

## Outrageous: Allu Arjun arrested



AGENCIES

**Hyderabad, Dec 13:** Dizzying success, arrest and then bail -- all in 24 hours. The pendulum swung widely for Telugu superstar Allu Arjun Friday when he grabbed headlines of the most unexpected kind, a plot line that could rival any of his potboilers.

On Thursday, the 42-year-old actor was in Delhi to celebrate the massive success of 'Pushpa 2: The Rule,' which is his career's biggest hit and also in the record books as the first Indian film to earn ₹1,000 crore in just six days. The very next day, police were at his Hyderabad home to arrest him in connection with the death of a woman in a stampede during the premiere of the film.

He was taken into custody with tight security and later taken to the police station. As reports spoke of him not being able to finish his breakfast and visuals showed him sipping a cup of coffee with cops all around him, Allu Arjun had much of the nation, particularly his fandom, transfixed.

## SC advises farmers to go Gandhian way

*The Supreme Court advising the farmers agitating at border points between Punjab and Haryana to adopt the Gandhian way of protest is significant. Reassuring the farmers, who have a slew of demands including legal guarantee for MSP, that their grievances are being looked into by the SC-appointed high-powered committee, the top court asked them 'not to get violent' and keep protesting in a peaceful way.*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 13:** Observing that protesting farmers should adopt the Gandhian way, the Supreme Court Friday ordered immediate medical aid to farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, whose health is deteriorating

owing to his indefinite fast for over a fortnight at a Punjab-Haryana border.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan directed the Centre and Punjab government representatives to immediately meet Dallewal, who has completed over 17 days of fast. "Farmers should not get violent and do peaceful agitation. They should adopt the Gandhian way of protests because their grievances are being looked into," the bench said after being informed that violent agitations had created problems at both the sites.

The court further asked to provide him with medical help and persuade him to break his indefinite fast saying his life was precious. "It is the bounden duty

of the state of Punjab and union of India to take all peaceful measures and provide adequate immediate medical aid to Dallewal without forcing him to break the fast, unless it is imperative to do so to save his life," the bench said. The top court said it was harsh winters and the agitating farmers at Shambhu and Khanauri borders should not get violent and disrupt highway traffic.

The SC said a high-powered committee constituted by it, which was stated to be doing a good job, would talk to the protesting farmers and make recommendations to the court which eventually be put to the stakeholders for a decision.

"We should not pass any order, which is very difficult to implement. It is the stakeholders, which will ultimately have to take a decision," it said.

## Bodies of three women found

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 13:** Odisha Police Friday recovered three unidentified bodies of women in Cuttack and Bolangir districts, an officer said.

A woman's body was found near Paramahansa area in Cuttack district, while the bodies of two women were found near a railway track in Bolangir district. Cuttack DCP Jagmohan Meena said a woman's body with deep injury on the face and the neck was found in Paramahansa area. The police have recovered a sharp-edged weapon from near the body, the DCP said. Meena said: "The body had a tattoo mark on the left hand."

In another incident, the police recovered the bodies of two unidentified women from near the railway track at Kukudahada village under Kantabanji block in Bolangir district. The police said that it could also be a murder case.

## Man held for killing pregnant wife

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, Dec 13:** In a dramatic turn of events, police Friday arrested the husband of a seven-month pregnant woman who was shot dead while trying to resist a suspected robbery attempt at her residence at Bonai in Sundargarh district, Wednesday night. The victim Samyamayee Behera's husband, Deben Behera, and Satya Narayan Behera, an ASI posted in Uditnagar court, have been arrested in connection with

the crime, the police said. Satya Narayan is the brother-in-law of Deben and was involved with the latter in concealing the weapon used in the crime.

The reason behind the murder is Deben's extramarital affair, the police added.

The incident occurred around 1am when Samyamayee, who resided with Deben in Jhirdapalli under the Tikayatpalli police station, was shot in the left chest by armed assailants. The attackers then fled with her gold ornaments. She

was declared dead at Bonai Public Health Centre.

Deben initially told the police that he had been asleep in another room when he heard what he described as a loud explosion, similar to a bomb. He claimed to have rushed out and seen one person fleeing the scene.

Deben's tearful account, however, was inconsistent with other testimonies, particularly those from Samyamayee's family, which raised suspicion, the police said.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Only 'survey a mosque' game is off, ladies and gentlemen. 'Dance in front of a mosque contest' and 'aarti with an Executive' will go on as planned!

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# leisure



## SHAWN MENDES REVEALS HE CONSIDERED QUITTING MUSIC

Singer-songwriter Shawn Mendes has revealed that he had aspirations of being a therapist, and he considered quitting music for the same. The singer cancelled his Wonder world tour after just seven shows in 2022 for mental health reasons.

## JLO SPARKS RUMOURS WITH 'EXTRA' CLOSENESS TO STAFF

Jennifer Lopez's latest move has sparked curiosity following her reported split from Ben Affleck. The *Jenny from the Block* singer appears to have surrounded herself with a team of strikingly attractive staffers, raising eyebrows and fueling speculation.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

So, busy bee, you finally realise you've been ignoring your near and dear. And now, it's going to cost you a lot of effort to make it up to them. Dinner at the finest restaurant, a trip to the theatre, shopping at a posh boutique... be ready to splurge, says Ganesha!

#### TAURUS

Your vision today will have a hue of green as you will draw to money like a fly to sweets. Taste the power of money with fortune as the monkey on your back. You may buy a pendant or a necklace today and your haggling skills will save you from being swindled, says Ganesha.

#### GEMINI

You will spend the day safeguarding sentiments of others and it is in your own interest. For most part of the day, probably the entire day, you will be away from your family, mostly on a trip for business or leisure purposes. Today, having a successful career will be only thing on your mind.

#### CANCER

You are a master of deception, and your sugar-coated comments play a pivotal role in your methods. Today, you will be able to smell trouble from a distance, and will know when to take a U-turn. Your methods may not make you very popular with the so-called moral brigade working with you, but you may think that this is the easiest way to the top. Ganesha, however, is not too sure that these tactics will work on a long-term basis.

#### LEO

Ever been surprised at your own abilities? Today you shall be, says Ganesha. With the perfect blend of amicable gestures and lack of inimical actions, you are poised to become the cynosure of all occasions. The day will bring to the fore your flexible nature, moderate views, and your mature mannerisms in a cocktail that is as heady as the best blend. With a mind set on communal harmony, you are assured to have success coming your way today, foresees Ganesha.

#### VIRGO

Children will ring in applause and praises - in the classroom and off it too! Processing logic and reasoning will improve too. Ganesha asks you to keep calm and enjoy the joy ride, irrespective of anything that happens during the day.

#### LIBRA

Some days are full of new ideas. Today is one such day as you radiate diligence and intelligence. Consider it an auspicious moment to begin new business schemes, especially if you happen to be self-employed. Today, you will be able to think at a level higher and clearer than the rest. But, as happens when you focus more on work, it comes at the cost of family time. Maintain a balance, advises Ganesha.

#### SCORPIO

Dig in deep and keep yourself in the hunt, says Ganesha. Karma matters, but don't give much thought to the outcome. In matters of joint ventures, adopt a wait-and-watch approach today.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Be ready to receive advice - unasked and unwarranted. Don't overlook it either, as these suggestions can be worthy of consideration. But let the last word rest in your hands and look deep inside for the right verdict.

#### CAPRICORN

The most intimidating of ventures can prove successful if fortune favours you; you will be fortunate today, says Ganesha. Those of you dealing in stocks and shares can expect a profitable day ahead, but don't forget to give credit to your spouse; it will be their luck working wonders for you.

#### AQUARIUS

Bursting with new ideas, you want to make the world a better place! You will give your best in a team and will come up with great schemes and solutions. At gatherings and social dos, says Ganesha, you will remain your charming self, impressing people with an amazing social grace.

#### PISCES

Home is where the hearth is, in which the troubles you need to deal with today are smouldering. Running away from your problems will simply have you out of breath; it would be wiser to take a stand and find solutions to petty conflicts without losing your perspective.

## PeeCee on power of cinema

**Dev: My lookalikes were far more handsome than me**

Los Angeles: Indian-origin British actor-filmmaker Dev Patel has quipped that he didn't think he would have won his own lookalike competition because the contestants who participated were 'far more handsome' than he is.

The 34-year-old actor, who began his career playing Anwar in the teen drama in 2007, said that "quite over- and very when he about the which took Francisco The star,



Mumbai: Actor Priyanka Chopra, also known as PeeCee among her fans, opened up about the power of movies. Earlier, she was told that 'films with subtitles or films that are non-English don't travel' when she was 'seeking work across borders.' Priyanka was bestowed with an honorary award at Red Sea Film Festival held in Jeddah. The award was presented to Priyanka by actor Sarah Jessica Parker. Reflecting on her career, she shared how, competition, place in San last month. *Slumdog Millionaire* who has been feted with a British Academy Film Award and nominations for an Academy Award and two Golden Globe Awards told *variety.com*: "I'm surprised more than five people showed up. I was quite overwhelmed by it and very touched. I also gotta say that I think most of the men who showed up were far more handsome and qualified than I am. I think I would have lost at my own lookalike contest, for sure."

Organisers had previously said they originally planned a Robert Pattinson lookalike competition but ultimately decided on Dev in order to represent their local Indian community and the *Monkey Man* star was delighted to be associated with the contest, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*. IANS

early in her journey, she was told that non-English films wouldn't be able to 'travel' internationally. "When I started working, I was 18 years old. I remember I was told that, I come from an industry that spoke Hindi and Telugu, non-English films. I remember when I was seeking work across borders, I was told that films with subtitles or films that are non-English don't travel. Yet, here we are today," she said. "You have been able to create a safe, incredible space for filmmakers and storytellers around the world to come together without the thought of nationality, language and borders. You have been able to bring people together outside of borders, languages to just celebrate this incredible medium of cinema," added Priyanka. AGENCIES



## Aanchal learns beauty of duality

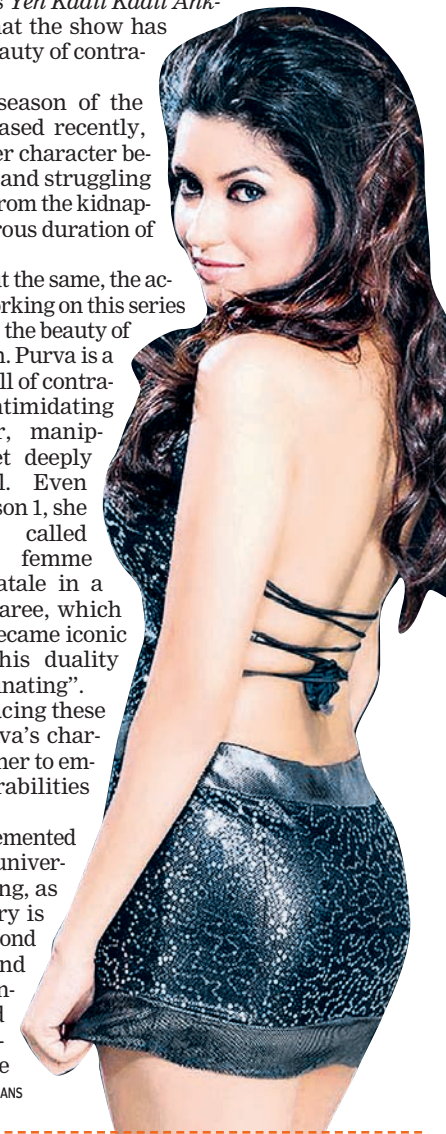
Mumbai: Actress Aanchal Singh, who essays the role of Purva in the streaming series *Yeh Kaali Kaali Ankhe*, has shared that the show has taught her the beauty of contradictions.

The second season of the show was released recently, and it shows her character being kidnapped and struggling to save herself from the kidnappers for a generous duration of the show.

Talking about the same, the actress said, "Working on this series has taught me the beauty of contradiction. Purva is a character full of contradictions, intimidating yet tender, manipulative yet deeply emotional. Even after Season 1, she was called a femme fatale in a saree, which became iconic and sexy. It's this duality that makes her so fascinating".

For Aanchal, embracing these contradictions in Purva's character also encouraged her to embrace her own vulnerabilities and fears as an actor.

The series has also cemented Aanchal's belief in the universal power of storytelling, as she said, "When a story is honest, it resonates beyond cultures, countries, and languages. We're all connected by emotions, and that's what makes a story timeless and capable of breaking barriers." IANS



When I die, bring my body to my studio. It is quite possible that I may wake up amid their lights shouting Action...Action



## Mirroring India through ages with movies

This quote of Raj Kapoor, in a book by his daughter, showcases the passion of a filmmaker who left an abiding imprint on Indian cinema.

Raj would have been 100 today. He released his first film in 1948, the year after Independence. And as India evolved through the decades, so did his movies, mirroring the dreams and conflicts of society in shades of black and white that gave way to glossy technicolour.

The man, the filmmaker, the far-seeing en-

trepreneur who started RK Studios with his first film itself and the patriarch of film's 'first family', the lines blur and rearrange into the portrait of the larger than life persona still known as the original showman of Indian cinema.

Raj Kapoor ruled the silver screen along with the two other greats Dev Anand and fellow Peshawari Dilip Kumar. Unlike his colleagues, however, he was not just the actor but also producer and director who made films, spectacles and otherwise, with music that strikes a chord many decades later.

He only directed 10 movies, some such as *Awara* and *Shree 420* in the gallery of unforgettable classics, others like *Bobby* and *Sangam*

blockbusters and then those debatable hits, including *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*, *Prem Rog* and *Ram Teri Ganga Maaili*.

His filmography includes *Andaz*, *Jaagte Raho* and *Teesri Kasam* where Raj the actor shone bright.

And all the films had great songs. Remember the global hit *Awara Hoon*, *Jeena Yahan Marna Yahan*, *Pyar Hua Iqar Hua* or *Hum Tum Kamre Mein Band Ho*.

"He was an amazing musician... I suppose it was inborn. He probably got it from my mum who was a singer, not my father... He could play any instrument, whether it was the accordion, tabla, piano, flute or a 'duff'," brother Shashi Kapoor recalled in a documentary.

