

Shilpa's philosophy

Actor Shilpa Shetty says life is all about embracing extremes and coming out stronger

LEISURE | P2



NHRC gets new chief

Former Supreme Court judge V Ramasubramanian has been appointed the new chairperson of NHRC

NATIONAL | P8



Trump's new threat

President-elect Donald Trump threatens to reassert US control over Panama Canal

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Manipur beat Odisha

Manipur's monopoly continues as they defeat Odisha in Senior Women's National Football

SPORTS | P12

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BHUBANESWAR | TUESDAY | DECEMBER 24, 2024

CM Majhi meets PM Modi in Delhi

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi and discussed various issues related to the state.

Majhi, who is on a five-day visit to Rajasthan and New Delhi, met the Prime Minister, on his way back to the state capital.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) posted on X saying: 'Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Mohan Charan Majhi, met Prime Minister @naren-



Majhi in a post on X said: 'Today, I met the Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi and discussed various important issues. On behalf of the people of Odisha, I would like to express my gratitude for all the support he has given to the development of

Prime Minister Modi is scheduled to attend the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention in Bhubaneswar which will be held from January 8 to

The PM will also visit Odisha to attend Utkarsh Odisha Make In Odisha Conclave, which is scheduled to take place in the Capital City January 27 and 28.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



the energy sector. He loves those who praise his energy levels!



UP IN FLAMES: An electronics godown in Satya Nagar area of Bhubaneswar catches fire Monday evening

CLASS V & VIII

NEW HURDLES

(RTE) in 2019, at least 16 states

and two Union Territories

(UTs) have already done away

with the 'no-detention policy'

According to a gazette noti-

fication, after the conduct of

regular examination, if a child

fails to fulfil the promotion cri-

teria, as notified from time to

time, he shall be given addition-

al instruction and opportunity

for re-examination within a

period of two months from the

"If the child appearing in the

date of declaration of results.

re-examination fails to fulfil the

promotion criteria again, he

shall be held back in fifth class

or eighth class, as the case may

be. During the holding back of

the child, the class teacher shall

guide the child as well as the par-

ents of the child, if necessary, and

provide specialised inputs after

identifying the learning gaps at

various stages of assessment.

the notification said. However,

the government has clarified

that no child shall be expelled

from any school till completion

for the two classes.

Five years after amending the

Right To Education (RTE) Act,

2010, in 2019, the Union gov-

ernment has allowed the states

and Union Territories to detain

Classes V and VIII students, if

they fail to clear the year-end

examinations and a re-test two

months after the results are out.

This move marks a significant

departure from the long-stand-

ing 'no-detention policy' which

had been a cornerstone of In-

dia's educational framework

since enactment of RTE Act in

2009. The notification will be

applicable to over 3,000 schools

run by the Centre including Ken-

driya Vidyalayas, Navodaya

Vidvalavas and Sainik Schools

New Delhi, Dec 23: The Cen-

tre has scrapped the 'no-deten-

tion policy for Classes V and

VIII in schools governed by it

allowing them to fail students

who do not clear the year-end

Following the amendment

exams, according to officials.

PNN & AGENCIES



Championship final

BJD rakes up election data discrepancies

New Delhi: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Monday filed a complaint with

12 PAGE | ₹5.00

submitted a memorandum on the issue. The BJD, in its memorandum to the poll panel, claimed that "serious

Election Commission (EC) claiming "unusual" variances in the votes cast in the 2024 Parliamentary and Assembly elections in Odisha and some other poll data. A delegation of BJD leaders, including its Rajya Sabha MPs, went to the EC office here and discrepancies" have been found between Form 17-C filled by presiding officers and Form-20 filled by returning officers. Discrepancies were found in the votes polled in Assembly seats and corresponding 21 Lok Sabha constituencies, it said.

Woman kidnapped, friend attacked in City

Bhuhaneswar: A woman was kidnapped and her male companior allegedly assaulted by four unidentified miscreants in Lumbini Vihar area here in the wee hours of Monday, police said. The incident happened under the jurisdiction of Maitri Vihar police station, when she was returning home with her male companion, they said. According to police, the woman was found near Baramunda around five hours after her kidnapping.

State demands IMD regional centre in City

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: The state government Monday urged the India Meteorological Department (IMD) to upgrade its existing office here to a regional meteorological centre as the state has been facing several natural calamities such as cyclones and

State Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari placed the demand at a function on the occasion of the IMD's 150 years of service.

At present, IMD has six regional centres in New Delhi, Mumbai. Chennai, Nagpur, Kolkata and Guwahati.

He also said, "Odisha has become a permanent address for different types of disasters. Therefore, we urge the director general of the IMD to set up a regional office of the weather department here," the minister said.

IMD DG Mrutyunjaya Mohapatra said, "The IMD has weather monitoring stations in all 30 districts of Odisha and Doppler radars at Paradip and Gopalpur, while three more places - Balasore, Sambalpur and Bhubaneswar - will get the facility soon.'

It's official: B'desh wants Hasina back

Dhaka, Dec 23: Bangladesh's interim government said Monday that it has sent a diplomatic note to India to send back deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Dhaka.

Hasina, 77, has been living in exile in India since August 5 when she fled the country amid the student-led protests that toppled her 16-year regime. Bangladesh-based International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) has issued arrest warrants for Hasina and several former Cabinet ministers, advisers, and military and civil officials for "crimes against humanity and genocide".

'We have sent a note verbale to the Indian government saying that Bangladesh wants her back here for the judicial process," Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain told reporters at his office. Earlier in the morning, Home Advisor Jahangir Alam said his office has sent a letter to the foreign ministry to facilitate the ousted premier's extradition from India.

"We have sent a letter to the foreign ministry regarding her



extradition. The process is currently underway," he told reporters in response to a query. Alam said an extradition

treaty between Dhaka and New Delhi already exists and Hasina could be brought back to Ban gladesh under it. Last month, in an address to the nation on the completion of 100 days of the interim government, Bangla desh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus said it will seek the extradition of Hasina.

"We must ensure justice in every killing... We will also ask India to send back fallen autocrat Sheikh Hasina," he said.

Yunus, who assumed office August 8, claimed that about 1,500 people, including students and workers, were killed while 19,931 others were wounded during the protest against the Hasina government.

to the Right to Education Act of elementary education. Bhatta, president of OPF. 'Sunny Leone' avails ₹1,000 a month government grant

Mumbai, Dec 23: A new fraud in Chhattisgarh involving ac-

fraud

related to

Mahatari

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

tress Sunny Leone has come to light. A person has been enjoying the benefits of the state's welfare scheme Mahtari Van-Vandan Yojana in dan Yojana using the Chhattisgarh came actress name to get o light after an RT the ₹1,000 per month plea was filed for from the state govhe scrutiny of the ernment. As per media reports, the fraud was

uncovered in Talur village, located in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region. A man used Sunny's name to receive the amount as the scheme only transfers the money to married women.

A case has been filed against the man behind the fraud named Virendra Joshi, according to reports. The man also used the name of adult film actor Johnny Sins.

According to senior Ministry

of Education officials, the notifi-

cation will be applicable to over

3,000 schools run by the central

government including Kendri-

ya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidy-

"Since school education is a

state subject, states can make

their decision in this regard.

Already 16 states and 2 UTs in-

cluding Delhi have done away

with the no-detention policy

for these two classes. "Haryana

and Puducherry have not made

any decision yet while remain-

ing states and UTs have decided

to continue with the policy," a

Meanwhile, Odisha Parents

Federation (OPF) has criti-

cised the Union government's

decision saying that this is a

"It will aggravate issues like

dropout, child marriage, child

labour and atrocities against

children in India. This is an

anti-parents and anti-students

decision. It must be rolled back

immediately," said Basudeb

senior official said.

violation of RTE Act.

alayas and Sainik Schools.

The fraud related to the scheme, which was introduced by the BJP government, came to the light after an RTI filing which led to the scanning of Mahatari Vandan Yojana website thereby filtering out details of a beneficiary registered with the name Sunny Leone and her hus-

band mentioned as Johnny Sins. To become a beneficiary of the scheme, the documents from the fraudster were received at Anganwadi level in Bastar district. The file was "verified" by Anganwadi and another supervisor. It also stated that the person has received the beneficiary amount for 10 months - from March to December.

In a social media post, the state Congress president Deepak Baij accused the BJP

of favouring their supporters through the scheme. He wrote on X, formerly Twitter, "Mahatari Vandan money is going to BJP's favourites in the name of Sunny Leone".

Sunny Leone, however, is yet to comment on the matter. Meanwhile, Sunny, who last hosted the dating reality show 'MTV Splitsvilla X5', renewed her wedding vows with her hushand Daniel Weber after 13 years of their marriage. The couple renewed their vows in an intimate ceremony in the Maldives October 31, and was joined by their

children Nisha, Noah, and Asher. A source close to the couple had shared that the couple had wanted to renew their vows for quite some time but waited until their children were old enough to understand the significance of the occasion.

Pioneer of parallel cinema Shyam Benegal dies at 90

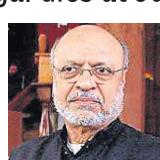
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 23: Veteran filmmaker Shyam Benegal, who heralded the Indian parallel cinema movement in the 1970s and 1980s with films such as "Ankur", "Nishant" and "Manthan", died Monday, his

daughter Pia said. He was 90. The filmmaker passed away at Mumbai's Wockhardt Hospital due to chronic kidney disease, Pia Benegal told PTI.

"He passed away at 6:38pm at Wockhardt Hospital Mumbai Central. He had been suffering from chronic kidney disease for several years but it had gotten very bad. That's the reason for

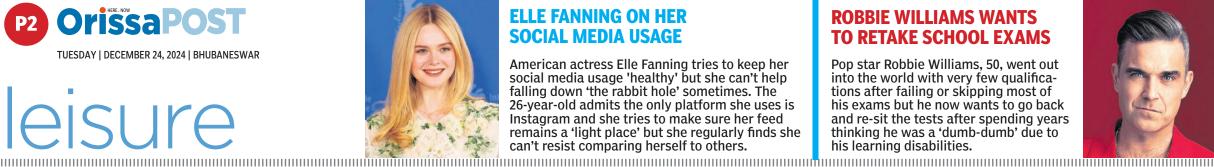
his death," she said. In his prolific career, Benegal made films on diverse issues, documentaries and television serials, including "Bharat Ek Khoj" and "Samvidhaan". Benegal is survived by his wife Nira Benegal and daughter. His films include "Bhumika", "Ju-



noon", "Mandi", "Suraj Ka Sat vaan Ghoda", "Mammo" and "Sardari Begum", most counted as classics in Hindi cinema The director's most recent work was the 2023 biographical "Mu jib: The Making of a Nation".

Meanwhile, people from various walks of life, in cluding President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Na rendra Modi, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Leader of Opposition in Odisha Assembly Naveen Patnaik, condoled Benegal's demise.

Isure



ELLE FANNING ON HER SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

American actress Elle Fanning tries to keep her social media usage 'healthy' but she can't help falling down 'the rabbit hole' sometimes. The 26-year-old admits the only platform she uses is Instagram and she tries to make sure her feed remains a 'light place' but she regularly finds she can't resist comparing herself to others.

ROBBIE WILLIAMS WANTS TO RETAKE SCHOOL EXAMS

Pop star Robbie Williams, 50, went out into the world with very few qualifications after failing or skipping most of his exams but he now wants to go back and re-sit the tests after spending years thinking he was a 'dumb-dumb' due to his learning disabilities.



POOJA'S NOTE

ON ALCOHOLSIM



accuracy • reliability • trust

You feel lost and thoroughly depressed today. This will make you turn towards spirituality, says Ganesha You will devote more time to meditation and will pray a lot. Despite the adverse circumstances, Ganesha says you will make a good deal of material headway.

TAURUS

Feel your imagination run wild as you star-gaze throughout the day wondering about the existence of the extra terrestrial. You will paint the workplace in your flavour of innovation, combined with a drive to work equally hard. Add some smooth talk to the equation and you will find a lot of people in awe of your

GEMINI

A long and hectic day awaits you. You will be in the mood to finish off long-pending projects at work or at home. There is a chance that your personal life may get affected due to the extra attention you pay towards work. You need to guard against hurting the feelings of your family members, says Ganesha.

CANCER

Ganesha advises you to be careful before signing any document. A hard time for share brokers and traders. So be on the guard during deals and transactions. you to be self-confidence.

You will pay serious attention to your work. You will feel that you have no option but to work hard. You will not be in the mood for socialising. This is only a temporary phase, hence there is no need to worry. You will be back to your usual gregarious self in no time at all, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

Matters of religion and spirituality rise to the fore today. Throw yourself into a single-minded pursuit to be successful in your chosen field, and make the most of your skills and natural talent, says Ganesha. Matters of relationships will see you more critical and analytical than emotional

LIBRA Ganesha says that today

you shall be very careful in money matters. It is nothing to do with miserliness at all. When buying things you will be careful while spending money and will stick to your budget. On the other hand when you are out with your loved ones you will not think about holding back and will spend lavishly. Ganesha says to take the balanced approach in everything in life and things will go well for you.

SCORPIO

It is likely that you shall learn an important lesson in life today. Remember that spite and envy beget enemies. Ganesha advises you to display some errors so as to make you seem more human and approachable.

SAGITTARIUS

You wake up with a smile today. According to Ganesha, you have a knack of solving problems, which you may use it to the optimum. Be cautious of people around you, as their envious nature may affect your work. Ignore them and keep the optimism alive.

CAPRICORN

Whether you're an artist, performer, professional or an entrepreneur, career issues will take the foreground today, while personal matters will wait in queue for your attention, says Ganesha. Your performance will be at its all-time high, and your efforts will be duly rewarded, but credit for this must go to your loved ones who will lend their unceasing support for all your endeavours.

AQUARIUS

Listen to your inner voice, follow what your heart says and you will not need anyone else guiding you on your path. At work, you will have a smooth sailing today, as superiors will be supportive of your actions and decisions. Go on a romantic date in the evening, and mark a perfect ending to the day, feels Ganesha.

PISCES

While you will need loads of moral support to keep your spirits up, you are also likely to be blessed with the company of a person who is equipped to provide just that. Positive results will come your way as long as you do not give up. Use your imagination and creativity to surge ahead of the competition, says Ganesha

'Take the plunge into whatever life offers'

MUMBAI: Actress Shilpa Shetty, who was last seen in Indian Police Force, is embracing the extremes and coming out stronger.

Monday, the actress took to her Instagram, and shared a video of herself in which she could be seen in a jacuzzi. The actress said in the video, posted from Lapland in Finland, that the temperature outside the jacuzzi is -13 °C.

The actress then came out of the jacuzzi, and lay down on the snow with her back facing down. She screamed as she felt the temperature shock and sprinted back to the jacuzzi.

She wrote in the caption, "Life can throw you from hot to cold in a heartbeat, just like this. But it's all about embracing the extremes and coming out stronger. Stay balanced, stay motivated, and take the plunge into whatever life offers #NOGUTSNOGLO-RY #MondayMotivation #HotAndColdChallenge #Lapland diaries'

Earlier, the actress and her husband, Raj Kundra's premises were raided by the Enforcement Di-

rectorate (ED). After this, Raj had issued a public statement about him fully complying with the authorities. The searches were part of an

ongoing investigation into an alleged money laundering case.

The businessman was arrested by the Mumbai Crime Branch in July 2021 in connection with the case, facing multiple charges under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Information Technology Act. He was later granted bail by a city court.

MUMBAI: Filmmaker Payal Kapadia, whose film All We *Imagine as Light* has been scooping critical acclaim, has shared her opinion on the representation of women in

The filmmaker said that the female representation in cinema and media is very one dimensional, and is often shaped by male gaze.

She said, "The representation of women in the media is so one-dimensional, often shaped by a male gaze. Even in something as simple as waxing ads, women are portrayed without hair, which speaks to the unrealistic standards set by society. In my film, we wanted to step away from that and just be ourselves, authentic and true to how we are in everyday life"

She further mentioned, "It's about whose gaze is at the center of the narrative. For instance, when you see Anu in the city, ev-

looks romantic and picturesque. But when it's Prabha, it's just normal, because the

lens changes

erything

everything". padia boasts of Payal Kaa Critics Choice Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film and the historic Golden Globe nominations for Best Director in Motion Picture, making her the first-ever Indian woman nominated in this category. The film also won Best Film Not in the English Language from the Los Angeles



Big B bunked classes

MUMBAI: Veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan is known for discipline on the sets, and his penchant for rehearsing the scenes. However, there was a time when Big B let go of the discipline in him for momentary fun. The veteran actor revealed on

the quiz based reality show Kaun Banega Crorepati that he used to bunk his school.

During the show, a curious contestant asked Amitabh Bachchan, "You had a role as the principal in the movie Mohabbatein, where you portrayed a character who was all about 'Parampara, Prathishta, Anushashan' (Tradition, Prestige, Discipline). I'm curious, if you were truly a principal, would you have been that strict? And, did you ever skip

class

Responding to the same, Amitabh Bachchan said, "Where did you get the idea that I could have been a principal? Padhaai-likhaai mein zero the hum... so I could never have a principal. But yes, the

principal at my school was very strict. I used to bunk school, not just classes! I was in a boarding school in Nainital, and couldn't leave the campus. But at night, when everyone else was asleep, I would sneak out. If I got caught, I would be punished".

The actress took to social media to share her journey, expressing that the opposite of addiction

maker Pooja Bhatt cele-

brated eight years of sobri-

ety after quitting alcohol.

MUMBAI:

Actor-film-

is not just sobriety but connection. Monday, Pooja posted a candid photo of herself

with the caption, "8 years sober today. Gratitude. Gravitas. Grace. 'You're not alone, we love you' has to be at every level of how we respond to addicts socially, politically, and individually. For one hundred years now, we've been singing war songs about addicts. I think all along we should have been singing love songs to them... because the opposite of addiction is not sobriety. The opposite of addiction is connection." -Johann Hari #onestepatatime #onedayatatime #sobrietyrocks #soberissexy #soberliving #8yearssober #gratitude #gravitas #grace #johannhari #lostconnections #poojabhatt.

