



Success mantra

Actor Priyanka Chopra shares secrets behind carving a place for herself in the global entertainment landscape

LEISURE | P2



Yoon faces impeachment

S Korean lawmakers move impeachment motion against Prez Yoon Suk Yeol for his sudden decision to declare martial law

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Rupee on free fall

Rupee slumps by 7 paise to hit lowest-ever closing level of 84.75 against US dollar, amid a strengthening greenback

BUSINESS | P11



Banking on seniors

KL Rahul says he is seeking advice from seniors to face the pink ball in the second Test beginning at Adelaide Friday

SPORTS | P12

5.20 LAKH DOG BITE CASES IN 22 MONTHS

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 4: The state has recorded a whopping 5.20 lakh dog bite cases between January 2023 and October 2024, according to data provided by the state government in the Assembly Wednesday.

This means stray canines or domesticated ones have targeted an average of 777 individuals every day during the period.

In a written reply to a question from Rayagada Congress MLA Kadraka Appala Swamy, Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Minister Gokulananda Mallick said that a total of 5,20,237 dog bite cases were reported in Odisha during those 22 months.

While 2,59,107 dog bite cases were reported during 2023, 2,43,565 such cases were recorded from January to October of 2024. The maximum number of such cases at 33,547, 32,561 and 29,801 were reported during January, February and March of 2024, respectively.

According to the 2019 Livestock Census, Odisha has 17.34 lakh stray dogs.

Following the Animal Birth Control Rule, 2023, municipalities and urban local bodies are implementing Animal Birth Control programme through organisations, which got project recognition certificates from the Animal Welfare Board of India, the minister said.

Fadnavis to take oath as Maha CM today

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Dec 4: Putting all speculations to rest, Devendra Fadnavis has been unanimously elected as the Maharashtra BJP legislature party leader at a meeting here Wednesday, paving the way for his appointment as the Chief Minister for the third non-consecutive term.

The swearing-in ceremony will be held in Mumbai Thursday in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Fadnavis met caretaker CM Eknath Shinde at his official residence, 'Varsha' Tuesday - the first in-person meeting since their discussions in Delhi last week.

MORE P9

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



What's the point in building expressways & highways if LoP or farmers can't use them?



SHOWCASING NAVAL PROWESS: Navy personnel conduct an operational demonstration, highlighting the strength and versatility of Indian naval fleet. The occasion commemorates the strategic victories during the 1971 India-Pakistan war

OP PHOTO

President: India building 63 ships

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Puri, Dec 4: Invoking the blessings of the 'God of the Ocean' (Varuna) for all-round development of the country, President Droupadi Murmu Wednesday said she is confident that the Indian Navy will continue to ensure maritime security of the country and added that the country is building 63 ships on its own.

Murmu, the supreme commander of the country's defence forces, said this while gracing the Navy Day celebration at the Blu Flag Beach in the Pilgrim City.

"I am confident that the Indian Navy will continue to ensure maritime security, essential for Viksit Bharat by 2047," the President said.

She said with 63 ships being built in India, the Navy's focus to be an 'Atmanirbhar' force by 2047 provides inspiration to all of us to pursue innovation in 'Mission Mode'.

The President praised the Navy's efforts in empowering women and acknowledged its pivotal role in India's victory in the 1971 war. She also lauded the Navy's growth and capabilities, noting that India's maritime history spans over 5,000 years.

The President commended the Navy's pioneering efforts in providing appropriate growth avenues to 'Nari Shakti' and noted that it was the first service to induct women Agniveers.

MORE P3

Peanuts for farmers

Despite the introduction of a separate agriculture budget by the previous government in 2012-13 and the state receiving 'Krushki Karman Award' on five occasions since 2019, farmers in Odisha continue to languish in distress. This is evident as the state ranks second from the bottom - one spot above Jharkhand - in terms of national farmers' income data revealed in the Assembly Wednesday. Paradoxically, this situation persists even as people grapple with soaring prices of vegetables and pulses, which have contributed to the recent rise in the CPI inflation. In simple terms, while middlemen are reaping the bulk of the price hike, farmers are getting peanuts. Odisha's agricultural sector continues to be plagued by low productivity, driven by traditional farming methods, insufficient capital investment, inadequate irrigation facilities, and the small, uneconomical size of land holdings. Nearly 62% of cultivable land is rain-fed and vulnerable to the uncertainties of the monsoon and natural calamities. It remains to be seen how the recent increase in the Minimum Support Price from ₹2,183 to ₹3,100 by the state government will impact farmers' earnings in the long run

THE TOP 10

States	Farmers' income
1. Meghalaya	₹29,348
2. Punjab	₹26,701
3. Haryana	₹22,841
4. Arunachal	₹19,225
5. J&K	₹18,918
6. Mizoram	₹17,964
7. Uttarakhand	₹13,552
8. Karnataka	₹13,441
9. Gujarat	₹12,631
10. Tamil Nadu	₹11,924

SOURCE: NATIONAL SAMPLE SURVEY (NSS)

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 4: Average monthly income of farmers in Odisha stands at a meagre ₹5,112, said Deputy Chief Minister and Agriculture Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo in the Assembly, Wednesday, citing the National Statistical Office (NSO) data from 2018-19.

Singh Deo's statement came in response to a question posed by Congress MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati.

Bahinipati had asked the Agriculture minister to provide details about the per cap-



ita annual income of agricultural households in the state.

He had also sought details about the Minimum Support Price (MSP) offered by the state government per quintal of paddy, as well as the cost incurred by farmers to produce a quintal of paddy.

Additionally, the Congress MLA requested for information on the cost of paddy production in both irrigated and non-irrigated farmlands.

In his reply, the Deputy CM stated that for 2024-25 year, the MSP for common paddy has been set at ₹2,300 per

quintal. He also added that the state government is offering additional support to farmers, bringing the total support to ₹3,100 per quintal.

Around 65 per cent of the population in Odisha is dependent on agriculture and deprived of government facilities, the Opposition claimed.

The NSO survey had revealed that the average monthly income of farmers in Odisha came down to ₹5,112 from ₹7,731 in 2015-16. The monthly earnings of farmers in states like Bihar and Haryana are more than that of Odisha.

It is worth mentioning here that the previous BJD government had claimed to double the farmers' income which didn't happen. Besides, financial assistance was extended to small and marginal farmers under state-sponsored KALIA scheme (introduced in December 2018) but the average monthly income of farmers dropped by around 35 per cent.

According to the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, the cost of production for paddy in Odisha stands at ₹2,067 per quintal.

Assassination attempt on SAD chief Sukhbir

The shooter, a former Khalistani terrorist Narain Singh Chaura, has been arrested

AGENCIES

Amritsar, Dec 4: Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal escaped a bid on his life Wednesday when a former Khalistani terrorist fired from a close range at Punjab's ex-chief minister at the Golden Temple's entrance here but missed as plainclothes policemen overpowered him.

The audacious attack, which occurred at around 9:30am, was captured on cameras by mediapersons who had gathered to cover the second day of Badal performing the duty of 'sewadar' at the main gate of the Sikh shrine as religious penance for "mistakes" committed by the SAD government in Punjab from 2007 to 2017.

As other devotees were entering, the shooter, identified as former terrorist Narain Singh Chaura, slowly walked towards Badal, 62, a Z+ protectee who was sitting in a wheelchair due to a fractured leg, and pulled



out a gun from his pocket.

Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Jasbir Singh, who was standing close to Badal in plainclothes, sensed the threat to the senior Akali leader and pounced on the shooter, grabbed his hands and pushed them upwards after which the attacker was overpowered with the help of other security personnel and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) task force members.

In the melee, the gun fired and the bullet hit the entrance wall of the shrine behind Sukhbir Badal, who escaped unhurt.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Harpal Singh said the police had been keeping an eye on Chaura, 68, who was at the Golden Temple Tuesday as well.

SHORT TAKES

Navy copter makes emergency landing

Baripada: An Indian Navy helicopter made an emergency landing at a paddy field in Mayurbhanj district Wednesday, police said. The helicopter landed in Armada village in Rasgopindpur police station area, taking farmers working in the field by surprise, they said. After landing, the pilot came out of the helicopter and examined it. The helicopter left the place after about 30-40 minutes, police said. Superintendent of Police Varun Guntupalli said the chopper had landed there because of minor technical issues and it was repaired by the pilot himself.

P5

Beef ban in Assam hotels & restaurants

New Delhi: Assam government has decided to ban serving and consumption of beef in restaurants, hotels and public places, CM Himanta Biswa Sarma announced Wednesday. A decision was taken at a meeting of the state Cabinet to amend the existing law on beef consumption to incorporate the new provisions. "We've decided to ban serving and consumption of beef in restaurants, hotel and public places," the Assam CM told a presser in the national capital. States like Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Punjab and Rajasthan have banned cow slaughter.

104-yr old a free man after spending 36 yrs in jail

RASIKT MONDAL'S IS ONE OF THE VERY FEW CASES OF CENTENARIAN INMATES INCARCERATED IN JAILS IN WEST BENGAL, ACCORDING TO OFFICIALS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 4: A 104-year-old man was finally released from West Bengal's Malda Correctional Home after languishing in jail for 36 years for murder of his brother over a land dispute.

Emerging out of the gate of Malda Correctional Home, centenarian Rasikt Mondal, a resident of Manikchak in Malda district, said he would now devote full time to gardening/nurturing plants and spending

time with family members. He was sentenced to judicial custody way back in 1988, said sources.

Mondal had been enlarged on bail for about one year in between but again went back to the prison once the bail period was over and the session and High Court turned down his pleas for release on past occasions.

Asked how old was he, Mondal mumbled 108 years but his son, accompanying him, corrected he was 104. Correctional



home authorities said records showed he was 104.

"I don't remember how many years I had spent in jail. It seemed never-ending. I don't even recall when I was brought here," the elderly man, looking remarkably agile considering his age, he said.

However, he added "now I have come out I can do justice to my passion - attending plants in the small garden in my courtyard. I missed my family and grandchildren. Want to be with them."

Mondal's son said his father was released following an order of the Supreme Court.

"After certain years, every prisoner is entitled to release from prison if he has not committed any improper act during incarceration. Happy the Supreme Court finally paved the way for his release," the son said.

Correctional Home department officials said his was one of the very few cases of centenarian inmates incarcerated in jails in the state.

leisure



KHLOE CLAIMS THERAPIST LEAKED PRIVATE INFORMATION TO TABLOID

American media personality Khloe Kardashian gave up on therapy because she was convinced her counsellor had leaked 'private information' from one of her sessions to a popular tabloid. She started going to a therapist to deal with the aftermath of her divorce from Lamar Odom.

TAYLOR SWIFT TO TAKE A YEAR OFF AFTER WRAPPING TOUR

Pop superstar Taylor Swift is reportedly planning to take a year off after she wraps *The Eras Tour* in Canada so she can focus on relaxing and spending time with her boyfriend Travis Kelce.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will be very enterprising and industrious today. You make your plans very carefully and execute them perfectly. Despite this, your progress will be very slow. However, Ganesh advises you not to despair and showers his blessings on you.

TAURUS
This one of those ordinary days that, somehow, do not turn out too well. Unexpected expenses, that could totally upset your budget, cannot be ruled out. Something or the other is likely to give you an uncomfortable stomach upset. Ganesh urges you to take your medicines on time, and exercise moderation and discretion while deciding what and how much you should eat.

GEMINI
You will be in a spot of bother owing to financial problems today. You will try to reduce your expenses and increase your savings, but circumstances will be such that you will have to spend your money. You will spend your day in all this financial jugglery, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You may get a gift from your life partner. Ties with business partners will be good and you will get a good news from them. Time to make new plans for the future with spouse. You will feel greater companionship with spouse, giving you joy.

LEO
You are businesslike and practical in your approach, however, you have a tendency to lose your temper. You will be able to channelise your aggression into business today. It is a good thing, since you need an outlet for your energy. The advice of your elders will help you. You will be able to comfortably sail through the day today, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Mundane, everyday routine will get on your nerves today, warns Ganesh. Don't make a mountain out of a mole hill. All said and done, you won't let anything affect your zest for work. You will break new ground to win the hearts of others, feels Ganesh.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that you will behave unlike your nature and take a more serious attitude towards life. This is unlike you but your seriousness will give you the opportunity to take up further responsibilities that will prove to people that you can be responsible too. Ganesh says that towards evening you may visit an art gallery or a heritage or cultural place.

SCORPIO
Blood is thicker than water, and you will experience this in true sense today, says Ganesh. Dedicate this day to your family and friends, enjoy and make merry. Feel as if you are on the top of this world when you set out on a secret date with your beloved. Life is beautiful, indeed!

SAGITTARIUS
You take the path of spirituality for the peace of mind and to stay away from the daily humdrum of life. You will not only seek love, but also spread love around you. In a nutshell, a pleasant day in store for you, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
You are witty and wise. With your extraordinary vision and intelligence you will help many their career and later, thanks to you, they will be near to their goals. Whenever some dark clouds of reality hover above your head, you know how to find the silver lining and get out of a problem. If you are handling a project, you will bring it to its successful completion today, foretells Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
The cupid may strike you today. You don't want make a wrong first impression, so wear something nice and be presentable all the time. Professionally, the day will be favourable for you to make some important decisions. Overall, you are in a happy mood and you will spread the joy around, feels Ganesh.

PISCES
Organized and sorted as you are, you will still find yourself clouded with emotions today. Those you are thoughtful and calculative as a person, you will discover the joy of emotions and the warmth that accompanies them. You will take the time to feel things instead of thinking of them and this change in your behaviour will either be the cause of worry or amusement for those who are close to you, says Ganesh.

PeeCee's success mantra



MUMBAI: As 2025 draws near, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, aka PeeCee, is poised to celebrate a remarkable milestone — 25 years as a public figure, since her appearance in the Miss India contest in 2000.

Looking back on her journey, the 42-year-old acknowledges the hurdles she's overcome to carve a place for herself in the global entertainment landscape and admits navigating different cultures hasn't been easy.

"But I feel blessed that I was not completely alien to working in the United States. I went to school here when I was a teenager, so that really helped," shared the actress.

The *Citadel* actress goes on to add, "The industry in itself... the process of filmmaking is same everywhere. It's the cultural differences which make them different industries, else the cameras, the shots, everything is the same. I can't be rigid in India, expecting it to be Hollywood-like in Bollywood, or vice versa. Be like water, and not rigid. I have always been like that my whole life... keep quiet, listen and find your place."

She further says, "I am someone whose ethos in life is to keep walking, moving forward. I am not daunted by ambition. I have always said everyone can have big dreams. You have to just keep moving forward."

AGENCIES

INTERNATIONAL THEATRE'S GOLDEN JUBILEE FEST: DAY-II



Rituparna Biswas of Kolkata-based drama troupe Amta Parichay performed Bengali solo play *Savitribai Phule*, during the second day of the four-day drama festival, at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Wednesday. Written by Sushama Deshpande and conceptualised by Ashis Goswami, the play was directed by Shuvendu Bhandari.

PIG: BIKASH NAYAK

MUMBAI: Popular 90s actress Mamta Kulkarni is now back in Mumbai, India after 24 years and she said that she is really overwhelmed.

A selfie video was shared on her Instagram handle that goes by the name 'mamtakulkarniofficial'. In the clip, the former actress was heard saying: "Hi guys, this is Mamata Kulkarni and I just came to India, Bombay, Mumbai, Amchi, Mumbai after 25 years."

She shared, "And I'm really overwhelmed. I'm emotional. In fact, when the flight landed or before the flight landed, I was seeing on my left, right. And I saw my country from the top after 24 years and I became emotional. I had tears in my eyes."

However, Mamta did not share as to what made her come back to India.

Mamta appeared in commer-

Mamta Kulkarni returns to Mumbai after 24 years

cially successful Hindi films such as *Ahankaar*, *Waqt Hamara Hai*, *Krantiveer*, *Karan Arjun*, *Sabse Bada Khiladi*, *Andolan* and *Baazi*. Her last Bollywood film was released in 2002.

Talking about her controversies, in 2016, the Thane Police reportedly named the actress as one of the accused involved in supplying ephedrine for illicit manufacture of methamphetamine to a

₹2000 crore international drug racket and gangster, intended for trafficking.

It was reported that she along with her partner Vicky Goswami and other co-accused attended a meeting in an international drug ring in Kenya in January 2016.

IAN S

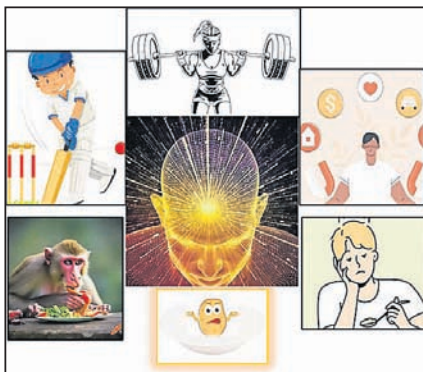


A file photo of actress Mamta Kulkarni

Manifest, money-fest, and monkey dish of harvest

The Cambridge Dictionary just manifested with the Word of the Year for 2024, and manifest it is! Perceived to be both a powerful art of intentional imagination of THY life goal/purpose and a science of the brain being rewired and configured to achieving THYN dream, the term signifies tap-dancing into the subconscious from the realm of conscious. The concept is timeless, like *Titan*, trending; Gen Z is tapping and totally digging into its limitless potential while the universe seems to be conspiring for you to "Bend it like Beckham."

Broken backs get bent; spirits may not, and in a populace of billions, might occasionally manifest the 'Dream Impossible' in the *avatars* of the Suryavanshi lad and the Rajamurty lass in cricket and powerlifting, respectively. Humble background, notwithstanding, it was possibly the pow-



er of manifestation by the left-handed batter and the centred lifter, which in recent times was on full display right, left, and centre and rightly so. *Vaibhav* may have 'come on earth to play cricket and go

back,' as his coach surmised, but it seems like he may have also come to manifest the money-fest (*Vaibhav*) to a staggering tune of ₹1.10 crore at age 13. Number 13 is largely considered unlucky; I cannot but fall *hook, line, and sinker* for the law of manifestation.

