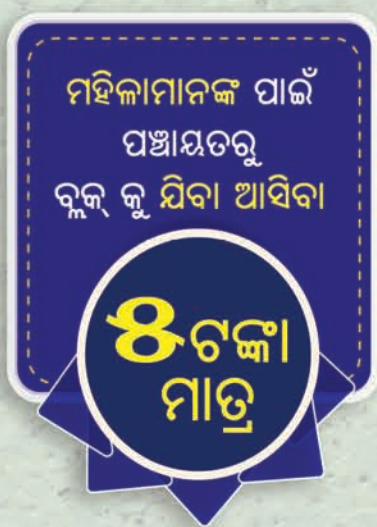




ଘରେ ଘରେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ

ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ଯୋଜନାର ପ୍ରମୁଖ ବୈଶିଷ୍ଟ୍ୟ

- ଗ୍ରାମାଞ୍ଚଳରୁ ସହରାଞ୍ଚଳକୁ ସୁନିଶ୍ଚିତ ବସ୍ ସଂଯୋଗ
- ସୁଲଭ ଓ ନିର୍ଭରଯୋଗ୍ୟ ସେବା
- ମହିଳା, ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀ ଏବଂ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟକୁ ସଶକ୍ତ କରିବା
- ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟନ ଏବଂ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଅର୍ଥ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାକୁ ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହନ
- ଯାତ୍ରୀ ଏବଂ ସଡ଼କ ସୁରକ୍ଷାକୁ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ
- ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛ ଏବଂ ବୈଷୟିକ ଜ୍ଞାନକୌଶଳ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପରିଚାଳିତ ସାଧାରଣ ପରିବହନ



ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ମାନ୍ୟବର ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ନବୀନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଶୁଭାରମ୍ଭ

ମୟୂରଭଞ୍ଜ | ବଲାଙ୍ଗିର | ବରଗଡ଼ | କେନ୍ଦୁଝର | ସୁନ୍ଦରଗଡ଼

୧୨ ଫେବୃଆରୀ ୨୦୨୪



ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବହନ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର



CHRISTOPHER NOLAN CLINCHES BEST DIRECTOR HONOUR

Filmmaker Christopher Nolan took home the top prize at the Directors Guild of America Awards, earning his first DGA Award for the historical epic *Oppenheimer*. He was conferred with the Best Director Award, reports *The Hollywood Reporter*.

DRAKE MAKES \$1.15 MN SUPER BOWL BET

Singer Drake has made a \$1.15 million Super Bowl bet and will net more than \$2.3 million if the Kansas City Chiefs beat the San Francisco 49ers. The *God's Plan* hitmaker has put a massive stake in the Kansas City Chiefs beating the San Francisco 49ers in the NFL showpiece game Sunday.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES

Today's events will be dominated by lots of friends. Life will seem to you to be a huge party, even if it is just tea that you are having together. However, Ganesh suggests that you set aside the evening for a special friend.

TAURUS

Prepare yourself to handle ordinary situations in an extraordinary way, foretells Ganesh. Today, you will get a lesson in how people work. Before arriving at any crucial decision, explore the pros and cons with a balanced mind, says Ganesh.

GEMINI

There is every possibility that you will keep your partner in the loop while making important decisions today, predicts Ganesh. And this will prevent a grave misunderstanding. Later in the day, you will benefit from the insights of your soul mate. You will tend to be a little bit on the spiritual side today.

CANCER

The first half of the day may leave you a little flummoxed. You may get discouraged when things are not going your way, predicts Ganesh. But your subconscious mind knows how to handle such situations. You will take a break from the rat race, and take a detour to your home.

LEO

You need to keep your temper in check today. Your mood swings will leave you irritated, especially in the morning. You will be busy dealing with a lot of issues today, and this will add to your tensions. However, you will find the solution to all your problems within a day or two, says Ganesh.

VIRGO

You might spend most of your day at the table today, planning and mapping your future. Keep your partner in the loop while making important decisions. Take the approval of your family as and when required so that no misunderstanding creeps up in the days to come. You will be surprised at the advice you get from your partner and loved ones, says Ganesh.

LIBRA

Today, you touch a new high when it comes to self-reliance. The pledges and promises you make may tend to perplex people at your workplace. Afternoon may see you taking on other people's responsibilities as well. Your vigour reaches its highest point in the evening, expects Ganesh.

SCORPIO

It seems like a fruitful day in business, and to deal in money matters, foresees Ganesh. On the career front, you may be occupied with important meetings. Things will work out for you if you manage to strike a balance between your ideas and implementation.

SAGITTARIUS

Time is something that once spent can never be earned back, says Ganesh. The importance of time will dawn upon you today as you undertake the massive challenge of organising your life and planning your goals. At the workplace, you will put in a lot of effort, but may fall short of reaching a level that is expected of you.

CAPRICORN

The day bodes well, especially for public servants. An impending business transaction with the government will keep you busy, and suggestions from friends and peers may prove beneficial, says Ganesh. Professionals, however, need to be more proactive, as their expertise will be tested.

AQUARIUS

Fortune is mighty pleased with you. So go ahead and play roulette if you wish! Partnerships will work today, as will business deals. But somewhere, a dark sentiment may cloud your thinking. Ganesh says that you should enjoy yourself and take life a bit lightly.

PISCES

Your peers will be the cause of a few confrontations today. Legal disputes may also arise. Take the advice of your elders to resolve these conflicts. Meditative techniques will help restore your calm, says Ganesh.

Deepika underlines value of honesty

Mumbai: Actress Deepika Padukone, currently riding high on the success of her recent film *Fighter*, shared insights into her approach to managing multiple responsibilities, setting priorities, and the sincerity she brings to her on-screen performances.

When questioned about her process for creating emotional scenes and the profound impact they have on the audience, she stressed the importance of honesty in her work and expressed discomfort with dishonesty and artificiality, advocating accountability, and openness to criticism.

She stressed the significance of maintaining integrity in her work, acknowledging mistakes, and seeking understanding rather than dwelling on shortcomings. As for managing multiple roles, Padukone described a shift towards prioritising what truly adds value, recognising the evolution from pursuing everything to filtering choices based on purpose and significance.

The *Om Shanti Om* actress underscored the opportunity to influence and uplift audiences through her work, viewing it as a responsibility to make a positive impact.

Regarding multitasking, she acknowledged her proficiency in handling diverse tasks simultaneously while prioritising activities that bring joy and purpose. Despite personal preferences, she emphasised the importance of fulfilling commitments, recognising them as essential aspects of her professional and personal growth.

AGENCIES

Mumbai:

Actress Urvashi Rautela, in a recent interview, opened up about her concept of love and marriage.

The actress mentioned that both love and marriage are just beautiful stories of companionship.

While having a chat with a media, she shared that love is not a one-sided emotion; it should be from both sides. When it comes to marriage, it is a beautiful companionship where two individuals completely fall in love with each other.

The *Sanam Re* actress further added that both people involved in any relationship are equally responsible. In a marriage, they walk through their lives together and should believe in

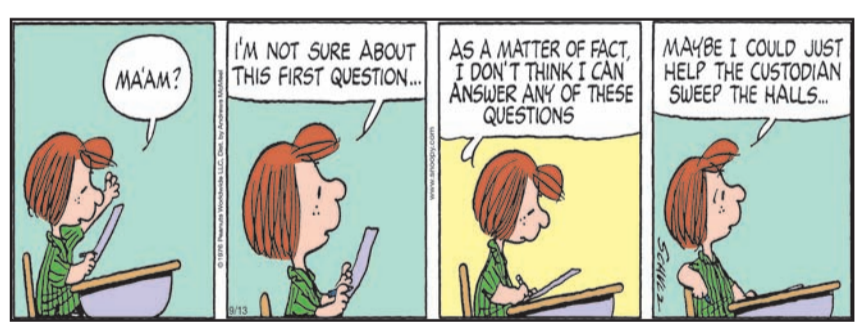
each other. There should be complete faith in each other. She personally defines faith as an immense feeling. While having respect for each other, marriage becomes an institution of beliefs and a responsible act of love.

On the work front, Urvashi will be seen in *Inspector Avinash 2* with Randeep Hooda and *Welcome 3* with Akshay Kumar.

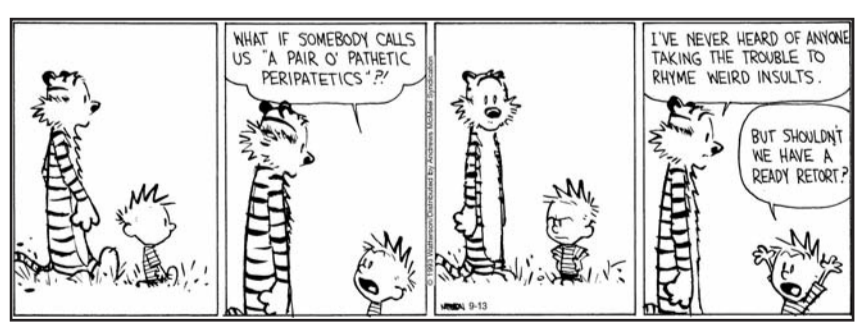
AGENCIES

Urvashi's take on love, marriage

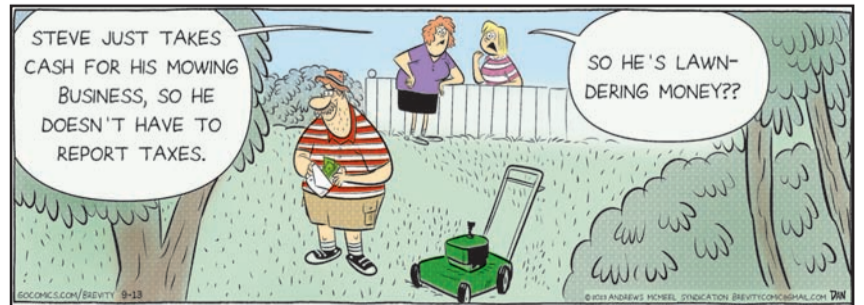
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



Women need to assert themselves, says Celina

Mumbai: Actress Celina Jaitley raises concerns about the pervasive stereotyping and judgement actresses endure, emphasising the need for women to advocate for themselves amid constant scrutiny.

In an interview with a media agency, she underscores the importance of standing up against negativity, not only for oneself but also to inspire others.

She utilises her platform as an actor to convey essential messages through comedy, aiming to impact her audience positively.

Highlighting the role of artists and storytellers in fostering connection and emotional understanding, the *No Entry* actress observes the ongoing struggles faced by women in society. Despite advancements, she laments that women still encounter challenges and often feel compelled

to justify their actions. She notes the prevalence of negative attitudes towards independent women, which can manifest as bullying and name-calling.

She also advocates for a balanced approach to criticism, acknowledging the need to discern between insignificant remarks and constructive feedback. She questions the rationale behind stereotyping actresses and seeks strategies to mitigate negativity in such situations. Ultimately, she affirms the necessity for women to assert themselves and confront judgement, regardless of their achievements, in the face of pervasive societal biases.

AGENCIES



Arbaaz on age gap criticism

Mumbai: Actor Arbaaz Khan recently opened up about his relationship with Shura Khan, defending their decision to keep their love story private. He shared the journey of their romance, emphasising the importance of maturity and commitment over age differences.

Addressing the significant age gap, the actor defended their union, stating that while Shura is younger, age alone isn't the deciding factor in a relationship's success. The couple spent quality time understanding each other's aspirations and expectations for the future. Later, it was emphasised that decisions of such magnitude were not rushed and were made with mutual understanding and commitment.

Despite facing online criticism for

their age difference, Arbaaz and Shura remain unfazed, highlighting that love, respect, and dedication are the pillars of their relationship. He too dismissed the notion that age gaps hinder relationships, pointing out that marriages with substantial age differences often have higher success rates.

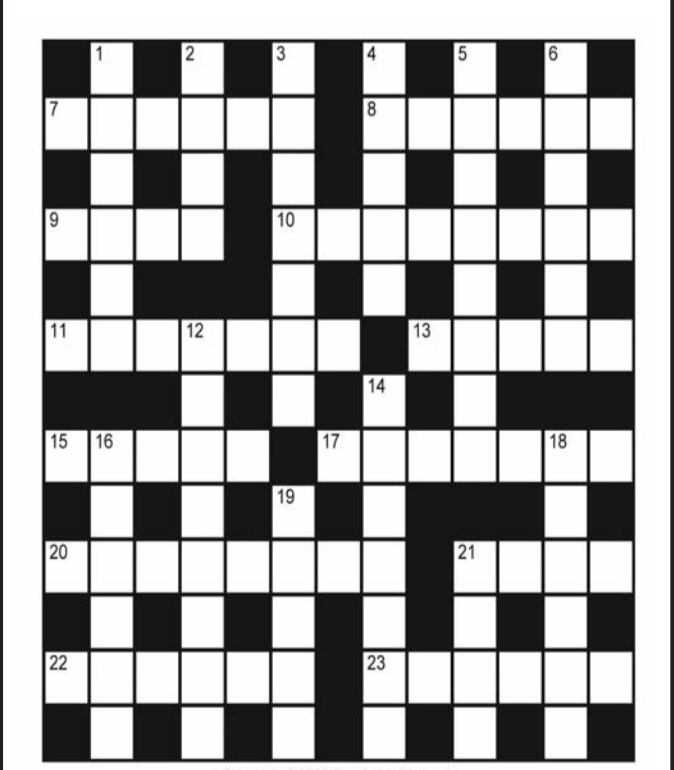
In conclusion, Arbaaz stressed that their compatibility in life goals and shared values were the driving forces behind their relationship. The couple's commitment to putting effort into their partnership has solidified their bond, transcending societal perceptions and proving that love knows no age.

