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15 months of war

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BHUBANESWAR | TUESDAY | DECEMBER 31, 2024



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India slump to a demoralising 184-run loss to Australia in Border-Gavaskar Trophy SPORTS | P12

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Deadline extended for reporting crop damage

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 30: The state government Monday announced extension of the deadline till January 1 for farmers to submit the report on crop damage due to unseasonal rains, and make claim for compensation.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi made the announcement after the state government's demand in this regard was accepted by the Centre. He said farmers can now re-

port and claim compensation over crop loss till midnight of January 1.

The initial deadline was December 29, which was later extended till December 30.

Maihi and other ministers had visited different rain-affected districts Sunday, following which the state government had requested the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Em-



SHORT TAKES

Majhi to skip New Year celebrations

powerment to extend time for the farmers to report crop loss. "Keeping in view the interests of the farmers, the Central government has extended the time. Farmers can now inform the insurance companies about the crop loss till January 1, 2025," a statement issued by the CMO said.

Meanwhile, Majhi said the damage assessment report in the wake of the unseasonal rains between December 20 and December 28, will be released Tuesday.

The CM has also announced that farmers, those covered under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and uninsured, will get assistance from the government, as there has been extensive damage to standing paddy crops.

It is also considering compensation for farmers growing cotton, vegetables, betel leaf and other cash crops, officials said.

Naidu richest CM, Mamata poorest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 30: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is the richest chief minister in India with assets worth over Rs 931 crore, while West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee is the poorest with just Rs 15 lakh, according to an Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) report released Monday.

The report said the average asset per chief minister from state Assemblies and Union

Territories is Rs 52.59 crore. While India's per capita net national income or NNI was approximately Rs 1,85,854 for 2023-2024, the average self-income of a chief minister is Rs 13,64,310, around 7.3 times the average per capita income of India The total assets of 31 chief ministers are worth Rs 1,630 crores Arunachal Pradesh's Pema Khandu is the second richest chief minister with total assets worth over Rs 332 crores, Karnataka's Siddaramaiah is the third on the list with assets worth more than Rs 51 crore Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, with assets worth Rs 55 lakh, is the second poorest in the list and Pinarayi Vijayan is third with Rs 1.18 crore Out of the 31 chief ministers, only two are women - West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee and Delhi's Atishi.



UP IN ARMS: Farmers raise slogans as they block a road during the statewide 'bandh' called as part their ongoing protest, near Golden Gate in Amritsar, Monday

Ex-US prez Jimmy Employed, in warzone Carter dies at 100

16K INDIANS IN ISRAEL REPLACE BARRED PALESTINIAN WORKERS

16,000 Indian construction workers have moved to Israel to replace Palestinian workers amid the raging war highlighting a troubling trend. The desperation among unemployed youth in India is soaring and

Tel Aviv, Dec 30: Wearing a safety belt, helmet and work boots, Raju Nishad navigates the scaffolding, hammering

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



him running for the shelters. 'Once it (the siren) stops, we just resume our work," he told AFP. High earnings in Israel, where some workers can make three times what they would back home, are the key to why



Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi Monday decided not to join any celebrations on the occasion of the New Year in the wake of the demise of former prime minister Manmohan Singh and crop loss by farmers due to unseasonal rains, according to an X post by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO). The Chief Minister has requested well-wishers and supporters not to bring any flowers, diaries or other items on New Year. Similarly. Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida's office announced that the Deputy Chief Minister will not celebrate the New Year.

Ayushman Bharat in state by Feb end

Bhubaneswar: The state government is set to implement the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana in the state by the end of February next year, Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling said Monday. He also said the state's Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana (GJAY) will be implemented along with the Ayushman Bharat scheme. The two health schemes will cover around 3.5 crore beneficiaries. Mahaling said a Central team for implementation of the Ayushman Bharat scheme has already visited Odisha.

Couple posing as PK Mishra's kin arrested

Bhubaneswar: Police Monday said they arrested a couple on charges of defrauding people by impersonating themselves as the daughter and son-in-law of PK Mishra, the Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi The couple, identified as Hansita Abhilipsa (38) and her accomplice Anil Kumar Mohanty, believed to be her husband, was accused of cheating people by claiming that they have influential connections, police added. **P**3 many young people face limited opportunities in a job market overwhelmed by population, competition and a lack of infrastructure. In this context, even *life-threatening situations. such* as the perilous environment in

the theatre of deadly war in Israel, are not deterrents. For these workers, the dire need for stable employment outweighs concerns for personal safety, driving them to seek work in war zones. Their willingness to work in Israel during a war exposes the depth of India's unemployment crisis and the growing desperation of its young labour force. A similar trend has been observed in Russia with young Indians joining the army in combat areas against Ukraine, costing them their life and limbs.

building in a new neighbourhood in central Israel's town of Beer Yaakov.

While he and other Indians working alongside him do not look out of place on the expansive construction site, they are relative newcomers to Israel's building industry.

They are part of an Israeli government effort to fill a void left by tens of thousands of Palestinian construction workers barred from entering Israel since Hamas's unprecedented October 7, 2023 attack.

If that attack had not hap pened, this site, with its slowly emerging high-rise towers. homes, roads and pavements, would have teemed with labourers speaking Arabic -unlike the Hindi, Hebrew and

even Mandarin of today.

The Hamas attack triggered the deadliest war yet between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. It later spread to include other Iran-backed groups including Hezbollah in Lebanon and Houthi rebels in Yemen, and even direct confrontation with the Islamic republic itself.

None of this deterred Nishad, 35, from coming to Israel. "There's nothing to be afraid of here," he said, despite several air raid warnings that have sent

people like Nishad flock here, thousands of kilometres away.

"I'm saving for the future, planning to make wise investments and do something meaningful for my family," Nishad said. He is just one of around 16,000 workers who have come from India over the past year -- and Israel has plans to bring thousands more.

India is the world's fifth-largest economy and one of the fastest growing, but it has also struggled to generate enough full-time jobs for millions of people.

Indians have been employed in Israel for decades, thousands as caregivers looking after elderly Israelis, while others work as diamond traders and IT professionals.

Washington, Dec 30: Jimmy Carter, the 39th US president and the third American head to make a trip to India, during which a village in Haryana was named Carterpuri in his honour, has died peacefully at his home in Plains, Georgia surrounded by his family

Carter, who died Sunday at 100, was the longest-lived president in US history.

"Today, America and the world lost an extraordinary leader, statesman and humanitarian," President Joe Biden said in a statement.

Carter is survived by his children -- Jack, Chip, Jeff, and Amy; 11 grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife Rosalynn and one grandchild.

Carter, a Democrat who served a single term from 1977 to 1981, had been in home hospice care since February 2023 after a series of short hospital stays.

"He was a man of great char acter and courage, hope and optimism," said Biden and First Lady Dr Jill Biden.

President-elect Donald Trump said while he strongly disagreed with Carter philosophically and politically, he also realised that he truly loved and respected our country, and all it stands for.

Carter was considered a friend of India. He was the first American president to visit India after the removal of the emergency and victory of the Janata Party in 1977. In his address to the Indian parliament, Carter spoke against authoritarian rule.

"India's difficulties, which we often experience ourselves and which are typical of the problems faced in the developing world, remind us of the tasks that lie ahead. Not the Authoritarian Way," Carter said on January 2, 1978.

Traffic jam in space: ISRO delays launch by 2 minutes

SpaDeX mission, described as a "bold step" by ISRO Chairman Dr S Somanath, will use indigenous technology to establish India's capability in orbital docking

AGENCIES

(Andhra Sriharikota, Pradesh), Dec 30: A traffic

jam of sorts in space forced the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Monday to delay the launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) by two minutes. Initially scheduled at 9.58pm, the launch of PSLV-C60 rocket for the ambitious Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) mission, a key milestone in India's space programme, was pushed to 10pm.

Two spacecraft that would aid ISRO in demonstrating space docking, a critical technology for future space missions got separated successfully and were placed into the desired low earth orbit late Monday night, ISRO said. "PSLV C60 mission accomplished as of SpaDeX spacecraft is considered," said Mission Director M Javakumar.

Dr S Somanath, Chairman of ISRO, told media that the launch was postponed due to "conjunctions with other satellites in the same orbit." Congestion in the orbit and flight path of the rocket has forced the Indian space agency to reschedule its launches earlier also.

Experts at ISRO found that some satellites from the Starlink constellation, owned by American billionaire Elon Musk and his company SpaceX,



were coming in the way. Starlink provides satellite-based broadband internet connectivity across the world.

With about 7,000 Starlink satellites already placed in the low Earth orbit, the total number of these satellites is ultimately expected to go up to about 12,000. Scientists and engineers from many space agencies have since long been complaining that these massive constellations will cause traffic jams in space

SpaDeX in a nutshell

Space Docking Experiment is a pioneering mission to establish India's capability in orbital docking, a key technology for future human spaceflight and satellite servicing missions, the space agency added.

A cost-effective technology demonstrator mission for inspace docking, it would make India join an elite list featuring China, Russia and the US.

This landmark mission, described as a "bold step" by ISRO Chairman Dr S Somanath, will use indigenous technology.

The in-space docking technology would be essential for taking up India's ambitions in space including sending humans to the Moon, bringing samples from there, and also building and operating the country's own space station-Bharatiya Antariksh Station.

Earlier, ISRO said the two spacecraft in the PSLV rocket-- Spacecraft A (SDX01) and Spacecraft B (SDX02) would be placed in an orbit that would keep them 5km apart from each other. Later, scientists at ISRO headquarters would try to bring them closer up to 3 metres which would subsequently lead them for merging together at an altitude of about 470km above Earth. The process is expected to take place in the next 10-14 days, ISRO officials said. This was ISRO's last mission in 2024















sure

IE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com accuracy 🖕 reliability 🖕 trust

You will be impulsive today, and this may throw up unexpected results. In a rush of enthusiasm, you may finish pending work and even be left with enough time to plan long-term goals. You may also realise and make amends for your past mistakes, savs Ganesha.

TAURUS

You may spend a majority of your time on your health and well-being today. Business lunch may see some pending negotiations reaching a successful outcome. Research work will progress better than expected, says Ganesha



get stronger. You are also likely to fall in love. If you are already in a relationship, you will plan to validate your bond either through an engagement or marriage. If you are a student, this is a good phase for you. Along with love, you will also get good grades.



There is every possibility that today, you will be prob-ing and prying about your future, predicts Ganesha. A visit to a well-known astrologer cannot be ruled out. Also, you are likely to consult a doctor. It is all due to your bad lifestyle and habits. You had better improve your lifestyle.