Hooked to a healthy amount of nature's harvest throughout the year and especially through the past month of *Kartika*, my heart continues to sink as prices of basic tubers and bulbs continue to soar. While macaques in a distant land may have the luxury of being generously treated to the fruit and vegetable *monkey buffet*, we evolved mortals must settle for the pricey harvest in *monkey dishes* meant for food sampling by the simians in erstwhile days. It is now the *junta's* dream to lavishly devour nature's bounty, a dream that we hope manifests at least in 2025.

DR RACHNA RATH

PEANUTS



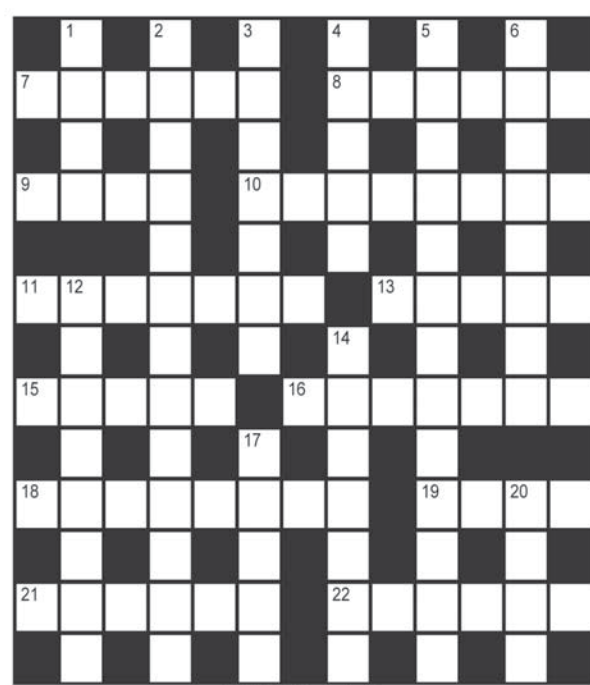
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



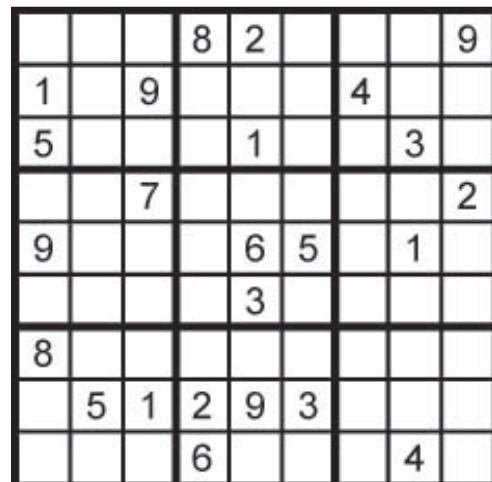
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Excrete
 - 8 Greek woman warrior of Scythia
 - 9 Cry loudly
 - 10 Manicurist's tool
 - 11 Lyrical
 - 13 Durable aromatic wood
 - 15 Lion-coloured
 - 16 Stole purveyor
 - 18 Nobleman
 - 19 Facilitate
 - 21 Dracula, for one
 - 22 Type of salt
 - 3 Spoon, e.g.
 - 4 Fundamental
 - 5 Without much enthusiasm (4-9)
 - 6 Your one and only (4,4)
 - 12 Probes
 - 14 Lawyer's aim in high places (4-9)
 - 17 Compadre
 - 20 Certain

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

SAFETY FIRST

Fire Services personnel hold a training session on battling fire mishaps, at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, Wednesday



NAVY DAY



THOUSANDS WITNESS INDIAN NAVY'S COMMENDABLE MIGHT AT PURI

Navy's efforts in empowering women praiseworthy: Prez



PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, Dec 4: Indian Navy's efforts in empowering women are praiseworthy, President Droupadi Murmu said during the Navy Day celebrations at the Blue Flag Beach here, Wednesday.

Murmu, the supreme commander of the country's defence forces, said, "Indian Navy's pioneering efforts in providing appropriate growth avenues to 'Nari Shakti' are commendable. It is the first service to induct women Agniveers."

The President said two women naval officers — Lieutenant Commander Dilna K and Lieutenant Commander Roopa — provide the best example of this new paradigm as they circumnavigate the globe in INSV Tarini as part of the 'Navika Sagar Parikrama II'.

Noting that India's economy is growing, and the country's interests and influence is expanding across the globe, the President said, "I am confident that the Indian Navy will continue to ensure maritime security, essential to enable our rise to a Viksit Bharat by 2047."

"The seamless integration of advanced technology, tactical acumen and sheer courage on display in the Operational Demonstration aptly showcase the evolution of our Navy into a combat-ready, fu-

ture-ready and credible force," she said. Murmu said with 63 ships being built in India, the Navy's focus to be an 'Atmanirbhar' force by 2047 provides inspiration to all to pursue innovation in 'Mission Mode.'

"It is a matter of pride for every Indian that we are today one of only six nations in the world that have the capability to design, build and operate both a Ballistic Missile Nuclear Submarine and an Aircraft Carrier," she pointed out.

While wishing all personnel of the force on the occasion of Navy Day, she said the day is observed to celebrate India's glorious victory in the 1971 war, and commemorate the selfless service and supreme sacrifices made by naval personnel in defence of the motherland.

"I wish the Indian Navy the very best for all future endeavours. May the God of the Oceans be auspicious unto us. May the Indian Navy always be victorious," she said.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi said several achievements have elevated its status with presence across the ocean.

"At the same time, our bilateral and multilateral engagements have enhanced cooperation with other navies and reinforced India's image as a

responsible partner towards securing security and growth for all in the region," he said.

"We assure our supreme commander and all our fellow citizens that your Navy stands as a combat-ready, credible, cohesive and future-ready force to safeguard India's maritime interest, anytime, anywhere and anyhow," Tripathi asserted.

Murmu was among thousands of spectators at the action-packed Navy Day celebrations, where it showcased maritime capabilities, air power and operational excellence.

The event, marking the first Navy Day celebration on the eastern coast, featured an impressive operational demonstration by its personnel, highlighting the strength and versatility of India's naval fleet. The occasion commemorates the strategic victories during the 1971 India-Pakistan war.

Altogether, 15 warships, 37 aircraft and a submarine participated in the operation demonstration, featuring breathtaking manoeuvres such as aerial dominance by fighter jets, combat free falls, slithering operations by MARCOS, submarine displays and rocket firing by warships. Women cadets performed a traditional horn pipe dance during the event.



Murmu calls for extensive research in Ayurveda

AGENCIES

Puri, Dec 4: President Droupadi Murmu Wednesday stressed the need for extensive research in Ayurveda as it holds remedies for many diseases.

Addressing the 75th Foundation Day celebration of Gopabandhu Ayurveda College here, Murmu said a person can remain disease-free all along life by remaining connected with yoga and nature.

"Research is capable of proving the scientific basis of any method. Evidence builds trust among people and trust widens the path of acceptance," the President said while calling upon Ayurveda students to undertake research.

Stating that she was aware of the method of treatment prevalent among tribal people for certain diseases, Murmu said that some elder tribal people know about various diseases and the herbs needed to treat them.

"But that traditional knowledge is slowly disappearing. I hope some of you (students) will be interested in exploring



the scientific basis of that treatment. By doing so, the method can be saved from extinction and also be beneficial to the society," Murmu, who hails from Santal community in Ma-yurbhanj district, said.

The President said she would like to draw the attention of the students and researchers to Odisha's palm leaf manuscripts preserved at the State Museum as they have rich information regarding Ayurveda. Even many people have palm leaf manuscripts at their houses.

"Apart from literature, there are descriptions of medical

methods in those palm-leaf manuscripts. In this direction, I hope you will make efforts to bring our hidden treatment methods to the public by doing research," the President said.

The President said that around the world, people are now eager to learn yoga and Ayurveda.

"By maintaining a balanced diet, we can stay healthy. Yoga can help keep diseases at bay," she said, adding, "Be yoga yukta to remain roga mukta (remain connected with yoga to be free from diseases)."

Stating that Ayurveda holds

remedies for many diseases, the President said that the students will engage themselves in extensive research in Ayurveda.

The event was also addressed by Governor Raghubar Das, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and others.

Prez offers prayers at Srimandir

PURI: President Droupadi Murmu walked about one kilometre on the Grand Road and then offered prayers to the sibling deities at Srimandir here, Wednesday. As the President walked on the road like a common devotee, hundreds of people lined up on both sides of the Grand Road and greeted her. The 12th century shrine was closed for public for some time to facilitate the first citizen to have a smooth darshan of Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. The President was accompanied by her daughter Itishree Murmu, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, Puri MP Sambit Patra and others. "I sought blessings of the Lord. Prayed for the people of India and wished their wellbeing," Murmu said after offering puja at the temple. She spent about 30 minutes inside the temple.

'Irregularities' in exams: NSUI members protest outside House

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 4: Members of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) staged protests outside the Assembly Wednesday, alleging irregularities in the conduct of examinations for recruitment to various posts.

Holding flags, posters and banners, they marched towards the Assembly in the morning. However, they engaged in a scuffle with police personnel, who prevented them mid-way.

Police took some of the activists into preventive custody and later released them, officials said.

The NSUI members alleged irregularities in the exams conducted by the Odisha Subordinate Staff Selection Commission (OSSSC) from September 20 to October 8 in different parts of the state.

The examinations were conducted in small cyber cafes by



a blacklisted firm, without any invigilators and timeframe, NSUI state president Udit Narayan Pradhan claimed.

The NSUI members also demanded the cancellation of the recruitment examinations conducted by the OSSSC.

Govt speeds up paddy procurement process



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 4: The state government is intensifying its efforts to expedite the paddy procurement process during the current kharif season to ensure farmers receive timely payments for their crops.

At present, the procurement activities are in full swing in key districts, including Bargarh, Nuapada, Sambalpur, Kalahandi, and Bolangir. The government has outlined a phased approach for procurement across other districts, with detailed preparations underway to ensure a smooth process in the coming weeks.

In the five districts currently involved, a total of 803 mandis have been set up, with a distribution of 197 mandis in Bargarh, 78 in Nuapada, 129 in Sambalpur, 223 in Kalahandi, and 176 in Bolangir.

These mandis serve as the focal points where farmers can bring their paddy for sale. To ensure the process runs efficiently, the state government has appointed nodal officers to oversee procurement activities at each mandi.

The officers are tasked with monitoring all operations closely, ensuring compliance with established procedures, and addressing any issues that may arise.

Additionally, the government is providing registered farmers with necessary information and issuing tokens to streamline the procurement process. Special attention is being paid to the facilities available at the mandis, with minimum amenities being provided to make the experience more convenient for the farmers.

One of the key aspects of the government's efforts is ensuring that farmers receive the minimum support price (MSP) directly into their bank accounts within 48 hours of selling their produce. The Civil Supply department is closely coordinating these efforts, ensuring prompt action and efficient processing to meet this goal.

These steps are part of the state's broader initiative to enhance the welfare of farmers and improve the agricultural ecosystem. By accelerating the procurement process and facilitating timely payments, the Odisha government is helping to secure farmers' livelihoods and contribute to the overall growth and development of the agricultural sector in the state.



Artistes perform on the fourth evening of 35th Konark Festival 2024 organised against the backdrop of historic 13th century Sun Temple, Wednesday

A night of captivating Kuchipudi & Odissi performances

POST NEWS NETWORK

Konark, Dec 4: The 35th Konark Festival 2024 continued to enchant audiences with a mesmerising display of dance on its fourth evening, set against the historic 13th-century Sun Temple here Wednesday.

The evening began with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by distinguished guests, including Principal Accountant General (A&E) Dinabandhu Sahu, ASI Puri circle superintending archae-

ologist Dibishada Brajasundar Garnayak, and Tourism department additional director Biswajit Routray.

The first performance featured Guru Deepika Reddy and her troupe, Deepanjali, from Hyderabad, presenting an exquisite Kuchipudi recital. The performance commenced with Kuchipudi Vandana, an invocation for divine blessings, followed by Thakkuvemi Manaku, praising Lord Rama, and Madhuram Madhuram, portraying

Lord Krishna's divine playfulness. The recital concluded with Nritya Neerajanam, showcasing the intricate beauty and rhythm of Kuchipudi. The choreography by Reddy, supported by the music of DSV Sastry, captivated the audience.

The second segment highlighted Odissi dance by Guru Bichitrnanda Swain and his ensemble from the Rudrakshya Foundation, Bhubaneswar. The performance started with Hamsakalyani Pallavi,

celebrating the grace of Raga Hamsakalyani through elaborate footwork and fluid motions. The highlight was Sakya Muni Buddha, a touching portrayal of Prince Siddhartha's journey to enlightenment, emphasizing compassion and wisdom. The choreography by Swain, accompanied by music from Guru Srijan Chatterjee and Guru Ramhari Das, and rhythms by Guru Dhaneswar Swain, won the hearts of the audience.



CARE Hospitals Bhub hosts event on physiotherapy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 4: CARE Hospitals, Bhubaneswar, in collaboration with Sironix Medtech, hosted an event 'CARE Rebound: Pioneering Physiotherapy Growth in Odisha' here, Wednesday.

The event brought together 150 of the state's top physiotherapists, aiming to advance physiotherapy practices in Odisha with a focus on sports injury management and rehabilitation.

The programme was inaugurated by Hi-Tech Medical College principal Deepak Samantaray who was the chief guest of the occasion. The event featured expert talks on key topics such as sports medicine advancements, pelvic tilt rehabilitation, and ACL rehabilitation.

Speakers included Orthopedics department head and chief consultant Sandeep Singh,

physiotherapy specialist Dinesh Behera and rehabilitation expert Soumendra Panda.

Singh emphasised the importance of the initiative, stating, "CARE Rebound demonstrates our commitment to advancing physiotherapy in Odisha. By leveraging technological advancements in sports medicine, we aim to empower physiotherapists with the knowledge and tools to improve patient outcomes." Samantaray praised the event's collaborative spirit, adding, "Such initiatives foster a culture of learning and innovation. By bringing together experts and practitioners, we are shaping the future of rehabilitation sciences in Odisha."

The hospital continues to lead in healthcare education, reinforcing its commitment to elevating physiotherapy standards and enhancing patient care in the region.

The event brought together 150 of the state's top physiotherapists, aiming to advance physiotherapy practices in Odisha with a focus on sports injury management and rehabilitation

City AIIMS launches 4D Spine & Gait Analysis Lab

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 4: In a groundbreaking development, AIIMS Bhubaneswar inaugurated the first-of-its-kind 4D Spine and Gait Analysis Lab in Eastern India Wednesday.

The state-of-the-art facility was unveiled by institute's executive director Ashutosh Biswas, on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The lab is equipped with cutting-edge technologies, including Prosthetic and Orthotic services, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy units, and other allied services. These advancements aim to enhance the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PMR) department's capacity for comprehensive patient care.

Speaking at the event, Biswas highlighted the significance of the facility. "The lab will enable AIIMS Bhubaneswar to offer high-quality, personalised rehabilitation services to a diverse patient population, including those with locomotor disabilities, musculoskeletal condi-



tions, and sports injuries," he stated.

The facility boasts advanced technologies capable of evaluating and quantifying spinal deformities while providing real-time biomechanical data on joint movements. It is particularly beneficial for conditions such as stroke, scoliosis, neck and lower back pain, post-polio residual paralysis, myopathy, and neuropathy.

Additionally, the lab offers real-time gait analysis for sports rehabilitation, aiding athletes in recovery and per-

formance enhancement. The non-invasive system, which is free of radiation hazards, delivers precise diagnostics by identifying hidden injuries, muscular imbalances, body balance issues, and foot pressure anomalies, explained PMR department head Jagannatha Sahoo.

Prominent attendees included Medical Superintendent Dillip Kumar Parida, Neurosurgery department head RN Sahu, Neurology department head Sanjib Kumar Bhoi, DDA in-charge Rasmi Ranjan Sethy, and RP Toppo.

66 fake beneficiaries of old-age pension caught

POST NEWS NETWORK

Aul, Dec 4: As many as 66 youths were caught taking old-age pension during an investigation into an alleged pension fraud at Aragal panchayat under this block in Kendrapara district, a report said.

Preliminary findings reveal that 66 youths were fraudulently listed as beneficiaries, block development officer (BDO) Minati Jagadev informed.

Official sources said that, prior to the last election, a government order (No. 329/55) approved pension applications for 303 beneficiaries. However, over 243 of these applicants were later found ineligible.

Despite being aged between 30 and 50, these persons falsely inflated their age in voter lists to qualify for pensions. Some even used forged certificates from local schools, including the Nadikula School in Aragal and Biripata High School in Jajpur, to substantiate their claims.

After reports surfaced, several residents of Aragal panchayat raised allegations about the irregularities during a public grievance meeting held at Aul Block by the district Collector,

August 20. However, the officials reportedly did not accept their complaints. The residents were instead asked to prepare a detailed list of ineligible beneficiaries and submit at the office. Officials assured that action would be taken once the list was submitted.

The development evoked sharp reactions as, the BJP held a press conference in Aul, demanding strict action against the officials involved in the pension scam, September 8. They also urged immediate disbursement of pensions to eligible persons.

When contacted, several senior citizens of the panchayat expressed their frustration. They stated they had been waiting for years to receive their pensions, only to be overlooked in favor of fraudulent claimants. Following the emergence of this incident, block administration had initially halted payment of allowances for new beneficiaries and remained silent. However, with the investigation now underway, it has been revealed that 66 youths out of 243 beneficiaries have been implicated in vendor-related fraud during the verifications.

Workshop on gender violence held at UU

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 4: Utkal University's department of Public Administration and Journalism & Mass Communication, in partnership with Shanta Memorial Rehabilitation Centre (SMRC) and Handicap International, organised a workshop titled 'Gender-Based Violence and Disability: Action for Change amongst Youth' here Wednesday.

The workshop aimed to shed light on the significant issue of gender-based violence, with a particular focus on its impact on disabled individuals. Executive Vice President of SMRC Asha Hans, the chief guest of the occasion, emphasised the societal harm caused by gender-based violence, stating, "It is a barrier to a healthy society. Both women and men can be victims, necessitating stricter laws and timely action."

