



Global celeb

Deepika Padukone has been nominated to present an award at the upcoming edition of the BAFTA awards

LEISURE | P2



Talks held

Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds talks with the UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Paytm crisis

NBFCs look at options other than Paytm for loan disbursal, worried about the regulatory crisis engulfing the firm

BUSINESS | P11



International debut likely

Sarfraz Khan's dream of senior international appearance likely to be fulfilled as he is in fray for a place in the playing XI for the 3rd England Test

SPORTS | P12

SHORT TAKES

Sonia may contest RS polls from Rajasthan

New Delhi/Jaipur: Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi will file her nomination for Rajasthan for the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls, party sources said Tuesday. The sources said she will be travelling to Jaipur and party president Mallikarjun Kharge and her daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra are likely to accompany her for the filing of nomination papers. Gandhi, who represented Rae Bareilly in Lok Sabha, will not contest the next general election. "She is likely to file nomination for Rajya Sabha on Wednesday," a source said.

Tusker dies as bomb explodes in mouth

Bhubaneswar: A wild tusker was killed in a forest here after eating some fruit or vegetables suspected to have been stuffed with crude bombs that exploded in the animal's mouth, an official said Tuesday. The sub-adult tusker (about 14 years old) was in grievous pain when Forest department officials found the jumbo in the Bharatpur forest area, on the outskirts of the City, Monday. The elephant's tongue was severed and its jaw was shattered in the blast. Veterinary experts from Nandankanan Zoological Park and OUAT were engaged to treat the animal.

Minor 'raped' by PCR van driver

Purusottampur: A minor girl was allegedly raped by the driver of a PCR van of Purusottampur police station in Ganjam district, a report said, Tuesday. The accused was identified as Kunal Behera. The matter came to the fore after the survivor lodged a written complaint at the Purusottampur police station. The accused allegedly called the girl out of her house Sunday and raped her. He later threatened to kill her if she disclosed the matter before others, the complaint stated. IIC Bipin Bihari Hota confirmed to have received the complaint and ordered a probe.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I'm not here for a job. Just one request: for the next five years in February, give free roses with ration

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	CHANGE
SENSEX	71555.19	↑ 482.70
NIFTY	21743.30	↑ 127.30
DOLLAR	83.04	↓ ₹0.01
EURO	89.57	↑ ₹0.03
GOLD	₹61,510	↓ ₹568
SILVER	₹ 69,720	↓ ₹1289

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	32.8°C	31.5°C
Min Temp	19.1°C	19.0°C
Humidity	88%	88%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

DRY WEATHER VERY LIKELY



ON WARPATH: Farmers move away after police fired teargas shell to disperse them during their 'Delhi Chalo' march at Punjab-Haryana Shambhu border, near Patiala, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

BOON FOR STUDENTS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: The state government has decided to provide scholarships to undergraduate (UG) and post-graduate (PG) students under Nua-O, 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian said, Tuesday.

Speaking to students at the 'Nua-O festival' in Jajpur, Pandian said that the decision in this regard was taken at the Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday.

Under the initiative, which has been launched with the elections round the corner, male students will get ₹9,000 annually, while female students will receive ₹10,000. Male students belonging to SC/ST and Nirman

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Nua-O magic smart cards will be given to students, through which they would be able to avail additional benefits such as bus or train travel, access free Wi-Fi, online courses, skill development and coaching programmes
- The Nua-O scholarship for the current academic year will be deposited in the bank accounts of the students from February 20 onwards
- Around 4.5 lakh UG and 32,000 PG students are expected to be benefitted from the Nua-O scholarship

Shramik (construction worker) families will get ₹10,000, while female students of the categories

will receive ₹11,000 annually.

The Nutana Unnata Abhilasha (NUA) Odisha initiative of the state government aims at empowering youth with continuous skilling, re-skilling, and upskilling opportunities, Pandian said, adding that with a budgetary allocation of ₹385 crore for 2023-24 to 2025-26 fiscals, the initiative will cover all 30 districts, prioritising tribal and remote areas.

Pandian said that the scholarship will be available for students pursuing UG and PG programmes in state universities and government and non-government aided colleges, including Sanskrit colleges under the Higher Education department.

However, the scholarship will not be provided to students whose parents are paying Income Tax or are permanent government

employees, he added.

The Nua-O scholarship for the current academic year will be deposited in the bank accounts of the eligible students from February 20 onwards.

"This will be a new era of student empowerment towards realising the CM's vision of 'Nabin Odisha' (New Odisha), he said.

"A corpus of ₹300 crore will be created and by August, Nua-O magic smart cards will be given to all eligible students, through which they would be able to avail additional benefits such as bus or train travel, access free Wi-Fi, online courses, skill development and coaching programmes," Pandian said.

Around 4.5 lakh UG and 32,000 PG students are expected to be benefitted from the Nua-O scholarship, he said.

OERC slashes power tariff

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: The Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC) Tuesday issued an order reducing the power tariff for domestic consumers by 10 paise in each slab for the 2024-25 financial year.

The existing tariff for domestic consumers is ₹3 per unit for the first 50 units, ₹4.80 per unit for consumption between 50 and 200 units, ₹5.80 from 200 to 400 units and ₹6.20 above 400 units. These prices will be reduced by 10 paise per unit from April 1 this

year, said an official of the OERC.

The retail power supply tariff of all other categories has not been revised. The tariff of those categories has remained constant for three years, said OERC secretary Priyabrata Patnaik.

The fixed monthly charge for BPL consumers has been reduced from ₹80 to ₹70 per month while consumers who opt for e-bill will get a rebate of ₹10 per bill, he said.

Patnaik said the premium of green energy tariff has also been reduced from 25 paise per unit to 20 paise per unit. Similarly, the EV charging tariff has been re-

duced from ₹5.50 per unit to ₹5 per unit. Consumers with prepaid meters will get 4 per cent rebate on pre-paid amount and the low transmission (LT) domestic and single-phase general-purpose consumers will continue to get 4 per cent digital payment rebate, Patnaik said.

The cold storage tariff had been reduced by ₹1.60 per unit from ₹4.60 per unit to ₹3 per unit. The mega lift point consumers will also get a rebate of ₹2 per unit and their revised tariff will be ₹3.80 per unit and no demand charge will be levied.

Odisha doubles Mamata benefits

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: In what would bring cheers to expecting and lactating mothers, the state government Tuesday doubled the financial assistance to them under 'Mamata' to ₹10,000.

Under 'Mamata', beneficiaries will get the assistance amount directly credited to their bank accounts in two instalments – ₹6,000 (after six months of pregnancy) and ₹4,000 (after 10 months). All pregnant women above 19 years of age can get this assistance for two children.

Farmers clash with police in Haryana



AGENCIES

Chandigarh/New Delhi, Feb 13: Farmers from Punjab clashed with Haryana Police at two border points between the states Tuesday facing tear gas and water cannons as they tried to break past barricades blocking their protest march to the national capital.

Twenty-four police personnel, including a deputy superintendent of police, were injured as protesters hurled stones at them, officials said. Farmer leaders said police also fired rubber bullets, and claimed over 60 protesters were hurt in the 'attack' on them at Shambhu border, close to Haryana's Ambala city. A drone was spotted dropping shells over the protesters at Shambhu.

Police used tear gas and water cannons against the protesters at the border in state's Jind district as well. According to police, nine of their men suffered injuries in this clash at Data Singhwala-Khanauri border.

In the evening, after a face-

off with police that lasted several hours, farmer leaders called off the protest for the day. They said they would resume the march from Shambhu Wednesday.

The Shanyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha are spearheading the 'Delhi Chalo' agitation to put pressure on the Centre for their demands, including a law on minimum support price for crops and loan waivers.

The march began around 10 am from Punjab's Fatehgarh Sahib, about 40 km from the Haryana border as farmers, including women, packed themselves in tractor-trolleys. An excavator was a part of one convoy, with a farmer in Amritsar saying it would be used to break barricades. Police barriers have been put up at several places in BJP-run Haryana on the highway to Delhi. And at major entry points to the capital, the Delhi Police has installed layers of barriers that include barbed wire, concrete slabs and tyre-bursting strips on the road.

First dinosaur was named 200 years ago

REUTERS

London, Feb 13: On February 20, 1824, English naturalist and theologian William Buckland addressed the Geological Society of London, describing an enormous jaw and limb bones unearthed in a slate quarry in the village of Stonesfield near Oxford.

Buckland recognized that these fossils belonged to a huge bygone reptile, and gave it a formal scientific name: Megalosaurus, meaning 'great lizard.' With that, the first dinosaur was officially recognized, though the actual word dinosaur would not be coined until the 1840s.

"It was the beginning of our fascination with dinosaurs,"



University of Edinburgh paleontologist Steve Brusatte said. "His announcement opened the flood gates and started a fossil rush, and people went out looking for other giant bones in England and beyond."

In the intervening 200 years, dinosaur science has flourished, providing insight into what these creatures looked like, how they lived,

how they evolved and what doomed them. Dinosaurs trod the planet from about 231 million years ago to 66 million years ago during the Mesozoic Era. Their bird descendants remain with us today.

"Our understanding of dinosaurs has changed significantly since the 19th century," said paleontologist Emma Nicholls of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, home to the Megalosaurus fossils Buckland studied.

"Buckland and other gentlemen naturalists of the early 19th century would be stunned at how much we now know about dinosaurs," Brusatte added.

Megalosaurus is a case in point. Buckland thought it was a lizard

about 66 feet (20 meters) long, walked on four legs and could live on land or in the water. Scientists now know it was not quadrupedal and not a lizard, but belonged to the theropod group comprising meat-eating dinosaurs such as Tyrannosaurus and Spinosaurus and was about 30 feet (9 meters) long.

"It scampered around on its hind legs, chasing down its prey, using its clawed hands and toothy jaws to subdue its victims," Brusatte said. Buckland, like others at the time, did not grasp how long ago dinosaurs lived, believing Earth to be only a few thousand years old. Scientists now know Earth is about 4.5 billion years old. Megalosaurus lived about 165 million years ago.

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LIFE WAS QUITE UNPLEASANT POST TITANIC: KATE WINSLET

Actress Kate Winslet has revealed she was not prepared for the kind of added attention she got after *Titanic*. "After the movie, I felt like I had to look a certain way, and because media intrusion was so significant at that time, my life was quite unpleasant," Kate said.

KATY PERRY QUILTS AMERICAN IDOL

Pop star Katy Perry has quit American Idol and revealed that the new season will be her last as she hints at plans for new music. The 39-year-old has served as a judge on the hit ABC talent show since 2018.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you may wake up with your nose in the air. Though you may feel bossy and important, others may not feel that way about you. Avoid giving orders that sound like insults. Otherwise, the whole thing may fall flat on your face, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
Getting through today will be like a cruise, says Ganesh. Business deals will kneel to the charm of your honey tongue and you will taste success. As the day progresses, you may lose interest in things. Beware of being too sentimental in the evening, warns Ganesh. You will feel loved and generous in social gatherings tonight.

GEMINI
You have great business plans and can't wait to launch a few of your ideas today. Your colleagues will lend you their complete support. You may spend the evening decorating your home or finding peace in the arms of your beloved.

CANCER
You will finalise business dealings with your partners today. Your high spirits may be subdued later in the day. However, as evening approaches and you get ready for a party, you will be back in your elements, cracking jokes and generally putting a smile on people's faces.

LEO
Since when was a day complete without a little bit of a scruff and a small squabble? These are the annoying little situations that remind you just how better the alternative is. Ganesh portends a day in which you are jinxed with a propensity for quarrels. So, it is advisable to shun any open confrontation at work.

VIRGO
Your focus levels will reach their highest point today, says Ganesh. Working will be fun and you shall finish your jobs quickly and efficiently. A twist of tale may crop up its head; worry not, as physical intimacy will take your love affair to the next level, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
It's like a finishing job for you today, says Ganesh, as you complete pending jobs. It was about time things got wrapped up, anyway. But with your high level of energy and vigour, you may also have an inclination to begin a new business.

SCORPIO
Your spouse will shower you with love and warmth today. The afternoon sun may bring good news from distant relatives. On the home front, family members will get special attention, predicts Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
You shall push yourself to the limit to make sure your authority goes unquestioned. Colleagues and seniors will laud you for your commitment. Expect that wallet to get heavier as you receive some cash gains, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Socialising is on the cards, and with increase in the number of acquaintances will be the increase of your social clout, says Ganesh. Later in the day, you will take to reading, and will pick just about any book. You will set out in search for peace as dusk sets in, and will find solace in holy places, where you would strive to improve your concentration power.

AQUARIUS
A romantic encounter may leave you breathless! Naturally, your whole day is tinged with hues of love. You will be in no mood to work or study, but you just have to go along with the world. It's a bittersweet experience, and you may as well enjoy it, says Ganesh. You may want to be alone in the evening, and that is perfectly okay.

PISCES
You will need to be as scheming as the proverbial fox if you hope to wriggle out of the tricky situations that you are likely to find yourself embroiled in today. Keep your temper in check if things don't go your way initially, for the answers to your troubles will come sooner rather than later, says Ganesh.

Deepika to present BAFTA award

Mumbai: Actress Deepika Padukone, who was recently seen in the action film *Fighter*, is set to present an award at the upcoming edition of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) awards.

The actress earlier presented the song *Naatu Naatu* at the 95th Academy Awards last year.

Deepika took to the stories section of her Instagram and shared the news with her followers as she expressed her gratitude.

The actress shared a screenshot of the list of presenters from the BAFTA website.

It read, "Presenters confirmed to date include (in alphabetical order) - Adjoa Andoh, Andrew Scott, Bryce Dallas Howard, Callum Turner, Cate Blanchett, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Daisy Edgar Jones, Daryl McCormack, David Beckham, Deepika Padukone, Dua Lipa, Emma Corrin, Emma Mackey, Gillian Anderson, Himesh Patel, Hugh Grant, Idris Elba, Indira Varma, James Martin, Jack O'Connell, Keegan-Michael Key, Kingsley Ben-Adir, Lily Collins, Marisa Abela, Rebecca Ferguson, Sheila Atim, and Taylor Russell." However, the categories in which they will hand them out remain unconfirmed.

At the ceremony, Hannah Waddingham will perform a special cover song, while Sophie Ellis Bextor will sing *Murder on the Dancefloor*, which recently regained popularity two decades after its release because of *Saltburn*.

The event will take place Sunday at the Royal Festival Hall in London. Indian audiences can watch the ceremony on Lionsgate Play. IANS



CURTAINS DOWN ON BHARAT RANG MAHOTSAV



Artists from Bangladesh performed the Bengali play *Asharasya Prothom Diboshe* on the last day of the International Theatre Festival of India, also known as Bharat Rang Mahotsav or Bharangam, at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Tuesday. Translated by Anshuman Bhowmik from a famous work of Mohan Rakesh, the play was directed by Alok Basu and presented by the Dhaka-based troupe Theatre Factory. PIC: MAUSAM NANDA

Top TV stars share their V-Day plans



Mumbai: Some of the top television stars—Mallika Singh, Karamm Rajpal, Ankur Verma, and Anchal Sahu—have opened up about the power of love, and shared their plans for the day.

Mallika, who portrays the role of princess Kaurwaki in *Prachand Ashok*, shared: "From Kaurwaki's character, I have learned the strength and passion it takes to believe in love's ability to triumph over any challenge. Her personality reflects the timeless love that has shaped history as we know it."

She added, "I wish we continued to spread love in the universe." Karamm plays Rajneesh in *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*. Calling himself an old-school romantic, Karamm shared: "For me, Valentine's Day is a chance to express my love and appreciation for the special people in my life. Additionally, we should celebrate love every day, not just February 14. Love, after all, is the essence of life itself,

and this day serves as a beautiful reminder to cherish it." Ankur, essaying the role of Rajeev in *Parineetii*, said: "Valentine's Day is a beautiful celebration of love, and there's no better way to revel in it than with the people who fill our hearts with joy. I am truly excited to spend this special day with my *Parineetii* family."

He added: "Moreover, for the show, we're filming the celebration of Rajiv and Parineet's wedding, making it double the fun." Anchal who plays Parineet in the show commented: "This is just another chance to celebrate the power of love. For me, my family is everything. They've always been there for me, loving me no matter what. So, this day is all about them."

