating match for Arsenal's often-profligate attack, Gabriel Jesus and Bukayo Saka scored in the second half to help the team beat Nottingham Forest 2-1, jump into second place and trim the gap to first-placed Liverpool to two points. Arsenal might be able to maintain a title push heading into the final months of the campaign.

Aston Villa have been the big surprise this season but a 1-3 loss at home to Newcastle slowed their bid for a finish in the Champions League places, with



Gabriel Jesus reacts after Arsenal's victory over Nottingham Forest, Tuesday

Unai Emery's team staying in fourth place.

There were five games in total and 16 goals scored, three of them coming for Luton striker Elijah Adebayo in a 4-0 thrashing of Brighton that lifted his team out of the relegation zone.

Adebayo's first came after just 18 seconds and it was barely the quickest of the night, with Ben Brereton Diaz scoring after 21 seconds for Sheffield United in their 2-3 loss at Crystal Palace. Fulham and Everton drew 0-0 in the other match on the opening night of the

league's midweek round.

### JESUS INSPIRES ARSENAL

Jesus has been criticised by some for not being the clinical finisher Arsenal might need to end their 20-year wait for a Premier League title. The Brazil striker was enduring another frustrating match, heading over in the first half and smashing a shot against the post just after the restart, before being the inspiration behind the win.

In the 65th, he received a throw-in from Oleksandr Zinchenko, drove toward goal at an acute angle and sent in a shot that deflected into the net off the heel of Forest goalkeeper Matt Turner — a former Arsenal player.

Jesus then turned provider as he led a counterattack and passed the ball across to Saka, who took a touch and shot right-footed into the bottom corner from just inside the area in the 72nd. Substitute Taiwo Awoniyi scored in the 89th for Forest.

## Vishnu's sail on for 2024 Paris Olympics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Adelaide, Jan 31:** Asian Games bronze medalist Vishnu Saravanan became the first Indian sailor to qualify for successive Olympics as he made the cut at the World Championships here Wednesday.

A Subedar from the Mumbai-based Army Yachting Node, the 24-year-old secured qualification for the upcoming Paris Games by finishing 26th out of 152 participants in ILCA-7. He thus becomes the first Indian sailor to make the cut for Paris 2024.

Vishnu secured the top rank among Asian countries, surpassing gold medalists from Singapore in the Asian Games and medal winners from Hong Kong and Thailand in the Continental Qualifiers.

Vishnu concluded the competition with an overall score of



174. Following the standard rule, his least score of 49 in a race was subtracted, resulting in a net score of 125. The weather condition was windy and at its challenging best at the Adelaide Sailing Club, taking a toll on the sailors.

So gruelling has been the race that Vishnu's fingers have become "numb" and "legs are destroyed". "I can't even hold my phone now, fingers have become numb, legs are destroyed. But it's all worth it. You get to go to Olympics," Vishnu told PTI.