The 'Dil Hai Ki Manta Nahin' actress gave up alcohol around 2016. Pooja Bhatt, daughter of filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt. has been candid about her struggles with alcohol. She had previously shared that she decided to quit drinking after realizing she had fallen into the 'trap of addiction' and understood that the only way to break free was to acknowledge it to herself.

PEANUTS





CALVIN AND HOBBES

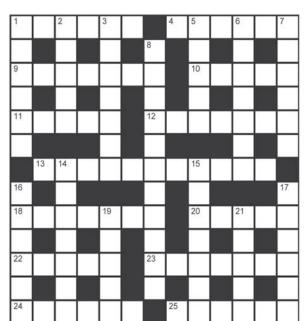


BREVITY



POST

CROSSWORD



22 Berate

23 Blunder

24 Vacation

25 Come into

view

destination

Across

1 Like some

humour

4 Poem unit

9 Plains beast

10 Animal disease

11 Entices 12 Warning signal

(3,4)

13 Large steak 18 Italian restaurant

menu item 20 Undisguised

Down

1 Preserve. sort of 2 Direct

> elsewhere 3 Operator's gear

6 Bewilder 7 Retaliate 8 Wes Craven's

violet

5 Like a shrinking

output (6,5) 14 Apparent 15 Pouched

mammal

16 Mistake fixer 17 Paper clip

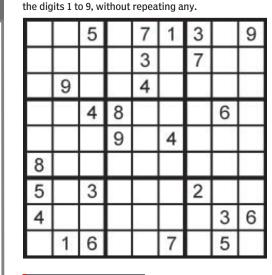
alternative 19 Dictate

21 Keyboard key

SUDOKU

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

M O L I E R E E L D E RUDDERS

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

CULTURAL SHOW

Young artistes perform during Biswa Odissi Utsav at Bhanja Kala Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Monday



BJD raises poll data discrepancies with EC

to the poll panel, claimed that

'serious discrepancies" have

been found between Form 17-C

filled by presiding officers and

Form-20 filled by returning of-

It also claimed that discrep-

ancies were found in the num-

ber of votes polled in assembly

constituencies and corresponding 21 parliamentary constitu-

encies. The variations ranged

from 4,056 votes in Dhenkanal

to 3,521 votes in Kandhamal

and 2701 votes in Bolangir, the

history of Odisha elections, per-

haps also in the country, that

the reported voting percentage

at the close of poll on polling

day and final voting percentage

after the end of poll reported by

ECI after two days saw a differ-

ence ranging from 15 per cent to

30 per cent," the BJD claimed.

Amar Patnaik told reporters

that their memorandum is

Former MP and BJD leader

"This is the first time in the

party said.

owntown



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Monday filed a complaint with the Election Commission claiming "unusual" variances in the votes cast in the 2024 Parliamentary and Assembly elections in Odisha and some other poll data.

A delegation of BJD leaders, including all its Rajya Sabha MPs, went to the Election Commission office here and submitted a memorandum on the issue

Asked if the BJD, which is not a part of the INDIA bloc, would join other opposition parties that have been raising concerns over electronic voting machines (EVMs), BJD leader Sasmit Patra said their complaint is not aimed at getting political gains.

"This complaint is above party politics and opposition versus ruling party," Patra said. The BJD, in its memorandum

parency of the election process in the country.

'We are bringing out these discrepancies before the Election Commission to highlight that people of this country, the citizens of our state of Odisha, have tremendous confidence in the Election Commission for conducting free and fair elections," Patnaik said.

Asked if the BJD felt the EVMs were to be blamed for the discrepancies, Patnaik said, "These differences could be arising either out of machine error, or out of manual error, or out of a process error, or a combination of both, or a combination of all.'

Patnaik added that the poll panel assured them that the complaint would be investigated and the party would be invited again for discussion.

BJD was a part of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) till 2009. The party, which has seven MPs in the Rajya Sabha, was routed in the recent parliamentary and assembly polls.

Naveen Patnaik-led BJD has maintained that it will serve as a "strong and vibrant" opposition in Parliament.

The Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) had raised questions on the EVMs' working and claimed discrepancies in poll data after their opposition alliance was defeated in the recent Maharashtra polls, but the EC had rebutted their claims.



RIGOROUS TRAINING: An NCC cadet rehearses in Bhubaneswar, Monday, ahead of the upcoming Republic Day Camp in New Delhi

Capital gears up for Christmas with festive fervour

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: The Capital city is brimming with festive cheer as markets. malls, and restaurants light up with vibrant decorations for Christmas celebrations. Streets are adorned with sparkling lights, Santa figurines, and colourful ornaments, creating a buzzing atmosphere that is drawing crowds and boosting local businesses.

Vendors across the City are witnessing a surge in sales, particularly near popular

shopping areas. "Christmas celebrations have grown over the years, and this season has been especially good for us,' said Ashok Sahu, a vendor near Vani Vihar.

'Our location near the

church makes it convenient "We prepare sweets like rose for people to shop and take cakes, cookies, and pithas to photos. Christmas has become mark the occasion.' Churches across the City a celebration for everyone, not are also ready for the festiv just the Christian community,

portunity," he added. The festive spirit extends beyond the markets, as homes and churches prepare for celebrations. Residents are excited to celebrate with family gatherings and traditional delicacies. "For our family, Christmas is about togetherness," Vimlesh Bhengra,

offering us a great earning op-

a local resident said adding,

At the Church of Christ (Union Church) in Acharya Vihar, elaborate decorations have been completed. "In my 13 years as caretaker, I've seen increasing enthusiasm every Christmas," said Sabhajan Pradhan. "We are ready

to welcome visitors and have ensured proper security for smooth celebrations.

BLOOD DONATION CAMP HELD IN CITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: The All Odisha Driving Training School Owners' Association recently organised a blood donation camp and awareness campaign in collaboration with the Red Cross, Sattwik Soul Foundation, and Marwari Yuva Manch (Rhubaneswar)

The event was held at the CPI (M) office in the City with the aim of inspiring the public to donate blood and raising awareness about the importance of blood donation, particularly at accident sites.

The camp collected 35 units of blood. Distinguished guests, including Bikash Chandra Choudhury, joint commissioner (Technical-Principal, Government Driving School & RTO, Bhubaneswar), and Biranchi Narayan Adhikari, deputy commissioner (Transport, Central Zone-Commissioner, RTO, Cuttack), graced the event as chief guests. The programme was spearheaded by Dushmanta Kumar Mahapatra, president of the All Odisha Driving Training School Owners' Association, with the support of key office bearers, including vice-president Chittaranjan Parida, Secretary Jagadish Chandra Mishra, joint secretary Prashant Ranjan Sahu, and treasurer Bijay Kumar Khuntia.

CTC

25.4°

16.0°

89%

WEATHER

Max Temp Min Temp

Humidity

Rainfall

Cloudy sky

FORECAST

ODISHA SOLAR INVESTOR CONCLAVE

IREDA sanctions ₹3K-cr for RE projects



Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IRE-DA) has sanctioned over ₹3,000 crore for green energy projects across Odisha, covering solar, hydro, ethanol and renewable energy manufacturing sectors, a top IREDA official said here

IREDA chairman and managing director Pradip Kumar Das said this while addressing the Odisha Solar Investor Conclave, organised by GRIDCO and iF-**OREST** (International Forum for Environment Sustainability and Technology) here

Das said Odisha has the potential to emerge as a leading solar power producer and a hub for solar equipment manufacturing. Sharing IREDA's national contributions, he noted that the company has

sanctioned over 2.08 lakh crore and disbursed 1.36 lakh crore towards renewable energy projects, positioning itself as a catalyst for market formation in emerging RE technologies such as ethanol, EV fleet financing, pumped storage hydropower and green ammonia.

Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo said the conclave has been organised prior to the Utkarsh Odisha Conclave-2025 to attract investors in the RE sector so that employment for more number of people can be generated in the state.

"The government of Odisha is committed to renewable energy. Our Prime Minister has shown the way forward for 2070. Solar is a key driver for the state's growth and Odisha has everything possible going for it. Our investment climate is conducive, we have a robust system in place and we have the willpower

to harness it," he said.

Energy department principal secretary Vishal Kumar Dev said, "Odisha is on the cusp of a transformative energy transition. The demand for clean and affordable energy has never been more important to address the global challenge of climate change. This conclave is a testament to our commitment to clean energy."

Solar power currently accounts for 21 per cent of Odisha's total 2,938 MW (me ga watt) renewable energy capacity, including hydro. This includes 508 MW of ground-mounted, 58 MW of rooftop, and 42 MW of off-grid solar capacity, officials said.

"We have found that a modest potential of 200GW is available in the state currently. A large chunk will come from floating solar, rooftop solar and PM Kusum. A lot of incentives have been given by the state to promote renewable energy," said Gridco managing director

Trilochan Panda. President of iFOREST, Chandra Bhushan said, "A green environment is only possible if we build a green economy. And clean energy is its biggest driver. There is demand, potential to supply and favourable conditions for the sector to grow.

State Congress to hit streets today

BHUBANESWAR: The Congress will stage protests in all the districts of Odisha Tuesday demanding Union Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation for his recent remark on BR Ambedkar during a debate in the Rajya Sabha Addressing a press conference at the Congress Bhawan here, Koraput MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka termed Shah's remark as an insult to the dalits, tribals, and minorities". Shah has come under fire from the opposition parties over his remark on Ambedkar in the Upper House of Parliament

December 17. "Abhi ek fashion Ambedkar ho gaya hai remarks - Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar,

Ambedkar. Itna naam agar bhagwan ka lete to saat janmon tak swarg mil jata (It has become a fashion to say Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar. If they had taken God's name so many times, they would have got a place in heaven)," Shah had said. "Ambedkar is like a god for the dalits, tribals, and minorities. A tribal man like me would have not been able to represent Koraput in Parliament without leaders like Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel," he said. Commenting on the alleged physical assault on two BJP MPs in Parliament, the Congress MP said, "When our MPs were trying to enter Parliament, saffron party parliamentarians pushed Mallikarjun Kharge and tried to attack Priyanka Gandhi."

BOOSTING ROAD SAFETY

STA inks MoU with IIT Madras



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: The State Transport Authority (STA) Monday signed an MoU with IIT Madras to implement innovative information, education, and communication (IEC) strategies to improve road safety measures across the state.

The MoU was signed here in the presence of Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena.

The partnership will focus on implementing the 4E model of road safety-engineering (road and vehicle design), enforcement, emergency care, and education, with empathy (human factors)—to address safety comprehensively and effectively, the official said.

Speaking on the occasion, Jena said that the partnership with IIT Madras marks a crucial step in the state government's mission to make Odisha's roads safer.

"By blending cutting-edge research with practical, commu nity-driven IEC strategies, we are making significant strides toward achieving our vision of a Viksit Odisha-a state where safety and innovation coexist for the benefit of every citizen, he said.

The minister said that the MoU's initiatives will focus on leveraging modern technology, real-time data, and engaging communication tools to effective ly address high-risk groups and foster long-lasting behavioural changes in road safety.

Commerce and Transport department principal secretary Usha Padhee said that such col laborative effort underscores the government of Odisha's unwavering commitment to improving road safety, fostering innovation, and building a sustainable, safer urban mobility ecosystem.

MHW HIGHLIGHTS BUDHA RAULA'S LEGACY

PARTICIPANTS EXPLORED THE ANCIENT TEMPLE AND MONASTERY, UNCOVERING STORIES OF ANCIENT TRADITION, CULTURE, AND HISTORY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Dec 23: More than 60 participants including heritage lovers, students and intellectuals from across the district gathered Sunday to explore the historic Baba Budha Raula Temple and Matha during the 15th edition of the Mayurbhanj Heritage Walks (MHW). The event was organised by Mayurbhanj Lovers and Mayurbhanj Mirror.

The heritage walk began at the iconic Mayurbhanj Palace, now part of MPC College, and proceeded to the temple and monastery. Kumaresh Nayak from Mayurbhanj Mirror captivated participants with tales of the temple's history, includ-

ing the Shiv Lingam, the sacred fire that has burned for centuries, and the story of Arakhpal

The event saw enthusiastic participation from students and professionals alike. Arlin Ankita Parida, an actress and postgraduate student of political science, expressed her excitement, saying, "Connecting the missing dots of our heritage, tradition, and culture is why I join heritage walks. It's a wonderful experience to be part of this event.'

Ansa Khatun, a postgraduate student in English literature, shared a similar sentiment, stating, "The heritage walk takes us back to the past. Discovering Mayurbhanj's glory



is a fascinating learning expe

Assistant Professor of Histo-

ry Suchismita Das emphasised the educational value of such events, saying, "Understanding

one's cultural history and traditions connects us to our glorious past. College and school students must actively participate in these walks to foster a sense of pride and awareness."

Ipsita Pattanayak, an Assistant Professor in Geology, highlighted the significance of archaeology and history in daily life, adding, "The heritage walk allows us to revisit and appreciate our roots.'

Rushirai Pattanavak, a core member of the Mayurbhani Lovers group and a key organiser, spoke passionately about preserving and promoting the district's heritage. "Baripada has a royal past that deserves recognition. Heritage walks like these keep the spirit of our history alive," he said.

Mayurbhani Lovers and Mayurbhani Mirror have been tirelessly documenting and promoting the district's heritage culture, tourism, wildlife, and rural life for over seven years Their efforts continue to inspire a deeper appreciation for Mayurbhanj's rich history.

Notable attendees included Sushree Nayak, Akash Mohanty, Krishna Chandra Mukhi, Jeet Patnaik, Abhas Dev. and Chinmay Das, who contributed to the success of the event.

The 15th Mayurbhanj Her itage Walks left participants with a renewed sense of pride in their roots and a deeper under standing of the district's cultur al and historical significance.

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VARIATION

Nil

MARKET WATCH



Never grumble. All sorts of forces enter you when you grumble and they pull you down.





Targeted Killings

s the Russian invasion of Ukraine is approaching its third year, the war between the two countries has assumed new proportions with targeted killing of top Russian commanders. It also speaks volumes for the guts and daring of Ukrainian spies to take the battle into the heart of the enemy country. Russia is furious over the assassination of one of their top commanders by Ukrainian spies in an explosion that shook a quiet Moscow neighbourhood. Lt Gen Kirillov, head of the Russian military's chemical, biological and radiological weapons unit, known as RKhBZ, was killed in a deadly scooter bomb attack. The scooter was parked outside a Moscow residential building and remotely detonated. The day before, the Ukraine secret service agency, the SBU, had charged the general in absentia, accusing him of the "mass use of banned chemical weapons." Ukraine claims over 2,000 of its troops have been hospitalised because of the use of choking agents and three have died. The SBU has said it recorded more than 4.800 occasions when Russia used chemical weapons on the battlefield since Putin launched his full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Russia's security service (FSB) immediately swung into action and claimed to have detained a suspect 20 December for killing the senior general. The suspect was described as an Uzbek citizen who, the Russian agency said, had been recruited by Ukrainian intelligence services. The FSB said the suspect had been promised a reward of \$100,000 and permission to move to a European Union country in exchange for killing Kirillov. It said that acting on instructions from Ukraine, the suspect travelled to Moscow, where he picked up a homemade explosive device. He then placed the device on an electric scooter and parked it at the entrance of the residential building where Kirillov lived. The suspect then rented a car to monitor the location and set up a camera that live streamed video from the scene to his handlers in the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro. When Kirillov was seen leaving the building, the suspect detonated the bomb.

Justifying the killing, SBU told the media Kirillov, being "a war criminal" was "an absolutely legitimate target," since he gave orders to use prohibited chemical weapons against the Ukrainian military. In wartime rhetoric Ukraine even said such an inglorious end awaits everyone who kills Ukrainians and retribution for war crimes is inevitable. Kirillov himself and his military unit were sanctioned by several countries, including the US, Britain and Canada for alleged use of chemical weapons on the battlefields in Ukraine.

Russia has denied using any chemical weapons in Ukraine and, in turn, has accused Kyiv of using toxic agents in combat. But, the war between the two countries has become so murky that even targeted killings are being justified invoking provisions from the UN Charter, Article 51, which states: "Nothing in the present charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations.

Clandestine killings in wartime represent a dark side of modern warfare. Last week, Ukraine's intelligence service claimed that it had assassinated Mikhail Shatsky, the deputy director of a Moscow-based ballistics engineering unit known for developing cruise missiles. If true, it only highlights Kyiv's increasingly bold efforts to disrupt Russia's war machine at its source. Russia, of course, terms such acts as terrorism though it may be painted with the same brush by Ukraine for its acts on the latter's soil.

But, the fact remains Russia is the aggressor and Ukraine is the victim of that aggression. Viewed in this light, the killings of civilians and army generals and military personnel in overt and covert operations are nothing but war against humanity. After all, as the Bard wrote, "everything is fair in love and war."

WISDOM CORNER

The marvelous richness of human experience would lose something of rewarding joy if there were no limitations to overcome. The hilltop hour would not be half so wonderful if there were no dark valleys to traverse.

Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.

The willow which bends to the tempest, often escapes better than the oak which resists it; and so in great calamities, it sometimes happens that light and frivolous spirits recover their elasticity and presence of mind sooner than those of a loftier character.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1814: Treaty of Ghent. On this day in 1814, the United States and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Ghent in Belgium, ending the War of 1812, marking a decline of American dependence on Europe, and stimulating a sense of U.S. nationalism.
- 1865: Ku Klux Klan created. The extremist white supremacist organization, also known as the Klan, was created in Pulaski, Tennessee by Confederate Army veterans.
- 1914: Christmas Truce begins. A much-studied event in war and peace studies, the Christmas Truce was a brief unofficial ceasefire between British and German troops along the Western Front of World War I. During the truce, soldiers from both sides sang carols, shared food, exchanged gifts and played football (soccer). Subsequent attempts to hold similar ceasefires around Christmas time failed.
- 1943: General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed supreme commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force during World War II.
- 1951: Idris I, head of the San siyyah (a Sufi Muslim brotherhood), was proclaimed king of an independent United Kingdom of Lib-
- 1955: NORAD's Santa tracking service begins. The event is now a Christmas tradition where the North American Aerospace Defense Command tracks Santa Claus as he travels around the world delivering presents to children. The event began after a printing error in a Sears catalog asking children to call Santa Claus. The number that was printed was the number of Colorado Springs' Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD) Center.
- 1979: The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to aid the Afghan communist government in its conflict with anti-communist Muslim guerrillas during the Afghan War.