"They mean the world to me, and I'm grateful for their love and support every single day. The viewers of *Parineetii* have also become part of this family and I thank them for embracing me," added Anchal. IANS

SRK: Have no role in naval officers' release in Qatar

New Delhi: Actor Shah Rukh Khan Tuesday dismissed claims that he played any role in securing the release of eight Indian Navy veterans in Qatar while adding that it was done solely by the Indian government.

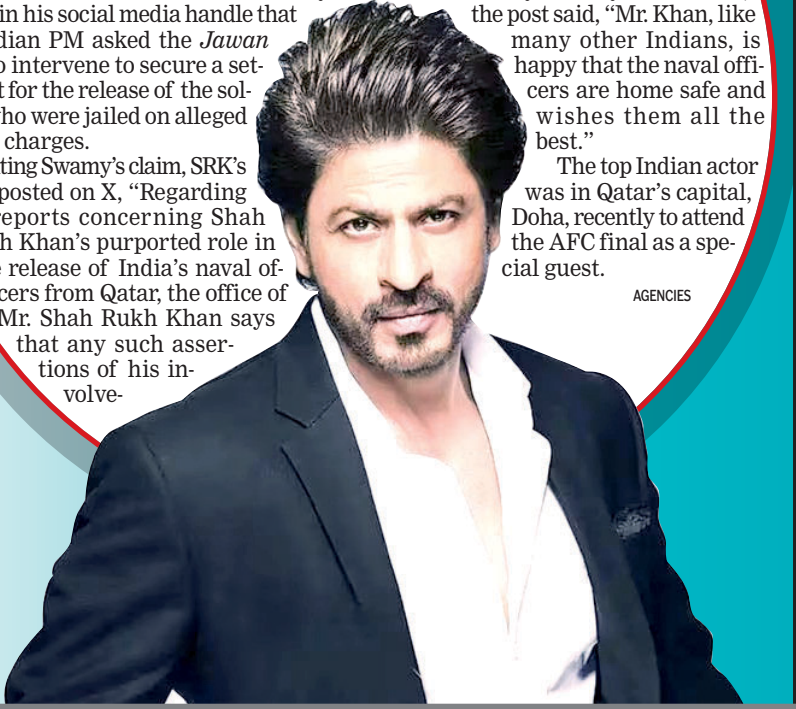
BJP leader Subramanian Swamy wrote in his social media handle that the Indian PM asked the *Jawan* actor to intervene to secure a settlement for the release of the soldiers who were jailed on alleged spying charges.

Refuting Swamy's claim, SRK's team posted on X, "Regarding the reports concerning Shah Rukh Khan's purported role in the release of India's naval officers from Qatar, the office of Mr. Shah Rukh Khan says that any such assertions of his involve-

ment are unfounded, emphasising the execution of this successful resolution solely rests with the Indian government officials."

Stating that all matters related to diplomacy and statecraft are 'best executed by our very able leaders', the post said, "Mr. Khan, like many other Indians, is happy that the naval officers are home safe and wishes them all the best."

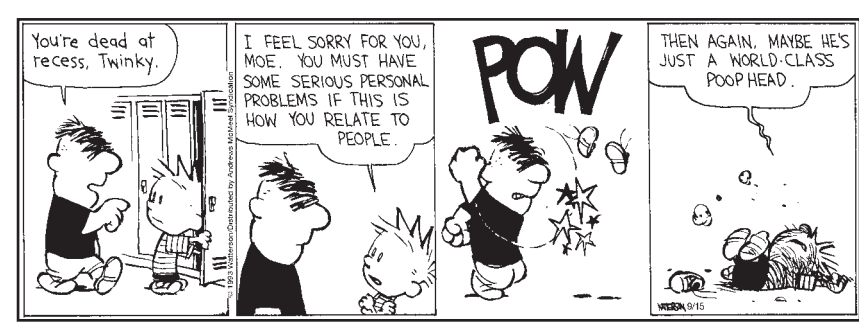
The top Indian actor was in Qatar's capital, Doha, recently to attend the AFC final as a special guest.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

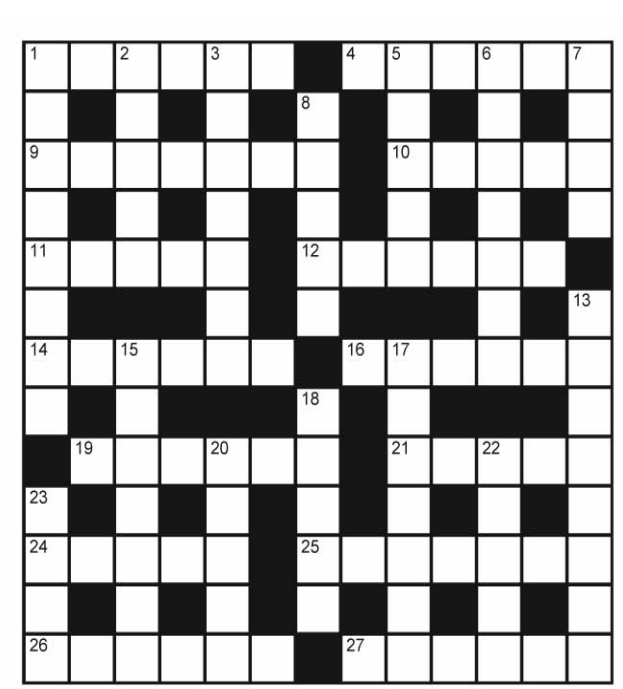


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Chic
 - 4 Sacred beetle of ancient Egypt
 - 9 Mr. Hood's activity
 - 10 Molten rock
 - 11 Onion relatives
 - 12 Rabbitlike rodent
 - 14 Inherent character
 - 16 Cuban city
 - 19 Igloo dweller
 - 21 Clan emblem
 - 24 Oyster's prize
 - 25 Hairpieces
 - 26 Fireside
 - 27 Light bulb starter
 - 7 Tusked animal
 - 8 Tropical Asian starling
 - 13 Tortellini topping
 - 15 Taqueria offering
 - 17 Bowl over
 - 18 Blood line
 - 20 Sound
 - 22 Forest members
 - 23 Moonfish
- Down**
- 1 Nan River locale
 - 2 Host
 - 3 Bureau
 - 5 Anaglyph
 - 6 Sports meeting at sea

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

T	R	V	A	R	M
B	O	L	E	R	O
R	A	G	A	O	C
R	A	G	A	A	L
S	M	I	T	T	E
U	L	O	P	E	R
E	L	O	P	E	R
T	E	I	E	U	G
G	I	G	A	N	T
P	N	C	E	Z	E
S	L	E	U	T	H
Y	T	H	T	E	O

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

A DAY FOR RADIO

Members of 'Ama Seba' celebrate World Radio Day in Puri, Tuesday



Barbed wire, tyre-bursting strips to thwart farmers' stir

20-YEAR RI FOR MINOR'S RAPE

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 13: Almost two years after farmers from Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh laid siege to the national capital seeking legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP) and other demands, Delhi borders Tuesday turned into a fresh 'battlezone' as Farmers protest 2.0 'choked' the national capital with Delhi Police installing layers of barriers that include barbed wire, concrete slabs and tyre-bursting strips on the road.

Police barriers have been put up at several places in Haryana on the highway to Delhi.

And at major entry points to the capital, the Delhi Police has installed layers of similar barriers that include barbed wire, concrete slabs and tyre-bursting strips on the road.

The "fortification" of Delhi reminded many of the farmers' agitations for the repeal of the Centre's agri-marketing laws in 2021. The protesters had then blockaded the main roads leading into Delhi for months.

Though the protesters were nowhere near the city, traffic crawled at a snail's pace at many places in the Delhi-NCR region because of the barricades regulating access to key roads. This



was apart from the barriers at Singhu and Tikri borders.

At the Shambhu border, Haryana policemen first used tear gas when some protesters broke a metal barricade and tried to throw it off the Ghaggar river bridge.

Protesters also used tractors,

trying to shift heavy concrete barriers. Many of them dispersed into the fields adjoining

the highway, apparently to circumvent the roadblock. They too faced tear gas shells.

Tear gas smoke enveloped the entire area. Protesters were seen covering fallen canisters with jute bags to contain the tear smoke. In another face-off, police lobbed teargas shells and used water cannons at the main border point in Jind. The farmers were trying to cross barricades installed at Data Singhwala-

Khanauri border.

Authorities in Haryana have fortified the state's borders with Punjab at places in Ambala, Jind, Fatehabad, Kurukshetra and Sirsa to scuttle the march.

Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee leader Sarwan Singh Pandher slammed the heavy barricading on the road to Delhi.

"It does not seem Punjab and Haryana are two states. It seems they have an international border," he told reporters at Fatehgarh Sahib before the march began.

Lashing out at the Manohar Lal Khattar government, Pandher said Haryana has been turned into "Kashmir Valley."

In Haryana, 64 companies of paramilitary personnel and 50 from the state police were deployed across the districts.

"We will not indulge in any confrontation with the government. The government may fire bullets or lathi-charge us. Jawans of police and paramilitary forces are also our brothers," Pandher had said, claiming that their march would be peaceful.

Following a second round of talks with the Centre late on Monday, he had said, "We do not think the government is serious about any of our demands. We do not think they want to fulfil our demands."

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: A POCSO court in Ganjam district sentenced a man to 20 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) for kidnapping and raping a 16-year-old girl about three years ago.

Pravat Kumar Rajguru, judge of the special court set up under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act at Berhampur, convicted the accused and pronounced the judgement Monday, said special public prosecutor Narayan Panda.

The court has also imposed a ₹15,000 fine on convict Ajaya Nayak. The court pronounced the judgement after examining and recording the statements of 13 witnesses, including police, and doctor and based on the medical reports, Panda said.

The court, however, acquitted two female relatives of the accused, due to lack of evidence, he added. The judge also recommended payment of compensation of ₹5 lakh to the victim through the district legal service authorities (DLSA).

Police had registered a case against the accused person along with the two women under different sections of the IPC and POCSO Act in October 2020, after the victim's mother lodged an FIR against the accused.

Tusker dies as bomb explodes in mouth

Poachers sometimes leave pineapple or ash gourds filled with crude bombs to hunt wild boars in the forest area, and the animal might have eaten one of those several days ago, say forest officials



PICTURE FOR REPRESENTATION

The elephant's tongue was severed and its jaw shattered under the impact of the bomb explosion

The elephant's tongue was severed and its jaw shattered under the impact of the bomb explosion. Veterinary experts from Nandankanan Zoological Park and Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology were engaged to treat the animal, divisional forest officer (DFO), Chandaka Wildlife Division, Sarat Chandra Behera, said.

Though saline, antibiotics and

painkillers were administered to it, the tusker did not survive, said veterinary doctor Indramani Nath who treated the elephant. The animal succumbed to injuries Monday night.

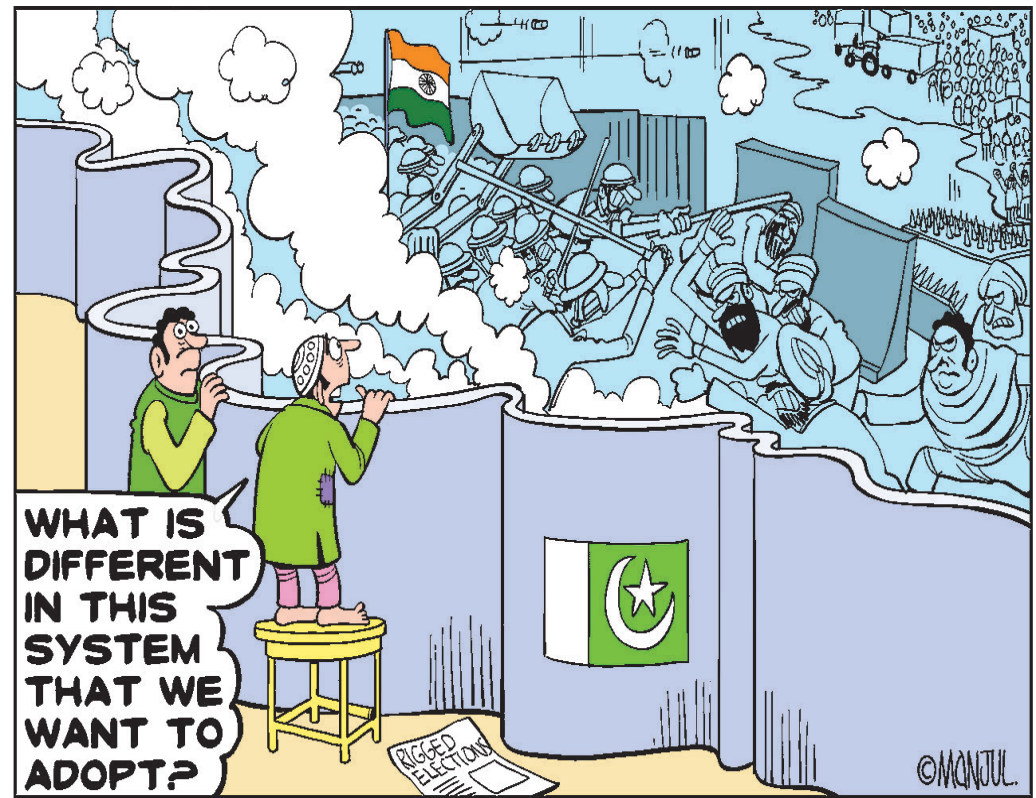
Poachers sometimes leave pineapple or ash gourds filled with crude bombs to hunt wild boars in the forest area, and the animal might have eaten one of those several days ago, officials said.

The jumbo was also hungry as it could not take any food for days due to injuries in the mouth. Post-mortem examination of the tusker was conducted later. "We will investigate to ascertain in what circumstances the elephant swallowed the bomb and who was involved in planting it," Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Susant Nanda said.

The wild elephant, which was part of a herd in Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary, probably entered into Bharatpur forest from Khurda area, Nanda said.

Notably, a pregnant wild elephant had died after eating fruit stuffed with firecrackers that exploded in her mouth in Kerala June 4, 2020.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



HC: 'Customer' can't be prosecuted unless trafficking charge is proved

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: The Orissa High Court has held that 'customers' cannot be prosecuted under Sections 370(3) and 370A(2) of Indian Penal Code (IPC) for trafficking and sexually exploiting sex workers when no evidence is available on record that such persons were trafficked by them or they had knowledge about such trafficking.

"Though exception to the judicial trend of exonerating the customers under the Act, 1956 are limited, but on the strength of weak evidence the customer cannot be tried for under the provisions under Sections of Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956. It is only when the customer performs his role of procuring the women for another, the offence under Section 370A IPC could be employed into action against the customer," said the single bench of Justice Sib Sankar Mishra, while clarifying about the liability of 'sex-customers'.

On May 19, 2018, a raid was conducted at a spa under Capital police limits here when seven girls were found in compromising positions with some customers, including the petitioners.

Following investigation, police filed chargesheet against the accused, including the petitioners, under Sections 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, and 370(3) and 370A(2) of the

AS IT HAPPENED

- On May 19, 2018, a raid was conducted at a spa under Capital police limits when seven girls were found in compromising positions with some customers, including the petitioners
- Following investigation, police filed chargesheet against the accused, including the petitioners
- The petitioners' counsel argued that his clients are neither the owners of the spa, nor the managers. They were mere customers
- They had no clue regarding the identity of the girls and they were also unaware of the age of the girls and if the victims were trafficked

IPC. The petitioners approached the HC seeking to quash cognisance taken by the lower court against them under Sections 370(3) and 370A(2) of the IPC.

The petitioners' counsel argued that his clients are neither the owners of the spa, nor the managers. They were mere customers. They had no clue regarding the identity of the girls and they were also unaware of the age of the girls and if the victims were trafficked. The petitioners' counsel urged the HC to quash Sections 370(3) and 370A(2) of the IPC against his clients.

The HC observed that Section 370(3) of the IPC provides for punishment of offence involving the

trafficking of more than one person. Similarly, Section 370A(2) prescribes punishment for a person who knowingly or having reason to believe that a person has been trafficked, engages such person for sexual exploitation in any manner.

The court noted that statements of none of the girls were recorded by the police under Section 161 of the CrPC and they were also not cited as prosecution witnesses.