LEO

Fortune smiles on but a few, and when it does, it can take you to places you have never even dreamt of. Today is an exceptional day, in the sense that Lady Luck is backing you in all earnestness. So go with the flow and take your chances. You will find, much to your delight, that success is easy to achieve when you are willing to work hard and have luck guiding you.

VIRGO

Reflect on past glories and assemble the machinery for accomplishing more in the future. New relationships will mark the road to progress. You easy-going nature will help you get along famously with people



Today might be a good day to invest in that body armour you saw on the telly last night. At least find one that will shield you from being at the receiving end of your seniors and the daily grind of life. prepared to slog it out for your suc-cess. Put off auction bids and sealed tenders for a luckier day. Whatever it is that you do to turn your luck around, Ganesha advises you to take abundant precautions in all matters.

What Malaika learnt in 2024

Mumbai: Malaika Arora recently opened up about the lessons she has learned in 2024, particularly the importance of trusting herself more following her separation from Arjun Kapoor.

In a social media post, the actress reflected on the challenges and growth she has experienced over the past year. Malaika shared her agreement with a post stating that 2024 has been a year of self-discovery and empowerment, teaching her to lean into her own strength and trust her instincts. On Monday. Arora took to her Instagram and reshared a note reflecting on her 2024 journey. The note came just days after she responded to her ex, Arjun Kapoor's public comment about being 'single.'

The note read, "I don't hate you, 2024, but you were a difficult year, full of challenges, changes, and learning. You showed me that life can change in the blink of an eve and taught me to trust myself more. But, above all, you made me understand that my healthwhether physical, emotional, or mental-is what really matters.

For those who may not know, Malaika Arora faced two significant life changes this year: the loss of her father, Anil Arora, and the end of her seven-year relationship with Arjun Kapoor.



PALTROW TO WELCOME 2025 WITH CLEAN SLATE

Hollywood actress Gwyneth Paltrow is set to welcome the New Year with a clean slate. The actress recently shared a post on Instagram featuring a list of everything she's "let go of" over the course of the year.

HOPKINS CELEBRATING 49 YEARS OF SOBRIETY

Multiple Academy awards-winning actor Anthony Hopkins, 86, is celebrating 49 years of sobriety and has encouraged those who are struggling to seek help. The 86-year-old actor took to Instagram to share a story about his decision to give up alcohol and how it has impacted his life.

Long-distance relationship healthy: Ananya

Mumbai: Ananya Panday is currently rumoured to be dating former model Walker Blanco. She attended Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's wedding earlier this year with him, and introduced as her 'partner'. Now, in a new interview with a film journal, the Call Me Bae actress opened up about handling long distance relationships, and said that they can be 'healthy.

During the conversation, Ananya said: "I actually think it is quite healthy sometimes to have some space. I think 45 days not meeting someone is good enough. I don't think it is too bad. Two months is okay. Actually, distance does make the heart grow fonder.'

She went on to add how she is as a girlfriend. She added, "Over time, I have become more comfortable in who I am and that has directly impacted my relationships. I had this thing of becoming who my partner is. Whatever their interests were, I would start liking those. If they wanted to do something I would kind of not do what I wanted to do and go with them. I would spend less time with my friends. In the past, I based a lot of my personality a lot on who I was dating, and now I am comfortable in who I am. AGENCIES

Kajol's NY resolution

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Kajol recently shared that she was fabulous last year and will be even more fabulous in the coming year.

On Monday, the actress posted stunning photos of herself slaying in a saree, which she paired with she paneu rings and jewellery. In the photos, Kajol can be seen flaunting her radiant smile as she poses for the cameras. Alongside the

pictures.

she wrote, "None of this new vear new me shit! I was fabulous last vear and I will be even

more fabulous next

year as

well #somoteitbe #asitis.' Previously, the Dilwale ac-

tress had posted a candid selfie with the caption, "Just me, being the main character as always #selfietime.'

Kajol recently made headlines for recalling the delightful moments she shared with Shah Rukh Khan on the sets of their blockbuster film Dilwale. The Do Patti actress shared a series of photos featuring herself posing with SRK and others. In the caption, she wrote, "BTS of such a good good time. you can see it

in our madness and fun! #dil wale.'

QUIZ

1. 6+5=___

TO SOMEHOW CRASH

PLANETS 6 AND 5 TOGETHER !

Rakul teases fans about her new releases

Mumbai: Rakul Preet Singh, one of the most talented actresses in the entertainment industry, has consistently won hearts with her stellar performances in Bollywood and South Indian cinema.

Speaking about her releases this year, the actress said, "I have been a part of showbiz for over 10 years. You can't constantly think about validating yourself by doing cinema across boundaries. Mostly, I pick up a film because of the script or role, but at other times. I sign a movie because I want to work with a certain filmmaker or an actor.'

The actress teased fans about her exciting roles in 2025 saying, "People didn't see me in Hindi films this year, but that changes in 2025. I am excited that they will see me in varied, exciting roles."

For the unversed, Rakul has already shared a sneak peek of some of her films that fans will get to see her in this year. Among that is the much-awaited sequel De De Pyaar De 2. in which she plays the role of Ayesha Khurana and it will feature her opposite Ajay Devgn, with R Madhavan joining the cast. AGENCIES



SCORPIO

House renovation is in the offing. You may furnish it with portraits and artefacts Today, you may also feel like playing the stock market game and stake your bets, says Ganesha. Have a great time at home by hosting friends over.

SAGITTARIUS

Personal grooming will be on your mind today. A small fortune may be spent on enhancing the way you look. especially on a new hair-do. Retail Therapy is on the cards, and you may indulge spending on clothes and iewellerv.

.

CAPRICORN

It's difficult to keep calm and have a control over your temper in times of distress, but today, you will prove all who surrendered to the whims of adversity wrong, foresees Ganesha. You will be unfaltering in dealing with problems, and will overcome them with ease.

AQUARIUS

The day seems normal as vou are unlikely to encounter unpleasant situations, says Ganesha. The high point of the day will be your consummate skill with which you will handle mundane tasks. Ganesha reminds you of the saying, "Success is one percent inspiration and 99% perspiration."

PISCES

Fear is a part and parcel of life, and while it can not be eliminated, it can certainly be tamed, and that is what you will be doing today. All your suppressed audacity will be on full display, says Ganesha.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY



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CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

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

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		3	7				5	
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SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

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



owntown

'JULU' DIES AT NANDANKANAN

Barang: Julu, the oldest chimpanzee at Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) here, died Monday. Born October 12, 1988 at Singapore zoo, Julu was brought to Nandankanan May 16, 1994. A major attraction at NZP, Julu was struggling with old age-related complications. With this, Nandankanan has now seven chimpanzeesa male, five females and a baby.



CM thanks PM, Union Agri min for extending crop loss plea deadline

Bhubaneswar, Dec 30: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi Monday expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan for extending the deadline for farmers to report crop damage due to unseasonal rains to insurance companies till January 1.2025

Majhi, who visited Nayagarh, Gajapati, and Ganjam districts to assess the damage caused by unseasonal rains, interacted with affected farmers and noted the significant crop losses they are experiencing.

The state government, he said, has planned to provide assistance to all affected farmers, including those uninsured.

"Although December 29 was initially the last date for insured farmers to report crop loss, the state government requested an extension from the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and it was granted in the interest of the farmers," the CM said. thanking the PM and the Union Agriculture Minister for their sympathetic attitude towards the plight of Odisha's farmers.

The CM assured that all affected farmers would receive assistance. Alongside him, Rev-

WEATHER									
	BBSR	СТС							
Max Temp	29.2°	27.2°							
Min Temp	17.9°	17.0°							
Humidity	88%	91%							
Rainfall	Nil	Nil							
FORECAS Fog/mist in the and mainly cle later.	e morning	Ö							

N	MARKET WATCH									
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RSES	SENSEX	78,248.13	¥	450.94						
BOURSE	NIFTY	23,644.90	¥	168.50						
NCY	DOLLAR	85.77	¥	0.02						
CURRE	EURO	89.62	¥	0.14						

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi along with Revenue and Disaster Management **Minister Suresh Pujari had visited** Nayagarh, Gajapati and Ganjam districts to assess the damage caused by unseasonal rains

enue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari also visited the affected districts.

Majhi directed district Collectors in the affected regions to re-evaluate crop loss data and ensure timely submission of accurate damage reports. which were instructed to be finalised by December 30. He emphasised that assistance will be provided based on precise assessment data.

Unseasonal rains since November 20 have caused extensive damage to crops, including paddy and vegetables, in many districts of the state.

The CM visited farmlands in Majhiyakhand and Kandpada gram panchayats in Ranpur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 30: For-

mer chief minister Naveen

Patnaik Monday urged the

state government to provide adequate and quick compensation

to farmers who incurred losses

Patnaik undertook field visits

in Ganjam district to take stock

of crop damage. He interacted

with affected farmers in Ser-

agada, Aska, Kabisuryanagar Khallikote and his Assembly

"I have visited five areas of

Ganjam district today. The crop

damage is severe and farmers

are in distress. They must be

compensated quickly as was

a practice during our tenure,"

Patnaik told reporters after the

visit. Describing cultivators as

due to unseasonal rains.

segment in Hinjili.

block of Nayagarh district De cember 29. According to official records, 6,350 hectares of farmland in the district have been damaged

The CM also inspected crop damage in the Gosani block and Gurandi gram panchayat of Gajapati district, where 2,128.586 hectares of farmland and 121.122 hectares of unharvested paddy were reported as damaged.

In Ganjam district, Majhi visited the farmlands in the Nauli area of Laxmipur panchayat and the Ganju area of Rangeilunda gram panchayat in Chhatrapur block. The district recorded Kharif crop damage across 37,800 hectares, vegetable damage on 822 hectares, and a total of 61,540 farm-

ers affected. During his visits, the CM personally surveyed the damage and interacted with the affected

farmers Majhi urged all farmers to apply for assistance through tehsildars, revenue inspectors, or district agriculture officers. Applications can also be submitted

via 14447, the toll-free number, or the Krishi Rakshak portal. "The government is committed to compensating not only rice farmers but also vegetable

farmers and uninsured farmers for their losses." Maihi said.

Naveen seeks immediate relief for rain-hit farmers

the backbone of the economy, the BJD president claimed that he was informed by hundreds of farmers, including women, that "no government official has so far visited their paddy field to assess crop damage'

"The farmers told me that they had no advance information about rain or advisory. Had farmers received prior information about unseasonal rains, they could have saved their crop," Patnaik said. The BJD chief assured the

farmers that he would fight for their rights.