FOCUS YEAR AHEAD

PROGNOSIS FOR 2025

the calendar year with a degree of optimism. To live with hope is in the very nature of human existence. No matter how tough the challenges in the year ahead, the optimists outnumber the pessimists. No amount of gloom or doom prospects purveyed by dismal economists can deter the optimists. Their confidence in the future is undiminished. In that spirit here is a prognosis for the year 2025, full of tough challenges for the optimists to tackle and overcome.

The year ahead is full of uncertainty. Making an accurate prediction is foolish and is sure to fail. The sources of global uncertainty are economic and geopolitical. In the latter category are many factors. These include the outcome of the endless war in Ukraine, the escalation of the Israel-Hamas conflict and its spillover into the wider region of West Asia, and the ascendance of far-right parties in many countries, most prominently in Germany. One of the largest economies in the world, the German government lost the vote of confidence in Parliament this month, leading to mid-term elections which will be held early next year. The German economy will contract for a second year in a row, even as it grapples with a rising deficit, need for greater funding of the overseas wars, a shortage of skills and underfunded education. Then there is a rising anti-immigrant sentiment fuelled by farright parties. Will Germany tilt closer to Russia or to NATO? How will it deal with Iran and its competitor China? Will its economy bounce back?

Ajit Ranade

THE INDIAN

EXPECTED TO

DUE TO STRONG

OF THE TRUMP

DOLLAR POLICIES

ADMINISTRATION

COMPOUNDED BY

A WIDER TRADE

DEFICIT IN INDIA

DEPRECIATE

RUPEE IS

Beyond geopolitics is the economic uncertainty that will be heightened by America's new leader, Donald Trump who takes oath on 20 January. He has promised higher import tariffs, slashing government funding, stronger anti-immigrant policies and a withdrawal from most global climate treaties. His government will be more protectionist. He is likely



The worry about how to increase foreign direct investment will remain. It has been falling for several years

to engage in international diplomacy purely from an American transactional perspective. At the same time his government will have to fight inflation along with recessionary winds. Meanwhile, the American government debt has reached a new peak of \$35 trillion. Feeding this debt mountain are higher deficits and an insatiable appetite by the government for borrowing. The interest on the debt alone is about \$1 trillion. The borrowing appetite keeps the American dollar currency strong, causing other currencies like the Indian rupee to fall. Weaker currencies cause inflation to worsen.

Despite its economic woes. the American stock market clocked new highs during 2024 leading to the creation of more than 150 new billionaires. The twelve richest men in America are together worth \$2 trillion now. We thus have a cocktail mix of high inflation, high unemployment, a wild asset markets growth (stocks and real estate) and widening wealth and income inequality. The stock markets have a habit of an abrupt and sharp correction, when collective paranoia takes hold. That bubble burst could happen but is unpredictable. Not many saw the Lehman crash coming in 2008. China is also fighting a slowdown and a large debt with stress in its banking and real estate. It is also trying to transition into the new economy powered by renewable energy, artificial intelligence, and space technology. The other parts of East Asia and Japan are in relatively better shape and have better macroeconomic features.

Rising inequality is a global concern and its removal or reduction is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. The rise of populist leaders, higher welfare spending is a response to rising inequality. How to manage the fiscal burden of welfare spending is a new challenge. In India too, welfare spending has expanded hugely, both by the Union government and the states. A recent report by the Reserve Bank of India has cautioned against expanding subsidies and freebies indiscriminately. During 2024, 60 countries had national elections including India, and in most places rising inflation and inequality were big issues for voters. In many places, incumbents were thrown out (such as in America) mainly due to inflation and economic hardships. In India too, the state assembly elections to Jharkhand and Maharashtra were swayed by promises of generous subsidies especially targeted at women. We will have two other states, Delhi and Bihar, electing new legislatures, and there is already talk of income subsidies to the poor, women and other sections of society. Who will pay for all of these is not a matter of debate, at least for now.

On India's domestic front. there are many things to watch out. Two state assem-

tioned. The much-delayed national census is likely to be kicked off. A revamp of the consumer price index and the index of industrial production is on the cards. Discussion will begin on the delimitation exercise of readjustment of Parliamentary seats. The deadline is 2026. The sixteenth Finance Commission will finalise its recommendation later this year. Will it assign assured funding to the third tier of government? In many states, election to local bodies like municipalities and panchayats have been long delayed, affecting local governance. The Indian rupee is expected to depreciate due to strong dollar policies of the Trump administration compounded by a wider trade deficit in India. The worry about how to increase foreign direct investment will remain. It has been falling for several years. The outflow of capital as well flight of rich people to other countries is also a matter of concern. Indians are expected to spend \$70 billion on the "import" of education, i.e. on students studying abroad. This is a major drain on the economy and reflects dissatisfaction with the quality of education in India, or of affordability and availability. On the technology front we will see the proliferation of electric vehicles, greater ethanol blending with petrol, and perhaps the initiation of pilot projects of small and modular nuclear reactors. One big economic development to watch for is the increase in private capital spending and the improvement in rural wages. The slowdown in urban consumption might call for a budgetary stimulus in the Union budget due to be presented in February. In summary, a year filled with uncertainty about investment and growth, widening inequalities, the growing influence of geopolitics and conflicts, and ever surging asset markets guided

by a loose monetary policy. The writer is a noted Pune-based economist.

SPECTRUM

SUSTAINABILITY

Case for digital financial inclusion



Ellen Jackowski

MORE THAN ONE BILLION UNBANKED PEOPLE LIVE IN THE MOST CLIMATE-VULNERABLE COUNTRIES

TO THE EDITOR

are most welcome to contribute letters

requested to send their contact

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numbers and full postal

columns (between 600-1000

group of economists came together earlier **▲**this year to complete the largest analysis of hurricanes' economic effects on the United States to date. One of the most striking findings was that businesses with only a brick-and-mortar presence that were in a hurricane's path suffered a 56% drop in sales for roughly three weeks, whereas those with an online presence experienced a far shallower decline - just 23%.

The clear takeaway is that nearly every business - from a hardware store in North Carolina to a corner shop in Nairobi – can strengthen its resilience to climate change by joining in the digital economy.

The global effort to counteract climate change has expanded rapidly in recent years. The energy and automotive industries are overhauling supply chains to boost uptake of clean technologies. Governments are implementing policies to accelerate the green transition, from the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism to the United States' Inflation Reduction Act.

But measures to promote digital and financial inclusion - the critical work of providing internet access to left-behind communities, bank accounts to workers, and digital tools to entrepreneurs - are often missing in the fight against global warming. More than one billion unbanked people live in the most climate-vulnerable countries, and improving their access to digital banking and payment services would make them and their communities more resilient to both economic and climate shocks. Following a natural disaster, households could more easily receive relief funds through digital money transfers, and businesses could continue selling to their customers online.

This represents a clear opportunity, especially for fintechs and nonprofits, to create more products and services at the intersection of climate resilience and digital inclusion. One good example is the social enterprise Abalobi, an Earthshot Prize finalist in 2023. Abalobi created an app that small-scale fishers can use to input catches, showing exactly where they are fishing.

The app addresses two problems. First, it provides invaluable data to governments and scientists about who is fishing sustainably and who is not. Second, small-scale fishers often sell through middlemen who pay low prices, which forces them to reel in as much as they can to make a living. But by using the app's digital marketplace, these fishers can connect directly with restaurants and other buyers, enabling them to sell their catch for higher prices. This allows them to fish more selectively, in turn reducing the strain on marine life.

Yo! Pay Agric, powered by Mastercard Community Pass. likewise enables smallholder farmers to connect with regional buyers through their farmer cooperative organisations, bypassing middlemen and earning them higher prices for their crops.

Digital and financial inclusion must become a core pillar

focus on reducing the number of unbanked individuals and building digital infrastructure in climate-vulnerable communities. To that end, private companies, governments, and nonprofits need to work together to create innovative solutions, including products like Abalobi and Yo! Pay. This approach would help local users improve their financial health while simultaneously

of future climate efforts, with a

promoting resilience. Climate change and poverty are intertwined: we cannot effectively tackle one without addressing the other. Digital tools and access to financial services cannot stop climate-related disasters, but they can make it easier for people to recover from these shocks. Strengthening the financial resilience of the most climate-vulnerable households benefits local communities, while also benefiting the entire global economy.

> The writer is Chief Sustainability Officer at **Mastercard.** ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

The eternal Rafi

Sir, The whole music world is all set to celebrate the birth centenary of the one and only Mohammed Rafi on 24 December. The eternal singer is truly a demigod for his worshippers in the temple of music. In fact Rafi saab lives through his infinite number of songs that span various genres. Perhaps no other singer would have synced so well when it comes to adapting the actors persona. Whether it is a sad number for Dilip Kumar, a rock and roll for Shammi kapoor or a romantic number for Dev Anand, Rafi saab truly adapts the actor. He lives not only in his songs but also through kindness, dedication and love he had for all. Legendary music director Naushad Ali once said that Rafi is God's gift to the music world. His voice could create magic in whichever genre the song belonged to. Be it fast and peppy numbers, raga-based songs, soothing melodies, romantic songs, qawwalis, soul-stirring ghazals or soulful bhajans, his golden voice stirred and lilted the souls of listeners. No wonder why even in an age where songs are created by AI, music machines and cyber tools Mohammed Rafi's songs turn into a panacea ready to cure any broken heart and ailing soul.

M Pradyu, KANNUR

Consumer is king

Sir, , An unhappy consumer stands out like a sore thumb for the government. At the same time, an unhappy customer is a source of great learning for the latter, of course if it desires to improve upon its shortcomings. Nothing can be more important for the consumers than salient laws to protect them. The Consumer Protection Act (CPA), 1986 was a landmark legal weapon in the field of consumer protection, and it was passed in Parliament on 24 December, 1986. With right comes responsibility, and the Act moulded the consumer to the dual task. The gaps in the outdated 1968 law were bridged by the 1986 Act. The Act underwent significant changes in 1991, 1993, 2002; the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 was perceived to be a path-breaker. National Consumer Rights Day is observed on 24 December.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

PARCEL BOMB CASE

ADG Bothra testifies in Patnagarh court

Patnagarh, Dec 23: Former Crime Branch IG and current additional DG, IPS Arun Bothra, appeared before the Patnagarh court in Bolangir district in connection with the much-hyped Patnagarh wedding parcel bomb case, Monday.

Bothra testified in the Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge here for the second time as Witness No. 60 in the case. The parcel bomb case had rocked the state six years back. ADG Bothra revealed how

he investigated the case then, and what steps were taken in the case. He also stated how he collected the evidences during the probe. The crime CD, produced by the Crime Branch September 3, was also displayed in the court. The videography showing prime accused Punjilal Meher making a bomb after he was given the explosives in the presence of Bothra was also exhibited in the court in the presence of the lawyers representing both the sides.

Accused Meher, who is



lodged in Bolangir Jail, ap peared in the court through video conferencing. Public Prosecutor Chittaranjan Kanungo and advocate Pramod Mishra representing the defendant were also present in the court.

Notably, the then principal of Bhainsa College Sanjukta Sahu and Rabindra Sahu's newly married son Soumyashekhar and his grandmother Jemamani Sahu died in an explosion while opening a parcel which had come as wedding gift to his house. Soumyashekhar's wife Rimarani sustained severe burn injuries in the blast. After a long period of treatment, she recovered and went back home. Later, the state Crime Branch arrested Sanjukta's colleague, English lecturer Punjilal Meher, in this connection.

Tension in Barbil after desecration of temple

Keonjhar/Barbil, Dec 23: Tension ran high after miscreants desecrated a temple of Lord Hanuman and dumped the deity's idol outside after removing it from the shrine at Akhadashal in New Market area under Ward No-9 of Barbil in Keonjhar district, late Sunday night.

The untoward incident sparked widespread unrest in the locality. The idol was allegedly removed from the temple's sanctum sanctorum and thrown outside by unidentified miscreants. The act ignited public outrage as locals staged a road blockade at Madhusudan Square. They also shut down all business establishments, shops, markets, banks, and offices in the town.

Notably, the Hanuman temple was established by the Jai Hanuman Yuvak Sangha Association in the New Market area. The desecration of the temple occurred late Sunday



the desecrated idol and gathered in large numbers, expressing their anger, early Monday morning. On being informed, police promptly moved the damaged idol from the site as part of their investigation.

Angry locals blocked major junctions, including Madhusudan Chhak, Railway Gate Chhak, Bata Chhak, Dak Bangla Chhak, Kiri Buru Chhak, OMC Chhak, and Birsa Munda Chhak, demanding the immediate arrest of those responsible for the desecration of the idol. The unrest disrupted regular life in Barbil until the protests subsided after police intervention.

police deployed two platoons of force for more than five and a half hours. Acting swiftly, the police arrested one accused individual.

Following prolonged road blockades, Keonjhar Superintendent of Police (SP) arrived at the scene around 1pm and informed the agitated crowd about the arrest of the accused. After requesting the protesters to withdraw their agitation, normal vehicular movement resumed.

The accused, identified as Balbir Singh from the New Market area of Barbil, has been arrested. He has multiple cases, including complaints of theft from various temples, filed against him at the same police

Barbil SDPO said that a case (383/2024) has been registered at the Barbil police station. Further investigations are underway to identify additional suspects and uncover the motives behind the desecration.

NHRC seeks ATR on death of 3 in Jharsuguda accident

Kendrapara, Dec 23: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Monday called for an Action Taken Report (ATR) within four weeks from the Jharsuguda Superintendent of Police (SP) on the death of three persons in a road mishap in January.

The NHRC passed the order while adjudging the case filed by rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy. In the complaint, Tripathy

stated that three persons, aged 18, 19 and 26 years, died after they were hit by a heavy vehicle January 8, 2024 in Jharsuguda district of Odisha. The complainant further

mentioned that the police failed to take immediate action as no patrolling is reportedly being done by the police personnel on the highway.

No arrest has been made, he said and alleged that no imme-

Name of the Work : MISCELLANEOUS

MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR

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SECTION) FOR A PERIOD OF 02 YEARS.

Approx cost of the work: ₹ 1,44,69,791.59

EMD/Bid Security Deposit: ₹ 2,22,400/

Completion period of the work: Twenty four months from the date of issue of LOA.

Tender closing date & time: at 1530 hrs.

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₹50,000/-

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(excluding

GST & other

statutory dues)

₹1,23,500/-

₹ 10,000/-

₹30,59,000/-

excluding GST

& other

statutory dues)

₹3,05,900/-

₹ 50,000/-

₹30,59,000/-

excluding GST

& other

statutory dues

₹3,05,900/-

₹ 50,000/-

₹13,91,000/-

(excluding

GST & other

statutory dues)

₹1,39,100/-

₹ 10,000/-

₹30,29,000/-

(excluding GST

statutory dues)

₹3,02,900/-

₹ 50,000/-

₹65,90,000/-

(excluding

GST & other

statutory dues)

₹6,59,000/-/

₹ 50,000/-

₹5,37,000/-

(excluding

GST & other

statutory dues)

₹53.700/-/

₹ 10,000/-

& other



diate medical treatment was provided to the victims and the bodies of the deceased were also not dealt with dignity.

Tripathy requested the apex rights body to intervene in the

The NHRC, while calling for a report within four weeks, said it would be constrained to in voke coercive process u/s 13 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 calling for a personal appearance of the authority concerned for submission of the report, in case the report is not received within the stipu-

Man sustains critical injury in bear attack

Pradhan launches plastic

bag manufacturing unit

Paradip, Dec 23: Union Minister Dharmendra Prad-

han Monday inaugurated a plastic bag manufacturing

unit at the Plastic Park here in Jagatsinghpur district.

veloped by Energon Polymatics has a processing capac-

ity of 500 metric tonne per month. This automated plant

will manufacture various types of plastic bags and pro-

vide employment to many people, the Union Education

Minister said. "We have to connect the potential we have

with the local people. Be it the proposed petrochemical

complex in Paradip or the Bhadrak textile park or the

plan to produce clean fuel hydrogen, all these areas will

Pradhan thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Chief

Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, for providing all nec-

essary support and giving special priority to strength-

ening the industrial infrastructure of Odisha, espe-

He asserted that this support has enabled rapid

progress in Odisha, with Paradip becoming a focal

point for development. The minister also highlight-

ed recent advancements, including the expansion of

Paradip Port's capacity and the initiation of mega

cially in Paradip, under Mission Purvodaya.

create a new identity for Odisha," he said.

Pradhan said the plastic bag manufacturing plant de-

Boinda, Dec 23: A man was left critically injured after a bear attacked him near Hinjirida village in Kishorenagar block under Handapa forest range in Angul district Sunday. The injured was identified as Kishore Chandra Pradhan, a resident of Hinjirida village.