"Therefore, the allegation that the girls were trafficked and thereafter sexually exploited is a matter found mentioning in the narration of the chargesheet but there is no evidence collected and placed before the court. In the absence of such evidence likely to come on record, securing conviction against the petitioners is impossible," it added.

The court further observed that the petitioners were only the customers of the spa where other accused persons were allegedly running a 'brothel'. Therefore, it held, the role of the petitioners in trafficking the women for sexual exploitation not forthcoming from the evidence.

"All the alleged victim girls were from Thailand, and they were adults. Nothing has come on record to suggest that they were sexually exploited; rather they were into prostitution out of their own volition. That's what is borne out from record," it held.

In the present case, the court held none of the girls have stated that they were sexually exploited or abused sexually or they were trafficked.

2 BJD candidates file papers; suspense over third seat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: Former BJD Cuttack-Barabati MLA Debashish Samantaray and BJD youth wing leader from Puri Subhashish Kuntia Tuesday filed their nomination papers as BJD candidates for the February 27 Rajya Sabha elections in Odisha.

Accompanied by BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, ministers and MLAs, the two BJD candidates filed their papers for

RS ELECTIONS



the election to the Upper House of Parliament. While Samantaray is a three-time former BJD MLA, Khuntia is BJD youth wing leader. However, the suspense con-

tinues over the third Rajya Sabha seat as Patnaik Monday named two candidates. According to official sources, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw will be arriving here on a two-day visit Wednesday. He is scheduled to visit party headquarters and review railway and BSNL projects February 14.

However, his visit assumes significance as his tenure as a Rajya Sabha member from Odisha ends in April this year. Though he belonged to BJP, Vaishnaw was elected to the

Upper House from Odisha on BJD support in 2019.

It is speculated that Patnaik might leave the third seat for BJP candidate Vaishnaw. However, there was no confirmation either from the BJD or the BJP in this regard. As BJP has only 22 MLAs in the Assembly, its candidate cannot win the polls on his own. A candidate requires at least 37 votes to win one RS seat in Odisha. Therefore, a BJP candidate would need the support of the BJD.

Interstate car lifting gang busted in City

DEBADURLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: The Commissionerate Police here, Tuesday, claimed to have busted an interstate car lifting gang under Chandrasekharpur police limits and arrested five persons, including two women, in this connection. The arrested persons include two couples and another man, said a police official.

The accused couples have been identified as Zahid Hussain and Shabana Siddique, residents of Tamil Nadu; Md Faraz Klarsi and Nasrin Begum, natives of West Bengal, and Isan Klarsi. The police officials have seized three cars, six mobile phones and four fake number plates, bearing state code of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, from their possession.

Awards for excellence in healthcare services

153 awards were given to professionals and institutions in recognition of their outstanding contribution in the healthcare delivery system



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday handed over 'Chief Minister's awards for excellence in healthcare services'. As many as 153 awards were given to individual healthcare professionals and institutions in six categories in phase 1 of the award ceremony.

The awards were given in a special function held at state convention centre of Lok Seva Bhawan. Health Minister Niranjan Pujari and Health Secretary Shalini Pandit were present on this occasion.

It may be mentioned here that the state has taken several measures for reforms in the health sector, to improve governance and ensure efficient delivery of healthcare services through the adoption of the 5T principles.

In the health sector, 'Every life is precious.' Taking this as the cornerstone of healthcare programmes, several initiatives were undertaken in the health sector to provide patient-centric quality health services.

As part of the 5T mandate, Chief Minister's awards for excellence in healthcare service are being awarded to individuals and institutions for making outstanding contribution in health services.

The Chief Minister gave away 153 awards in recognition of the

outstanding contribution of individuals and institutions to the transformation of the healthcare delivery system in the state.

These awards will rejuvenate professional and personal commitment among healthcare professionals, public and private sector hospitals, and institutions and thus transforming Odisha into a model state and healthcare destination by ensuring universal access to quality healthcare, thereby building a 'Sustha Odisha, Sukhi Odisha'.

Among the top awards, SCB Medical and Hospital got the first position among the old Medical Colleges and Hospitals for 2022-23, whereas Bhima Bhoi MCH Bolangir received the first award among new MCHs for 2022-23.

Similarly Ashwini Covid Hospital, Cuttack received the best standalone Covid hospital award and RMRC Bhubaneswar received the best Central government institution award for exceptional services during the Covid pandemic.

28 doctors and 16 paramedics received individual awards while six hospitals received special award for outstanding contribution during the Bahanaga train tragedy.



PROMOTING HANDICRAFT: Dignitaries, including Odisha Khadi and Village Industries (OK&VI) Board president Sangram Keshari Paikaray and Utkalika president Kumari Debasmita Sahu, inaugurate Gandhi Shilp Bazar exhibition on the OK&VI Board premises in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

Odisha's BSKY bags SKOCH Gold award

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY), a flagship scheme of the Odisha government, has been conferred with National SKOCH (Gold) award for 2023.

Chief Executive Officer of State Health Assurance Society (SHAS) Brundha D along with Additional Secretary Health & Family Welfare Department and Joint CEO SHAS Subhananda Mohapatra received the award from Chairman, SKOCH, Sameer Kochhar at New Delhi, Saturday.

BSKY was conferred with the national award in health sector for its innovativeness, inclusivity, transparency, and effectiveness.



The scheme has brought about observable transformation in universal healthcare scenario of Odisha. All 119.8 lakh families of Odisha have

been included under BSKY Component-1 for free universal treatment, including high-end pathological tests, in all government health facilities, an

official release said.

Besides, 99.3 lakh economically vulnerable families with around 3.56 crore members have been brought under the umbrella of BSKY Component-2 for cashless treatment in empanelled hospitals both inside and outside the state. So far, 816 private sector super specialty hospitals from 17 states, including Odisha have been brought under the fold of BSKY, it added.

Health and Family Welfare Secretary Shalini Pandit complemented the BSKY team and urged them to keep up the good works in service of the people with all care and alertness on 24x7 basis. It may be pertinent to mention here that BSKY had also bagged SKOCH Gold Award for 2019.

ODM's Satyendu JEE Mains state topper



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: ODM Public School's Satyendu Kar secured top rank in the state in the JEE Main 2024 (Session-I) Examinations, the results of which were declared, Tuesday. A number of students of the school also demonstrated excellent performances by scoring top ranks across the state.

Kar scored 99.98 per cent and topped the chart as the state topper. Debasish Panda from ODM Global School scored 99.95 per cent and ranked among states' top 10 in JEE mains 2024, along with 12 more students of ODM Educational Group, who scored above 99 per cent.

Hailing the students, ODM Educational Group chairman

Satyabrata Minaketan said, "We are immensely proud of the stellar performance exhibited by our students in the JEE-Main 2024 (Session-I). This achievement is a testament to their hard work, perseverance, and the holistic education they receive at ODM."

ODM Educational Group COO Swoyan Satyendu, while wishing the achievers, said, "Your tenacity and the unparalleled educational standards upheld by ODM have propelled you to this outstanding success."

Speaking to media, Kar said, "I am ecstatic to have secured the top ranks in JEE Main 2024 (Session-I). My heartfelt gratitude to my parents, teachers, mentors, and the entire ODM family for their unwavering support and guidance!"

'AIIMS-DRDO tieup for military physiology'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: Collaboration between All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is needed to strengthen military physiology, said AIIMS Bhubaneswar executive director Ashutosh Biswas. He said this while speaking at a workshop 'AIIMS-Physiomeet' organised by AIIMS Bhubaneswar here recently.

Biswas emphasised the crucial role of artificial intelligence (AI) in advancing physiology education and research, and suggested for exploring potential collaborations between AIIMS and DRDO to strengthen military physiology, the institute said in a press statement, Tuesday.

Physiology can be integrated into the different aspects of military physiology such as underwater, heat, high-altitude, hypoxic stress and can be regular research activities in all physiology departments of different AIIMS, Biswas added.

Kalpna Barhwal, additional professor and organising secretary of the event, highlighted that the workshop was the first-of-its-kind, creating a platform for all physiology faculty of AIIMS to discuss academic synergy and form research consortiums between Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana institutes.

PETA urges youths to go vegan on Valentine's Day

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: Keeping the Valentine's Day in view, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), India has come up with an innovative campaign using themes from the Valentine's Week to encourage young people to choose vegetarianism by quitting non-vegetarian foods.

The organisation has placed billboards near universities and colleges in cities across the country, including Bhubaneswar; with novel and witty statements like "break up with this hot chick," nudging the youths to give up the practice of eating chickens.

The billboard in Bhubaneswar has been placed outside the Baidyanath Memorial Hospital near Patia Chowk, Nandanakanan Road.



their families, and value their own lives," said PETA India Manager of Vegan Projects Kiran Ahuja. "This Valentine's Day, PETA India is calling on young people across India to show animals some love by choosing delicious, heart-healthy vegan meals."

Ahuja added that every person who goes vegan spares nearly

200 animals a year suffering and a terrifying death in the meat and dairy industries. "Chickens, cows, pigs, goats, and other animals killed for food are roughly handled during transport and are often crammed into vehicles in high numbers. Many sustain injuries, suffocate, or die on their way to slaughterhouses," she said.

Vegans are believed to be less likely to suffer from heart disease, diabetes, and cancer; all of which are widespread health problems in India. "They are, on average, fitter and trimmer than meat-eaters. In addition, rearing animals for meat, eggs, and dairy is one of the leading causes of water pollution and land degradation, and a United Nations report has concluded that a global shift towards vegan eating is necessary to combat the worst effects of the climate catastrophe," Ahuja said.

Sharma inspects Khurda Road-Bolangir rail project

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: East Coast Railway (ECoR) general manager Manoj Sharma Tuesday inspected the under-construction rail line section between Sonapur and Boudh, path of the larger Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project.

Senior officials from ECoR headquarters, officials in charge of the construction works were present during the GM's inspection along with officials of the Sambalpur Railway Division.

During the inspection Sharma reviewed progress in the infrastructure work and advised the officials to take necessary steps to ensure completion of construction within the stipulated time period.

Officials said that construction work has been going on smoothly despite several parts of the Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project falling in remote areas. Out of the total length of 301 km, work for 152.80 km of railway track has been commissioned.

22cr Indians aged between 45 & 59 affected by frailty

A whopping 22-crore middle-aged people (or 16.2 per cent of the population) in the age group of 45-59 in India are affected by frailty, according to a global study.

Frailty refers to a state of weakness in the human body that makes people prone to diseases, injuries and falls. Although frailty is commonly associated with older people, it may not be limited to a particular age group.

The study, published in BMJ Open, showed the rising prevalence of frailty among middle Indians.

It showed that women are twice as likely as men to be frail. Having lower education and using tobacco were also found to be associated with frailty among Indians.

The team of researchers from The George Institute for



Global Health (Delhi and Australia), and from the UK, also showed that there are nearly 60 crore (43.2 per cent) frail adults aged over 60.

They found that frailty results in more hospitalisations, falls, and poor cognition in all adults,

irrespective of age and sex. The outcomes are worse in women compared to men, although not statistically proven.

Surprisingly, frailty was found to be more common in people who spent more money on their daily needs.

"We think this might be because frail people often have more healthcare expenses, which makes them spend more on daily needs. However, when we looked at their household income instead of spending, we did not see any clear connection," Vivekanand Jha, Executive Director at the George Institute, told IANS.

For the study, the scientists analysed data from the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI). The data, which is publicly available, was collected from 2017 to 2019 and includes details from over 65,000 individuals aged 45 and above. The survey covered all states and union territories in India, except Sikkim.

"India has a large ageing population, and the healthcare sys-

tem is not yet well-coordinated. Knowing about the prevalence of frailty in the country will help in providing the right care and support for those who need it most," Jha emphasised. Previous studies on frailty have primarily focused on high-income countries.

Since frailty is more common in women, strategies to address it should consider gender differences.

As there is a strong connection between social inequalities and frailty, it is also important to focus on marginalised communities to tackle this health issue effectively, the researchers said. They also suggested managing risk factors and screening for frailty, especially at centres of primary care.

Patnaik has outsourced govt to officers: Chouhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: Senior BJP leader Shivraj Singh Chouhan Tuesday accused Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik of outsourcing the state government to a handful of officers.

Chouhan said this at the airport here before visiting Jagatsinghpur and Cuttack Lok Sabha segments in Odisha. He is scheduled to attend meeting of party workers both in Jagatsinghpur and Cuttack.

"Naveen Patnaik has outsourced the government to some officers for which there is rampant corruption at every level. Patnaik is not running the government and officers on his behalf rule the state", the former Madhya Pradesh

chief minister told reporters.

Chouhan alleged that there has been a rise in atrocities against women in Odisha for which girls and mothers do not feel safe in the state. He also accused the state's BJD government of "re-branding" central schemes and misleading people.

Claiming that BJP will win more seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and also form government in Odisha, Chouhan asserted that more than 86 per cent of people in the state support Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Replying to a question on Congress' allegation of a 'shadow boxing' between BJD and the BJP in Odisha, Chouhan said, "We will fight against the BJD with full strength and win elections in 2024."

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LaccMI transforming lives in Nabarangpur

Commuting turns easy for people living in remote areas of tribal-dominated district



and Bidyutprabha Behera of Gotiguda villages under Umerkote block said that the LAccMI bus service has come as a boon for them. Commuting has become very easy for them and they thanked the Chief Minister and 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian for launching the service in the district.

The bus service connects 26 panchayats under Koshagumuda block as well as inaccessible villages like Motigaon, Badagumuda, Ukia, Pali, Bankuli, Atigaon and Emkera villages bordering Chhattisgarh. This has immensely benefited the people in these localities. Saheb Jani, a lady trader informed that due to the LAccMI service, her income has increased substantially.

Debaraj Majhi of Ukiapali, Madhab Mirgan of Ekri, Chittaranjan Goud of Atigaon and Motiram Bhatra of Bada Gumuru villages said six buses are plying in Koshagumuda block. This has helped the residents living around 80km from the district headquarters avail transportation at very nominal costs.

Droupadi Souri of Patakhalia block said that the LAccMI service has connected inaccessible villages like Kuhudi, Phatki, Gambhariguda, Dalbedha, Patakholia and Jamadarpada with other parts of the district. This has come as a huge boon for the people living in the district, she added. Similarly all remote areas in the 26 panchayats of Raigarh block are now interconnected with one another, locals pointed out.

in the district.

The buses have made conveyance easy for farmers travelling to local markets or for people who want to visit the district headquarters hospital here. Earlier they had to pay astronomical sums for commuting from one place to another. Students are also availing of the service paying only five rupees for a one-way ticket. The bus service has ensured connection of all panchayats with block and district headquarters.

Muna Dakua, a resident of Badakumari panchayat under Umerkote block said they had to shell out ₹50 or more for travelling in an auto-rickshaw to Umerkote town for work or to visit a bank. However, after the launch of the LaccMI bus service, they can travel to Umerkote by spending a nominal amount.

Geeta Paika of Padagad, Ambika Patra of Baunshbeda

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, Feb 13: The Location Accessible Multi-modal Initiative (LaccMI) bus service has transformed the lives of people staying in the tribal-dominated Nabarangpur district. It has come as a huge boon to thousands of women, farmers, students and marginal traders, locals informed here Tuesday. The bus service was launched by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on the first Thursday of the holy month of Margashira.

The month of Margashira is associated with goddess Lakshmi. People pray to the goddess for wealth and prosperity. Now the LaccMI bus service is enabling them to earn substantial amounts and also save money. The residents of this district are now commuting from one place to another at affordable costs. A total of 39 buses are now plying



REFLECTION OF CULTURE: Tribals perform a traditional dance at the annual function of Mundari Bhasha Vikash Parishad and the 76th birth anniversary of Mundari Sridhar Singh at Kaliapada under Sainkula panchayat of Gopabandhu Nagar block in Mayurbhanj district, Tuesday

Police bust inter-state burglary gang, 7 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Patana, Feb 13: Patana police in Keonjhar district arrested Tuesday seven notorious criminals of an inter-state burglary gang and forwarded them to court, officials stated here. The accused were identified as A Shrinu, 30, of Dhankuni Sahapur village, Krishna Das, 26 and Aadel Esu, 32, of Sorada area, Bijay Das, 40, of Bhanjanagar area, A Aba, 35, of Aska locality, Aul Malinga, 30, and A Sekhar, 32, belonging to Jajpur Road.