"The unseasonal rain has broken their (farmers) backbone. Therefore, I strongly demand that the state government

immediately provide adequate

compensation to them," the for-

mer chief minister said.

has been arranged through the other three gates. General devotees will not be permitted to enter through any gates other than the Singhadwar. However, this arrangement

Puri, Dec 30: Keeping in mind

the large congregation of dev-

otees and tourists in Puri on

the occasion of New Year cele-

brations, the Shree Jagannath

Temple Administration (SJTA) and police have made elaborate

arrangements for the smooth darshan of the sibling deities and movement of tourists.

The SJTA in a statement said, "Entry for darshan in the 12th-century shrine will be al-

lowed only through the Singhadwar (Lion's gate), while exit

will not apply for servitors and their family members, who may enter or exit through any gate.

"We seek everyone's cooperation for the smooth implementation of this arrangement for the orderly darshan of Mahaprabhu (Lord Jagannath)," SJTA chief administrator Arabinda Padhee said

He said this arrangement in the temple will be implemented on December 31 and January 1. This apart, the Puri district

rangements for devotees. Barri-

cades have been erected from the

Singhadwar to Market Square in

administration and police have made elaborate security ar-



HELPING HAND: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi hears public grievances at CM Grievance Cell in Unit-V area of Bhubaneswar, Monday

Spl arrangements for deities' darshan Dec 31, Jan 1



G (Central) Charan Singh Meena said 60 platoons of force (one platoon comprises 30 personnel) would be deployed for crowd management on the two days

t least 10 additional SPs, At least 10 additional 33 DSPs, 62 inspectors, 245 sub-inspectors and assistant SIs would be deployed for crowd control and managemen

the town so that the devotees can

enter the temple in an organised

DIG (Central) Charan Singh

manner.

toon comprises 30 personnel) would be deployed for crowd management on the two days. At least 10 additional SPs, 33 DSPs, 62 inspectors, 245 sub-inspectors and assistant SIs would be deployed for crowd control and management.

traffic arrangements and park-

ing places have been prepared

for devotees and tourists coming

Two teams of police would be deployed inside the temple and arrangements have been made to engage special anti-snatching teams, Meena said, adding that said.

has already started at different

The four students were hos-

pitalised and discharged in the

He said checking of vehicles

crowding inside the Shree Jagannath Temple here, police

evening, they added.

fainted and complained of breathlessness due to over-

entry points to Puri and in the town. A special outpost would be opened on the sea beach, which will keep a watch on tourists. Meanwhile, around 10 dev otees, including four students,



Odisha to implement **Ayushman Bharat** by end of Feb: Min

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 30: The Odisha government is set to implement the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri – Jan Arogva Yojana in the state by the end of February next year, Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling said Monday. He also said the state's Gop-

abandhu Ayushman Jan Arog-Bharat Pradhan ya Yojana Mantri – Jan (GJAY) Arogya Yojana and will be im-Gopabandhu Jan plement-Arogya Yojana will ed along cover around 3.5 crore beneficiaries with the

Ayushman Beneficiaries Bharat can avail health scheme. insurance in The two 27.000 empanelled health hospitals in the schemes

state and outside will cover around 3.5 crore beneficiaries. Mahaling said a Central team for implementation of the Avushman Bharat scheme has already visited Odisha, and the state government is

committed to increase the number of medical colleges and nursing colleges in the New Year to strengthen the healthcare sector.

He said an agreement is likely to be signed for implementation of the two schemes. The beneficiaries can avail health insurance in 27,000 empanelled hospitals in the state and outside, the Minister added.

ity gears up for New Year celebrations RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 30: As 2024 comes to an end. Bhubaneswar is abuzz with excitement, gearing up for vibrant New Year celebrations. The City, known for its cultural richness and lively atmosphere, is ready to welcome 2025 with a variety of events featuring music, dance, and culinary delights.

Hotels and resorts across the City have announced special programmes for the occasion. Empires Hotel has organised an evening of live music by singers Remo Ghosh, Chelsi Behura, Sachin Rout, and Rozalin Pattnaik, along with performances by the musical band Eagle. Empires accommodation manager Arun Mohanta assured that all



safety protocols will be followed, and celebrations will conclude shortly after midnight.

Hotel Hindustan International (HHI) will host 'Eclipse Party 2025', featuring DJ Pankaj, dancers Swati Banerjee and Ditsha Banerjee, and tabla player Dibvendu Baneriee. Wonder World Water Park and Resort's 'Euphoria' event includes live performances by Priya Singh and

Jay Jha, with a night of music and entertainment.

Pal Heights Mantra's 'Vintage Hollywood' theme will dazzle guests with golden-age cinema-inspired décor and performances by the Band Jashn. Meanwhile, their Jaydev Vihar branch will host a 'Winter Wonderland' party. Hotel Pushpak's celebration includes playback singers Navya Jaiti, Sworin

Brain, and DJ Cross, while Swosti Premium's 'Groove & Glitter' promises unlimited snacks, beverages, and live music.

Residents and visitors are also expected to flock to popular attractions like Dhauli, Nandankanan, and Sikharchandi to celebrate in serene settings.

To ensure public safety during "Zero Night" and New Year's celebrations, security has been beefed up across Bhubaneswar. DCP Pinak Mishra emphasised the importance of avoiding drunken driving, which has caused accidents in previous years. CCTV surveillance, night patrolling, and vehicle checks are in place to prevent illegal activities. Organisers of public events are required to secure necessary permissions.

Direct flight services to more cities from January

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 30: Direct flight services from two airports in the state to some prominent cities across the country will be launched in the first week of January 2025.

According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), direct flight services from Veer

Surendra Sai Airport at Jharsuguda to Hyderabad, Raipur, Lucknow and Mumbai will be launched January 1.

Similarly, direct flight services from Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Bhubaneswar to Indore Dehradun, Kochi, Jaipur and Lucknow will start January 3, it added.

Cops nab couple posing as kin of PM's principal secy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 30: Odisha Police Monday said it arrested a couple on charges of defrauding people by impersonating themselves as the daughter and son-in-law of Dr PK Mishra, the principal secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The couple, identified as Hansita Abhilipsa (38) and her accomplice Anil Kumar Mohanty, believed to be her husband, was accused of cheating people by claiming that they have influential connections, police added.

They were arrested Sunday and booked under Sections 329(3), 319(2), 318(4), and 3(5) of the BNS. They claimed to be the daughter and son-in-law of PM's principal secretary Dr PK Mishra, Swaraj Debata, Additional

PIC: BIKASH NAYAR

DCP Zone 6 in Bhubaneswar, said. Police recovered several

photographs from the couple's residence, showing them with high-profile people, includ ing Chief Secretary. The duo allegedly swindled rich businessmen, builders, mining operators, and other influential people in Bhubaneswar.

Officials said the couple digitally manipulated the photographs with influential officials and used these doctored images to approach victims, falsely promising to help them get their tenders passed.

Hansita is a resident of Kand hamal district, while Mohanty is a small-time businessman who owns an infrastructure firm.

The arrests were made following a complaint by a mine owner.



People stand in a long queue to buy state government calendar and diary, at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Monday













power post



DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FOCUS

Yoga is the union of that which has become separated in the play of the universe with its own true self, origin and universality. **SRI AUROBINDO**



Turmoil in S Korea

outh Korea is plagued by a deepening political crisis after two impeachment motions against two top leaders have been passed, one after the other, in an unprecedented development that has baffled the observers of that country. The Opposition-controlled National Assembly has voted to impeach acting President Han Duck-soo. It comes close on the heels of President Yoon Suk Yeol's surprising imposition of martial law on 3 December and his ensuing impeachment on 14 December. The latest move by the Opposition means Han will be stripped of the powers and duties of the President until the Constitutional Court decides whether to dismiss or reinstate him. The court is already reviewing whether Yoon's earlier impeachment can be upheld or not. The impeachments of the country's two top political heads in such quick succession have exacerbated the political turmoil, deepened economic uncertainties and lowered the country's image internationally

The single-chamber National Assembly passed Han's impeachment motion with a 192-0 vote. Lawmakers of the ruling People Power Party (PPP) boycotted the vote and tried to mob the Assembly Speaker Woo Won Shik shouting that the vote was invalid. They even demanded Woo's resignation protesting against his ruling that the passage of the impeachment motion required a simple majority in the 300-member assembly, not a two-thirds majority as claimed by the PPP. The problem with the South Korean system is that there are no specific laws on the impeachment of an acting president.

Reacting to the impeachment announcement, Han said it was regrettable but added that he respected the assembly's decision and would suspend his duties so as not to "add to the existing confusion and uncertainty." He declared he will wait for "a swift, wise decision" by the Constitutional Court.

Han's powers were officially suspended after copies of his impeachment document were delivered to him and the Constitutional Court. The Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, Choi Sang-mok, has taken over the duties. Since South Korea can ill afford to be in a state of political turmoil, given the belligerence of its neighbour – North Korea-, Choi's office immediately instructed the military to boost its readiness to prevent North Korea from miscalculating the situation and launching provocations. He also told the foreign ministry to inform the United States, Japan and other major partners that South Korea's foreign policies remain unchanged.

Han could have survived had he not crossed swords with the main liberal opposition Democratic Party by stonewalling the latter's efforts to fill three vacant seats on the Constitutional Court, establish an independent investigation into Yoon's martial law decree and legislate pro-farmer bills. The demand for the approval of the assembly's nominations of three new Constitutional Court justices stemmed from the anxiety of the Opposition to have the court's full nine-member bench ahead of its ruling on Yoon's impeachment. A court decision to dismiss Yoon as President needs support from at least six justices, and adding more justices will likely increase the prospects for Yoon's ouster. Yoon's political allies in the governing party oppose the appointment of the three justices on the plea that Han should not exercise the presidential authority to make the appointments while Yoon is yet to be formally removed from office. Han decided to oblige them by announcing that he would not appoint the justices without bipartisan consent. In response the Democratic Party, which holds a majority in the assembly, submitted an impeachment motion against Han and passed bills calling for the appointment of three justices

South Korean investigative agencies have been deployed to find out whether Yoon committed rebellion and abuse of power with his martial law decree, which had to be rescinded within six hours of its promulgation due to mass protests. Yoon has repeatedly ignored requests by authorities to appear for a face-to-face questioning. His defence minister, police chief and several other military commanders have already been arrested over the deployment of troops and police officers to the National Assembly.

South Korea is effectively sending out the message across the globe that it will not tolerate any attempt to subvert democracy. This is a remarkable development at a time when autocratic leaders and parties are entrenching themselves in many countries. It is to be seen whether the South Korean experience augurs well for the democratic process the world over.

NAVIGATING THE RISKS

n recent years, the concept of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) has gained significant attention from the international community, including the United Nations and the G20, as a new policy paradigm for development. But understanding the risks of DPI is crucial to ensuring that its potential benefits materialise.