His later films, most notably *Bobby*, *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* and *Ram Teri Ganga Maaili* attracted controversy for the often voyeuristic gaze. But Raj Kapoor dismissed it all.

"We are shocked to see nudity, we need to get mature. I have always respected women but don't understand why I am accused of exploiting them. Fellini's nude woman is considered Art but when I show a woman's beauty on screen, then it is called exploitation," Ritu Nanda quoted her father as saying in the book *Raj Kapoor Speaks*.

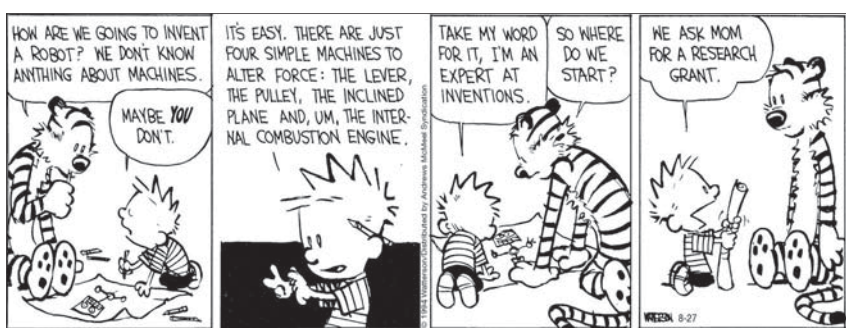
While in Delhi to receive the Dadasaheb Phalke award May 2, 1988, Raj Kapoor collapsed in the auditorium after a severe asthma attack and was rushed to hospital. He passed away a month later at 63. PTI

### RAJ KAPOOR@100

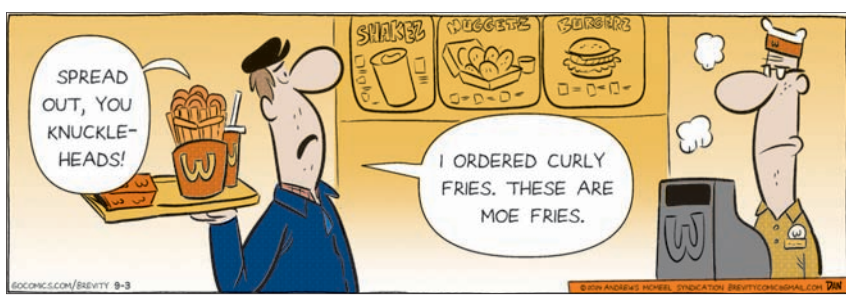
### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

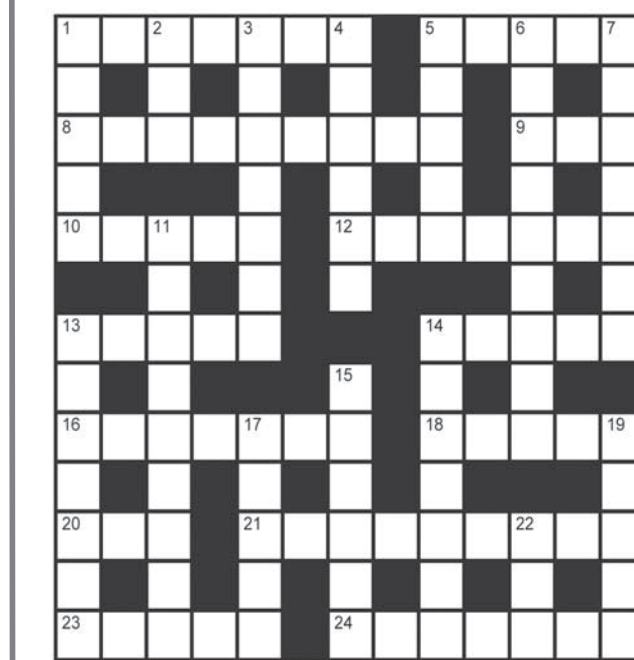


### BREVITY



### FUN POST

### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Congestion cause
  - 5 Ascend
  - 8 Cleansing agent
  - 9 Cobbler's tool
  - 10 Bolivian capital
  - 12 Judgment
  - 13 Where the heart is
  - 14 Dinette set part
  - 16 Vessel holders
  - 18 Majestic
  - 20 Possess
  - 21 Medical procedure
  - 23 Teatime treat
  - 24 Mutilates
  - Down
  - 1 Ocean motions
  - 2 Surrender
  - 3 Adhere
  - 4 Provide food at a party
  - 6 Fanciful
  - 7 Support and strengthen
  - 11 Increase in volume, musically
  - 13 Soft leather
  - 14 Positive
  - 15 Admiration
  - 17 Thunderstorm product
  - 19 Golf course
  - 22 Indisposed

### 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.

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

### SOLUTIONS

S	I	L	O	U	N	I	C	Y	C	L	E
Y	O	S	E	H	H	W					
C	O	R	O	N	E	T	O	P	I	N	E
A	I	A	A	O	M	R					
M	A	C	K	I	N	T	O	S	H	E	S
O	L	U	Y	R	F						
R	E	V	N	T	H	A	W	L			
E	E	S	T	I	I	I					
F	R	E	U	D	I	A	N	S	L	I	P
A	A	M	E	O	S						
V	E	N	O	M	B	E	R	N	I	N	I
I	D	E	I	T	R	D					
D	I	A	T	R	I	B	E	P	E	L	E

### CROSSWORD

### SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Members of 'Odisha Thika Mazdoor Mahasangha' stage a demonstration at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Friday, to press for fulfilment of their demands



# downtown



**FOR A CAUSE:** Sanjukta Basa of 'SANGRAM' receives ₹1 lakh Dharitri Climate Grant, for the organisation's dedicated works towards conservation and protection of forests and wildlife, from Dharitri's Senior Sub-Editor Sanghamitra Mohanty at the leading Odia daily's office in Bhubaneswar, Friday, in presence of Dharitri and Orissa POST Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy and staffers

## BJP's Sujeet Kumar elected to Rajya Sabha unopposed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 13:** BJP candidate Sujeet Kumar was elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Odisha Friday, officials said.

Kumar was a BJD MP. But he quit the party and gave up his membership of the Rajya Sabha in September to join the BJP, forcing the byelection to the seat. The BJP nominated him for the byelection, which he won unopposed. "I will work with full dedication for the people of Kalahandi district and the state. I have the experience in Rajya Sabha," he told reporters after being handed the certificate of election at the Odisha Assembly.

In July, Kumar's colleague Mamata Mohanta had done the same by giving up her Rajya Sabha membership as a BJD MP to join the BJP, and then returned to the House after a byelection.

With the election of Kumar,



**I will work with full dedication for the people of Kalahandi district and the state. I have the experience in Rajya Sabha**

SUJEET KUMAR

BJP's strength in the Upper House from Odisha increased to three. The third MP is Railway, Information and Broadcasting, and Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav.

The Opposition BJD holds seven Rajya Sabha seats from the state.

## Stay away from corruption, Majhi asks new govt recruits

Chief Minister hands over appointment letters to 376 new recruits to Health & Family Welfare and Higher Education departments at a Nijukti Mela in Bhubaneswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 13:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday asked newly recruited government employees to remain dedicated to their work and refrain from making money through corrupt practices.

The chief minister said this while addressing a 'Nijukti Mela' (appointment fair) where as many as 376 people were appointed in the Health & Family Welfare and Higher Education Departments.

"Remain committed to duty and don't give into corruption," Majhi said, adding that the state government has now brought new legislation to ensure complete transparency in the recruitment process to different government jobs. He cautioned the employees involved in corrupt practices.

Of the 376 new appointments, 85 persons were recruited as homoeopathic doctors and 239 radiographers in the Health and Family Welfare Department, while 52 others got appointments as lecturers in the Higher Education Department.

Noting that the state was lagging in the health service



Pharmacy officers will soon be appointed in government hospitals, says the CM

3 more 50-bed integrated AYUSH hospitals are being set up in Dhenkanal, Berhampur and Balasore: CM

sector, the chief minister said the recently published health ranking by NITI Aayog indicated that Odisha was placed in the third position from the bottom of the list of 28 states. "Odisha has got only 40.19 out of 100 marks in the health service sector. But earlier it was widely advertised in the name of global health services. This situation has to change now," the chief minister said.

"We have to keep at least 60 marks in the Health Ranking. We have to be among the top ten best service-providing states in the country," he said.

He also said the state government has been working to develop both infrastructure

and trained human resources, which are needed to improve the health services sector.

Medical colleges and hospitals will be established in all the districts of the state in the next five years, he said.

Along with this, the state will implement Ayushman Bharat Yojana and the 'Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana'. He said the BJP government during the first six months of its rule, has filled up more than 20,000 posts in the government.

Majhi said along with the appointment of the homoeopathic doctors and radiographers, pharmacy officers will soon be appointed in government hospitals.

He said that three more 50-bed integrated AYUSH hospitals are being set up in Dhenkanal, Berhampur and Balasore.

He called upon newly recruited lecturers to guide and ensure that the youths of Odisha remain dedicated to society.

## 'Govt committed to encouraging children in field of science'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 13:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday said his government is committed to encouraging children in the field of science from an early age.

Majhi made the statement after felicitating winners of the Young Astronomer Talent Search (YATS) 2024-25 at Pathani Samanta Planetarium here.

"Our government is committed

to taking necessary steps from the school level itself to develop scientific thinking among the youth and encourage them," he said.

Majhi said Samanta's research in the field of astronomy and space science is a source of inspiration for the whole world.

Science and Technology (S&T) Minister Krushna Chandra Patra congratulated the students and encouraged them to continue striving for

excellence. "We are proud of the hard work of our scientists, and I encourage all children to achieve greater heights in science," he added.

YATS, organised by Tata Steel in collaboration with Pathani Samanta Planetarium, witnessed the participation of over 71,000 students from across the state. 30 students emerged winners, it was learnt.

Tata Steel-Kalinganagar vice-president (operations) Ra-

jiv Kumar said. "For nearly two decades, YATS has nurtured scientific curiosity, inspiring students to explore astronomy and pursue careers in science."

Celebrating the achievements of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the 18th edition of YATS was themed 'Will Space be Your Next Travel Destination?'

The winners will have the opportunity to visit an ISRO facility.

## Youth gets 20-year jail for raping minor

Bhubaneswar:

A POCSO court here Friday

sentenced a youth to 20

years in jail

after convicting

him for raping a

minor girl

under Nachuni

police station in

Khurda district

in April this

year. The court

also slapped a

penalty of

₹10,000 on the

convict. Failure

to pay the fine

would result in

an additional

one-year jail.

Special public

prosecutor

(SPP) Subrat

Priyadarshi said

the convict,

Kartik Biswal

alias Mangi, 22

and the victim

are from the

same village.

On April 15,

Kartik, who

was on a

motorcycle,

spotted the girl

alone at a local

market. Later,

he approached

the girl and

convinced her

to drop her at

home. However,

Kartik took her

to an isolated

place where

he sexually

assaulted her

till the next day

before dropping

her at her

residence. The

girl narrated her

ordeal before

her parents

who lodged a

complaint with

Nachuni police

April 16. The

cops then

launched a

probe and

apprehended

Kartik. The

court

convicted

Kartik

under Sections

363, 366 (A),

376 (3) of

IPC, along

with

Section 4 and

6 of Protection

of Children

from Sexual

Offences

(POCSO) Act.

PNN

## Adopt tech-based probe process, DGP tells cops



AGENCIES

**Cuttack, Dec 13:** Noting that there have been changes in the pattern of crimes in the state, director general of police (DGP) Yogesh Bahadur Khurania Friday called upon police officials to adopt technology-based and scientific investigation process for success.

Khurania made the remarks at the 69th State Police Duty

Meet here.

He said the prime responsibility of the police is detection and prevention of crime, and that should be the focus of all officers in the state. "There is a need to change the investigation process as there have been changes in the crime patterns," the DGP said. He said Odisha Police has already adopted certain technology-based investigations and achieved success.

It has also been successful in tackling the Maoist menace, the top police officer said. The DGP also advised police personnel to be abreast with new laws.

"There should be efforts to improve the technical skills of police personnel. Through the police duty meet this time, we will try to find out the technical skills they have acquired," Khurania said.

It has also been successful in tackling the Maoist menace, the top police officer said.

The DGP also advised police personnel to be abreast with new laws.

"There should be efforts to improve the technical skills of police personnel. Through the police duty meet this time, we will try to find out the technical skills they have acquired," Khurania said.

PNN

DSPL - 254

ରାଜ୍ୟ ପରିବହନ ପ୍ରାଧିକରଣ ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ମୋଟର ଯାନ ଟିକସ ବକେୟା ଅଛି କି ?

ଏକକାଳୀନ ପୈଠରେ ରିହାତି ସୁଯୋଗ

ଯୋଜନାର ଅବଧି ସରିବାକୁ ଆଉ ମାତ୍ର କିଛି ଦିନ

ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବହନ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଚାଲିଥିବା **One Time Settlement of Arrear Motor Vehicle Tax / Addl. Tax & Penalty** (ମୋଟର ଯାନ ଟିକସ/ଅତିରିକ୍ତ ଟିକସ/ଜରିମାନାର ଏକକାଳୀନ ସମାଧାନ) ଯୋଜନାର ଲାଭ ଉଠାନ୍ତୁ

ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ/କୃଷିଭିତ୍ତିକ/ଡିନି ଟକିଆ ଆଦି ମୋଟର ଯାନ ପାଇଁ ୩୧ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ୨୦୨୨ ପୂର୍ବର ବକେୟା ଟିକସ ଏକକାଳୀନ ପୈଠ କଲେ ୧୦୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ଜରିମାନା ରାଶି ଛାଡ଼ିବୁ ସୁବିଧା ରହିଛି । ବକେୟାର ଅବଧି ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଜରିମାନା ସହ ୫୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ, ୧୦୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଟିକସ ଛାଡ଼ିବୁ ବି ସୁଯୋଗ ରହିଛି

ଗାଡ଼ି ସ୍ତ୍ରାପିଂ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଲେ ୧୦୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ବକେୟା ଛାଡ଼ିବୁ ସୁବିଧା ମିଳିଥାଏ

ଏହି ଯୋଜନାରେ ଲାଭ ନେବାର ଶେଷ ଅବଧି ୨୬ ଡିସେମ୍ବର ୨୦୨୪

ସର୍ବଶେଷ ତଥ୍ୟ ଓ ସହାୟତା ପାଇଁ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ପରିବହନ ଅଧିକାରୀ (ଆରଟିଓ)ଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

\*ସର୍ବାବଳା ଲାଭୁ

ରାଜ୍ୟ ପରିବହନ ପ୍ରାଧିକରଣ  
ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବହନ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

OIPR-38003/13/0033/2425



# BJP's post on Naveen, Pandian sparks row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 13:** A controversy erupted over the state BJP sharing on X a "derogatory" image of BJD president and former chief minister Naveen Patnaik and his former aide VK Pandian, blaming them for the potato crisis in the state.