Police arrested the accused from Aska and parts of Jharkhand in a phased manner. Police seized gold ornaments, ₹54,286, a couple of bikes and five mobile phones from their



possession, Ghatagaon SDPO, Sudarshan Gangoi said in a press conference.

Officials said that a woman from Dhanabeni village under this police station limits was re-

turning home with her nephew on a bike after purchasing gold jewellery from a market here January 20. They were waylaid by two bike-borne miscreants who snatched away a bag from the victims and fled the scene. The bag contained a mangalsutra, two gold earrings, a gold coin, Rs 5,000 in cash and a mobile.

The woman lodged a complaint with the police following which Keonjhar SP Kusalkar Nitin Dagudu ordered a probe. Police zeroed in on the miscreants and arrested them. During interrogation, miscreants confessed to have robbed people at places in this town, and in the localities of Turumunga, Ghatagaon and Champua, police said. They added that more arrests are on cards.

Pangolin rescued, 1 arrested by STF

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Feb 13: The Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha police have rescued a pangolin from this district and arrested a smuggler for his involvement in wildlife trade, an official said Tuesday. Acting on reliable information, an STF team with the help of Bargarh Forest division officials conducted a raid Monday on Ambabhona-Dunguri road near Budhipalli Chhak in this district and rescued the pangolin, the STF official informed.

Following the raid, the STF registered a case under relevant sections of the IPC and Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and arrested Jagadish Minz (41), a native of Ambabhona village in the western Odisha district. Pangolin is a Schedule-I protected animal under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.



Opportunities galore, Guv tells BPUT students



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Feb 13: The 10th Convocation of the Biju Patnaik University of Technology (BPUT) was held Tuesday at the Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Auditorium inside the sprawling campus of the institution here. The function was graced by Odisha Governor and Chancellor of the institution, Raghubar Das.

A total of 119 gold medals in different disciplines, like engineering, MBA, MCA and Pharmaceutical Sciences, were presented to the graduating students. Besides, 73 Ph.D degrees were also conferred.

Doctorates of Science (Honora causa) were presented to Dr Sanjay Kumar Nayak, VC Ravenshaw University, Dr Binoy Kumar Das, Director General

Electronics and Communication Systems, DRDO and Prof SC Sharma, former Director of NAAC for their outstanding contribution in the field of engineering and technology.

Speaking on the occasion Das urged students to grab the opportunities waiting for them once they finish their education. "You have possibilities galore outside waiting for you. So, prepare yourself for the future accordingly. I am sure bright minds like you understand the importance of my words," the governor said. Das remembered former Odisha CM, Biju Patnaik as a 'dreamer' and 'visionary'.

"This university has been set up in the name of a dreamer. He dreamt about India and visualised the necessity of industrialisation," Das stated.

Close shave for family as LPG cylinder explodes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sorada, Feb 13: All the members of a family had a close shave after a LPG cylinder in their house caught fire and exploded due to leakage at Kotibadi village under Hukuma panchayat in this block of Ganjam district, Tuesday. The women members belonging to the family of Prabhakar Sabat were cooking in the kitchen when the gas cylinder suddenly caught fire.

Family members raised an alarm after the blaze began to grow. Meanwhile, a local youth rushed inside their house and tried to douse the flames by wrapping the cylinder with a gunny bag but the fire refused to subside. Taking no chances, the youth managed to throw the cylinder to the backyard of the residential compound. The cylinder exploded within a couple of minutes. The explosion was so severe that the fragments of the cylinder were found more than 300 metres from the site of the explosion. Locals said that if the explosion would have occurred inside the house, the results could have been tragic.

Literary meet held on 'Pushpuni Convention'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kesinga, Feb 13: "Literature thrives on commitment of authors who transform words into rhythms, illuminating the soul's voice. Hence, the need for commitment in literature remains vital today." This was highlighted at the 36th annual Pushpuni convention held here in Kalahandi district, Monday.

The convention was inaugurated by Kalahandi cultural organiser Jayanta Behera while short story writers Yasobanta Samal, former MLA Rasbihari Behera were special guests. Chairman of 'Chetabani Literary Association', Senapati Pradyumna Kesari welcomed the gathering.

A recital was held in morning session attended by poets Preetidhara Samal and Niroj Patnaik, Kesinga College principal Sushant Kumar Padhi, playwright Parameshwar Mund and social educator Manjumeha Guru. The afternoon session was chaired by Vaishnav Charan Saha and attended by poets

Sabita Bhoi, Pallavi Das and Yadavendra Saha.

Litterateurs Yugal Sarangi, Narmada Nilotpala, Mukul Mishra, Padmalaya Samal and Manjumeha Guru, were felicitated on the occasion. Ranjan Kumar Panda read out a report on souvenir *Chalopathara Katha*. A compilation of poems *Dhulighara* by Saha was unveiled on the occasion.

Pradeep Panda was awarded the 'Durgabati Memorial Literary Award' along with a cash prize of ₹10,000 on the occasion. Vice-Chancellor of Maa Manikewari University, Sanjay Satpathy was honoured with 'Chetabani Education Award', Yasobanta Samal with the 'Chetabani Knowledge Award' (for Prose), Preetidhara with the 'Chetabani Knowledge Award (for Poetry)' and Mund with the 'Chetabani Knowledge Award' (Essay).

Former vice-president of Odisha Sahitya Akademy, Gayatrikala Saraf was the chief guest for the afternoon session and was conferred with the 'Chetabani Education Award'.

OMBADC ambulance support for Keonjhar residents



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Feb 13: In modern times, ambulance is one of the most vital among all emergency services. Advanced ambulance services are now available in the mining-affected Keonjhar district, offering free transportation for critically ill patients from rural health centres to district headquarters hospital or specialty healthcare facilities beyond the district. This initiative is supported by Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC).

Since 2021, OMBADC has facilitated the operation of three ambulances in Keonjhar district. Among them, one is an advanced life support (ALS) vehicle, and the other two are

basic life support (BLS) ambulances. These ambulances are assigned with government health centres across the district.

The ambulance service accessible at the sub-divisional hospital (SDH), Anandapur, community health centres (CHC) Salania, and health and wellness centres (HWC) here has been named 'OMBADC Seba Sanjog Bahana'. It plays a crucial role in transporting patients receiving treatment at these health centres to major hospitals. A total of 6,493 patients starting from May, 2021 to December, 2023 have benefited from this service. The ambulances transport approximately 200 to 250 patients each month in the district.

The advanced life support ambu-

lance is equipped with life-saving medical equipment including oxygen cylinders, a ventilator, pulse oximeter, glucometer, nebulizer, infusion pump, suction machine and various types of stretchers. Likewise, the basic life support ambulance is equipped with first-aid facilities. Additionally, essential drugs and injections are on hand, along with spine boards to facilitate the transportation of accident victims to the hospital.

In addition to the ALS and BLS ambulances, the Keonjhar district administration operates the 108 and 102 ambulance services. These ensure that patients can easily reach the nearest hospital from their homes conveniently.

Apart from this district, OMBADC supports various programmes of the Odisha government aimed at enhancing quality healthcare delivery in the mining-affected districts of the state. The healthcare scenario has undergone transformation, renovation and modernisation at several health centres with OMBADC support. The implementation of ambulance services has further strengthened the healthcare sector in the mining-affected Keonjhar district.

6,493 patients benefited from 2021 to Jan 2024 from the service

Over 250 patients transported every month

Vehicles have modern equipment and life-support system for patients

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- Adjunct, Visiting (Maximum 2 Years), Adhoc, On Contract, Temporary Faculty.

For details, any updates and application process, please visit www.iiitl.ac.in.
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CBC 21361/12/0008/2324 Deputy Registrar

EAST COAST RAILWAY
E-AUCTION FOR PARKING STAND
Station & Location : BRAHMAPUR, STAND NO. 2 (2 WHEELER) (Near PF-1).
Auction Start Date & Time : 22.02.2024 at 11:00 hrs.
Auction End Date & Time : 22.02.2024 at 11:30 hrs.
Note: Prospective bidders are advised to visit the <https://www.ireps.gov.in> and check the upcoming e-auctions leasing tab to get all required information regarding this e-auction.
Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/ PR-1083/O/23-24 Khurda Road

EAST COAST RAILWAY
E-AUCTION FOR WATER VENDING MACHINES
Auction Catalogue No.: G-129-KUR-WVM
STATION & LOCATION : (1) BHADRAK, PF-1/2 AND PF-3/4(02), (2) BRAHMAPUR, PF-1 & PF NO. 2 & 3(02), (3) PALASA, PF-2/3(01), (4) BHUBANESWAR, PF-2/3(01), PF NO. 4/5(02) AND PF NO. 06(01)(04), (5) KHURDA ROAD, PF NO. 01(01), PF NO. 3(01), PF NO. 4/5(01)(03), Total: 12 WVMs.
Auction Start Date & Time : 22.02.2024 at 13:00 hrs. (for SI. No.1), 13:30 hrs. (for SI. No.2), 13:40 hrs. (for SI.No.3), 13:50 hrs. (for SI. No.4) & 14:00 hrs. (for SI. No.5).
Auction End Date & Time : 22.02.2024 at 13:30 hrs. (for SI. No.1), 13:40 hrs. (for SI. No.2), 13:50 hrs. (for SI.No.3), 14:00 hrs. (for SI.No.4) & 14:10 hrs. (for SI.No.5).
Note: Prospective bidders are advised to visit the <https://www.ireps.gov.in> and check the upcoming e-auctions leasing tab to get all required information regarding this e-auction.
Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/ PR-1081/O/23-24 Khurda Road

Bank of India
Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015 [Rule-8(1)] of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer of Bank of India, Tangi Branch** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Possession** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **Bank of India, Tangi Branch** for an amount mentioned below with interest & expenses thereon. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.**

TANGI BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Property
Borrower: Mrs. Bandana Swain, At: Jasorajpur, PO.: Samsarpur, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN-754023	₹ 17,61,964.40 + interest & expenses thereon	03.11.2023 / 09.02.2024	All that part and parcel of Land & Building situated over Khata No.: 815/89, Plot No.: 820/2257, Area: Ac.0.060 Dec., KISSAM: Gharabari at Mouza: Kaitha, P.S.: Mahanga, SRO: Mahanga, Tahasil: Mahanga, Dist.: Cuttack, standing in the name of Mrs. Bandana Swain, Bounded by North: Gopinath Swain, South: Road, East: Batakushna Rout, West: Pitambar Swain.

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 14.02.2024 Authorised Officer, Bank of India

FOCUS TECHNOLOGY

HOW TO DEMOCRATISE AI



By democratising access to AI, we can empower today's children to engage with humanity's brightest minds in a way that caters to their individual needs

reach the majority of people, a two-fold strategy is necessary: enabling individuals to harness this value locally while redistributing the overall gains to those unable to access them.

Hence, enhancing the accessibility of AI is both feasible and critical. To leverage these technologies to tackle pressing social problems, it is crucial to identify specific areas where AI can make a substantial difference, such as health care, education, environmental sustainability, and governance. But setting the right priorities and implementing technological solutions requires a concerted effort. The concept of AI for good should be integrated into the strategies of development institutions and multilateral organisations.

But first, the global conversation about AI must shift from "wow" to "what" and "how." It is time to move away from mere fascination with the emerging technology to identifying the challenges it can address and devising strategies for its integration into the educational and social systems of developed and developing countries alike. Preparing society for an AI-augmented future requires more than just technological innovation; it calls for establishing ethical frameworks, updating policymaking, and promoting AI literacy across communities.

As we navigate the Stupor Mundi phase of AI, captivated by its seemingly magical capabilities, we must never lose sight of the fact that the impact of technology depends on how we use it. The choices we make today will determine whether AI benefits and enriches a select few or evolves into a powerful force for positive social change. To realise the promise of Salvador Mundi, we must harness these emerging technologies to forge a better, more inclusive future for all.

Bertrand Badré is a former managing director of the World Bank. Charles Gorintin is Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer of Alan. PROJECT SYNDICATE

The rapid advance of artificial intelligence (AI) evokes both wonder and dread. Many regard AI as an object of marvel and awe (a Stupor Mundi, to borrow a Latin phrase), while others believe it can be a benevolent savior (a Salvator Mundi). Regardless of whether AI is seen as miraculous or merely helpful, the question remains: How can we ensure that its benefits are available to everyone?

To answer this question, we need a nuanced understanding of AI. That means rejecting several simplistic narratives: functionalism, which says humans should adapt and augment themselves to keep up with technological progress; sensationalism, which depicts AI as an existential threat; cynicism, which seeks to exploit AI for profit; and fatalism, which implies a resigned acceptance of AI's inevitable rise.

What these scenarios overlook is that the future is still ours to shape. Adopting the verum-factum principle - knowing through making - is crucial to developing a more profound understanding of AI's capabilities and implications.

To prevent a minority from co-opting AI's transformative potential, it must be democratised. Equitable access is the key to ensuring that the benefits of technological progress are broadly shared, and that AI serves as a unifying force, rather than exacerbating the divisions within our fragile societies.

The potential benefits are enormous. In the 1990s, Joseph Stiglitz observed that "a child anywhere in the world who has access to the internet has access to more knowledge than a child in the best schools of the industrial countries did a quarter-century ago." By democratising access to AI, we can empower today's children to engage with humanity's brightest minds in a way that caters to their individual needs.

But achieving this depends on how we shape the narrative surrounding AI's adoption and future impact. Instead of making lofty promises like "AI will

solve world hunger," we should focus on its ability to bring about incremental yet meaningful improvements in people's daily lives.

In this regard, the technology's rapidly expanding capabilities and declining costs create new opportunities for smaller-scale models and enable individual users to personalise AI solutions, mirroring the internet's freewheeling, creative early days. Just two years ago, for example, the leading open-source AI model was Meta's OPT-175B. Today, a leading open-source model, Mistral 7B, is 40 times smaller, at least 40 times cheaper to operate, and outperforms its predecessor. Remarkably, it was developed by a company of just 18 people.

And this is just the beginning. AI is currently experiencing its own version of Moore's law, setting the stage for rapid uptake, akin to the diffusion of telephones and televisions. This accelerated process calls for a shift in focus toward developing practical applications and mitigating risks, rather than fixating on reducing costs.

The rise of AI is a double-edged sword. The technology could be a powerful equaliser

or a source of division, depending on how it is deployed and who controls it. Like previous technological revolutions, it promises to create new employment opportunities while simultaneously threatening to displace existing jobs. A recent report by the International Monetary Fund underscores this point, warning that AI could lead to a growing divide between tech-savvy individuals, well-positioned to reap the economic benefits of innovation, and those who risk falling behind.

But our understanding of these technologies must reflect their complexities and the power of human ingenuity. By developing and promoting AI systems that significantly improve essential services, especially in underserved regions, we could ensure that their benefits are broadly shared. To achieve this, AI technologies must be deployed with the explicit objective of reducing existing inequalities.

At the same time, it is worth noting that AI will most likely increase the overall consumer surplus by lowering the costs associated with certain services. To ensure that these benefits



Bertrand Badré & Charles Gorintin

THE CHOICES WE MAKE TODAY WILL DETERMINE WHETHER AI BENEFITS AND ENRICHES A SELECT FEW OR EVOLVES INTO A POWERFUL FORCE FOR POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE

Putin's Peace Plan

Russian President Vladimir Putin has taken the world by surprise by giving a two-hour-long interview to an American journalist, launching what experts call a peace offensive to end the ongoing war with Ukraine on his terms only. He has so long been shying away from interactions with international media over Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the brutal war, bringing in its trail colossal miseries to the people of Ukraine, loss of lives on both sides and an economic, humanitarian crisis affecting the rest of the world. Why he has chosen a hand-picked journalist of the US for the interview given at the Kremlin has triggered speculation about his real intent which is being interpreted as something more than a propaganda war.

The selection of time for the interview seems significant too, fitting perfectly in Putin's scheme of things. For, he spoke at a moment of apparent leverage. The much vaunted Ukrainian summer counteroffensive has failed to achieve substantial gains, while the Biden administration is hard put to get congressional approval for desperately needed additional military aid for Kyiv. In fact, the Republicans are dead against providing military and monetary assistance to Ukraine.