Driving growth in jackfruit industry with new partnerships

New initiatives aim to promote training, innovation, and trade in jackfruit sector

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 4: In a concerted effort to strengthen the jackfruit industry in Odisha, the Directorate of Horticulture, under the department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment (DA and FE), has signed MoUs with two companies—Artocarpus Foods Pvt Ltd and Nutritivo Food Products LLP.

The agreements aim to provide specialised training and facilitate trade opportunities through Technology Incubation Centers (TICs), paving the way for innovation and growth in the state's jackfruit sector.

The MoUs were finalised during a two-day training-cum-workshop organised under the Odisha Jackfruit Mission at the Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Horticulture, Deras.



The event served as a platform for knowledge sharing, with participants including representatives from three TICs in Koraput, Kandhamal, and Keonjhar, along with officials from DA and FE, Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS), ICAR-

IIHR (CHES), and Palladium, a technical support unit.

To add expertise, master trainers and industry specialists from Kerala, known for its advancements in jackfruit-based products, conducted comprehensive sessions.

Participants were guided on

developing value-added products, including jackfruit chips, papads, pickles, ice cream, jelly, sweets, and beverages like squash, nectar, and wine. The training emphasised innovation, sustainability, and market-driven approaches to utilising the fruit's potential.

The workshop also spotlighted the jackfruit tree's versatility. Beyond its fruit, the leaves, bark, inflorescence, seeds, and latex are widely used in traditional medicine, while its wood is valued for various applications.

As a nutrient-dense fruit, jackfruit is rich in carbohydrates, proteins, potassium, calcium, iron, and vitamins A, B, and C. In times of food scarcity, its high carbohydrate content makes it an essential supplement to staple diets in some regions. The starchy and

fibrous nature of its flesh also makes it a significant source of dietary fiber.

The mission reflects Odisha's intent to tap into the growing demand for jackfruit products both domestically and internationally. By fostering value addition and market connectivity, the initiative seeks to empower farmers, enhance income generation, and position Odisha as a major player in India's jackfruit industry.

The workshop's success marks a step forward in achieving these goals, reaffirming the government's commitment to sustainable agriculture and rural development. This initiative not only leverages the nutritional and economic potential of jackfruit but also strengthens the state's agricultural ecosystem for long-term benefits.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	32.2°	30.0°
Min Temp	20.2°	18.0°
Humidity	62%	73%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST Partly cloudy sky		

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
SENSEX	80956.33	▲ 110.58
NIFTY	24467.45	▲ 10.30
DOLLAR	84.86	▲ 0.06
EURO	89.30	▼ 0.06
GOLD	₹76,071	▲ ₹105
SILVER	₹90,873	▲ ₹1,128

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DISASTER-READY: A mock drill on rescue ops during leakage of toxic gas was conducted at CCD final gas cooler area of Coal and Chemicals department of Rourkela Steel Plant on the eve of Chemical Disaster Prevention Day

Police bust job racket; 9 held in Berhampur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, Dec 4: The Odisha Police Wednesday busted a job racket in Berhampur and arrested nine members of the gang allegedly involved in it, officials said. Those arrested include the kingpin and his four bodyguards, who allegedly cheated several job aspirants in different districts in the state, they said. Numerous fake appointment letters of government departments, official seal, bio-data of candidates, a car and mobile phones were seized from the accused, Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M said. A search operation has been launched to nab the others believed to be a part of the gang, he said. The SP said police are also investigating the financial transactions of the accused persons. A cheating case against the accused was lodged at Baidyanathpur police station Tuesday, after a complainant filed an FIR, alleging he was duped of around ₹27.50 lakh in the name of providing jobs in the government sector. When people realised that they were cheated and asked for refund of their money, the gang members threatened them, the officer said.

Four arrested for gangrape of minor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kuchinda, Dec 4: Four persons were arrested for allegedly gangraping a 14-year-old girl at Mahulpali area in Sambalpur district late Saturday night, Kuchinda SDPO Amitabh Panda said in a press conference Wednesday. Police also seized a two-wheeler, five mobile phones and ₹750 cash from their possession, he added. The accused were identified as Jitendra Bhanja, Gobinda Kisan, Anil Manja, and Saroj Ekka. Police said the incident occurred late Saturday night while the victim, along with her relative and neighbours, was returning home after watching opera at Bilunga village. The accused attacked them near a culvert between

Bilunga-Lapada villages and forcefully took away the minor girl into the nearby forest. There they took turns to rape her and fled after dropping her near the village. The girl's father lodged a written complaint in this regard at Mahulpali police station after she narrated her ordeal before her parents. A case (188/24) was registered at Mahulpali police station under various sections and an investigation initiated into the incident. The medical test of the victim was conducted Tuesday at VIMSAR, Burla and her statement was recorded before the POCSE magistrate. Later police arrested the accused and forwarded them to POCSE court, Wednesday.

Event held for safety of Olive Ridley turtles

Berhampur: On the occasion of World Wildlife Conservation Day, a collaborative effort for the protection of the endangered Olive Ridley turtles was initiated Wednesday by Berhampur Sabuja Bahini, Eco Warriors Ganjam, officials from the Forest department and members of various local organisations. The programme took place at the Rushikulya river mouth near Bateswar Shiva temple beach. This marks the beginning of activities to safeguard the nesting and breeding process of these rare turtles. As the mass nesting season approaches, the government has also implemented strict measures to ensure the safety of these creatures. Discussions during the event focused on maintaining cleanliness and ensuring a risk-free environment for the nesting and hatching process in the upcoming days. As part of the programme, students from the Eco Club of Laban Shramik High School and other volunteers cleaned approximately 3 kms of the coastline, collecting over 50 kgs of plastic waste.

Forest dept scrambles to rein in jumbo deaths

Following electrocution deaths of three elephants, Sambalpur Forest Circle has stepped up awareness measures, patrolling to shore up jumbo protection

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Dec 4: Hard on the heels of death of three elephants due to electrocution, the Sambalpur Forest department has launched efforts to curb pachyderm fatalities amid frequent man-animal conflicts. The escalating conflict between humans and elephants has become a pressing concern for the Forest department. During harvest season, elephants often stray into villages causing crop damage. This has led villagers to adopt unethical practices to protect their crops without thinking on its repercussions, ultimately resulting in elephant fatalities. The ongoing lack of effective solutions has prolonged the human-elephant conflict, especially in the Sambalpur division. A recent tragedy, where three elephants died after coming in contact with high-power electric live wires near Buromal under Naktideula forest range, has prompted the Forest officials to strengthen patrolling and make it widespread to curb such incidents from recurring. Sambalpur Regional Chief Conservator of Forests (RCCF), T. Ashok Kumar, stated that the patrol teams in forested areas have been augmented and additional patrolling measures have been taken up in regions with significant elephant movement. Around 120 Forest personnel have been assigned to patrol various locations. In high-risk areas for elephants, particularly in the Redhakhole Forest Division, 124 sensitive villages (hotspots)



have been identified. Forest officials, in collaboration with Tata Power Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL) personnel, are conducting regular inspections to check for illegal power connections and unauthorised electrical setups such as hooking. To enhance awareness and vigilance, 400 community members, known as 'Gajasathis', have been engaged in the hotspots. They are tasked with monitoring elephant activity, safeguarding paddy fields, and sharing critical information regarding illegal electrical connections and elephant-related risks. This multi-pronged approach aims to reduce human-elephant conflict and ensure the safety of local communities and wildlife in the region. Regular awareness campaigns are being conducted through public address system to educate people about the consequences of illegal electricity connections, the penalties associated with such actions, and the government schemes available to compensate crop damage caused by wildlife. Additionally, residents are urged not to panic upon spotting elephants near villages or paddy fields. Instead, they are advised to immediately inform Forest officials or trained elephant response teams like 'Gajasathis'. The Forest department is also involving local villagers to take responsibility and collaborate in efforts to ensure the safety of elephants and other wild animals. According to available data, the Sambalpur Forest Circle recorded seven elephant deaths in the past year, including three each in Sambalpur and Redhakhole Forest Divisions and one in Bargarh Forest Division. Tragically, human fatalities have also occurred, with 10 deaths caused by elephant attacks under six forest divisions. Of these, five were reported in Sambalpur Forest Division, four in Bargarh, and one in Bamra. All bereaved families have received government compensation of ₹6 lakh each, as confirmed by the RCCF. These measures aim to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts and foster harmony between local communities and wildlife.

Indian Navy helicopter makes emergency landing in paddy field

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baripada, Dec 4: An Indian Navy helicopter made an emergency landing at a paddy field in Amarda village under Rasgovindpur police station limits in Mayurbhanj district Wednesday, police said. The helicopter, which was on a routine sortie, encountered a technical glitch and was forced

Indian Navy helicopter makes emergency landing in paddy field

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

to make an emergency landing at a field. Farmers working in the paddy fields noticed the helicopter hovering as it attempted to land in the centre of the field. However, the helicopter was unable to land there due to flying paddy stubble and instead descended on a nearby field. After landing, the pilot came out of the helicopter and examined it. Fortunately, the pilot and crew

members were unharmed, though the helicopter sustained damage. The incident caused a panic among the farmers, who were initially startled by the situation but were later excited to get a close-up view of the naval helicopter. After the pilot spent approximately 30-40 minutes repairing, the helicopter took off once again, leaving the villagers filled with excitement and curiosity.

members were unharmed, though the helicopter sustained damage. The incident caused a panic among the farmers, who were initially startled by the situation but were later excited to get a close-up view of the naval helicopter. After the pilot spent approximately 30-40 minutes repairing, the helicopter took off once again, leaving the villagers filled with excitement and curiosity.



Govt staff paid double salaries

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar/Hatadihi, Dec 4: Allegations are flowing thick and fast regarding irregularities in the expenditure of Keonjhar DMF funds. Things have come to such a pass that allegations regarding corruption and procedural violations are surfacing on a regular basis. According to rules, a government employee is not entitled to receive salary twice in a month. However, information obtained through the Right to Information (RTI) Act reveals that three government employees were allegedly paid salaries from the DMF fund along with their regular wages. This matter has now reached the Orissa High Court and demands have intensified for recovery of the disbursed amounts along with interest.

Pradipta Kar, Sitanshu Jena, and Uday Narayan Jena, all government employees, were initially working at the Keonjhar District Rural Development Agency (DRDA). Later, they were transferred to Keonjhar's District Mineral Foundation (DMF). Pradipta and Sitanshu served as senior revenue assistants during their tenure, but both have retired. Meanwhile, Uday continues to work as a junior revenue assistant. Despite receiving their government salaries, it has come to light that the three employees drew additional amounts amounting to ₹1.94 lakh from the contingency fund of the DMF between October 1, 2017, and July 2024. Specifically, Pradipta collected salaries from the DMF from October 2017 to May 2021

while Sitanshu from June 2021 to January 2024. Similarly, Uday has also been drawing salary from the DMF fund April 2024 onwards. This practice is reportedly not in compliance with the law. It is worth noting that the district collector serves as the chairperson of the DMF, and the Project Director (PD) of the DRDA and Zilla Parishad acts as its CEO. All approvals and disbursements related to fund usage are made under the signatures of the chairperson and CEO. However, questions have come up as to how these government employees, already receiving regular salaries, were additionally compensated from the DMF fund. Residents have demanded a detailed investigation to determine accountability and initiate legal proceedings to recover the full amount.

Advisory committee formed for rly station

Chhatrapur: An advisory committee comprising individuals from various fields of expertise has been formed Saturday, for the first time to work towards the development of the railway station at Ganjam district headquarters town Chhatrapur. Considered as one of the oldest NACs in the country, Chhatrapur has much importance in terms of connectivity and industries. Other blocks of the district such as Ganjam, Puru-shottampur, Khallikote, and Krushnapsad block of Puri district too rely on the railway station. However, the railway station still lacks in facilities. The short length of the platform is yet to come in line with the number of bogies of the trains running presently. It lacks other basic amenities like restrooms, dining halls, retiring rooms, first aid treatment facilities, special facilities for senior citizen and pregnant women.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, SUNDARGARH E-mail: eemisundargarh@yahoo.co.in 'e' Procurement Notice Bid Reference No. SE MID SNG 08/2024-25 No. A-667: Bid documents consisting Name of Works, Estimated Cost, Cost of Tender Paper, EMD, Time of Completion, Class of Contractor, the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in e-procurement portal https://tendersodisha.gov.in. 1 Name of the Works: Civil Construction Work 2 No. of Works: 02 (Two) Nos. 3 Estimated Cost: Varies from Rs.5.04 lakh to Rs.42.37 lakh (Approximately) 4 Period of Completion: 02 (Two) to 03 (Three) Calendar Months 5 Date and time of availability of bid documents in the Portal: From Dt.06.12.2024 at 10.00 A.M. to Dt.16.12.2024 upto 5.30 P.M. 6 Last date/time of receipt of bids in the Portal: Dt.16.12.2024 upto 5.30 P.M. 7 Date of Opening of Bid: Dt.17.12.2024 at 11.00 A.M. onwards 8 Name and address of the OIT: Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Sundargarh **Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement market place http://tendersodisha.gov.in. Sd./- 02.12.2024 Superintending Engineer M.I. Division, Sundargarh OIPR-32124/11/0009/2425

Police tighten noose around absconders

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, Dec 4: As part of a broader initiative to enhance public safety, Rourkela police have started employing a unique British-era approach to trace absconders who have ignored multiple court summonses. Along with public announcements, police are beating drums, called 'dhol' in the local parlance, and other instruments in front of the absconders' houses. Rourkela Superintendent of Police (SP) Nitesh Wadhvani explained that the campaign aims to send a clear message to those evading legal responsibility. "This initiative will continue until the end of the



steps, saying, "In the next phase, we will seek court orders to seize the absconders' properties. No one will be spared. The law must be enforced." The initiative has been well received by the Steel City denizens. A local woman at Udit Nagar's Fitness Park expressed her support, saying it is "reassuring to see the police taking action". The police have issued notices for 16 absconders in various cases. These notices were issued by the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Rural Court and the Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate (SDJM), Rourkela. Authorities are hopeful the strategy will deter absconders and help maintain public order. Wadhvani outlined the next

NOMINATED AUTHORITY, MINISTRY OF COAL, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA 120, 'F' Wing, 1st Floor, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001. 011-23384106

"Invitation of Bids for Auction of Coal Mines/ Blocks for Sale of Coal" In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 4(1) and 4 (2) of the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 and Section 11A of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and in accordance with the Rules made thereunder, the Government of India has directed the Nominated Authority to undertake the auction of 20 Coal mines / blocks under 21st Tranche of Auction under CM (SP) Act, 2015 and 11th Tranche of Auction under MMDR Act, 1957 and 7 coal mines / blocks under Second Attempt of 20th Tranche of Auction under CM(SP) Act, 2015 and Second Attempt of 10th Tranche of Auction under MMDR Act, 1957. The Tender process has been launched on Thursday, the 05th December, 2024. Tender Document and other details can be accessed on https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/coalblock/index.jsp CBC 04107/11/0003/2425

Indian Bank ZONAL OFFICE: SAMBALPUR, 1st floor, Shyam Arcade, Khetrajpur, Sambalpur-768003. E-mail: zosambalpur@indianbank.co.in PREMISES REQUIRED Indian Bank, Zonal Office, Sambalpur invites offers for engagement of premises on rent in following locality / town for shifting of its Branch preferably in Ground Floor and new ATM premises for Rourkela & Bolangir Branch. Table with columns: Zone, Branch Name, Premises for, Carpet Area, Locality (market area of following locality). The application form & other details in the matter may be obtained from Bank's Zonal Office, at Shyam Arcade, Khetrajpur Sambalpur-768003 or from Sambalpur Main Branch near Laxmi Talkies, Sambalpur, Rourkela Daily Market Branch, Rourkela & Bolangir Ramjipara Branch, Bolangir or can be downloaded from Bank's website at www.indianbank.in. Fully filled up applications in prescribed format along with required information & documents are to be submitted in sealed envelope as described in website "Ad" at Zonal Office, latest by 05.00 PM dated 20.12.2024. Date: 04.12.2024 Zonal Manager

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION PLANNING BOARD (A Statutory Body under Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, Govt. of India) 1st Floor, Core-4B, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003 Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) for Preparation of Functional Plans National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB), New Delhi invites sealed bids from National and International Consulting Entities / Organizations/ Joint Ventures/ Consortiums etc. for undertaking works relating to preparation of Functional Plan on 'Transport, Economic Nodes and Industrial Corridor' as per Regional Plan 2041 proposals for National Capital Region Area. The RFQ-cum-RFP document containing the Terms of Reference (ToR), Details of Qualification and Evaluation Criteria etc. can be downloaded along with the draft Contract Agreement from the website of NCRPB i.e. http://ncrpb.nic.in/tenders. Hardcopy of the RFQ-cum-RFP document may also be obtained from the Office of NCRPB, Core 4-B, First Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003. Last date of submission of completed bid is 16.01.2025. Sd./- CBC 44103/12/0005/2425 Member Secretary

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION PLANNING BOARD (A Statutory Body under Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, Govt. of India) 1st Floor, Core-4B, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003 Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) for Preparation of Functional Plans National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB), New Delhi invites sealed bids from National and International Consulting Entities / Organizations/ Joint Ventures/ Consortiums etc. for undertaking works relating to preparation of Functional Plan on 'Water Management and Waste Management' as per Regional Plan 2041 proposals for National Capital Region Area. The RFQ-cum-RFP document containing the Terms of Reference (ToR), Details of Qualification and Evaluation Criteria etc. can be downloaded along with the draft Contract Agreement from the website of NCRPB i.e. http://ncrpb.nic.in/tenders. Hardcopy of the RFQ-cum-RFP document may also be obtained from the Office of NCRPB, Core 4-B, First Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003. Last date of submission of completed bid is 16.01.2025. Sd./- CBC 44103/12/0004/2425 Member Secretary

FOCUS AGRICULTURE

SUSTAINABLE APPROACH



India has high potential for exports and new markets need to be exploited. For this, natural farming based on organic methods of cultivation must be promoted

there has been an urge for quite some time by agricultural experts to shift to dry-land farming due to scarcity of water in certain regions of the country. Rice needs about 4000 cubic metres of water per tonne for irrigation. In fact, of the total agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emission in India, close to 18% is contributed by rice cultivation. Added to this, free electricity has meant that the water table in paddy growing areas in Punjab and Haryana has been depleted at an unsustainable rate.