BJP, on the other hand, said criticism is a part of politics and should be accepted by all.

BJD MPs Friday took to X to draw the attention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda to the post.

Odisha BJP's X handle, in the controversial post Thursday said, "They (BJD govt) had started potato mission in Odisha with a cost of ₹267 crore from 2015, but Naveen has brought potato crisis in Odisha by swallowing the entire amount."

BJD MPs Sasmit Patra, Sulata Deo and Manas Mangaraj were among those who took to X to protest the post.

BJD national spokesperson and MP Sasmit Patra wrote, "Respected @BJP4India President Shri @JPNadda Ji, attached is a shocking social media post on official X handle of @BJP4Odisha which depicts former Hon'ble CM of Odisha and @bjd\_odisha President Shri @Naveen\_Odisha Ji in an extremely derogatory, malicious, spiteful and disparaging manner."

"He is the same person who



Respected @BJP4India President Shri @JPNadda Ji, attached is a shocking social media post on official X handle of @BJP4Odisha which depicts former Hon'ble CM of Odisha and @bjd\_odisha President Shri @Naveen\_Odisha Ji in an extremely derogatory, malicious, spiteful and disparaging manner

POTATO CRISIS

SASMIT PATRA | BJD MP

Criticism is part of politics and one should accept this. BJD, in an official press conference in its state headquarters Sankha Bhavan, had dubbed former Leader of Opposition and senior BJP leader and MLA Jayanarayan Mishra as insane.

ANIL BISWAL | BJP SPOKESPERSON

so graciously attended the swearing-in of the BJD Govt in Odisha, the Tallest Leader of Odisha who is loved by 4.5 crore people of Odisha and beyond. Is this the way your party treats a statesman, a Tall Leader, a Man who was cited as an epitome of leadership by the highest leadership of your Union Government and the Party? We strongly condemn this malicious and derogatory post by @BJP4Odisha in the strongest of words. Simply put, it's shameful. @PMOIndia@narendramodi @AmitShah," he added.

Two other Rajya Sabha MPs - Manas Mangaraj and Sulata Deo - along with BJD state spokesperson Lelin Mohanty also made similar posts on the

social media handles.

Patnaik's political advisor Santrupt Misra raised the issue of Odia Asmita (pride) in his X post.

"Decency in democracy makes it worthwhile. Official handles of political parties (particularly the one that claims to be the largest Party in the world) must distinguish between lampooning and criticising policy and performance," he said.

"Shri Naveen Patnaik was the elected Chief Minister of Odisha for 24 years. He has been an icon of grace and dignity both in and out of power. People love him and adore him for his personal demeanour. It is sad and reprehensible that

termed the BJD's response as a "panic reaction".

"Criticism is part of politics and one should accept this. BJD, in an official press conference in its state headquarters Sankha Bhavan, had dubbed former Leader of Opposition and senior BJP leader and MLA Jayanarayan Mishra as insane," BJP spokesperson Anil Biswal told PTI.

Asked whether morphing Patnaik's picture in a "disrespectful manner" was acceptable, Biswal said, "The previous government headed by Patnaik had wasted over ₹250 crore in the potato mission. Is it wrong to raise questions on the BJD government's failure?"



SCINTILLATING SHOW: Artistes perform Odissi during Maa Cuttack Chandi Festival-2024 organised by Nrutya Mayuri at Kala Vikash Kendra in Silver City Friday

# PRIs play key role in rural devtpt

Panchayati Raj Minister Rabi Narayan Naik felicitates National Pachayat awardees

POST NEWS NETWORK



**Bhubaneswar, Dec 13:** In view of the country's commitment to achieve the long-term development goals set by the United Nations by 2023, the three-tier Panchayati Raj institutions have played an important role in keeping with the call for rural development work, Minister of Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Rabi Narayan Naik said Friday.

Speaking at a special programme at State Institute for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj here, Naik said Panchayati Raj institutions

of the state like gram panchayats, panchayat samitis and zilla parishads continue to perform effectively at the national level, which is a matter of pride and glory for Odisha.

On the occasion, the minister felicitated the officers and members of the Panchayati Raj department who received the National Panchayat Award from President Droupadi Murmu in

New Delhi recently.

He termed the honours as an inspiration for the entire state and expressed his opinion that it is the foundation of a developed Odisha.

Felicitating the winners, Naik said that the entire state is proud of their efforts. "This will give a boost to the enthusiasm of other institutions of the three-tier Panchayati Raj system," he added.

# ACTO, 2 others held for ₹4 crore fraud

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 13:** Vigilance officials have arrested an assistant commercial tax officer (ACTO) and two other persons on charge of financial fraud of over ₹4 crore, officials said Friday.

The anti-corruption wing officials of Odisha Police arrested the three people after getting prima facie evidence of their involvement in the alleged misappropriation of government money by officials of commercial tax (CT) and goods and services tax (GST), Bhubaneswar by abusing their official power for refund of VAT and disbursement of a sum of ₹4.03,09,723.

"During enquiry, it was revealed that Satyaki Pattanaik and Deepikanta Choudhury in connivance with officials of CT & GST, Bhubaneswar have siphoned off ₹4,03,09,723 by filing forged and fabricated appeal on behalf of a firm," the Vigilance said in a statement.

The officials had allegedly tampered with financial instruments and entertained statutory forms containing forged signatures and seals submitted by them.

# Contractors urge govt to address challenges

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 13:** The All Odisha Contractors' Welfare Association (AOCWA), in association with All Odisha Contractors' Association (AOCA), Friday raised concerns over the challenges faced by contractors engaged in the construction sector and urged the state government to sort them out.

Speaking to the media, AOCWA president J Patra empha-

sised the obstacles faced by local contractors due to outdated policies, delayed payments and limited opportunities. He urged the government to take immediate steps to create a fair and transparent contracting ecosystem that prioritises Odia contractors while ensuring timely execution of projects.

The association urged the government to prioritise indigenous products and Odia

contractors for infrastructure projects to boost local industry, create jobs and ensure sustainable development. It also said that proper land acquisition processes must be followed, while inclusion of site photographs, land schedules, and title documents in tender documents must be ensured.

The association also placed several other demands before the government.



FIREFIGHTING DEMO: Fire Services personnel conduct a mock drill on AG office premises in Bhubaneswar Friday

# BMC survey to improve citizens' living conditions

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 13:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has launched a citizen survey, as part of the Quality of Life Initiative, to enhance living standards in the Capital City.

The survey conducted by the civic body, in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), is aimed at gathering valuable insights directly from the residents of the city, a BMC release said. The findings of this survey will guide BMC

and UN-Habitat in identifying focus areas and implementing data-driven, people-centric solutions, it added. The survey aims at understanding the living experiences, challenges, and priorities of people in the City to create actionable strategies that align with their needs and aspirations.

The survey consists of 16 questions covering domains like housing, health & wellbeing, basic services & mobility, environment, economy, social cohesion & governance. The questions are subjective in nature, allowing the participants to express their views.

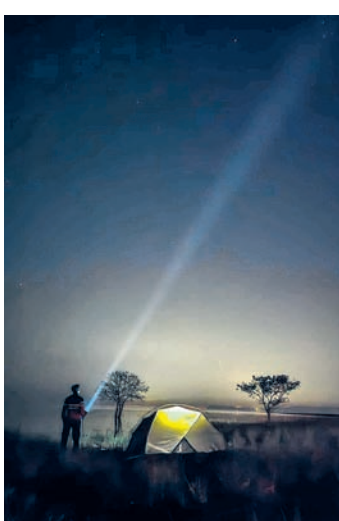
# Winter Hiking in Debrigarh to explore nature

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Sambalpur/Bhubaneswar, Dec 13:** In a bid to educate and involve people practically with the beauty and richness of nature, a month-long Winter Hiking Programme is being organised by Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary.

Started December 2, the nature trail would include identification of butterflies, snakes, animals, birds and trees of Debrigarh. The hikers will also identify stars and constellations from the islands of Hirakud Wetland.

Altogether 70 hikers from across the country, including Odisha, are undertaking the trail and are divided into five groups. "The programme has two night campings and three day hikes of 16 km upto an altitude of 400 to 500 metres," said



divisional forest officer (DFO) of Hirakud Wildlife Division Anshu Pragnyan Das.

Birds like mynas, hoopoes, bulbuls, cuckoos, hornbills,



orions, doves, quails, and painted & common partridges which are visible commonly on forest roads of Debrigarh are identified by avid naturalist of

Debrigarh Piyush Bhue. Bhabesh Sahu, an expert invitee for identification of snakes, also guides the hikers on safety aspects. Sahu's role

in preventing snakebites while moving in Jungle is crucial. Snakes like pythons, cobras, kraits, sand boas and others are commonly seen in the forest and wetland areas.

According to sources, almost every hiking team has seen herds of bison and other herbivores grazing near leopards and bears, without being disturbed by the predators. Debrigarh is home to colourful butterflies like painted jezebel, common rose, banded peacock, common lime and commander. Once back home, the hikers can identify these butterflies in their backyards, they added.

Night camping for stargazing experience is scheduled at Cattle Island with zero trash. Bio-toilets are being used there as an eco-friendly measure. Stargazing experts of India Hikes and Debrigarh are jointly

guiding the hikers for identifying stars visible from Hirakud Wetland. The open sky spanning over 1,000 sqkm (353 sqkm Debrigarh Sanctuary & 700 sqkm Hirakud Wetland) provides ample scope for stargazing, without any light pollution.

Constellations like Saptarshi Mandal (Ursa Major), Ursa Minor, Orion, Milky Way and other celestial bodies are clearly visible from Cattle Island.

The hikers are mostly from Delhi, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Odisha. The first hiking group explored Debrigarh December 2, followed by other groups December 9, 13, 20 and 26.

"The objective of combining different natural elements is to educate and develop positive attitude of people towards nature by involving them practically," said Das.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	28.7°	26.5°
Min Temp	14.5°	13.4°
Humidity	55%	67%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
<b>FORECAST</b> Fog/mist in the morning and mainly clear sky later		

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
SENSEX	82133.12	▲ 843.16
NIFTY	24768.30	▲ 219.60
DOLLAR	84.88	▼ 0.09
EURO	89.01	▼ 0.23
GOLD	₹77,257	▼ ₹712
SILVER	₹90,990	▼ ₹1643

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Zeenat scare in J'khand

Tigress on the prowl forces school closure amid curfew-like situation in villages of the neighbouring state



FILE PHOTO

Baripada/Jamshedpur, Dec 13: A curfew-like situation has gripped several villages in the Chakulia block of East Singhbhum (Jamshedpur) district over the past four to five days due to fear of tigress 'Zeenat'.

concerns that she could attack humans if given an opportunity. The Ghatsila subdivision administration has imposed prohibitory orders in Chiyabandi, Pandrasali, Dhadika, and Kharbandha villages, restricting the movement of people in the area since December 11 to ensure public safety.

has spread across a 20 km radius in the area. In an attempt to capture the tigress, the Forest department tied a buffalo in the Chiyabandi forest Wednesday as bait. Early Thursday morning, Zeenat attacked the buffalo, but efforts to sedate her using tranquiliser darts failed when the shot missed its mark, allowing her to retreat into the forest.

Tiger Reserve (TATR) in October-November. After spending 10 days in a soft enclosure, Zeenat was released into Simlipal North's core area November 24.

However, she ventured out of the reserve Monday night, crossing approximately 35km to reach Jharkhand's Chiyabandi forest via Gudabanda, Chakulia Nayagram, and Rajabasa.

The tigress is being tracked using a radio collar and GPS. A team of 20 Forest personnel has been deployed to monitor her movements, and discussions are going on between the Jharkhand and Odisha governments to strategise her safe capture and return to Simlipal.

STR Field Director Prakash Chand Gogoi confirmed that concerted efforts are going on to bring Zeenat back to her habitat. The Forest departments of both states are working collaboratively to ensure her safety and mitigate risks to local communities.

2 get life term for minor's gangrape, murder bid

POST NEWS NETWORK



Berhampur, Dec 13: Special POCSO Court of Judge Pranati Pattnaik Friday sentenced two youths to life imprisonment after convicting them in a case of gangrape and attempted murder of a minor girl in 2021.

The judge also imposed a fine of ₹35,000 on each of the convicts, identified as Raturaj Behera, 33, and Hemant Behera, 31, residents of Golanthara police station area. In default, they have to undergo an additional one-year jail term each, the judge ordered. The court also directed the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) to provide ₹15 lakh compensation to the victim.

According to the case diary, the incident took place January 28 in 2021, when the victim, a nine-year-old girl, was playing with her brother on the village road. The two

accused, who were married, lured the girl into a house with the promise of chocolates, where they took turns to rape the girl. Hearing her cries, her brother raised an alarm, attracting the attention of the villagers.

In order to silence the girl, the accused slit her throat and hit her head with a stone before fleeing. However, villagers managed to catch them. The unconscious girl was rescued and taken to MKCG Medical College and Hospital here.

Police reached the scene and arrested the duo after the villagers handed them over. The victim's family filed a complaint at the

police station, leading to the registration of a case (27/21). A stone found at the crime scene was seized by the police. The accused were subsequently remanded to court.

After receiving treatment at MKCG, the victim was transferred to SCB Medical College and Hospital at Cuttack due to the severity of her injuries. The victim has been left incapacitated after losing eyesight and hearing ability completely.