Against this backdrop, Putin's assertion before the former Fox News host Tucker Carlson that ending the war is "simple" sounds ludicrous indeed. The solution he offered is stopping the supply of weapons to Ukraine by the US and its allies. While he stated he was prepared to settle the conflict diplomatically, he also defended the indefensible invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Carlson had to quit Fox News for his controversial interviews and he is regarded as an unabashed apologist of Donald Trump and white supremacists. The clout he appears to have become evident when Putin urged Carlson to convey to the US administration the need to "tell the current Ukrainian leadership to stop (the war) and come to the negotiating table."

It is only natural that President Biden rejected such overtures outright. US officials had previously assessed that Putin had no intention of negotiating seriously until after the US presidential election in November. He seems to be waiting to see whether Trump might return to the White House and offer him more favourable terms. This explains the sudden decision to choose a journalist close to the Trump lobby for the interview. The objective appears to send a loud and clear message to the Republicans and the American people that they should cut off military and material aid to Ukraine and force it to agree to his terms for peace once they are back in power.

However, Putin's first interview with an American media figure since the invasion and his peace overtures, whatever their worth, is getting traction. The US and Ukrainian officials believe the least that Ukraine's military can hope to do is to defend its current positions. Putin's words do not match his actions that may indicate his interest in ending this war. If he was, he would pull back his forces and stop his relentless attacks on Ukraine, experts say. The Biden administration has supported Ukraine's resolve to reclaim territory that Russia has occupied since its invasion. Russia now occupies around 18 per cent of Ukrainian land.

It seems Putin's peace proposals are nothing but an attempt to permanently take possession of Ukrainian territory Russia has annexed and then stop the war. This could be the reason why he devoted much of the time during the interview to Russia's history mixed with legends and unsubstantiated stories dating centuries back to claim Ukraine was once part of Russia. He has subtly launched his propaganda war to this effect well before Trump succeeds in his goal of becoming US President once again and works in collaboration with Putin on global issues. Should that happen, a bizarre trade off lies in store for the world.

WISDOM CORNER

Most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility, and most people are frightened of responsibility. SIGMUND FREUD

The true genius shudders at incompleteness - and usually prefers silence to saying something which is not everything it should be. EDGAR ALLAN POE

Only a man who knows what it is like to be defeated can reach down to the bottom of his soul and come up with the extra ounce of power it takes to win when the match is even. MUHAMMAD ALI

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1876: The telephone is patented. Both Alexander Graham Bell and Elisha Gray applied for a patent on that day - Bell won.

1946: The first general-purpose high-speed electronic digital computer, the ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer), was demonstrated to the public by its creators, J. Presper Eckert, Jr., and John W. Mauchly.

1949: The Knesset, the parliament of Israel, convenes for the first time. The term "Knesset" is derived from the Hebrew name of an ancient Great Assembly: Anshei Knesset HaGedolah.

1989: Fatwa issued against Salman Rushdie. On this day in 1989, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran issued a fatwa and offered a bounty for the assassination of author Salman Rushdie, whose novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988) Khomeini denounced as blasphemous.

1991: The psychological thriller *The Silence of the Lambs* was released in American theatres; widely regarded as a classic, it won five Academy Awards, including best picture, actor (Anthony Hopkins), actress (Jodie Foster), and director (Jonathan Demme).

LOL

The pessimist



An avid duck hunter was in the market for a new bird dog. His search ended when he found a dog that could actually walk on water to retrieve a duck. Shocked by his find, he was sure none of his friends would ever believe him. He decided to try to break the news to a friend of his, the eternal pessimist who refused to be impressed with anything. This, surely, would impress him. He invited him to hunt with him and his new dog. As they waited by the shore, a flock of ducks flew by, they fired, and a duck fell. The dog responded and jumped into the water. The dog, however, did

not sink but instead walked across the water to retrieve the bird, never getting more than his paws wet. This continued all day long; each time a duck fell, the dog walked across the surface of the water to retrieve it. The pessimist watched carefully, saw everything, but did not say a single word. On the drive home the hunter asked his friend, "Did you notice anything unusual about my new dog?" "I sure did," responded the pessimist. "He can't swim."

IN JEST THIS

Spotting criminals is a challenging job



Melvin Durai

ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IS FIGURING OUT WHO IS A BAD GUY AND WHO IS JUST A GUY

If you happen to see the police in your neighbourhood, make sure you wave, smile or greet them politely. It's important for police officers to feel appreciated because they have extremely challenging jobs. One of the biggest challenges is figuring out who is a bad guy and who is just a guy.

What would you do, for example, if you were a police officer and spotted a man running down the street with a refrigerator strapped to his back?

I would do exactly what some officers in Britain did: stop him for questioning.

This encounter happened recently in the town of Stevenage, Hertfordshire, about 27 miles north of London. Police officers stopped a man named Daniel Fairbrother who was running with a fridge.

Officer: "What are you doing?" Fairbrother: "Training." Officer: "Training for what?" Fairbrother: "Stealing refrigerators."

Actually, as the BBC reported, Fairbrother told the officers that

he was training for the London Marathon, where he hoped to break the Guinness World Record for fastest half-marathon while carrying a household appliance. The current record is 2 hours, 4 minutes and 13 seconds, set by Sam Hammond of Brighton, UK, on Feb. 26, 2023.

Fairbrother, for his part, did not mind the questioning. "I would expect the police to do their job and check on someone running about with a fridge," he told the BBC. "If I got pulled over another 10 times, I wouldn't be annoyed."

This cannot be emphasised enough: if you are running with a refrigerator strapped to your back, you have lost the right to complain if the police stop you for questioning.

As part of their jobs, the police have to be on the lookout for potential criminals - and this is not as easy as it looks.

What would you do, for example, if you were a police officer and came across a man carrying an ATM on his back? Would you stop him for questioning? I

certainly would.

Me: "Excuse me, is that an ATM on your back?"

Man: "Yes, it's very heavy."

Me: "What are you doing with it?"

Man: "I'm trying to set a Guinness World Record. Most ATMs stolen in a year."

Me: "That's great. Best of luck to you!"

As you can tell, I would make a terrible police officer. To be a good police officer, you need to have a discerning eye and good judgement. If you spot anyone transporting an ATM, you should immediately detain them - at least until they provide evidence that they're not committing a crime.

The same applies if you spot someone carrying a gun. But you have to be careful: it might be a toy gun. You could make a terrible mistake, as many police officers have done. That's what makes it a tough job.

Police officers often have to make decisions in a split second. If you are responding to a bank robbery and three people are run-

ning from the scene in different directions, which of them would you chase? (1) The woman holding a gun in her hand; (2) the man wearing a mask; or (3) the man carrying an ATM on his back.

I would chase the man carrying the ATM, but only because he'd be the slowest runner.

In this hypothetical scenario, there is no right answer. Any of them could be innocent or guilty. In real life, however, officers have to react quickly, exercising good judgement and not letting their prejudices get in the way. Criminals come in all shapes, sizes and colours. If you don't believe me, just ask the police officers who arrested a 78-year-old woman in Missouri, US, last year for robbing a bank.

According to the charges filed against her, the woman handed a robbery note to a bank teller asking for "13,000 small bills" and adding "thank you sorry I didn't mean to scare you."

I like polite criminals, especially if they're politely serving time.

Diplomatic victory

Sir, The release of eight former Indian Naval officers on death row from Qatar, where Sharia law is implemented and our relationship with it have not been very cordial, will be called a major success of Indian diplomacy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's intense negotiations resulted to this outcome. During COP28 Summit in Dubai in December last year, PM Narendra Modi met the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. Thereafter, the death sentence was lifted and all eight were released within one and a half months. By completing this arduous mission, the Modi government not only demonstrated its diplomatic ability, but also reinforced the message that no effort is spared to assist Indian residents wherever they are in difficulties around the world. Evidence of this was also discovered when Indians besieged in war-torn Yemen and Ukraine were safely evacuated. Post release of eight former Indian sailors from Qatari captivity, it was announced that the Indian Prime Minister will pay a visit to Doha following his two-day tour to the UAE. This indicates that commercial and trade links between Gulf Cooperation Council countries and India would be strengthened even further. India already has good relations with the majority of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, and Oman. One illustration of these friendly relations is the construction of a temple in Abu Dhabi. The Prime Minister is going to inaugurate this temple.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

Mind game

Sir, Winning and losing is part of the game but the way one loses is definitely something that really matters. The way in which our U19 cricket team lost the finals to Australia after playing so wonderfully and formidably throughout the tournament, is something that needs to be studied and analysed seriously so that such debacles do not happen in future. The U19 team has very talented and energetic players. In spite of having such a strong team, to lose the finals is really a matter of concern. The same thing happened to the fearless senior team who collapsed in the final of WC23. It is high time players understand that the game of cricket is also a game to be played with the mind.

M Pradyu, KANNUR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Assam's 'disease' is population: Himanta

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Feb 13: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Tuesday asserted in the Assembly that high population is a "disease" for the state, which impacts its performance in various parameters.

He also maintained that the state's poor performance in a nationwide cleanliness survey "is a reflection on the people as a whole rather than the government", as he pitched for a 'proper citizens' movement'.

Taking part in a discussion on the state Budget, Sarma said the state's performance in terms of percentage cannot be compared with Arunachal Pradesh or Meghalaya, which have a much lower population than Assam. "Our population burden affects our performance in terms of percentage. Population vis-à-vis students determine the percentage", he said, referring to opposition Congress MLA Bharat Chandra Narah pointing out that Assam's gross enrolment ratio (GER) was much less than the national average.

Narah, speaking before the Chief Minister, had said that



Assam's GER was 16.9 per cent as per recent survey findings, while the national average is 27.1 per cent.

Most other north eastern states have better percentage than Assam, with a few of them even performing better than the national average, he added. Responding to the Congress MLA's statements, Sarma said, "We have to attack the disease and not the symptoms, and our disease is population."

He also claimed that participation of colleges in the national survey on GER at various levels was low in the state previously, which negatively impacted the state's position. "This time, everyone participated properly in the higher education sur-

vey and when the results come out next year, we will be at 23-24 per cent, which is closer to the national average. "Previously data of 130 colleges was not even uploaded. I had a meeting with principals of 350 colleges the day before yesterday," he added.

The CM also maintained that there is no shortage of colleges in the state anymore and in some newly opened ones, there is a dearth of students. "Hence, we have new schemes in the budget to encourage youth to pursue higher studies. We are aware of the problems of the state and the budget is a reply to these", Sarma maintained.

On Narah's criticism of the state and its cities, especially the largest city Guwahati, performing poorly in Swachh Survekshan 2024, the CM said a proper citizen movement is needed to address it.

"It is not the Assam government which has been shamed, but our 'jati' (community) which has to bear the 'lajja' (shame) (of poor performance)... The government has provided various facilities, we need to now motivate the people to use it properly. We need a proper citizens' movement," Sarma said.

SP names RS candidates

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Feb 13: Outgoing MP Jaya Bachchan, former chief secretary Alok Ranjan and former MP Ramji Lal Suman, Tuesday, have been named as Samajwadi Party candidates for the Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh.

Samajwadi Party leader Rajendra Chaudhary said Tuesday, "We have fielded Jaya Bachchan, Ramji Lal Suman and Alok Ranjan."

"Our party is very inclusive and we have taken forward our pitch for the PDA by giving tickets to women, a Dalit and a dominant caste member. This vindicates our stand that we are including all communities in our PDA pitch - with women and dominant castes being a part of it," said the senior SP leader.

Party leaders said that the decision to pick the three from very different backgrounds was taken with an eye on the Lok Sabha polls. Meanwhile, Jaya Bachchan will start her fifth term in the Upper House if she is elected. The move to nominate her has been taken with an eye on women voters in the state. Alok Ranjan, a retired IAS officer, is an analyst for the party and has



Party leaders said that the decision to pick the three from very different backgrounds was taken with an eye on the Lok Sabha polls

With the Rashtriya Lok Dal switching over to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), it may be tricky for the SP to get all three elected to the Upper House

the Dalit vote bank in Uttar Pradesh. Dalits are a part of PDA (Pichda, Dalit and Alpsankhyak) pitch by the SP ahead of the Lok Sabha

been given a ticket as SP chief Akhilesh Yadav has maintained that the PDA also includes "agde" (dominant castes), and "aadhi aabadi" (women).

With the Rashtriya Lok Dal switching over to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), it may be tricky for the SP to get all three elected to the Upper House. But party leaders Tuesday said that "things are in place and they are confident that all three candidates will emerge victorious".

The SP currently has two members in the Rajya Sabha. If the three candidates emerge victorious, its strength will increase to five in the Upper House.

Over 3,700 children go missing in Assam in 3 yrs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Feb 13: More than 3,700 children had gone missing in Assam in the last three years, with over 3,400 of them also rescued by different agencies, Women and Child Development Minister Ajanta Neog said in the state Assembly Tuesday.

The rescued children are handed back to their families wherever possible, or else they are taken care of by the government, she said. Replying to a question by Congress MLA Bhaskar Jyoti Baruah, Neog said a total of 3,779 children had been reported missing from their homes from 2021 to 2023.

Of these, 3,419 children were rescued, she added. Rescued children who could provide details of their homes were sent back to their families, and those who could not give the details were taken care of at childcare institutions, she said.

The minister also said that 6,054 cases under POCSO Act, 2012, were registered from 2012 to 2023, of which 3,522 cases have been disposed. She also said that cases of child trafficking are reported from almost all districts of the state, with Kamrup, Udalguri, Sonitpur, Kokrajhar, Lakhimpur and Biswanath accounting for most such crimes.

UPPSC seeks STF probe in paper leak allegations

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Prayagraj/Lucknow, Feb 13: The Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) has asked the state police's Special Task Force to investigate the allegations of a question paper leak in the preliminary recruitment examination for review officers and assistant review officers (ROs/AROs).

The test was held for recruitment to 334 posts of RO and 77

The test was held for recruitment to 334 posts of RO and 77 posts of ARO Sunday

posts of ARO Sunday. However, aspirants and some student organisations alleged that the question paper had been leaked before the exam started.

UPPSC secretary Ashok Kumar said Tuesday that while the commission had constituted an internal committee to look into the issue, following the reports and claims of the paper leak, it had also sent a formal recommendation to the state government requesting for an STF probe into the issue.

Meanwhile, aspirants claimed that the RO/ARO examination paper had been leaked the night before the exam and was available on certain WhatsApp groups. Omkar Nath Singh, the commission's secretary, had earlier said the exam was held at 2,387 centres, and that 64 per cent of the registered candidates took it.

Monday, aspirants staged a protest outside UPPSC headquarters in Prayagraj and demanded that the exam be re-conducted. In Lucknow, National Students' Union of India's Lucknow University unit staged a protest over the issue on the university campus.



Pilgrims cover themselves with a plastic sheet as it rains on the eve of Basant Panchami during the annual 'Magh Mela' festival at Sangam, in Prayagraj

UP govt to collaborate with IIT Roorkee

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Feb 13: The Uttar Pradesh government is set to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IIT Roorkee for enhanced disaster management.

The MoU will be signed between the Relief Commissioner's office and IIT Roorkee on the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with the aim to minimise casualties and shift people to safe places before the disaster strikes.

Under the proposed collaboration, IIT Roorkee's seasoned professionals will impart specialised training to personnel at the Relief Commissioner's office, equipping them with advanced skills and techniques in disaster management.

Additionally, the institute will



conduct comprehensive research to identify the root causes of prevalent disasters, enabling proactive measures to be implemented. Additional Chief Secretary Sudhir Garg emphasised Uttar Pradesh's vulnerability to various disasters, compared to other states.

The impending MoU signifies

■ The MoU will be signed between the Relief Commissioner's office and IIT Roorkee on the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with the aim to minimise casualties and shift people to safe places before the disaster strikes

■ Additionally, the institute will conduct comprehensive research to identify the root causes of prevalent disasters, enabling proactive measures to be implemented

a significant step towards fortifying the state's resilience against natural calamities over the next five years, during which IIT Roorkee's experts will spearhead critical research initiatives and capacity-building exercises.

Moreover, IIT Roorkee's involvement extends beyond dis-

aster management to include assistance in land consolidation matters, said Relief Commissioner GS Naveen. Leveraging their technical acumen, experts from the institution will facilitate the resolution of land consolidation disputes, offering invaluable support in surveying and land measurement activities, he pointed out.