Carl Gahnberg

UNDERSTANDING **THE RISKS OF DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IS CRUCIAL TO ENSURING THAT ITS POTENTIAL**

> **BENEFITS MATERIALISE**

The risks stem from the fact that "digital public infrastructure" lacks a clear definition. The term encompasses the many digital technologies that serve as economic and social infrastructure, from digital identification and payment systems to data exchanges and health services. As a policy initiative, though, DPI refers to a vague vision of using these technologies to serve the public interest. This could result in the internet and technological innovation working for everyone - or just as easily turn them into tools for political control.

In discussions about DPI, policymakers often point to cases that highlight how technology and connectivity can spur development. They frequently cite India's Unified Payments Interface, which has expanded financial inclusion and reduced the costs of digital transactions for its hundreds of millions of users.

It is also understood that such infrastructure is to be built with Digital Public Goods (DPGs), a concept that encompasses open-source software, open standards, and other non-proprietary components. This definition is partly intended to position DPIs as being "for the public" but also to enhance competition and mitigate concentrations of power in the global digital economy.



Despite being ill-defined, Digital Public Infrastructure has become the new policy paradigm for development. But policymakers must reach consensus on the proper scope of these policies and how to implement them to ensure that governments do not use them as

tools for surveillance and repression

Lastly, proponents point out that DPI could bolster international cooperation, particularly as the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) approaches. This important UN initiative has provided the framework for countries to collaborate on digital development. Although authoritarian states have previously sought to assert greater control over the internet's governance during these negotiations, a focus on promoting DPI could avoid this politicised debate and instead foster a constructive agenda to bridge digital divides.

But basing policy on such an ill-defined concept poses significant risks. Ideally, governments would convene other stakeholders to create an enabling environment for DPI and safeguard users' rights and interests. It is easy to imagine, however, that some governments will place their own interests above civil lib-

erties and fundamental rights, using this infrastructure for surveillance and targeting in the name of law enforcement or national security. An especially pernicious example could involve the monitoring and regulation of individual behaviour through dystopian social-credit systems.

Moreover, while many proponents hope that DPI could chip away at Big Tech's outsize power, it has also been associated with narratives of digital sovereignty that could contribute to the internet's fragmentation - a systemic threat to global communications. For example, one can imagine scenarios in which some governments challenge the multi-stakeholder model for governing global internet resources like IP addresses and domain names on the grounds that they constitute DPIs.

In fact, we recently witnessed something similar in the European Union when it

proposed an amendment to the Electronic Identification, Authentication, and Trust Services (eIDAS) regulation that would have empowered governments to mandate the recognition of digital certificates that did not adhere to stringent industry standards. This risked undermining the global governance model for browser security and could have allowed European governments to surveil communications both within and beyond their borders

The policy vision of DPI will continue to evolve, and ongoing discussions, it is hoped, will help identify and clarify further opportunities and risks. Initiatives such as the UN's Universal DPI Safeguards Framework, which seeks to establish guardrails for DPI, are a promising start. But much more must be done. For example, the UN's framework has recognised the need for continuous learning to ensure that the right safeguards are in place.

As the concept of DPI gains traction in the UN system and other multilateral organisations, vigorous and informed debate regarding its potential advantages - and pitfalls - will be essential. With clear-cut policy guidelines and protections, we can help prevent these technologies from becoming tools for surveillance and repression, ensure that everyone benefits from the burgeoning digital economy, and keep the internet open, globally connected, and secure.

> The writer is Director of Policy Development and Research at the Internet Society.

> > ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WARFARE SPECTRUM

Russians unveil a game-changer

n the early hours of 22 December, the Ukrainian L city of Dnipro, Dnepropetrovsk during Soviet days, received a Christmas gift three days earlier - a series of missile strikes most unlike any other seen in the current war with Russia, or in any other since the twin atomic bomb strikes on Nagasaki and Hiroshima at the fag-end of World War II. A series of thunderous bolts from the sky hit the Yuzhmash military production complex at Dnipro, resulting in massive explosions, causing damage not revealed by Ukraine for obvious reasons, but estimated to have been extensive, some calculating that the complex, a mile square. that produces missile and aircraft parts, and parts of which were built deep underground during the Soviet days, was made non-functional. Coming a month after a fearsome strike on the energy grid of Ukraine which crippled the war-torn country, the strike by Oreshnik, the new missile, had the equivalent of a meteorite, to quote President Vladimir Putin. Russia, which unleashed the attack by its latest, and till the attack unknown Oreshnik missile, understandably preened.

Oreshnik (Hazel in Russian, a tree that produces nuts packed with vitamin 'A') may force many militaries to rewrite their war doctrine. It is a system that consists of a rocket vehicle, or 'bus', that carries six MIRVs (multiple in-

during the first Trump term. In fact, Moscow informed Washington of its intention to use missile in advance. and perhaps that the missile was not carrying a nuclear warhead, in order to prevent a nuclear holocaust.

What Oreshnik has, in effect, done is to change the basics of war, if not doctrines. A country at war can now unleash a weapon on its enemy with the awe-inspiring power equivalent of a nuclear missile, but with no radiation effect that a nuclear strike entails, and therefore escaping the opprobrium and retaliation that a nuclear strike would attract. Simply put, you can stay within conventional warfare bounds, and yet wreak devastation that a nuclear missile can. And not trigger a nuclear Armageddon. In other words, even conventional war will now approach the ruinous capability of MAD (mutually assured destruction). The Ukraine war has changed the world in many ways. It has destroyed the normal rules the world lived by. including those that governed financial transactions between nations. It overturned the supply chains of international trade. It has now thrown up a weapon that makes nuclear weapons redundant even as weapons of deterrence.

WISDOM CORNER

- The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul. These laws execute themselves. They are out of time, out of space, and not subject to circumstance. RALPH WALDO EMERSON
- Intuition and concepts constitute... the elements of all our 66 knowledge, so that neither concepts without an intuition in some way corresponding to them, nor intuition without concepts, can yield knowledge. IMMANUEL KANT

Time heals griefs and quarrels, for we change and are no longer the same persons. Neither the offender nor the offended are any more themselves.

BLAISE PASCAL

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- **1600:** The East India Company, formed for the exploitation of trade with East and Southeast Asia and India, was incorporated by English roval charter.
- **1857:** Ottawa, located in Ontario at the confluence of the Ottawa, Gatineau, and Rideau rivers and whose area was first described by Samuel de Champlain in 1613, was named the capital of Canada by Queen Victoria this day in 1857.
- **1907:** The first annual ball drop at Times Square. The annual tradition of dropping a ball at 11:59 pm to mark the start of the New Year was organized for the first time by Adolph Ochs, the owner of the New York
- **1909:** Manhattan Bridge opens for traffic. The Manhattan Bridge, one of the first suspension bridges ever constructed, was opened to traffic on this day. The bridge was designed by Leon Moisseiff and crosses the East River in New York City.
- **1983:** Coup in Nigeria. A military coup in Nigeria overthrew the civilian government of Shehu Shagari and installed Maj-Gen Muhammadu Buhari
- **1991:** The Soviet Union legally ceased to exist, Russia and other former Soviet republics having declared themselves independent and having founded the Commonwealth of Independent States on December 21, 1991.



KV Ramesh **THE ORESHNIK MISSILE MAY** FORCE MANY **MILITARIES TO REWRITE**

THEIR WAR

DOCTRINE

dependently-targetable re-entry vehicles), to the high levels of the atmosphere, much like an Intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) each of which carried six sub-munitions. virtually rods, speculated to be made of hard metal, tungsten, or alloys such as tungsten-titanium, or perhaps more dense metals like osmium, or rhenium, that bore down on their target at Mach 10. and at impact, reduce the object of their wrath to nothing. This is because at the time of impact, they unleash energy equivalent of close to 80 US Mark 84 bombs used in Vietnam, which means four-fifth of a kiloton. For comparison, the "Little Boy' that destroyed Hiroshima was 15 kilotons.

The missile was an IRBM. Intermediate range ballistic missile, whose range was limited to within 5,000 km under the IRBM treaty between US and Russia, signed during the Soviet days. which the former withdrew

Western defence analysts came up with mixed reactions. Some scoffed at the scientific feasibility of a missile that can reach its target at Mach 10-11, claiming that any object that does would lose power because of atmospheric resistance, and therefore could not reach that speed at impact. Others doubted if the missile's MIR-Vs strikes had been accurate since at the speed claimed, the projectiles would be covered in a plasma cloud that could prevent guidance signals reaching them, to target them to their intended targets.

The 'before' image of Yuzhmash complex are available freely on the internet, but Ukraine, which claimed that there was no damage on the complex, has not released the 'after' photographs, so it is not easy to assess the devastation wrought, but that reluctance raises the speculation that the impact the 36 projectiles wrought could have put out the facility for a long time.

The writer, a senior iournalist, is an analyst of geopolitics.

etters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post

are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 (0) words). Contributors are

requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: dit@orissapost.com



B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Land of immigrants

Sir, This refers to "MAGA Meltdown," Dec 30, Orissa POST. The ongoing debate over the "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) movement and its stance on immigration underscores one of the most profound contradictions in American society: a nation that prides itself on being a land of immigrants grappling with the complexities of its immigration policies. Despite ideological divides, one undeniable truth prevails-America has always been, and continues to be, a nation shaped by immigrants. Even those who claim "nativist" identities often have ancestral ties to foreign shores, a fact that highlights the paradox of anti-immigration rhetoric. Historically, the US has thrived on its ability to attract talent, ambition, and ingenuity from around the globe. The promise of meritocracy and the 'American Dream' has drawn countless individuals seeking a better life, fueling economic growth and innovation. From the industrial revolution to the digital age, immigrants have played a central role in positioning the US as a global leader. However, the idealised narrative of America as a welcoming haven for immigrants often obscures the reality: immigration policies have always been selective, favouring certain groups while marginalising others.. Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Out of school

Sir, Right to Education Act, 2009 has made education free and compulsory for children in the age group of 6-14 years under Article 21 A of the Constitution. But has the Act percolated through the society to fulfil its stated aim? The Lok Sabha was told the other day that 11.7 lakh school children were considered "out of school" in the first eight months of 2024. Children not enrolled and those absent 45 days without notice are defined as "out of school." Poverty, abysmal and unhygienic living conditions, child labour, insufficient and untrained teachers, and paucity of vehicles to ferry children keep them away from schools. Governments can set right the anomaly in several ways and, of course, making schools appealing for the children is the right way to go ahead. There is an urgent need to tie up loose ends of the once attractive midday meal scheme or the PM-POSHAN because a hungry body is an angry mind.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA









state



Bodies to check illegal mining 'ineffective'

OST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Dec 30: The district. sub-divisional, and tehsil-level committees formed by the state government's Steel and Mines department more than two weeks ago to curb illegal mining of minor minerals have allegedly proved ineffective as large scale theft of black stone in Dharmasala tehsil of Jajpur district - where a majority of these, and other, quarries are located - continue unhindered.