The judge delivered the verdict after examining the testimonies of 25 witnesses and police chargesheet, said Public Prosecutor Narayana Panda.

7 yrs in jail for woman's rape

Baripada: A man was sentenced to seven years in jail by a court in Mayurbhanj district Friday for raping a 30-year-old woman. Judge V Sujata of Additional District and Sessions Court in Rairangpur also imposed a fine of ₹5,000 on the convict. The woman was returning home from a weekly market in the Bisoyi police station area June 11, 2020, when the 40-year-old man offered her a lift. He eventually took her to a forest and raped her, Additional Public Prosecutor Pankaj Kumar Das said. A case was registered under IPC section 376 (rape). The verdict was based on the statement of the victim, her medical report and the statements of nine witnesses.

Gandhi statue in dilapidated state in Sundargarh district

POST NEWS NETWORK



Sundargarh, Dec 13: A tall statue of Mahatma Gandhi, once surrounded by a scenic garden at Kirei Bypass Square, welcomed visitors from Jharsuguda to Sundargarh. The spot, a peaceful retreat offering a breath of fresh air amid the dust from coal-laden trucks, was enjoyed by locals and travellers alike.

and added a high-mast light with the Municipal Council and Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) support to ensure the area was well-lit at night. The site became a popular spot for locals, youth, families, and visitors from nearby areas. People would stop there to enjoy the fresh air, take pictures, or unwind, particularly on holidays. Gandhi Jayanti, Independence Day, and Republic Day were regularly marked with celebrations at the site, attended by public officials, students, and residents.

In 2017-18, the district administration withdrew KFM's maintenance rights for the statue and garden, with plans for renovations and better upkeep. However, once the administration took over, the site fell into disrepair. No renovations were carried out, and the garden slowly deteriorated. Plants died, tiles and paver blocks broke at places, water jets and lights stopped working or were stolen, and weeds overtook the flower beds.

The area soon became a place for littering, with local residents and truck drivers using it to discard waste, urinate, and drink alcohol. Reports of immoral activities also surfaced. As the site deteriorated, people of Sundargarh started blaming KFM for the poor condition, despite the fact that the company no longer had responsibility for it. Complaints were directed at KFM, urging them to renovate the site, but without permission from the administration, KFM is unable to act. Meanwhile, the district administration has shown no interest in restoring the site, leading to growing resentment among locals.

The once-beautiful Gandhi memorial and garden now lie in a neglected, dilapidated state, a stark contrast to the vibrant space it once was.

Ganjam police raid country liquor units; 20 arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khallikote, Dec 13: In a major crackdown, Ganjam police Friday conducted raids on illegal country liquor distillery units and godowns in several villages under Khallikote block, following orders from the Ganjam Superintendent of Police, Subhendu Kumar Patra.

A total of 20 people were arrested and nearly 2 lakh litres of country liquor along with raw materials, breweries, cooking utensils, plastic drums, and other items were destroyed during the operation. The raid was carried out in several villages under Badapalli panchayat at 5am Friday morning by a team comprising two additional SPs, 20 IICs, and 15 platoons of police force. Police also seized around 135 liquor cooking utensils, 402 plastic drums, liquor barrels and pouches, 13 gunny bags of mahua flowers, five water pump sets, two pistols, and two motorcycles.

FM varsity signs MoU with CII

Balasore: The Fakir Mohan University (FMU) Friday entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), marking a significant step towards fostering academic-industry collaboration. The ceremony was held under the chairmanship of honourable Vice-Chancellor Prof. Santosh Kumar Tripathy and attended by guests, including Registrar Kukumina Das, PG Chairman Prof. Bhaskar Behera, and Heads/Coordinators of all departments of the varsity. The programme was coordinated by Prof. Pankaj Kumar Parhi, Coordinator of FMU-TB, Sunendu Nayak, COO of FMU-TB, and Pankaj Kumar Agarwal, Young India (YI) Chapter Chair, Balasore, and his team from Young India, who represented CII in the MoU signing ceremony. The MoU highlights a partnership that aims to bridge the gap between academia and industry, focusing on skill enhancement, leadership development, and community service initiatives. It enables FMU students and faculty to engage in diverse programmes organised by CII, particularly through its Yuva platform. The key objectives include enrolling and engaging FMU students in CII Yuva activities, emphasising leadership and skill-building, facilitating FMU's participation in national and chapter-level YI events, fostering broader exposure and networking and promoting joint projects and initiatives focused on self-development, community service, and nation-building.

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Bank of India Gold Auction Notice. It is hereby brought to the notice of the following gold loan borrowers, their legal heirs, person engaged in the business of gold ornaments and general public that in spite of repeated notices by the Bank, the following borrowers are not repaying their dues to the Bank.

Table with columns: Sl. No., A/c. No., Name & Address of the Borrower(s), Gross Wt. in Gram, Net Wt. in Gram, Total Dues as on 30.11.2024 (excluding unapplied interest Charges, Cost & Expenses). Lists borrowers from various branches like Kendrapara, Chandanpur, etc.

IIFL FINANCE Public Notice of E-Auction of Gold Ornaments. Includes contact information for the branch office in Balangir.

It is hereby notified to all concerned borrower(s) in specific and the public, in general, that we, IIFL Finance Limited ("IIFL") are auctioning gold ornaments of defaulted customers who neither regularized their loans nor paid the outstanding amount despite being informed through registered auction notices and repeated reminders.

Public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the following loan accounts will be conducted online through Shriram Automall India Limited on their online auction platform https://gold.sami.in on 17.12.2024 between 03:30 PM to 06:00 P.M. Change in venue or date (if any) will be displayed at the auction center.

The E-Auction shall be conducted on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis and IIFL does not make any representation or warranties regarding quality, purity, caratage, weight or valuation of the said gold ornaments. The E-Auction process and the sale (if any) pursuant to such E-Auction shall be subject to terms and conditions as IIFL may at its sole discretion deem fit to impose.

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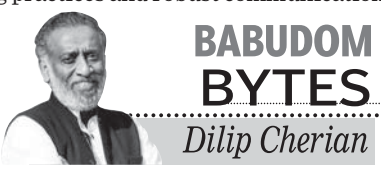




Whosoever has courage can give courage to others, just as the flame of the candle can light up another. THE MOTHER

# SEBI's Dilemma

SEBI is no stranger to turbulence, but the latest row might signal deeper cracks within its ranks. The appointment of Shikha Gupta, a former taxation head at Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL), as Executive Director (ED) has reportedly ruffled feathers among SEBI's employees. Their contention? A deep-seated belief that such positions should go to internal candidates, not external hires parachuting in. This discontent comes amid a swirling controversy surrounding SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, already under scrutiny following allegations tied to the Hindenburg report. Adding fuel to the fire is Gupta's rumored connection to Buch—her husband's longstanding association with HUL raises questions about impartiality. While the optics aren't ideal, is the uproar entirely justified? Critics argue that external appointments, though unsettling, can bring fresh perspectives. Shikha Gupta's corporate experience could potentially inject SEBI with innovative approaches, especially in navigating taxation complexities. Yet, this optimism is overshadowed by SEBI's internal dynamics. Its employees appear to view this as another instance of sidelining its own talent—a sentiment exacerbated by memories of Pramod Rao's appointment from ICICI Bank in 2022, which triggered similar dissent. The larger issue here is the perceived erosion of SEBI's autonomy. When top roles are filled with outsiders, particularly those linked to private sector powerhouses, it's easy for whispers of cronyism to gain traction. For SEBI to maintain its credibility, it must address this trust deficit. Transparent hiring practices and robust communication with its internal teams would go a long way in quelling such revolts. Ultimately, the question SEBI faces isn't just about Gupta's appointment—it's about whether the regulator is doing enough to balance internal aspirations with the need for external expertise. That balance right is critical for its future.



BABUDOM BYTES Dilip Cherian

**Leadership transition in RBI**  
As the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) prepares for a leadership transition, all eyes are on Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra, who has been appointed as the new RBI Governor for a three-year term starting Wednesday. His appointment comes as the financial world speculates on the future of the outgoing Governor, Shaktikanta Das, whose extended tenure concluded with the recent monetary policy announcement. Das, a veteran babu with an uncanny ability to sidestep contentious queries, has kept everyone guessing about his plans. Even as whispers of a behind-the-scenes campaign for an extension swirl—fueled by rumours of his visit to a Chennai hospital added to the prolonged intrigue. Das' tenure has been pivotal, marked by stability and a steady hand during turbulent times. Appointed after the unexpected exit of Urjit Patel in 2018, Das steered the RBI through the pandemic-induced economic upheaval. His administration delivered bold monetary measures, including the latest CRR cut, which is expected to infuse Rs 1.16 lakh crore into the banking system. Yet, the government's choice of Das—and now Malhotra—signals a clear preference for seasoned administrators over candidates selected solely on performance metrics. While Das' leadership underscored continuity and control, it also spotlighted a shift away from independent-minded central banking. As Malhotra steps into this high-stakes role, the financial community will keenly watch how he balances the RBI's autonomy with the government's expectations. The baton has been passed, but the challenges of inflation, growth, and global financial headwinds remain as pressing as ever.

**CBI's changing approach**  
The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is getting a makeover—or at least, that's the idea behind the new rules the government has notified. The aim? To bring in more diversity at the Superintendent of Police (SP) level by opening up the doors to professionals from outside the Indian Police Service (IPS). Until now, only 15 of the 75 SP-level deputation posts could be filled by officers from non-police backgrounds. That number has now been bumped up to 18. It may not seem like a seismic shift, but in bureaucracy-speak, even small tweaks signal intent. The new rules allow half the SP posts in CBI to be filled through deputation and the rest through promotions. And it's not just the IPS officers in the mix anymore. The expanded pool includes members of All India Services, Central Police Organizations, organized Group 'A' services of the Central Government, and even state and Union Territory police organizations. This shift isn't just about filling seats but equipping the CBI to handle complex financial crimes and multidisciplinary investigations better. Financial shenanigans today often demand expertise beyond traditional policing—think forensic auditing, financial analysis, and cybercrime tracking. Having onboard officers with such skill sets is a step in the right direction. That said, the four-year cap on deputation tenure remains intact. While it ensures a constant inflow of fresh talent, it also means the clock is ticking for these specialists to make an impact. This move reflects a slow acknowledgement that crime-solving in the 21st century needs more than just a badge and a baton. It needs minds that think differently—and now, the CBI seems ready to embrace that change.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

- Truth, like gold, is to be obtained not by its growth, but by washing away from it all that is not gold. LEO TOLSTOY
- What people think in their heart gets out, no matter how much they try to hide it. MUNSHI PREMCHAND
- It is a melancholy truth that even great men have their poor relations. CHARLES DICKENS

- THIS DAY IN HISTORY**
- 1503: French astrologer and physician Nostradamus, the most widely read seer of the Renaissance, was born.
- 1799: George Washington, the first president of the United States of America, died at age 67.
- 1911: One of the greatest figures in the history of polar exploration was Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, who left Norway for Antarctica in June 1910 and became the first person to reach the South Pole.

## FOCUS CLIMATE CHANGE

# COP29 & WOMEN



To transform COP29's promises into reality, we need clear international guidelines for gender integration, backed by allocated budgets, measurable targets, and participatory approaches to ensure effective, transparent, and accountable climate finance



Maria Fernanda Espinosa

CLIMATE INITIATIVES THAT EXPLICITLY INCLUDE WOMEN HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO PRODUCE BETTER OUTCOMES FOR ENTIRE COMMUNITIES

The most recent United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) focused on finance, but it fell short in more ways than one. The contentious negotiations – representatives from several developing countries walked out in protest – defied the odds to produce a commitment—the “Baku Climate Unity Pact” – from developed economies to deliver \$300 billion in climate funding annually to their poorer counterparts by 2035. That is triple the target agreed upon in 2009 (and reached, for the first time, in 2022), but it is nowhere near the estimated \$1.3 trillion in annual financing that developing economies will need over this period. Although the agreement represents progress, we must recognize it as merely a starting point. But insufficient financing is only part of the problem. The reality is that as world leaders clashed in Baku amid unprecedented international tensions, the true battle being waged was for the future of climate finance – and women's role in it. Women and children are 14 times more likely to die in climate-related disasters than men, and women comprise 80% of those displaced by extreme weather. These disparities are not incidental but are rooted in systemic inequalities. Yet the so-called New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance includes just one reference to women and girls: in paragraph 26, it “urges parties and other relevant actors to promote the inclusion and extension of benefits to vulnerable communities and groups in climate finance efforts, including women and girls.” Women and girls' greater vulnerability to climate change reflects systemic inequality of access to education, economic opportunities, and decision-making power. These differences are also apparent at climate-related forums. While this year's COP was heralded as the most gen-

der-balanced in terms of registrations, women accounted for just 35% of delegates (up from 34% at COP28). Climate initiatives that explicitly include women have been shown to produce better outcomes for entire communities. Moreover, women are already leading some of the most innovative and effective climate initiatives globally, in areas ranging from sustainable agriculture to renewable-energy deployment. The conclusion should be obvious: the potential for gender-responsive climate finance to unlock more efficient pathways for decarbonisation, adaptation, and resilience makes it a strategic necessity. And yet for every \$100 of climate finance deployed globally, only 20 cents goes toward supporting women, and only 0.01% of climate finance addresses both climate action and women's rights. Even so, COP29 was not a total loss for women and girls. The enhanced Lima work program on gender was extended for another decade, though without additional funding for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat to support implementation. In addition, the 27 gender-specific provi-

sions in the final “Presidency text on gender and climate change” emphasized the vital role of women's full, meaningful, and equal participation in climate action and the critical importance of incorporating gender considerations into all policymaking domains. The “gender action plan” that countries agreed to develop for adoption at COP30 provides a framework for progress. Despite these commitments, COP29 fell short in addressing critical intersectional issues such as the links between gender equality, peace-building, and climate action. Similarly, calls to address gender gaps in skills – such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) training to access green jobs – and the care economy as part of climate action failed to make it into the final document. While the text encouraged gender-responsive climate finance and simplified access for grassroots women's organizations and Indigenous communities, it lacked the structural push necessary to ensure implementation at scale. To transform COP29's promises into reality, we need clear international guidelines for gender integration, backed by allocated budgets, measurable

targets, and participatory approaches to ensure effective, transparent, and accountable climate finance. High priority should be given to financing local initiatives, particularly in informal settlements, where women often lead climate-resilience efforts. Robust tracking systems – which monitor not only how much money is pledged, but also where it goes and who it benefits – are essential. Of course, international action alone cannot close the gender gap in climate action; national policy frameworks are also vital. And here, too, women continue to be sidelined. According to the latest analysis from the UNFCCC, 82% of countries mention gender in their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), but fewer than 26% include meaningful gender considerations in their long-term strategies and investments. As countries prepare their updated NDCs – to be submitted this February and assessed at COP30 in November – they must take care to incorporate gender-specific programs and policies. We do not know whether the international environment will be any less tense when countries gather in Brazil for COP30. But we do know that the failure to pursue meaningful climate action would carry astronomical costs, as the proliferation of deadly climate disasters results in lost lives and trillions of dollars in lost output. We also know that if the fight against climate change is to succeed, it must be as inclusive as it is transformative. That is why COP30 offers us a unique opportunity to reflect on our priorities and align gender equality with the Paris climate agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. The writer is Executive Director of GWL Voices and Co-Chair of the Debt Relief for a Green and Inclusive Recovery Project. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