AGENCIES



FUN post

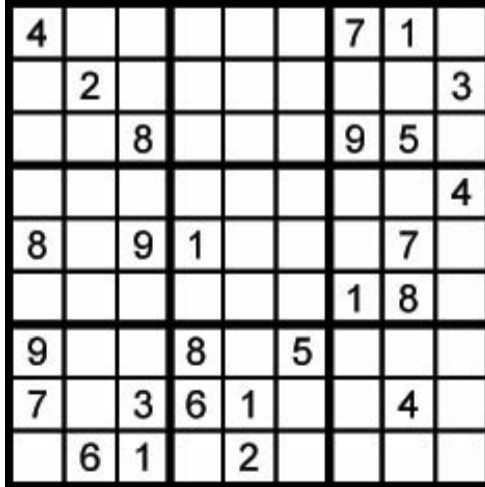
CROSSWORD



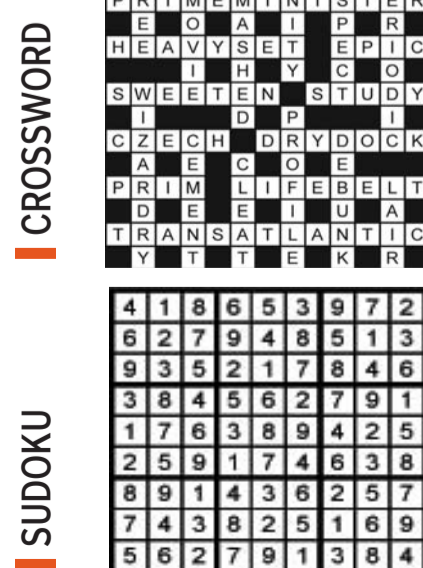
- Across
- 7 Shrinking violet
 - 8 Copyreader
 - 9 Glance, surreptitiously
 - 10 Kingdom
 - 11 Arranging
 - 13 Jewelled headdress
 - 15 Tout
 - 17 Passion
 - 20 Stable
 - 21 Twinge
 - 22 Swiss lake
 - 23 Tradition
 - 3 Inflexible
 - 4 Spring bloom
 - 5 Sick headache
 - 6 Pouched rat
 - 12 Gauze-like
 - 14 Forecast
 - 16 Bloviated
 - 18 Ravine
 - 19 Take a powder
 - 21 Sit for a photo
- Down
- 1 Clandestine
 - 2 Escapade

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Road accidents claim 8 lives

PNN & AGENCIES

Jharsuguda/Bhawanipatna/Bhadrak, Feb 11: At least eight people were killed and many others injured in separate road accidents in the state Sunday.

In the latest road mishap, two farm labourers were killed and 36 others sustained critical injuries after a speeding pick-up van carrying them turned turtle in between Dokripada and Chilagaon in Kalahandi district Sunday evening.

The deceased were identified as Mohan Biswal, 50, and Manjulata Biswal, 23 of Michagaon village (Nuapada). The mishap occurred after the driver of the speeding van suddenly applied brakes due to bad road condition.

The injured labourers have been admitted to Dharmagarh sub-divisional hospital, Junagarh community health centre and



Over-turned pick-up van in Kalahandi district

OP PHOTO

Saheed Rendo Majhi Medical College and Hospital at Bhawanipatna.

Expressing grief over the deaths, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced an ex-gratia of ₹3 lakh to the family members of each of the deceased.

He also directed the officials concerned to ensure proper treatment of the injured persons.

Earlier in the day, five people

were killed and eight injured when a pick-up van carrying them collided head-on with a truck on NH-49 near Lakhanpur in Jharsuguda district around 10.30am. The accident was so severe that both the vehicles turned sideways following the collision.

The injured passengers were taken to Lakhanpur CHC. Later, the seriously injured were shifted to the district headquarters hos-

Nabarangpur MP injured in mishap

Bhubaneswar: Biju Janata Dal MP Ramesh Chandra Majhi was injured in a road accident in Nabarangpur district Sunday. The accident took place at Dargaguda when Majhi, the Nabarangpur MP, along with his driver and personal security officer was returning home at Umerkote from Raipur. The vehicle was damaged in the mishap in the early hours of Sunday. However, the MP said he only got a scratch mark on his body.

pital in Jharsuguda. Police sent the bodies for autopsy and initiated an investigation.

The third accident took place near Aradi Chhak in Bhadrak district in the early hours of Sunday. One person died while six others were critically injured. The accident happened when a vehicle carrying passengers from Puri to Balasore collided head-on with a truck.

Hectic parleys in Pak

PARTIES INTENSIFY EFFORTS TO FORM COALITION GOVT AFTER SPLIT VERDICT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad/Lahore, Feb 11: The three main political parties in Pakistan Sunday intensified their efforts for the formation of a coalition government after it became clear that the coup-prone country faced a hung Parliament after general elections marred by allegations of rigging.

The general elections were held Thursday, but the unusual delay in the announcement of results vitiated the atmosphere as several parties cried foul and some resorted to protests.

Former prime minister and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif received the backing of the powerful Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir Saturday for his call for a unity government to pull Pakistan out of its current difficulties.

Amidst allegations of vote rigging and inordinate delay in announcing the results, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Sunday published the results of 264 out of 265 contested seats in the 266-member National Assembly. The result of one constituency was withheld by the ECP due to complaints of fraud. Election to one seat was postponed after



Supporters of jailed ex-PM Khan's party chant slogans during a protest against delay in announcement of election result in Karachi, Pakistan, Sunday PTI PHOTO

the death of a candidate.

Independent candidates, a vast majority of them backed by jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), won 101 seats in the National Assembly.

They were followed by three-time former PM Sharif's PML-N with 75 seats, which technically is the single largest party in Parliament.

The Pakistan Peoples' Party of Bilawal Zardari Bhutto got 54 seats, and the Karachi-based Muttahida Qaumi Movement

Pakistan (MQM-P) of Urdu-speaking people who migrated from India during the Partition, got 17 seats. Other smaller parties won the rest of the 12 seats.

To form a government, a party must win 133 seats out of 265 contested seats in the National Assembly.

Overall, 169 seats are needed to secure a simple majority out of its total 336 seats, which include the reserved slots for women and minorities which will be decided later based on proportional representation.

COURTS FLOODED WITH PETITIONS

Islamabad: Pakistan courts have been flooded with petitions by losing candidates who challenged the provisional results in their constituencies within days after the highly polarised general elections in the country, it emerged Sunday. Though PML-N emerged as the single largest party in the February 8 elections, the number of independent candidates, a vast majority of them backed by jailed former PM Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, were the single largest block of winners. The PTI claimed that its supported candidates have won the maximum number of seats but the results were manipulated to deprive it of the majority, and in order to turn the tide, its losing candidates have thronged the courts.

MORE P8

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Find out if these journalists are taking the Rajya Sabha route so that they can ask questions to the PM

Hamas tunnel under Gaza UNRWA HQ

GAZA: Israeli forces have discovered a tunnel network hundreds of metres long and running partly under UNRWA's Gaza headquarters, the military says, calling it new evidence of Hamas exploitation of the main relief agency for Palestinians. Army engineers took reporters for foreign news outlets through the passages at a time of crisis for UNRWA, which has launched an internal probe and seen a string of donor countries freeze funding over allegations last month by Israel that some of its staff doubled as Hamas operatives. The Palestinians have accused Israel of falsifying information to tarnish UNRWA, which employs 13,000 people in the Gaza Strip and has been a lifeline for the aid-dependent population for years. The agency runs schools, primary healthcare clinics and other social services, and distributes aid, describing its activities as purely humanitarian.

₹150cr sops for kendu leaf workers

BHUBANESWAR: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Sunday announced significant financial assistance for kendu leaf pluckers, binders, and others involved in the trade, amounting to ₹150 crore. According to a statement from the CMO, kendu leaf pluckers will receive a 50 per cent bonus during the crop season this year, which is double the amount compared to last year. This bonus will be directly deposited into their bank accounts starting from April, the statement added. Additionally, a 10 per cent incentive has been announced for binders and temporary workers. Moreover, the price of kendu leaf bundles has been increased, with a bundle of 20 leaves now priced at ₹1.60, up from ₹1.40, and a bundle of 40 leaves now priced at ₹3.20, up from ₹2.80, the statement said.

P2

DSPL - 641





ପର୍ଥ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟରେ ଯାଜପୁର ଜିଲ୍ଲାର

୮୭ ରୂପାନ୍ତରିତ

ଭିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ












ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ମାନ୍ୟବର ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ

ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ନବୀନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଲୋକାର୍ପଣ

୧୨ ଫେବୃଆରୀ ୨୦୨୪

ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଓ ଗଣଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଭାଗ

₹150 crore aid for kendu leaf pluckers

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Sunday announced a host of initiatives worth over ₹150 crore for the welfare of more than nine lakh kendu leaf pluckers, binders, and others involved in the trade.

According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), kendu leaf pluckers will receive a 50 per cent bonus during the crop season this year, which is double the amount compared to last year. This bonus will be directly deposited into their bank accounts starting from April.

Additionally, a 10 per cent incentive has been announced for binders and temporary workers. The seasonal employees are entitled to get one more month of employment, the statement added.

The state government has also increased the price of kendu leaf bundles. "The price of a bundle of 20 leaves, which was ₹1.40, has been increased to ₹1.60. Similarly, the price of a bundle of 40 leaves, which was ₹2.80, has been enhanced to ₹3.20," the statement said.

Furthermore, travel and cycle allowances for temporary workers have been raised by 50 per cent, and the age limit for availing benefits of social security schemes has been extended to 62 from the previous limit of 60, it said.



₹350CR FOR SAMBALPUR STADIUMS

The state government has decided to redevelop VSS Cricket Stadium and construct a football stadium in Sambalpur with an allocation of ₹350 crore, 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian said during his visit to the western Odisha district, Sunday.

Pandian flagged off the 'First Mahanadi Half Marathon' in the district at around 6am. More than 4,000 runners participated in the marathon under various categories.

Pandian visited the VSS Cricket Stadium, where he interacted as well as played cricket with the players. Later, Pandian met Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Science and Research (VIMSAR) director and senior officials and discussed issues regarding the development of the premier facility.

Pandian also reviewed the progress of the redevelopment of the birthplace of Veer Surendra Sai at Khinda and visited Maa Samaleswari Temple.

The state government has also decided to provide ₹25,000 as financial assistance for wedding of a kendu leaf plucker's

daughter. Each plucker can avail the benefits for the wedding of at best two daughters, the statement said.

POLITICKLE BY MANJUL



CAPF CONSTABLE EXAM NOW IN ODIA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: For the first time, the examination for recruitment of constables (general duty) in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) such as CRPF, BSF and CISF will be conducted in 13 regional languages, including Odia, apart from Hindi and English.

Around 48 lakh candidates will be appearing in the examination in 128 cities across the country from February 20 to March 7, 2024, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

This 'historic' decision has been taken on the initiative of the Home minister to increase the participation of local youths in the CAPFs and to promote regional languages, it said, adding, "In addition to Hindi and English, the question papers will now be prepared in 13 regional languages - Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Odia, Urdu, Punjabi, Manipuri and Konkani."

Noted Odia litterateur Satakadi Hota no more

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: Prolific Odia writer Satakadi Hota, who had served key positions in the Indian Railways, passed away due to old age-related ailments, Sunday. He was 95.

Hota, a retired IRTS officer, had served as the DRM of Khurda Road Division. He was also the editor of an Odia daily and president of Odisha Sahitya Akademi.

Hota had written many poems, essays, novels, stories, travel stories, and even biographies.

Born in 1929 at Jagannath Khunta in Mayurbhanj district, Hota joined the Indian Railways in 1954.

He started his literary career

with poems but later shifted to writing stories. He has written several books and novels which included 27 stories, 21 novels, and a book of poems.

Hota was conferred with the Odisha Sahitya Akademi award in 1987 for the novel 'Ashanta Aranya', the prestigious Sarala Puraskar in 2004 for his collection of stories 'Muktimantri' and 'Janani Jannabhoomi'.

He also received Sahitya Bharati Samman and Utkal Sahitya Samaj award for his contribution to Odia literature.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, many of his council of ministers, leaders from various political parties and other distinguished personalities from the literary field have expressed their profound grief over the demise of Hota.

Innovation in DNA of Odia society: Pradhan

Bhubaneswar: Union Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched the '100-Cube' startup initiative of IIT-Bhubaneswar's Research and Entrepreneurship Park here Sunday, which aims to create 100 startups with a valuation of ₹100 crore each by 2036. Launching the initiative, Pradhan said that innovation is 'in the DNA of Odia society.' "After seeing the new ideas and innovations of our youths, I am confident that 100 startups will be created by 2036," he added. To help the founders achieve this goal, the park will provide essential resources, mentorship, seed capital and access to potential investors. "It is set to expand to about 80,000 square feet from the existing 20,000 square feet over the next two years with support of ₹130 crore from the Education Ministry," an official said.



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian and Cognizant CEO Ravi Kumar S (2nd from L) on the inaugural occasion of the IT major's first facility in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

IT major Cognizant opens office in City

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated here Sunday the new facility of Cognizant, one of the largest professional services company in the world.

Speaking on the occasion, Patnaik said, "The entry of Cognizant marks a significant milestone for new Odisha and further solidifies its reputation as a leading IT investment destination in the country." He further said Odisha has emerged as a 'Destination of the

Future' with growing scale of investment, talent pool and ambition. All these factors have become cornerstones of our state's journey towards growth and development which is fuelled by a robust ecosystem.

Tusharkanti Behera, Minister of State for Electronics and IT, said that under the leadership Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Bhubaneswar has become a global hotspot for IT, ESDM and Consulting companies. The new centre of Cognizant shall create more opportunities for the state's

youth and drive the economy upwards.

Cognizant CEO Ravi Kumar S said, "We are excited to begin our expansion to Tier II cities with the opening of a new centre in Bhubaneswar. The state of Odisha has an entrepreneurial spirit, renowned educational institutions, strong infrastructure, and promising talent."