Through workshops, seminars, and training programmes, this collaborative endeavour aims to foster innovation and develop bespoke solutions tailored to Uttar Pradesh's unique challenges. The MoU framework ensures equitable distribution of intellectual property rights, further enhancing the partnership's transparency and effectiveness in driving sustainable disaster risk reduction measures.

2-day conclave of water policy makers in Lucknow

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Feb 13: Lucknow will host a two-day conclave of water policy makers February 16-17.

The principal secretaries and directors of all states' Jal Shakti departments are expected to attend the programme, which will be led by Vini Mahajan, Secretary, drinking water and sanitation.

The event will see discussions on policies for conservation of water. The Uttar Pradesh government will present a paper on its efforts to provide clean drinking water through tap connections to every household.

"All states will present their achievements under the Jal Jivan Mission in their respective states. They will also share the challenges they faced in implementing the policy on the ground. Efforts will be made to bring



out a consensus from various sessions and thus a common policy might be brought out for implementation of a nationwide plan on water conservation and water distribution," the government spokesman said.

Swachh Bharat will also be discussed during the programme. The event is being organised by UP's Jal Shakti department and will be conducted on seven themes. The theme for the first session is WASH (water, sanitation, hygiene). A separate session will be organised on challenges and stability of Jal Jivan Mission.

No. C-3060

**OFFICE OF THE
DHENKANAL MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, DHENKANAL**

E-Procurement Notice

Tender Call Notice No. 598/DKLMPLTY / Date: 09.02.2024

1. Name of the Work	: Individual Civil Construction work published the www.tenderodisha.gov.in website.
2. No. of works put to Tender	: 17 Nos. individual works
3. Estimated Cost	: Rs.1.926 lakhs upto 10.152 lakhs
4. Period of Completion	: 45 Days
5. Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From 11.00 hours of Dt.13.02.2024 to 17.30 of Dt. 22.02.2024
6. Last date/time for receipt of Bids	: 17.30 hours of Dt.22.02.2024
7. Date and time of opening of Bid	: 11.00 hours of Dt.23.02.2024
8. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Executive Officer, Dhenkanal Municipality, Dhenkanal

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tenderodisha.gov.in>. Sd./- Executive Officer Dhenkanal Municipality

OIPR-13146/11/0053/2324

No. C-3057

**OFFICE OF THE
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, DEOGARH**

"e" Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No. EO/DM/02/2023-24

No. C-3057: Bid documents consisting of specification, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the Govt. website i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

1. Nature of Work	: Civil Work
2. No. of Works	: 14 Nos.
3. Estimated Cost	: As per NIT
4. Period of Completion	: As per NIT
5. Date and time of availability of the Documents in the Portal	: From 15 hours of 12.02.2024 to 17 hours of 21.02.2024
6. Last date/time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	: Dt.21.02.2024 at 17 hours
7. Original Document Submitted	: Dt.22.02.2024 at 17 hours
8. Bids received online shall be opened on	: Dt.23.02.2024 at 12 hours
9. Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Executive Officer, Deogarh Municipality

Further the details can be seen from the procurement portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Sd./- Executive Officer, Deogarh Municipality OIPR-13088/11/0006/2324

Assam declares 'Kaji Nemu' as state fruit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Feb 13: The Assam government Tuesday declared 'Kaji Nemu' (citrus lemon) as the state fruit.

'Kaji Nemu' is known for its unique aroma and health benefits and carries Geographical Indication (GI) tag. Agriculture Minister Atul Bora made the announcement in the state Assembly as per a decision of the Cabinet.

"The Cabinet meeting yesterday has approved the 'Kaji Nemu' as the state fruit of Assam. It is a laudable decision of our government", he said. Bora pointed out that the fruit



had received a GI tag in 2016 and has been commercially grown in the state, with it being

exported also. "Commercial plantation of the Kaji Nemu is being done.

Kaji Nemu is known for its unique aroma and health benefits and carries Geographical Indication tag

Agriculture Minister Atul Bora made the announcement in the state Assembly as per a decision of the Cabinet

There is 15.90 hectares of land under its cultivation, with the production at 1.58 metric tonnes. In the last two years, this fruit has been exported to several countries, including to the Middle East", he said.

The minister also dwelt on the unique qualities of the Kaji Nemu, especially in boosting

immunity and bringing a unique flavour to food.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the decision to declare Kaji Nemu as the state fruit will help the fruit to attract more prominence globally.

"Our government has decided to declare Kaji Nemu (Citrus Limon) as the State Fruit of Assam. With its unique aroma & antioxidant properties, Assam lemon has enriched our local cuisines," he wrote on X. With this announcement, it is set to shine on the global fruit map, boosting self-dependency and production, the CM added.



Farmers move away as police use teargas shells to disperse them during their 'Delhi Chalo' march at Punjab-Haryana Shambhu border, near Patiala



Farmers gather at Punjab-Haryana Shambhu border during the march



Barricades put up at Ghazipur border in view of farmers' protest march



Rapid Action Force (RAF) personnel deployed at Singhu border in view of the march



An injured farmer being assisted during the march



A convoy of tractor trolleys carrying farmers moves towards Punjab-Haryana Shambhu border for the march



Security personnel deployed at the Punjab-Haryana Shambhu border



Police personnel deployed at the Punjab-Haryana Shambhu border in Patiala district

national

of the day quote

Two types of injustice are taking place in the country. One is economic injustice and the other is social injustice. Unemployment is spreading due to economic injustice. Big billionaires are selling Chinese goods in India

₹1.40 lakh crore is being spent in Uttarakhand over road infrastructure at present to which an additional ₹60,000 crore will soon be added to make it a total expenditure of ₹2 lakh crore

Today, both (BJP and Chavan) are scared. BJP is scared because it has made an announcement of clinching 400-plus (seats in the Lok Sabha polls)

SHORT TAKES

ED conducts fresh raids in Kolkata

Kolkata: Teams of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) Tuesday conducted simultaneous raids at multiple locations in Kolkata in connection with its ongoing probe into the multi-crore ration scam in West Bengal, a senior official said.

Police file DA case against Shivakumar

Bangalore: The Karnataka Lokayukta police has registered a case against Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar anticipating a transfer of a disproportionate assets (DA) probe to itself from the CBI, which is currently investigating it.

Terrorist arrested

Srinagar: The terrorist who killed two labourers from Punjab here last week has been arrested, a senior Jammu and Kashmir Police officer said Tuesday.

Pawar moves SC against EC order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 13: Having lost control over the party he founded, veteran politician Sharad Pawar has moved the Supreme Court against the Election Commission order recognising the faction led by his estranged nephew Ajit Pawar as the real Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

Pawar, who founded the NCP with former Lok Sabha speaker Purno Sangma and Tariq Anwar in 1999 after their expulsion from the Congress, filed the petition through lawyer Abhishek Jeebaraj on Monday evening.

Before the Maratha stalwart approached the apex court, the Ajit Pawar faction had filed a caveat through advocate Abhikalp Pratap Singh to ensure that no ex-parte order is passed in favour of the Sharad Pawar group. In a body blow to Sharad Pawar, the Election Commission announced February 6 that the Ajit Pawar faction is the real NCP.

The EC considers the support enjoyed by each claimant in the party's organisational and legislative wings in case of a split,



SC refuses to stay new law on CEC, ECs appointment

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Tuesday refused to stay the operation of the new law that provides for appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners by a panel which does not include the Chief Justice of India.

besides examining its constitution and the list of office-bearers that was submitted to it when the party was united before allotting the election symbol.

ity of NCP MLAs in July last year and supported the BJP-Shiv Sena government led by Eknath Shinde.

"This commission holds that the faction led by the petitioner, Sh Ajit Anantrao Pawar, is the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and is entitled to use its name and reserved symbol 'clock' for the purposes of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968," the EC had said in its 140-page order.

The commission had said there were serious inconsistencies in terms of time-lines in the claim of the Sharad Pawar group on organisational majority, which resulted in unreliability of their claim. It had also expressed the hope that political parties will adopt good disclosure practices of organisational elections and internal party democracy.

Sharad Pawar is also locked in a battle with Ajit Pawar in the Maharashtra assembly, having sought the disqualification of his estranged nephew and eight MLAs loyal to him. The apex court had January 29 extended the deadline for Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar to decide the Sharad Pawar faction's disqualification plea till February 15.

Sandeshkhali: Clashes, protests rock Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 13: Protest against allegations of sexual harassment of women in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali for the sixth consecutive day cast its shadow in other regions of the state, with agitating BJP supporters clashing with police personnel in another part of North 24 Parganas district.

A delegation of the ruling Trinamool Congress delegation visited Sandeshkhali and pledged to ensure justice to the women who are "victims" of atrocities by absconding party leader Shajahan Sheikh and his associates.

Members of the National Commission for Women also visited the area and spoke to the victims.

Clashes erupted between police personnel and supporters of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as attempts were made to flout the prohibitory orders enforced near the SP's office in Basirhat.

The orders, enacted under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), were in effect from 6 am to 6 pm to uphold law and order, according to officials. A significant police

presence, outfitted with riot gear, has been stationed outside the SP's office to forestall any potential disturbances. Sandeshkhali falls within the jurisdiction of the Basirhat police district.

The state BJP, which had declared its intention to besiege the SP office Tuesday to protest the situation in Sandeshkhali, led by state president Sukanta Majumdar, attempted to breach police barricades.

Initial attempts by police to pacify the BJP supporters were met with defiance, resulting in clashes and stone-pelting, prompting the force to baton charge to disperse the crowd.

Several BJP activists were arrested and detained by the police. "This is a lawless situation in Bengal. The state government is trying to hide the truth. There is no place for democratic protest," Majumdar claimed.

Earlier in the day, Majumdar revealed that the party delegation would travel to Basirhat by train due to road blockades set up by the police in the area.

In response, the ruling TMC accused the BJP of attempting to disrupt the state's tranquility.



SNIPPETS

Swami Prasad Maurya quits party post

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party leader Swami Prasad Maurya Tuesday resigned as the party's national general secretary accusing the leadership of discriminating against him and not defending him over his remarks.

Months after ED arrest, Balaji quits as minister

Chennai: After remaining as a minister without portfolio for months following his arrest by the ED, V Senthil Balaji has quit the MK Stalin-led state Cabinet and his resignation has been accepted by Governor R N Ravi.

Ex-Maharashtra CM Ashok Chavan joins BJP

Mumbai: Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Ashok Chavan Tuesday made his political move by joining the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Mumbai, just a day after parting ways with the Congress.

SC quashes defamation case against Tejawshi

New Delhi: In a relief to RJD leader Tejawshi Yadav, the Supreme Court Tuesday quashed the defamation complaint against him over the "Gujarati thugs" remark after he withdrew it unconditionally.



PLANE CRASH: Remains of a Hawk trainer aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) after it crashed during a training sortie, at Kalaikunda in Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal.

ANOTHER KOTA STUDENT DIES BY SUICIDE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kota (Rajasthan), Feb 13: A 16-year-old JEE aspirant allegedly hanged himself in his hostel room here, hours after the National Testing Agency published the answer key for the first edition of JEE-Main 2024, police said Tuesday.

This is the third case of suspected "suicide" by coaching students in Kota this year so far,

they added. Shubh Choudhary's body was found hanging from the ceiling fan of his hostel room in the Jawahar Nagar area here Tuesday morning.

Choudhary, who hailed from Chhattisgarh, was a student of Class 12 and had appeared in the JEE-Main 2024 examination, Singh said.

ascertain the status of his results, he added.

The National Testing Agency Monday published the answer key for the first edition examination of JEE-Main 2024 and announced the results Tuesday.

Choudhary had been preparing for JEE at a coaching institute here and was living in the hostel in Jawahar Nagar area for two years, the police said.

Death toll in Haldwani violence rises to six

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Haldwani (U'tkhand), Feb 13: One more person injured in recent violence in this Uttarakhand town died during treatment at a hospital here Tuesday, while a police outpost was set up in the affected area within 24 hours of an announcement made in this regard by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, police said.

Inaugurated by two women police personnel injured in the violence that broke out February 8 over the demolition of an "illegally-built" madrasa, the police chowki consists of a head constable, four constables and some Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) personnel to keep an eye on unruly elements in the area, Nainital Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Prahlad Narayan Meena told a press conference here.

Dhami had Monday said a police station would come up on the land freed from encroachment in Haldwani's Banbhoolpura, where violence erupted last week after authorities razed the madrasa.

Mohammad Israr (50), who had sustained a gunshot injury in the violence, died at the Sushila Tiwari Hospital where he was under treatment. His death has taken the number of people killed in the clashes to six, the SSP added.

Indira Gandhi, Nargis dropped from names of top film awards

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 13: The 'Indira Gandhi award for best debut film' and the 'Nargis Dutt award for best feature film on national integration' have been retitled with the names of the late prime minister and legendary actor being dropped as part of a raft of changes for the National Film Awards, according to a notification.

The 'Regulations of 70th National Film Awards 2022' reflects the changes suggested by a committee set up by the Information and Broadcasting ministry to rationalise the honours given in different categories. The changes include an upward revision in the cash rewards, including for the Dadasaheb Phalke award, and several awards being fused.

committee told PTI on condition of anonymity.

Filmmaker Priyadarshan, who is also a member of the panel, told PTI he gave his final recommendations in December. "I have made a few recommendations in the technical department like sound," he added.

Entries for the National Awards for 2022 closed January 30. The awards are running a year late because of the pandemic with the National Awards for 2021 being given in 2023.

In accordance with the changes suggested by the committee, and included in the 'Regulations', the 'Indira Gandhi award for best debut film of a director' has been renamed 'Best debut film of a director'.

Similarly, the 'Nargis Dutt Award for best feature film on national integration' will now be called the 'Best feature film pro-



moting national, social and environmental values'. This category also merges award sections for social issues and environmental conservation into one.



Priyadarshan, Vipul Shah, Haobam Paban Kumar, Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) chief Prasoos Joshi, cinematographer S Nallamuthu as well as I&B joint secretary Prithul Kumar and the ministry's director (finance) Kamlesh Kumar Sinha. The entries for the 70th edition of the awards,

to be held this year, were sought on the basis of recommendations of the committee which reviewed and rationalised the honours.

The monetary reward for the Dadasaheb Phalke award, which is presented every year to an Indian film personality for their outstanding contribution to Indian cinema, has been increased from ₹10 lakh to ₹15 lakh.

Besides, the prize money for the Swarn Kamal awards has been increased to ₹3 lakh and to ₹2 lakh for Rajat Kamal winners across categories. Earlier, the award money varied from category to category. Swarn Kamal is given in these categories - best film, debut film, film providing wholesome en-

ertainment, direction and children's film. Rajat Kamal is given to winners of best feature film promoting national, social and environmental values, all the acting categories, best screenplay, music and other such categories.

In another notable change, the award for 'best animation film' and 'best special effects' have been clubbed under a new category named 'best AVGC (animation, visual effects, gaming and comics) film' with two sub-categories. The 'best audiography' category, which had three sub-categories honouring location sound recordist, sound designer and recordist of the final mixed track, will now be known as best sound design.

Entries for the National Awards for 2022 closed January 30. The awards are running a year late because of the pandemic with the National Awards for 2021 being given in 2023

international



Iran is presenting a face which is not entirely transparent when it comes to its nuclear activities. Of course this increases dangers

RAFAEL MARIANO GROSSI | DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

GEARING UP

As demand for red roses surges ahead of the Valentine's Day, Nepal is importing over 3 lakh stems of long-stem roses from India



of the day quote

The UK is a majority white country, so of course there will be many areas where there is very little, and sometimes no, ethnic minority participation. I do not see a problem. Ethnic minority people tend to live in urban areas. Does that make Wembley, where I come from and which is now a majority non-white area, racist because there are fewer white people who live there? Of course not

SUELLA BRAVERMAN | BRITAIN'S FORMER HOME SECRETARY

Resolve the Pakistan election disputes through legal means

ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

Iran presents a constant threat to the United States — trying to murder Americans right here within our borders, conducting a cyber-attack on a children's hospital, supporting terrorists around the world, and more

CHRISTOPHER WRAY | DIRECTOR, FBI

US Senate passes \$95bn support package for allies

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Feb 13: The Senate early Tuesday passed a \$95.3 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, pushing ahead after months of difficult negotiations and amid growing political divisions in the Republican Party over the role of the United States abroad.