## SPECTRUM RAILWAYS

# Extortion in the name of dynamic fare



Shivaji Sarkar

DETAILED STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT REVEALS THAT INDIAN RAILWAYS DO NOT GIVE A PAISA AS SUBSIDY

Some debate or discussions never end. So are the rail subsidies that, rail knows, have never been offered. But now someone in Parliament surprisingly says that railways subsidises 46 per cent fares of all classes. None has challenged the fallacious statement and the person has got uninterrupted publicity. Some connoisseurs on the social sites have, however, stated that never since the inception rail has given a paisa as subsidy. Railways subsidise itself and it does not get a paisa from the government. There is no scope for a subsidy. Why should one make such an unsubstantiated statement on the floor of the house? At least the person could have seen various details present on various books, files and sites. This is not the first time that such claim is made. In 2019 too it was said that Rs 35000 were rail subsidies. It was later refuted. Presenting the 2019-20 Interim Budget, Piyush Goyal

said that capital expenditure is pegged at Rs 64,587 crore, a mere rise of Rs 15,687 crore over Suresh Prabhu's figures. It means even after the merger of the Rail Budget with the Union Budget, the Railways is paying for all of it, which only means that the Centre does not have to bear the cost of investment in railways. The subsidy is a myth. Why are the people being implored to give up and for whom? The railways misstatement also has a cost. This calls for transparency and a national debate. The CAG noted that about Rs 14,000 crore surplus known in the 2018-19 budget is incorrect. The Railways has a system of cross-subsidy. Often it is said that passenger earnings are not enough, so freight earnings are used to subsidise it. This is happening since 1950s proving that except for the bureaucratic jargon there is no loss. So, why 1300 stations being demolished and for whose benefit? Why is this extra expenditure? No one stated about the ex-

tortion in the name of dynamic fare (DF) that has jacked up basic fares many times. The railways are silent on how much extra it earned for rendering no service by inflating fares and subsuming full fares on waitlisted tickets, causing inhuman troubles to the genuine passengers. No Nirmala Sitharaman or Vaishnav stated that in the budget. It gives astounding figures of fare collection, certainly due to DF. Bereft of media attention or scrutiny, the regime could bask immediately in the glow of a “massive” increase in outlay without delivering anything substantial at all. This tested model was applied to the railway finances. Undoubtedly, there is no subsidy at any level. But railways launched well-planned propaganda on its tickets and other instruments cajoling the people to give up “subsidy”, which is not there. It causes severe loss to senior citizens. In monetary terms neither the railways nor the govern-

ment is having any loss but it is silent about the extra earnings from DF and harassment to the travellers. Why should not railway refund unconfirmed waitlisted ticket fare with a minimum interest rate? According to Vaishnav, the Railways have actually borrowed less than what was provisioned for. But he is shy of admitting that there is no subsidy by railways or the government. Incidentally, the Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) will abstain from borrowings, for the second consecutive year in FY 2025. In FY2024, the organisation did not raise funds, while in FY23 it raised over Rs 30,000 crore, as per the Budget documents. This shows that rail finances are in good health. The detailed statements reveal the reality. The railway services are becoming deficient with higher DF but also higher actual savings. Let us admit, Indian Railways do not give a paisa as subsidy. INFRA

## 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



### Gukesh's David game

Sir, Gukesh Dommaraju from Tamil Nadu has done India proud and his state even more by becoming the youngest to win the World Chess Championship at an age of 18. He has broken the decades-long record of Garry Kasparov, who annexed the world championship at the age of 22. The path of his victory against the formidable opponent Ding Liren, the reigning champion, was not a bed of roses but full of tense moments till Ding resigned from the 14th deciding match crestfallen. Finally, Gukesh, the Indian David, outclassed the mighty Chinese Dragon. No doubt, the humble and unassuming Gukesh has become a great inspiration to all our young chess players. Rest assured that more and more of our chess players are going to add golden pages in the history book of Indian chess with their sterling performance, following the footsteps of Gukesh and our other grandmasters. It is also heartening to learn that TN Chief Minister MK Stalin has announced a cash prize of Rs 5 crores to Gukesh, the new world chess champion.. Tharcus S. Fernando, CHENNAI

### Respecting rights

Sir, Nelson Mandela had said that to deny individuals their human rights is to challenge their very humanity adding as long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, no one can truly rest. Governments of the world are duty-bound to secure the fundamental right of every individual, although it does not always happen that way. The right to equality and freedom from discrimination, the right to life, right to liberty, and the right to personal security are some basic universal human rights. The right to privacy, right to believe in and choose a religion, and freedom of opinion are others. Race, colour, religion, sex, language, leanings, and origin—none should come in the way of people fully enjoying their rights. When interference becomes a routine, inequality becomes the rule, much to the detriment of citizens. Perhaps poverty is the greatest challenge to human rights and needs to be tackled as an obligation. That should happen fast because a right delayed is a right denied. Denial of rights can be akin to a social death sentence for an individual. Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA



Villagers on mission to kill Maoists in Jharkhand

As many as 10 Maoists have been killed in the last 10 days



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chaibasa, Dec 13: A violent campaign led by villagers against extremists, Maoists, and illegal traders has intensified in the Gudri, Tebo, Goilkera, Sonua, and Anandpur areas of Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district.

trolling the forested region, covering around 40 kms, and are reportedly holding 'Jan Adalats (people's courts)' to capture and execute suspects.

by them despite an extensive search for the remains. "There is information about killings in the forested areas. A campaign is underway to recover the bodies. Until we retrieve them, we cannot confirm these incidents officially," he said.

HISTORIC MOVEMENT

Birhor tribe unites against child marriage in J'hkhand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Dec 13: People belonging to the Birhor tribe, a particularly vulnerable tribal group in Jharkhand, have joined a movement against child marriage in Giridih for the first time, according to an organisation working in the field of protection of children's rights.

For the first time, hundreds of people from the Birhor community joined a movement for a social cause. In the dimming light of dusk, people from the community came out of their dwellings to gather against child marriage, a rampant practice among the community.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER M.I. DIVISION GANJAM NO-1, BERHAMPUR ODISHA INTEGRATED IRRIGATION PROJECT FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT AGRICULTURE (OIPCRA) (WORLD BANK PROJECT ID: P163533) NATIONAL OPEN COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT FOR SMALL WORKS REQUEST FOR BID (RFB) E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA RFB No.OIIPCRA-W2-GM-102/2024-25 No.4013//M.I.D. (GM)-I, BAM, 09.12.2024//

'Govt can't turn blind eye to public inconvenience'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vijayapura (Karnataka), Dec 13: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah Tuesday defended the lathi charge by police on the Panchamasali agitators, saying that the government cannot turn a blind eye if someone takes law into their hands and causes trouble to people.

PANCHAMASALI PROTEST

to the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi. The chief minister said the government has no problem with the Panchamasali community demanding reservation under 2A category and agitating, but the protest should be peaceful. He appealed that no one should take the law into their own hands.

2A, the category, which enjoys 15 per cent reservation in education institutions and government jobs. Presently the community is under 3B category which gets five per cent reservation. The chief minister underlined that the law is equal for everyone, be it Swami or anyone else.

IIFL FINANCE CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797 Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No.B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF E-AUCTION OF GOLD ORNAMENTS

It is hereby notified to all concerned borrower(s) in specific and the public, in general, that we, IIFL Finance Limited ("IIFL") are auctioning gold ornaments of defaulted customers who neither regularized their loans nor paid the outstanding amount despite being informed through registered auction notices and repeated reminders.

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Date: 14.12.2024 Place: RAYAGADA Sd/- AUTHORISED SIGNATORY IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

Date: 14.12.2024 Place: SUNDERGARH Sd/- AUTHORISED SIGNATORY IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

Date: 14.12.2024 Place: KENDRAPARA Sd/- AUTHORISED SIGNATORY IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

Date: 14.12.2024 Place: KENDRAPARA Sd/- AUTHORISED SIGNATORY IIFL FINANCE LIMITED





Have you ever thought that a child from a poor family would have the opportunity to study abroad? This is not just a dream but a realization of hopes that were previously suppressed due to financial constraints

ATISHI | DELHI CM

THREE PIO STUDENTS KILLED IN CANADA; GOVT RAISES CONCERN

Three Indian students have been murdered in Canada last week and the Indian high commission in Ottawa has taken up the matter of safety of Indians with the Canadian authorities, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Friday. The safety, security and welfare of Indian nationals in Canada remains of utmost importance to us, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said



of the day note

We have assembled here to herald a new history. We are unveiling Swarna Andhra-2047 vision, which will change the course of the state. The foundation has been laid to transform the Telugu community as the world's top community today and I am telling you all that it is possible

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | AP CHIEF MINISTER

Punjab government should also take a decision to procure crops of farmers at MSP. They should not have a problem in this. When farmers of Punjab are facing problem, Punjab government should come forward and announce that they will procure all crops of farmers at MSP

NAVAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM

The state government has been issuing orders to close them many times. Despite this, open borewells are commonly found in villages

ASHOK GEHLOT | EX RAJASTHAN CM

DAY OF DIFFERING VERDICTS IN BENGAL

Rape-murder invites death sentence for one, bail for others



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 13: On a day when a key suspect of the evidence tampering case in the rape-murder of the RG Kar hospital medic walked on account of the CBI's failure to file a timely chargesheet, the West Bengal Police secured capital punishment for a convict of a similar crime on a minor and life imprisonment for his accomplice.

This was the second such success of the state police inside a week, after it secured death sentence for a 19-year-old man for raping and murdering a 10-year-old school student in Joynagar's Kultali in South 24 Parganas district December 6. Conviction and sentencing of the Farakka and Kultali cases were completed in about two months, leading Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to laud the achievements of both police and justice system in the state for wrapping up air-tight investigations, and delivering speedy justice to the victims' kin by awarding harshest punishments to the guilty.

In a sharp distinction, though, the SealDAH court in Kolkata Friday granted bail to former officer-in-charge of Tala police station Abhijit Mondal and RG Kar hospital ex-principal Sandip Ghosh in evidence tampering charges of the on-duty medic's rape and murder after the CBI, which is investigating the case on a Calcutta High Court order, couldn't file chargesheet against them within the mandatory 90-day

period, a lawyer representing Ghosh said. While Mondal was accused of alleged delay in filing of FIR in the case, Ghosh was charged with tampering of evidence.

Mondal's lawyer told reporters outside the court that he will walk out of the correctional home where he is incarcerated on judicial remand. Ghosh, who is on judicial remand in another case of alleged financial irregularities at RG Kar hospital, will, however, remain behind bars despite being granted bail in the rape-murder case.

The failure to file the chargesheet has led certain sections to question whether the agency ever had solid grounds to arrest the accused and detain them behind bars for nearly four months, like it has been claiming before courts so far. The central probe agency, though, has filed a chargesheet against the prime accused, Sanjay Roy, in the rape-murder case.

Adding to the angst of the parents of the RG Kar hospital victim, Friday's developments led them to state they were heartbroken with the two key suspects in the case getting bail, and that it seemed like the "system" was failing them. The rape and murder of the on-duty doctor shocked the state, leading to never-seen-before protests across West Bengal. Both the Kultali and Farakka crimes were committed at a time when unprecedented agitations were rocking the state in protest against the RG Kar hospital incident.

Bomb hoax once again haunts Delhi schools

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 13: Around 30 schools in Delhi received bomb threats over e-mail in the early hours of Friday, triggering a multi-agency search of their premises, officials said.

Nothing suspicious was found in any of the schools after the searches, they added. The latest threats came close on the heels of at least 44 schools receiving similar e-mails December 9.

Police had declared those threats as hoaxes. The Special Cell of the Delhi Police has registered a case of criminal

intimidation and conspiracy but it is yet to get any lead on the culprits. Reacting to the development, former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal pointed out that it was the second such instance within a week and wondered how these bomb threats would affect the children.

A Delhi Fire Services official said, "We received calls (regarding the threat e-mails) from the Bhatnagar International School in Paschim Vihar (4:21 am), Cambridge School in Srinivaspuri (6:23 am) and DPS Amar Colony in East of Kailash (6:35 am)."

'Judging women based on clothes shows misogynistic prejudice'

Strongly disagreeing with the findings and reasoning of the Family Court, the High Court set it aside by saying that "courts cannot be suspected to be guilty of even borderline misogyny or sexism and our constitutional mandate is that we decide matters as per its conscience and within its overriding umbra"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Dec 13: The Kerala High Court has held that judging women on the basis of their clothes or expecting them to be sad on getting divorce are indications of a "misogynistic prejudice" and "reinforce a very skewed gender stereotype".

The observation by a bench of Justices Devan Ramachandran and M B Snehalatha came while setting aside a Family Court order denying custody of the children to a mother for several reasons including that she wore revealing dresses, celebrated her

divorce and had an account on a dating app.