The incident occurred when Kishore had gone to the nearby forest. A bear came out of the bushes all of a sudden and attacked him.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



vere wound on the head and was admitted to the district headquarters hospital (DHH) for treatment after being rescued by his family members. Villagers demanded com-

Bank of India

Zonal Office: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jayadev

E-AUCTION **SALE NOTICE** Vihar, Navapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Ph.: 0674-2362249 E-Auction Sale Notice Under SARFAESI ACT, 2002

Description of the Properties

Homestead Land and Fly Ash Bricks Plant having

Factory Shed: 11,900 Sqft, Office Room: 690 Sqf

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1187 & 5/324, Land Area: Ac. 1.300 Dec. i.e. 56,628

Sqft, Kissam: Gharabari, situated at Mouza

Dharmashala, Dist.: Jajpur, Odisha, Standing in the

name of Mrs. Sujata Swain, W/o.: Mr. Sunil Kuma

Swain, Bounded by East: Road, West: Pvt. Land

All that part and parcel of Residential Plot situated

over Khata No.: 355/78, Plot No.: 810, Area: Ac.0.135

Dec. i.e. 5880.60 sqft., Kissam: Gharabari at Mouza

Elamapur, SRO: Salipur, Tahasil: Salipur, Tahasi

No.: 451, P.S.: Salipur, Dist.: Cuttack-754200

Standing in the name of Late Santilata Sethy

Bounded by North: Road, South: Plot No.: 812, Eas

Flat No.: 111, 1st Floor, Type- 2 BHK, Block-B having Super Built up Area: 920 sqft., Carpet Area:

589 Sqft with undivided proportionate share for the

Flat Ac.0.005 Dec. i.e. 217.80 Soft out of Tota

project Area: Ac.0.648 Dec., along with parking

space in the Apartment name & Style as "ABLAZE

HOMZ" bearing Khata No.: 512/256, Plot No.: 1127

2676, Kissam: Gharabari, Mouza: Ghangapatna

P.S.: Chandaka, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha-752054, Standing in the name of

Flat No.: 410, 4th Floor, Type- 2 BHK, Block-B having Super Built up Area: 920 sqft., Carpet Area: 589 Sqf

with undivided proportionate share for the Fla

Ac 0.011.2 Dec. i.e. 487.87 Soft out of Total project

Area: Ac.0.648 Dec., along with parking space in the

Apartment name & Style as "ABLAZE HOMZ" bearing Khata No.: 512/256, Plot No.: 1127/2676, Kissam

All that piece & parcel of the Land and Building situated over Khata No.: 97/26, Plot No.: 113, Mouza:

Machhia Diandi, SRO/Tahasil: Brahmagiri, P.S.

Brahmagiri, Dist.: Puri, Odisha, Admeasuring Area

Ac.0.060 Dec. i.e. 2614 Sqft, Kissam: Gharabari

Standing in the name of Mr. Amulya Baral, S/o.

Karunakar Baral and Mr. Milu Baral, S/o.: Karunaka

G+1 Residential Building situated over Khata No.

108/42, Plot No.: 325/423, Area: Ac.0.027 Dec. 8

Plot No.: 324/422, Area: Ac.0.087 Dec., Mouza

Panasuapada, P.S.: Patkura, Thana No.: 130

Tahasil: Garadpur, Tahasil No.: 99, Dist.

Kendrapara, Odisha, Standing in the name of Late

Lalit Kumar Mohanty, Mr. Satyajit Mohanty, Mr

Sujit Mohanty, Bounded by East: Gopabandhu

All that part and parcel of Land & Building situated

over Khata No.: 815/89, Plot No.: 820/2257, Area: Ac

North: Pvt. Land. South: Pvt. Land

Plot No.: 811, West: Road

Jhadasohala, P.S./Tahasil

Where as the Bank acting through its Authorised Officer in exercise of its powers under-Section 13(4) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (SARFAESI) has decided to put up for E-auction of the following properties "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis for realization of the

Bajabati &

	BRANCH / Name	& Address	of the Bor	rowers /
Ca	Borrowers / Co	Applicant /C	uarantore	/Total Duo

BHUBANESWAR BRANCH (NOW THE BELOW ACCOUNTS ARE TRANSFERRED TO ASSET RECOVERY BRANCH, CUTTACK), PH.: 8249067773 /

Borrower: M/s. Maa Tarini Fly Ash Bricks, Prop. Mrs. Sujata Swain, At: Plot No.: 1187, Khata No.: 210/27 Mouza: Bajabati, PO.: Thanual, Haridaspur, Dist.: Jajpur, PIN-755024 / Guarantor: Mr. Sunil Kumar Swain, S/o Golakha Bihari Swain, At: Nuagaon, PO.:Jaraka, Haridaspur P.S.: Dharmasala, Dist.: Jajpur, PIN-755024 / Total Dues: ₹2,56,53,192.75 + interest, costs and expenses, less any part

GOPALPUR BRANCH, PH.: 9007488999

Borrower: Mr. Sukanta Charan Sethy (Borrower of Home Loan), S/o: Late Santilata Sethy / Guarantor: Mr. Basanta Kumar Sethy(Guarantor of Home Loan) & Legal Heirs of Late Santilata Sethy (Mortgagor of Home Loan) are: Mr. Sukanta Charan Sethy, 2) Mr. Basanta Kumar Sethy, 3) Mr. Bisanta Charan Sethy, 4) Mr. Hemant Kumar Sethy, 5) Mamita Sethy, 6) Miss Meghana Priyadarshini Sethy (Grand Daughter of Late Santilata Sethy), 7) Mr. Soumya Ranjan Sethy (Grandson of Late Santilata Sethy), At: Elamapur, PO.: Ramakrishnapur, PS.: Salipur, Dist.: Cuttack / Total Dues: ₹22,80,927.13 as on 29.11.2022

nterest, costs and expenses from 30.11.2022, less any part amount repaid.

POKHARIPUT BRANCH, PH.: 9066629742 Borrower: Mrs. Bhabalin Samantasinghar, W/o. Mruganka Bhusan Mahapatra, Address-1: At: Raulahaia (Kasipur), PO/PS: Nirakarpur, Dist.: Khurda-752019, Address-2: Flat No.: 111, Block-B (1st Floor), Ablaze Homz,

Ghangapatna, Khata No.: 512/256, Plot No.: 1127/2676, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, Khandagiri, P.S: Chandaka, Dist.: \(\text{hurda-752054}\) \(\text{Total Dues: \(\frac{725,83,470.28}{\text{ + interest, costs}}\) and expenses, less any part amount repaid.

Mrs. Bhabalin Samantasinghar, W/o.: Mruganka Bhusan Mahapatra, Bounded by East: Open Space, West Flat No.: 109, North: Corridor, South: Open Space

POKHARIPUT BRANCH, PH.: 9066629742

Borrowers: 1) Mr. Satyanarayan Sahu, S/o.: Gopal Krishna Sahu, 2) Mr. Laxminarayan Sahu, S/o.: Gopal Krishna Sahu, Both are At: LIG-282, K-4, Kalinga Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khordha-751019 / Total Dues: ₹37.85.357.92

408, North: Open Space, South: Corridor BHUBANESWAR SME BRANCH, PH.: 9937640878 / Borrower: Mr. Amulya Baral, S/o.: Karunakar Baral Co-Applicant: Mr. Milu Baral, S/o.: Karunakar Baral, Both

interest, costs and expenses, less any part amount repaid.

are At: Machhia Diandi, PO.: Brahmagiri, Dist.: Puri, PIN-752011 / Total Dues: ₹21,16,801.86 + interest, costs and expenses, less any part amount repaid. Baral, Bounded by North: Laxmidhar Baral, South: Bhagirathi Baral, East: Village Road, West: Bhagirathi Baral

KENDRAPARA BRANCH, PH.: 9668584167 / Borrower: Late Lalit Kumar Mohanty, Legal Heirs of Late

Lalit Kumar Mohanty are: 1) Kalpana Mohanty (Mother), 2) Sumitra Mohanty (Wife) / Co-Borrowers: 1) Mr. Satyajit Mohanty, 2) Mr. Sujit Mohanty, All are At: Panasuapada, P.S.: Patkura, Tahasil: Garadpur, Kendrapara, PIN-754153 / Total Dues: ₹22,23,497.20 + interest, costs and expenses, less any part amount repaid. Beura, West: Jyotshna Mohanty, North: Road, South: Plot No.: 324 & another Share Holder

TANGI BRANCH, PH.: 8327793415

Borrower: Mrs. Bandana Swain, At: Jasorajpur, PO. Samsarpur, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN-754023 / Total Dues: 0.060 Dec. i.e 2613.6 Sqft., Kissam: Gharabari at ₹17,61,964.40 + interest, costs and expenses, less any part

VSS NAGAR BRANCH, PH.: 8249758170 / Borrower: Tarique Ahemad Khan, S/o.: Late Liyakat Alli

Khan, At: Renchkhelar, Nimapara, Dist.: Puri, PIN - 752114 Total Dues: ₹9,33,802.80 + interest, costs and expenses, ess any part amount repaid.

Khan, S/o: Late Liyakat Alli Khan, Bounded by East: Road, West: Rest part of Plot No.: 17, North: Mouza Renchsasan South: Rest part of Plot No.: 17

Mouza: Kaitha, P.S.: Mahanga, SRO: Mahanga Tahasil: Mahanga, Dist.: Cuttack-754023, Standing in the name of Mrs. Bandana Swain, Bounded by North: Gopinath Swain, South: Road, East: Batakrushna Rout All that part and parcel of Residential Sheds situated over Khata No.: 255/189, Plot No.: 17/880, Area:

Ac.0.030 Dec. i.e 1307 sqft., Mouza: Renchkhelar

P.S.: Nimapara (48), Tahasil: Nimapara, Dist.: Puri Odisha, Standing in the name of Tarique Ahemad

Date & Time of E-Auction: 27.01.2025 From 11.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 10 (Ten) minutes each.

Last Date & Time for submission of EMD & Documents: 27.01.2025 upto 4.00 P.M. Inspection will be provided to the prospective bidders on any working day before 24.01.2025 with prior appointment of the authorised officer

The sale shall be subject to the terms and conditions and provisions prescribed in the SARFAESI Act 2002 read with the

Gharabari. Mouza: Ghanqapatna. P.S.: Chandaka, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha-752054, Standing in the name of Mr. Satyanarayan Sahu, S/o.: Gopal Krishna Sahu, Bounded by East: Open Space, West: Flat No.

Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. This is also a 15 days sale notice to the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) of the aforesaid loan account for settlement of their outstanding dues with the Bank and to participate in the public auction on the above mentioned date.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://baanknet.com

Authorised Officer, Bank of India Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 24,12,2024

Name of work: DESIGN, SUPPLY ERECTION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF 02 NOS. TRACTION WITH NEW LINE BETWEEN DASPALLA (EXCL

Approx cost of the work: ₹ 1246.82 Lakh EMD: ₹ 7,73,400/-, Completion period of the work: 24 months

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or person shall be accepted against suc e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and

shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available

n website www.ireps.gov.in The tenders/bidders must have Class-III digital signature certificate and must be registered on IREPS portal. Only registered tender/bidder can participate on e-tendering. All relevant paper must have to be upload at the time of participating on e-tendering as per instruction. Note: The prospective tenderers are advis to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G) PR-826/P/24-25

SUB-STATION, 2 NOS. SUB-SECTIONING & PARALLELING POST & 1 NO. SECTIONING & PARALLELING POST ALONG WITH ASSOCIATED PSI WORK IN CONNECTION DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or i person shall be accepted against suc e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tende documents of the above e-tender is available in website www.ireps.gov.in. The prospectiv tenderers are advised to revisit the website 1! (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/ corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and mus be registered on IREPS portal. Only registere enderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering the tenderers carefully and ensure complianc of all instructions including check lists, para 3.3 (additional check list) of Tender form (Second

G1 duly verified and signed by Chartered Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/Con-II
PR-108/CH/24-25 Bhubaneswar

sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tende documents, submission of Annexure-B,G &



अंतर्राष्ट्रीय वित्तीय सेवा केंद्र प्राधिकरण INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES CENTRES AUTHORITY eFile No. IFSCA-Admn/1/2023-GA

VACANCY NOTIFICATION

International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, invites applications from eligible Indian Citizens for filling up various positions of Consultants on contract basis. The place of posting is GIFT City, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

2. The candidates willing to apply are requested to refer www.ifsca.gov.in/career for detailed vacancy notifications including eligibility criteria and last date for receipt of applications along with requisite documents.

Sd./- महा प्रबंधक (प्र. एवं मा.सं.)/General Manager (Admin & HR)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that, Binay Kumar Nayak S/o.Gopinath Nayak,At-Alekhpatana, Po-Kumanda, PS/Dist-Angul,has sworn an affidavit on dt.21.12.2024 andhas reported to IIC, Sadar PS, Angul on dt.21.12.2024 regarding loss of original link Regd Sale Deed No.4329/2007, Vol-238 dt.03.11.2007of Registering Officer,

Binay Kumar NayakS/o Gopinath Nayakhas applied to the LIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD. Angul to avail loan on the above property by mortgaging the said property documents.

All concerned therefore, having any claim over the property ourchased under the said document Regd Sale Deed No.4329/2007, Vol-238 dt.03.11.2007 of Registering Officer, Angul isrequired to file his claim with the undersigned within 15(Fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice failing which it will be presumed that, the property having link with the said document/s is/are free from encumbrances and any claim in respect thereof against the applicant as a mortgager and the company as the mortgagee shall be void and ineffective after the lapse of 15(Fifteen) days of publication of this notice

Dt.23.12.2024

(Bikram Keshari Pattanaik) Advocate, LIC Housing Finance Ltd. At-House No-13, Dinabandhu Villa, Mausima Chhak,

Bhubaneswar, Khordha. Mobile No.9337395558. **GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER **RURAL WORKS DIVISION, KUCHINDA** E-mail:- eerw_kuchinda@yahoo.com

"e" Procurement Notice for Road and CD Works Identification No. Online Tender/07/RWD, Kuchinda/2024-25

1. Name of the Work :: Road and CD Works

available in website www.tenderodisha.gov.in

06 Nos.

2. Total Number of Works 3. Class of Contractor

tender clarification

5. Availability of Tender online

for Biddina

B, C & D Class of Contractor 01 & 02 Calendar Month

:: Dt.23.12.2024 to Dt.05.01.2025

6. Last date & time of seeking :: Dt.04.01.2025 at 5.00 A.M.

7. Date & Time of Opening of :: Dt.06.01.2025 at 11.00 A.M

Other details can be seen from Detailed notice inviting Tenders

Corrigendum if any shall only be published in the above website.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer

Rural Works Division, Kuchinda

OIPR-25151/11/0012/2425



same and one person.

CLASSIFIED in jail for rape Malkangiri: A court in Malkangiri district

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Sonepur, dt. 19.12.24, I, Anandini Sarangi, D/o- I, Dillip Kumar Ojha (51 yrs.), S/o-Late Kalandi Charan Ojha, Vill./P.O. - Sundarpur, P.S.- Dhusuri, Dist.-Bhadrak declare that my wife has an LIC Policy bearing No. 588872623. Where in her name mentioned Anima Ojha. But her actual name is Annapurna Ojha. Further I declare that Anima Ojha and Annapurna Ojha, W/o Dillip Kumar Ojha

Man gets 7 yrs

raping a 50-yearold woman in 2009. Senior Civil Judge (Women's Court)cum-Assistant Sessions Judge Malkangiri, Babita Dash also imposed a fine of ₹10,000 on the convict. Sk Public Prosecutor, Rabinarayan Patra. The verdict was pronounced of statements of 14 witnesses and other evidence, Patra said. As per woman had gone to a forest near her village in Khairput block of the district February 1, 2009. Finding her alone, Suri raped her. The woman narrated the incident to her

petrochemical projects, such as those led by IOCL.

Monday sentenced a man to seven years of imprisonment for Suri, said Additional Monday on the basis the prosecution, the family. Her daughter lodged a complaint

at Mudulipada police

station the next day

THE YEAR IN PICTURES

As 2024 draws to a close, we look back at a year shaped by moments of both crisis and transformation, each captured in powerful images that tell the story of a turbulent year and human resilience. Through the lens of photographers, these powerful images have chronicled the triumphs, challenges, and everyday moments that defined the year. From world-changing events to natural disasters, these photographs serve as a stark reminder of the events that have defined the year that has tested the limits of hope, unity, and endurance. **Orissa POST** presents a reflection on 2024, told through images that speak louder than words



The moon is pictured with the Olympic rings on the Eiffel Tower ahead the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris, France, July 23.



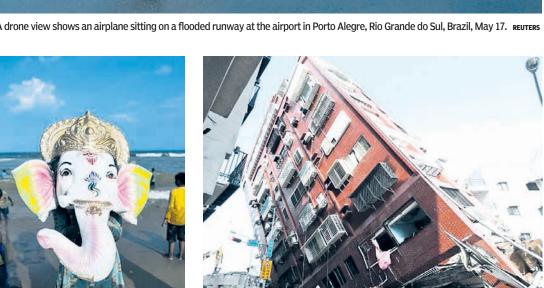








Palestinians gather to receive food cooked by a charity kitchen, amid a hunger crisis, as the Israel-Gaza conflic



anesha during immersion in Bay of Bengal



in Hualien City, eastern Taiwan, April 4.



A drone view shows sand dunes partially covered by floodwaters, after A man transports an electronic voting machine on a pony as election officials walk to a polling booth in a remote mountain area on the eve of the first round of voting in the An animal runs through grass while fleeing flames as the Park Fire tears through national election at Dessa village in Doda district, Jammu and Kashmir, India, April 18.



the Cohasset community in Butte County, California, US, July 25.



A view of the Dali cargo vessel that crashed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge causing it to collapse in Baltimore, US, March 26.



greased-pole to retrieve prizes as part of Independence Day celebrations, in Jakarta, Indonesia, August 17.



Ultra-Orthodox Jews look at part of an intercepted ballistic missile that fell in the desert near the city of Arad, Israel, April 28.



Children shake hands before they play a chess game at The Soga Chess Club of the internally др РНОТО displaced persons camp in Kanyaruchinya, Democratic Republic of Congo, July 29.



G7 leaders watch a skydiving demonstration on the first day of the G7 summit, in Savelletri, Italy June 13.



Russia's President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un ride an Aurus Protesters celebrate at the Parliament House premise after news of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation. car in Pyongyang, North Korea, June 20.