The vote came after a small group of Republicans opposed to the \$60 billion for Ukraine held the Senate floor through the night, using the final hours of debate to argue that the US should focus on its own problems before sending more money overseas. But more than a dozen Republicans voted with almost all Democrats to pass the package 70-29, with supporters arguing that abandoning Ukraine could embolden Russian President Vladimir Putin and threaten national security across the globe.

"It's been years, perhaps decades, since the Senate has passed a bill that so greatly impacts not just our national security, not just the security of our allies, but also the security of western democracy," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, who worked closely with Republican Leader Mitch McConnell on the legislation.

The bill's passage through the Senate was a welcome sign for Ukraine amid critical shortages on the battlefield. The final vote gained 22 Republicans supporting its passage, while two Democrats, Sens. Jeff Merkley of Oregon and Peter Welch of Vermont, as well as Sen. Bernie Sanders, an independent, voted against it. Progressive lawmakers have objected to sending offen-



Speaker Mike Johnson cast new doubt on the package in a statement Monday evening, making clear that it could be weeks or months before Congress sends the legislation to President Joe Biden's desk — if at all

The bill's passage through the Senate was a welcome sign for Ukraine amid critical shortages on the battlefield

sive weaponry to Israel.

Yet the package faces a deeply uncertain future in the House, where hardline Republicans aligned with former President Donald Trump — the front-runner for the GOP presidential nomination and a critic of support for Ukraine — oppose the legislation.

Speaker Mike Johnson cast new doubt on the package in a statement Monday evening, making clear that it could be weeks or months before Congress sends the legislation to President Joe Biden's desk — if at all.

Still, the vote was a win for both Senate leaders. Schumer noted the strong bipartisan support and projected that if the House speaker brings it forward

it would have the same strong support in that chamber. McConnell has made Ukraine his top priority in recent months, and was resolute in the face of considerable pushback from his own GOP conference.

Speaking directly to his detractors in a floor speech Sunday, McConnell said that "the eyes of the world" were on the US Senate. "Will we give those who wish us harm more reason to question our resolve, or will we recommit to exercising American strength?" McConnell asked.

Dollars provided by the legislation would purchase US-made defence equipment, including munitions and air defence systems that authorities say are desperately needed as Russia batters the country. It also includes \$8 billion for the government in Kyiv and other assistance.

In addition, the legislation would provide USD 14 billion for Israel's war with Hamas, USD 8 billion for Taiwan and partners in the Indo-Pacific to counter China, and USD 9.2 billion in humanitarian assistance for Gaza.

Modi holds talks with UAE President

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Abu Dhabi, Feb 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday held wide-ranging talks with the UAE's President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during which they reviewed the strategic partnership, discussed new areas of cooperation and witnessed the signing of several agreements, including a bilateral investment treaty.

In a special and warm gesture, Modi was received at the airport by President Mohamed bin Zayed. The two leaders hugged each other. He was later given a guard of honour. "Immensely grateful to my brother, HH @MohamedBinZayed for taking the time to receive me at Abu Dhabi airport," Modi posted on X.

The two leaders held one-on-one and delegation-level talks soon after Modi landed here. They reviewed the bilateral partnership and discussed new areas of cooperation. They welcomed the deepening of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership across sectors, including trade and investment, digital infrastructure, fintech, energy, infrastructure, culture and people-to-people ties. Discussions also covered regional and global issues, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

"I thank you for this grand welcome of me and my team. As you said, I feel that whenever I have come here, I have always felt that I have come to my home and family," Prime



I thank you for this grand welcome of me and my team. As you said, I feel that whenever I have come here, I have always felt that I have come to my home and family

NARENDRA MODI | INDIA'S PM

Minister Modi said in his opening remarks at the bilateral meeting with the UAE President.

"We have met five times in the last seven months. Today, there is a mutual partnership between India and UAE in every sector," he said. The two leaders witnessed the exchange of eight agreements including a Bilateral Investment Treaty, MoU on cooperation in the field of electrical interconnection and trade and an Intergovernmental Framework Agreement between India and

UAE on the India-Middle East Economic Corridor.

The Bilateral Investment Treaty will be a key enabler for further promoting investments in both countries. India has signed both a Bilateral Investment Treaty and a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with UAE, the statement said.

Other agreements include an MoU on cooperation in Digital Infrastructure Projects, a Cooperation protocol between the National Archives of the two countries, an MoU for cooperation in the field of heritage and museums, an agreement on interlinking of the instant payment platforms - UPI (India) and AANI (UAE) and an agreement on inter-linking domestic debit/credit cards - RuPay (India) with JAYWAN (UAE).

SHORT TAKES

8 killed in accident

Kathmandu: At least eight people were killed and 10 others injured in a jeep accident in Nepal's Palpa district Tuesday afternoon, police said. The accident occurred when the jeep was heading to Chidis from Dumre of Palpa district in western Nepal via the Siddharth Highway. A police team reached the accident site to carry out a rescue operation soon after the accident. The injured passengers are undergoing treatment at Lumbini Medical College, police said.

4 soldiers dead

Yerevan: Armenia and Azerbaijan Tuesday traded accusations over a border skirmish that left at least four Armenian soldiers dead and escalated tensions between the two Caucasus neighbours. Armenia's Foreign Ministry denounced what it described as a "provocation" by Azerbaijani troops who fired on Armenian forces across the border in the eastern Syunik region early Tuesday. Four Armenian soldiers were killed and one was wounded, the ministry said. It urged Azerbaijan to refrain from "destabilising" actions. Azerbaijan's State Border Service said it had fired on an Armenian post in retaliation for Armenian shelling of Azerbaijani positions that wounded one Azerbaijani service member the previous day.

2 Thai journalists released on bail

Bangkok: Two Thai journalists arrested for reporting on the vandalism of Bangkok temple wall with graffiti criticizing a pro-monarchy law were released on bail Tuesday, a lawyer's group said. The arrests, carried out separately Monday, nearly a year after the incident, drew widespread criticism and raised concerns from several right groups over the state of media freedom in Thailand.

Nine gold miners missing in Turkey

Istanbul: Nine miners were missing after a landslide at an Anagold Mining operation in eastern Turkey Tuesday, the energy ministry said, with rescue efforts under way. The mine in Erzincan province is operated by Lidya Madencilik and owned by Turkey-based Calik Holding and Toronto-listed SSR Mining. SSR did not immediately respond to a request for comment at its Turkey office.

Russia puts Estonia PM on wanted list



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, Feb 13: Estonia's Prime Minister has been put on a wanted list in Russia because of her efforts to remove Soviet-era World War II monuments in the Baltic nation, officials said on Tuesday as tensions between Russia and the West soar amid the war in Ukraine.

The name of Prime Minister Kaja Kallas appeared on the Russian Interior Ministry's list of people wanted on unspecified criminal charges, although it was unclear when she was added, according to Mediazona, an independent Russian news outlet. The list includes scores of officials and lawmakers from other Baltic nations.

The move was related to her

efforts to remove World War II monuments, other Russian officials said. There was no immediate reaction from Estonian authorities. Estonia and fellow NATO members Latvia and Lithuania have pulled down monuments that are widely seen as an unwanted legacy of the Soviet occupation of those countries.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine nearly two years ago, numerous monuments to Red Army soldiers also have been taken down in Poland and the Czech Republic, a belated purge of what many see as symbols of past oppression.

Moscow has denounced those moves as a desecration of memory of Soviet soldiers who fell while fighting Nazi Germany. The inclusion of Kallas — who has fiercely advocated for increased military assistance to Ukraine and stronger sanctions against Russia — appears to reflect the Kremlin's effort to raise the stakes in the face of NATO pressure over the war. It's the first time the Russian Interior Ministry has put a foreign leader on a wanted list.



Workers arrange ballot boxes prepared for the February 14 election at a stadium in Jakarta, Indonesia. Indonesia, the world's third-largest democracy, will open its polls Wednesday to nearly 205 million eligible voters in presidential and legislative elections, the fifth since Southeast Asia's largest economy began democratic reforms in 1998

Siberian shipyard workers brave freezing cold

Locals in Yakutia, Russia's largest republic by landmass, name 'vymorozka' as one of the hardest jobs in the world, but the workers themselves say it's all a matter of perspective

REUTERS

Yakutia, Russia, Feb 13: A drone flies low over a snow-covered shipyard in Russia's Far East, where workers toil in sub-zero temperatures to maintain the hulking vessels during the bitter Siberian winter.

The process of 'vymorozka,' which roughly translates as 'freezing out,' is backbreaking and tedious work that takes



weeks in some of the world's harshest conditions, with temperatures dropping to minus 50 degrees Celsius (-58 F).

Workers chip away at the ice encasing the ships, looking for areas in need of repair: The vessels are docked in the harbour of Yakutsk on the banks of the Lena River, Siberia's economic lifeblood in summer, during the winter months.

Locals in Yakutia, Russia's largest republic by landmass,

name 'vymorozka' as one of the hardest jobs in the world, but the workers themselves say it's all a matter of perspective.

"You dress the right way and that's it. When you come (to a heated building) and get undressed, it's like a sauna, steam rises from you," worker Mikhail Klus, 48, told Reuters as he took a break from cutting through the ice with a chainsaw.

"I don't think it's the hardest job — there are jobs even harder than that, but it's probably one of the hardest jobs... One needs to try to understand, needs to love the cold and working in it."

The work requires not only stamina and strength, but also extreme precision. The labourers must be sure not to cut the ice too quickly and break through to the water below. If they do, the carved dugout can be submerged and the work is lost.

The colder the weather, the better the ice freezes and the smoother the job, although the temperatures are hard on some workers. "Sometimes, when you freeze, you feel negative emotions from it," 22-year-old Artyom Kovalec said from under a thick layer of coats, a pickaxe in his mittened hands. "You feel it's too cold to work, you want to go home, to eat and relax, so you have to get a grip on yourself."

Nawaz Sharif's chances of becoming PM brightens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 13: In a major boost to former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's bid to secure a record fourth term, Pakistan Peoples Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari Tuesday withdrew from the race, saying his party would support the ex-premier without being part of the government.

Despite independent candidates backed by jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party springing a surprise by winning the most seats in Parliament, questions loom over what the next government of Pakistan will look like five days after the general elections.

None of the three major parties, the PML-N, the PPP, or the PTI have won the necessary seats in the February 8 general elections to secure a majority in the National Assembly and, therefore, will be unable to form government on their own, leading to a hung Parliament.

Addressing a press conference here after the meeting of the PPP's high-powered Central Executive Committee (CEC), held under his leadership, Bilawal has said the reality is that his party does not have a mandate to form a federal government.

"Due to this, I will not be putting myself forward for the candidacy of the prime minister of Pakistan," the 35-year-old former foreign minister said, adding that PML-N and the independents have greater numbers in the Centre.

business

of the day quote

Investing in high growth markets like India helps us strengthen our relationships with established suppliers, but also developing relationships with new ones to build long-term surety and diversity and global supply

ANDREA ALBRIGHT | WALMART INC
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, SOURCING

One of the biggest challenges for e-commerce alone to solve is the cost structure of logistics. India, in general is a low ticket price market. Whenever we are able to get to further (lower logistics) cost structure, is when we will be able to further increase the penetration in commerce

KALYAN KRISHNAMURTHY | FLIPKART CEO

SUV demand along with the introduction of new models, greater availability, effective marketing, consumer schemes and the auspicious wedding season underpinned this strong performance

MANISH RAJ SINGHANIA | FEDERATION OF AUTOMOBILE DEALERS ASSOCIATIONS PRESIDENT

Q3 RESULTS CORNER

Nalco profit up almost two-fold

New Delhi: National Aluminium Company Ltd Tuesday reported almost two-fold rise in consolidated profit to ₹470.61 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2023. The company had posted a consolidated profit of ₹256.32 crore in the October-December quarter of FY2022-23, Nalco said in a filing to BSE. Total income during the quarter under review rose to ₹3,397.87 crore from ₹3,357.71 crore in the year-ago period.

Hindalco net jumps 71%

New Delhi: Aditya Birla Group firm Hindalco Industries Tuesday reported a 71.1 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to ₹2,331 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2023, on the back of strong performance across aluminium and copper business segments. The company had posted a net profit of ₹1,362 crore in the October-December quarter of the previous financial year, Hindalco Industries said in a filing to BSE.

Bosch profit rises 62%

New Delhi: Auto components major Bosch Tuesday reported 62 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit at ₹518 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2023, on account of robust sales. The company had reported a net profit of ₹319 crore in the October-December quarter of last fiscal. Revenue from operations rose to ₹4,205 crore in the period under review from ₹3,660 crore in the year-ago period, Bosch said in a regulatory filing. "Increased demand for vehicles has resulted in robust growth for the company this quarter," Bosch Ltd Managing Director Guruprasad Mudlapur said.

Siemens net grows 9%

New Delhi: Siemens Ltd Tuesday posted a 9.2 per cent rise in net profit at ₹505.7 crore in the first quarter ended December 31 due to higher revenues. The company follows the October to September fiscal year. It had reported a net profit of ₹462.7 crore in the October-December period of the preceding financial year, Siemens Ltd said.



The major economy with the highest potential growth rate right now is India. India has successfully developed by far the best digital economy and finance architecture in the world

A MICHAEL SPENCE | NOBEL LAUREATE ECONOMIST

INTENT TO HIRE FRESHERS IMPROVES

Intent to hire freshers in the first half of this year has improved by 6 per cent compared to the same period a year ago, as employers' confidence grows in the country, TeamLease EdTech's Career Outlook Report HY1 (January-June) report said Tuesday.



PAYTM CRISIS

NBFCs explore options for loan disbursement

REUTERS

Mumbai, Feb 13: Indian non-bank lenders are looking at options other than Paytm for loan disbursement, worried about the regulatory crisis engulfing the firm that has led to a temporary halt of lending services, sources with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Paytm's banking unit Jan. 31 was hit by a central bank order to wind down its business due to persistent non-compliance with rules and a day later Paytm said it would not be originating loans for "maybe a couple of weeks" to resolve operational challenges.

If Paytm's lending partners were to distance themselves from the company, that would be a further major blow to the app. Loan distribution fees contributed close to a fifth of Paytm's revenues in the latest quarter, analysts have said.

While non-bank lenders have not terminated their contracts with Paytm, sources said that they have no visibility as to when they might be able to resume lending through the Paytm app. "We have been speaking to the company about regulatory issues and until those are resolved, we want to stay away and explore other options for loan disbursement," a senior executive at one of Paytm's lending partners said.

The executive was one of three sources at the non-bank lenders who said that options were being



Macquarie said the company faced a serious risk of customer exodus. The stock has halved in value since Jan. 31.

It remains to be seen just how extensive the financial and reputational impact of the winding down of Paytm Payments Bank will be on Paytm.

Owners of the 330 million digital wallets at the bank will not be able to add to their deposits after Feb. 29 but will be allowed to withdraw their money. While the deadline might be extended to allow for a smoother transition of some bank-related services, the central bank has said it will not review its decision to halt business at the bank.

Having its own payments bank allowed Paytm to process transactions at a lower cost than other digital payments firms. Paytm has said it is working on securing new banking partners. Payments can, however, still be made on the Paytm app using India's popular Unified Payments Interface (UPI) digital payments system.

The crisis has, however, seen many merchants refuse to accept payments via Paytm while Walmart's PhonePe and Google Pay have seen demand surge for their services.

explored. They were not authorised to speak to media and declined to be identified.

A Paytm spokesperson said that while non lending from lending partners had been put on hold for a couple of weeks, the company "would like to stress upon the fact that it is solely due to operational reasons and our relationship with our lending partners remains intact."

Paytm has seven non-bank lending partners: Aditya Birla Finance, Hero Fincorp, Piramal Capital, Poonawalla Fincorp, Shriram Finance, SMFG India Credit and Tata Capital.

None of the non-bank lenders responded to Reuters requests for comment. Most also have part-

nerships with other digital payments firms.