According to reports, massive theft of valuable black stone from the Barada-1 quarry during night hours is being carried out causing serious environmental impact. This has also triggered disappointment among local residents who have questioned the inaction and lack of transparency of the committee members.

According to a notification issued by the additional chief secretary (ACS) Dec 4, 2024, these committees are expected to conduct regular raids, reviews, and take appropriate measures against illegal mining operations. They are also required to submit monthly reports to the district-level task force and the director of mining.

JAJPUR DISTRICT

The sub-collector is the chairperson of the sub-divisional committee while the sub-divisional police officer (SDPO), assistant conservator of forests (ACF) or range officer, tehsildar, and inspector-in-charge of the local police station will function as members, the noti-

fication stated. While the mining officer will serve as the convener member, the tehsildar is the chairperson of tehsil-level committee, with the inspector-in-charge and range officer as members. The mining officer is the convener member, the notification added.

However, it is alleged that around 5.000 tons of black stone are being illegally extracted on a daily basis from Barada -1 mine in connivance with the officials.



The smugglers are using 10 compressors and two to four excavators to extract the mineral from the quarry, it is alleged. This rampant loot is estimated at ₹12 lakh on a daily basis.

It is alleged that the miners distribute about 20 per cent of the proceeds among the officials, enabling the illegal mining to continue without any hurdles. Locals said their attempts to draw the attention of district-level committee over the issue did not meet with any suc-

cess. The smuggled black stone is being sold to crusher units in the vicinity, they alleged. They said if members of the task force. divisional officers. and tehsildar-level committees inspect the quantity of black

units, the truth would become evident. However, the committees are deliberately avoiding conducting verification of these crusher units and remaining silent on the matter, they alleged.

It is feared that the lack of transparency in administrative actions and illegal operations could lead to the complete deple tion of valuable black stone reserves in Dharmasala tehsil area.

According to reports, the state government this year suffered significant loss of revenue owing to the illegalities, as against the crores of rupees it earlier generated annually.

The drastic depletion of revenue is on account of the fact that only 24 of the 90 black stone mines have been leased out. The rest are allegedly being illegally operated by businessmen, politicians, officials, and employees of the enforcement agencies, who are reportedly sharing the profits.

Meanwhile, when contacted, Deputy Director of Mines Jayaprakash Nayak said that regular raids are being conducted by the committees. He also ruled out administrative negligence or irregularities regarding the extraction of black stone.

Al cams help nab 13 poachers in Similipal POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Dec 30: With the help of AI camera network set up in the Similipal Wildlife

Sanctuary, Forest department sleuths in Mayurbhanj district were able to track and successfully arrest a group of 13 poachers Monday.

The accused were booked under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 following their arrest. In addition, a separate case under the Arms Act has also been filed against them for possession of illegal firearms.

A total of 13 bows, 33 arrows, one country-made gun, and other hunting tools were seized from them. They were later forwarded to a court, Forest officials said

Sources said the AI cameras installed in the core area of Similipal Tiger Reserve, which is a part of the advanced Similipal Wildlife Intelligence Network (SWIN), caught the accused persons poaching wildlife after entering into the core area November 24. After receiving the automated alert, the Forest sleuths moved swiftly, arrested them and seized a significant quantity of hunting gear from their homes

3 held for assaulting women over religious conversion

BJD accuses BJP of shielding prime accused PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasore/Bhubaneswar, Dec 30: Even as Odisha Police arrested three persons on charges of assaulting two women over allegations that they were attempting religious conversion of some tribal families in Balasore district, Opposition BJD Monday alleged that the prime accused was allowed to go scot-free due to his links with ruling BJP leaders.

According to police, the arrests were made Sunday and two cases have been filed at Remuna police station. Police action followed a viral video showing two women being tied to a tree and assaulted in public view for allegedly attempting forced conversions of tribal families in Gobardhanpur village Thursday.

"So far, three people have been arrested. We are taking stringent action to ensure there is no law and order situation in the area," Balasore SP Rai Prasad said. The accused were booked un-

der the SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and BNS, while another case was registered

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against the two women under Sec tion 4 of the Odisha Freedom of Religion Act, 1967, and Sections 299 (deliberate and malicious insult of a religion), 3(5) (joint crimi nal liability), and 351(2) (criminal intimidation) of BNS.

Meanwhile, BJD leader Lekhashree Samantsinghar alleged that members of the ruling BJP were behind the assault, "The prime accused. Badal Panda, who is seen in the video, was not arrest ed because of his close proximity to Balasore MP Pratap Sarangi and Nilagiri MLA Santosh Khatua," Samantsinghar claimed.

BJP MP Sarangi dismissed the allegations, calling them false and politically motivated. Earlier during the day, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi posted on X, "Or one hand, a Dalit youth was killed in police custody in Dewas. Mad hya Pradesh. On the other hand tribal women were tied to trees

nnivance with the officials. stone stored at	t these crusher black stone.	their homes.	while another case w	vas registered and beaten in Balasore, Odisha."
olkata zoo vet	EAST COAST RAILWAY (1) e-Tender Notice No. 24-SBP-TRD- 0T-2024-25, Dtd, 23-12-2024	इंडियन बेंक 🤣 Indian Bank 🛆 इलाहाबाद allahabad	ZONAL OFFICE: SAMBA At: Shyam Arcade, Khetra Sambalpur - 768003	
good health tiger takes 4-6 kg of buffalo meat a day in perfect health condition but did not specify her intake."She is in good health but needs rest and our team of vets and zoo keepers are at work. We	Name of the work! TRD RELATED WORK IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORK OF "P.WAY AND OTHERALLIED WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH REMOVAL OF PERMANENT SPEED RESTRICTION (PSR) ON CURVE NO. 23 UP AT KM 46/27-47/13 AND CURVE NO. 24 DN AT KM 46/28-47/24 IN JUJOMURA (JUJA)-KEREJANGA (KPJG) SECTION OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION". Approx.cost: ₹ 56,06,480.31, EMD: ₹ 1,12,100.00. (2) e-Tender Notice No. : 25-SBP-TRD-	Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securit with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcemen Mortgagor to repay the amount mentioned in having failed to repay the amount, notice is he general that the undersigned has taken Sym conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of th Mortgagor in particular and the public in ger property will be subject to the charge of the In	y Interest Act, 2002 and in exerci- nt) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand I the notice within 60 days from the reby given to the following Borroo mbolic Possession of the prope he said Act read with Rule 8 & 9 o heral are hereby cautioned not to ndian Bank, Rourkela Daily Mari Borrower's attention is invited to	nk under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of ise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read Notice calling upon the Borrower/Partner/Guarantors/ he date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers wer/Partner/Guarantors/Mortgagor and the public in erty described here-in-below in exercise of powers of the said Rules. The Borrower/Partner/Guarantors/ bo deal with the property and any dealings with the ket Branch for an amount mentioned herein below o provisions of Sub-section (8) of the section 13
are constantly monitoring him," the of- ficial said but did not give a timeframe for when the tigress will be sent back	A CONNECTION WITH THE WORK IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORK OF "P.WAY AND OTHER ALLIED	ROURKELA DAILY MARKET BRANCH/ Name & Address of Borrower/Partner/Guarantor/Mortgagor	Amount Payable as on specified date Date of Demand / Possession Notice	Description of the Immovable Property
to Simlipal. The Forest department is regularly coordinating with their coun- terparts in Odisha. The tigress had kept wildlife officials from both the states on edge for over a week after leaving STR December 8.	WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH REMOVAL OF PERMANENT SPEED RESTRICTION (PSR) ON CURVE NO. 36 UP AT KM 75/1-23 AND CURVE NO. 37 DN AT KM 75/1-23 AND CURVE NO. 37 DN AT KM 75/24-2 IN JUJOMURA (JUJA)-KEREJANGA (KPJG) SECTION OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION".	Borrower: Tarun Trading Company (Partnership Firm), At: Katchery Road, Near Lal Building, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundargarh, PIN- 769012 / Partner/Guarantor/Mortgagor: Mr. Pawan Kumar Agrawal, S/o.: Kundan Lal Agrawal, At: Mahima Niwas, Birsa Dhar Road,	As on 30.09.2024 + interest and cost thereon Ac.0.06 Dec, Kissam: Gharabari	All that piece and parcel of Property (Land & Building) recorded in the name of Mr. Pawan Kumar Agrawal , Khata No.: 207, Plot No.: 921 (953/2), Town Unit No.: 43, Situated at Rourkela Town, P.S.: Plant Site, Area: Bounded by North: 16 feet wide Road, South: Sri West: Smt. Puspa Devi Goel
On Sunday the tigress was tranquil- lised with a single dart shot at 4:09 pm, after previous attempts to sedate her had failed. The animal's vital parameters were	Approx. cost : ₹ 61,69,986.30, EMD: ₹ 1,23,400.00. (3) e-Tender Notice No. : 26-SBP-TRD- OT-2024-25, Dtd. 24.12.2024 Name of the work: TRD RELATED	Rourkela, Sundargarh, PIN-769012 / Partner/G Birsa Dhar Road, Rourkela, Sundargarh, PIN-7 Place: Sambalpur Date: 30.12.2024		wal, S/o.: Pawan Kumar Agrawal, At: Mahima Niwas, Sd/- Authorised Officer Indian Bank
examined several times before her road journey from Bankura to Kolkata in a vehicle accompanied by a convoy of po- lice and the Forest department. "The operation to sedate Zeenat was	WORK IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORK OF "P.WAY AND OTHER ALLIED WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH REMOVAL OF PERMANENT SPEED RESTRICTION (PSR) ON CURVE NO. 18, 18A, 18B & 18C DN IN JHARSUGUDA ROAD (JSGR)-SAMBALPUR (SBP)	Central Bank of India Regional Office: P.O.: Modipara,	al Bank of I Sambalpur, Quantum Building Sambalpur - 768002, Phone: 06 cmrecoverysambro@centralb	63-2533091/ (For Immovable Property)
undertaken after veterinarians gave their approval," he said. Since Saturday night, the tigress had been in the Gopalpur forest in Bankura district, where she was surrounded by double netting, he added.	SECTION OF SÁMBALPUR DIVISION". Approx. cost : ₹ 21,41,117.27, EMD: ₹ 42,800.00. Completion period; 12 Months (for all sl. no.) Tender closing Date & Time: At 1530 hrs. on 14.01.2025 (for sl. no. 1 & 2) and At 1530 hrs. on 15.01.2025 (for sl. no. 3).	of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) F against her name, calling upon them to repay notice. The Borrower having failed to repay th undersigned has taken possession of the properties.	/ Interest Act, 2002 & in exercise of Rules, 2002, issued a demand notic the amount mentioned in the notic he amount, notice is hereby given erties described herein below in ex- nerties described herein below in ex-	k of India under the Securitisation & Reconstruction of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with ce to the concerned Borrower on the date mentioned within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said to the Borrowers and the public in general that the kercise of powers conferred on him/her under section against the accounts. The Borrower in particular and

Zeenat at Ko hospital, in



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 30: Tigress Zeenat, which had strayed from Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) to West Bengal and was finally captured in Bankura district, is now in good health and under the observation of veterinary doctors at Alipore Zoo hospital, an official said Monday.