REUTERS in Dhaka, Bangladesh, August 5.



national



Democracy is facing its gravest threat under the BJP-led Union **Government with the** reckless amendment of Section 93(2)(a) of the Conduct of Election Rules, to kill the transparency in election

MK STALIN | CM, TAMIL NADU

JAISHANKAR KICKING **OFF 6-DAY VISIT TO US**

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will pay a six-day visit to the US from Tuesday, in the first high-level trip from India after Donald Trump won the US presidential election. An official readout said Jaishankar will meet his counterparts to discuss key bilateral, regional and global issues



Today's party is not the inheritors of the Congress party during Mahatma Gandhi's

time. What is there now is a duplicate Congress and fake Gandhis (referring to Sonia and Rahul Gandhi)

PRALHAD JOSHI | UNION MINISTER

They all (BJP) are hypocrites. They are standing behind a person who used a deroga-

tory word against a woman in the House and are praising him. Has anyone condemned it or apologised? Instead, they are taking his procession from place to place

LAXMI HEBBALKAR | MINISTER, KARNATAKA



Farmers should be allowed to protest in the Parliament premises regarding their demands

NARESH TIKAIT | BKU NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Police 'killed' Dalit man: Rahul

Chief Minister Fadnavis, who holds the home portfolio, hit out at Gandhi, said his visit to Parbhani was 'only for political reasons' and to 'create hatred'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Parbhani, Dec 23: Congress MP Rahul Gandhi Monday met the family of Parbhani resident Somnath Survayanshi, who died in judicial custody after being held for violence in the city in central Maharashtra, and later said he was "killed" hecause he was a Dalit and protecting the Constitution.

Parbhani witnessed violence after a glass-enclosed replica of the Constitution near Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's statue outside the city's railway station was vandalised December 10. Suryavanshi (35), a resident of Shankar Nagar, was among more than 50 persons arrested in connection with the violence, and later died at a staterun hospital after falling ill, police have said.

Police "killed" Suryavanshi,

and it was a 'cent per cent custodial death', Gandhi alleged after meeting his family members in Parbhani in the Marathwada

region. The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, talking to reporters later, said Suryavanshi's family members showed him the post-mortem report, as well as some photographs and videos

Suryavanshi died December 15 at a state-run hospital where he was rushed after complaining of chest pain and uneasiness while in judicial custody and lodged at the Parbhani district central prison, as per

The state government has ordered a judicial probe into the Parbhani violence. Gandhi said, "The youth was

Suryavanshi (35), a resident of Shankar Nagar, was among more than 50 persons

killed because he was a Dalit

and protecting the Constitution. This is a cent per cent custodial death. The police have murdered him. The chief minister lied in the Assembly to give a message to the police. The RSS ideology is to wipe out the Constitution.'

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said in the Assembly last week that Suryavanshi had told a magistrate that he was not tortured in custody and CCTV footage also doesn't show any evidence of police

Gandhi demanded that those who killed the man be punished swiftly.

"This is not politics, there has been a murder and action has to be taken," the Congress MP insisted.

Asked who was responsible for the Parbhani violence, Gandhi said, "Certain ideology is responsible for this and since the chief minister has spoken, he, too, is responsible.'

Later, Gandhi also met the family of local resident Vijay Wakode, who died during a protest in Parbhani following the violence.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Fadnavis, who holds the home portfolio, hit out at Gandhi and said his visit to Parbhani was "only for political reasons" and **SCUFFLE AMONG MPs IN PARLIAMENT**

'NO LAPSE' ON OUR PART: CISF

New Delhi, Dec 23: The CISE Monday said there was "no lapse" on its part when asked about the scuffle that took place among MPs in Parliament complex during the recently concluded Winter Session and added it will choose to "keep quiet" when allegations are levelled by lawmakers.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is tasked to guard the Parliament House Complex. "There was no lapse (on part of the force)...by lapse if you mean some weapons were allowed inside, then I can tell you that no weapon was allowed...," CISF Deputy Inspector General (operations) Shrikant Kishore told the press during a conference here.

He said the force will choose to "keep quiet when the honourable members (MPs) make allegations." The officer was asked about the counter-allegations made by the parliamentarians on who pushed whom.

He added the CISF was not conducting any inquiry into the incident that took place at the 'Makar Dwar' of the Parliament

House Complex December 19. BJP MPs Pratap Chandra Sarangi and Mukesh Rajput had got injured during scuffle between the Opposition and ruling BJP MPs on the premises of Parliament, Delhi Police had filed an FIR against Leader of the Op position (LoP) and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi following BJP's complaint against him.

Kishore said MPs who enter Parliament "are not screened" (frisked) as per protocol.

Asked about complaints against the force since it took charge of Parliament security in June this year, the officer said the MPs, employees working in the complex and visitors are "very satisfied and happy" with their work.

SHORT **TAKES**

3 killed as truck runs over footpath dwellers

Pune: Two toddlers and a man were killed and six other persons injured after a truck ran over people sleeping on a footpath in Maharashtra's Pune city in the wee hours of Monday, police said. The incident took place at 12.55 am on the footpath in Wagholi area where several persons were sleeping, they said. The victims comprised labourers and their family members hailing from Amravati. The labourers had come to Pune a couple of days back in search of jobs, the police said. The truck driver, identified as Gajanan Totre (26), was arrested after the incident.

5 killed in Bihar road accident

Purnea (Bihar): Five people. died and eight others were injured after a speeding pick-up vehicle ran over them in Dhamdaha area of Purnea district, police said Monday. The accident took place around 8 pm Sunday in Dhokwa village. "The driver fled along with the vehicle.. While two people died on the spot, around 11 injured were taken to the nearest government hospital. Three more succumbed to their injuries during treatment." SDPO (Dhamdaha) Sandeep Goldv told PTI.

4 ZPM members of CADC join BJP

Aizawl: Four Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) members of the Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) in South Mizoram's Lawngtlai district have joined the BJP, a senior saffron party leader said Monday. Mizoram BJP president Vanlalhmuaka said three ZPM members joined the BJP Saturday and one Monday raising the party's tally in the 20-member CADC from 9 to 13. Eleven seats are required to form the board or an executive body in the CADC created under the sixth schedule of the country's constitution in 1972 for

Tiger found dead in **Ranthambore reserve**

Chakmas in Mizoram.

Jaipur: A three-vear-old male tiger was found dead at the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve (RTR) in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district, an official said Monday. The big cat may have died in a territorial fight, Anoop KR, Chief Conservator of Forests and RTR Field Director, said.

COURT CORNER

Cal HC upholds single-bench order allowing doctors' protest in Esplanade

Kolkata: A division bench of the Calcutta High Court Monday upheld a December 20 order that allowed an organisation of doctors to hold a demonstration here during the Christmas season to press their demand for speedy justice for RG Kar hospital medic who was allegedly raped and murdered in August. During the course of the hearing, the bench observed that the RG Kar incident was "unprecedented, unimaginable and horrible". The state had moved the division bench, challenging the order of the single bench of Justice Tirthankar Ghosh, which had permitted the Joint Forum of Doctors to hold the sit-in 50 feet away from Dorina Crossing at Esplanade in central Kolkata from December 20-26. Such demonstrations on Christmas days would cause traffic snarls in the busy area and inconvenience revellers in the festive season, the state's counsel argued. The division bench of Justice Harish Tandon and Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharvya allowed the forum to continue its agitation at the same spot after the defence counsel assured that the number of protesters would be within the specified limit of 100.

HC notice to TMC MP Saket Gokhale on Lakshmi Puri's contempt plea

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court Monday sought a response from TMC leader Saket Gokhale on a plea by former diplomat Lakshmi Murdeshwar Puri, the wife of Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, seeking contempt action against him for allegedly failing to comply with a court direction to apologise and pay Rs 50 lakh damages to her. A separate bench of the high court also asked Gokhale to file an affidavit disclosing all his assets within four weeks, while it was hearing a plea by Lakshmi seeking execution of the July 1 judgment on the defamation lawsuit. Justice Manoj Jain issued notice on the contempt petition and asked Gokhale to file his reply

Delhi Excise Policy case: HC allows ED to e-serve plea to accused to save public money

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court Monday allowed the Enforcement Directorate to serve electronically to 35 accused its plea against a trial court order in the alleged money laundering case related to the 2021-22 excise policy as it will save public money. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) submitted that approximately Rs 3 lakh will be spent in serving the 1,500-page appeal paperbook to all the accused. Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri allowed the probe agency's application to serve the petition copy to the accused as well as their counsel through electronic mode. The court said in case any accused will seek a physical or legible copy, the request



Children pose holding balloons as they run through a mustard field, ahead of the festive season, in Nadia, Monday

B'desh owes Tripura ₹200 cr in unpaid electricity bills

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, Dec 23: Bangladesh owes Tripura Rs 200 crore in electricity dues but no decision has been taken on halting power supply to the neighbouring country yet, Chief Minister Manik Saha said Monday.

Tripura supplies 60-70 megawatts of power to the neighbouring country according to an agreement signed by the Tripura State Electricity Corporation Limited through the NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Limited with the Bangladesh Power Development Board.

megawatts of power to the neighbouring country according to an agreement signed by the Tripura State **Electricity Corporation Limited**

"Bangladesh has not paid us about Rs 200 crore for supplying electricity. The outstanding (amount) is increasing every day. We hope that they will clear their dues so that the power supply is not disrupted," Saha told PTI here in an interview.

Asked whether the Tripura government would stop the

supply of electricity if Dhaka fails to pay the dues, the chief minister said no decision has

been taken on it yet.

He said several pieces of machinery at the power generation plant in Tripura were brought through either Bangladeshi territory or Chittagong port. Therefore, out of gratitude, the Tripura government started supplying power to the country following a pact.

"But I don't know how long we will be able to continue the supply of electricity to Bangladesh if they don't clear the dues," he said.

Ex-Supreme Court judge V Ramasubramanian appointed NHRC chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: Former Supreme Court judge V Ramasubramanian has been appointed the new chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission, the rights panel said Monday.

The post of NHRC chairperson had been lying vacant since Justice (retd) Arun Kumar Mishra completed his tenure

Mishra served as the eighth chairperson of the rights panel and was appointed to its top

post in June 2021. A high-powered committee led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting December 18 to select the next

chairperson of the NHRC sources earlier said.

A former chief justice of India or a retired judge of the top court are appointed as NHRC chairperson by the president on the recommendation of the selection committee. Justice (retd) Ramasubramanian, a former judge of the apex court has been appointed the chairperson of the NHRC, a senior official said, adding "the NHRC received the communication



Experts claim latest govt data on India's forests 'inflated'

The 'India State of Forests Report 2023' released Saturday, after a delay of almost a year, said India's total forest and tree cover has increased by 1,445 sq km since 2021, reaching 25.17 per cent of the total geographical area in 2023

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: Several experts have claimed that the latest government data on India's forests is "inflated" as it includes bamboo plantations, coconut groves, and orchards among others as part of the forest cover.

The 'India State of Forests Report 2023' released Saturday, after a delay of almost a year, said India's total forest and tree cover has increased by 1,445 sq km since 2021, reaching 25.17

per cent of the total geographical area in 2023

However, the forest cover

grew by just 156 sq km and most of the gain (149 sq km) occurred outside the Recorded Forest Area (RFA), which refers to areas designated as forests in government records

The overall results could have been stronger, especially since the government included bamboo and smaller trees (5-10 cm diameter at breast height) in the tree cover estimates for ISFR 2023. The assessment also expanded to 751 districts, up from 636 in 2021

Experts including Kerala's former principal chief conservator of forests Prakriti Srivastava, conservationist



researcher Krithika Sampath and former National Board for Wildlife member Prerna Singh Bindra claimed that

the government counted bamboo plantations. coconut groves, and orchards

does not establish a duced "another correlation between forest faulty report with area (areas designated as inflated data". forests in government argued They records) and forest that such areas do

not offer any ecological value for biodiversity and wildlife conservation. among others as part of the for-The increase in tree cover ans over an area of one

It includes natural forests as well as man-made plantations, orchards and tree patches in urban and rural areas that meet the size and canopy density criteria

(1,289 sq km) is also mainly due

to plantations of rubber, eucalyptus, acacia and mango, coconut, areca nut and shade trees in tea and coffee plantations. Forest cover refers to all land

that has a tree canopy density of more than 10 per cent and spans over an area of one hectare or more, regardless of the type of ownership or legal status. It includes natural forests as well as man-made planta-

tions, orchards and tree patches

in urban and rural areas that meet the size and canopy density criteria.

Tree cover is defined as patches of trees and isolated trees outside RFA that are less than one hectare.

"Mango contributes to 13.25 per cent of the tree cover," they pointed out. They said accord ing to government data, 1,488 sq km of unclassed forests have been lost between 2021 and 2023 but "there is no explanation for it" in the ISFR 2023.

'Unclassed forests' are non-notified forests under gov ernment ownership.

The experts also said the report does not establish a correlation between forest area (areas designated as for ests in government records) and forest cover. The report "clearly reflects that the data on both is not robust and therefore cannot be correlate ed", the experts said.



The BJP has repeatedly insulted the women of this country. BJP's very character is anti women, anti youth, anti farmer and anti dalit, tribes and backward classes. The way in which **BJP leaders are using derogatory** language against women leaders once again is deplorable

RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA | AICC GENERAL SECRETARY,

FIRST MEETING OF PARLIAMENTARY PANEL ON ONOE JANUARY 8

The first meeting of the 39-member parliamentary panel on 'one nation, one election' is set to be held January 8, setting the tone for nationwide deliberations on the key poll reform measure of the BJP-led NDA government



number one in 'ease of doing crime'. Today's episode is Lucknow's Overseas

Bank, where valuable things were stolen by breaking open the locker. Yesterday a bank was looted in

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

The recent events prove that neither the BJP nor the Congress is truly committed to protecting the interests of Ambedkar's followers. Their policies and principles lack sincerity



if Nagpur airstrip recarpeting not completed in month





navigating daily life can feel like a gamble, you're really on your own out there. It's best not to voice too many inquiries, as it might get

you into hot water, possibly even behind bars. But one thing is clear: you'll be paying taxes right up until your last day, GST on even shrouds.

@VijaySingh_law

SHORT **TAKES**

Maoist leader carrying ₹25L bounty held

Kanker: A senior Naxalite leader, carrying a reward of ₹25 lakh on his head, has been arrested by security forces in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district. a senior police official said Monday and termed it as a significant success in fight against Leπ-wing extremism Prabhakar Rao alias Balmuri Narayan Rao, a Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee Member (DKSZCM) of the banned CPI (Maoist), was apprehended Sunday in the Antagarh police station area of the district, Bastar (Range) Inspector General of Police Sundarraj P said.

Techie loses ₹11.8cr in 'digital arrest'

Bangalore: A 39-year-old software engineer became a victim to a "digital arrest" scam and lost ₹11.8 crore when fraudsters impersonating police officials claimed that his Aadhaar card was being misused to open bank accounts for money laundering, police said Monday. The fraud occurred between November 25 and December 12, they said. According to police, in his complaint, the victim alleged that November 11, he received a call from a person who claimed to be an officer of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). The alleged officer claimed that his SIM card, which was linked to the Aadhaar card, was used for illegal advertisements and

4 kids killed in brick kiln wall collapse

harassment messages.

Hisar: Four children were village of Haryana's Hisar in the incident that took

Record govt jobs provided in one and a half yrs: Modi

New Delhi, Dec 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday said his government has provided nearly 10 lakh permanent government jobs to youths in the last one or one and a half years which, he asserted, is a record.

Addressing recruits at a Rozgar Mela through a virtual event, where over 71,000 people were given appointment letters, he said never before in the tenure of any previous government were jobs provided in such a "mission mode".



The young population is at the centre of his government's policies and programmes, he said, adding honesty and transparency have driven the recruitment process.

The prime minister said 'Rozgar Melas' (recruitment drives) are empowering the youth and unlocking their potential. "The youth of India today is full of new confidence, succeeding in every sector.' Noting that a large

number of recruits are women, Modi said it is the endeavour of his government that they become self-dependent in every field. The government's de-

cision to grant 26-week maternity leave to women has helped them a lot in their careers, he said and underscored that women are the majority owners of the house constructed under the 'PM Awas Yojana'.

develop-Women-led ment is taking place in the country, he said.

Modi said making maximum use of the Indian youths' abilities and talent is a priority of his government, and that they are at the centre of a host of schemes, be it start-up India, digital India or reforms in space and defence sectors.

The National Education Policy has taken steps for the development of youngsters, he said, highlighting its emphasis on the use of mother tongues. His government has ensured that language is not a barrier by ensuring that youngsters can take recruitment exams in 13 Indian languages, he added.

Noting that former prime minister Charan Singh, whose birth anniversary is being observed Monday, stood for the development of rural India and for the country's progress, Modi said his government has followed this by creating job and self-employment opportunities in villages.

Attack on Allu Arjun's house: All 6 granted bail

Hyderabad: A Hyderabad court Monday granted bail to six people, who were arrested for allegedly vandalising the residence of Telugu actor Allu Arjun ever as the police beefed up security at the actor's house here, a day after the incident The incident also led to a fierce political slugfest with the BJP joining the BRS in attacking the Congress government, saying some of the attackers belonged to the Kodangal Assembly constituency of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. Meanwhile, the top Telugu actor was issued notice to appear before police Tuesday as part of ongoing probe into the stampede during the screening of 'Pushpa-2' December 4, in which a woman was killed and her minor son injured, police sources said. The actor has been asked to appear at 11 AM December 24, they said.



ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ସମିତି, ସେମିଳିଗୁଡା PANCHAYAT SAMITI. SEMILIGUDA

GOLD AUCTION

NOTICE

+ interest thereon

₹ 1.25.436/

MAIL ID:-ori-Semiliguda@nic.in; Phone No.-06853 -225783

No. i-382:- In partial modification to this office Tender Call Notice No. 4985 dated:03.12.2024 published online at https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in and official website of Koraput https://koraput.odisha.gov.in that the last date o selling and submission of online tender is hereby reschedule to 31.12.2024 till 17:30 Hrs. Further, the opening of Online tender is rescheduled to 02.01.2025 at 11.30 Hrs. due to unavoidable circumstances in connectic with this office Corrigendum No. 5292 date: 20.12.24.