As per the Central Ground Water Board (2020), of the assessed farm blocks in Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana, over 78%, 69% and 60% were over-exploited for water respectively. Besides, the standing water used for rice cultivation has been heavily concentrated with fertilizer and pesticide runoffs and causing cancer among a section of farmers.

It's a fact that the agricultural system continues to be led by smallholder producers and with heavy reliance on rain-fed irrigation. It's necessary these producers are helped in using soil and water resources as also fertilizers in creating resilient and adaptive systems. Accelerating R&D in developing new climate-resilient crop varieties, enhancing oilseed production and protection to climate shocks are welcome.

Experts have voiced the need for following a balanced approach in the changing landscape of Indian agriculture, mainly due to food shortages having disappeared. The other aspect of the issue is land degradation due to excessive use of pesticides and chemicals. Keeping in view these aspects as also the environmental concerns, there is obviously a need to formulate a sustainable approach to agriculture. In evolving this approach, consideration has also to be given on basic income support and remunerative prices.

Another aspect for seriously considering natural farming is the crisis we face in water resources. It's well known that

having 18 components with total proposed expenditure of over Rs 1 lakh crore, it can't be denied the condition of the agriculture sector remains much to be desired. There are plans that PM Rashtriya Kriishi Vikas Yojana will promote sustainable agriculture, the other Krishonnati Yojana will address food security and agricultural self-sufficiency by increasing productivity of farm produce, including oilseeds.

Apart from these, the launch of a National Mission on Natural Farming has seen the increase in subsidy to Rs 20,000 per hectare for farmers willing to shift from green revolution techniques to natural farming. Undoubtedly, the green revolution that required costly inputs - high yielding seeds, chemical fertilisers and tubewell irrigation - steadily lifted food production and helped the country become self-sufficient in the 1990s. However, it has had adverse side effects such as excessive fertilizer run-off, excessive pesticide use, degradation of land and salinity through excess irrigation. These as well as high cost of production have encouraged experts to seek solutions in natural farming. There have been instances where natural farming has been able to get more or less the same yields, not just in India but in other countries

The Supreme Court appointed high-power committee to resolve grievances of farmers agitating at Shambhu border has in its interim report significantly stated that stagnancy of agricultural production for three decades coupled with spiralling debts in Punjab and Haryana have created a distressing situation for farmers.

As per the 11-page report, it's estimated that the debt of farmers increased manifold in 2022-23—while in Punjab it was Rs 73,673 crore, in Haryana it was Rs 76,530. Obviously, the challenge is to make agriculture viable and sustainable by experimenting on various available options. "Declining net farm productivity, rising production costs, inadequate marketing system and shrinking farm employment have contributed to the deceleration in farm income growth. Small and marginal farmers along with farm workers, are the most affected and vulnerable segments of this economic squeeze", the report rightly observed.

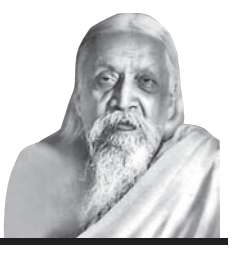
It further said that Punjab has not escaped the "suicide epidemic," evident among farmers in some other states. The state witnessed 16,000 suicides by farmers, mostly small and marginal and landless farm workers between 2000 and 2015 and in the last five years of the past decade figures remain more or less the same. The panel noted: "As a matter of fact, rural society as a whole is under severe economic stress. At the national level, 46% of total workers are absorbed in agriculture whose share in income is only 15%," it said. "Not only this, there's a very high rate of disguised unemployment and a large number of unpaid family workers. A significant proportion among them is working-poor."

Though some steps have been taken such as the rationalisation of all agri-related centrally sponsored schemes into two umbrella schemes,



Dhurjati Mukherjee

IT'S A FACT THAT THE AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM CONTINUES TO BE LED BY SMALLHOLDER PRODUCERS AND WITH HEAVY RELIANCE ON RAIN-FED IRRIGATION



A God who cannot smile, could not have created this humorous universe.

SRI AUROBINDO

A Financial Wasteland

It was a bold idea, encapsulated in a snappy slogan: "From billions to trillions." A decade ago, when private capital was sloshing into developing economies, governments and development institutions saw an opportunity to turbocharge progress on poverty reduction and other development goals. "The good news is that, globally, there are ample savings, amounting to \$17 trillion, and liquidity is at historical highs," read a key strategy document of the time.

The bad news is that it all turned out to be a fantasy. Instead, the financing landscape for development has been upended. Since 2022, foreign private creditors have extracted nearly \$141 billion more in debt-service payments from public-sector borrowers in developing economies than they have disbursed in new financing.

But there is one striking exception: In 2022 and 2023, the World Bank and other multilateral institutions pumped in nearly \$85 billion more than they collected in debt-service payments. Thus, multilateral institutions have been thrust into a role that they were never designed to play. They are now lenders of last resort, deploying scarce long-term development finance to compensate for the exit of other creditors.

Last year, multilateral institutions accounted for about 20 per cent of developing economies' long-term external debt stock, five points higher than in 2019. The World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) now accounts for nearly half of the development aid going from multilateral institutions to the 26 poorest countries. And in 2023, the World Bank accounted for one-third of the overall net debt inflows going into IDA-eligible countries - \$16.7 billion, more than three times the volume a decade ago.

These developments reflect a broken financing system. Since capital - both public and private - is essential for development, long-term progress will depend to a large degree on restarting the capital flows that benefited most developing countries in the first decade of this century. But the risk-reward balance cannot remain as lopsided as it is today, with multilateral institutions and government creditors bearing nearly all the risk while private creditors reap nearly all the rewards.

When global interest rates skyrocketed in 2022 and 2023, leading to increased debt distress in the poorest countries, the World Bank followed its usual practice. It shifted from providing low-interest loans to providing grants to countries at high risk of distress. It also increased its overall financing for these countries, typically with generous repayment terms ranging from 30 to 50 years. But private creditors headed for the exits, with high interest rates more than fully compensating them for the investment risks they had taken.

In the absence of a predictable global system for restructuring debt, most countries facing distress opted to tough it out rather than default and risk being cut off indefinitely from global capital markets. In some cases, new financing arriving from the World Bank promptly went back out the door to repay private creditors.

In 2023, developing countries spent a record \$1.4 trillion - nearly 4 per cent of their gross national income - just to service their debt. While principal repayments remained stable at about \$951 billion, interest payments surged by more than one-third, to about \$406 billion. The result, for many developing countries, has been a devastating diversion of resources away from areas critical for long-term growth and development, such as health and education.

The squeeze on the poorest and most vulnerable countries - those eligible to borrow from the IDA - has been especially fierce. Their interest payments on external debt have quadrupled since 2013, hitting an all-time high of \$34.6 billion in 2023. On average, interest payments now amount to nearly 6 per cent of IDA-eligible countries' export earnings - a level not reached since 1999. For some countries, the burden ranges from 10 per cent to as much as 38 per cent of export earnings. It is no wonder that more than half of IDA-eligible countries are either in debt distress or at high risk of it, or that private creditors have been retreating.

These facts imply that the world's poorest countries are suffering not from liquidity problems, but from a metastasizing solvency crisis. It might be easy to kick the can down the road by providing these countries with just enough financing to help them meet their immediate repayment obligations. But doing so will simply prolong their purgatory. These countries need faster growth if they are ever going to reduce their debt burdens, but faster growth requires higher investment. Given the size of their debt burdens, that is unlikely to materialise. On current trends, their ability to repay will never be restored.

We need to face reality: the poorest countries facing debt distress need debt relief if they are to have a shot at sustained economic growth and lasting prosperity. A twenty-first-century global system is needed to ensure fair play in lending to all developing economies. Sovereign borrowers deserve at least some of the protections that are routinely afforded to debt-strapped businesses and individuals under national bankruptcy laws. Private creditors that make risky, high-interest loans to poor countries ought to bear a fair share of the cost when the bet goes bad.

In an era of deepening international mistrust, it will be a struggle to establish these precepts. But without them, all major development goals will remain in peril, facing the same fate as the "billions to trillions" promise.

The writer is Chief Economist and Senior Vice President for Development Economics at the World Bank.

PROJECT SYNDICATE



Indermit Gill

Since 2022, foreign private creditors have extracted nearly \$141 billion more in debt-service payments from public-sector borrowers in developing economies than they have disbursed in new financing

SPECTRUM NOMINATION FACILITY

A critical aspect of financial planning

Nomination is a facility that allows an individual to appoint a person, who can claim the proceeds of their investments or insurance policies in the event of their death. This is particularly crucial during challenging times when the family may need immediate financial support.

Yet, many continue to overlook this critical aspect of financial planning, potentially exposing their loved ones to legal complications and also financial distress. It is highly advisable to lodge nominations in respect of all assets for which this facility has been made available, for example - bank account, bank locker, demat account, mutual funds, flats in co-operative housing societies, provident fund accounts etc.

Nomination in banking is governed by the Banking Companies (Nomination) Rules, 1985. It allows account holders to nominate a person to receive their deposit amount in the event of their death.

As per pension laws, nomination is governed by the

relevant pension rules, such as the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972. It allows pensioners to nominate a person to receive their pension benefits after their demise.

In insurance laws, nomination is governed by the Insurance Act, 1938, and the Insurance Rules, 1939. It allows policyholders to nominate a person to receive the policy benefits in the event of their death.

EPF (Employees' Provident Fund) nomination is governed by the Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, 1952. It allows EPF members to nominate a person to receive their provident fund benefits after their passing.

In securities laws, nomination is governed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) regulations. It allows investors to nominate a person to receive their securities or benefits in the event of their death.

Banking Companies (Nomination) Rules 1985 permits banks to pay dues to nominees in the event of death of depositor(s) without asking for succession certificate or

verifying claims of legal heirs. This simplifies settlement. Of course, as trustee the nominee is accountable to legal heirs.

When a bank account holder has availed of nomination facility, the same may be indicated on the passbook so that, in case of death of the account holder, the relatives can know from the passbook that the nomination facility has been availed of by the deceased depositor. Banks may accordingly introduce the practice of recording on the face of the passbook the position regarding availing of nomination facility with the legend "Nomination Registered." This may be done in the case of term deposit receipts also.

In addition, banks are also advised to indicate the name of the nominee in the passbooks / statement of accounts / FDRs, in case the customer is agreeable to the same, as this would be helpful to the customers/ nominees.

In general, nomination in India has the following legal characteristics: i) Nominations can be revoked or changed by the nominator

during their lifetime; ii) Nominations are not considered as wills or testaments; iii) Nominations override the general succession laws, ensuring that the nominated person receives the assets or benefits; iv) Nominations may have tax implications, such as income tax or wealth tax.

The Lok Sabha on 3 December, 2024 passed the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which allows bank account holders to have up to four nominees in their accounts.

Legally, a nominee is treated as an interim trustee. For example, if a nominee is there and happens to be an outsider, but receives money on death of account holder, the legal heirs can file a case in a court. In such a situation, the nominee has to pay back the money to the legal heirs as he is only an interim trustee. It is essential for nominees to understand their legal responsibilities and seek professional advice, if needed, to ensure they fulfill their roles effectively.

The writer is a retired banker.



Gopabandhu Mohapatra

LEGALLY, A NOMINEE IS TREATED AS AN INTERIM TRUSTEE

Fragile liberation

Sir, Muhammad Yunus' interim government in Bangladesh faces a daunting challenge in reconciling a nation scarred by communal violence and political instability. The student-led uprising against Sheikh Hasina's administration brought hopes of a brighter future, but the reality has been far more sobering. The euphoria of change has quickly given way to the grim realities of rebuilding trust and ensuring justice in a fractured society. For minorities, particularly the Hindu community, this period has been one of heightened vulnerability as they bear the brunt of targeted attacks on their homes, businesses, and places of worship. The government's response to these atrocities has been widely criticised for its inadequacy and heavy-handedness. Peaceful protests calling for justice have been met with force, and activists advocating for minority rights have been arrested, further alienating marginalised groups. This has not only deepened societal divides but also raised serious questions about the interim government's commitment to human rights and inclusivity. These challenges are rooted in Bangladesh's historical complexities. While the 1971 liberation war was a secular struggle promising equality for all, subsequent political developments—including military rule and the rise of religious extremism—have eroded these ideals. Over decades, religion has been weaponised in politics, fueling tensions and leaving minority communities increasingly vulnerable. This historical backdrop has created a precarious social fabric that is now unraveling under the weight of unaddressed grievances. The international community has expressed concern over the deteriorating human rights situation in Bangladesh.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Ensure soil health

Sir, Soil pollution has not received the same level of attention as water pollution and air pollution. Land degradation and chemicals emerging from industrial and agricultural practices, are the culprits. Though soil has the innate property to filter out contaminants, it can do so only to a limited extent. More than 90 per cent of people's food is accrued through soil. The crippling effects of soil pollution, including congenital health disorders, infective diseases and non-contagious diseases like cancer, have awakened health professionals to the dangerous possibilities of soil contamination. Nonetheless, on 5 December, the World Soil Day, the responsibilities of an individual cannot be overstated.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

WISDOM CORNER

Laughter relieves us of superfluous energy, which, if it remained unused, might become negative, that is, poison. Laughter is the antidote.

GEORGE GURDJIEFF

Don't avoid extremes, and don't choose any one extreme. Remain available to both the polarities - that is the art, the secret of balancing.

RAJNEESH

The practice of peace and reconciliation is one of the most vital and artistic of human actions.

THICH NHAT HANH

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 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

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EVE-TEASING TO MATRIMONIAL SCAMS

Delhi women helpline gets 2L calls in 4 months

The complaints are primarily regarding domestic violence, sexual harassment, cyber fraud and physical abuse



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 4: From complaints about eve-teasing and cyber fraud in matrimonial scams to disputes over metro seat reservations and altercations with auto drivers, Delhi's women helpline 181 received over 2.41 lakh calls between July and November 2024.

Previously managed by the Delhi Commission for Women, the helpline was taken over by the Women and Child Development (WCD) Department July 2, 2024.

Within the first two days of the transition, the helpline recorded 1,024 calls, marking a sharp increase in public engagement.

Data shows that during this four-month period, 90,414 calls were categorised as hoax, 2,091 as follow-ups, 29,277 as general inquiries, 2,096 as nuisance calls, and 260 as abusive calls. Common complaints included issues like eve-teasing, disputes with auto drivers and conflicts over metro seat reservations.

Out of the total calls, 8,560 cases were formally registered, of which 146 have been resolved, while the remaining

cases are still under investigation. The complaints are primarily regarding domestic violence, sexual harassment, cyber fraud and physical abuse.

An official highlighted that the surge in calls reflects a growing public awareness of safety issues. "We often receive calls about a man occupying a women's reserved seat in the metro, verbal abuse by auto drivers, or inappropriate comments from strangers. Women are seeking information about the help available to them," the official stated.

Officials also noted a rise in cyber fraud cases targeting women. One particularly challenging case involved a scammer who gained a woman's trust through a matrimonial site before disappearing with her money. "This case was particularly challenging due to the scammer's deliberate attempts to erase their digital footprint," the official said.

The helpline continues to address both traditional and emerging safety concerns, ensuring timely and effective responses to those in need.



Women take part in a torch rally after a man went missing from an army camp, in Imphal West, Manipur. Violence had broken out in the state following the recovery of dead bodies of three women and three children in Jiri and Barak rivers in Manipur and Assam respectively

UNREST AFTERMATH Manipur resumes inter-district bus services

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, Dec 4: The Manipur government's attempt to resume inter-district public transport services evoked a mixed response from passengers Wednesday, with direct buses from Imphal to Chura-chandpur and Kangpokpi in the hills finding no takers till afternoon, officials said.

However, a few passengers were seen waiting for the buses to take them to Bishnupur and Imphal West districts in the restive state.

The state government Tuesday appealed to the people to cooperate with the administration to this initiative and not to resort to violence.

"Anybody without exemption, if involved in acts which

disturb movement of vehicles, will be sternly dealt with and prosecuted as per relevant laws of the land," a government order read.

This is the administration's second attempt to resume public transport service in 19 months in the state which has been witnessing clashes between Imphal valley-based Meitei communities and Kukis

who are based in hill districts. Manipur has remained gripped by recurring bouts of violence since ethnic clashes between Meiteis and Kukis first erupted in May last year. At least 258 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless since then.

Public bus services between Imphal valley and hill districts also stopped at that time.

SMOG CRISIS

Delhi breathes easy after 50 days

AQI in 'moderate' category



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 4: Delhi breathed clean air Wednesday after a gap of 50 days as the air quality was recorded in the 'moderate' category, offering much-needed respite from the high levels of pollution.

The 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) of the city was recorded at 178 at 4 pm, registering an improvement from 268 Tuesday.

Earlier, the AQI was recorded in the 'moderate' category with a reading of 198 October 15. However, the AQI had deteriorated and shifted to the 'poor' category the following day, according to Central Pollution Control Board data.

Speaking about the improved air quality, an official of the India Meteorological Department said strong surface winds were forecast in the city Wednesday. The winds will blow till De-

ember 7 when a new western disturbance is expected, which will lead to moderate fog starting December 8.

Of the 38 air quality monitoring stations in the city, only Sri Aurobindo Marg reported air quality in the 'very poor' category Wednesday, while eight others showed air quality in the 'poor' category. The remaining reported 'moderate' air quality, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

The Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi has forecasted that the air quality is likely to remain in the moderate category from Thursday, with a prediction of deterioration to the poor category on Friday and Saturday.

With clean air, the daytime temperature was recorded at 28 degrees Celsius, three notches above the normal, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Sikkim team assesses glacial flood risk in Lhonak Valley

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gangtok, Dec 4: An expedition team from the Sikkim government's Science & Technology Department Wednesday reached Muguthang in North Sikkim's Lhonak valley to assess the impact of glacial floods and its mitigation through various measures, officials said.