A senior Forest official told PTI tha the three-year-old tigress - who could finally be captured after being sedated with tranquillisers in Bankura Sunday afternoon - was brought to the Alipore Zoo Vet Hospital around midnight and her health checked after arrival.

She was again checked by three yets and zoo keepers Monday morning and her condition was okay excepting the stress and trauma due to tranquillizing and being on the run for 21 days since her escape from Similipal reserve forest in the first week of December, he said. "She will be under observation for some more days as she has been running away from one place to another in three states and has been chased. She did not have proper meal as the places where she roamed in the three weeks did not have enough prey base. Also, the Forest department had to sedate her with tranquillizers as she could not be caught otherwise. So she needs time to recuperate," he said. Zeenat was given buffalo meat as her meal on arrival at Alipore Zoo.

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier Fax or in person shall be accepted agains such e-tenders even if these are subm on firm's letter head and received in time

The official said a full-grown adult

serve (TATR) to Similipal last month to introduce new gene pool to the tiger population.

Zeenat had been relocated from Ma-

harashtra's Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Re-

After leaving Similipal, Zeenat ventured through forests in Manbazar and Bandwan before crossing into West Bengal, covering over 120 km across the borders of West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha.

Despite efforts, the tigress avoided baits in trap-door cages and instead killed domestic goats that strayed into the forest. Surveillance using drones was also conducted, but the dense forests made monitoring challenging. Officials said Zeenat had been travelling shorter distances in recent days, suggesting she may be settling in the area.

nvalid and shall be rejected summaril without any consideration. Complete information including e-tende documents of the above e-tender is availabl n website : www.ireps.gov.in The tenderers/bidders must have Class-II Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate or e-tendering. All relevant paper must have to be uploaded at the time of participating on e-tendering as per instruction. Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note an hanges/corrigendum issued for this tende Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD) PR-839/P/24-25 Sambalpu

BRANCH / Name and Address of Borrower	Amount in Demand Notice	Date of Demand / Possession Notice	Description of Mortgaged Property
DEOGARH BRANCH / Borrower: Mr Pradeep Kumar Naik, S/o: Mr Bholeswar Naik, At/ PO: Kalla, Saida, Barkote, Dist: Deogarh-768110 / Guarantors: 1)	plus interest, other charges &	06.10.2024 / 24.12.2024	All that part and parcel of property consist of Khata No: 372/153, Plot No: 3043/4886, having Area: Ac.0.040 Dec, Mouza: Saida, Tahasil: Barkote, PS: Barkote, Dist.: Deogarh, Mortgagor: Mr Bholeswar Naik & Mrs Jayanti Naik , Bounded by East: Road, West: Vendor, North: Mr. Maharana, South: Road
Mr Bholeswar Naik, S/o: Late I Dist: Deogarh	Duryodhan Naik, 2)) Mrs Jayan	ti Naik, W/o: Mr. Bholeswar Naik, Both are At/PO: Saida,
TAMIAN BRANCH / Borrowers: 1) Mr Shreedhar Meher, S/o: Mr. Kalakanhu Meher, 2) Mr Kalakanhu Meher, S/o: Late Akura Meher, Both are- At/PO: Tamian, Via: Patnagarh, Dist.:		19.09.2024 / 30.12.2024	All that part and parcel of property consist of Khata No: 282/ 358, Plot No: 1019,1018,&1029, having Area: Ac 0.010 Dec, Ac 0.005 Dec, Ac 0.030 Dec respectively (Total: Ac.0.045 Dec), Mouza:Tamian, Tahasil: Patnagarh, PS: Patnagarh, Dist. Bolangir, Mortgagor: Mr. Kalakanhu Meher , S/o: Late Akura Meher, Bounded by East: Village Road, West: Yudhistir Deep.
Bolangir- 767025.	North: Makaru Meh	er, South: Sa	
Place: Sambalpur, Date: 30.12.20	24		Sd/- Authorised Officer, Central Bank of India

the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the said properties and any dealings with the said properties will be subject

to the charge of the Central Bank of India, for the amount stated below with further interest and cost thereon. The borrower's attention is hereby invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of the time

Eco-friendly paver block making unit inaugurated



RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, Dec 30: 'Eco Brick' an eco-friendly paver block manufacturing facility using LD slag was inaugurated by Atanu Bhowmick, Director In-Charge (DIC) at the materials recovery department (MRD) of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant Monday.

The unique unit will manufacture paver blocks utilising LD slag - a by-product of steelmaking - as a core material, addressing environmental challenges

while advancing waste utilisation, and circular economy, a release said. The new paver block manufacturing facility is equipped to produce high-quality paver blocks with a concrete grade of M200 (1:1.5:3), and a block thickness of 80 mm. The facility has a daily production capacity of 1,000 units, which converts to vearly output of 3 lakh units.

With an annual influx of 10 lakh tons of LD slag from the steel melting shop (SMS), this facility is a significant step in utilising slag for innovative applications. Currently, internal consumption across RMHP, SMS-II, T&RM, and other departments is limited to 2 lakh tons per annum. This initiative ensures a substantial portion of

slag is repurposed, addressing disposal burdens and contributing to sustainable steel production, the release added.

DO निक्षेप बीमा और प्रत्यय गारंटी निगम DEPOSIT INSURANCE AND CREDIT GUARANTEE CORPORATION G

Unidentifiable and untraceable depositors in claims prepared by liquidators.

Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) settles claims prepared by liquidators in terms of provisions contained in Sections 17 and 18 of DICGC Act, 1961. The claims of insured depositors who were marked unidentifiable (depositors who were not paid due to non-availability of KYC documents at the time of sanction of main claim) /untraceable (depositors whose claims were sanctioned but emain undisbursed and refunded to DICGC) by liquidators is provided for by DICGC. Instructions have been issued to Registrar of Co-operative Societies and liquidators of banks (liquidated before December 31, 2014) to contact such depositors and submit the claims, if any, to DICGC. Depositors of these banks are advised to approach the respective liquidators with officially valid document/s of identity in ca of unpaid claims. The list of banks is available on DICGC website www.dicgc.org.in

"Don't get cheated by E-mails/SMSs/Calls promising you money."

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEE RURAL WORKS DIVISION **RUBAL WORKS DIVISION, KUCHINDA** e-Mail- eerw kuchinda@yahoo.com Corrigendum to Bid Identification No. Tender Online 07/RWD/Kuchinda/2024-25 No.O-1076:Due to unavoidable circumstances, the following change we been made in this Office Bid Identification No. tender online 0 RWD/Kuchinda/2024-25 The availability of tender for online bidding has been extended fro 31.12.2024 at (11.00 A.M.) to 08.01.2025 upto (5.00 P.M.) Last date & time of seeking tender clarification - 07.01.2025 Date & Time of opening tender:- 09.01.2025. All other terms and conditions remain unchanged

Sd./- Superintending Engineer OIPR-25151/11/0014/2425 **Rural Works Division, Kuchind**

) बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा Bank of Baroda	Regional Office (Sambalpur Region) G.M. College Chowk,	
े बिक आफ़ बड़ादी Bank of Baroda	Christian Para, Sambalpur-768001	(Immovable Property)

(As per Appendix IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002) Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the BANK OF BARODA under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice calling upon the Borrowers/Guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice together with further interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken POSSESSION of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on the date mentioned below. The Borrowers/Guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the BANK OF BARODA for an amount stated herein below plus further interest thereon at contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment. The Borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

se 1.	<u>BRANCH</u> / Name & Address of the Borrowers/Guarantors	Description of the Immovable Properties	Demand/ Possession Notice Date	Total Dues as on
R	1) Sri Rabindra Sahu, 2) Smt. Hirabati Sahu and 3) Smt. Snehlata Sahu, all are resident of	Equitable Mortgage of Land & Building having Khata No.: 242/992, Plot No.: 2253/4099, corresponding to Rakhit Khata No.: 250, classified as Gharabari, admeasuring Area: Ac. 0.040 Dec., situated at Mouza: Hirma, At/P.O: Hirma, PS: Badmal, Tahasil: Jharsuguda, Dist.: Jharsuguda	24.09.2024 / 24.12.2024	₹12,21,675.39 as on 22.12.2024 + further interest thereon at contractual rate plus costs,
es 1 <u>7/</u>	Sahu, Bounded by North: Plot No.: 2253 (P), Son PATNAGARH BRANCH / Borrower: Mr. Sunil Kumar Agrwal / Guarantor: Mr. Hrusikesh Jain, Both are At/PO.: Ghasian,	Ir. Rabindra Sahu, Smt. Hirabati Sahu and Sm uth: Plot No.: 2253 (P), East: Road, West: Plot No. Equitable Mortgage of Residential Land & Building admeasuring Area: Ac. 0.14Dec.,Kissam: Gharabari, situated at Mouza: Ghasian, PS:	: 2253 (P)	charges and expenses till date of payment ₹12,67,140.50 as on 29,12.2024
'n	Dist.: Bolangir, Odisha, PIN-767025 No.: 224/323, Plot No.: 1317/2496. Owner Name	Patnagarh, P.S. No.: 42, Tahasil: Patnagarh, Tahasil No.: 336, Dist.: Bolangir, having holding Sunil Kumar Agrawal, Bounded of the property ar Dandsena, East: Road, West: Lane of Tikeswar	North: Land	+ further interest thereon at contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment
a l	Place: Sambalpur Date : 30.12.2024			Authorised Officer Bank of Baroda





Orissa POST 6

POWER LIST 2024

As the world continued to evolve in 2024, remarkable individuals stood out, shaping the year's defining moments. From leaders in politics, industrialists and entrepreneurs making impacts locally and globally, to jurists upholding human rights and democratic values, these headline-makers reflected resilience by overcoming all odds. Their achievements and actions not only captured the public's attention but also left a lasting impact, inspiring millions. Be it breaking barriers, solving complex challenges, or initiating transformations, these individuals left their mark in the outgoing year