Cognizant office is spread over 52,000 square feet and is designed to accommodate 1,000 of company's associates in hybrid work environment and is

located at Odisha Technology Centre.

The new centre is projected to be expanded further to accommodate more than 5,000 associates in the span of two years.

Cognizant is a \$19.4 billion, US-based multinational company recognised as one of the world's leading IT services providers with a purpose to engineer modern businesses that improve everyday life. The company is part of NASDAQ-100 and employs more 3,50,000 professionals worldwide.

1ST ANNUAL DAY OF EKAMRA VATIKA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: Ekamra Vatika, the premier school, celebrated its first annual day here, Sunday.

The occasion was graced by Ranjit Kumar Joshi, an exemplary figure in the field of child health. Addressing the gathering, he said that each child is different in his own way and each one of them should be dealt with unique strategies.

School chairperson Meghna Singh Deo said, "Through bespoke curriculum, student-centric infrastructure and progressive teaching-learning approaches, the school aims to engage young children in experiential and life-changing learning."



Our priority is to teach our children to slow down and appreciate the beauty around them, she added.

FIFA PROGRAMME

1,260 SCHOOLS GET 6,848 FOOTBALLS

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: The Union ministry of education, in collaboration with the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), has distributed 6,848 footballs in 1,260 schools of Odisha under the ambitious Football for Schools (F4S) programme.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had launched the programme from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) in Cuttack December 2, 2023.

The programme is launched with an aim to broaden the accessibility of football for students, regardless of gender, within the school setting, while seamlessly integrating football-related activities into the education system, the ministry said in a statement, Sunday.

Under the programme, 6,848 footballs were distributed to 1,260 schools in 17 districts of the state till February 9, it said.



More than 11 lakh FIFA footballs are to be distributed in 1.50 lakh schools throughout the country in a phased manner.

The footballs were distributed in the districts of Angul, Dhenkanal and Deogarh and Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat and UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu in a phased manner.

An MoU was earlier signed between the Ministry of Education, AIFF and FIFA 30 October 2022. Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya is the Nodal organisation for the F4S programme.

To enhance capacity building, recently the department has conducted a master training programme at 3 venues, viz Sambalpur, Pune and Bangalore where around 300 physical edu-

cation teachers/trainees from states/UTs, KVS, NVS and AIFF across India participated with an aim to learn from the best and further use their training and skills as Master Trainers at state-level for further capacity building in the field.

F4S aims to contribute to the education, development, and empowerment of around 700 million children across the world. It seeks to make football more accessible to both boys and girls by incorporating football activities into the education system, in partnership with relevant authorities and stakeholders.

By fostering partnerships at different levels, the programme wishes to instil a sense of enthusiasm for the sport, laying the foundation for a lasting sports culture that goes beyond individual schools.

It will not only introduce the joy of playing football to students but also infuse values of teamwork, discipline, and fitness, contributing to their holistic development, the statement added.

Mo College bags prestigious 'SKOCH' award

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: For its initiatives in bringing excellence to higher education in Odisha, 'Mo College Abhijan' received the prestigious 'SKOCH' award, known for its independent and rigorous outcome based assessment process, Sunday.

Mo College chairperson Akash Dasnayak was presented the award in a ceremony at Annexe Hall of Constitution Club of India in New Delhi Saturday.

More than a thousand departments of several state governments participated in com-



petition for the award. The procedure for selection of the winner involved three major steps: PR voting, online voting and jury evaluation.

"The most useful outcome of the SKOCH assessment process is that it benchmarks well performing projects and their out-

comes. For the last two decades, SKOCH awards have been giving recognition to people, projects and institutions that go the extra mile to make India a better nation," said an official.

The award recognises the best of efforts in digital, financial and social inclusion. "It encompasses the best of governance, inclusive growth, excellence in technology and applications, change management, corporate leadership, corporate governance, citizen services delivery, capacity building, empowerment and other such issues that get normally lost at

the industry sponsored award shows," explained the official. Similarly the Mo College Abhijan Parichalana Sangathan (MCAPS) is working to bring educational and infrastructural transformation to around 850 colleges, universities, BEd colleges, polytechnics, engineering and government-aided colleges.

Previously, 'Mo School Abhijan' and the state government's high school transformation programme had also been honored with the Skoch Gold awards for their efforts at strengthening the school ecosystem in Odisha.

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All eyes on Chikiti constituency

BJP CONFIDENT OF WRESTING ASSEMBLY SEGMENT FROM BJD



Devi all the way. She has been elected to the Odisha Assembly five times on the trot and has been a minister on a number of occasions. Despite his best efforts, Samantara has not been able to win.

In the 2014 elections, Samantara withdrew from active politics due to age. His place was taken by Manoranjan, his second son. However Manoranjan failed to stop the Devi juggernaut. In 2019, Manoranjan contested on a BJP ticket, but even then he lost by a margin of over 20,000 votes against Devi.

Since then however, changes have been noticed in the constituency. In the last panchayat elections conducted in 2022, the BJD managed to wrest the Patrapur block from the BJD. Political observers feel that the upcoming election is the best chance for the BJD to defeat Devi.

When contacted, district BJD president Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik said that BJD has prepared a poll strategy to retain the Chikiti constituency. Speculation is rife that this time around, the BJD may nominate Devi's son Chinmayananda Srirup Deo to contest from Chikiti.

The fact however, is that BJD is leaving nothing to chance even though its vote bank has substantially increased in the constituency. Hence all eyes will be on who finally emerges triumphant in Chikiti.



WATER WOES: Women of Nuagaon village under Khireitangiri panchayat and Patana block of Keonjhar district returning home Sunday after collecting water from a nearby nullah as the only tube well in the village has run dry

OP PHOTO

POLICE NAB RAPE, MURDER ACCUSED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Feb 11: Police arrested Sunday a man who has been accused of raping and murdering a minor girl February 8.

The deceased was staying in the house of the accused Bikas Bara for quite some time now. A complaint of rape and murder had been lodged by the brother of the deceased, Marcus Rai.

Police said that on the fateful

day, taking advantage of no one being present in the house, Bikas raped the girl. When the victim threatened that she would disclose the matter to the accused's wife, Bikas smothered her to death with a pillow. Then he hung up the victim with a cloth from the ceiling and fled the scene.

When other family members returned to the house, they found the victim hanging from the ceiling. They informed Bikas, who

feigned ignorance. The police were also informed.

During investigation, police found answers by Bikas quite contradictory. This prompted them to grill him. Also when the post-mortem report arrived, it was confirmed that the victim had been raped. Meanwhile, Bikas left his house and disappeared, leading to police zeroing in on him as the prime suspect.

Police finally managed to nab Bikas from a secluded place. He was produced in a POCOS court and remanded to police custody.

Talking about the accused, IIC Brahmanitarang police station, Khitish Chandra Patra said, "He (the accused) has confessed to his crime. When he absconded, he became the prime suspect. Since then we have been searching for him and managed to arrest him."

BJD leader Sugyan Deo cremated

PNN & AGENCIES

Berhampur, Feb 11: The last rites of veteran Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader and 10-time MLA V Sugyan Kumar Deo were performed at Khallikote in Ganjam district Sunday.

A large number of people joined Deo's funeral procession. She passed away at a private hospital in Chennai Friday night. She was 86. Her body was brought to Bhubaneswar Saturday evening from Chennai before it was taken to Khallikote.

Deo's body was taken in a decorated vehicle to the cremation ground of the royal family in Khallikote amidst slogans of 'Rani Maa Amar Rahe.....'. There were tears in the eyes of many who had joined the funeral procession. Shops and business establishments in Khallikote town have remained shut for the past two days following her death.

Sugyan was elected eight times from the Khallikote Assembly constituency and twice from Kabisuryanagar Assembly segment of Ganjam district. Sugyan was elected for the first time to the Odisha Assembly in a by-election held at Khallikote in 1963.

Sugyan's body was consigned to the flames after a guard of honour: Kuresh Chandra Acharya of Shyamundarpur, a Brahmin priest of the royal family, performed the last rites as per traditions. Odisha Finance Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha, several MLAs, MPs and leaders of the ruling party were present on the occasion.

"Even though she belonged to a royal family, Sugyan Kumari Deo served the people for 60 years as a common citizen. She was an inspiration for all of us," Arukha said.

Govt to set up EWS in Gajapati dist

PNN & AGENCIES

Berhampur, Feb 11: The Odisha government is planning to set up a user-friendly landslide early warning system (EWS) in Gajapati district as a proactive measure, officials said here Sunday. A team of seven experts from the Coimbatore-based 'Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham's World Centre of Excellence on Landslide' recently visited landslide-prone Gajapati district to conduct a comprehensive study. They also discussed about the frequency of landslides in the district and potential mitigation measures, including setting up a user-friendly EWS.

During their two-day field visit, the expert team surveyed the most vulnerable areas for landslides, including Baraghar and Madha in Rayagada block of the



FILE PHOTO

district. The district administration has identified 139 sites highly susceptible to landslides across six blocks in the southern Odisha district. Gajapati, situated on the Odisha-Andhra Pradesh border, has been identified as one of the landslide-prone districts in the state.

The experts conducted assessments on various factors such as topography, landscape pattern, soil textures, vegetation, slope percentage, rainfall trends, rock types, agriculture patterns and the location of water bodies.

Led by Maneesha V Ramesh,

provost of 'Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham' and director of 'Amrita Centre for Wireless Networks and Applications', the team visited the district at the request of the Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA), officials said. Discussions were also held with Gajapati Collector Smruti Ranjan Pradhan. He emphasised that landslides pose a significant threat to life and livelihoods in the district, necessitating a participatory and sustainable approach to its management.

It should be stated here that severe cyclonic storm 'Titli' in October 2018 triggered massive landslides in the district, resulting in the destruction of 20 villages. Forty eight people died in the landslide and 91,000 families were displaced.

Elderly man killed in jumbo attack

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Feb 11: A 70 year old man was trampled to death by a marauding tusker at Jhankarpali village in Sadar forest range in this district, late Saturday night. The deceased identified as Patra Bhoi, 70, died on the spot.

The incident occurred when the deceased and his family members were asleep at home. A tusker strayed into the village and pulled down his house. The animal then chased down Bhoi, caught him with his trunk and trampled him to death. In an effort to save her husband, the victim's wife also suffered injuries. On being informed, Sadar Forest department officials reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem and admitted the woman for treatment at a hospital. Her condition is



now stable.

The incident sparked panic among the villagers. They alleged that elephant herds are frequently straying into their villages and destroying their crops and properties. Sadar forest ranger Girish Dora said that efforts are being made to drive away the elephant herd inside the jungle while compensation will be given to the next of the kin of the deceased after completion of necessary formalities.

1st Foundation Day of Dharanidhar Varsity observed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Feb 11: The first Foundation Day of Dharanidhar University was celebrated with much gaiety Sunday. The college with the same name was established in 1957 for the development of higher education in tribal-occupied Keonjhar district. It has now been granted university status.

On the occasion Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena was present as chief guest. "Dharanidhar University will create a golden signature in the field of education and research if the ideals and dedicated attitude remain strong," Jena stated. Jena was felicitated by Vice-Chancellor Professor Pratap Kumar Mohanty as the best student of the university.

Professor Ashok Kumar Das, Vice-Chairman, Higher Education Department attended the pro-



gramme as the guest of honour. He advised the students to spend substantial time in their research projects.

Professor Satyabrata Mishra delivered the welcome address and introduced the guests. Niladri Mishra was felicitated during the event for his contribution to cultural activities. Eminent person-

alities of the district and the state also attended the event. Registrar Narendra Kumar Sahu gave the vote of thanks.

"I wished all the staff, students and locals of the university on the first Foundation Day. This district is full of mineral resources and so the state government is giving importance to it. It is a great feeling that the college established more than 65 years ago has now become a University," Jena told mediapersons.

"We strive to create extraordinary universities, not ordinary ones. This is a rare university which has two campuses. Therefore, it has a high probability of further growth. So I request everyone to work to make it a different type of university. The government has sanctioned ₹52 crore for the development of this university," Jena added.

Farmer's unique tribute for Prez Murmu

KALAHANDI FARMER GETS LAVISH PRAISE FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO AGRICULTURE AND SOCIETY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, Feb 11: Kalahandi district, once the landmark of hunger in India's political map, has now become an example for the entire country in agriculture and pisciculture. Proud of its farmers and their success stories, this western district in Odisha is now attracting attention and making headlines owing to different types of rice cultivation in the area.

Prana Ranjan Behera, a young farmer from Jayapatana block in Kalahandi district, is in the spotlight after he created a portrait of President Droupadi Murmu on his paddy field. Apart from profiting through advanced rice cultivation techniques, Behera has captured people's attention by creating national awareness through his innovative art in paddy fields.



While various programmes have been organised in the state to revitalise Odia language, culture, tradition, an ordinary farmer has

now become successful with his innovative efforts to create first Odia President's portrait in the middle of his paddy field.

Last year when the country was observing 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' to mark the 75th anniversary of Independence, Behera garnered praise in India and abroad by successfully drawing the country's map in three colours on his paddy field with the digits '75' in the middle.

Behera has also created awareness by drawing various relevant topics on his paddy fields since 2012, giving examples of other initiatives aimed at creating awareness.

Some of the special campaigns that Behera undertook on his paddy fields were 'Save Women Save Nation', 'Save Girl Child Save Mother', 'Together We Can' for Clean India campaign, 'One Flag-

One Nation-One Constitution' and abolition of 'Article 370'.

Behera has been recognised for his work with state-level prizes. He is the recipient of 'Prakruti Bandhu Award' for nature conservation. However, Behera does not concentrate on designs only on his paddy fields. His organic farming method has not only registered record rice production at minimal costs but has also been able to diversify crops on his farm.

As a successful farmer, a good writer and social worker, Behera has been honoured for his efforts to contribute to agriculture and society. "To recognise the importance of an Odia woman becoming the head of the world's largest democratic country, as an ordinary Odia farmer I just replicated the portrait of President Droupadi Murmu in her honour", said Behera.