All other terms and condition in the tender call notice remain unaltered OIPR-19066/11/0002/2425 Sd./- Block Development Officer, Semiliguda

Regional Office: Sambalpur

1st Floor, Balaji Midtown, Budharaja,

Sambalpur- 768004, Dist.: Sambalpur, Odisha This is to inform the public that inspite of repeated reminders the following gold loan borrowers ha

not repaid their loan. If they do not repay their outstanding debts before the auction, their gold

ornaments we hold as collateral will be auctioned to the premises of our Concerned Branch or

31.12.2024 at 11.00 A.M. The Bank will not be liable for any inconvenience or loss to the borrowers

and the Bank will take legal action against them if the Bank loses where necessary. Borrowers car

ATTBIRA(13001), Bus Stand, Main Road, Attabira, Bargarh-768089

take their Jewellery by repaying the outstanding debt before the auction take place

Name & Address of Borrowers / A/c. No.

Shaik Fakir Saheb, S/o: Shaik Meera Saheb, At: Nuakhairpali

GURDASPUR GRENADE ATTACK यूनियन बैंक 🎧 Union Bank

3 Khalistan Zindabad Force members gunned down

The success comes after three blasts which took place in different districts of Punjab this month



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pilibhit/Chandigarh, Dec 23: Three suspected Khalistani terrorists allegedly involved in the grenade attack in Gurdaspur were killed in an encounter with police in Pilibhit early Monday, with Punjab's Director General of Police Gauray Yaday terming it as a major breakthrough against a Pakistan-sponsored terror module.

The success comes after three blasts which took place in different districts of Punjab this month. The gunfight between members of the Khalistan Zindahad Force (KZF) and a joint team of Uttar Pradesh Police and Punjab Police took place in Puranpur area of Pilibhit after three module members opened fire at the police party.

DGP Yadav said the three have been identified as Varinder Singh alias Ravi (23), Gurvinder Singh (25) and Jashanpreet Singh

CISF launches new

transfer-posting policy

The accused were identified as s Varinder Singh alias Ravi (23), **Gurvinder Singh (25),** and Jashanpreet Singh alias Partap Singh (18),

all residents of **Punjab's Gurdaspur**

alias Partap Singh (18).

They are residents of Kalanaur police station and are accused of hurling a hand grenade at the Bakshiwala police post in Kalanaur in Punjab's Gurdaspur district December 18, a Punjab police statement said Monday. No one was injured in the Bakshiwala incident.

Terrorist organisation KZF had later used social media platform to claim the responsibility for this act

Amitabh Yash, Additional Director General (Law and Order), Uttar Pradesh Police said the trio was involved in the grenade attack on a police checkpoint in Gurdaspur.

The three sustained serious injuries in the encounter and were immediately rushed to CHC Puranpur for treatment," he said. The ADG told PTI that the three suspects later succumbed to

Two AK-47 rifles, two Glock pistols and a huge cache of ammunition were seized from them. he said.

In a major breakthrough against Pakistan ISI-sponsored KZF terror module, a joint operation of Punjab Police and Uttar Pradesh Police led to an encounter with three module members involved in grenade attack at Police establishment in Gurdaspur, said DGP Yadav.

According to a Punjab police statement, the DGP said said preliminary investigation has revealed that this terror module is controlled by Pak-based Ranjeet Singh Nita, the chief of KZF, and operated by Greece-based Jaswinder Singh Mannu, a native of village Agwan village in Kalanaur.

Accused Varinder alias Ravi, who was leading the module, also belongs to Agwan village. He was being further controlled and masterminded by UK-based Jagieet Singh and was using assumed identity of Fateh Singh Baghi to also claim the responsibility of the grenade attack, the DGP said, according to the statement.

CM ABDULLAH MEETS STUDENT DELEGATION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Dec 23: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Monday assured a delegation of protesting students that the cabinet sub-committee formed to review the reservation policy in Jammu and Kashmir will submit its report within six months, according to student leaders.

The students are protesting against the reservation policy in Jammu and Kashmir implemented after the abrogation of Article 370.

National Conference leader and Lok Sabha member from Srinagar Aga Ruhullah Mehdi led a peaceful protest outside the residence of Abdullah to support the demand for "rationalization" of reservations in Jammu and Kashmir.

'We met the chief minister and held discussions on the reservation issue for about 30 minutes. The crux of the discussion was that the chief minister has asked for six months for the sub-committee to complete its work.' one of the student leaders told reporters after meeting Abdullah at his residence.

Taking to social media, Abdullah said the channel of communication with the students will remain open without any intermediaries.

"Today I met the representatives of the Open Merit Students Association. The beauty of democracy is the right to be heard & dialogue in a spirit of mutual cooperation. I have made certain requests of them & given them a number of assurances. This channel of communication will remain open without any intermediaries or hangers-on," the chief minister posted on X.

Mehdi, a firebrand leader, had on Sun-

P.O.: Larasara, Bargarh-768027/ 130030100016859 interest thereor Shaik Rahim Saheb, S/o; S K Lal Saheb, At; Nua Khairpali, P.O ₹ 1,08,743/interest thereo Larasara, Via: Attabira, Attabira-768027 / 130030100017405 Shaik Rahim Saheb, S/o: S K Lal Saheb, At: Nua Khairpali, P.O ₹ 39,914/-Larasara, Via: Attabira, Attabira-768027 / 130030100017414 interest thereo Surendra Meher, S/o: Diwakar Meher, At/P.O.: Tope, P.S. ₹ 87,643/-Attabira, Attabira-768027 / 130016540000837 BRAJRAJNAGAR(41380), Main Road, Brajrajnagar, Dist.: Jharsuguda, Pin-768216. Ajay Sahu, At: Kalia, Maharajpada, Brajrajnagar, Brajrajnagar 768216 / 413806540000021 SUNDARGARH(71780), Near Megha Malhar Building, Hospital Road(Mission Rd), P.O.: Sundargarh, Sundargarh MD. Wasim, Dengibhad, Dengibhadi Rajgangpu, Rajgangpur Rajgangpur-770001 / 717806540000056 BHATLI CHOWK(28681) Pld NH-6, Bhatli Chowk, 0, Bargarh-768035 Nirulla Bhagat, W/o: Amarnath Bhagat, Roop Shree Textile Mahanty Para Road, W No.: 12, Bargarh, Bargarh-768028 ₹ 4,38,078/-286816540000447 Nirulla Bhagat, W/o: Amarnath Bhagat, Roop Shree Textile Mahanty Para Road, W No.: 12, Bargarh, Bargarh-768028 ₹ 3,61,056.50 286816540000448 Nirulla Bhagat, W/o: Amarnath Bhagat, Roop Shree Textile

Mahanty Para Road, W No.: 12, Bargarh, Bargarh-768028 ₹ 2.22,769/-Govind Sharma, S/o: Sampat Ku Sharma, C/o: Aishwarya Beauty ₹ 7,305/-1.81 Parlour, Bhatli Chowk, Bargarh-768028 / 286816540000475 Narottam Sahu, S/o: Rajkumar Sahu, At/P.O.: Resham, Via: Bheden, Bargarh-768104 / 286816540000291 ₹ 75,659/-Pramod Patel, At: Bhatli Chowk, Infront of Tuli Petrol Pump Bargarh-768028 / 286830100005701

HIRAKUD (02101), Near Govt. Girls High School, P B No.: 7, Hirakud, Sambalpur-768642 Ashok Kumar Mahapatra, At: Gundurupara, P.O.: Hirakud, ₹ 2.31.629/-Sambalpur-768016 / **021016530000580** Ashok Kumar Mahapatra, At: Gundurupara, P.O.: Hirakud, ₹ 1.87.461/-Sambalpur-768016 / 021016530000681 ROURKELA MAIN (30210), First Floor, Rosy Shopping Centre, Main Road,

Rourkela, Dist.: Sundargarh-769001 Savitri Devi, C/o: Jwala Engg Work, Uditnagar, Rourkela-12, Uditnagar, Rourkela-769001 / 302106540000226 ₹ 2,14,186.06 43.40 Savitri Devi, C/o: Jwala Engg Work, Uditnagar, Rourkela-12, Uditnagar, Rourkela-769001 / 302106540000240 ₹ 7,66,824/-141.60

SONEPUR (61150), Near Infront of New Police Station, P.O.: Sonepur, Near Biju Patnaik Chowk, Sonepur Sunil Kumar Naik, S/o: Ganesh Naik, Ward No.: 3, Ghodagha ₹ 80,055/-Pada, Dist.: Subarnapur, Sonepur-767017 / 144930100009178 Jibardhan Guru, At/P.O.: Kaintara, Via: Binka, Dist.: Sonepu ₹ 1.43.399/ 15.40 Sonepur 767017 / 144930100006560

UDITNAGAR ROURKELA (05442) Near P.B. No.: 6, Kacheri Road, Sundargarh-769001 Rizwana Bano, W/o: Sahir Hussain, Nala Road, G.P./Town ₹ 34,069/-

10.29 Rourkela, Sundargarh-769001 / 054426540000171 Diptirekha Behera, Bamanbindha, Bhadrak-756131 ₹61,981.63 054426540000271 SK Ahmed Ali, At: Charikaba, Nagaspur, Dist.: Cuttack-770031 ₹ 20.989/-UMFB SAMBALPUR 2 (05371), 1st Floor, Balaji Tower, 2, Gangadhar Meher

University Rd, UMFB, Sakhipara, Sambalpur, Odisha-768001 Manas Ranjan Panda, At: Katapali, Sakhipada, Sambalpur ₹ 18,488/-768006 / 053716530000029 Manas Ranjan Panda, At: Katapali, Sakhipada, Sambalpur ₹ 41,491/-768006 / 053730100020931

Subhendu Dip, Golgunda, Jagruti Bihar, Burla, Sambalpur-768020 ₹ 1.47.010/-39.00 053730100022036 VEDVYAS-ROURKELA (75500), Near Shop No.: 1. Ground Floor, Vyas Tower, P.O.: Ved Vyas, SD: Raurkela, Sundargarh SK Ahemad Alli, At: Charikaba, Nagaspur, Dist.: Cuttack-770031

₹ 12.698/-755006540000009 SK Ahemad Alli, At: Charikaba, Nagaspur, Dist.: Cuttack-770031 ₹ 38.619/-12.10 755006630000003 Person willing to participate in the auction should obey the following rules:

Person willing to participate in the auction must deposit Rs.1,000/- in the form of Earnes Money Deposit (EMD) two hours before the scheduled auction time

After depositing the EMD, person who willing to participate in the auction can inspect the ornaments The person who make the highest offer shall have to deposit 25% of the said offer immediately in the Bank. After making the highest offer, if the person unable to deposit the 25% of the said

offer, then his EMD will be forfeited and that person will not be allowed to participate in the auction process further. Auction for another account will begin only after the auction and amount deposit of one

account have been completed.

The Bank is not completed to accept any auction calls. The Bank may cancel the auction without assigning any reason therefor.

The person whose highest bid will be accepted by the Branch Office of the Union Bank of India will be compelled to deposit the remaining 75% of the auction amount within 3 days of receiving the notice of confirmation of the auction. Otherwise 25% of the deposited amount and the EMD deposit will be forfeited.

If Union Bank of India, Branch Office cancel/postpone any higher Bid, then the 25% deposited amount, EMD amount will refunded to the depositor without any interest Union Bank of India will not held responsible in any manner for the quality, wieght and purity

of the ornaments pledged for auction.

Bank will forfeit the EMD Deposit Amount if any person does not obey the above rules Place: Sambalpur, Date: 23.12.2024 Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India

it comes to their transfer and posting, and place of work... ence in their choice posting day announced that he would be joining without compromising on the due to their skills and demandoperational requirements of ing nature of work. the student protest.

place on Sunday night in the According to sources, many families of labourers from Uttar Pradesh work at the kiln in Budana

killed when a wall of a brick kiln collapsed on them while they were asleep in Budana

district, police said Monday. A girl was critically injured Narnaund police station area.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: The CISF Monday said it has unveiled a new organisational transfer and posting policy in order to ensure a "better work-life balance" for its personnel who guard some of the most vital assets and infrastructure in the country. The policy will "impact" over

98 per cent of the paramilitary force's about 1.70 lakh workforce with personnel to retire within two years being the first category to be given "choice or preference posting" followed by women staffers, working couples and the remaining falling in the fourth category.

The policy, to kick in from December 31, is meant for non-gazetted officials (NGOs) in the ranks from constable to inspector, as grievances related to this issue is "higher" in these ranks, officials said. "The policy is aimed to sat-

isfy the force members when

the force," CISF Inspector General (Administration) K C Samantaray told reporters here. The Central Industrial Secu-

rity Force (CISF) has replaced the last such policy that was enacted in 2017.

"The policy has been made after conducting extensive consultations on the ground. We aim to make the CISF a future ready force to cope with emerging security challenges with training and building expertise in various security domains.'

He said "more and more women" were joining the force and that "working couples' are increasing in the force and hence the policy is borne out after considering all such issues. The IG said special care will be taken to ensure that the education of the children of the force personnel does not suffer and transfer orders will be issued in such a time that the academic cycle of their wards does not get affected.

personnel retiring within two years will be given the first preference while issuing posting orders followed by women personnel, then working couples and the rest will fall in the last category. The IG said "domain experts

As per the CISF officials,

and personnel who are highly talented" will also get prefer-

international



We don't need a crystal ball to see that 21st Century challenges require problem-solving mechanisms that are more effective, networked and inclusive. We can't create a future fit for our grandchildren with systems built for our grandparents

ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN

DAY OF MOURNING FOR MAYOTTE

France is holding a national day of mourning for Mayotte, its Indian Ocean territory devastated by a deadly cyclone December 14, Monday. Cyclone Chido was the worst storm to hit the island in 90 years, and authorities have said that perhaps thousands of people may have been killed in its wake, though the government's death toll stands at 35



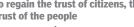
ment of the weapon by the Philippines would intensify geopolitical confrontation and an arms race. It is an extremely irresponsible choice for the history and people of itself and the whole of Southeast Asia, as well as for the security of the region

MAO NING | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

The ban on TikTok for one vear in Albania is not a rushed reaction to a single incident. but a carefully considered decision made in con-

EDI RAMA PM, ALBANIA We are aware that we are of a deep political crisis. It is also a crisis of trust, and

to regain the trust of citizens, the trust of the people MARCEL CIOLACU | PM, ROMANIA



sultation with parent communities

in schools across the country

SHORT TAKES

Terrorism charges against Luigi

New York: Luigi Mangione, the man suspected of fatally gunning down UnitedHealth Group chief executive Brian Thompson on a Manhattan street, is due to be arraigned Monday on state murder charges that brand him a terrorist. At the hearing in New York state court in Manhattan, Mangione is expected to be asked to enter a plea to the 11-count indictment, which includes three murder charges, including murder as an act of terrorism. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole. It will be the second court appearance in New York for Mangione, 26, since he was arrested at a fast food restaurant in Altoona, Pennsylvania, five days after the brazen, pre-dawn Dec. 4 killing of Thompson outside a hotel in midtown Manhattan where his company was

Kremlin denies reports of Assad, wife divorce

Moscow: The Kremlin Monday rejected Turkish media reports which suggested that Asma al-Assad, the Britishborn wife of former Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, wanted a divorce and to leave Russia. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov also rejected Turkish media reports which suggested that Assad had been confined to Moscow and had his property assets frozen. Asked on a conference call if the reports corresponded to reality, Peskov said: "No they do not correspond to reality. Turkish and Arabic media reported Sunday that Asma al-Assad had filed for divorce in Russia, where the Assad family were granted asylum this month after rebels took control of Damascus following a lightning advance.

Biden gives lifer to 37 death row inmates

Washington: President Joe Biden announced Monday that he is commuting the sentences of 37 of the 40 people on federal death row, converting their punishments to life imprisonment mere weeks before President-elect Donald Trump, an outspoken proponent of expanding capital punishment, takes office. The move spares the lives of people convicted in killings, including the slayings of police and military officers, people on federal land and those involved in deadly bank robberies or drug deals, as well as the

killings of guards or prisoners

in federal facilities.

Trump's Panama rhetoric draws flak

The US President-elect is troubled over Beijing's growing influence right under US' tail - the Panama Canal - a bridge connecting the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean through strategically located Panama, the country which links North and South America

West Palm Beach, Dec 23: President-elect Donald Trump threatened to reassert US control over the Panama Canal Sunday, accusing Panama of charging excessive rates to use the Central American passage and drawing a sharp rebuke from Panamanian President Jose Raul Mulino.

Speaking to a crowd of supporters in Arizona, Trump also said he would not let the canal fall into the "wrong hands," warning of potential Chinese influence on the passage.

After the event, he posted an image on Truth Social of an American flag flying over a narrow body of water, with the comment: "Welcome to the United States Canal!'

"Has anyone ever heard of the Panama Canal?" Trump said at AmericaFest, an annual event organized by Turning Point, an allied conservative group. "Because we're being ripped off at the Panama Canal like we're being ripped off everywhere else.'

Trump's comments were an exceedingly rare example of a US leader saying he could push a sovereign country to hand over territory. They also underlined an expected shift in US diplomacy under Trump, who has not historically shied away from threatening allies and using bellicose rhetoric when dealing with counterparts.

"It was given to Panama and the people of Panama, but it has provisions," Trump said of the canal, which was once owned by the United States but



not let the canal fall into the 'wrong hands'

fees to use the canal Panama's President Mulino defends canal's independence and fees

was handed over to Panama decades ago.

"If the principles, both moral and legal, of this magnanimous gesture of giving are not followed, then we will demand that the Panama Canal be returned to us, in full, quickly and without question.