MOHAN CHARAN MAJHI ASHWINI VAISHNAW Chief Minister



DHARMENDRA PRADHAN **Union Education Minister**



KANAK VARDHAN SINGH DEO Deputy CM



SURESH PUJARI **Revenue Minister**



MUKESH MAHALING Health Minister



Railway Minister



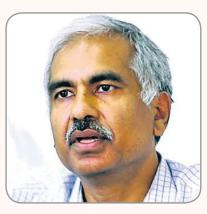
MANMOHAN SAMAL **BJP State Chief**



PRAVATI PARIDA **Deputy CM**



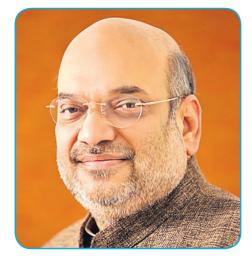
PRITHIVIRAJ HARICHANDAN Law Minister



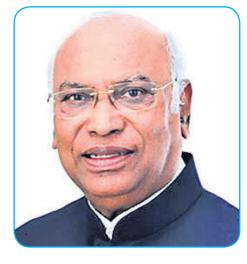
MANOJ AHUJA Chief Secretary



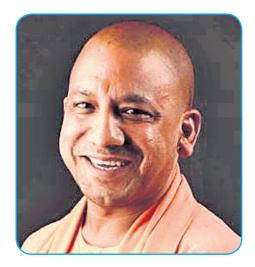
NARENDRA MODI Prime Minister



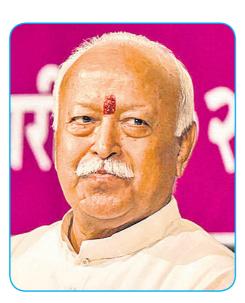
AMIT SHAH Home Minister



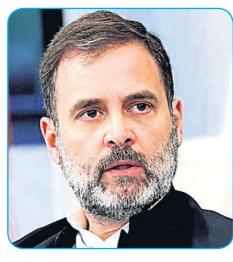
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE President, Indian **National Congress**



YOGI ADITYANATH CM, Uttar Pradesh



MOHAN BHAGWAT **RSS Chief**



RAHUL GANDHI Leader of Opposition



MK STALIN Chief Minister, TN



ARVIND KEJRIWAL Convener, AAP









GAUTAM ADANI Founder-Chairman, Adani Group







YEARENDER 2024

NATIONAL

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU CM, Andhra Pradesh



AKHILESH YADAV President, Samajwadi Party



NITISH KUMAR CM, Bihar



HEMANT SOREN CM. Jharkhand



MAMATA BANERJEE CM, West Bengal



SANJIV KHANNA Chief Justice of India

PK Mishra Principal Secretary to the PM



MUKESH AMBANI Chairman & MD, RIL



AJIT DOVAL National Security Advisor



JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA President, BJP

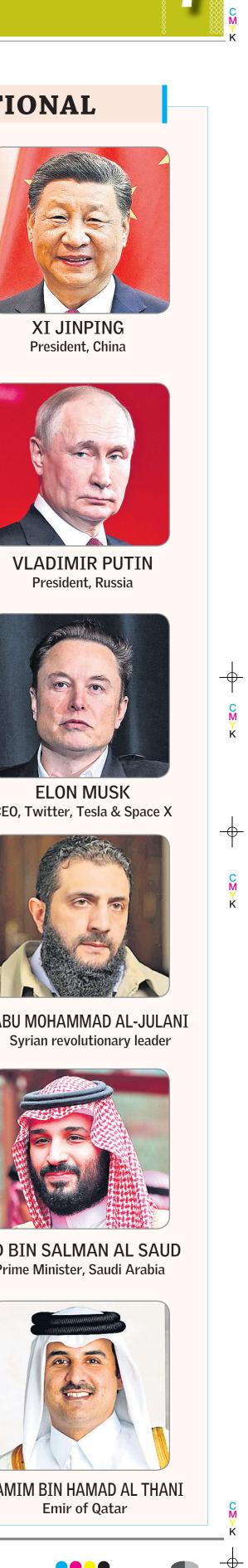


RAHUL NAVIN Director, ED





DONALD TRUMP President-elect, US





MARK RUTTE Secretary-General, NATO



BENJAMIN NETANYAHU Prime Minister, Israel



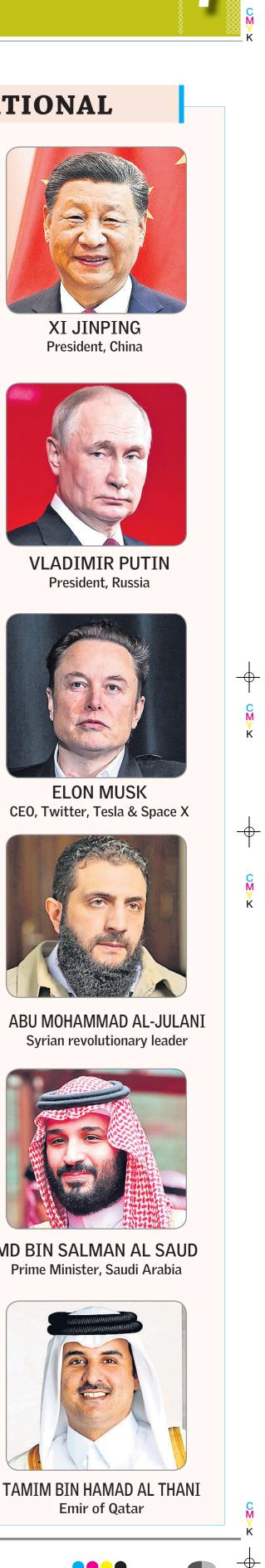
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY President, Ukraine

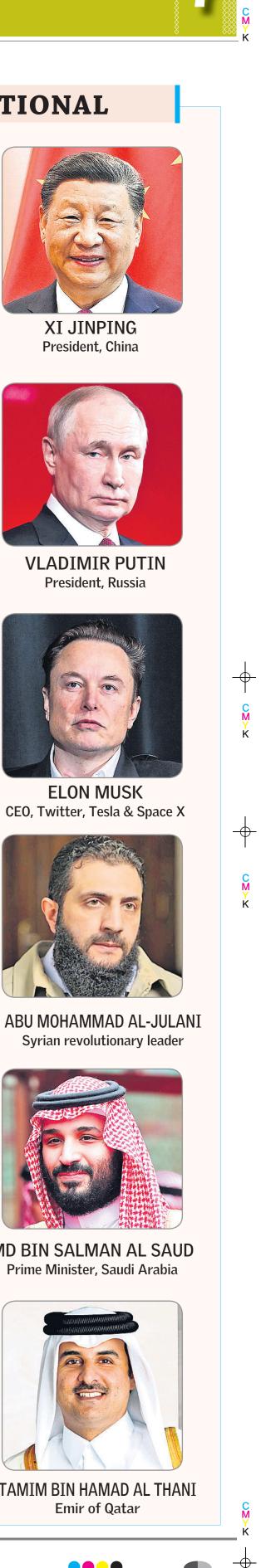


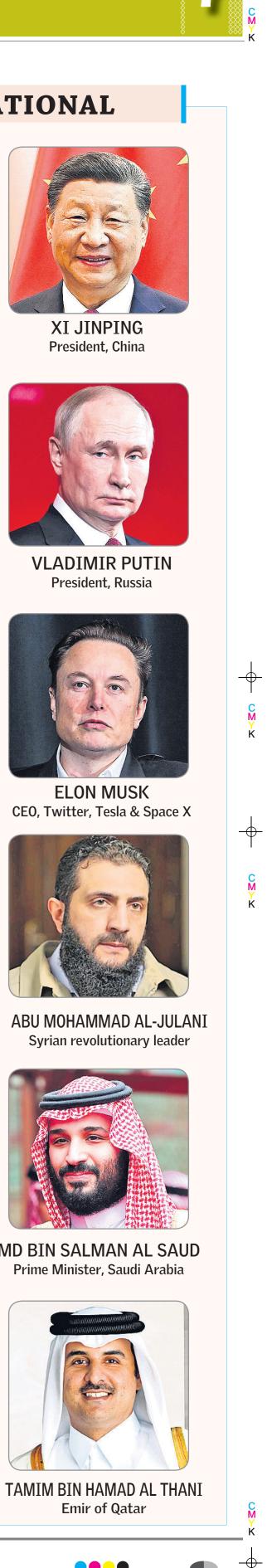
GIORGIA MELONI Prime Minister, Italy

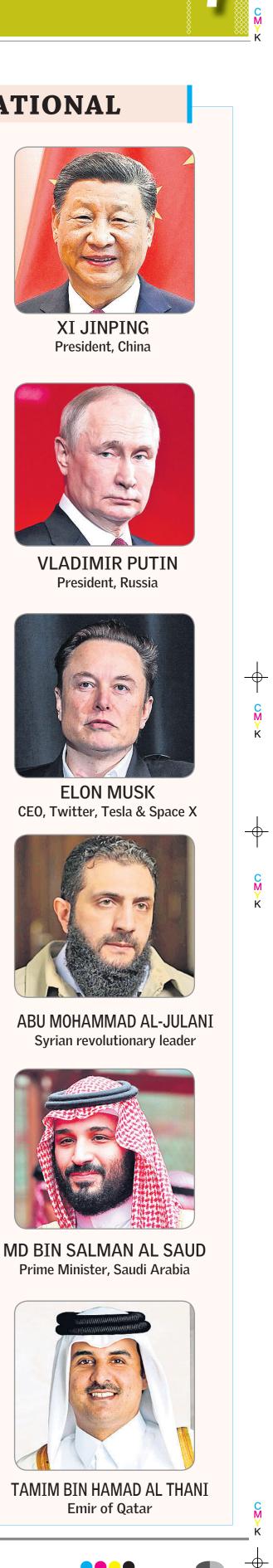


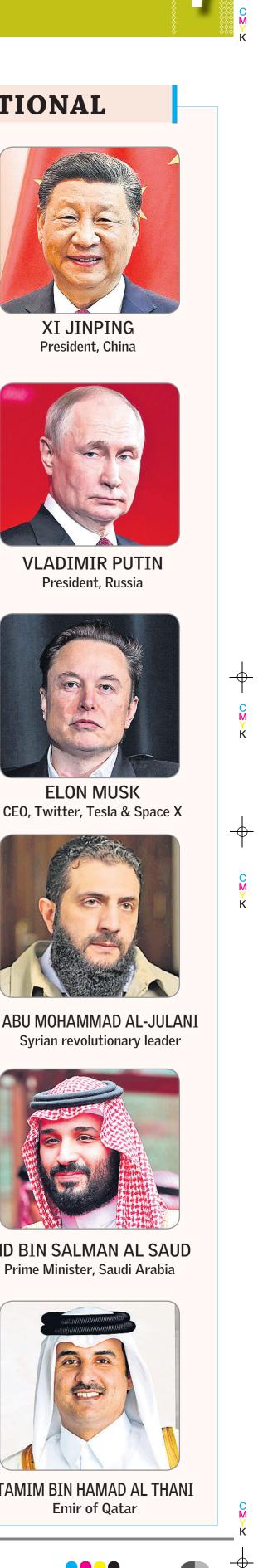
KEIR STARMER Prime Minister, UK













national



It is unfortunate that the Congress party has used Singh's death for politics. This reflects the **Congress party's** devoid of culture G KISHAN REDDY NION COAL MINISTER