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My God is love and sweetly suffers all.

SRI AUROBINDO



Bat & Gun

It is the invisible "bat" of the jailed former cricketer-turned-politician and former Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan that is seemingly silencing the gun of the country's military establishment. That is the upshot of the results of the general elections in the country. The followers of Khan fought the elections as independent candidates sans their party's electoral symbol - bat -, as neither their party nor their leader was allowed to contest. But, candidates backed by Imran's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have upset all calculations of their opponents and the military establishment by winning more seats than any of their principal adversaries - Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP). In fact, these politicians allied with Khan's party have defied a military-led crackdown and alleged widespread rigging to register victory in most seats, even though Nawaz Sharif claimed he would form a coalition government.

Independent candidates supported by PTI stunned everyone with their electoral success belying all expectations that Sharif, a three-time former Prime Minister, and his PML-N would have a cakewalk, winning an easy majority. The outcome was so unexpected that Khan did not waste time and declared victory from jail in an audio-visual message created using artificial intelligence and shared on his X account. He called on his supporters to celebrate a win that was achieved despite what he called a crackdown on his party. Khan had been arrested in August and last week he received three separate jail sentences that could keep him behind bars for over a decade. But, his popularity has soared in recent months. This is attributed to the rising frustration of voters at the military's brazen interference in politics. The surge in support for Khan on election day was evident at many polling stations across the country. From first-time voters to elderly women born before Pakistan was established and from labourers to tech workers and lawyers, the overwhelming majority told the media covering the polls that they were ready to back Khan and vote for his party, PTI. Now it is evident they were telling the truth.

However, while initial results showed PTI was ahead of its rivals, allegations of inconsistencies and rigging began to emerge. Thereafter, declarations of results began to slow down and then stopped altogether. Polling agents began to say they were unable to collect results and then there was a reported "technical error" in counting. TV stations were said to have received instructions to stop reporting the results.

Sharif was seen to have the backing of Pakistan's military, which has long been the country's political power broker. The irony of what is regarded as the failed state of Pakistan is that it is the army which once backed Khan to oust Sharif and is now doing exactly the opposite. It has become virtually the arbiter of whatever democratic process is followed in Pakistan. It seems it was overconfident of its power to determine the course of the country's politics this time around. It has evidently failed to judge the mood of the people who have rallied behind Khan and his men which is nothing short of a revolt against the military rulers. It could be that this election has convinced the army that the grip it had in the past is dwindling. This could be the reason that the Pak army has appealed to all political parties to 'show maturity and unity'. These words demonstrate willingness to negotiate and soften the blow but the army is definitely not out.

The final tally shows, for the 265 seats in the national assembly, that the PTI-backed independent candidates have won 93 seats, PML-N 75 and the PPP 53. The Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has bagged 17 seats. Without a simple majority, none of the three principal parties are in a position to form a government. Due to an election commission ruling, PTI candidates had not been allowed to campaign under their party name or symbol and so had to be registered as independents. The rules do not allow independents to form the government on their own and they need to join a party. Hence, a key PTI leader has announced a party would soon be launched and the victorious independents would join it so as to cross the hurdle for forming the government should they manage to chalk up the numbers.

At the same time, Sharif's comments after the results were announced indicate he is ready to clinch a deal with the PPP and other smaller parties, including the MQM-P, to form a coalition government. However, such a prospect does not inspire much confidence about a stable government. The same parties came together in a coalition in 2020 and ousted Khan as Prime Minister two years later. They were in government for 16 months, but ended up being largely unpopular due to the country's continuing economic crisis.

Pakistan politics after the elections is interestingly poised. The results seem to be a referendum against decades-long army interference in the country's politics. The remark of Pakistan army chief Asim Munir that the country needs "stable hands" to move on from the politics of "anarchy and polarisation" indicates the army is cooking up new things and that it would not so easily yield to popular will. Horse trading is also a likely prospect so as to woo PTI backed independents to help the PML(N) form the government.

Be that as it may, the election results prove that the people of Pakistan are ready to take a stand against the army's interference in the democratic process. Independents forming the largest group of winners in the election results is by no means a small feat.

WISDOM CORNER

I have seen many storms in my life. Most storms have caught me by surprise, so I had to learn very quickly to look further and understand that I am not capable of controlling the weather, to exercise the art of patience and to respect the fury of nature.

PAULO COELHO

If people are good only because they fear punishment, and hope for reward, then we are a sorry lot indeed.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

You will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of. You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life.

ALBERT CAMUS

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

■ **1818:** Chile's independence from Spain declared. Although the decisive victory over the Spanish did not come until April at the Battle of Maipú, Chile formally declared independence from Spain on this day in 1818, the first anniversary of Chile's victory at Chacabuco.

■ **1851:** Gold was discovered in east-central New South Wales, sparking Australia's first gold rush.

■ **1912:** The last Emperor of China abdicates at the age of 6. Puyi was expelled from the Forbidden City after a military coup in 1924. He died on October 17, 1967 aged 61.

■ **1994:** Thieves broke into the National Gallery in Oslo and stole The Scream (later recovered), one of several versions Norwegian artist Edvard Munch made of his most famous painting.

■ **2002:** Slobodan Milošević, president of Yugoslavia in 1997-2000, went on trial for war crimes in The Hague, at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia; he died four years later, before the trial had ended.

FOCUS HEALTHCARE

ENGINEERING AS CURE



Unless we view healthcare as a system with the patient as the primary customer, we are likely to fall short of the goal of affordable, quality healthcare



Rajiv Gupta

QUALITY IN HEALTHCARE IS AN EMERGING FIELD WITH MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS STRIVING TO GAIN COMPETENCE IN SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGIES

In the interim budget, the Finance Minister announced a marginal increase of Rs 3000-odd crore allocation for the health sector, along with plans to set up new medical colleges and a new pharmaceutical programme to promote research and innovation. However, the field of healthcare is going through several challenges and the issues need to be clearly understood if the desired end result is an improvement in the availability and quality of healthcare.

It is evident that the price of healthcare has gone up significantly up, while the trust of people in healthcare has gone down due to a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons may be medical negligence, the corporate model of healthcare which puts profit above patients, as well as poorly planned systems which lead to unnecessary waste and costs in the system. So, while there may be a perceived shortage of qualified doctors, unless we view healthcare as a system with the patient as the primary customer, we are likely to fall short of the goal of affordable, quality healthcare.

It is ironic that healthcare facilities, which are expected to cure people of whatever ails them, themselves are in need of help from the malady of negligence, medical errors, and healthcare acquired infections. A study conducted in the US and reported by the Institute of Medicine publication "To Err Is Human," estimated that at least 44,000 and perhaps as many as 98,000 Americans die in hospitals each year as a result of medical errors.

Quality in healthcare is an emerging field with medical professionals striving to gain competence in systems and technologies. In the context of healthcare, quality would include the consideration of medical errors, inefficiencies in procedures, wasteful activities, and a lack of sensitivity to patient needs and concerns. The tools

and techniques that can be used come from very diverse areas such as flying airplanes to the Toyota Production System, and the teachings of Dr. W.E. Deming. While it is not possible to provide an extensive coverage of all the tools that can be used to improve healthcare productivity and quality, a few techniques will be discussed in this article.

First, a very simple and effective approach used by aircraft pilots will be discussed. Before a pilot starts to taxi and take off, she conducts several checks on various systems on the aircraft to ensure that there is no malfunction. This reduces the possibility of problems once the aircraft is airborne. Dr. Atul Gawande, a well-known surgeon and author, has written a book "The Checklist Manifesto" where he discusses the application of similar checklists in healthcare, especially before starting a medical procedure or surgery. Such checklists are being implemented in several hospitals in India where the chief surgeon goes through a list of people, tasks, medications, and supplies before starting the procedure. This is done with the entire medical team in the operating theatre and if anyone feels that something is missing, they are encouraged to speak up so that a costly error or problem may be averted once

the procedure is started.

Another very simple and effective way to reduce errors in healthcare is 5S. 5S is part of the Toyota Production System. It refers to 5 practices, each starting with the letter S (Sort, Set in order, Shine, Standardise, and Sustain), which can help in improving systems from car manufacturing to healthcare. Although 5S does not involve any complicated or expensive technology, it does require discipline to sustain the benefits that come from the process. The first element of 5S (the first S) suggests that an organisation does an assessment of all materials and equipment that are present in the workplace. If there is anything that is in the system, but should not be there, we should remove it from the system. A common complaint of organisations is the lack of sufficient space. However, what they do not realise is that useful space is being occupied by things that should be removed. If we eliminate unnecessary items from the workplace, not only is additional space created, but the workplace is less cluttered, allowing workers to find things more easily. Once we have eliminated unnecessary items, the necessary items should be organised so that they are easy to identify and access. This reduces time to accom-

plish tasks as well as reduces the possibility of errors.

An example of the application of 5S in healthcare is the storage of medications which look alike, and also have similar names. It is easy for individuals to make a mistake in such cases, possibly resulting in serious harm to patients. In such situations, 5S suggests that the medications should be colour coded, and also they should be stored in different locations to minimise the possibility of a mix-up.

A third technique comes from the area of Industrial Engineering. When industrial engineers design a facility, they ensure that unnecessary waste in the form of walking or other actions of workers be eliminated. A similar approach can be taken in the design of a healthcare facility. It has been estimated that nurses in hospitals spend about 30 per cent of available time in providing care to patients. The rest of the time is spent in walking or performing other tasks such as searching for items. An application of industrial engineering design principles can reduce walk times and unnecessary tasks, freeing up more time for patient care. Also, if healthcare facilities are designed to reduce walking and movement, it will also reduce unnecessary movement of patients, which can be a major relief to them.

These are some of the approaches that can help in improving productivity of healthcare professionals, reduce instances of errors, and should lead to an overall improvement in patient experience. As Deming and other gurus of quality have always suggested, the customer is the reason why an organisation exists. If an organisation can improve the customer experience, the customer as well as the organisation will benefit. Patients are the principal customers of healthcare. It is therefore important to ensure that healthcare facilities focus on what is important for patients. ©INFA

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

Matchmakers for green transition

The pledges made at last year's COP28 in Dubai reflect the growing political will to tackle climate change head on and in an equitable way. But while governments are taking the lead in accelerating the green transition, they cannot finance it alone. Fortunately, the appetite for sustainable investment is greater than ever: environmental, social, and governance (ESG) assets are expected to reach \$50 trillion in 2025. The difficulty lies in matching investors with viable green projects.

Achieving the global goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 requires coordinated investment on a scale never before seen. Goldman Sachs recently estimated that roughly \$4 trillion - 4 per cent of global GDP - in annual clean-energy investment will be needed to reach this target every year for the next decade. Yet, as it stands, only \$1.1 trillion is being invested in decarbonisation each year, with a focus on lower-risk, subsidy-driven technologies such as wind and solar generation and electric vehicles (EVs).

Given this shortfall, and governments' limited financial resources, the private sector must find innovative ways to attract

investment in projects that will slow global warming and ensure a just energy transition for all. Success will depend on a strong incentive to deliver results for the climate and the economy; sufficient investment capital; and the development of an ecosystem of technical, finance, and operational specialists with the skills needed to execute the net-zero transition - a crucial but underappreciated variable.

Similar ecosystems in other sectors, such as biotech, have shown how a coordinated group of experts working together closely can help accelerate progress. While such a group has yet to form for green industry, owing to its fragmentation, all the ingredients are there.

A crucial part of mobilising new climate-finance flows is identifying alternative investment options that are attractive to a wide range of investors, both geographically and in terms of size. Today's biggest investors focus too much on large-scale commitments and high-impact headlines. For example, news from the recent COP28 summit centered on multibillion-dollar pledges from massive private investment groups such as

Brookfield, Apollo, and TPG, whose combined assets under management total around \$12 trillion.

The funding requirements for green projects, including in clean energy (hydrogen, carbon sequestration, biogas, battery storage, waste recycling, and more), transport (EVs), agri-tech, and hard-to-abate heavy industries, are growing rapidly. But these projects are becoming divided between large, government-led infrastructure initiatives and smaller to mid-size ones driven by the private sector. Financing the full spectrum is essential to tackle climate change effectively.

This is where digital platforms can help. By matching investors with green projects in the smaller to mid-size category (valued below \$250 million for an individual project), they could bring greater visibility to initiatives of this size while also indicating their bankability. Furthermore, such platforms should facilitate access to expert service providers - from law firms to technical advisers and ESG consultants - who can support the transaction and the project more generally, and should be facilitated by a drive to standardise documentation. Previous

efforts have centered on crowd-funding micro-projects and pushing the public sector to take the lead, and thus never attained the critical mass needed for a functioning ecosystem.

One new digital platform that could help reach this critical mass is VerdEx which has strategic partners around the world. By shining a light on bankable projects that require funding and offering an ecosystem of relevant specialists, VerdEx aims to connect institutional investors to green projects in the smaller to mid-size category and reduce friction, which would lower overall financing costs. Moreover, VerdEx will invest a portion of its revenue in an impact fund to help deliver a just and equitable energy transition.

Efforts like this will be critical to attracting a wider range of institutional investors to less gargantuan, but no less important, green projects. With governments and private investment funds remaining focused on big-ticket projects, this type of matchmaking will help us use all avenues available to reduce global emissions and meet our climate commitments.