In a recorded message released by Panama's President Mulino Sunday afternoon, the nation's leader said that Panama's independence was non-negotiable and that China had no influence on the canal's administration. He also defended the passage rates Panama charged, saying they were not set "on a whim"

China does not control or administer the canal, but a subsidiary of Hong Kongbased CK Hutchison Holdings has long managed two ports located on the canal's Caribbean and Pacific entrances.

The United States largely built the canal and administered territory surrounding the passage for decades. But the United States and Panama signed a pair of accords in 1977 that paved the way for the canal's return to full Panamanian control. The United States handed over control of the passage in 1999 after a period of joint administration.

"Every square meter of the Panama Canal and the surrounding area belongs to Panama and will continue belonging (to Panama)," Mulino said in his statement, which was released on X.

Trump then responded to Mulino: "We'll see about that!"

Trump eyes Greenland, its leader says 'not for sale'

sponding to comments made by US President-elect Donald Trump regarding the "ownership and control" of the vast Arctic island that has been part of Denmark for over 600 years. "Greenland is ours. We are not for sale and will never be for sale. We must not lose our long struggle for freedom," the island's Prime Minister Mute Egede said in a written comment. Trump Sunday announced that he had picked Ken Howery, a former envoy to Sweden, as his ambassador to Copenhagen, and commented on the status of Greenland, a semi-autonomous part of Denmark and host to a large US Air Force base. "For purposes of National Security and Freedom throughout the World, the United States of America feels that the ownership and control of Greenland is an absolute necessity," Trump wrote on Truth Social. Trump, who takes office January 20, did not elaborate on the statement. During his previous term in office, Trump in 2019 expressed interest in buying Greenland, but the proposal was promptly rejected by Denmark as well as by the island's own authorities before any for mal discussions could take place. Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen at the time labelled Trump's offer as "absurd", leading him to term her dismissal of the idea as "nasty" and to subsequently cancel a visit to Copenhagen. Since 2009 Greenland has held the right to declare independence from Denmark. The island of some 56,000 inhabitants, which relies on significant budget transfers from Copenhagen each year, has so far refrained from doing so.



The waterway, which allows up to 14,000 ships to cross per year, accounts for 2.5% of global seaborne trade and is critical to US imports of autos and commercial goods by container ships from Asia, and for US exports of commodities, including liquefied

It is not clear how Trump would seek to regain control

have no recourse under international law if he decided to make a play for the passage. This is not the first time

over the canal, and he would

Trump has openly considered territorial expansion.

In recent weeks, he has repeatedly mused about turning Canada into a US state, though it is unclear how serious he is about the matter.

Pak plans to acquire China's latest stealth fighter planes J-35

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Dec 23: Pakistan plans to procure 40 jets of advanced Chinese stealth fighter J-35, which, if materialised, will mark the first export of China's latest jet, according to a media report Monday. The sale would mark Bei-

jing's first export of fifth-generation jets to a foreign ally and is expected to recalibrate regional dynamics, particularly in relation to Pakistan's rival India, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. The Post quoted Pakistan

media reports stating that the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) had approved the purchase of 40 aircraft, expected to be delivered within two years, to re place its ageing fleet of American F-16s and French Mirage fighters.

The acquisition of new aircraft was pursued despite the serious economic crisis faced by Pakistan. There is no official confir-

mation in Beijing or mention of such a deal in the official media here, though speculation is rife since the J-35, primarily regarded as a jet fighter meant for Chinese aircraft carriers was exhibited at the prestigious annual air show at Zhuhai city last month attended by top PAF officials.

The land-based version of J-35 was called J-31, according to previous reports. China is currently the only country in the region to have developed stealth aircraft.

PAF chief Air Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu said in January that "the foundation for acquiring the J-31 stealth fighter aircraft has already been laid", according to the Post report.

Trudeau faces more pressure to resign

REUTERS

Ottawa, Dec 23: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, whose party looks set to lose power early next year, is under increasing pressure from his own legislators to step down and let someone else take over.

The ruling Liberals face obliteration in the next election after more than nine years in office amid voter fatigue as well as anger over high prices and a housing crisis.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corp said more than 50 Liberal members of parliament from Ontario - the most populous of the 10 provinces and the party's main stronghold - held a call Saturday and agreed Trudeau had to step down.

"There is no alternative but to have the leadership change now," Liberal legislator Chandra Arya, traditionally a Trudeau loyalist, told the CBC



Sunday. As of last Friday, only 18 legislators had publicly demanded that Trudeau quit.

Last week, Trudeau suffered two major blows - then finance minister Chrystia Freeland quit amid a policy dispute over spending and all the opposition parties then said they would unite to bring down the minority Liberal government.

If he quit and the party had time to choose a new permanent leader, the contenders

Trudeau faces internal

Opposition parties push

pressure after

would potentially include Freeland, Foreign Minister Melanie Joly, Innovation Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne, and former central bank governor Mark Carney

Trudeau though shows no intention of leaving soon. The Globe and Mail, citing a Liberal source, said he would spend Christmas with family before taking a skiing vacation in the Pacific province of British Co-



Tourists feed pigeons during heavy snowfall in downtown Sarajevo, Bosnia, Monday

CHRISTMAS APPROACHES

Syria's Christians fearful of new Islamist leaders

Damascus, Dec 23: Syrian church leaders are advising Christians to scale back Christmas celebrations this year, despite assurances from the Islamists who have just taken power that they are free to practise their religion.

The self-imposed constraints highlight one of the main challenges for Syria's new Islamist rulers: establishing mutual trust among a myriad of minorities, all scarred by decades of brutal dictatorship and 13 years of pitiless civil war.

De facto ruler Ahmed al-Sharaa has told Christians and other groups that they will be safe in a Syria run by his Havat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a former al Qaeda affiliate.

Although himself a former leader of the Sunni Muslim Islamist group, which sees Christians as infidels, Sharaa has quickly shed his jihadist uniform for business suits.



And he has told the Western officials visiting him that HTS will neither seek revenge against the former regime of Bashar al-Assad, drawn mostly from the Alawite sect, nor repress any other religious mi-

But many Christians have yet to be convinced.

On December 18, unidentified gunmen opened fire at a Greek Orthodox church in the city of

Hama, entering the compound and attempting to destroy a cross, and smashing headstones in a cemetery, the church said in a statement. Reuters reporters saw several

SUVs driving through Bab Touma, a predominantly Christian neighbourhood of Damascus, unnerving residents by pointedly blasting jihadist songs from their speakers

And a photo has circulated

Christian leaders fearful of provoking Islamists

Several incidents recorded of intimidation of Christians

New HTS rulers giving assurances of religious tolerance

Scars of war and dictatorship unlikely to heal quickly

on social media showing an ar moured vehicle moving through a Christian quarter with a message written on the front window: "Your day is coming, Oh worshippers of the cross.

Christian Bishop Andrew Bahhi of St George's Syriac Orthodox Church said the incident was very worrying. But he also said that, when it was reported to HTS, they had acted swiftly, forcing the driver to remove the sign and apologise. The Greek Orthodox Church also said police had rapidly announced the arrest of the vandals in Hama.

POLITICAL CRISES

Pak govt, Khan's party hold maiden meet to resolve contentious issues

Islamabad: Pakistan government and the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party in their maiden meeting Monday agreed to continue talks to address contentious issues, including the release of jailed form prime minister Imran Khan. The longanticipated talks between the committees representing the government and the PTI were chaired by the National Assembly (NA)



Speaker Ayaz Sadig, who had last week announced to facilitate the two sides in their effort to defuse the prevailing political tension. Those who attended from the government side include Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, PM's political aide Rana Sanaullah, Senator Irfan Siddigui, former premier Raja Parvez Ashraf, former minister Naveed Qamar, lawmaker Farooq Sattar and Privatisation Minister Aleem Khan. PTI was represented by former speaker Asad Qaiser, Sahibzada Hamid Raza, and Senator Raja Nasir Abbas.

After prez, SK Oppn threatens to impeach PM over martial law bid

Seoul: South Korea's main opposition party threatened Monday to impeach acting president Han Duck-soo if he failed to approve legislation to launch a special counsel investigation into President Yoon Suk Yeol's failed bid to impose martial law. Prime Minister Han has taken over from the suspended Yoon, who was impeached December 14 and faces a Constitutional Court review on whether to oust him.



With a majority in parliament, the opposition Democratic Party (DP) passed a bill this month to appoint a special counsel to pursue charges of insurrection, among others, against the conservative Yoon and to investigate his wife over a luxury bag scandal and other allegations. The party, which has accused Han of aiding Yoon's martial law attempt and reported him to police, said it would "immediately initiate impeachment proceedings" against the acting president if the legislation was not promulgated by Tuesday.

Business



While rural demand has been growing quarter on quarrecovery in urban demand as the new year progresses MOHIT MALHOTRA

MARKETS ON BUDGET DAY

Stock markets will remain open for trading February 1, Saturday, when Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presents the Union Budget, bourses BSE and NSE said Monday. Stock markets are generally closed on Saturdays and Sundays, except for special circumstances.



Innovation, affordability, and availability will be key drivers forward

SAUGATA GUPTA | MARICO MD & CEC

The upcoming budget should consider proactive measures aimed at stimulating

consumption in the larger economy. A consumption boost will lead to a cycle of sustained economic growth in the long run

AASIF MALBARI GODREJ CONSUMER PRODUCTS LTD CFO



modern retail ecosystem along with AI-powered tools like Coke Buddy are expanding accessibility and conve-

SUNDEEP BAJORIA | VP, INDIA, COCA-COLA

Retail inflation for farm, rural workers eases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: Retail inflation for farm workers and rural labourers dipped to 5.35 per cent and 5.47 per cent in November compared to 5.96 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively, in October this year.

The All-India Consumer Price Index for Agricultural -Labourers (CPI-AL) and Rural Labourers (CPI-RL) registered an increase of 5 points each in November 2024, reaching levels of 1,320 and 1,331, respectively, a labour ministry statement

The CPI-AL and CPI-RL were 1,315 points and 1,326 points, respectively, in October 2024.

"The year-on-year inflation rates based on CPI-AL and CPI-RL for the month of November 2024 were recorded at 5.35 per cent and 5.47 per cent, respectively, compared to 7.37 per cent and 7.13 per cent in November 2023. The corresponding figures for October 2024 were 5.96 per cent for CPI-AL and 6.00 per cent for CPI-RL," it stated.



Honda, Nissan aim to merge

Deal would create No. 3 global auto group after Toyota, Volkswagen

REUTERS

Tokyo, Dec 23: Honda and Nissan are in talks to merge by 2026, they said Monday, a historic pivot for Japan's auto industry that underlines the threat Chinese EV makers now pose to the world's long-dominant legacy car makers. The tie-up would create the

world's third-largest auto group by vehicle sales after Toyota and Volkswagen.

It would also give the two companies scale and a chance to share resources in the face of intense competition from Tesla and more nimble Chinese rivals, such as BYD.

The merger of Honda, Japan's second-largest automaker, with Nissan, its No. 3, would be the biggest reshaping in the global auto industry since Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and PSA merged in 2021 to create Stellantis in a \$52-billion deal. Smaller Mitsubishi Motors,

in which Nissan is top shareholder, was also considering joining and would make a decision by the end of January, the companies said. The chief executives of all

three held a joint press conference in Tokyo.

"The rise of Chinese automakers and new players has changed the car industry quite a lot," said Honda CEO ToshiNISSAN MOTOR CORPORATION

hiro Mibe, citing technological trends of electrification and autonomous driving.

"We have to build up capabilities to fight with them by 2030, otherwise we'll be beaten."

The two companies would aim for combined sales of 30 trillion ven (\$191 billion) and operating profit of more than 3 trillion yen through the potential merger, they said.

They aimed to wrap up talks around June 2025 before setting up a holding company by August 2026, when shares of both companies would be delisted. Honda, which has a market

capitalisation of more than \$40 billion, roughly four times that of Nissan, will appoint the majority of the company's board, they said.

Combining with Mitsubishi Motors would take the Japanese group's global sales to more than 8 million cars. The current No. 3 is South Korea's Hyundai and Kia.

Honda and Nissan have been exploring ways to bolster their partnership, including a merg-

er, Reuters reported last week. In March, both said they were considering co-operation on electrification and software development. They widened the collaboration to Mitsubishi Motors in August.

Last month, Nissan announced a plan to cut 9,000 jobs and 20% of its global production capacity after sales plunged in the key China and U.S. markets.

Honda also reported worse-than-expected earnings due to a China sales slump, although solid motorcycle and hybrid car businesses helped it secure a relatively stable financial base.

"This is not a rescue of Nissan," however, Honda's Mibe said, adding that Nissan's business turnaround was a "prereguisite" for the merger.

Like other foreign carmakers, Honda and Nissan have lost ground in the world's biggest market China to BYD and other domestic makers of electric

and hybrid cars loaded with innovative software.

In a separate online press conference Monday, former Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn, now wanted in Japan as a fugitive for jumping bail and fleeing to Lebanon, said he did not believe the Honda-Nissan alliance would be successful, as the two were automakers were not complementary.

French automaker Renault, Nissan's largest shareholder, said it would "discuss with Nissan and consider all possible options". Sources have said Renault is open in principle to a Honda-Nissan tie-up.

Taiwan's Foxconn, seeking to expand its nascent EV contract manufacturing business, approached Nissan about a bid but the Japanese company rejected it, sources have told Reuters.

Foxconn decided to pause the approach after it sent a delegation to meet with Renault in France, Bloomberg News said Friday. Nissan chief executive Ma-

koto Uchida, at Monday's press conference, denied a view that Foxconn's move prompted its merger talks with Honda. Uchida said Nissan contin-

ued to work with Renault on a "project basis" if there was synergy, while Mibe said Honda would not change its relations with General Motors.

Shares in Honda ended the day up 3.8%. Nissan rose 1.6% and Mitsubishi Motors gained 5.3% after news of the merger plan, while the benchmark Nikkei index closed up 1.2%.

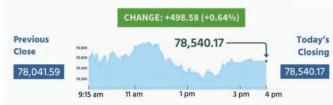
Markets rebound after 5 days of fall

BSE SENSEX

DECEMBER 23, 2024

LOSER!

vices, said.



TECH MAHINDRA	+1.68%	TOP GAINERS
HDFC BANK	+1.63%	
NDUSIND BANK	+1.58%	OMINE
RELIANCE	+1.33%	

Mumbai, Dec 23: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded sharply Monday after five days of steep decline amid value buying at lower levels and a supportive trend in global markets. Besides, bargain hunting in

blue chip stocks like ITC, HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries added to the optimism in the equity market, traders said.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 498.58 points or 0.64 per cent to settle at 78,540.17. During the day, it soared 876.53 points or 1.12 per cent to 78,918.12.

The NSE Nifty surged 165.95 points or 0.70 per cent to 23,753.45.

"The Indian market demonstrated optimism following the recent sell-off. The lower-than-expected US PCE print bolstered investor sentiment

in interest rate-sensitive sec tors. Broad-based buying was observed, with the metals sector notably benefiting from the anticipated increase in steel import taxes. Despite the positive market sentiment, the short-term outlook is expected to remain sideways due to a lack of new catalysts and the impact of the festive season and holidays," Vinod Nair, Head of

From the 30 blue-chip stocks ITC, Tech Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, IndusInd Bank, Titan, State Bank of India and ICICI Bank were the biggest gainers.

Research, Geojit Financial Ser

New entrant Zomato, Maruti, Nestle, HCL Tech, Bajaj Finserv and Tata Motors were among the laggards.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.10 per cent, while smallcap index declined 0.60 per cent.

TRAI MANDATES TELCOS

RECHARGE VOUCHER

FOR ONLY VOICE, SMS

New Delhi, Dec 23: Telecom

regulator Trai Monday amend

ed tariff rules to mandate mo-

bile service providers to issue

a separate plan for voice calls

and SMS for customers not us-

cap of 90 days on special re-

charge coupons and extended

offer at least one Special Tariff

Voucher exclusively for Voice

and SMS with validity period

not exceeding three hundred

and sixty-five days," the Tele

com Regulatory Authority of

India (Trai) said in the Telecom

Consumers Protection (Twelfth

"...the service provider shall

The regulator removed the

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

it to up to 365 days.

Rupee falls 7 paise to close at 85.11 against \$

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 23: The rupee depreciated 7 paise and settled for the day at 85.11 against the US dollar Monday, amid continued strength in the dollar index bolstered by the Fed's policy stance. According to forex traders.

notwithstanding a positive trend in domestic equities, the rupee stayed weak due to significant dollar demand. Moreover, higher crude oil prices triggered by volatile geopolitical situation also dented sen-They said the dollar index

is expected to remain elevated as the US Federal Reserve indicated slower-than-expected rate cut in 2025

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 85.02 and touched the lowest level of 85.13 and settled for the day at 85.11 against the greenback, registering a loss of 7 paise over its previous close. On Friday, the rupee saw

some recovery from its all-time low level and settled 9 paise higher at 85.04 against the US

Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said the rupee traded weak amid continued strength in the dollar index bolstered by the Fed's policy stance "With the holiday season

approaching, market partici-

pation is expected to thin out, potentially reducing volatility in the near-term. The rupee's trading range is projected between 84.85 and 85.25, as global cues and year-end market dynamics influence the sentiment," he said. Meanwhile, the dollar index,

which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.48 per cent at 108.13. Anuj Choudhary, Research

Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said the rupee fell amid strong demand for the American currency. Also, the US dollar gained on weakness in the Chinese yuan.

A rise in crude oil prices also pressured the rupee, though it was cushioned by positive domestic equities.

"FII outflows may also weigh on the rupee. However, a recoverv in the domestic markets may support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may take cues from CB consumer confidence data from the US. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 84.90 to 85.15," Choudharv added.

NTPC to set up green hydrogen infra in state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: State-run power giant NTPC Monday said it has signed an initial pact with GRIDCO and CRUT to set up green hydrogen infrastructure in Odisha.

NTPC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with GRIDCO, a Government of Odisha undertaking for Energy and Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT), the public transit agency of the state government, Monday, as per a

The tripartite MoU intends to further green energy technolo gies in Odisha, especially green hydrogen mobility scheme.