Paytm, known formally as One 97 Communications, disbursed loans worth 155 billion rupees (\$1.9 billion) on behalf of the seven lenders in the October-December quarter, according to a company presentation to investors. "Lending was expected to become the key driver of earnings in the near future and hence accounted for the bulk of Paytm's (market) valuation," said Pranav Gundlappalle, senior research analyst at AllianceBernstein.

Paytm shares tumbled another 10% Tuesday to fresh record lows after brokerage house

If Paytm's lending partners were to distance themselves from the company that would be a further major blow to the app

Gold ETFs continue to glitter: Amfi report

Experts believe the appeal of the precious metal as a safe haven and hedge against inflation will continue amid ongoing geopolitical tensions and higher inflation in the US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 13: Gold Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) attracted ₹657 crore in January, marking a seven-fold jump compared to the previous month, according to Amfi data.

Experts believe that the appeal of the precious metal as a safe haven and hedge against inflation will continue amid ongoing geopolitical tensions and higher inflation in the US.

The inflow helped inflate the assets under management (AUM) of gold funds by 1.6 per cent to ₹27,778 crore by the end of January compared to ₹27,336 crore at the December-end, the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) data showed.

The net flows in Gold ETFs were sharply higher at ₹657.4 crore in January from ₹88.3 crore in the previous month, the data showed. The launch of Tata Gold Exchange Traded Fund which garnered ₹6 crore also aided the growth. With ongoing geopolitical tensions and US inflation still higher than the desired number, the appeal of gold as safe haven and hedge against inflation is expected to continue,



Melvyn Santarita, Analyst at Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

"Gold prices in US Dollar terms scaled new highs after going past the USD 2,100 per ounce mark in early December 2023 but since then has come down gradually. In Rupee terms, gold has done fairly well over the last year but dwarfs in comparison to how equities have fared. Given this backdrop, flows in the Gold ETF category have been somewhat patchy. Some investors could be choosing to opt for a risk on approach to investing with the anticipation of a reversal in rate cycle going ahead," he added. In 2023, Gold ETFs witnessed an inflow of ₹2,920 crore, which was higher than the ₹459 crore inflow seen in 2022. The attractiveness of gold as a safe haven and a hedge against inflation enhanced significantly in 2023.

Tata Motors cuts EV prices as battery cost decreases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 13: Tata Motors Tuesday said its electric vehicle arm has reduced prices of two models -- Nexon.Ev and Tiago.Ev -- by up to ₹1.2 lakh on account of reduction in battery cost.

The auto major has cut the price of Nexon.Ev by up to ₹1.2 lakh and now the model price starts at ₹14.49 lakh.

Similarly, the company has reduced the prices of Tiago.Ev by up to ₹70,000 with the base model now starting at ₹7.99 lakh, Tata Motors said in a statement. Introductory prices of the re-

cently-launched Punch.Ev remain unchanged as they already factor in reduction in battery cost in the foreseeable future, it added.

"Battery costs constitute a substantial part of the overall cost of an EV. With battery cell prices having softened in the recent past and considering their potential reduction in the foreseeable future, we have chosen to proactively pass on the resulting benefits directly to customers," Tata Passenger Electric Mobility (TPEM) Chief Commercial Officer Vivek Srivatsa said.

SC to hear plea against Sterlite unit closure today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 13: The Supreme Court will commence hearing Wednesday on a plea of the Vedanta group against the closure of its Sterlite copper unit in Tamil Nadu's Tuticorin.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra on Tuesday asked the parties to circulate short notes of their respective submissions in the case.

Senior advocate Shyam Divan would open the arguments on behalf of the Vedanta group firm. Besides the firm, NGO 'Manu Neethi Foundation', through senior advocate Vikas Singh, had also moved the top court for an urgent hearing in the

case, saying the workers of the Sterlite copper unit are facing extreme difficulties. Earlier, the top court had said it had directed the registrar to allocate "two dedicated dates" for hearing the Vedanta group's plea.

The top court had in May last year asked the Tamil Nadu government to take appropriate decisions in pursuance of its April 10 direction by which it had allowed the Vedanta group to carry out the upkeep of its Sterlite copper unit in Tuticorin under the supervision of a local-level monitoring committee.

In its April 10, 2023 order, the top court also allowed the evacuation of the remaining gypsum at the plant and made available manpower as requested by the company.

Stock markets rebound amid buying in banking, IT shares

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 13: Benchmark Sensex spurred by 482 points while broader Nifty closed above the 21,700 level Tuesday on buying in banking, financial services and IT sector stocks as easing retail inflation boosted investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex surged 482.70 points or 0.68 per cent to settle at 21,755.19. The gauge moved between a high of 21,662.74 and a low of 20,924.30 during intra-day.

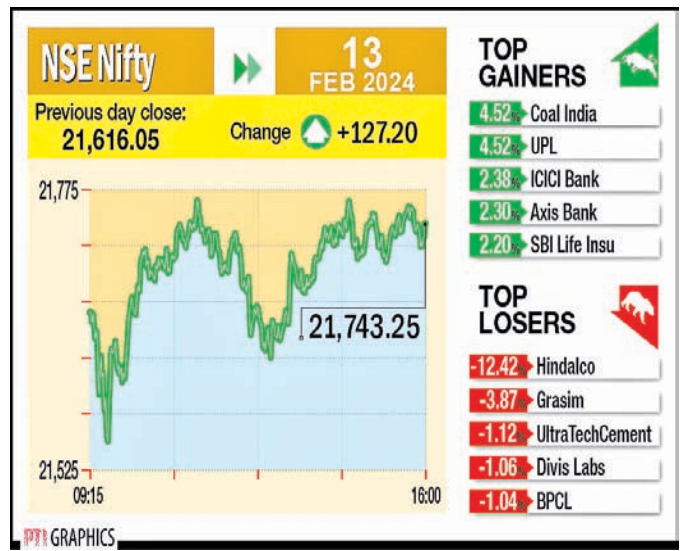
The broader NSE Nifty also soared 127.20 points or 0.59 per cent to close at 21,743.25 with 39 of its components ending in the green and 11 in the red.

Among Sensex stocks, ICICI Bank was the lead gainer, rising by 2.46 per cent. Axis Bank, Wipro, Kotak Mahindra Bank and NTPC were among the major gainers.

The five stocks that defied the trend included UltraTech Cement, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, Tata Motors and Nestle.

"The domestic market largely recovered from yesterday's losses, driven by gains in the banking sector. Improved sentiment stemmed from a decline in domestic inflation, which is expected to boost rural demand," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Government data released Monday showed India's retail inflation declined to a three-month low of 5.1 per cent in January. However, the country's industrial production growth



Government data released Monday showed India's retail inflation declined to a three-month low of 5.1 per cent in January. However, industrial production growth slowed to 3.8 per cent

slowed to 3.8 per cent in December 2023.

Among sectoral indices, bankex and financial services gained 1.44 per cent and 1.23 per cent, respectively. While services rose 1.45 per cent, tech advanced 0.40 per cent and energy gained 1.03 per cent.

Metal and commodities were major losers, declining 1.44 per

cent and 0.94 per cent, respectively. BSE smallcap index inched up 0.18 per cent while midcap and largecap indices closed with a gain of 0.61 per cent each.

In Asia, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 and China's Shanghai Composite settled in the positive territory while Hong Kong's Hang Seng was in the red.

European markets were in the red with CAC 40 of France and DAX of Germany declining 0.32 per cent and 0.62 per cent, respectively.

The US market ended Monday's session on a mixed note. Global oil benchmark Brent crude rose 0.78 per cent to USD 82.64 a barrel Tuesday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers as they bought equities worth ₹126.60 crore, according to exchange data.

India narrows gap with China in key MSCI index

THE GAIN FOR INDIA CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO A SUSTAINED RALLY IN EQUITIES AND RELATIVE UNDERPERFORMANCE OF OTHER EMERGING MARKETS, ESPECIALLY CHINA

REUTERS

Bangalore, Feb 13: India has narrowed the gap with China in MSCI's Global Standard index, which tracks emerging market stocks for investors, after the

latest revision. Index provider MSCI raised, India's weightage in the index to an all-time high of 18.2% Tuesday, which could lead to inflows of about \$1.2 billion, analysts said.

In comparison, China's weight in the index fell to 25.4% after the February revision, from 26.6% a year ago.

The convergence of weights between Indian and Chinese stocks has intensified since August 2020, when China's weightage was five times that of India's.

MSCI's revisions will come into effect after market close on Feb. 29. Indian shares had a 17.9% weight on the index ahead of the February review.

The gain for India can be attributed to a sustained rally in



equities and relative underperformance of other emerging markets, especially China,

Nuvama Alternative & Quantitative Research said in a note Tuesday.

India could surpass a 20% weight on the MSCI index by early 2024, on consistent flows from domestic institutional investors and steady foreign portfolio investor participation, Nuvama said.

MSCI added five Indian stocks to its Global Standard index and did not move any out. In contrast, the index provider removed 66 Chinese stocks while adding five.

India's state-owned lenders Punjab National Bank and Union Bank of India were added to the large-cap category, while Bharat Heavy Electricals and NMDC were included in the mid-cap category. GMR Airports Infrastructure was moved to the mid-cap category

from small-caps. India could witness up to \$1.2 billion of passive foreign flows after the February review, Nuvama said.

About 27 small-cap stocks were added to the MSCI Domestic index, while six were either moved to other categories or removed.

Tata Motors and Macrotech Developers were added to the domestic index under the large-cap category while Punjab National Bank, Canara Bank and Embassy Office Park REIT to the mid-caps.

Bharat Heavy Electricals, Persistent Systems, MRF, Suzlon Energy and Cummins India were moved to the mid-cap index from small-caps.

Duo in line for debut

Jurel likely for Test debut, while Sarfaraz may also get senior India cap in the third Test against England



SARFARAZ KHAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rajkot, Feb 13: An injury-hit India could well go into the third Test against England with two debutants in domestic run-machine Sarfaraz Khan and hard-hitting keeper-batter Dhruv Jurel on a track that will be quite similar to the first two Test matches. Last match's centurion Shubman Gill however did not attend the optional training on Tuesday. It must be noted that Gill had hurt his right index finger while fielding in the second Test in Visakhapatnam. He didn't field during the England second innings and also said that the injury isn't too serious. With Shreyas Iyer being dropped and KL Rahul yet to recover, doors have opened for Sarfaraz, who has been one of the most prolific performers in Ranji Trophy.



DHRUV JUREL

In case of Jurel, it is his superior batting quality that could get him the nod ahead of Kona Bharat, who has failed to score a single half-century in seven successive Tests.

With Rajat Patidar, Sarfaraz and Jurel batting between No.4 to 7, three of the four middle order players (other being Ravindra Jadeja) will go into the Test match with a collective experience of solitary game. Patidar made his debut in Visakhapatnam.

With a transition phase looming large, a glimpse into the future of India's Test side became apparent here Tuesday when the team hit the ground running to prepare for the third Test.

Usually spoilt for choices when it comes to selection and perennially dominant at home, India have had to make do with a mix of experienced and rookie players against England in the first two Tests of the five-match series in absence of the regular stars.

Patidar and Sarfaraz were both part of a new-look slip cordon when India began their training here at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium.

While Patidar, positioned at gully and Sarfaraz at first slip did attract attention when the training session got underway, it was also the sight of a lean and bubbly young keeper Jurel taking

some sharp catches which sparked a lot of interest.

Accompanying them at the second slip was the dashing opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who at times celebrated taking catches as if he was playing a game, throwing the ball high in the air in jubilation.

Having had a look at the pitch upon arrival, Rohit Sharma and coach Rahul Dravid watched the proceedings from a distance for a while before the Indian skipper decided to join the catching session for a brief period of time.

The coach, meanwhile, was again spotted having a long chat with the local groundsmen close to the end of the session.

After the conclusion of the slip catching session, both Patidar and Sarfaraz spent some time training for catches at close-in positions — silly point and short-leg — which indicated their possible roles in the upcoming match.

Rohit then headed into the nets where he was joined by Patidar and Sarfaraz, who both had extended sessions facing local bowlers, Indian spinners and throwdown specialists.

India's bowling spearhead Jasprit Bumrah joined the team Tuesday evening along with Rahul's replacement in Devdutt Padikkal, and Bengal pacer Akash Deep.

Ishan fiasco could lead BCCI to impose new rule

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 13: Jharkhand keeper-batter Ishan Kishan's reluctance to play first-class cricket and focus only on the IPL could prompt the BCCI to make a minimum number of Ranji Trophy games mandatory for players in order to be eligible for the cash-rich league's lucrative auction pool.

It has been learnt that BCCI brass has already instructed Kishan to play Jharkhand's last group league game against Rajasthan in Jamshedpur, starting February 16.

The manner in which Kishan had skipped match after match after returning midway from South Africa tour citing "travel fatigue" hasn't exactly gone down well with men who matter in the Indian cricket establishment.

More so after it was found



that he is training in Baroda with his new MI skipper Hardik Pandya while his state team is languishing near bottom of group A table.

There is a general consensus that a strict policy need to be adhered to so that a group of young players don't make "playing IPL to IPL" a habit.

"The decision makers in BCCI are well aware that some players

they can't play IPL or even appear in IPL auction if released by their franchise. The state units feel unless the diktat comes from top of BCCI, some of the young stars will treat Ranji Trophy with disdain."

It is understood that even Indian team's think-tank are very unhappy off with a certain section of players, who are always reluctant to play Ranji Trophy even when they are fit.

It will be interesting to find out if Kishan finally leaves his "new training base" in Baroda and is back in Jamshedpur for Jharkhand's final game of the tournament.

Asked if Kishan would find himself out of BCCI retainer-ship (he has a grade C annual contract of Rs 1 crore), the official said: "No discussions have taken place as of now regarding central contracts."

Eyes eye better show against mighty Dutch

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rourkela, Feb 13: Their morale hitting rock-bottom after slumping to their fourth defeat, India await another tough contest in the women's FIH Pro League when they take on the undefeated Netherlands here Wednesday.

It has been rough sailing for the Indian women's hockey team of late. After failing to qualify for the Paris Olympics, the side has also been faring poorly in the ongoing Pro League matches in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela.

The Savita Punia-led side has played five matches in the Pro League so far, out of which it has lost four and won one. The home team's campaign started with three successive defeats against China (1-2), the

Netherlands (1-3) and Australia (0-3) before it beat the USA 3-1. The Indians then slumped to their second defeat at the hands of China (1-2) here Monday.

A herculean task awaits India in their next tie as they are up against the formidable Netherlands, who are leading the standings with 27 points from nine matches. The Indians are currently placed fifth in the nine-team league with just three points from five games.

After Wednesday's match, the Indian women will play two more games in the Odisha-leg of the Pro League — against Australia February 17 and USA February 18.

After the ongoing matches in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, the team will travel to Antwerp, Belgium for the next leg of the Pro League in May.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Dattajirao Gaekwad passes away

New Delhi: An accidental Indian captain who matched the peerless Vijay Hazare stroke for stroke with a cover drive to die for, Dattajirao Gaekwad should have played more than 11 Tests, given the talent this remarkable player from Baroda possessed. Tuesday, Gaekwad died in his hometown Baroda at the age of 95. Statistically, he was the oldest living Indian Test cricketer since the death of Deepak Shodhan in 2016. A nightmare for the Bombay (Mumbai) teams of the 1950s, those cover drives, unfortunately, never really came off when he played at the highest level from 1952 to 1961. His son Aunshuman, who played 40 Tests from the 1970s to the 80s, was more successful with a tight defensive technique compared to his father. But in those first two and half decades post independence, not every cricketer could always be judged by the prism of statistics. He also led India in four of the five Tests during their disastrous tour of England in 1959.

Mandhana moves up in ODI batters' ranking

Dubai: India opener Smriti Mandhana has jumped two spots to grab the fourth position in the latest ICC Women's ODI Player Rankings for batters. The 27-year-old from Mumbai surpassed South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt, who slumped to fifth place after a lacklustre show in the ODI series against Australia. England's Nat Sciver Brunt, Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu and Australia's Beth Mooney occupy the top 3 positions in the batting chart, which also has India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur static at the 10th place. In the bowling chart, headed by England's Sophie Ecclestone, Deepti Sharma slipped a place to No.4. The Indian, however, moved a place to the fifth spot in ODI all-rounder list.

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