The team investigated whether Lhonak lake's behaviour was aligned with typical patterns of glacial floods which carry debris, sediment and boulders with massive destructive potential, officials said.

The study team observed that flood water from Lhonak lake slowed down as it passed through the wide areas of the valley between Goma and Dolma Sampa sections.

This natural dissipation of force caused debris deposition, reducing the flood's destructive impact downstream, the officials said.

It was only below Dolma Sampa that the flood picked up momentum and debris causing widespread devastation downstream. The team also analyzed the sub-surface geology at Dolma Sampa and measured discharge of the Lhonak River.

These insights will be crucial in evaluating feasibility of a retention structure at Dolma Sampa, which could regulate floodwaters and protect downstream



«The goal is to gather crucial data that will help inform future flood management strategies

«Forty glacial lakes in the state have been identified as high-risk by the central government

infrastructure.

The expedition team comprised experts in geology, ecology, engineering, hydrology, and remote sensing from the Departments of Science & Technology, of Mines & Geology and the National Disaster Management Authority.

The team endured freezing temperatures of minus 10 degrees Celsius and high winds while camping in Muguthang at 14,000 feet to conduct their studies.

The expedition team will re-

turn to Gangtok Thursday carrying critical data and insights that will inform future strategies for managing glacial flood risks.

Their findings will form the basis of a concept note, which will undergo wider consultation and feasibility assessments, officials added. This initiative marks the fourth glacial lake expedition by the Government of Sikkim, aimed at building resilience to safeguard lives, livelihoods, critical infrastructure, and the environment.

The Lhonak lake had burst in October last year triggering a flash flood in Teesta river that claimed more than 40 lives and caused large-scale destruction of road and communication infrastructure in North Sikkim.

MAJOR SETBACK

BJP's Ratan joins AAP ahead of Delhi Assembly elections

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 4: In a significant political development ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections early next year, BJP leader Pravesh Ratan joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Wednesday.

Ratan, who had contested the 2020 elections from Patel Nagar on a BJP ticket, made the switch from the BJP to the AAP during a press conference alongside senior party leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

Ratan, a prominent figure from the Jatav community, cited dissatisfaction with the BJP's state unit as a key reason for his departure from the BJP.

"The community from which I come has immense

love for Arvind Kejriwal. I am not happy with the working style of the Delhi state BJP. I am here now and will stay here," he said.

He further criticised the BJP, stating, "The Jatav community and people from the lower classes are still being oppressed. I have been following Arvind Kejriwal for a long time. He has done remarkable work for the Jatav community in a short time, providing relief and opportunities for progress."

Welcoming Ratan into the party, Manish Sisodia remarked, "I am very happy that today, impressed by the work carried out under Arvind Kejriwal's leadership for the lower classes and the Jatav community, Pravesh Ratan is joining the AAP."



HORNBILL FEST Stone-pulling ceremony attracts visitors

As the gigantic stone - measuring 24 feet long, 6 feet wide, and 1.8 feet thick - was being pulled with the help of ropes, men hummed tunes and fired gunshots to encourage them, women, dressed in colourful dresses, walked alongside, carrying edibles and water in bamboo baskets

stone for around four km along serpentine roads near here as part of Nagaland's Hornbill festival Wednesday.

As the gigantic stone - measuring 24 feet long, 6 feet wide, and 1.8 feet thick - was being pulled with the help of ropes, men hummed tunes and fired gunshots to encourage them, women, dressed in colourful dresses, walked alongside, carrying edibles and water in bamboo baskets.

The 'Stone pulling ceremony', a significant cultural practice of the Angami Naga community, captivated tourists and locals alike on the fourth day of the 10-day-long Festival, an annual tourism promotional event of the state government at Naga Heritage village Kisama, some 12 km of the state capital Kohima.

Union Tourism Minister Ganendra Singh Shekhawat flagged off the ceremony following the traditional blessings pro-



«The pulling of stone gives us a sense that united we are strong. The way our ancestors could unitedly pull heavy stones or wooden logs, we can unitedly pull our country to the expectations of the future generations

GANENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT | UNION TOURISM MINISTER

nounced by Chairman of Kigwema Village Council, Balie Kere, in the presence of Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, Assembly Speaker Sharingain Longkumer, and others.

The union minister also ex-

pressed happiness to be a part of the Hornbill Festival since Tuesday not only to see the scenic beauty but also to witness the vibrant and diverse culture.

"With the support of the Government of India, Ministry of

Tourism and Culture, we can take it to another level where this festival can become a globally known festival and the people from all across the world come in more numbers," Shekhawat said.

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio said all good things of the forefathers should be protected and promoted for the future. "It is a moment of happiness to come together in this manner, celebrating our rich festivals," Rio said.

The ceremony concluded with a community feast, where both locals and tourists joined in, sharing Angami cuisine.

To encourage inter-tribal interaction and to promote cultural heritage of Nagaland, the Nagaland government organises the Hornbill Festival every year in the first week of December. The 10-day event, showcasing a melange of cultural displays under one roof, is a major event in this northeastern state.

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, KARANJIA, DIST.- MAYURBHANJ
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1st CORRIGENDUM-CUM-TENDER CALL NOTICE
No. 2095/NAC, Dt. 4.12.24
No.C-1182:- Due to unavoidable circumstances the "e" Procurement Notice of this ULB issued vide No.2051/Date.28.11.2024 and Tender Reference No. NAC-KJA-02/2024-25 has not been published the tender in the website due to technical error. Due to non published in website the tender has been cancelled.
Sd./- Executive Officer, Karanjia N.A.C.
OIPR-13119/11/0007/2425

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, P.H. DIVISION, ANGUL No. C-1173
Ph. (06764) 296431, Email: eephangul@yahoo.in
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
Bid Identification No. SE PH Division Angul - 19/2024-25 Dt.02.12.2024

1	Name of the work	: 01 (One) No.
2	Type of Bid	: One No. Double Bid System
3	Estimated Cost	: Rs.58.65 lakhs
4	Period of Completion	: 03 (Three) Months
5	Date & time of availability of Bid document in the portal	: From 11.00 A.M. of 07.12.2024 to 5.00 P.M. of 23.12.2024
6	Last date/time of receipt of bids in the portal	: 5.00 P.M. of 23.12.2024
7	Date & time of Opening of technical Bids	: At 11.00 A.M. of 24.12.2024
8	Name & address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Angul
9	The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://tendersodisha.gov.in . Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.	

Sd./- (Er. Prasanta Behera)
Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Angul
OIPR-13056/11/0010/2425



Both Akhilesh and Rahul are trying to do politics of getting Muslim votes. They are enacting a drama. The decline of SP and Congress are certain. SP will become 'Samaptawadi Party' and there will be Congress-mukt Bharat

KESHAV PRASAD MAURYA | UP DY CM

BHUTAN KING WANGCHUCK TO ARRIVE IN INDIA TODAY

Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck will pay a two-day visit to India beginning Thursday to further advance the already close bilateral partnership between the two nations



of the day quote

Karnataka has tremendous real estate potential, and Bengaluru is poised to lead this growth, with proptech emerging as a catalyst. We are at the right time to create platforms where the industry, the real estate sector, and the government can come together to develop the right policies for the sector

PRIYANK KHARGE | KARNATAKA MINISTER FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

We have to prepare effective strategies in that direction. There is a need to further intensify the awareness drive to encourage Naxalites to quit violence

VISHNU DEO SAI | CH'GARH CM

Had the Congress-led government not been in power in Maharashtra during the MVA period, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train would have already commenced

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | UNION FINANCE MINISTER

Rahul stopped at Ghazipur border on way to Sambhal

The Opposition party's leaders, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, returned to Delhi after staying at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border for about two hours, failing to proceed onwards



Violence erupted during a second survey November 24 as protesters gathered near Shahi Jama Masjid and clashed with security personnel. Four people were killed in the violence and many more were injured. Uttar Pradesh's deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak slammed the Congress for its decision to visit Sambhal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ghaziabad (UP), Dec 4: A delegation of Congress leaders led by Rahul Gandhi on its way to violence-hit Sambhal was stopped by Uttar Pradesh Police at Ghazipur border here Wednesday and had to return, with the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha terming the action as "anti-constitutional".

The Opposition party's leaders, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, returned to Delhi after staying at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border for about two hours, failing to proceed onwards.

A maassive traffic jam was witnessed at the Ghazipur border on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway in the morning as Congress workers gathered there amid heavy security deployment and barricading. The carriageway from Delhi to Uttar Pradesh was heavily congested, with thousands of commuters facing a harrowing time on the road.

After being stopped at the Ghazipur border, Rahul Gandhi said he was ready to go alone

to Sambhal with police but was not allowed.

"We are trying to go to Sambhal. Police are refusing, not allowing us. As the leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, it is my right to go... I said that I am ready to go alone, I am ready to go with the police but they did not accept that either," he said. "Now they are saying that if we come back in a few days, they will let us go. This is actually against the right of the leader of opposition in Lok Sabha. I should be allowed to go," he told reporters. BJP leaders in Uttar Pradesh decried the Congress's move as a "drama" aimed at "appeasing its Muslim vote bank".

Meanwhile, Congress legislative party leader in Uttar Pradesh assembly Aradhana Mishra 'Moni' claimed in Lucknow that she was supposed to be a part of the delegation but was put under "house arrest".

"I am under house arrest. This is hooliganism and anarchy by the government. Rahul ji, the Congress party and I will visit Sambhal today, tomorrow or whenever

we can," she said. Prohibitory orders are in place in Sambhal where violence erupted November 24 over a court-ordered mosque survey, killing four people and injuring several others. Holding up a copy of the Constitution in his hands amid heavy security at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border, Rahul Gandhi said the police's decision was against democracy.

Priyanka Vadra said what happened in Sambhal was wrong and as the LoP, Rahul Gandhi has the constitutional right to visit it.

Later, Rahul Gandhi posted on X: "The police stopped us from going to Sambhal. Being the leader of the Opposition, it is my right and duty to go there. Yet I was stopped. I am ready to go alone, but they did not agree to that either. This is against the Constitution. Why is the BJP scared - why is it using the police to hide its failures? Why is it suppressing the message of truth and brotherhood?"

Curbs under Section 163 (power to issue an order in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), which were set to expire Sunday, have now been extended till December 31 in Sambhal.

Sambhal District Magistrate Rajendra Pensia Tuesday wrote to the police commissioners of Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad as well as the police chiefs of Amroha and Bulandshahr districts, urging them to stop Rahul Gandhi in their districts.

Earlier in the day, Ghaziabad Police Commissioner Ajay Kumar Mishra said, "We will not permit Rahul Gandhi to Sambhal as prohibitory orders have been issued by the administration there."

ATTACK ON BANGLADESH HINDUS

Protests held in several cities of MP



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal/Indore, Dec 4: Protests against atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh continued on the second consecutive day in Madhya Pradesh Wednesday with marches being organised in various cities amid the chanting of "Ek Rahenge to Safe Rahenge" slogans.

In some places, BJP leaders and ministers also participated in demonstrations, while commercial establishments and markets remained closed for half a day in solidarity in Bhopal, Indore, and other cities and towns.

The minority Hindu community in Muslim-majority Bangladesh has reportedly faced more than 200 attacks in 50-odd districts after Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government fell August

Apart from the common people, BJP leaders and ministers took out a protest march from Bhabhda square to Roshanpura in Bhopal

Bangladesh.

BJP MLA from Bhopal Huzar seat, Rameshwar Sharma, said 'Sakal Hindu Samaj' is pained by atrocities committed on Hindus, the demolition and arson of temples, Gurudwaras, and Buddha shrines. "Hindu government employees in Bangladesh are being forced to resign at the sword point. We want to tell the protectors of humanity to make the Army and government of Bangladesh understand. Do not shed the blood of humanity," Sharma said.

Responding to an appeal by some Hindu organisations, thousands of people gathered in Indore's Lalbagh area before marching towards the district collector's office.

A large number of women, religious leaders, and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh workers also participated. The protesters handed over a memorandum, addressed to President Droupadi Murmu, to Indore District Collector Ashish Singh.

The memorandum submitted on behalf of "Sakal Hindu Samaj", mainly demanded that the Indian government put "pressure" on Bangladesh to ensure the safety and religious freedom of Hindus and other minority communities.

ISRO reschedules Proba-3 launch after detecting 'anomaly'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh) Dec 4: The ISRO has rescheduled the launch of PSLV-C59 to Thursday due to an "anomaly" detected in the PROBA-3 spacecraft, the agency announced Wednesday, minutes before the scheduled launch.

The Bangalore-headquartered space agency had originally planned the launch at 4.08 pm Wednesday from the spaceport here. "Due to an anomaly detected in PROBA-3 spacecraft PSLV-C59/PROBA-3 launch rescheduled to tomorrow at 16:12 hours," the space agency said in an update minutes ahead of the lift-off.



Dubbed as world's first initiative of its kind, the Proba-3 (Project for Onboard Anatomy) consists of two satellites - Coronagraph (310kgs) and Occulter (240kgs) - in which two spacecraft would fly together as one, maintaining precise formation down to a single millimetre to study the Corona, the Sun's outer atmosphere.

The European Space Agency (ESA) said the Corona is much hotter than the Sun itself and it is where space weather originates. It is also a topic of widespread scientific and practical interest

Rajya Sabha clears Bill to replace 100 years old Boiler Act

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 4: The Rajya Sabha Wednesday cleared a Bill to provide for the regulation of boilers, safety of life and property of persons from the danger of explosions of steam-boilers and uniformity in registration.

The Boilers Bill, 2024, seeks to repeal the century-old Boilers Act, 1923. The Bill, which aims to decriminalise seven offences and promote ease of doing business, was cleared in the Upper House by a voice vote.

The Bill also has provisions to ensure the safety of persons working inside a boiler. It also provides that repair of boilers should be undertaken by qualified and competent persons. Piloting the Bill, Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said several colonial-era laws were prevalent across sectors in the country and the proposed legislation seeks to do away with the colonial mindset. The government is revisiting pre-1947 laws to make any required changes, he added.

"This Boilers Bill in a way makes the country safe. We need the Boilers Bill to ensure safety, it mandates that competent and qualified people inspect boilers," said the minister.

SHORT TAKES

7-month-old baby raped in Kolkata

Kolkata: The seven-month-old daughter of a homeless couple was allegedly raped in Kolkata, police said Wednesday. The incident came to light after a person called the Burtolla police station November 30 to report that a girl was sitting alone on the footpath outside his house, crying profusely, they said. "The parents of the toddler had also approached us. We took the child to the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital where doctors were shocked to see the injury marks near her private parts. There were several scratch marks on her body as well, indicating sexual molestation. We have started an investigation," a police officer told PTI.

5 held for raping woman in UP

Sonbhadra (UP): Five men were arrested Wednesday for allegedly raping a 19-year-old woman, police said. On Saturday, the victim's parents informed the police that their daughter had been missing for a day. Following this, a case was registered and the girl was found Tuesday, police said. She told the police that the accused - Neeraj Yadav, Umesh Yadav, Shyam Sundar Yadav, Vimlesh Paswan and Bindu Gupta -- took her from her residence and gang-raped her, Additional Superintendent of Police Tribhuvan Nath Tripathi said.

Five killed in road accident in Churu

Jaipur: Five people were killed and two others were injured in a collision between a car and a truck Wednesday in the Churu district of Rajasthan, police said. The accident occurred near Sardarshahar on Churu-Hanumangarh mega highway in the wee hours Wednesday when the SUV was on its way to Hanumangarh from Sardarshahar, police added. The victims got stuck in the car after a truck rammed into it and the bodies were extracted using a crane.

Two cars catch fire after collision

New Delhi: A person was charred to death in a car after it caught fire following a collision with an SUV on a flyover in Dwarka Sector 21 in the early hours of Wednesday, police said.

SNIPPETS

AP port stake sale: YSRCP MP, others booked

Amaravati: Andhra police have registered a case against YSRCP Rajya Sabha MP V Vijaysai Reddy and Y Vikranth Reddy, son of another party member Y V Subba Reddy, for allegedly acquiring stakes in Kakinada Seaports Ltd (KSPL) and Kakinada SEZ (KSEZ) Ltd through "cheating, criminal intimidation, conspiracy" for a throwaway price in favour of Aurobindo Realty (since renamed as Auro Infra).

Delhi: Three of a family stabbed to death

New Delhi: A middle-aged couple and their daughter were allegedly stabbed to death inside their house in Delhi's Neb Sarai area Wednesday, police said. The victims have been identified as Rajesh Kumar (51), his wife Komal (46), and their daughter Kavita (23), the police added. According to the police, the bodies were discovered by the couple's son, Arjun, around 5:30 am when he returned from his morning walk.

SC transfers cases against WB BJP leader to CBI

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Wednesday transferred to the CBI two FIRs lodged against West Bengal BJP leader Kabir Shankar Bose pertaining to the 2020 scuffle between his security staff and TMC workers observing there was a politically charged atmosphere in the state. A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Pankaj Mithal said the political scenario in West Bengal was apparently opposed to the party in power at the Centre.



Tourists participate in rafting in Beas River, in Manali, Himachal Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

MP HC orders man to plant 50 trees in month in contempt case

A division bench comprising Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva and Justice Vinay Saraf issued the order on December 2 in a suo motu criminal contempt petition against Rahul Sahu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jabalpur, Dec 4: The Madhya Pradesh High Court has ordered a man to plant 50 trees of indigenous species within a month, while accepting his apology in a criminal contempt case.

A division bench comprising Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva and Justice Vinay Saraf issued the order December 2 in a suo motu criminal contempt petition against Rahul Sahu.

"Keeping in view the conduct, we direct that respondent (Sahu) shall plant 50 trees of indigenous species in the area of Sambalgarh in Morena district. The trees shall be of indigenous nature of at least height of 4 feet," it said.

"The trees shall be planted under the direction of Sub Divisional Officer (Forest), Sambalgarh. The trees will be planted within a period of one month," it said. The high court took suo motu action on a con-



tempt reference received from the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC), Sambalgarh.

"The respondent is present in person. He (Sahu) has filed his affidavit dated October 15, 2024

and has contended that he is a semi-literate person and has studied only up to Class X," the court order said.