Strongly disagreeing with the findings and reasoning of the Family Court, the High Court set it aside by saying that "courts cannot be suspected to be guilty of even borderline misogyny or sexism and our constitutional mandate is that we decide matters as per its conscience and within its overriding umbra".

The High Court granted custody of the children to the mother by also taking into account the kids wish that they wanted to stay with her full-time and were open to meeting their fa-

Opposition submits notice in RS: Sources

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 13: Members of several Opposition parties Friday moved a notice in the Rajya Sabha for the impeachment of Allahabad High Court Judge Shekhar Kumar Yadav over his alleged controversial remarks at a recent event, sources said.

The notice for moving an impeachment motion was signed by 55 Opposition MPs, including Kapil Sibal, Vivek Tankha, Digvijaya Singh, John Brittas, Manoj Kumar Jha and Saket Gokhale. The MPs met the Rajya Sabha secretary general and handed over the notice for impeachment, the sources said.

The notice for the motion was moved under the Judges' (Inquiry) Act, 1968, and Article 218 of the Constitution, seeking initiation of proceedings for impeachment of Justice Yadav. The notice mentioned that the speech/lecture

ALLAHABAD HC JUDGE'S IMPEACHMENT



The notice for moving an impeachment motion was signed by 55 Opposition MPs, including Kapil Sibal, Vivek Tankha, Digvijaya Singh, John Brittas, Manoj Kumar Jha and Saket Gokhale

The MPs met the Rajya Sabha secretary general and handed over the notice for impeachment, the sources said



delivered by Justice Yadav in an event organised by the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) prima facie showed that he "engaged in hate speech and incitement to communal dis-

harmony in violation of the Constitution of India".

It also mentioned that the judge prima facie showed that he targeted minorities and displayed bias and preju-

dice against them. It went on to further state that the judge showed that Justice Yadav entered into public debate or expressed his views in public on political matters relating to a uniform civil code, in violation of the Restatement of Values of Judicial Life, 1997. At a VHP function December 8, Justice Yadav said the main aim of a uniform civil code was to promote social harmony, gender equality and secularism.

A day later, videos of the judge speaking on provocative issues, including the law working according to the majority, were circulated widely on social media, prompting strong reactions from several quarters, including Opposition leaders. The Supreme Court Tuesday took note of news reports over the purported controversial statements of Justice Yadav function and sought details from Allahabad High Court on the issue.



A flock of seagulls, near the causeway of Tapi River in Surat, Gujarat

PTI PHOTO

B'lore police summon Atul's wife

The 34-year-old techie ended his life Monday in Bangalore, alleging harassment at the hands of his estranged wife and her family

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

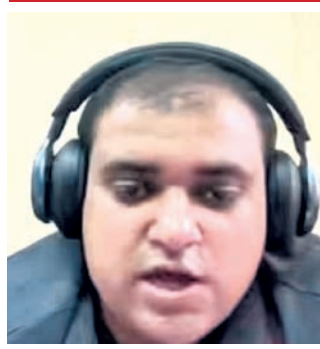
Jaunpur (UP), Dec 13: As part of its probe into the suicide of engineer Atul Subhash, the Bangalore City Police Friday issued a summons to his wife Nikita Singhania and asked her to appear before it within three days.

The 34-year-old techie ended his life Monday in Bengaluru, alleging harassment at the hands of his estranged wife and her family.

A four-member Bangalore-City Police team led by sub-inspector Sanjeet Kumar arrived at Singhania's residence in the Khowa Mandi area in this Uttar Pradesh district around 11 am and pasted the notice for her summons.

According to Circle Officer (City) Ayush Srivastava, the Bengaluru City Police notice said, "Nikita Singhania to ap-

TECHIE SUICIDE



pear before the investigating officer at Marathahalli police station, Bangalore, within three days for interrogation regarding the circumstances surrounding the death of her husband, Atul Subhash."

The notice, addressed solely to Singhania, did not mention other accused family members, including her mother Nisha

Singhania, uncle Sushil Singhania and brother Anurag Singhania despite their names being in the FIR. At the time the notice was pasted, the main door of the house was locked and no family members were present.

The Bengaluru City Police team arrived in Jaunpur late Thursday. After meeting Superintendent of Police Ajay Pal Sharma, the team proceeded to the city police station for further action.

The team planned to visit the civil court in Jaunpur to gather information about cases previously filed by Singhania, Srivastava said.

Subhash, a 34-year-old engineer, died by suicide in Bengaluru December 9, allegedly due to harassment by his estranged wife and her family. A case of abetment to suicide has been filed against Singhania and her family members.

Maharashtra cabinet expansion Dec 15

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 13: The cabinet expansion of the BJP-led Maharashtra government would take place December 15 with the new ministers taking the oath of office at a ceremony in Nagpur, official sources said Friday.

A senior BJP leader told PTI that 30-32 ministers are likely to take oath. The week-long winter session of the state legislature is slated to begin in Nagpur, Maharashtra's second capital, from December 16. Devendra Fadnis took oath as Chief Minister with Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde and NCP chief Ajit Pawar as his deputies at a grand ceremony in Mumbai December 5. The council of ministers in Maharashtra can have a maximum of 43 members including the chief minister. Meanwhile, state BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule Friday met deputy CMs Shinde and Ajit Pawar separately to finalise cabinet formation.



ther on holidays. In its recent order setting aside the Family Court deci-

sion, the High Court observed that through such cases it has realised "how much rigid gen-

der roles and patriarchy have trickled down into societies and guides our thoughts and actions".

"We unfortunately continue to follow and perpetuate such unconsciously, which surely warrants continuous education and close introspection," It said. The bench further said that in the "heteronormative context, being feminine is construed as synonymous to being modest and even submissive or that is how this term is more than often interpreted".

It said that consciously or subconsciously, societies impose restrictions on women's

autonomy and scrutinize their choices; and they are supposed to adhere to certain standards, including their choice of clothes and appearances. "Such unwritten norms perpetuate casual sexism and strengthen the glass ceiling for women, with control being considered exclusive to men."

Referring to the Family Court's reasons for granting custody to the father, the High Court said that the lower court found the mother to be a person of loose morals as the husband alleged that she wore revealing dresses and had posted her pictures on dating apps.



national



My colleague in the ruling party recounted the past, this happened, that happened... what happened in 1975. You also learn from it, you also apologise for your mistakes

PRİYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

SC GRANTS CONDITIONAL FUTURE BAIL TO PARTHA

In an innovative approach, the Supreme Court Friday granted conditional future bail to former West Bengal minister Partha Chatterjee, who has been in jail in connection with a money-laundering case related to the alleged cash-for-jobs scam in the state, and expedited the trial



101 farmers to resume march today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Dec 13: Samyukta Kisan Morcha leader Rakesh Tikait Friday met Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, whose fast-unto-death entered the eighteenth day, at Khanauri border and called for unity of farmers' groups for a "joint fight".



death till the time the government does not hold talks and meets their demands," he said. When asked should all outfits, which formed the SKM during the agitation against now repealed farm laws, not join hands to fight the battle for farmers' rights effectively, Tikait said, "we have formed a committee which will communicate with the groups".

At Khanauri, Tikait, who is also Bharatiya Kisan Union's spokesperson, said, "Dallewal ji is our big leader and we are worried about his health, farmers of the entire country are worried". "We are worried about his health...the government should take cognizance.. It does not seem that Dallewal will take back his fast-unto-

DELHI COURT SENDS NARESH BALYAN TO JUDICIAL CUSTODY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 13: A Delhi court Friday sent AAP's Uttam Nagar MLA Naresh Balyan to judicial custody till January 9 in a case related to alleged organised crimes while denying police his further remand and said that he could not be "compelled" to cooperate in the probe.

Dismissing Delhi Police's application seeking Balyan's further custody for 10 days in the case lodged under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), Special Judge Kaveri Baweja said the ground stated by the probe agency did not justify any further extension. The judge noted that police sought the extension of Balyan's police custody remand stating that he did not cooperate during his custodial remand granted earlier and did not reply to queries during interrogation. Balyan was arrested in the organised crime case December 4. A court earlier granted him bail in an extortion case.

8 held for raping woman in Assam

Guwahati: Eight people were arrested Friday for allegedly raping a woman on a temple premises in Assam's Guwahati, police said. The arrests were made after a purported video of the incident in Gorchuk area was found circulating among locals, a senior police officer said. While seven of the accused were apprehended initially, the eighth person was arrested later in the day. Guwahati Police Commissioner Diganta Barah said the video of the alleged gang rape was received from a newspaper early Friday. "Based on information received and thorough analysis of the video, police teams immediately conducted raids at various locations under the jurisdiction of Gorchuk and Jalukbari police stations, and seven people identified in the video were arrested," Barah said.

Rumours of paper leak erupt

Patna: Rumours of a leak of question paper of the Bihar Public Service Commission preliminary examination erupted at an examination centre Friday, prompting the commission to warn of police action against those involved in the "conspiracy". Around 300-400 aspirants boycotted BPS's 70th Integrated Combined Competitive Examination (CCE) 2024 held at Babu examination centre at Kumhar in Patna alleging the question paper was leaked on social media even before the examination started. Chaos prevailed at the Babu examination Centre where an additional examination superintendent died of cardiac arrest and a female candidate fell unconscious.

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF E-AUCTION OF GOLD ORNAMENTS

It is hereby notified to all concerned borrower(s) in specific and the public, in general, that we, IIFL Finance Limited ("IIFL") are auctioning gold ornaments of defaulted customers who neither regularized their loans nor paid the outstanding amount despite being informed through registered auction notices and repeated reminders. Public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the following loan accounts will be conducted online through Shriram Automall India Limited on their online auction platform https://gold.samil.in on 17.12.2024 between 03:30 PM to 06:00 PM. Change in venue or date (if any) will be displayed at the auction center. If for any reason the E-Auction cannot be held on the date mentioned herein or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the said auction on any subsequent date on the auction platform and/or auction center with same terms and conditions. The unauctioned gold ornaments shall be auctioned on subsequent working days after displaying the details on auction platform and/or auction center. In case the auction at Branch level fails, the same will be re-auctioned on 24.12.2024 at the specified district centre. If for any reason, the district level auction cannot be held on the date mentioned herein or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the district level auction on any subsequent date with same terms and conditions. If the customer is deceased, then all the conditions pertaining to auction will be applicable to nominee/legal heir. District Centre: BHAWANIPATNA-BHAWANIPATNA GL - IIFL FINANCE LTD, AT-1ST FLOOR, PLOT NO-1077, MAHAVEER PADA, BHAWANIPATNA, KALAHADI, PIN-766001

PM inaugurates multiple projects in Prayagraj

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj (UP), Dec 13: The Maha Kumbh 2025 a "mahayagya of unity" which would take the country's cultural and spiritual identity to new heights, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Friday, emphasising the event's role in promoting social cohesion as well as economic empowerment of communities. Addressing a public meeting here after inaugurating developmental projects to improve the city's infrastructure and provide better amenities to pilgrims during the Kumbh Mela, the prime minister said the differences of castes and sects disappear at the event. The prime minister inaugurated 167 key



development projects worth ₹5,500 crore. The projects also included Sah'Aiyak Chatbot -- an Artificial Intelligence-based platform to streamline communication for devotees attending the Maha Kumbh. Modi said the city of Prayagraj, which hosts the Maha Kumbh every 12 years, is not just a geographical location,

good fortune of taking a bath at the Sangam and today, once again, I received blessings at the feet of Ganga," Modi said. The 2025 Maha Kumbh will be held from January 13 (Paush Poornima) to February 26 (Maha Shivratri) at Prayagraj. It will be the world's largest religious gathering and more than 40 crore people are expected during the 45-day event.

The prime minister emphasised the historical importance of the event, saying saints and sages have, for centuries, used it as a platform to discuss national issues and provide valuable guidance. He pointed out that even in ancient times, the Kumbh laid the foundation for social change.

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Date: 14.12.2024, Place: KORAPUT, AUTHORISED SIGNATORY IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

Date: 14.12.2024, Place: JA.JAYPUR, AUTHORISED SIGNATORY IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

Date: 14.12.2024, Place: BALESWAR, AUTHORISED SIGNATORY IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

Date: 14.12.2024, Place: BALESWAR, AUTHORISED SIGNATORY IIFL FINANCE LIMITED



# international



Core principles include establishing peace and stability in Sudan, preserving its territorial integrity and sovereignty, and preventing the country from becoming a zone of external interventions

MOLDOVA FACES ENERGY CRISIS Moldova's parliament Friday voted in favour of imposing a state of emergency in the energy sector over fears that Russia could leave the European Union candidate country without sufficient natural gas supplies this winter



## of the day quote

If we want to be serious about protecting our borders, we need to step up the fight against migrant smuggling



BENCE TUZSON | JUSTICE MINISTER, HUNGARY

The Sri Lankan government wants to see the deep-water container terminal project at the Colombo port go ahead and has no issue with the Adani-led conglomerate using its own resources to fund it



BIMAL RATHNAYAKA | PORTS MINISTER, SRI LANKA

Developed countries must meet their commitments and deliver the promised USD300 billion annually for climate finance



ANTÓNIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN

## SHORT TAKES

### Indian origin trader jailed for tax fraud

London: A British hedge fund trader of Indian heritage has been sentenced to 12 years in prison by authorities in Denmark after being found guilty of a tax fraud amounting to over GBP 1 billion. Sanjay Shah, 54, was handed the maximum prison sentence for an economic crime by a district court in Glostrup this week. The Danish prosecution said in a statement that the court found it proven that Shah was the mastermind behind a complex setup in which 190 American pension companies and 24 Malaysian companies entered into agreements to purchase Danish listed shares at times when the shares were traded with the right to dividends.

### SL Parl Speaker to step down

Colombo: Sri Lanka's Parliament Speaker Asoka Ranwala announced his resignation Friday following days of speculation about him falsifying his educational qualifications. "In recent days, a problem with my educational qualifications has been raised in society. I have not made any false statements about my educational qualifications," Ranwala said in a statement. Asserting that he currently does not possess any documents to prove his qualifications, Ranwala said that it would also not be possible for him to obtain these from the relevant institutions. "However, in order to stop the inconvenience caused to the government and the people who had placed trust in the government, I have decided to resign from the post of Speaker," he said.