The writer is a former CEO of Puma Energy.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Emma FitzGerald

FORTUNATELY, THE APPETITE FOR SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT IS GREATER THAN EVER: ESG ASSETS ARE EXPECTED TO REACH \$50 TRILLION IN 2025

Distressing development

Sir, The distressing revelation that women prisoners in West Bengal are becoming pregnant while in custody has prompted a robust response from the Calcutta High Court. The court, informed by the amicus curiae, has taken a significant step by transferring the matter to a criminal division bench for thorough investigation. This move reflects the gravity of the situation and the court's commitment to addressing the potential sexual exploitation and security lapses within the correctional facilities. The proposed solutions put forward by the amicus curiae include restricting male employee access to women's enclosures and implementing mandatory pregnancy testing for women entering correctional homes. While these measures aim to curb the alarming trend, careful consideration is required to ensure ethical implementation and avoid unintended consequences. The court's expressed concerns about the 196 babies born in state jails highlight the urgency of safeguarding their rights and well-being. Immediate attention is needed to establish support systems and policies that prioritise the children's welfare within the prison system. In addressing this complex issue, it's imperative to conduct a thorough investigation into its root causes and systemic vulnerabilities. Beyond security measures, a comprehensive approach should encompass rehabilitation programmes, access to healthcare, and legal aid for women prisoners. Prioritising the best interests of the children born in these circumstances is paramount, necessitating policies that provide them with proper care, education, and support as they navigate life within and beyond the prison system.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

On sticky wicket

Sir, Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supreme Arvind Kejriwal finds himself on a sticky wicket! A local Delhi court has summoned him to appear on February 17 in the Delhi excise policy scam case. The court has issued the order after finding evidence of disobeying the Enforcement Directorate's summonses. The ED had complained that Kejriwal had failed to comply with its summons in the case for the fifth consecutive time. Meanwhile, the court has refused bail to the arrested AAP leader Sanjay Singh in the Delhi excise policy scam.

NJ Ravi Chandar, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Over 300 legislators visit Ram temple, SP skips mass 'darshan'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ayodhya/Lucknow, Feb 11: Over 300 Uttar Pradesh legislators packed in 10 buses and some cars travelled Sunday from Lucknow to the new Ayodhya Ram Mandir, a state government-organised event skipped only by the Opposition Samajwadi Party.

Members from the Jayant Chaudhary's Rashtriya Lok Dal too were part of the group, their participation seen as another indication that the party is all set to switch sides from the SP to the ruling BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

Flower petals were showered on the blue state roadways luxury buses in Ayodhya as they brought the legislators. Some people even stood atop a bulldozer and showered flowers on the cars.

Legislators from both the state Assembly (current strength 399) and the legislative council (100) took part in the day trip to the temple town, about two and a half hours away.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who was in Pune earlier, flew down to Ayodhya separately to join the MLAs.

Ayodhya District Magistrate Nitish Kumar said the darshan took place "in sequence" so that ordinary devotees could continue with their own darshan. The process took about an hour and a half. This was followed by lunch. Adityanath shared a 14-minute video clip of his visit.

Some MLAs, including Speaker Satish Mahana were seen chanting 'Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram'. Some sat on the stairs of the temple, posing for group photos.

Assembly sources said about 325 legislators offered prayers. Some of them were accompa-

nied by their spouses, and altogether there were over 400 people in the group.

Jansatta Dal (Loktantrik) leader Raghuraj Pratap Singh, Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party's O P Rajbhar, Bahujan Samaj Party's Umashankar Singh and RLD's Rajpal Singh Baliyan were among those who travelled to Ayodhya.

Aradhana Mishra, one of two Congress MLAs in the state assembly, was there. The top leadership of the opposition party had skipped the January 22 event. UP Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak had the Lok Sabha polls and the 2027 assembly polls too in his thoughts.

The MLAs skipped a visit to Ayodhya's Hanumangarhi temple due to lack of time and the crowd there, Principal Secretary (Home) Sanjay Prasad said.

Deputy CMs Pathak and Keshav Prasad Maurya linked the SP's decision not to come to Ayodhya to the Opposition party's "minority appeasement policy".

The charge was also made by Adityanath in the House after Akhilesh Yadav declined the government invitation extended to all MLAs through the Speaker.

The BJP leaders also recalled the police firing on 'kar sevaks' in Ayodhya during Mulayam Singh Yadav's term as CM.

Congress MLA Aradhana Mishra, however, defended the SP's stand, saying one can go to Ayodhya whenever convenient to them.

Her party colleague in the House had earlier excused himself from the trip, saying he had of another commitment.

Opposition SP has 108 MLAs, RLD nine and SBSP six. The Congress and the Jansatta Dal (Loktantrik) have two MLAs each and the BSP one. Four seats are vacant.

In UP, 53% cancer in men linked to tobacco

The ICMR report indicated that most of these cancers belong to oral cavity, lung and other upper aero digestive section categories

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Feb 11: Data from the Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR) national cancer registry suggests that the lone cause of cancer in every second male patient in Uttar Pradesh, is tobacco.

Data shows that more than 53 per cent of all cancers caused in men were linked to tobacco.

The corresponding figure for women is about 15 per cent, while the average for the state is 37.5 per cent. The ICMR report indicated that most of these

cancers belong to oral cavity, lung and other upper aero digestive section categories.

A good majority of patients reach medical centres in advanced stages where options for curative therapies get limited.

Experts at the department of Radiotherapy and Medical Oncology, SGPGIMS emphasised on the need for 'self-restraint to keep disease away'.

"Embracing self-restraint and keeping oneself away from tobacco is the easiest and most effective preventive strategy one can adopt," said Punita Lal, sen-



ior faculty. In UP, an estimated 2.1 lakh cases of cancer appear every year, which is the highest among Indian states.

In general, the commonest cancer among men was in the mouth (20.4 per cent) while breast cancer (23.9 per cent) was the

commonest site among women. The mortality rate of cancer patients (across all categories) in UP is about 55 per cent.

Shaleen Kumar, another cancer expert, said that the theme for 2024 was 'close the care gap', while director Prof RK Dhiman explained that gap in the care for cancer patients is a global concern that needs urgent redressal.

"Each cancer patient has the right to good holistic care irrespective of their social strata. To ensure this goal for every patient, doctors, nurses, and health care providers will have to recognise, acknowledge, and address the unique needs of each patient," Kumar said.

Traffic-cum-tourist PSs will curb crimes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, Feb 11: The three newly established traffic-cum-tourist police stations in Bilaspur, Mandi and Kullu districts on the Kirtapur-Manali National Highway would check incidents of road rage and hooliganism, police said Sunday.

The traffic-cum-tourist police (TTP) stations would keep a record of habitual offenders at tourist hotspots and maintain supervision over them, and ensure that all cognisable crimes are registered, a statement issued by the police headquarters here said.

The TTP stations will also help curb activities of touts, beggars and hawkers, and make travel of the tourists hassle-free



The traffic-cum-tourist police (TTP) stations would keep a record of habitual offenders at tourist hotspots and maintain supervision over them

ters, which has become a major tourist attraction, witnessed about 65,000 tourists visiting the tunnel in over 12,000 vehicles on the Christmas Eve and the New Year 2024, police said.

The TTP stations' staff will also facilitate tourists, handle traffic congestion, conduct investigation and perform rescue during road accidents and intervene in case the tourists are involved in drug trafficking and consumption.

The other tasks involve sensitising tourists regarding the law and order system in the state, permits and security conditions, and guide them to the authorised foreign currency exchange counters and banks, among others, the statement said.

by immediate intervention in case of any mishap, it said. The police would also provide emotional support to victims in case they fall prey to any mischief or wrongdoing and impart information to tourists about locations, transport systems, and facilities in the destinations, among others, the statement said. These police stations were approved in August last year in

Baghed in Bilaspur, Nerchowk in Mandi and Bhunter in Kullu to ensure smooth and safe movement of traffic on the Kirtapur-Manali National Highway.

The creation of these specialised police stations underscores the government's commitment to prioritising public safety and promoting tourism as Atal Tunnel, Rohtang near Manali, spanning 9.2 kilometre-



A farmer sprays pesticides in his field in the backdrop of the Taj Mahal in Agra, Uttar Pradesh

HPSHIVA project transforms Bagehra village

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hamirpur (HP), Feb 11: Thousands of guava saplings have been planted in orchards developed on the barren land of several farmers in the once barren Bagehra village in Hamirpur district of Himachal Pradesh under a state government project.

Under the Himachal Pradesh Subtropical Horticulture, Irrigation, and Value Addition (HPSHIVA) Project, a target has been set to plant fruit trees on 834 hectares of land in 65 clusters in Hamirpur district, said Deputy Director of Horticulture Department, Rajeshwar Parmar. He further noted that with passage of time, the farmers of other areas of the district will also adopt horticulture activities in a big way.

Villagers are being motivated to take advantage of the SHIVA project, Parmar said, adding that the entire expense is being borne by the Horticulture department and irrigation arrangements were made with the help of Jal Shakti Department, Parmar added.

Located on the left bank of River Beas in Bir-Bagehra gram panchayat, the Bagehra village has become a mini garden with fruits sown in an area of 30 canals and about 1,667 guava saplings have been planted in orchards developed on the barren land of several farmers.

These plants have started bearing fruits. "It seems like the whole village was in a state of unity and a new spring has arrived for them," said Santosh Sharma who is growing guava on his barren land.

Earlier, local people had to go outside to earn their livelihood. But now, the situation has changed, said another farmer Ravinder Nath.

He said that due to inclement weather, problem of stray animals and wild animals, they had started abandoning the cultivation of traditional crops.

Ayodhya's unique bank offers peace, faith, instead of money

The spiritual bank, which was set up in November 1970 by Mahant Nriyta Gopal Das, the chief of the Shri Ramjanmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust, has over 35,000 account-holders in India and abroad including the US, the UK, Canada, Nepal, Fiji, the UAE and other countries



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ayodhya, Feb 11: There is a unique bank here in the land of Lord Ram where money does not matter and the only return its 35,000 account-holders get is peace of mind, faith and spirituality!

Catching the attention of the devotees and tourists visiting the newly constructed Ram temple is "International Shree Sitaram Bank". The deposits here are booklets with "Sitaram" scribbled on all pages.

The spiritual bank, which was set up in November 1970 by Mahant Nriyta Gopal Das, the chief of the Shri

Ramjanmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust, has over 35,000 account-holders in India and abroad including the US, the UK, Canada, Nepal, Fiji, the UAE and other countries.

The bank has a collection of 20,000 crore 'Sitaram' booklets from the devotees of Lord Ram.

According to Punit Ram Das Maharaj, the manager of the bank, the number of daily visitors at the bank has increased after the consecration ceremony of the grand temple last month. "The bank provides free booklets and red pens to devotees and keeps track of each account. One has to write 'Sitaram'

at least 5 lakh times to get an account opened in the bank and then a passbook is issued."

"There are 136 branches of the bank across India and even abroad. The account holders also send us the booklets by post and we maintain the ledger here," Puneet Ram Das told PTI. Puneet Ram Das explained that it is believed that by writing the name 84 lakh times, one can attain 'Moksha'. Jeetu Nagar, from Gaya in Bihar, who has been visiting the bank for 14 years, said this is his only form of prayers.

"Instead of praying at a temple, I practice this and it has always worked for me whenever I have felt low or have been in a trouble. I write it throughout the year and deposit at the bank once a year. There is an option to send by post too but I prefer to visit myself," he said in a statement.

Nagar said he has already deposited booklets with a name count of 1.37 crore. Suman Das, another account holder from Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh said, he has scribbled 'Sitaram' 25 lakh times.

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|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा Bank of Baroda | | REGIONAL STRESSED ASSETS RECOVERY BRANCH : SAMBALPUR Ground Floor, At: Christian Para, G.M. College Chowk, Dist.: Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN - 768001 | | E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE | |
| E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 6(2) & 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to be held on 15.03.2024 from 2.00 P.M. to 6.00 P.M. | | | | | |
| Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrowers and Guarantors that the below described Immovable properties Mortgage/Charged to the Secured Creditor, will be sold on the basis of "PHYSICAL POSSESSION" of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", and "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis for recovery of dues in below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrowers/Guarantors/Secured Assets/Dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below- | | | | | |
| PROPERTY INSPECTION DATE AND TIME : 08.03.2024 time 11.00 AM to 1.00 PM. Status of Possession of Properties: Physical, Encumbrance Known to Bank - NIL Last Date of Submission of online payment of EMD : 14.03.2024 latest by 2.00 P.M. The linking of interested property started: after 5.00 P.M. on 14.03.2024 till 2.00 P.M. on 15.03.2024 The scheduled date of Auction to be held on 15.03.2024 from 2.00 P.M. to 6.00 P.M. | | | | | |
| Sl. No. | ROURKELA MAIN BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantors | Description of the Property & the Owner | Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increase Amount | Total Dues (Type of Possession) | |
| 1. | Borrower: M/s. Shree Jaganath Minerals, represented by its Partners: 1) Mr. Anup Singhal, 2) Mr. Mulchand Bidolia, 3) Mr. Om Prakash Prasad, Koshala Hyundai Complex, Panposh Road, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundergarh, PIN-770039 / Guarantors: 1) Mr. Anup Singhal, S/o: Mr. Mulchand Bidolia, 2) Mr. Mulchand Bidolia, S/o: Mr. Chaitram Bidolia, Both are at W-20, Civil Township, 7 & 8 Area, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundergarh, PIN-769004, 3) Mr. Om Prakash Prasad, S/o: Late Bharat Prasad, Janta Niwas Lane, Daily Market, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundergarh, PIN-769001 | Equitable mortgage of property consisting of MS Khata No.: 183, Plot No.: 250, 251, 249/339 & 150, Area: Ac. 1.610 Dec., Mouza: Besarapada, P.S: Biramitrapur No.: 17, Tahasil: Panposh No-89, Dist.: Sundergarh, standing in the name of Mr. Anup Singhal, S/o: Mr. Mulchand Bidolia. The plot is Bounded by North: Road, South: Forest Land, East: Forest Land, West: Forest Land & Agriculture Land | ₹14,76,000/- ₹1,47,600/- ₹20,000/- | ₹ 2,08,60,811/- as on 05.02.2024 plus further interest and charges, legal expenses thereon from 05.02.2024 till full payment (Physical) | |
| For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.bankofbaroda.com/e-auction.htm and https://ibapi.in Also prospective bidders may contact the Authorized Officer on Mob: 7278141330 | | | | | |
| STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE TO THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS FOR SUBSEQUENT SALE UNDER RULE 6(2) & 8(6) AS PER AMENDED SARFAESI ACT 2002 | | | | | |
| This may also be treated as notice under rule 6(2) & 8(6) of security interest (Enforcements) Rules, 2002 to the Borrowers / Guarantors of the said loan about holding of E-Auction sale on the above mentioned date | | | | | |
| Place: Sambalpur Date: 09.02.2024 | | | | | |
| | | | | | Scan here for more details Authorised Officer Bank of Baroda |