"He submits that he does not have formal legal education and has limited knowledge of legal procedure and is unfamiliar with the decorum and requirement of court proceeding," it said.

The order said that Sahu expressed regret and remorse at his conduct and furnished unconditional apology and undertakes to be careful in future. "He has volunteered to undertake social service," the court said.

The area where the trees shall be planted would be decided by the Sub Divisional

Officer (Forest), Sambalgarh, it added.

"The respondent complying with the direction, the proceedings shall stand closed," the court order said.

Sahu posted certain photograph of the court in Morena with a comment on a social media platform related to court proceedings when a family case filed by his wife was being heard, his advocate Ashish Singh Jadoun told PTI.

The JMFC took cognisance of the social media post and served notice to Sahu, but he did not respond despite giving an opportunity.

The JMFC later referred the matter to the high court, the counsel said.



It's imperative that the UT government reinstates SRO 49 (2018) of the J&K Reservation Act to ensure that super-specialty medical courses remain accessible and the interests of J&K's youth are safeguarded

INDIAN FOREIGN SECY LIKELY TO VISIT B'DESH NEXT WEEK

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri is likely to visit Bangladesh next week for a foreign secretary-level meeting, amid tensions between the two countries after the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus came to power



Quake in Telangana, tremors felt in Andhra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Dec 4: Parts of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were jolted by tremors Wednesday due to an earthquake of 5.6 magnitude at Mulugu, the first such strong quake to strike the southern state in decades.

Mulugu in Telangana is located about 200 km from state capital Hyderabad. The quake hit at 7.27 AM. The tremors were felt at several places in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Mulugu district Collector Divakara T S said no loss of life or major damage to property has been reported. However, the district administration has been asked to conduct a survey of dilapidated houses and temporary structures and submit a report, he said.

The official said he felt the tremors for a short period in the morning and came out of the house. Several residents of Warangal, near Mulugu, said they experienced an unusual jerk for a few seconds around 7.30 am. Ceiling fans began swinging and items started falling off the cupboards.

Citizens in several other districts of Telangana, including Khammam and its neighbouring Eluru district of Andhra Pradesh also experienced the tremors for a few seconds. They said they came out of their houses or apartment buildings following the tremors and shared their experience with their neighbours.

Several videos related to the quake have gone viral. State Special Chief Secretary, Disaster Management, Arvind Kumar said the district administration is on high alert, especially for aftershocks.

Tikait urges farmers to comply with kisan panchayat decisions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aligarh (UP), Dec 4: BKU-Tikait leader Rakesh Tikait, who was detained at Tappal police station here early Wednesday before being released in the evening, said the farmers protesting across Uttar Pradesh would fully comply with the decisions taken by the 'kisan panchayat' in Gautam Buddh Nagar.

He also said the farmers detained at more than 50 police stations across the state had been advised to hold local panchayats. "We will honour all decisions made at these panchayats," the Bhartiya Kisan Union-Tikait (BKU-Tikait) spokesperson said.

He said farmer leaders were considering the possibility of heading to Lucknow with their tractors. "The issues we are facing are with the Uttar Pradesh government and it is there the resolution must come from." The farmers are prepared for a prolonged struggle, he added.

Rakesh Tikait, who was detained with more than a dozen supporters at Tappal police station, said upon his release, "I will ask them to end their protests for now and await the decision of the ongoing Gautam Buddh Nagar kisan panchayat." He also said that he would attempt to contact the panchayat leaders to discuss the next steps.

Fadnavis to take oath as Maha CM for third time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 4: Devendra Fadnavis will be sworn in as Maharashtra Chief Minister Thursday, after Governor C P Radhakrishnan invited him to form the new government in the state.

Two deputy Chief Ministers, including NCP leader Ajit Pawar, will also be sworn in at the ceremony at the sprawling Azad Maidan in south Mumbai Thursday in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

There is no clarity yet on whether outgoing CM Eknath Shinde will be a part of the new ministry. While Fadnavis said he has requested Shinde to join the government, Shinde said the media will be updated on this front later Wednesday.

A delegation of the ruling Mahayuti alliance met the Governor at Raj Bhavan Wednesday, soon after Fadnavis was unanimously elected state BJP legislature party leader.

At the legislature party meeting held in Vidhan Bhawan, former Gujarat CM and BJP's central observer Vijay Rupani announced that Fadnavis (54) has been unanimously elected the BJP legislature party leader.

Speaking at the meeting, BJP's central observer and Union minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the "double engine government" in the state and the Centre will boost development.

Fadnavis thanked the BJP legislators for reposing trust in him, adding that the thumping victory of the ruling Mahayuti alliance in the November 20 assembly elections was due to the mantra of "Ek hai toh safe hai" given by PM Modi.

At the Vidhan Bhawan meeting, senior state BJP leader Chandrakant Patil proposed the name of Fadnavis as the legislature party leader.

Fadnavis' name was finalised for the top post at the state BJP's core committee meet held here ahead of the legislature party meeting.



There is no clarity yet on whether outgoing CM Eknath Shinde will be a part of the new ministry

While Fadnavis said he has requested Shinde to join the government, Shinde said the media will be updated on this front later Wednesday

Shinde had been camping in Thane citing health problems, sparking speculation of internal discord in the Mahayuti alliance. However, he returned to Mumbai Tuesday.

At the Raj Bhavan press conference Wednesday, when a reporter asked Shinde if he and Ajit Pawar would be sworn in as deputy chief ministers at Azad Maidan, Shinde replied, "Let's wait till evening. The oath ceremony is tomorrow."

Ajit Pawar butted in, quipping, "Inka to shaam tak pata chalega. Main to shapath le raha hoon. He (Shinde) will figure it out by this evening. I'm the one taking the oath."

The BJP achieved remarkable success in the November 20 Maharashtra elections, securing 132 out of the 288 assembly seats in the state, marking its best performance in the state so far.

Together with its allies Shiv Sena and NCP, the BJP-led Mahayuti coalition has a commanding majority of 230 seats.

Ruling AAP, Oppn leaders condemn attack on Badal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Dec 4: Leaders cutting across party lines condemned the attack on Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal outside the Golden Temple Wednesday even as the Opposition targeted the ruling AAP alleging breakdown of law and order in the state with SAD demanding resignation of the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann directed police to investigate the incident. A former Khalistani terrorist fired from close range at Badal at the Golden Temple's entrance but missed as plainclothes policemen overpowered him. The SAD leader was performing the duty of 'sewadar' on the second day of his religious penance for "mistakes" committed by the party's government in Punjab from 2007 to 2017.

Besides Mann, other leaders like AAP's Arvind Kejriwal, BJP's Amarinder Singh and Sunil Jakhar, SAD's Bikram Singh Majithia and Daljit Singh Cheema and Partap Singh Bajwa of Congress also condemned the attack. Mann, whose government came under fire from the Opposition parties following the attack, lauded the promptness of Punjab Police in nabbing attacker Narain Singh Chaura. He also said that the entire incident will be probed impartially.

The audacious attack, which took place around 9:30 am, was captured on cameras of media persons who had gathered outside the Sikh shrine to cover the second day of Badal's penance.

Speaking to reporters in Mohali, Mann called it an unfortunate incident. "...I have given them (police) strict instructions that the incident should be deeply probed, and very soon we will know the reasons behind the incident.

"We will not allow such conspiracies to defame Punjab succeed. I strongly condemn the attack on Sukhbir Badal," he said. Kejriwal lauded the police for



A former Khalistani terrorist fired from close range at Badal at the Golden Temple's entrance but missed as plainclothes policemen overpowered him

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann directed police to investigate the incident

The SAD leader was performing the duty of 'sewadar' on the second day of his religious penance for "mistakes" committed by the party's government in Punjab from 2007 to 2017

averting a "very big" tragedy.

Speaking in Delhi assembly, he also hit out at the BJP, saying "very big powers" are conspiring to defame Punjab and people of the state. The police have set an example of how to maintain law and order, the former Delhi Chief Minister said, adding the issue of attack on Badal was raised by the BJP but the party is silent over the "murders, rapes, shooting in Delhi" where police come under the central government.

Reacting to the incident, BJP Rajya Sabha member and national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said, "It's a very serious matter." The law and order situation in Punjab has been deteriorating since the AAP came to power in the state, he charged.

SAD leader and former Punjab minister Bikram Singh Majithia slammed the ruling party over the incident.

Noting that Chaura faced multiple cases, many of them serious, Majithia said, "He was wearing a cream coloured sweater yesterday. If the police were so alert, why didn't they arrest him? Instead, police gave him VIP treatment and were probably waiting for the bullet to be fired." Earlier too

there have been conspiracies to wipe out the Akali leadership, Majithia claimed in response to a question.

Badal (62) is undergoing religious punishment announced by the Akal Takht. Holding a spear in one hand and dressed in blue 'sewadar' uniform, the SAD leader sat at the entrance of the Golden Temple where the incident took place.

Senior SAD leader Cheema, who is also undergoing religious punishment, demanded judicial inquiry into the incident and said, "we have been saying conspiracies are going on to finish the Akali leadership. The entire conspiracy needs to be unearthed".

Punjab minister and AAP state president Aman Arora denied there was any intelligence failure or other lapse.

Punjab BJP chief Jakhar said, "No Sikh can commit such cowardly act. A true Sikh can never do such an act." He lauded the promptness of the security personnel in nabbing the attacker.

Punjab Congress president Amrinder Singh Raja Warring said if Sukhbir Badal can be shot at then anybody can be harmed.

DEFAMATION CASE

Be ready for unnecessary compliments in politics: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 4: One should be ready to receive all sorts of unwarranted and unnecessary compliments upon entering politics, the Supreme Court observed Wednesday while hearing union minister L Murugan's plea in a defamation case.

The apex court in September 2023 stayed the criminal defamation proceedings against Murugan on a complaint filed by Chennai-based Murasoli Trust for his alleged defamatory statements at a press conference in December, 2020.

Murugan, union minister of state for Information and Broadcasting, moved the top



court challenging the September 5, 2023 order of the Madras High Court, which refused to quash the defamation proceedings. When the matter came up for hearing on Wednesday before a bench of Justices B R Gava and K V Viswanathan, it asked his counsel, "Are you

willing to make a statement that you had no intention to defame?"

The counsel appearing for the trust said that persons holding office had to be responsible. "Free speech issues, you have to have breathing space," the bench said, "when you enter politics, you should be ready to receive all sorts of unwarranted, unnecessary compliments".

The counsel appearing for the trust said they were not in politics. "He (petitioner) is making a statement that he did not intend to hurt your sentiments," the bench told the trust's counsel, who sought time till Thursday to seek instructions.



Shashi Tharoor Wednesday shared an "extraordinary experience" at his home when a monkey ran towards him, hugged him and after being treated to a couple of bananas, rested his head on the Congress MP's chest and dozed off

PTI PHOTO

Smartphone use impacts parent-child bonds: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 4: Rise in dependence on smartphones and their excessive usage are adversely impacting relationships between parents and children in India, a survey commissioned by Chinese mobile devices company Vivo said Wednesday.

The survey conducted by Cybermedia Research found that on average, parents spend more than five hours and children spend over four hours daily on their smartphones, with social media and entertainment accounting for the largest portion of usage for both groups. "Excessive smartphone use has strained personal rela-

tionships, with both parents and children recognizing it as a source of conflict between them. 66 per cent of parents and 56 per cent of children notice negative changes in their personal relationships due to excessive smartphone usage," the vivo Switch Off 2024 Survey report said.

As per the study, both parents and children yearn for closer relationships with each other but neither group is willing to curb their excessive and purposeless smartphone habits. The survey found 73 per cent of parents and 69 per cent of children agree that excessive smartphone usage is a source of conflict between them. Both parents and children are highly dependent on smart-



phones, as it has become an indispensable part of their lives. According to the survey, 76 per cent of parents and 71 per cent of

children agree that they cannot live without their smartphones. 64 per cent of children going to the extent of stating that they

The survey found 73 per cent of parents and 69 per cent of children agree that excessive smartphone usage is a source of conflict between them

feel addicted to their smartphones, spending the majority of their smartphone time on social media and entertainment activities.

"Two-thirds of children say that they would not use social media if their friends were not on the apps. Over 90 per cent of children wish that some or the

other of the most popular social media apps had never been invented," the report said.

The study covered 1,543 smartphone owners across Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Pune. "While smartphones have seamlessly integrated into our daily routines, unmindful relationships with smartphones can create barriers in the real-life relationships that people care about the most. This year's findings raise essential questions about how families can create meaningful connections in a world dominated by screens," Geetaj Channana, Head of Corporate Strategy, vivo India, said.

of the day quote

The people of the state are reeling under exorbitant power tariff and erratic billing by smart pre-paid meters which deserve to be called smart cheaters



TEJASHWI YADAV | RJD LEADER

The government will be formed. Discussions with the elected MLAs will take place tomorrow. One name will be finalised and it will be announced later



VIJAY RUPANI | FORMER GUJARAT CM

Due to the efforts of the state government, the Mohali airport has been named after Shaheed Bhagat Singh



BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

POST OF THE DAY

Why BJP is so scared of Rahul Gandhi? Huge number of Police forces were deployed in Sambhal to stop

Rahul Gandhi

@dhruvrahtee

SHORT TAKES

DRG jawan killed in encounter with Naxals

Narayanpur: A District Reserve Guard (DRG) head constable was killed in an encounter with Naxalites in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district Wednesday, a senior police official said. The gunfight broke out at around 1 pm in the forest on the border of Sonpur and Kohkameta police station areas in Abujhmad when a joint team of security personnel was conducting an anti-Naxal operation, he said. District Reserve Guard (DRG) and Border Security Force personnel were involved in the operation launched Tuesday, the official said. The intermittent exchange of fire lasted till late evening, he said.

CBI searches 10 locations

New Delhi: The CBI Wednesday conducted searches at 10 locations in Delhi and surrounding areas in connection with a case of transnational cyber-enabled financial frauds involving ₹117 crore, officials said. The central probe agency had registered the case last year in December on a complaint from the Union Home Ministry's Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) alleging that unidentified foreign actors and organised cybercriminals were allegedly engaged in a systematic financial fraud across India. The agency launched surveillance and detailed technical analysis to track the people running these scams during the year, officials said.

Debt-ridden youth kills self

Mathura (UP): A 19-year-old youth allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself after he incurred a loss in the stock market investments, police said Wednesday. According to police, Abhishek, a resident of Uspar village, sent a text message to his father and said, "Father, forgive me. I've ruined your money and others'. I can't repay anyone." The immediate cause appears to be the financial loss. Further investigation into the matter is underway, SHO added.

international



Indophiles, or Indian allies in this part of Bengal" were thinking that things were going to cool down and bypassing the July uprising and the "fascist's atrocities would not cost them anything"

ARTIST JASLEEN KAUR WINS PRESTIGIOUS TURNER PRIZE Glasgow-born artist of Indian heritage Jasleen Kaur, whose works are inspired by her life growing up in Scotland's Sikh community, has won Britain's prestigious Turner Prize 2024 for her considered weaving together of the "personal, political and spiritual"



of the day quote

Tennessee jobs are at risk due to India's unfair and uncompetitive trade practices in the ceramic tile market

The Lobito Corridor constituted the largest US investment in a train project outside the country

This agreement with the Department of Justice (DOJ) will ensure President Trump and his team are ready on Day 1 to begin enacting the America First Agenda that an overwhelming majority of our nation supported on Election Day

MARTIAL LAW DEBACLE

Yoon faces impeachment

FIRST TIME SINCE 1962

French PM faces no-confidence vote

The Opposition has threatened to impeach President Yoon if he does not resign voluntarily, following his ill-fated move to impose martial law



REUTERS

Seoul, Dec 4: South Korean lawmakers Wednesday proposed impeaching President Yoon Suk Yeol for his sudden decision to declare martial law, which he rescinded after a chaotic standoff between parliament and the army that damaged the country's standing.

Yoon's declaration of martial law late Tuesday attempted to ban political activity and censor the media in South Korea, which has Asia's fourth largest economy and is a key US ally.

Washington had no advance notice of the decision, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Reuters, adding that he expected to speak with his South Korean counterpart in the coming days.

Armed troops had forced their way into the National Assembly building in Seoul but stood back when parliamentary aides sprayed them with fire extinguishers. Lawmakers re-

jected the martial law decision while protesters scuffled with police outside.

Civic and labour groups held a candlelight vigil Wednesday evening in downtown Seoul calling for Yoon's resignation - a reminder of the massive candlelight protests that led to the impeachment of former President Park Geun-hye in 2017. They then marched to the presidential office.

Six South Korean opposition parties submitted a bill in parliament to impeach Yoon, who had already faced accusations of heavy-handed leadership from his opponents and from within his own party, with voting set for Friday or Saturday.

A plenary session to formally introduce the bill was scheduled to begin shortly after mid-

US had no advance notice of Yoon's decision - Blinken

Impeachment bill to be formally introduced to parliament at midnight

Civic and labour groups hold candlelit vigil in downtown Seoul, march towards presidential office

Finance ministry seeks to reassure ratings agencies

We couldn't ignore the illegal martial law. We can no longer let democracy collapse

KIM YONG-MIN | DP LAWMAKER

night Wednesday.

The leader of Yoon's ruling People Power Party called for Defence Minister Kim Yong-hyun to be fired and the entire cabinet to resign. Kim has offered to resign, the defence ministry said.

The crisis rattled global financial markets and left South Korea's benchmark KOSPI index .KS11 down 1.4%, taking its

year-to-date losses to over 7% and making it the worst performing major stock market in Asia this year.

NO SPECIFIC THREATS

Yoon told the nation in a television speech late Tuesday that martial law was needed to defend the country from pro-North Korean anti-state forces,

and protect the free constitutional order, although he cited no specific threats.

Within hours, South Korea's parliament, with 190 of its 300 members present, unanimously passed a motion for martial law to be lifted, with 18 members of Yoon's party present.

The president then rescinded the declaration of martial law, around six hours after its proclamation. Protesters outside the National Assembly shouted and clapped. "We won!" they chanted, and one demonstrator banged on a drum.