### Over 340 terrorists killed this yr in Pak

Islamabad: At least 341 terrorists were killed by the security agencies in various actions across the country during the first ten months of this year, the Parliament was told Friday. Also, at least 1,566 terrorism incidents occurred in the 10 months, with highest 948 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa followed by 532 in Balochistan, leading to a total of 924 deaths. The Interior Ministry shared the details with the National Assembly in response to a question by lawmaker Hameed Hussain of Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen party of Shiite Muslims, who had sought details of actions to improve the law and order in the country.

# Russia targets Ukraine's embattled power grid

REUTERS

Kyiv, Dec 13: Russia hammered Ukrainian energy facilities in a massive aerial attack Friday that President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said was one of the largest yet on the ailing grid and evidence of why Kyiv needed more Western support before any peace with Russia. Russia's 12th major assault on the energy system this year damaged power facilities in several Ukrainian regions and forced authorities to impose even longer electricity cuts for millions of civilians, the national grid operator said.



A strong reaction from the world is needed: a massive strike - a massive reaction. This is the only way to stop terror

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKIY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

Russia launches 93 missiles, nearly 200 drones, Kyiv says

Ukraine imposes longer power cuts after attacks

Damage to multiple energy facilities confirmed

Ukraine calls for strong Western response, more aid

Officials said they had imposed additional power cuts due to the attack. In the region outside Kyiv, the power cuts were scheduled to last for 11 hours, up from eight hours before the attack. Around a half of power company Yasnol's 3.5 million consumers were without power Friday, their CEO said.

### 'CYNICAL' ATTACK

"As Ukrainians wake to the coldest day of the winter so far, the enemy tries to break our spirit with this cynical terrorist attack," DTEK's CEO Maxim Timchenko said.

Moscow described its assault as retaliation for Ukraine using US-supplied ATACMS missiles to attack a Russian military airfield this week.

The Russian Defence Ministry said air- and sea-based long-range precision weapons and drones had been used against "critical facilities of Ukraine's fuel and energy infrastructure that support the military-industrial complex".

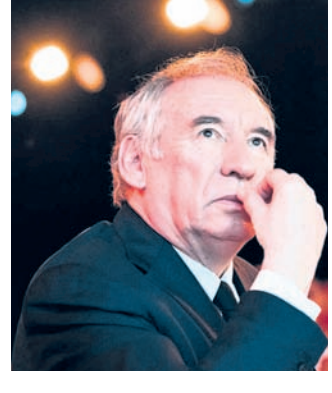
Russia says it does not target civilian infrastructure, but that it sees the power system as a military target.

## France's Macron names centrist ally Bayrou as PM

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Dec 13: French President Emmanuel Macron Friday named centrist ally Francois Bayrou as prime minister in an effort to address the country's deep political crisis, after a historic parliamentary vote ousted the previous government last week.

Bayrou, 73, a crucial partner in Macron's centrist alliance, has been a well-known figure in French politics for decades. His political experience is seen as key in efforts to restore stability as no single party holds a majority at the National Assembly.



Macron's office said in a statement that Bayrou "has been charged with forming a new government."

Former Prime Minister Michel Barnier resigned last week following a no-confidence vote prompted by budget disputes in the National Assembly, leaving France without a functioning government. Macron in an address to the nation vowed to remain in office until his term ends in 2027.

Bayrou is expected to hold talks with political leaders from various parties in the coming days in order to choose new ministers.

# Trump's tariffs spook Dragon

REUTERS

Beijing, Dec 13: As Donald Trump steps up his tariff threats against China, Beijing is moving to beat the next US president to the punch with its own restrictions and get Washington to the negotiating table ahead of a full-blown trade war, analysts say.

Armed with the lessons of the last trade war during Trump's first term, China is seeking to amass bargaining chips to kick off talks with a new US administration on contentious aspects of bilateral ties, including trade and investment, and science and technology. It is also concerned about the harmful effects of additional tariffs on its already fragile economy.

This week, China launched a probe into US chip giant Nvidia (NVDA.O), opens new tab over what it claimed were suspected antitrust violations, which follows its ban on US-bound exports of rare minerals.

"We have to look at this as the opening bid in what will likely ultimately turn into a negotiation with the US rather than just an imposition of tariffs and everyone walks away," HSBC's Chief Asia Economist Fred Neumann said.

China is better prepared to deal with almost any tariffs, short of an "Armageddon announcement" of a 60% tariff on all Chinese goods, said George Magnus, research associate at Oxford University's China Centre.

The world's second-largest economy now globally dominates sectors such as electric vehicles and green energy, and has less need for the Boeing jets and large gasoline-fuelled cars it bought back in 2017, having



China seeks negotiations to avoid trade war escalation

Beijing amassing bargaining chips learnt from first trade war

Chinese economy vulnerable despite global dominance in some sectors

Any trade war will still hurt China more than US, analysts say

found substitutes such as Airbus airplanes and its own Comac C919. But China is far from self-sufficient.

A new trade war with the world's biggest economy would still hurt China more, analysts say, as Washington can levy ever-larger import duties on its goods and further rip China from its supply chains.

China still needs to import strategic materials from the US such as advanced microchips and other high-tech equipment and counts on US consumers to buy its goods, given an increasingly pessimistic global trade outlook and weak domestic consumer demand.

The agreement, which enables scientific collaboration between the two countries lapsed in August and negotiations over its renewal are unlikely to be completed before Trump's Jan 20 inauguration.

## PAK MAY 9 VIOLENCE

# SC allows army courts to announce verdicts



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Dec 13: Pakistan's Supreme Court Friday gave conditional permission to military courts to announce reserved verdicts in cases of 85 civilians allegedly involved in the violent protests of May 9 last year.

A seven-member bench led by Justice Aminuddin Khan was hearing the intra-court appeals (ICA) against last year's judgment of a five-member bench that favoured criminal courts over military courts for the trials of these civilians.

Passing an order at the end of Friday's hearing, Justice Khan

specified that the verdicts of the military courts would be subject to its final decision on the appeals against the October 23, 2023 ruling.

In its order, the court ruled that suspects who can be accorded concessions in their sentences "should be given so and released", but the "suspects who cannot be released should be moved to jails once their sentence has been pronounced."

The case is about more than 100 suspects who were handed over to the military authorities for trial for their alleged involvement in the attacks on army installations during the protest May 9, 2023, against the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan.

In Friday's order, Justice Khan stated that the right to challenge military courts' decisions in high courts would remain suspended till the case in the apex court was decided upon.



Children ride a chain carousel at the Red Square Christmas Fair with the Spasskaya tower of the Kremlin in the background in Moscow, Russia, Thursday

# When Homo sapiens interbred with Neanderthals

REUTERS

Washington, Dec 13: Neanderthals went extinct roughly 39,000 years ago, but in some sense these close cousins of our species are not gone. Their legacy lives on in the genomes of most people on Earth, thanks to interbreeding between Homo sapiens and Neanderthals.

New research is providing the most precise estimate to date of when this mixing occurred - with the height of the interaction around 47,000 years ago - and showing how Neanderthal components have shaped the human genome in functions such as skin pigmentation, immune response and metabolism.

One group of scientists examined genomes from three



female and three male Homo sapiens individuals who lived around 45,000 years ago based on bones found in a cave at the German town of Ranis, and one genome from a woman from about the same time

whose skull was found in a cave at Zlaty kun mountain in the Czech Republic. The study, published in the journal Nature and involving the oldest Homo sapiens DNA ever sequenced, gave a date range

for the mixing of about 49,000 to 45,000 years ago. A second group of researchers examined the genomes of 300 present-day and ancient Homo sapiens individuals, including 59 who lived between 2,000 and 45,000 years ago. The study, published in the journal Science, gave a date range of the mixing of about 50,500 to 43,500 years ago.

The scientists described the interbreeding, found to have been more recent than previous estimates, as a single extended period of gene flow lasting for numerous generations.

It is difficult to know the nature of the interaction between Homo sapiens and Neanderthals based on genome data beyond being able to say they mixed and had children together.

# Switzerland plans revamp of Cold War-era N-bunker network

REUTERS

Switzerland, Dec 13: Switzerland wants to update its network of ageing nuclear shelters, which are increasingly seen as an asset at a time of greater global uncertainty, notably since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Thanks to a 1963 law, Switzerland is already ahead of neighbours like Germany. Each of its 9 million residents, including foreigners and refugees, is guaranteed a spot in a bunker to protect them from bombs and nuclear radiation.

"In the coming years, the (Swiss) Confederation wants to remove some of the exceptions to the current rules and update some of the older shel-



ters," Louis-Henri Delarageaz, civil protection commander for the Vaud canton, told Reuters.

The government launched consultations in October to ensure Swiss "resilience in the event of armed conflict" and plans a 220 million Swiss franc (\$250 million) upgrade of old structures.

"It doesn't mean we're preparing for a conflict - that's not the message - but we have a network of shelters and we need to maintain them and make sure they're functional."





We have 27 lakh members and all of them participated in Anti-Privatization Day protest observed today

SHAILENDRA DUBEJ | CHAIRMAN, ALL INDIA POWER ENGINEERS FEDERATION

EPFO SUBSCRIBERS MAY SOON WITHDRAW MONEY VIA ATMS

Members of the retirement fund body EPFO may soon be able to withdraw their provident fund (PF) money directly from ATMs after the settlement. Currently, subscribers of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) have to wait for 7-10 days for the settlement of their claims online



Business

Big Swiss blow for India PV despatches rise 4%

Switzerland suspends most favoured nation status to India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 13: The Swiss government has suspended the most favoured nation status (MFN) clause in the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) between India and Switzerland, potentially impacting Swiss investments in India and leading to higher taxes on Indian companies operating in the European nation.



The development means Switzerland will tax dividends that Indian entities will earn in the country at 10% from January 1, 2025

According to a December 11 statement by the Swiss finance department, the move follows the Supreme Court of India

last year ruling that the MFN clause doesn't automatically trigger when a country joins the OECD if the Indian govern-

This suspension may lead to increased tax liabilities for Indian entities operating in Switzerland, highlighting the complexities of navigating international tax treaties in an evolving global landscape

SANDEEP JHUNHUNWALA | M&A TAX PARTNER, NANGIA ANDERSEN

ment signed a tax treaty with that country before it joined the organization.

India signed tax treaties with Colombia and Lithuania that provided tax rates on certain types of income that were low-

er than the rates it provided to OECD countries. The two countries later joined OECD.

Switzerland in 2021 interpreted that Colombia and Lithuania joining the OECD meant a 5 per cent rate for dividends would apply to the India-Switzerland tax treaty under the MFN clause, rather than 10 per cent as outlined in the agreement.

But post suspension of the MFN status, Switzerland will from January 1, 2025, levy a 10 per cent tax on dividends due to Indian tax residents who claim refunds for Swiss withholding tax and for Swiss tax residents who claim foreign tax credits.

PV despatches rise 4%

Demand sustains post festive period

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 13: Passenger vehicle despatches from companies to dealerships rose 4 per cent year on year to 3,47,522 units in November with demand momentum sustaining post festive period in October, industry body SIAM said Friday.

The overall passenger vehicle despatches stood at 3,33,833 units in November last year.

Market leader Maruti Suzuki India dispatched 1,41,312 units to its dealers last month, an increase of 5 per cent as compared with 1,34,158 units in November last year.

Hyundai Motor India despatches declined to 48,246 units



last month as against 49,451 units in the year-ago period.

Mahindra & Mahindra sales stood at 46,222 units last month as compared with 39,981 units in November last year, a growth of 16 per cent

"The demand momentum which was seen in October during the festive period has continued in November for the industry as a whole, although two-wheeler and three-wheeler segments witnessed minor de-growth in November 2024," SIAM Director General Rajesh Menon said.

Benchmarks stage strong comeback

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 623.07 points or 0.76%, and the Nifty climbed 90.5 points or 0.36%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 13: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded sharply by about 1 per cent Friday, propelled by bargain hunting in telecommunication, tech and consumer durable stocks amid encouraging domestic inflation data.

After falling 1,207.14 points in morning trade, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex recovered all the lost ground later and jumped 843.16 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 82,133.12. During the day, it surged 923.96 points or 1.13 per cent to 82,213.92.

The NSE Nifty climbed 219.60 points or 0.89 per cent to settle at 24,768.30 after falling 367.9 points in intra-day trade.

"The domestic market smartly recovered from the day's low and moved out of the consolidation path led by index heavyweights. A gradual easing in food inflation and a price hike by FMCG companies, along with a re-



cent correction in valuation, supported the sector to outperform. Currently, the market is anticipating a revival in consumer spending, driven by the festive season and year-end holidays, adding to the sentiments. Additionally, the expectation of an increase in US spending is propelling the IT sector," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Among the 30-share Sensex blue-chip pack, Bharti Airtel, ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Titan, UltraTech Cement, HCL Technologies, and Power Grid were the biggest gainers. On the other hand, Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, JSW Steel and Bajaj Finserv were the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹3,560.01 crore Thursday, according to exchange data.

The BSE gauge declined 236.18 points or 0.29 per cent to settle at 81,289.96 Thursday. The Nifty dropped 93.10 points or 0.38 per cent to 24,548.70.

SNIPPETS

Forex reserves drop by \$3.23 bn to \$654.85 billion

Mumbai: India's forex reserves dropped by \$3.235 billion to \$654.857 billion for the week ended December 6, the RBI said Friday. In the previous reporting week, the reserves had increased by \$1.51 billion to \$658.091 billion, ending a multi-week decline in the overall kitty. The forex reserves had increased to an all-time high of \$704.885 billion in end-September. For the week ended December 6, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by \$3.228 billion to \$565.623 billion, the data released Friday showed. Gold reserves decreased by \$43 million to \$66.936 billion during the week, the RBI said. India's reserve position with the IMF was also up by \$12 million to \$4.266 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

Provident fund dues: SpiceJet clears ₹160cr

New Delhi: SpiceJet Friday said it has cleared all employee provident fund dues worth ₹160.07 crore that were pending for over two years. The low-cost carrier, which has been facing multiple headwinds, recently raised ₹3,000 crore, following which it has been clearing statutory, GST (Goods and Services Tax) and other dues. Employee provident fund dues amounting to ₹160.07 crore, spanning over two years, have been cleared, the airline said in a release. According to the release, since October, SpiceJet has been utilising its internal cash flows to meet its statutory obligations, including provident fund and TDS (Tax Deduction at Source) payments, the release said. The airline has also resolved various disputes with aircraft lessors and other creditors.