A boy does a backflip, as displaced Palestinians, who fled their houses due to Israeli strikes, take shelter in a tent camp, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, at the border with Egypt, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip



People dance during the opening ceremony of the traditional Opera Ball in Vienna, Austria



A group of migrants wait to be assisted by the Red Cross after disembarking at the Port of Arguineguin, on the island of Gran Canaria, Spain



Tourists from South Korea jump as they take a group photo near Elephant Rock in the Valley of Fire State Park, Nevada



A person holding an umbrella watches the Los Angeles river during heavy rains in Los Angeles, California



A farmer plucks flowers in an orchard at Dhantala in Nadia district



Preparations underway for the launch of ISRO's GSLV-F14/INSAT-3DS mission, at the Satish Dhawan Space Station, in Sriharikota



A woman clicks a selfie with tulips at a lawn near Shanti Path, in New Delhi

REUTERS/PTI PHOTOS

national

of the day quote

No subsidised power will be provided to any minister, officer or government employee in Assam
HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

The Narendra Modi government has conferred Bharat Ratna on former Bihar chief minister Karpooi Thakur to get votes from the eastern state in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls
UDDHAV THACKERAY | SHIV SENA (UBT) CHIEF

Narendra Modi has worked to gain respect for the country's cultural heritage on the world stage. Modiji has worked for the revival of several of our cultural centres such as Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, Kashi Vishwanath Corridor in Kashi, Mahakal Corridor (Mahakal Lok Corridor in Ujjain), and resurrection of Kedarnath and Badrinath Dham
AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Gujarat govt employee ends life

Patan: A Gujarat government employee Sunday ended his life by jumping off the terrace of his two-storey office building in Harij taluka of Patan district, police said. VO Patel, who served as the mamlatdar of Harij taluka, died by suicide at his workplace around 9:30 am, said Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) DD Chaudhary. "We have not found any suicide note in his possession and the reason behind the extreme step is not yet known. We are investigating the case thoroughly," he said.

BJP names 14 RS candidates

New Delhi: The BJP Sunday named 14 candidates for the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls including former Union minister R P N Singh and outgoing MP Sudhanshu Trivedi from Uttar Pradesh and its Uttarakhand unit president Mahendra Bhatt from the hill state. None of the Union ministers, whose terms are coming to an end, were named in the list amid a strong possibility that many of them will contest the Lok Sabha polls. However, the party is yet to name many candidates.

Jawan injured

Bijapur: A jawan of the Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) was injured when a pressure improvised explosive device (IED) planted by Naxalites exploded in Bijapur district Sunday, police said. Three IEDs, weighing 5 kg each, were also recovered from the blast site between Dumripalnar and Timenar villages, an official said. The explosion occurred around 9 am when a team of security personnel was out on an area domination operation, he said.

Man arrested

New Delhi: Shahid (44) was arrested for allegedly killing his 58-year-old cousin following a dispute over Rs 10,000 in northeast Delhi, police said Sunday. According to police, the incident occurred on Saturday afternoon when Shahid, a butcher by profession, stabbed his cousin multiple times. "On Saturday, we got information that a man has been stabbed at 1:30 pm and died during treatment. The victim was identified as Zahooruddin. An FIR was registered after the deceased's son filed a police complaint against Shahid and further investigation was taken up," Deputy Commissioner of Police (northeast) Joy Tirkey said.



Value addition to farm produce will bring qualitative improvements in the lives of farmers
JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT TO VISIT GUJARAT, RAJASTHAN

President Droupadi Murmu will visit Gujarat and Rajasthan from February 12 to 14, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said Sunday. The President will grace the 200th Janmotsav-Gyan Jyoti Parv Smaranotsav Samaroh on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati at Tankara in Gujarat Monday



Farmers' stir: Borders sealed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Chandigarh, Feb 11: Ahead of a proposed 'Delhi Chalo' march by farmer unions Tuesday, authorities in Haryana and Delhi fortified borders with neighbouring states at many places by putting up concrete blocks, road spike barriers and barbed wires and deploying thousands of police personnel, besides imposing prohibitory orders. While the Centre has invited farmer unions for another meeting to discuss their demands February 12, the move to block borders to prevent the protesters from entering the national capital drew flak from opposition parties and farmer groups Sunday. Authorities, however, defended the restrictions, citing the 2020 agitation against the now-repealed three farm laws that had stretched to over a year. The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and several farmer associations, mostly from UP, Haryana and Punjab, have called the protest to press the Centre to accept their demands, including the enactment of a law to guarantee a minimum

support price (MSP) for crops. Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra shared a video of road spike barriers being placed on state borders and said, "Is laying nails-thorns in the path of farmers 'amritkaal' or 'anyaykaal'?" Punjab Chief Minister and AAP leader Bhagwant Mann likened roads to enter Delhi and Haryana to the India-Pakistan border. "I urge the Centre to hold talks with farmers and accept their genuine demands... There are as many wires put up on the roads (Punjab-Haryana borders) to go to Delhi as there are at the border with Pakistan," said Mann. The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) also slammed the blocking of roads. "Why is the government scared? Huge barricading is being done. Is this democracy?" its leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal said. "If the situation turns bad, it will be the responsibility of the Khattar government," he said in a video message. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 were imposed in the northeast district of the national capital Sunday, directing the police to make all efforts to prevent protesters from entering Delhi.

PROHIBITORY ORDERS UNDER SECTION 144 WERE IMPOSED IN THE NORTHEAST DISTRICT OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL SUNDAY, DIRECTING THE POLICE TO MAKE ALL EFFORTS TO PREVENT PROTESTERS FROM ENTERING DELHI
BARRICADES WERE ALSO PUT UP AND POLICE CHECKING INTENSIFIED ALONG THE GHAZIPUR BORDER, ONE OF THE SITES OF THE 2020-21 FARMERS' STIR



Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri during the flagging off ceremony of the 57th Statesman Vintage & Classic Car Rally, at Statesman House, Connaught Place, in New Delhi, Sunday

MAMATA STILL PART OF INDIA: PILOT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Raigarh, Feb 11: Amid some INDIA bloc constituents switching sides to the NDA, Congress leader Sachin Pilot Sunday said the opposition alliance is "strong" and the BJP is attempting a "frantic rejig" of the political landscape as it is worried over the collective strength of the coalition. Pilot also said West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee is very much part of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), and expressed confidence that a way forward will be found in seat-sharing talks with her party. He also said the BJP talking about 370 seats for itself and 400-plus for the NDA was more of "bravado and rhetoric" than a practical assessment on the ground. As the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra travels through Chhattisgarh, the AICC general secretary in-charge of the state dismissed suggestions



A ONE-ON-ONE CONTEST BETWEEN THE INDIA BLOC AND THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE (NDA) IS TILTED IN FAVOUR OF THE OPPOSITION COALITION, PILOT CLAIMED
THE INDIA BLOC IS 'STRONG' AND VERY SOON IT WILL ANNOUNCE THE SEAT-SHARING ARRANGEMENTS IN DIFFERENT STATES, HE SAID

that the yatra was adversely affecting the poll preparations of the party and asserted that talks for seat-sharing with allies were going on simultaneously. "As we speak, we are finalising seat-sharing agreements with most of our allies in different states. So it is not a question of either/or. The yatra is going on but other things are being handled by the AICC leadership and the state in-charges. The Congress president (Mallikarjun Kharge) is himself overseeing all these meetings and negotiations that are being

held," Pilot said. "Our attempt is to make sure we fight unitedly. Yes we have had some that have left our alliance but largely the alliance is intact and very soon we will be announcing the seat sharing and a future roadmap that the alliance will come up with," the Congress general secretary said. Asked about suggestions that the INDIA bloc is unravelling with JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar crossing over to the NDA, RLD's Jayant Chaudhary's imminent switch-over and Banerjee attacking the Congress, Pilot said,

"Look at the amount of partners that left the NDA? Akali Dal, Shiv Sena, PDP, AIADMK. So the number of those leaving the NDA is far larger than some of those people who may not be with us today." "But the INDIA bloc is strong and Mamata Banerjee is a part of the INDIA alliance, we are having discussions with the TMC," the 46-year-old leader said. He said Nitish Kumar's switch over to the NDA raises the question of credibility also and he would have to answer to the people of Bihar when he goes to polls. "People may come and go, one or two moving sides will not make an impact on the effort we are putting in as the INDIA bloc. I can assure you that with regards to the INDIA bloc the final outcome will be a positive one. Every political party has its own turf to protect. A regional party will not want to cede too much space, as a national party, we also have an obligation to our state units. So there is always going to be some give and take," he said.



Police barricades put up at Ghazipur border in view of farmers' 'Delhi Chalo March', in New Delhi, Sunday

EC snatched NCP from its founders: Pawar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Feb 11: Senior politician Sharad Pawar Sunday said the Election Commission's decision to allot the NCP name and symbol to Ajit Pawar-led group was "surprising" as the poll body has "snatched" the party from the hands of its founders and gave it to others. He also said the programme and ideology are important for the people while a symbol is useful for a limited period. In a setback to Sharad Pawar, the Election Commission on February 6 recognised the Ajit Pawar faction as the real Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and also allotted the party



symbol 'clock' to the group led by him. "I am confident that people will not support the Election Commission ruling against which we have approached the Supreme Court," Sharad Pawar said in Pune. The Election Commission not only snatched our party but also handed over our party to others, he said. "The EC snatched the party from the hands of those who founded

and built it and gave it to others; such a thing never happened before in the country," said Pawar, who founded the NCP in 1999 after breaking away from Congress. Pawar, who had served as chief minister of Maharashtra and also as union minister, recalled that he had contested his first election on the symbol of 'a pair of bullocks'. "The programme and ideology are more important than any symbol," he said. The EC had said that its decision followed the laid-out tests of maintainability of such a petition which included tests of aims and objectives of the party constitution, the test of party constitution and tests of majority, both organisational and legislative.

Haldwani violence: 25 more arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Haldwani, Feb 11: Twenty-five more people have been arrested in connection with the Haldwani violence over the past 24 hours, Nainital SSP Prahlad Meena said. Most of these arrests have been made from within the limits of the Nainital district. Ammunition they had allegedly looted from the Banbhoolpura police station has also been recovered from them, the SSP said. Asked whether the arrests in-

cluded that of the key accused in the case Abdul Malik, the SSP said he will also be arrested soon. Malik had allegedly built the illegal structure whose demolition triggered the violence in the town leaving six people dead and more than 100 injured, including police and media personnel. The arrest of 25 more people takes the total number of arrests so far to 30, he said. CM Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed his determination to deal sternly with those involved in the violence.

Stop referring to trial courts as 'lower courts': SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 11: The Supreme Court has asked its registry to stop referring to trial courts as 'lower courts'. The Apex court said even the record of trial courts should not be referred to as 'lower court record'. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan passed the order while hearing a plea filed by two persons challenging the Allahabad High Court verdict which dismissed their appeal against conviction and life sentence awarded to them in a murder case of 1981. "It will be appropriate if the registry of this court stops referring to the trial courts as 'lower courts'. Even the record of the trial court should not be referred to as lower court record (LCR). Instead, it should be referred as the trial court record (TCR). The registrar (judicial) to take a note of this order," the bench said in its order passed February 8. The top court asked its registry to call for the soft copy of trial court record of the case concerned and posted the matter for hearing August 6.