'DODGED A BULLET'

If Yoon resigned or was removed from office, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo would fill in as leader until a new election was held within 60 days.

"South Korea as a nation dodged a bullet, but President Yoon may have shot himself in the foot," Danny Russell, vice president of the Washington-based Asia Society Policy Institute, said of the first martial law declaration in South Korea since 1980.

Blinken said he welcomed Yoon's decision to rescind the martial law declaration.

South Korea's political situation is an "internal matter", China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said. Russia said it was following the "tragic" events in South Korea with concern.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Dec 4: France's far-right and left-wing forces are expected to join together Wednesday to oust Prime Minister Michel Barnier's government in a historic no-confidence vote prompted by budget disputes.

If the motion succeeds, it would mark the first time a French government has been toppled this way in more than 60 years.

President Emmanuel Macron insisted he will serve the rest of his term until 2027 despite growing Opposition calls for his departure amid the turmoil. However, Macron will need to appoint a new prime minister for the second time this year, further reshaping France's political balance after his party's losses in July's legislative elections.

The political drama comes as Macron, currently on a presidential visit to Saudi Arabia, dismissed the threat of a government collapse, according to French media reports Tuesday, saying discussions about his potential removal from office were "make-believe politics."

The no-confidence motion rose from fierce Opposition to Barnier's proposed budget. The National Assembly, France's lower house of parliament, is deeply fractured, with no single party holding a majority.

SHORT TAKES

UnitedHealthcare CEO shot dead

New York: UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson was killed Wednesday morning in what investigators suspect was a targeted shooting outside a Manhattan hotel where the health insurer was holding an investor conference. The killing was a "brazen, targeted attack," Jessica Tisch, the New York City police commissioner said. Thompson, 50, was set to speak at an investor meeting when he was gunned down around 6.45 am outside the New York Hilton Midtown by a shooter who fled on foot and then took an e-bike into Central Park, according to the New York Police Department.

Nepal, China sign BRI framework

Beijing/Kathmandu: Nepal and China Wednesday signed the much-awaited Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Cooperation Framework, an agreement which is expected to pave the way for the implementation of the BRI projects. The agreement was inked during Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's official visit to China - his first official visit to that country after assuming office for the fourth time. The Nepal-China economic cooperation will further strengthen under the Belt and Road Framework Cooperation, he added.

BANGLADESH ON BOIL

Hasina hits back at Yunus

Though Hasina made several statements in the last few months, it was her first public address after taking shelter, said an expert closely tracking developments in Bangladesh



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 4: In her first public address after fleeing Bangladesh four months back, ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has mounted a stinging attack on the country's interim leader Muhammad Yunus, accusing him of perpetrating "genocide" and failing to protect minorities including Hindus.

In the remarks delivered virtually to her supporters at an event in New York, Hasina, presently living in India, also claimed that there were plans to kill her and her sister Sheikh Rehana just like their father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in 1975.

Describing Yunus as "power-hungry", Hasina alleged that the places of worship in Bangladesh are under attack and the current dispensation has totally

failed to deal with the situation.

Hasina was speaking to supporters of her Awami League party at the event organised Sunday to mark "Bijoy Dibos" or Victory Day that falls December 16.

Though Hasina made several statements in the last few months, it was her first public address after taking shelter, said an expert closely tracking developments in Bangladesh.

"The armed protestors were directed towards Ganabhaban (official residence of the prime minister). If the security guards opened fire, many lives would have been lost. It was a matter of 25-30 minutes, and I was forced

to leave. I told them not to fire no matter what happened," she said, speaking in Bengali.

"Today, I am being accused of genocide. In reality, Yunus has been involved in genocide in a meticulously designed manner. The masterminds, the student coordinators and Yunus, are behind this genocide," she said.

In her nearly an hour-long address, Hasina said the current dispensation in Dhaka failed to protect the minorities.

"Hindus, Buddhists, Christians - no one has been spared. Eleven churches have been razed, temples and Buddhist shrines have been broken. When the Hindus protested, the Iskon leader was arrested," she said in an oblique reference to arrest of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das.

"What is this persecution of minorities for? Why are they being ruthlessly persecuted and attacked," she asked.

"People no longer have the right to justice...I never even got the time to resign," she said.

Hasina said she left Bangladesh in August with an aim to stop the violence. However, the situation has deteriorated further, she said.



US President Joe Biden greets dancers as he arrives at Catumbela Airport in Catumbela, Angola

REUTERS

Al-Golani: Leader behind Syria's shock insurgency

The rebel's success on the battlefield follows years of maneuvering among extremist organisations while eliminating competitors and former allies



Now al-Golani, 42, seeks to seize the moment yet again, leading his fighters in a stunning offensive that has put them in control of Syria's largest city, reigniting the country's long civil war

against Syria's Assad triggered a brutal government crackdown and led to all-out war. Al-Golani's prominence grew when al-Baghdadi sent him to Syria to establish a branch of al-Qaida called the Nusra Front.

The United States labeled the new group as a terrorist organisation. That designation still

remains in place and the US government has put a USD 10 million bounty on him.

THE NUSRA FRONT AND THE SYRIA CONFLICT

As Syria's civil war intensified in 2013, so did al-Golani's ambitions. He defied al-Baghdadi's calls to dissolve the Nusra Front and merge it with al-Qa-

ida's operation in Iraq, to form the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS.

Al-Golani nonetheless pledged his allegiance to al-Qaida, which later disassociated itself from ISIS. The Nusra Front battled ISIS and eliminated much of its competition among the Syrian armed opposition to Assad.

CONSOLIDATING POWER AND REBRANDING

In 2016, al-Golani revealed his face to the public for the first time in a video message that announced his group was renaming itself Jabhat Fateh al-Sham and cutting its ties to al-Qaida.

The move paved the way for al-Golani to assert full control over fracturing militant groups. A year later, his alliance rebranded again as HTS as the groups merged, consolidating al-Golani's power in north-west Syria's Idlib province.

Afterward HTS clashed with independent Islamist militants who opposed the merger, further emboldening al-Golani and his group as the leading power in northwestern Syria, able to rule with an iron fist.

TWO-STATE SOLUTION

India votes for UNGA resolution on Palestine

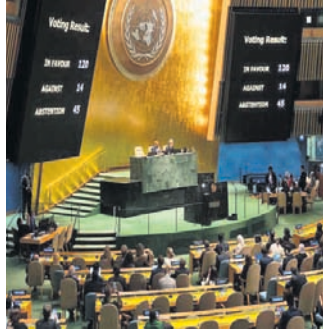
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Dec 4: India voted in favour of a UN General Assembly resolution that called for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and reiterated the call for achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in West Asia.

The draft resolution 'Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine' tabled by Senegal was overwhelmingly adopted in the 193-member General Assembly Tuesday.

India was among the 157 nations that voted in favour, while eight Member States - Argentina, Hungary, Israel, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea and the United States voted against it. Cameroon, Czechia, Ecuador, Georgia, Paraguay, Ukraine and Uruguay abstained.

The resolution, adopted as orally revised, reiterated its call for the "achievement, without



delay, of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East (West Asia)" on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, including of East Jerusalem.

The resolution called for the "withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem" and for the realisation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State.

Business



Whatever Trump has announced so far...I think there are opportunities for India. We are a man at first slip, the ball is coming in our direction. Are we going to hold it or drop the catch, it's for us to see...and I think, you will see some steps in next few months

BVR SUBRAHMANYAM | CEO, NITI AAYOG

SUVEN PHARMA SHINES BRIGHT

Suven Pharmaceuticals Wednesday said it has been ranked among the global top 20 companies for sustainable growth in the drugs industry. The company has been recognised as one of the world's best companies in sustainable growth 2025 in the inaugural edition of TIME and Statista's ranking, Suven Pharma said



of the day quote

Revenue comes in only when there is some income, so we have to be very cautious so that we do not in the process, as they say, kill the golden goose

SANJAY MALHOTRA | REVENUE SECRETARY

My only submission will be are we measuring food inflation correctly? For example, 80 crore Indians are provided free food. That cost is more than our fiscal deficit. Is the credit taken in food inflation?

NILESH SHAH | PART-TIME MEMBER OF THE ECONOMIC ADVISORY COUNCIL TO PM

The cumulative Affordable housing shortage in India is projected to reach 31.2 million by 2030, with the market size estimated at ₹67 trillion

GULAM ZIA | SENIOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KNIGHT FRANK

Trade grows 5.45% in H1

India's trade landscape is rapidly evolving in response to global challenges and opportunities



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 4: India's trade performance demonstrated stability and moderate growth during the first half of the current financial year, according to a NITI Aayog Trade Watch report released Wednesday.

The publication offers a holistic snapshot of India's trade position, combining global demand-supply perspectives, sectoral performance, and insights into emerging trade opportunities.

Merchandise exports showed restrained growth, influenced by declines in critical sectors such as iron and steel, as well as natural and cultured pearls. On the other hand, imports were propelled by high-value commodities, including aircraft, spacecraft, mineral fuels, and vegetable oils. Services exports displayed an encouraging surplus, the 40-page report states.

of the report, India's total trade in H1 2024 experienced a 5.45 per cent year-on-year increase to \$576 billion compared to 2023.

Merchandise imports showed consistent growth, with Q1 FY25 exports rising by 5.95 per cent to \$110 billion and imports increasing by 8.40 per cent to \$173 billion, leading to a growing trade imbalance.

In Q1 FY25, Indian iron and steel exports experienced a massive decline (33 per cent) primarily due to weak domestic demand and excess capacity in China which resulted in an oversupply of steel in the global markets.

In Q1 FY25, North America accounted for 21 per cent of India's exports, followed by the EU at 18.61 per cent. Imports were largely from Northeast Asia, West Asia (GCC), and ASEAN, making up 51 per cent of total imports. During Q1 FY25, export growth to FTA partners was notably strong at 12 per cent, while import growth from these partners was 10.29 per cent.

Merchandise exports showed restrained growth, influenced by declines in critical sectors such as iron and steel, as well as natural and cultured pearls

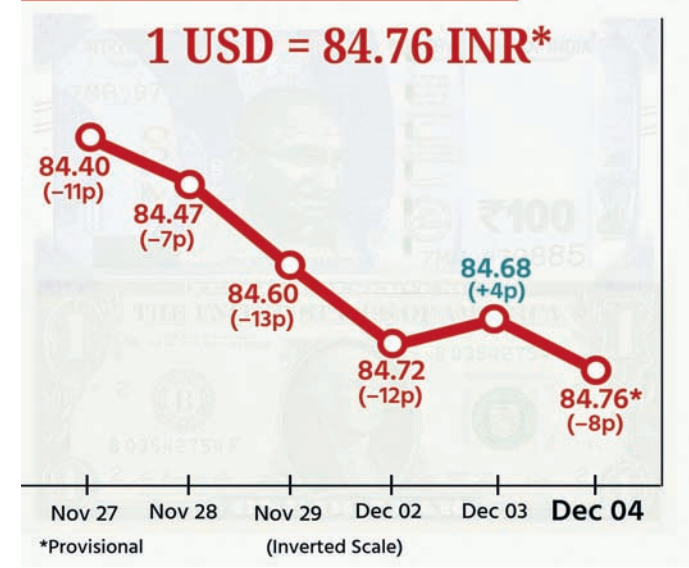
On the other hand, imports were propelled by high-value commodities, including aircraft, spacecraft, mineral fuels, and vegetable oils

External debt rises by \$31 bn to \$647bn: WB

India's total external debt has increased by \$31 billion to \$646.79 billion in 2023, according to World Bank International Debt Report. The report further said that interest payment increased from \$15.08 billion in 2022 to \$22.54 billion in 2023. While the long-term debt stocks have risen 7 per cent to \$498 billion in 2023, short-term debt stocks declined marginally to \$126.32 billion in 2023. According to the report, external debt stock as percentage of exports was 80 per cent, while debt servicing was 10 per cent of exports in 2023. The World Bank International Debt Report, 2024, further said that net debt inflows during the year worked out to be \$33.42 billion, while the net equity inflows was higher at \$46.94 billion in 2023.

₹ plummets to fresh all-time low of 84.75

RUPEE ₹ VS DOLLAR \$



Rupee closed at 84.68 against dollar Tuesday. The currency's previous lowest closing level of 84.72 was recorded Dec 2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 4: The rupee slumped by 7 paise to hits its lowest-ever closing level of 84.75 against the US dollar Wednesday amid a strengthening greenback and increase in crude prices.

Forex traders said a positive trend in domestic equity markets and foreign fund inflows supported the local unit at lower level. At the interbank currency exchange, the rupee opened at 84.66 and traded in the range of 84.65-84.76 during intra-day. The unit ended the session 7 paise lower at an all-time low of 84.75 against the dollar.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said, the rupee lost initial gains amid strong dollar and a positive tone in crude oil prices.

"Dollar strengthened amid upbeat JOLTS (Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey) data from the US and disappointing Caixin Services PMI data from China," he said, adding, "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in the range of ₹84.50 to ₹85."

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.11 per cent at 106.47.

Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said the dollar index rose as euro pound and yen fell.

"For tomorrow the rupee looks to be in the range of 84.50 to 84.80 with RBI supporting it at 84.75-80 levels," he added. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, surged 0.83 per cent to \$74.23 per barrel in futures trade.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) remained net buyers in the capital markets for the second straight session Wednesday, purchasing shares worth ₹1,797.60 crore, according to exchange data.

The only way for USD/INR is weaker, and this time around it's even more pressing for two reasons. One is the external headwinds... and the second is the domestic macro mix has changed for the worse

DHIRAJ NIM | FX STRATEGIST, ANZ

SHORT TAKES

SBI writes to RBI

Mumbai: Faced with the challenge of ensuring an account remains operative, the State Bank of India (SBI) has written to the Reserve Bank, requesting change in rules, and consider non-financial transactions like balance checking as well for tagging an account as operative. CS Setty, chairman of the country's largest lender, said many a time, an account holder, especially ones where cash transfers under government programmes is the primary usage, does limited number of financial transactions.

UPI Lite wallet raised

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank Wednesday increased the UPI Lite wallet limit to ₹5,000 and per-transaction limit to ₹1,000 in order to encourage wider adoption of the popular instant payment system through mobile phones. UPI Lite transactions are offline to the extent that Additional Factor of Authentication (AFA) is not required, and transaction alerts are not sent in real time. Currently, the upper limit of an offline payment transaction is ₹500 and the total limit for offline transactions on a payment instrument is ₹2,000 at any point in time.

Voda to sell stake in Indus Towers

New Delhi: British telecom company Vodafone will sell 3 per cent stake in Indus Towers to clear its debt of \$101 or about ₹856 crore and use the residual amount to pay outstanding dues of its Indian venture Vodafone Idea. The transaction is valued at around ₹2,841 crore as per the Wednesday's closing price of Indus Towers stock at ₹358.75 apiece on the BSE. "Vodafone Group Plc announces that it has launched a placing of its remaining 79.2 million shares in Indus Towers Limited representing 3 per cent of Indus' outstanding share capital through an accelerated book build offering," Vodafone said.

Honda expands SUV segment

New Delhi: Japanese carmaker Honda plans to introduce three new models by the 2026-27 fiscal in India as it looks to tap growth opportunities in the robustly growing SUV segment. The company, which is present in India through a wholly-owned subsidiary, currently sells just one SUV model -- Elevate -- in the market.

Ericsson wins multi-billion 4G, 5G deal from Airtel for India operations

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 4: Telecommunications giant Ericsson Wednesday said it has been awarded a multi-billion, 4G and 5G extension deal by Bharti Airtel for its India operations.

As part of the multi-year deal for 4G and 5G RAN products and solutions, Ericsson will deploy centralised RAN and Open RAN-ready solutions for network transformation, which will help customers with wider coverage and the enhanced capacity on the network.

Ericsson will also undertake the software upgrade of its current deployed 4G radios thereby enhancing the customer experience, it said in a statement.

"This deployment will enable us to further improve the speed, reliability, and coverage of our network, ensuring an exceptional experience for our customers," said Randeep Sekhon, CTO, Bharti Airtel.

As a global leader in 5G, Ericsson currently powers 170 live 5G networks in more than 70 countries. The company has been a trusted connectivity partner for Airtel for over 25 years, supporting every generation of mobile communications.

According to the latest Ericsson Mobility report, 5G subscriptions in India are projected to reach around 970 million by the end of 2030, accounting for 74 per cent of mobile subscriptions.

Shares end session in green

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 4: Benchmark Sensex advanced 110 points in a choppy trade Wednesday, extending its gains to the fourth day in a row helped by buying in HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and fresh foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share barometer rose by 110.58 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at 80,956.33 with 14 of its constituents ending with gains and 16 stocks with losses. During the day, it jumped 399.64 points or 0.49 per cent to 81,245.39 and dipped to a low of 80,630.53.

The NSE Nifty rose marginally by 10.30 points or 0.04 per cent to 24,467.45 as gains in IT, realty and banking shares were offset by profit-taking in auto



CHOPPY TRADE

and FMCG shares. From the 30-share Sensex pack, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Finserv, NTPC, Titan, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finance and ICICI Bank were the biggest gainers.

Bharti Airtel, Tata Motors, Adani Ports, Power Grid, Maruti, ITC, Reliance Industries and UltraTech Cement were among the laggards.

Foreign institutional investors turned buyers Tuesday as they bought equities worth ₹3,664.67 crore.

Services growth eases moderately in November

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 4: India's services PMI marginally dipped to 58.4 in November while employment in the segment recorded robust growth, a monthly survey said Wednesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services Business Activity Index was down marginally to 58.4 from 58.5 in October as sales increased at a softer pace. Last month, the country's services PMI recovered from its 10-month low. In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India posted a strong 58.4 services PMI in November, down only a fraction from the prior month's 58.5. During November, services sector employment notably grew at the fastest pace ever recorded since this survey began in 2005," Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said. Panellists of the survey continued to signal improving international demand for their

Employment growth fastest since 2005

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

services, while new export orders increased at the quickest rate in three months, but well below those seen around mid-year.