Unfair trade practices: CCPA notice to 17 direct selling firms

New Delhi: Consumer protection regulator CCPA Friday said it has issued notices to 17 direct selling firms, including Oriflame India, for alleged unfair trade practices and violations of consumer protection rules. The notices have been served on companies such as Vihana Direct Selling India, Triptales Pvt Ltd, Oriens Global Marketing, Zennessa Wellness, and others for alleged service deficiencies and non-compliance with the Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules, 2021. An official statement revealed that 13 of these cases are under investigation, while replies from three companies are still awaited. The action comes in response to concerns about deceptive practices in the direct selling industry. The ministry warned that some fraudulent entities are misusing the direct selling mode to promote illegal pyramid or money circulation schemes.

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# LIVED FOR THIS MOMENT: GUKESH

## Youngest world chess champion presented with the trophy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Singapore, Dec 13:** His eyes were expectedly burning after a sleepless night but the adrenaline kept D Gukesh going as he smiled through a plethora of engagements, including signing hundreds of autographs, before finally getting his hands on the World Chess Championship trophy a day after becoming its youngest owner.

The 18-year-old Chennai-lad got the better of defending champion Ding Liren of China here Thursday for the historic triumph that made him the 18th overall and only the second Indian after Viswanathan Anand to win the crown that came with a whooping prize of USD 1.3 million.

The morning after began with getting a glimpse of the trophy, which he refused to touch as he wanted to wait till the closing ceremony in the evening. He finally held it after it was presented to him by FIDE (International Chess Federation) president Arkady Dvorkovich.

In his introduction, the FIDE presenters spoke of Gukesh's 'brilliant poise' and 'performance for the ages' that he delivered against an older and more experienced rival.

"I mean this moment, it feels like I have lived it a million times. Every morning when I woke up, this moment was the reason I woke up. To hold this trophy and this reality means more than anything else in my life," the

graceful teenager said in his acceptance speech after being presented with his gold medal and the trophy.

Before that, Gukesh sat down to meet and greet a seemingly never-ending stream of fans, both the young and old, even toddlers. Those who lined up included not just the Indian diaspora but also the local Singaporeans, carrying chess boards which became priceless memorabilia after Gukesh scribbled his name on them.

Gukesh reiterated his gratitude towards his opponent for challenging him, his parents for being there for him, his team, the host country, the many new fans he acquired over the course of past three weeks and the almighty. "When I couldn't see the solution, God was the only one who could pull me through and show me the way," he said.

The financial windfall also continued with Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin announcing a cash prize of Rs 5 crore for the lanky teen, who is based in Chennai and was shaped by city's now famous 'Velammal Vidyalaya' and the 'Westbridge-Anand Chess Academy'.

Paddy Upton, the renowned mental conditioning coach who worked with Gukesh, said the 'incredible self-awareness' of the 18-year-old Indian Grandmaster powered him to a historic World Chess Championship title.

"I think the most fascinat-

ing thing working with Gukesh was his level of self-awareness, just to recognise where his thoughts are being directed. So, if there was even a moment on the chessboard where he found himself overthinking he had an amazing awareness of it, when his mind drifted off and that's quite unique," Upton said.

"Gukesh has incredible powers of self-awareness and a lot of our work was helping him identify what were the things that would potentially distract his focus. So yeah, I think that's the thing that's really stood out, his ability to recognise his thoughts and manage his mind was outstanding," Upton added.



FIDE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SINGAPORE 2024

## India celebrates Gukesh's crown

*Congratulations pour in from all quarters as youngest chess champion lays hands on the trophy*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 13:** The nation celebrated Gukesh's feat with pomp after he became the world chess champion Thursday. People from all walks of life took to social media to congratulate him. Gukesh is the second Indian after the great Viswanathan Anand to clinch the title which the latter held five times in his career.

President Droupadi Murmu was one of the first to laud Gukesh. She said India is 'immensely proud' of Gukesh's achievement.

"Heartiest congratulations to Gukesh for becoming the youngest player to win the world chess championship. He has done India immensely proud. His victory stamps the authority of India as a chess powerhouse. Well done Gukesh! On behalf of every Indian, I wish you sustained glory in the future," the President said on 'X'.

Champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, the country's first and only track and field Olympic gold medallist, wrote on 'X', "Congratulations, Gukesh! The best in the world and the youngest to ever do it. India is proud."

Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar said with his win, Gukesh has 'opened a world of endless possibilities'.

"In a game of 64 squares, you've opened a world of endless possibilities. Congratulations, @DGukesh, on becoming the 18th World Champion at just 18! Following in Vishy's footsteps, you're now guiding the next wave of Indian chess prodigies," Tendulkar posted on 'X'.

India's first individual Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra said Gukesh has inspired a generation to 'dream big' with his stunning achievement. "Wishing you even greater success ahead!" Bindra tweeted.



**Gukesh impressively surmounted every obstacle and opponent in his path, especially considering his age, and nothing more can be asked**

GARRY KASPAROV



In a game of 64 squares, you've opened a world of endless possibilities. Congratulations, @DGukesh, on becoming the 18th World Champion at just 18! Following in Vishy's footsteps, you're now guiding the next wave of Indian chess prodigies.

## Indian national arrested on match-fixing charges

**COLOMBO:** Prem Thakkur, the Indian owner of Lanka T10 Super League team Galle Marvels, has been arrested by police here on match-fixing charges, according to a report. Thakkur was arrested Thursday, a day after the tournament began, and was produced before a local court, according to ESPNcricinfo. The report said that Thakkur, an Indian national, had been arrested by the Sri Lanka Sports Police Unit under the 2019 Prevention of Offences Relating to Sports Act. He was arrested at a hotel in Kandy, where the Lanka T10 tournament is underway.

## Rahane's T20 re-invention

**BANGALORE:** Ajinkya Rahane continued his T20 re-invention with a brutal 98 that carried Mumbai to a six-wicket victory over Baroda and into the final of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy here Friday. Mumbai bowlers chipped away at regular intervals as Baroda were restricted to 158 for seven, and Rahane's blistering knock off 56 balls (11x4, 5x6) took his team to 164 for four in 17.2 overs in the first semifinal. Mumbai will face the winner of the second semifinal between Delhi and Madhya Pradesh in the final Sunday.

## China jails ex-football star

**BEIJING:** The former coach of the Chinese men's national soccer team has received a 20-year-prison sentence for bribery, Chinese state media reported Friday. Liu Tiejie, who once played in the English Premier League as a midfielder for Everton, was found guilty of "leveraging his positions" as head coach of the national football and national selection team to receive bribes of more than 50 million yuan (about \$7 million), by a court in the city of Xianning in the central Hubei province. Liu coached the Chinese men's team between January 2020 and December 2021. He was also charged with taking bribes between 2015 to 2019, when he worked for local football clubs. His sentencing is the latest in a series of high-profile corruption cases involving Chinese football.

## Shubman promises better batting show

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Brisbane, Dec 13:** Shubman Gill admitted that the fall of wickets at the other end affected his game in the Adelaide Test but expressed confidence that the Indian batting group would deliver a stronger first innings effort in what is now effectively a three-match series.

Gill didn't play the first Test due to a finger injury but looked good in his brief innings of 31 and 28 during the pink ball Test at Adelaide.

"As a batting group, we are looking to post a big total first up. That's been the key discussion and every batter has his own game plan," Gill said in the pre-match press conference here Friday. India had scored 150 and 180 in the first innings at Perth and Adelaide respectively.

Gill said that he wouldn't curb his natural game although he did get edgy seeing wickets tumble at the other end. "I still have the freedom as a batter. One of the challenges is whether you can play the game you want to play, irrespective of what's happening at the other end and irrespective of scorecard. I faltered in the first innings because of what



happened at the other end and I take that upon myself," Gill informed.

India have had at least six scores of 150 or less in recent times and Gill admitted that the piece of stat isn't lost upon the batting group. He said it is now a three-match series for his side.

"Adelaide Test, we didn't do well but the series is still 1-1. We will treat it as a three-match Test series and if we win this one, we will have advantage going into Melbourne and Sydney," Gill stated.

Gill was nostalgic as he walked into the Gabba for the first time since the 2021 Test where he was the top-scorer in the run-chase with a fine 91 that catapulted him into stardom. "Walking into the stadium after 2021 with the team, definitely it felt very nostalgic," Gill said.

## Make or break game for India

**FEISTY GABBA PITCH TO WELCOME INDIANS AS PAT CUMMINS WARNS OF 'SHORT' STUFF**

AGENCIES

**Brisbane, Dec 13:** The Gabba here is not a place for the faint hearted. It was Australia's fortress, used to disseminate and subjugate visiting teams, till India arrived in 2021. Rishabh Pant's heroics gave India a historic triumph and a second series win over the hosts in Australia. Prior to that, India's only good show at the Gabba had been in 2003 when Sourav Ganguly-led India had drawn a Test. India will be bubbling with optimism when they take the field for the third Test of the series against Australia here Saturday.

It will also be a 'test' for many... especially India's own Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. Call it what you may, the fast and bouncy pitch at the Gabba will be a make or break test for them. The onus lies on both of them to play substantial knocks to put the team in a good position.

Australian skipper Pat Cummins has already warned the Indians to be ready for some short stuff on what can be called a

'spicy' Gabba pitch. With the series locked at 1-1, Brisbane could well decide the course of the rubber and whether Rohit's men would continue to be the master of their fate in the ongoing World Test Championship.

"Yeah, potentially (we will use the short ball). It worked out in the Adelaide Test. It's always in the back of your mind as a bit of a plan B," Cummins told the media in his pre-match press meet Friday. "If it's something really uncomfortable for the Indians, you're likely to take a look at it. It worked in Adelaide, so I'm sure

we'll give it a shot at some point (in the third Test)," he added.

**STATS FACTS**

- Jasprit Bumrah is averaging 11.25 runs per wicket in the series, the best among bowlers of both sides
- Gabba is a favourite hunting ground for Australia skipper Pat Cummins - 40 wickets in 7 Tests
- India have played 7 Tests at the Gabba, winning 1, drawing 1 and losing the remaining 5
- Australia have played 66 Tests at the Gabba winning 42

Cummins also informed that Josh Hazlewood is fit and he will replace Scott Boland in the playing XI. Hazlewood's return certainly bodes well for the hosts. For India, the biggest hope remains in Australia's batting vulnerability which can lead to an implosion if a certain Travis Head doesn't decide to be the marauder.

In bowling, India have Jasprit Bumrah, who has made every other bowler in the series look pedestrian in his comparison. He definitely needs more support at the other end but more than that, he needs runs from the likes of Rohit and Kohli as a psychological cushion while breezing in to unleash his thunderbolts.

India's biggest issue has been terrible first innings batting during the past one year in both home and away fixtures with six totals of 150 or less during the period. And Rohit and Kohli's first innings average in the 2024-25 season reads a rather poor 6.88 and 10 respectively.



The Indian players have something to smile about during their training session

## Indian pair miss semis spot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hangzhou, Dec 13:** Indian women's doubles pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand missed out on a semifinal spot at the BWF World Tour Finals after losing to Japan's Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida in straight games in their third and final group A match here Friday.

Treasa and Gayatri, who won their maiden BWF Super 300 title at Syed Modi International in Lucknow recently, lost 17-21 13-21 to their world number 4 opponents in 49 minutes.

It was the fourth defeat for the Indian pair against the Paris Olympics bronze medallists Japanese rivals in five meetings. World number 13 Treasa and Gayatri, the only Indians to have qualified for the prestigious season-ending



tournament, needed a win to secure a spot in the knockout stage of the tournament.

On Wednesday, the Indians had narrowly lost to world No.1 pair Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning of China in their opening group match before stunning

the Malaysian duo of Pearly Tan and Thinaah Muralitharan in their second match to keep their hopes alive.

But the Japanese pair proved too hot to handle for the Indian duo, who stayed level with Matsuyama and Shida till 5-5.

## Hojlund's brace secures Man U comeback win

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, Dec 13:** Rasmus Hojlund scored twice after coming off the bench and Manchester United rallied to beat Viktoria Plzen 2-1 in the Europa League.

The Denmark striker netted in the 88th minute after collecting Bruno Fernandes' pass off a free kick to seal the victory and put United into the top eight of the standings. Hojlund replaced Marcus Rashford in the 56th and scored an equalizer six minutes later after Amad Diallo's shot was deflected by goalkeeper Martin Jedlicka into his path for an easy finish.

The 21-year-old Hojlund also scored twice in the previous round, when United beat Norwegian team Bodo/Glimt 3-2, and has five goals in his six appearances in the second-tier competition.



"It feels good to have scored two goals but I am more happy with the win," Hojlund said. "My instructions? Go out there and score two goals! Just to use my qualities, run the channels and be assertive in front of goal."

United had come off two straight losses in the English Premier League, 2-0 away to Arsenal, and 3-2 at Old Trafford to Nottingham Forest that left the club 13th and eight points adrift of the top four as progress looked slow under new coach Ruben Amorim.

## Odisha Masters: Sathish, Tanvi enter semifinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Cuttack, Dec 13:** Defending champion Sathish Kumar Karunakaran moved closer to another Super 100 title after reaching the men's singles semifinals of the Odisha Masters here Friday.

The 23-year-old from Chennai, who won his maiden Super 100 title here last year and added a second crown at the Guwahati Masters last week, defeated compatriot Ayush Shetty, a bronze medallist at the 2023 World Junior Championships, 21-18, 12-21, 21-9 in a thrilling quarterfinal. In women's singles, Tanvi Sharma will face Shriyanshi Valishetty in an all-Indian semifinal. Tanvi defeated compatriot Anmol Kharb 25-23, 21-16, while Shriyanshi triumphed 13-21, 21-10, 21-14 over Hong Kong's third-seeded Lo Sin Yan Happy.