El Nino conditions weakening: Meteorologists

WEATHER SCIENTISTS IN INDIA, TRACKING THE DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY, HAVE SAID THAT LA NINA CONDITIONS SETTING IN BY JUNE-AUGUST COULD MEAN MONSOON RAINS WOULD BE BETTER THIS YEAR THAN THE LAST YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 11: After delivering a warm 2023, El Nino conditions are set to dissipate by June this year raising hopes of "bountiful monsoon" rains this season, meteorologists have predicted. At least two global climate agencies announced last week that El Nino, the warming of the equatorial Pacific Ocean that impacts weather across the world, has started to weaken and there is a probability of La Nina conditions setting in by August. Weather scientists in India, tracking the developments closely, have said that La Nina conditions setting in by June-August could mean monsoon rains would be better this year than the last year. However, they also struck a word of caution citing the 'spring predictability barrier', considered

a forecasting headache as weather models have a harder time making accurate forecasts. Madhavan Rajeevan, former secretary in the Ministry of Earth Sciences, said there is a good probability of La Nina developing by June-July. "Even if El Nino transitions into ENSO-neutral conditions, the monsoon this year should be better than the last year," he said. The southwest monsoon delivers about 70 per cent of India's annual rainfall, critical for the agriculture sector that accounts for about 14 per cent of the GDP and employs more than half of its 1.4 billion population. The United States' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said last week that there is a 79 per cent chance that El Nino will transition to ENSO-neutral by April-June and a 55 per cent chance of La Nina developing in



June-August. The European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) confirmed that El Nino has started weakening. La Nina is the cyclic counterpart to El Nino. "Currently, we cannot say anything with certainty. Some models indicate La Nina, while some predict ENSO-neutral conditions. However, all models suggest an end to El Nino," D Sivananda Pai, a sen-

ior scientist at the India Meteorological Department, said. NOAA, the American national forecaster, said there was a historical tendency for La Nina to follow strong El Nino events. "The forecast team is in agreement with the latest model guidance, with some uncertainty around the timing of transitions to ENSO-neutral and, following that, La Nina," the US agency said. "But even if El Nino transi-

tions into ENSO-neutral conditions, the monsoon this year should be better than last year," the senior meteorologist said. India received "below-average" cumulative rainfall of 820 mm compared to the long-period average of 868.6 mm in the 2023 monsoon season, which was attributed to a strengthening El Nino. Assuming El Nino continues through the first half of 2024, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) earlier predicted that 2024 would be warmer than 2023, Pai said. "If La Nina develops, 2024 would not be warmer than 2023," he said. Roxy Mathew Koll, a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, said latest forecasts indicate a quick transition to La Nina by June, which could result in an on-time and bountiful monsoon.



international



I would like to express my most heartfelt thanks for the many messages of support and good wishes I have received in recent days
CHARLES III | KING OF THE UK

FINNS VOTE

Voters in Finland are choosing Sunday between two experienced politicians to be their next president, whose main task will be to steer the Nordic country's foreign and security policy now that it is a member of NATO, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine



of the day quote

The threat posed by China offers an opportunity for the US and India to make strong agreements, including a genuine Free Trade Agreement to ensure that the two countries will look at each other as first partners
DARRELL ISSA | US LAWMAKER

I hope you can imagine how it felt to read that attack -- not just as Joe's wife, but as Beau's mother. I don't know what this Special Counsel was trying to achieve
JILL BIDEN | US FIRST LADY

We consider use of peaceful technologies as our given right. Such interventionist statements (France, Germany, Britain condemnation) will not make a dent in Iran's determination to advance in science and technology
NASSER KANAANI | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, IRAN

'Russian forces using Starlink'

Russian forces in occupied Ukraine are using Starlink terminals produced by Elon Musk's SpaceX for satellite internet in what is beginning to look like their "systemic" application, Kyiv's main military intelligence agency said Sunday

AGENCIES

Kyiv, Feb 11: Russian forces launched 45 drones over Ukraine Sunday in a five-and-a-half-hour barrage, officials said, as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy continued the reshuffle of his war cabinet as the war enters its third year. In a statement, the Ukrainian air force said it had shot down 40 of the Iranian-made Shahed drones over nine different regions, including on the outskirts of the country's capital, Kyiv.

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service said Sunday that attacking Russian forces had been found using Starlink terminals to aid their attack. It released what it said was a recording of an intercepted conversation between two Russian soldiers as proof. Starlink terminals, which use a series of satellites run by Elon Musk's company SpaceX to provide high-speed communications, have been vital in giving Ukraine's military an edge over invading Russian troops.

However, multiple reports of Russian troops using Starlink on the front line in occupied Ukraine had begun to surface in the Ukrainian media in recent weeks.

They prompted Space X to release a statement on social media February 8, saying that it did not "do business of any kind with the Russian government or its military".

However, Western tech companies have regularly been

Donald Trump's NATO comments draw scorn

Top western officials criticised former president Donald Trump Sunday after he suggested the US might not protect NATO allies who aren't spending enough on defence from a potential Russian invasion. "Any suggestion that allies will not defend each other undermines all of our security, including that of the US, and puts American and European soldiers at increased risk", said NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in a written statement. "Any attack on NATO will be met with a united and forceful response," he added, reacting to remarks Saturday by Trump, who is likely to be the Republican nominee in this year's US presidential election. Polish Defence Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz also weighed in. "NATO's motto 'one for all, all for one' is a concrete commitment. Undermining the credibility of allied countries means weakening the entire NATO," he wrote on social media platform X.

fought among Russia's arsenal as Moscow has become more skilled at evading sanctions, often importing goods via third countries.

In a statement on Telegram Saturday, Zelenskyy said that he hoped to "reboot" the upper levels of Ukraine's armed forces with experienced combat commanders.

PAKISTAN ELECTION Courts flooded with petitions



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 11: Pakistan courts have been flooded with petitions by losing candidates who challenged the provisional results in their constituencies within days after the highly polarised general elections in the country, it emerged Sunday.

Though Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) emerged as the single largest party in the February 8 elections, the number of independent candidates, a vast majority of them backed by jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) party, were the single largest block of winners.

The PTI claimed that its supported candidates have won the maximum number of seats but the results were manipulated to deprive it of the majority, and in order to turn the tide, its losing candidates have thronged the courts.

According to a report in the Dawn newspaper, a vast majority of those filing challenges against results are PTI-backed in-

dependents, including high-profile politicians such as former Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi and his wife Qaisera, former Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) finance minister Taimoor Jhagra and ex-KP speaker Mahmood Jan. Islamabad-based lawyer Shuaib Shaheen, former Punjab health minister Dr Yasmin Rashid, as well as Rehana Dar, mother of Usman Dar who was in-charge youth affairs in the PTI government.

In Lahore, the victories of PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif, his daughter Maryam Nawaz, PML-N Attaullah Tarar and former defence minister Khawaja Asif were assailed in separate petitions before the high court, which allege manipulation of Form 47s, which showed consolidated results of every constituency. T Maryam's victory from NA-119 has been challenged by independent candidate Shahzad Farooq, alleging that the presiding officers did not provide Form 45, and the returning officer issued the result in his absence.

SHORT TAKES

Nigerian bank CEO killed in chopper crash

California: The CEO of one of Nigeria's largest banks was killed Friday when a helicopter he was riding in crashed in the Mojave Desert in Southern California. Herbert Wigwe, CEO of Access Bank, was among six people on board when the helicopter crashed shortly after 10 pm. His death was confirmed by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, director general of the World Trade Organisation and formerly Nigeria's finance minister, in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter. The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department said the helicopter crashed east of Interstate 15 near Halloran Springs Road, which is near the California-Nevada border and about 128.75 kilometres from Las Vegas.

Hungary Prez quits

Budapest: Hungarian President Katalin Novak, a close ally of Prime Minister Viktor Orban, announced her resignation Saturday following outrage over a pardon granted to a man implicated in a child sexual abuse case. Soon afterwards another Orban supporter, former justice minister Judit Varga, announced she was withdrawing from public life over the affair. The announcements followed growing pressure from opposition politicians and protests outside the presidential palace Friday evening. "I am resigning my post," said 46-year-old Novak, acknowledging that she had made a mistake.

SNIPPETS

Trump mocks Haley for absence of her husband

Washington: Former US president Donald Trump has mocked his Republican rival Nikki Haley over the absence of her husband, who is deployed overseas, drawing a sharp reaction from the Indian-American politician who said the person who disrespects military families has no business being commander-in-chief. Haley's husband Major Michael Haley, a commissioned officer with the South Carolina National Guard, is currently on a year-long deployment with the 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, which is providing support in the Horn of Africa. He deployed in June. The war of words between two Republican presidential candidates started with a Trump rally Saturday in South Carolina where the 77-year-old former president, seemingly unaware of his deployment, when started questioning his whereabouts.

Musk plans to shift 1 mn people to Mars

New Delhi: Billionaire Elon Musk Sunday announced plans to shift one million people to Mars. "We are mapping out a game plan to get a million people to Mars," Musk wrote in a post on X.com. "Civilisation only passes the single-planet Great Filter when Mars can survive even if Earth supply ships stop coming," he added. He said this in response to a post which said "Starship is the largest rocket ever built and it'll take us to Mars". "One day, a trip to Mars will be like a flight across the country," replied Musk, to users who asked about the launch of Starship to the Red Planet. Last week, the SpaceX founder said that the "Starship should be able to make it to the moon in less than 5 years".

Al-Shabab claims attack in Somali

Dubai: The al-Qaida-linked militant group al-Shabab claimed an attack that killed four Emirati troops and a Bahraini military officer on a training mission at a military base in the Somali capital, authorities said Sunday. The attack Saturday targeted the troops at the General Gordon Military Base in Mogadishu. Details about the attack and whether it killed others remained scarce Sunday, though Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud offered his condolences to the UAE for the loss of its troops. Early Sunday, the UAE's state-run WAM news agency reported the killing of three of its troops and the Bahraini officer in a "terrorist act". A fourth later died en route back to the Emirates, WAM reported.



Performers take part in a parade involving costumes, lion dances and floats, to mark Lunar New Year, also known as the Spring Festival or Chinese New Year, in London

Palestinian refugees in West Bank fear UNRWA closure

REUTERS

Jerusalem, Feb 11: In refugee camps in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Palestinians relying on the UN agency UNRWA for schooling and healthcare fear key services will stop as donors have paused funding over accusations staff members took part in Hamas' October 7 attack.

Most of the focus on the fate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees has been on its emergency operations in war-devastated Gaza where it is critical to an aid effort for the enclave's 2.3 million inhabitants. But the agency is also a lifeline for Palestinian refugees across the Middle East, including in the West Bank where it serves more than 870,000 people, running 96 schools and 43 primary healthcare facilities.

"If they cut off aid from UNRWA, there will be no help of any kind for residents, espe-

cially in refugee camps because they rely on UNRWA," said Mohammad al-Masri, a resident of Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem.

UNRWA announced last month that it had dismissed staff after Israel presented it with allegations that 12 of its 13,000 employees in Gaza had taken part in the October 7 assault by Hamas fighters who stormed border fences and attacked Israeli towns.

The Islamist militant group killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and dragged more than 250 back into Gaza as hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Israel's aerial and ground war in the Hamas-run enclave has killed more than 28,000 people there, health authorities there say. Accusations against UNRWA



DONORS PAUSED UNRWA FUNDING OVER HAMAS ALLEGATIONS
AGENCY SERVES 8,70,000 PEOPLE IN ISRAELI-OCCUPIED WEST BANK
UNRWA BOUND UP WITH FATE OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

have reignited longstanding Israeli demands to dismantle an agency which both sides see as closely linked to a refugee problem dating to Israel's creation in 1948 that lies at the heart of their decades-long conflict.

Some 7,00,000 Palestinians, half the Arab population of what 75 years ago was British-ruled

Palestine, fled or were expelled, many spilling into neighbouring Arab countries where they and their descendants remain. The tent camps they lived in after 1948 evolved into built-up townships.

With no lasting settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the horizon, they retain the status of refugees, including in the West Bank and Gaza, and assert

a right to return to their homes within Israel's borders.

Israel has always rejected that, saying they chose to leave and have no right to go back.

Last month Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu renewed demands for UNRWA to be shut down, saying "it seeks to preserve the issue of Palestinian refugees".

REFUGEES Daoud Faraj was 10 years old when his family became refugees. Now 85, he has lived most of his life in the West Bank's Aida refugee camp near Jerusalem.

"Cutting off aid will hurt many people. Not only me," he said, referring to the health services and schools that UNRWA manages in the camp.

The agency has said it hopes donors will review their funding decisions in a few weeks after a preliminary report into Israeli accusations and UNRWA's handling of them.

It has said that it may run out

of funds to operate services by the end of February if funding is not restored.

"It is possible for UNRWA to be forced into the worst scenario, which is a nightmare for us, and it is to stop our operations. Not only in Gaza, (but) in other locations where we operate," said agency spokesperson Kazem Abu Khalaf.

An internal UN investigation has been launched as the United States - the largest donor to UNRWA - and other countries paused funding following the allegations.

Outside UNRWA's West Bank operations hub in Jerusalem, the city's deputy mayor Aryeh King spoke at a protest by Israelis demanding that the agency be shuttered.

"It is time that the government of Israel decides to deal with this organisation like an enemy," King said as demonstrators held up placards reading "Expel UNRWA".

9 Pakistanis killed in shooting in Iran

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Tehran, Feb 11: Nine Pakistani nationals were killed in an armed attack in Sikran, located in Iran's Sistan and Baluchistan province Sunday, a provincial security source said, a media report said.

The incident happened as three gunmen opened fire toward the Pakistani nationals, according to the province's deputy governor, Alireza Marhamati, Alireza Marhamati, Mehr News reported.

He added that three people were injured during the incident.

Condemning the tragic incident, Marhamati expressed sympathy with the families of the victims and the Pakistani people.

Iranian police forces were immediately dispatched to the scene but the gunmen managed to flee the scene of the incident. The details of the incident are being investigated.

business

of the day quote

We are seeing some logistical challenges because of the Red Sea issue. And there may be some increase in costs because of risk or because of rerouting of vessels but it should not be significant

RAHUL BHARTI | EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CORPORATE AFFAIRS), MSI

We are very optimistic in terms of the medium to long-term demand, which is coming in. We are seeing that private sector capex cycles have really started to kick in

ANSHUMAN SINGHANIA | MD, JK TYRE & INDUSTRIES

Utilising agricultural residues like paddy straw for bioenergy production and soil enrichment instead of burning those offers a dual benefit as it provides renewable energy sources while enhancing soil health

GAURAV KEDIA | CHAIRMAN, INDIAN BIOGAS ASSOCIATION

SHORT TAKES

ONGC profit falls

New Delhi: State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Sunday reported 14 per cent drop in net profit for the third quarter ended December 31 as oil and gas prices fell. Standalone net profit of ₹9,536 crore in October-December 2023 (third quarter of 2023-24 fiscal year) was 13.7 per cent lower than ₹11,045 crore earning in the same period of previous financial year, the company said. The earning was lower as price realised for crude oil the firm produced and sold in the quarter fell 6.4 per cent to \$81.59 per barrel. Gas price too was 24.2 per cent lower at \$6.5 per mmbtu.

4 firms' mcap up

New Delhi: Four of the top-10 most valued firms together added ₹2.18 lakh crore in market valuation last week, with Life Insurance Corporation and State Bank of India emerging as the biggest gainers. From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and SBI were the gainers. They collectively added ₹2,18,598.29 crore in market capitalisation. On the other hand, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Bharti Airtel, Hindustan Unilever and ITC faced erosion from their valuation to the tune of ₹1,06,631.39 crore. Last week, the BSE benchmark declined by 490.14 points or 0.67 per cent. In the ranking of top-10 most valued firms, Reliance Industries continued to rule the chart followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Infosys, LIC, State Bank of India, Airtel, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

Large-cap MFs garner ₹1,287cr

New Delhi: Investors flocked to large-cap oriented mutual funds with influx of ₹1,287 crore in January, making it the highest fund infusion in 19 months, as a significant run-up in small and mid caps prompted them to book profit. This is a huge turnaround following a net outflow of ₹281 crore in December. Also, the quantum was 80 per cent higher than inflows of ₹716 crore in January last year. The latest inflow helped push the asset base of large-cap equity category by 26 per cent to ₹3 lakh crore at January-end from ₹2.38 lakh crore a year ago.