Private sector companies indicated that demand strength supported further growth of new business and output in November. Ongoing increases in sales continued to add to capacity pressures, which led firms to

hire staff at the quickest pace since comparable data became available 19 years ago. Paired with rising input prices, labour costs exerted upward pressure on inflation. Overall, expenses and output charges rose at the fastest rates in 15 months and almost 12 years respectively. Service providers were more confident regarding the year-ahead outlook for business activity. Confidence reached its highest level since May, boosted by predictions of continued demand strength and expectations that marketing efforts will drive new business.

The hiring surge reflected the sector's improving business confidence, growing new orders, and vigorous international demand. At the same time, high food and labour costs drove up input and output prices to their fastest rates in 15 months and nearly 12 years, respectively

PRANJUL BHANDARI | CHIEF INDIA ECONOMIST, HSBC



three months, but well below those seen around mid-year. Private sector companies indicated that demand strength supported further growth of new business and output in November. Ongoing increases in sales continued to add to capacity pressures, which led firms to

GRAINS FOR GOLD

The smuggling distorts India's bullion trade with discounts from official prices, hides unaccounted wealth, and weakens New Delhi's efforts to curb food inflation by limiting exports

REUTERS

Petrapole, Dec 4: Guards on either side of a border checkpoint between India and Bangladesh scour vehicles and frisk passengers in a hunt for illicit consignments of gold and drugs, as well as food staples such as sugar, grain and even onions.

"We caught smugglers in August who were transporting sugar concealed beneath a layer of sand in their vehicle," said an officer of India's Border Security Force (BSF) in the northeastern city of Shillong, who sought anonymity.

Despite such efforts, illegal barter trade of gold for food items has surged since mid-2022,

Export curbs drive boom in barter smuggling with B'desh

as India's export curbs fuelled a vast disparity with prices in Bangladesh, causing combined government revenue losses of billions of dollars.

The practice of smuggling gold to buy grain has persisted even after India, the world's second-largest gold consumer, slashed 9 percentage points from its import duty in July, taking it to the lowest in more than a decade.

It is driven by significantly higher food prices in Bangladesh, which traditionally relies heavily on Indian supply.

But instead of simply exploiting the price difference between Indian and overseas gold, grey market operators use gold to



barter for items such as sugar, wheat, and onions smuggled into Bangladesh.

The goods are concealed, said a BSF officer, citing the example of a smuggler in West Bengal, arrested in October with 4.7 kg (10.3 lb) of gold worth ₹35.1 million (\$414,000) stashed in his motorcycle's air filter.

He had been offered just ₹10,000 rupees to ferry 18 gold biscuits into India to pay for food items already smuggled into Bangladesh, said the officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

LUCRATIVE ARBITRAGE

Traditionally the biggest supplier of grains to Bangladesh, India imposed curbs on exports of staples such as wheat, sugar, rice, onions and pulses to rein in food inflation from 2022.

But gold prices have rallied more than 50 per cent since the middle of that year, encouraging wider activity by grey market operators to exploit the arbitrage opportunity as food prices in Bangladesh spiked as much as 150 per cent in India.

The gold-for-grain trade flourished as India steadily tightened curbs on food exports over the past two years, said a grains dealer in the eastern city of Kolkata, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

ILLEGAL BARTER TRADE HAS SURGED SINCE MID-2022

GOLD PRICES RALLIED OVER 50% SINCE MID-2024

GOVT LOST \$1.6BN IN UNPAID TAXES LAST YEAR TO GOLD SMUGGLING

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More than 2 million metric tons of staples have been smuggled into Bangladesh each year in exchange for gold, up from less than 300,000 tons before India's curbs, officials estimate.

"The government limits farm exports to quickly lower local prices. But smuggling weakens that strategy, and farmers end up bearing the brunt of the restrictions," said Balwant Holkar, a trader from Lasalgaon in Maharashtra. Meanwhile, India's illegal imports of about 156 metric tons of gold last year, worth about \$9 billion, were up from 100 tons in 2022, the World Gold Council (WGC) says.

Nearly a third originated from Bangladesh, say industry and government sources, with the bulk used to settle payments for smuggled grain, the BSF and India's Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials told Reuters.

Araijeet show sinks Pakistan

India retain junior Asia Cup hockey title with convincing victory over arch rivals



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Muscat, Dec 4: Araijeet Singh Hundal slammed four goals as defending champions India defeated arch rivals Pakistan 5-3 in the summit clash to win a hat-trick of titles in the men's junior Asia Cup here Wednesday. In the process India exacted sweet revenge for the loss they suffered to Pakistan in the group stages.

This was India's fifth title in the continental tournament, having previously won the crown in 2004, 2008, 2015 and 2023. The tournament was not held in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Araijeet converted three penalty corners in the fourth, 18th and 54th minutes besides finding the net from a field effort

in the 47th minute. Dilraj Singh (19th) was the other goal-getter for India.

Sufyan Khan (30th, 39th) converted two penalty corners for Pakistan, while Hannan Shahid scored from field play in the third minute. In fact Pakistan had taken the lead early in the game, but India came back strongly.

There was hardly anything to differentiate between the two sides as both India and Pakistan fought hard for ball possession in the first quarter. The highlight of the first quarter was aerial passes employed by both the teams.

Pakistan had the first laugh, striking early through a field goal from Shahid. However, India didn't sit back and secured their first penalty cor-

This was India's 5th title having won the trophy in 2004, 2008, 2015 and 2023

India had lost to Pakistan in the group stage encounter

ner seconds later, and Araijeet stepped up to draw level with a powerful drag-flick to the right of Pakistan goalkeeper.

India upped their game in the second quarter and secured their second penalty corner in the 18th minute and Araijeet struck again with another powerful flick. A minute later, a fine field goal by Dilraj extended India's lead to 3-1.

Pakistan, however, reduced

the margin in the 30th minute through a penalty corner conversion by Sufyan. They were the better side on display after the change of ends and they drew level in the 39th minute through another penalty corner conversion by Sufyan.

India secured their third penalty corner in the 47th minute, but Araijeet's effort was saved by Pakistan goalkeeper Muhammad Janjua. Araijeet, however, was not to be denied his hat-trick as he found the net from a field effort seconds later to hand India the lead again.

India pressed hard on the Pakistan citadel in the final 10 minutes and secured a few more penalty corners and Araijeet found the net again from a fine variation to make the scoreline 5-3.

Pink ball trickier to face: Rahul

India batter talking to seniors on how to prepare for Adelaide Test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Adelaide, Dec 4: Senior India batter KL Rahul said Wednesday that batting against the pink ball is a bit trickier and also informed mediapersons that he has been told his batting position, but only the captain will disclose it. Rahul stated that he is talking to seniors like Virat Kohli to find out the way and means to tackle the pink ball.

Rahul has figured out that the pink Kookaburra ball comes at a quicker pace, hits the hands harder while fielding and picking it from the bowler's hand is pretty tricky. Hence he is trying to pick as many cues as possible from the nets.

"(Pink) Ball seems a bit harder than the red ball and while fielding also, you can feel the ball hits your hands a lot quicker and harder," said the veteran of 54 Tests and 3000-plus runs ahead of the day/night Test here starting Friday.

"Same with batting, it seems to get to you much quicker than the red ball and does seem around a bit more. That's the challenge we are looking forward to. Since this is my first pink ball game I am going in with a clean slate, go there and see what comes my way," Rahul added.

When Rahul was asked what is the best way to play pink ball he had a straight answer.

"That depends on what players prefer. Picking the ball from hand is tricky for some of the boys. Getting used to seeing the ball from someone's hand



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

is step one for a batter. And then you give yourself the best chance to react and be in good positions. That's what batters have been speaking about," Rahul said. "I don't have much game experience like some of the others who played pink ball matches so far. I am speaking to guys like Virat to try and understand what were the things they found hard and if there were any changes," Rahul added.

Rahul described his decade-long journey in international cricket as one like that of 25 years during which he has had to overcome 'mental challenges' of being a floater in the Indian set-up, deal with injury lay-offs and the noises in his head that have now subsided over time.

He was an assured man, facing questions on the 10-year roller-coaster ride he has endured and enjoyed.

"Feels like 25, the amount of

injuries I have had and time away from sport, feels long, but yeah I have enjoyed every bit of it," Rahul reminisced.

Rahul has often been described as a volcano of talent, which has remained dormant for considerable periods leading to frustration among cricket fans.

With skipper Rohit Sharma walking back into the playing XI, Rahul was asked the obvious question about his batting position.

"I have been told about my batting position but have been told not to share it today. You have to wait for day one or may be when the captain comes here tomorrow (Thursday)," he smiled and everyone around had a good laugh.

"I just want to be in the playing XI, which means wherever I get to bat. You go there and bat and play for the team," said the batter with 3,000-plus runs and eight hundreds.

SHORT TAKES

Suryavanshi scripts 10-wicket triumph

Sharjah: Thirteen-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi (76 n o, 46b, 3x4, 4x6) lived up to the hype around his rare talent as India outclassed United Arab Emirates (UAE) by 10 wickets to enter the semifinals of the U-19 Asia Cup here Wednesday. Suryavanshi became the youngest-ever player at 13 years to be sold in the IPL auction to Rajasthan Royal recently. Electing to bat, UAE lost wickets at regular intervals to be bundled out for 137 in 44 overs. Right-arm medium pacer Yudhajit Guha (3/15) was the pick of the bowlers for India. He was well-supported by Chetan Sharma (2/27) and Hardik Raj (2/28). India cantered home in 16.1 overs riding on unbeaten half centuries from the opening duo of Suryavanshi and Ayush Mhatre (67, 51b, 4x4, 4x6). India will play Group B toppers Sri Lanka in the semifinals.

Djokovic to start season at Brisbane

Belgrade (Serbia): Novak Djokovic will open the new tennis season at the Brisbane International tournament, a warm-up event for the Australian Open. "I'm excited to be kicking off my Australian swing at the Brisbane International and to compete again at Pat Rafter Arena," Djokovic, who will be seeking his 100th tour-level title, said on social media. This will be the only time, Djokovic will be playing in the Brisbane tournament since he played here in 2009. Other prominent players set to compete in the tournament beginning December 29 are Grigor Dimitrov, Holger Rune, Frances Tiafoe and Nick Kyrgios.

Barca back to winning ways

Madrid: Barcelona got back to their winning ways in the Spanish league in style, routing Mallorca 5-1 with a pair of goals by Raphinha in a game played Tuesday evening. Ferran Torres, Frenkie de Jong and Pau Victor scored the three other goals for Barcelona, who hadn't won in three consecutive league games to allow Real Madrid to inch closer at the top of the standings. Madrid are now four points back although they have two games in hand. The only goal for Mallorca was scored by Vedat Muriqi just before the breather. Barca dominated the entire second half scoring four goals to emerge runaway winners. While Raphinha scored from the spot in the 56th minute the other goals came from well planned moves.

BCCI waits for new secretary

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 4: With Jay Shah taking over as International Cricket Council's (ICC) youngest chairman December 1, the role of secretary in the BCCI lies vacant and as officials wonder who the replacement might be, they have time to figure out the next course of action.

Following the constitutional amendment in 2022, the secretary is the most influential office-bearer in the BCCI, having 'all powers in relation to cricketing and non-cricketing matters' with the CEO working under his supervision.

Shah was elected unopposed for the ICC top position in August and the stakeholders have been wondering ever since how the transition process will take place.

Gujarat's Anil Patel and current BCCI joint secretary Devjit Saikia could replace Shah in the BCCI. The name of DCCA president Rohan Jaitley was also floated but remained just speculation.

"We don't know exactly what is happening. Everyone (BCCI officials and state units) is quiet on the matter. Most likely

From the time an elected office-bearer resigns, the board has 45 days to call for a special general meeting (SGM) and choose his successor

joint secretary (Saikia) will be the interim for the time being," said a BCCI administrator on condition of anonymity.

"There are issues that need to be dealt with on a day to day basis and anyone who comes in, needs to have a bit of knowledge on how the BCCI is run," the official added.

From the time an elected office-bearer resigns, the board has 45 days to call for a special general meeting (SGM) and choose his successor. If one calculates the 45 days from the day Shah took charge of ICC, the board has time till mid-January to fill up the position.

The BCCI also needs to appoint an electoral officer at least four weeks prior to the election, as per cricket body's constitution.

OFC face Mumbai challenge

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 4: Odisha FC (OFC) high on confidence after their 4-2 victory over Bengaluru FC will look to continue their winning run when they face Mumbai City FC at the Kalinga Stadium here Thursday.

Currently, third in the ISL points table with 15 points from 10 matches, OFC have hit their stride with impressive performances in recent games. However, they continue to miss striker Roy Krishna who has been ruled out for the rest of the season with an ACL injury.

"It's sad news for the team. Roy is not just an incredible player but also a fantastic human being. We'll miss him on the pitch, but I'm sure he'll continue to support us off it. He's one of the best professionals I've worked with, and I wish him a speedy recovery. Despite this loss, the team remain focused and ready for the challenges ahead," head coach Sergio Lobera told reporters here Wednesday.

Mumbai City FC, after a slow start to their campaign, enter this match on the back of a narrow 1-0 victory against Hyderabad FC. This season, they currently sit in eighth place on the league table with 13 points from nine matches.



OP PHOTO

In head-to-head encounters, Mumbai have won 11 of their 20 matches against OFC.

Discussing the team's preparation for back-to-back home matches in the press conference, Lobera admitted the challenges of managing a tight schedule. "It's not easy when you have just two training sessions, primarily focused on recovery and compensation. But we don't make excuses. This is football, and we need to adapt. It's another challenge for us to

overcome, and I believe we're ready," Lobera stated.

Jerry Mawihmingthanga, who recently celebrated his 100th ISL appearance, shared his emotions about the milestone. "It's an incredible journey to have played 100 matches for Odisha FC. This club holds a special place in my heart, and I'm grateful to the fans, the staff, and everyone who believed in me. It's a proud moment for me and my family," Jerry said.

New coach in Alcaraz's team

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, Dec 4: Carlos Alcaraz will have an additional coach with him when the 2025 season begins. The four-time Grand Slam champion has hired Samuel Lopez to work alongside Juan Carlos Ferrero, who has coached the Spaniard since he was 15 years old.

Lopez has coached Ferrero, among other players. Alcaraz, 21, believes the pairing can help push him back to the top of the rankings.

"I think Samuel, for me, is one of the best coaches that we have on tour," Alcaraz said here Tuesday. "They trust each other 100 per cent and being able to travel with both, for me, it's going to be great. I think I'm going to grow as a player thanks to them. I think we are going to work pretty hard and pretty good for the next season and the next years. Hopefully we are going to make good results together," the Spaniard added.

Alcaraz became the youngest player to reach No. 1 in the ATP rankings after winning the US Open in 2022 at 19. He went on to win two Wimbledon titles and one at the French Open, where Ferrero won the title in 2003. He finished the 2024 season as No. 3.

Another stalemate for Gukesh

8TH GAME OF WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP ENDS IN A DRAW LEAVING BOTH PLAYERS ON 4 POINTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Singapore, Dec 4: Indian challenger D Gukesh and defending champion Ding Liren of China played out their fifth draw on the trot in a nervy eighth game of the World Chess Championship to remain level points here Wednesday. The drawn match left both the players on an identical tally of four points each, still shy of 3.5 points in order to win the world crown.

The two players signed peace after 51 moves. It was the sixth draw of the 14-round match. The 32-year-old Liren had won the opening game while the 18-year-old Gukesh had emerged victorious in the third game.

Liren decided against risking much and took home a draw while it was possible in a complicated position. The game lasted more than four hours. It seemed like Gukesh would also take it given the chances Liren has misplayed in the match.



PTI PHOTO

Just six more games are left to be played in the USD 2.5 million championship and if a tied result happens after 14 rounds, there will be games under faster time control to determine the winner.

It was kind of surprising when Gukesh decided not to go for the draw initially through repetition

which would have ended the game some time earlier. "I would have taken the draw if I thought I was worse but I did not, I had to be very precise. I missed one of his resource. I am not very sure I think the position had more tricks," Gukesh later said. "The position where I

didn't repeat, I didn't think I was in much danger. I always thought with his weak king and my strong pawn on b3, I should play. I thought maybe I might even have some chances. But okay, yeah, it was just a misjudgment of the position," added Gukesh.

It was an English opening by Liren who played his fourth white game and Gukesh chose for a variation favoured by Alexei Shirov. Obviously, Gukesh has something planned for every opening and Wednesday was no exception and it was yet again Liren who had to sink in to a long thought in order to counter the black's opening idea.

Gukesh thanked his team for managing to surprise Liren in the openings. "My team they're been doing great job, not only 'Gaju' (Grzegorz Gajewski), but other team members as well, we managed to surprise him in the openings. I would like to thank my team and hopefully more interesting ideas will come," Gukesh said.

Good day for Indian shuttlers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Dec 4: Top seed Priyanshu Rajawat and Tanvi Sharma advanced to the pre-quarterfinals of the men's and women's singles events of the Guwahati Masters even as Unntai Hooda bowed out of the Super 100 badminton tournament, here Wednesday.

Priyanshu was made to sweat it out by compatriot Arya Bhivpathki before the former sealed the match 22-20, 21-14 in 35 minutes. Tanvi stunned seventh seeded compatriot Tanya Hemnath 21-18, 21-14 in the opening round to enter the round of 16.

Priyanshu will next face compatriot Tharun Manneppalli, while Tanvi will be up against Yi En Hsieh of Chinese Taipei.

In the paired events, mixed doubles top seeds Satish Kumar Karunakaran and Adya Variyath along with fifth seeds Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto stayed on course for a possible showdown in the quarterfinals.



PHOTO X

The top seeds defeated Nithin HV and Anagha Pai 21-14, 21-10 while Dhruv and Tanisha got the better of Chinese combination of Liao Pin Yi and Huang Ke Xin 22-20, 21-19.

Just like Tanvi, upcoming youngster Shriyanshi Valishetty also grabbed the opportunity to impress with a 21-19, 21-14 win over Unntai Hooda.

Local favourite Isharani Baruah, seeded eight, played her heart out against India's Asian Championship star player, Anmol Kharab but ended up on the wrong side, losing 10-21, 21-18, 18-21.