As per the MoU, NTPC will set up a green hydrogen fuelling station in Bhubaneswar. along with hydrogen buses for short-haul and long-haul oper-

This will open an option of phasing out fossil fuel buses in favour clean and green fuels. bringing decarbonisation and energy security.

The Ministry of New & Renewable Energy has contributed partially for setting up of the project in Bhubaneswar.

The NTPC is operating the green hydrogen blending project in Surat for the last two years and has taken similar mobility initiatives in Leh, Greater Noida, and Gujarat's



FESTIVE CHEER: Nexus Esplanade Bhubaneswar is all set to present a perfect Christmas setup with captivating musical nights, shopping rewards, and a lot more starting December 25.

Central Bank of India celebrates 114th Foundation Day

India, Bhubaneswar Regional Office, celebrated the Bank's 114th Foundation Day December 21 in presence of Pankai Kumar. Regional Head, B K Swain, Chief Manager & M K Karn, Chief Manager & other senior Bank officials. Floral tributes were paid to the visionary founder. Sir Sorabii Pochkhanawala, in remembrance of his extraordinary contributions in establishing the Bank. The 114th foundation day of the Bank serves as a reminder

Bhubaneswar: Central Bank of



of the institution's rich heritage, its ongoing transformation, and its commitment to serving the nation with excellence in banking.

Amendment) Regulations, 2024 The move will help consum ers to pay for services which they generally use. During the consultation process, Trai came across various views, including several senior citizens, families having broadband at homes etc may not need recharge plans bundled with data for their mobile phones. In an explanatory note, Trai

said that it is of the view that a separate STV for voice and SMS, in addition to existing data-only STV and bundled offers shall be mandated. "It is also observed that man-

dating Voice and SMS only STV will provide an option to subscribers who do not require data, and this in any way will not reverse the government initiative of data inclusion as service providers are at liberty to offer bundled offers and data only vouchers," the note said.

The regulator has also al lowed telecom operators to issue recharge vouchers of any value, but they should also issue a recharge coupon of at least ₹10. Earlier, the rule allowed telecom operators to issue top-up vouchers in de nomination of ₹10 and multiples of 10.

"The Authority is of the view that reserving of denomination of 210 and multiple thereof on ly for top-up voucher be done away with and TSPs may be al lowed to offer all the vouchers in any denomination of their choice while retaining mandate of at least one Top up voucher of denomination of ₹10," the note said.

How to tax popcorn? India's formula sparks outrage

New Delhi, Dec 23: India's move to tax popcorn differently based on its sugar or spice content has drawn criticism from the opposition and sparked social media outrage, with two former government economic advisers questioning the tax system introduced in 2017.

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, chaired by the finance minister and including state representatives, announced Saturday that non-branded popcorn mixed with salt and spices would attract a 5% GST, pre-packaged and branded popcorn 12%, and caramel popcorn, categorised as a sugar confectionery, 18%.

The differential rates come into effect immediately, end-

ing confusion over rates as popcorn was taxed differently across states

Explaining the rationale behind the decision to tax caramel popcorn at 18%, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that any product with added sugar is taxed differently.

The announcement, however, sparked a social media storm Sunday, with opposition politicians, economists and supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government criticising the move and others creating memes and poking fun at it. "Complexity is a bureaucrat's delight and citizens' nightmare," India's previous Chief Economic Adviser K V Subramanian wrote on X. He questioned the rationale of the decision he said will contribute

minimally to tax revenues, but inconvenience citizens.

His predecessor, Arvind

Subramanian, said "the folly is

compounded because instead of

at least moving in the direction

of simplicity we are veering to greater complexity, difficulty of enforcement and just irrationality.'

One widely circulated post on X showed an image of a branded

and said how it would send the taxman into a tizzy calculating the tax rate on it. Jairam Ramesh, leader and

"salt caramel" popcorn packet

spokesman of the main opposition Congress party, said the 'absurdity of three different tax slabs for popcorn under GST ... only brings to light a deeper issue that the growing complexity of a system that was supposed to be a Good and Sim-

A finance ministry spokesperson and the GST Council Secretariat did not respond to requests for comment on the controversy. Gopal Krishna Agarwal, the

ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's spokesman on economic affairs. said the GST Council "clarification" on how popcorn is to be taxed was in reply to a specific query on the issue. "It is normal when basic in-

gredients are same but finished products attract different GST rates," he said, adding that GST has become a very efficient and effective ecosystem for enhanced and transparent tax compliance through a corruption-free and smooth process.

The GST system has run into similar controversies for its tax classifications in the past and faced questions although not on this scale.

Previous controversies have involved taxing chapatis or unleavened Indian flatbread differently from layered flatbreads, different rates for curd and yogurt, and cream bun versus bun and cream served separately.

SENIOR WOMEN'S NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Odisha miss crown again KHEL RATNA NOMINEES

Odisha once more had to stay content with the runners-up trophy as it was their sixth defeat in seven finals, all against the ultimate champions Manipur

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Narainpur, Dec 23: Manipur's near-monotonous monopoly over the Senior Women's National Football Championship remained uninterrupted after they defeated Odisha 1-0 in the final of the Rajmata Jijabai Trophy at the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama Ground Monday.

After a barren first half, defending champions Manipur made sure of taking home the trophy for the 23rd time out of the 29 editions played so far when striker Asem Roja Devi booted in the winner through a jungle of legs off a corner kick



in the 55th minute.

Odisha once more had to stav content with the runners-up trophy as it was their sixth defeat in seven finals, all against the ultimate champions Mani-

Odisha could take pride in restricting the victory margin of the mighty Manipur side to

the bare minimum, but some amount of luck too played a role in the scoreline that projected a seesaw battle

While there is no denying the fact the Odisha defence put up a gallant fight against the rampaging Manipur attack, Odisha were distinctly lucky not to concede at least two more goals.

Manipur, who camped themselves in the Odisha half right from the kickoff, missed the opportunity to take the lead in the fifth minute when they wasted

A handball by Odisha defender Shibani Munda prompted the referee Ruva Devi G to call for a penalty award. Seasoned Ratanbala Devi displayed enough confidence in taking the kick, but it hit the post before coming back to play.

With the Manipur midfielders and forwards swarming all over the Odisha goal area like a unit of trained commandos, the supremacy of the north-eastern state was never in question. Odisha were reduced to playing

second fiddle from the beginning, and except for occasional forays, they had not much to say in the Manipur area.

Odisha skipper and livewire of attacks, Pyari Xaxa, was kept under constant check by the alert Manipur defenders thus ending any chance of Odisha even making a serious dent in the rival arena.

But, despite all their overwhelming presence, Manipur were left frustrated by an Odisha defence that firmly believed in promptly clearing the ball whenever faced with the slightest danger. And when they could not, Manipur themselves faltered and fumbled, like one missed by experienced Dangmei Grace from close range.

Finally, the goal came in the 55th minute, it was more of a result of a scramble in the goalmouth than a concrete move. That Roja Devi could put it right through the narrow gap made all the difference in the final.

MANU MISSING FROM

In August, Bhaker became independent *India's first athlete to* win two medals in a single edition of the Olympics with her bronze-winning show in the 10m air pistol individual and 10m air pistol mixed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: Amid reports that double Olympic-medallist Manu Bhaker has been shockingly ignored for this year's Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award, a top sports ministry source has asserted that the names are yet to be finalised and she is likely to be there when the list is unveiled in a week's time.

team events

In August, Bhaker became independent India's first athlete to win two medals in a single edition of the Olympics with her bronze-winning show in the 10m air pistol individual and 10m air pistol mixed team events. Reports of her omission from the national honours evoked shock with her family insisting that application was duly submitted.

'There is no final list of nominees at this point. Sports minister Mansukh Mandaviva will decide on the recommendations in a day or two and her name, in all likelihood, will be there in the final list," a ministry source

The award selection committee is a 12-member panel headed by retired Supreme Court judge Justice V Ramasubramam. It includes former athletes like

women's hockey captain Rani Rampal among others.

The ministry norms allow athletes to self-nominate instead of relying on federations and other institutions for it. The selection committee is, however, allowed to consider names which may not be among the applicants.

While the ministry claimed that Bhaker did not apply for the award, her father Ram Kishan Bhaker, a chief engineer in Merchant Navy, said the youngster had followed the due

"There is no worth of playing Olympic sports in India because despite winning two medals in an Olympics, Manu has been ignored for the Khel Ratna award. There is no point in playing and winning rewards for your country and in turn beg for recognition," Ram Kishan told PTI.

"She had been applying for all awards, say Khel Ratna, Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan for the last 2-3 years continuously and I have proof of that. This time too, I am confident she would have applied but I can't show anything as I am at sea right now. But even if she hasn't, the committee should consider her looking at her achievements," he asserted. He blamed

bureaucracy for the mess-up." form a committee but it is the bureaucrats who call the shots This is not how sports function,' he said. It is learnt that the committee has recommended India hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh, who led the country to a second consecutive Olympic bronze medal, for the Khel Ratna

Also nominated for the honour is para athlete Preveen Kumar, who won a gold in the men's high jump T64 class with an Asian record at Paris Paralympics.

The awards committee has recommended 30 athletes for Arjuna awards, including 17 from para disciplines.

Wrestler Aman Sehrawat, who won a bronze in the men's 57kg freestyle category, and shooter Swapnil Kusale, bronze medal-winner in the men's 50m rifle three position event, along with Bhaker's mixed team part ner Sarabjot Singh have been recommended for the Arjuna

Members of the bronze medal-winning Indian hockey team, Jarmanpreet Singh, Sanjay, Ra jkumar Pal, Abhishek and one more player have been also recommended for the Arjuna

SHORT **TAKES**

Kambli hospitalised

Mumbai: Former India cricketer Vinod Kambli has been admitted to a hospital here due to deterioration in his health. The 52-year-old was brought to the hospital by one of his fans who also owns the hospital in Bhiwandi's Kalher area in Thane district and his condition is said to be stable, even though the exact reasons for his hospitalisation could not be ascertained. Kambli was admitted to the hospital Saturday, Kambli, who played 17 Tests and 104 ODIs for India between 1993-2000, had recently attended the inauguration of legendary coach Ramakant Achrekar's memorial at the Shivaji zark nere. The former india cricketer, who has been struggling with health-related issues for quite some time, appeared frail in the function which was also attended by his long-time friend Sachin Tendulkar.

Pak dominate Proteas

Johannesburg: Pakistan completed a 3-0 sweep of its ODI series against South Africa, winning the third match by 36 runs under the DLS method. Opener Saim Ayub hit 101 runs in 94 balls as Pakistan scored 308-9 at the Wanderers in a game reduced to 47 overs by rain. South Africa was all out for 271 in 42 overs in pursuit of a winning target of 308. Pakistan batted first after losing the toss and was 1-1 when it lost Abdullah Shafique in the first over. The innings took off with Ayub involved in two key stands - 114 runs for the second wicket with Babar Azam (52 in 71), and 93 runs for the third with captain Mohammad Rizwan (53 in 52). The 22-year-old Ayub, who scored 109 in the first ODI, was caught behind against debutant Corbin Bosch.

Purcell suspended

Melbourne: Two-time Grand Slam winning doubles player Max Purcell has entered a voluntary provisional suspension under tennis' anti-doping rules. The International Tennis Integrity Agency announced the sanction in a statement on Monday after the 26-year-old Australian admitted to violating Article 2.2 of the Tennis Anti-Doping Program "relating to the use of a Prohibited Method". The ITIA said the suspension came into effect 12 December, and time served under provisional suspension will be credited against any future sanction. The length of time of the voluntary suspension was not specified by the ITIA.

Rugby Premier League set to start next year

New Delhi: Rugby India, the sport's national governing body, is all set to launch the Rugby Premier League (RPL) next year. The tournament, the world's first franchise-based rugby league, featuring six city-based teams will be a part of a 10-year strategic partnership between Rugby India and GMR Sports. The RPL will be a platform for top players from elite rugby nations around the world to



changer for rugby in India. With World Rugby's support and GMR Sports' expertise, we are set to deliver a league that showcases the finest talent and professionalism," Rahul Bose, president of Rugby India, said in a release, "Fans can expect nothing less than world-class rugby action that will inspire the next generation of athletes in our country." "The Rugby Premier League is not just a league - it is a movement to bring worldclass rugby to India while fostering grassroots development," Kiran Kumar Grandhi, chairman of GMR Sports, said.

Participation for Kho Kho World Cup rises



New Delhi: A total of 20 women outfits will compete in next month's Kho Kho World Cup with the sport's governing body increasing the number of participating teams due to an

overwhelming interest. India will host the inaugural edition of the event at the IGI Stadium from January 13 to 19. Initially, 16 men's and 16 women's teams were scheduled to participate. Teams from six continents -- Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, and Oceania -- will feature in the much-anticipated tournament. "We are keeping the facilities with the foreign delegates in mind. We have devised meals and diet plan for our guests as per their dietary requirements and we are also providing entire logistics, stay, and transport facilities for them, so that they do not face any issues during their stay here," KKFI President Sudhanshu Mittal said in a release. "We have also made provisions for all countries to stay till the end of the tournament, irrespective of the results."

Kotian replaces Ashwin in India's squad

It is understood that the 26 year old Kotian, who was part of India A's tour of Australia, has also been added as a cover for Washington Sundar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

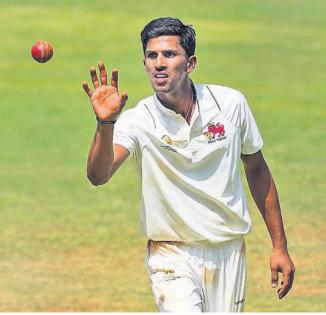
Melbourne, Dec 23: Mumbai off-spinner Tanush Kotian is set to join the India squad in Australia as a replacement for the recently retired Ravichandran Ashwin.

'Kotian has been added as a safety net and also to keep the squad number intact for the last two games. He only comes into the picture if either among Washy or Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) gets injured," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Kotian, who is currently in Ahmedabad for Vijay Hazare Trophy, is expected to leave Mumbai Tuesday and will reach Melbourne before the start of Boxing Day Test.

The bowling all-rounder picked two wickets and scored an unbeaten 39 for Mumbai in their Vijay Hazare Trophy match against Hyderabad Monday.

Kotian has fond memories of the Melbourne Cricket Ground where he scored 44 batting at No 8 for India A and looked the part. He already has 101 wickets to his name and 1525 runs



with two centuries in 33 firstclass games.

Originally, Axar Patel was supposed to be summoned to Australia but as per sources, the left arm spinner had sought a break after first two matches of Vijay Hazare Trophy due to a family commitment.

Kotian has been added to the squad following Ashwin's surprise retirement from international cricket following the draw Test in Brisbane. The 38-year-old ended his glorious career as the second highest wicket taker for India behind Anil Kumble.

Shami not fully fit yet

ndia pacer Mohammed Shami has

against Australia as he is yet to regain full fitness, the BCCI said Monday. Shami, who last played for India in the ODI World Cup final in November, 2023, made a comeback from his right heel surgery during Bengal's Ranji Trophy match against Madhya Pradesh last month. His fitness has been a subject of intense debate and speculation, so much so that India skipper Rohit Sharma had asked the physios at the National Cricket Academy to provide clarity on the matter following the Brisbane Test Shami had developed swelling in his knees while playing the SMAT, and the clarification in that regard finally came Monday. "Based on the current medical assessment, the BCCI Medical Team has determined that his knee requires more time for controlled ex-posure to bowling loads. Consequent y, he has not been deemed fit for consideration for the remaining two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, said the BCCI in a release.



Shuttler Sindhu gets hitched

Udaipur, Dec 23: Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu embarked on a new journey in life as she tied the knot with entrepreneur Venkata Datta Sai in a private ceremony here.

The 29-year-old shuttler from Hyderabad, who won a bronze at the 2016 Rio Olympics and a silver at the Tokyo Olympics three years ago, married Datta, an executive director at Posidex Technologies, Sunday in a traditional ceremony attended by close family and friends

Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, shared the first photograph of the wedding on 'X' Monday

"Pleased to have attended the wedding ceremony of our Badminton Champion Olympian PV Sindhu with Venkatta Datta Sai in Udaipur last evening and conveved my wishes & blessings to the couple for their new life



ahead," Shekhawat tweeted.

The celebrations commenced with a lively Sangeet ceremony December 20, featuring music and dance as the two families came together. This was followed by traditional rituals such as Haldi, Pellikuthuru, Mehendi, and other customs December 21.

Sindhu's wedding news came

close on the heels of her victory

at the Sved Modi International

in Lucknow earlier this month,

ending a long title drought.

With five medals, including a gold, at the BWF World Championships, and two Olympic medals, Sindhu is widely regarded as one of India's greatest athletes.

The couple has invited some of the top celebrities of the country for the wedding reception, including the likes of Sachin Tendulkar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Ulhas KS becomes first **Indian to play in Serbian** National Basketball League

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: Talented hoopster Ulhas KS has become the first Indian to compete in the Serbian National Basketball League Division 1, Kosarkaska Liga Srbije (KLS).

Playing for Novi Pazar, the 26-year-old Ulhas debuted in a match against BKK Radnicki Sunday night, marking a significant milestone in his career. "It is an incredible honour to represent India in the Serbian National Basketball League," Ulhas said.



Odisha IDC Under-19 team felicitated



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: The Odisha team emerged victorious in the IDCA Under-19 National Cricket Tournament for the hearing impaired, showcasing exceptional sporting skills and resilience despite numer-

ous challenges last month. Nivati Pattnaik, Director of the Department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, extended her heartfelt congratulations to the team and felicitated the players for their remarkable success Monday.

The team's achievement brought immense pride to the state, as they secured the championship trophy with outstand ing performances.

Adding to the state's pride two players - Sagar Kant Senapati, serving as the team manager, and Santosh Kumar Mahapatra, an all-rounder represented the international team. Santosh delivered an extraordinary performance, amassing 325 runs across five matches against Sri Lanka and earning the title of best batsman of the series.

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