Tariff concessions on gold, accounting for \$1.8 billion or 80 per cent of India's imports from Peru in FY23, is the most challenging issue for India

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | FOUNDER, GTRI

CLIMATE ACTION: APSEZ BAGS TOP SPOT

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) Sunday said it has secured top position for its climate actions and environmental performance in assessments done by four global rating agencies. The assessments were done by CDP, S&P, Sustainalytics and Moody's



CRISIS CONTINUES

Another Paytm arm in soup

Govt examining FDI flow from China in Paytm Payments Services days after banning Paytm Payments Bank Ltd

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 11: The government is examining foreign direct investment from China in Paytm Payments Services Ltd (PPSL), the payment aggregator subsidiary of One97 Communications Ltd, sources said.

In November 2020, PPSL had applied for licence with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a payment aggregator under the guidelines on Regulation of Payment Aggregators and Payment Gateways.

However, in November 2022, RBI rejected PPSL's application and asked the company to re-submit it, so as to comply with Press Note 3 under FDI rules.

One97 Communications Ltd (OCL) has investment from Chinese firm Ant Group Co.

Subsequently, the company filed the required application December 14, 2022 with Government of India for past downward investment from OCL into the company in order to comply with Press Note 3 prescribed under FDI guidelines.



PAYTM GETS MERCHANTS' BACKING

Fintech firm One97 Communications, which owns the Paytm brand, has received support from merchants, and it assured them of continuity of services without any disruption, the company said in a blog Sunday. The blog post came amid the recent crisis around Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL), an associate company of Paytm, which has been barred by the RBI from accepting deposits or top-ups in customer accounts, wallets, FASTags and other instruments after February 29. Withdrawal or utilisation of balances by its customers from their accounts, including savings bank accounts, current accounts, prepaid instruments, FASTags, and National Common Mobility Cards, are to be permitted without any restrictions up to their available balance.

An inter-ministerial committee is examining investments from China in PPSL and decision would be taken on the FDI issue after due consideration and comprehensive examination, sources said.

Under Press Note 3, the government had made its prior approval mandatory for foreign investments in any sector from countries that share land border with India to curb opportunistic takeovers of domestic firms following the Covid-19 pandemic.

When contacted, a Paytm

spokesperson said PPSL applied for an online Payment Aggregator (PA) application for online merchants and the regulator subsequently asked PPSL to seek necessary approvals for past downward investment and resubmit the application.

"This is part of the regular process where everybody applying for a payment aggregator licence has to get FDI approval," the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson said PPSL followed the relevant guidelines and submitted all relevant docu-

ments to the regulator within the stipulated time.

During the pending process, PPSL was allowed to continue with its online payment aggregation business for existing partners without onboarding any new merchants.

"Since then the ownership structure has changed. The Paytm founder remains the largest stakeholder in the company. Ant Financial reduced its stake in OCL to less than 10 per cent in July 2023. Subsequently, it does not qualify for benefi-

cial company ownership. OCL founding promoter now holds a 24.3 per cent stake. Therefore, your understanding of FDI from China in PPSL is incorrect and misleading," the spokesperson said.

PPBL ban by RBI

The Reserve Bank last month barred Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL), an associate company of OCL, 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 PPBL follows a comprehensive system audit report and subsequent compliance validation report of external auditors.

RBI had said that these reports revealed persistent non-compliances and continued material supervisory concerns in PPBL, warranting further supervisory action.

On March 11, 2022, RBI had barred PPBL from onboarding new customers with immediate effect.

BULLISH STANCE

FPIs infuse ₹15K-cr in debt mkt in Feb so far

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 11: Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) continued their bullish stance on the country's debt markets with a net infusion of over Rs 15,000 crore so far this month, on the back of inclusion of Indian government bonds in the JP Morgan Index along with relatively stable economy.

This followed a net investment of Rs 19,836 crore in January, making it the highest monthly inflow in more than six years. This was the highest inflow since June 2017, when they infused Rs 25,685 crore.

On the other hand, foreign investors pulled out more than Rs 3,000 crore from equities during the period under review. Before this, they withdrew a massive Rs 25,743 crore in January.

Tax mop-up at 80% of FY24 aim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 11: Net direct tax collection so far in current fiscal grew 20 per cent year-on-year to Rs 15.60 lakh crore, which is 80 per cent of revised budget estimates for full fiscal year.

"The provisional figures of direct tax collections continue to register steady growth. Direct tax collections up to 10th February, 2024 show that gross collections are at Rs 18.38 lakh crore, which is 17.30 per cent higher than the gross collections for the corresponding period of last year," Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement.

Direct tax collection, net of refunds, till February 10 of FY24 stands at Rs 15.60 lakh crore, which is 20.25 per cent higher than the net collections in the corresponding period last year.

Refunds amounting to Rs 2.77 lakh crore have been issued during April 1, 2023 to February 10, 2024.

Gross revenue collections for Corporate Income Tax (CIT) and Personal Income Tax (PIT) also showed a steady growth.

Growth rate for CIT was 9.16 per cent while for PIT, it was 25.67 per cent (PIT only).

After adjustment of refunds, the net growth in CIT collections was 13.57 per cent and that in PIT was 26.91 per cent (PIT only), it added.

UPI spreads wings

After France, UPI set to be launched in Sri Lanka, Mauritius today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 11: India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) services will be rolled out in Sri Lanka and Mauritius at a virtual ceremony Monday that will be witnessed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the top leadership of the two island nations.

India's RuPay card services would also be launched in Mauritius at the event

Mauritian PM Pravind Jugnauth and Sri Lanka's President Ranil Wickremesinghe will join Modi at the virtual ceremony, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe and Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Jugnauth will witness the launch of Unified Payment Interface (UPI) services in Sri Lanka and Mauritius, and also RuPay card services in Mauritius on February 12 at 1 PM via video conferencing," it said.

Developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), UPI is an instant real-time payment system to facilitate inter-bank transactions through mobile phones. RuPay is a global card payment network from India, with wide acceptance at shops, ATMs, and online.

The launch of the Indian services in Sri Lanka and Mauritius is taking place amid New Delhi's increasing bilateral economic ties with the two countries

"India has emerged as a leader



in fintech innovation and Digital Public Infrastructure. The prime minister has placed a strong emphasis on sharing our development experiences and innovation with partner countries," the MEA said in a statement.

It said given India's robust cultural and people-to-people linkages with Sri Lanka and Mauritius, the launch will benefit a wide cross-section of people through a faster and seamless digital transaction experience and enhance digital connectivity between the countries.

"The launch will enable availability of UPI settlement services for Indian nationals travelling to Sri Lanka and Mauritius as well as for Mauritian nationals travelling to India," it said.

"The extension of RuPay card services in Mauritius will enable Mauritian banks to issue cards based on RuPay mechanism in Mauritius and facilitate usage of RuPay card for settlements both in India and Mauritius," it added.

Earlier this month, France allowed the UPI to work in the country. With the launch, Indian tourists can book their visit to the Eiffel Tower by purchasing tickets online using UPI. France became the first European country to accept UPI.

ISRAEL'S TOWER PLANS \$8BN INDIA CHIP PLANT

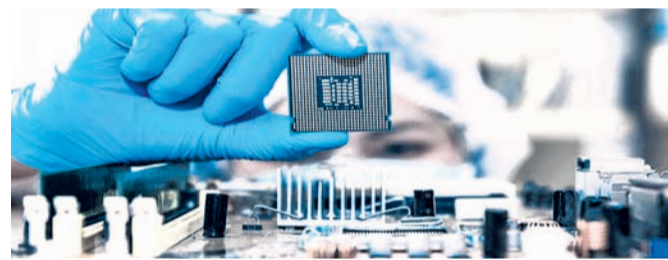
SEMICONDUCTOR MANUFACTURING IS MODI'S KEY BUSINESS AGENDA, FOR WHICH HIS GOVERNMENT ROLLED OUT A \$10BN SCHEME IN DEC 2021

REUTERS

Bangalore, Feb 11: Israel's Tower Semiconductor has submitted a proposal to India's government to build an \$8 billion chipmaking facility in the South Asian nation, national daily Indian Express reported Sunday.

Tower, seeking government incentives for its plan, is looking to manufacture 65 nanometre and 40 nanometre chips in India, the report said.

Chip manufacturing is a key plank of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's business agenda, but initial bids to offer



\$10 billion in incentives to the industry have floundered, with some proposals stalled or cancelled.

Minister of State for IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar has in October last year met with Tower Semiconductor CEO Russell C Ellwanger. The meeting was also attended by Naor Gilon, Israel's Ambassador to India. According to Chandrasekhar, the two discussed the India-Tower partnership in semiconductors.

In 2022, the International Semiconductor Consortium (ISMC), of which Tower Semiconductor is a part, applied to be part of India's semiconductor scheme. However, at the

time Intel proposed to acquire Tower Semiconductor. Due to this development, the decision on the consortium's application was put on hold as the government wasn't sure of Intel's plan for letting Tower continue with the consortium post the acquisition was complete.

When Intel CEO Pat Gelsinger met Prime Minister Modi and MeitY Minister Ashwani Vaishnav in 2022, the company had said that there were no plans to set up a foundry in India anytime soon. But with the Intel-Tower Semiconductor deal off, the Ministry of Electronics and IT was once again in touch with Tower Semiconductors.

Lalchnd comes up with Valentine's Day offers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: Love is in the air and Lalchnd Jewellers is here to make it super-special with their sensational Valentine's Day offers.

With a commitment to excellence and a passion for crafting timeless masterpieces, Lalchnd Jewellers invites customers to in-

dulge in an unforgettable shopping experience from February 10 to 14.

This Valentine's week, Lalchnd Jewellers presents an array of captivating offers like flat Rs 25,000 off/carat on diamond value, flat discount of Rs 699/gram on making charges on all HUID-certified gold ornaments, flat 50% off on mak-



ing charges of silver ornaments, flat 15% discount on

MRP of select items and flat 20% off on select international branded watches.

In addition to these spectacular deals, customers can take advantage of an exclusive bank offer which is up to Rs 2,500 cash back with SBI cards on their purchase -- adding even more value to their shopping experience.

India's scrutiny of Chinese firms unnerves suppliers: Xiaomi

INDIA HAS CLOSELY WATCHED CHINA-LINKED INVESTMENTS SINCE 2020 BORDER CLASH BETWEEN THE NEIGHBOURING NATIONS

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 11: China's Xiaomi has told New Delhi that smartphone component suppliers are wary about setting up operations in India amid heavy scrutiny of Chinese companies by the government, according to a letter and a source with direct knowledge of the matter.

Xiaomi, which has the biggest share in India's smartphone market at 18%, also asks in the letter dated February 6 that

India consider offering manufacturing incentives and lowering import tariffs for certain smartphone components.

The Chinese company assembles smartphones in India with mostly local components and the rest imported from China and elsewhere. The letter is Xiaomi's response to a query from India's information technology ministry asking how New Delhi can further develop the country's component manufacturing sector.

India ramped up scrutiny of Chinese businesses after a 2020 border clash between the two countries killed at least 20 Indian soldiers and four from China, disrupting investment plans of big Chinese companies and drawing repeated protests from Beijing.

While Chinese companies operating in India are reticent to speak publicly about the scrutiny, Xiaomi's letter shows that they continue to struggle



Xiaomi says suppliers 'apprehensive' over Chinese scrutiny

It seeks more import tariff cuts, incentives on components

There are apprehensions among component suppliers regarding establishing operations in India, stemming from the challenges faced by companies in India, particularly from Chinese origin

MURALIKRISHNAN B | PRESIDENT, XIAOMI INDIA

in India, especially in the smartphone space where many critical components come from Chinese suppliers.

In the letter, Xiaomi India President Muralikrishnan B said India needed to work on "confidence building" measures to encourage component suppliers to setup operations

locally.

The letter said the concerns were related to compliance and visa issues that it didn't elaborate on, and other factors. It said "the government should address these concerns and work to instil confidence among foreign component suppliers, encouraging them to set up man-

ufacturing facilities in India."

ACTIONS TAKEN SO FAR
Indian authorities last year accused Chinese smartphone company Vivo Communication Technology of breaching some visa rules and alleged it siphoned \$13 billion in funds from India.

India has also frozen more than \$600 million in Xiaomi assets for alleged illegal remittances to foreign entities by passing them off as royalty payments. Both Chinese companies deny any wrongdoing.

Other than regulatory scrutiny of the likes of Xiaomi and Vivo, India has since 2020 also banned more than 300 Chinese apps, including ByteDance's TikTok, and halted planned projects such as those planned by Chinese automakers BYD and Great Wall Motor.

The source said many executives of Chinese electronics companies struggle to get visas to enter India, and their companies continue to face slow clear-

ances for investments due to heavy scrutiny by New Delhi.

In the letter, Xiaomi's Muralikrishnan also made a case for further lowering India's import tariffs, just after New Delhi's January 31 move to reduce import taxes on battery covers and phone camera lenses. Xiaomi is also asking India to reduce import tariffs on sub-components used in batteries, USB cables and phone covers, according to the letter.

Reducing the import tariffs could "increase India's manufacturing competitiveness ... in terms of costs", Xiaomi said in the letter, but getting component manufacturers to set up shop in India would require bigger incentives.

In January, India's top industrial policy bureaucrat Rajesh Kumar Singh signalled that India could ease its heightened scrutiny of Chinese investments if the two countries' border remains peaceful.