VIJAY KUMAR SINGH TO BE SWORN IN AS MIZORAM GOVERNOR JAN 9

Former Army Chief General Vijay Kumar Singh will be sworn in as the new governor of Mizoram January 9, an official said Monday. The ceremony will be attended by Chief Minister Lalduhoma, his cabinet colleagues, Assembly Speaker Lalbiakzama, Deputy Speaker Lalfamkima, MPs, important officials, and special invitees



uotel day

In our mem orandum we sought steps to protect law and order in Tamil Nadu besides action

for ensuring safety of women in all places VUAY I TAMIZHAGA VETRI KAZHAGAM FOUNDER

Why are

they work ing so hard and creating drama? Hardeep Puri and Amit Shah have all the data of Rohingyas settled in Delhi

ARVIND KEJRIWAL AAM AADMI PARTY CONVENER

The exclusion of Bhujbal fro the council of ministers is the issue of the NCP and not of the Mahayuti coalition BHARAT GOGAWALE SHIV SENA LEADER, MAHARASHTRA

SHORT TAKES

Contractor suicide: CID to probe case

Bangalore: The Karnataka government has handed over the contractor suicide case to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), state Home Minister G Parameshwara said Monday. "The BJP has made allegations against **Rural Development and** Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge in this case. We have handed over the matter to the CID." Parameshwara told reporters here. Civil contractor Sachin Panchal allegedly died by suicide by lving before a moving train in Bidar district December 26. In his suicide note, he accused Privank Kharge's close aide Raju Kapanur of compelling him to take the drastic step.

Nepalese man held with charas

ED traces ₹33crore worth assets of MP's ex-Transport dept official, associates PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 30: The Enforcement Directorate Monday said it has found documents related to assets worth about Rs 33 crore after it conducted searches against a former Madhya Pradesh Transport department official and his associates as part of a money laundering probe linked to a disproportionate assets case.

About eight premises in state capital Bhopal, Gwalior and Jabalpur were raided by the federal probe agency December 27 in the case against Saurabh Sharma, a former constable of the state Transport department, his "associate" Chetan Singh Gaur and some others including Sharad Jaiswal and Rohit Tiwari.

The ED said in a statement that these persons were the "suspected beneficiary of the proceeds of crime or have allegedly abetted in the laundering of the same'

The money laundering case stems from an FIR of Lokayukta police of the MP government against Sharma where it is alleged that he amassed "disproportionate assets worth crores of rupees in the name of his family members and associated firms and companies". Movable assets (fixed depos-

its) of more than Rs 6 crore were identified in the name of Chetan Singh Gaur and bank deposits of more than Rs 4 crore were found in the name of family members and companies of Sharma, it said.

Some documents related to immovable properties worth more than Rs 23 crore in the name of various companies and family members of Sharma were found along with other "incriminating" documents, the ED claimed. These assets were allegedly purchased and acquired by Sharma from "illegal" money obtained through "corrupt" practices while he was working as a constable in the state Transport department,

Union Carbide toxic waste set to travel 250 km for disposal

The highly toxic gas methyl isocyanate leaked from the Union Carbide pesticides factory on

the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984, killing 5,479 persons and leaving more than five lakh others with health problems and long-term disabilities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal/ Indore, Dec 30: The work to remove 377 metric tonnes of hazardous waste from the now-defunct Union Carbide factory in Bhopal has got underway ahead of its planned disposal near Indore. The development comes weeks after the Madhya Pradesh High Court chided the authorities for not taking action despite repeated directions to clear the site in the Madhya Pradesh capital.

The highly toxic gas methyl isocyanate leaked from the Union Carbide pesticides factory on the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984, killing 5,479 persons and leaving more than five lakh others with health problems and longterm disabilities. Half-a-dozen GPS-enabled trucks with specially reinforced containers reached the factory site as part of the waste disposal process Sunday morning.

Several workers wearing special PPE kits and officials of the Bhopal Municipal Corporation, environmental agencies, doctors and incineration experts were seen working at



the site. Police were also deployed around the factory.

The toxic waste will be moved to an incineration site in Pithampur near Indore, around 250 km from Bhopal, sources said.

The MP High Court December 3 set a four-week deadline to shift the toxic waste from the factory, observing that even 40 years after the gas disaster, the authorities were in a "state of inertia" that may cause "another tragedy"

Describing it as a "sorry state of affairs", the HC warned the government of

contempt proceedings if its directive was not followed.

'The waste of Bhopal gas tragedy is a stigma which is going to disappear after 40 years. We will dispose it by sending it safely to Pithampur," Swatantra Kumar Singh, director of the state's Gas Relief and Rehabilitation Department told PTI.

He said a "green corridor" of about 250 km will be created by managing traffic to transport the waste from Bhopal to Pithampur in the shortest possible time.

Singh refused to give a specific date for the transportation of the waste and its subsequent disposal at Pithampur, but sources said in view of the HC direction, the process can start soon and the waste might reach its destination by January 3.

Daily life hit in Punjab 9-HOUR BANDH

Rail operations in Punjab were mostly suspended, buses and other vehicles remained off the road, leaving passengers stranded; and shops and establishments downed shutters as the 7 am-4 pm bandh passed off peacefully

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Dec 30: Normal life was hit across Punjab Monday due to a nine-hour 'bandh' called by farmers protesting against the Centre for their various demands including a legal guarantee of a minimum

Rail operations in Punjab were mostly suspended, buses and other vehicles remained off the road, leaving passengers stranded; and shops and establishments downed shutters as the 7 am-4 pm bandh passed off peacefully. Petrol pumps were also shut, a senior farmer leader said.

Farmer leaders who gave the bandh call more than a week ago declared it "successful" and thanked the "three crore Punjabis for extending their full support".

Amid a harsh winter chill and dense fog at some places, farmers staged 'dharnas' on several roads and highways



including in Patiala, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Ferozepur, Bathinda, and Pathankot, crippling the traffic.

The sit-in at the Dhareri Jattan Toll Plaza affected vehicular movement on the Patiala-Chandigarh National Highway. At Amritsar's Golden Gate, scores of farmers staged a 'dharna' near the citv's entry point. Police there assisted some stranded foreign tourists by arranging auto rickshaws for them to reach the Golden

Temple. At some places, commuters were seen arguing with the protesting farmers blocking the roads

The call for the statewide shutdown was given by the Samvukta Kisan Morcha (Non-political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha over the Centre not acting on the farmers' demand for a legal guarantee for the MSP.

The bandh was also in support of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal (70) who has

been on a fast-unto-death at Khanauri border protest site over the non-fulfilment of the demands. His health has deteriorated during the fast which has completed 35 days.

Farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher told reporters in Amritsar that emergency and other essential services were allowed to operate. He said those going to airport or for a job interview or a wedding were allowed to go.

"Punjabiyat has won. On behalf of both the forums (spearheading protests at Shambhu and Khanauri), I want to thank three crore Punjabis for extending their full support to the bandh," Pandher said after the bandh hours.

He also said vegetable mandis, grain markets and petrol pumps also remained shut. "All establishments remained closed. The bandh has been successful and Punjabis have shown great support for Dallewal sahab," he said

BJP MLA DHAS APOLOGISES FOR REMARKS ON MALI PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 30: Maharashtra BJP MLA Suresh Dhas Monday claimed his statement on actor Prajakta Mali was misinterpreted and said he was apologising if it had hurt her

and other women. His statement came amid the Maharashtra State Com mission for Women, earlier in the day, directing Mumbai Police to take immediate action and submit a factual report on

Mali's complaint against Dhas "My statement regarding Prajakta Mali was misinter preted. I had no intention to disrespect her and talking about her character was out of question. I respect all women

If my statement has hurt her or any other woman, then I apologise" Dhas said. Mali, in her complaint, had

claimed Dhas' inappropriate and defamatory remarks im pacted her personal and social life. She also alleged that defam atory content was circulated on social media following these remarks.

The Maharashtra State Commission for Women informed through its X handle that it had received Mali's complaint and initiated action.

Stalemate continues despite

BPSC EXAM ROW

BY FARMERS

support price for their crops.

Bahraich (UP): A 26-yearold Nepalese man was arrested here with charas worth Rs 1.5 crore in his possession, authorities Monday said. The arrest was made by a joint team of police and Sashastra Seema Bal patrolling the Rupaidiha border Sunday. The team stopped a man coming from the Nepal side on a motorcycle, and when he was searched he was found to have six kilograms of charas on him. Acting Commander of SSB's 42nd Battalion Raj Ranjan told PTI. According to Ranian. the value of the charas in the international market is said to be around Rs 1.5 crore.

Smuggler escapes police custody

Barabanki (UP): A drug smuggler who was arrested with morphine here escaped from police custody following which two policemen including a sub-inspector were suspended and a case was lodged against a home guard jawan, officials said Monday. Superintendent of Police Dinesh Kumar Singh said Asgar Ali from Mohammadpur village of Subeha area, was arrested near Ratauli underpass late Saturday. Police seized 252 grams of morphine worth Rs 25 lakh from him, Singh said and added that he was brought to the police station and was put in a lock-up. The accused got himself out of the lock-up on the pretext of using the toilet Sunday afternoon, he pushed Home Guard Constable Vinod Pathak and escaped with handcuffs on, the officer said.

intervention from Bihar guv

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

petitive test.

Patna, Dec 30: Stalemate over

the demand for cancellation of

a recent Bihar PSC exam con-

tinued Monday, despite Chief

Secretary Amrit Lal Meena

holding talks with a section of

protesters over an alleged leak

of question paper for the com-

Governor Rajendra Arlekar

also summoned Bihar Public

Service Commission Chair-

man Parmar Ravi Manubhai

over the paper leak allegation.

Kishor, whose party colleague

RK Mishra, a retired IPS offi-

Jan Suraaj founder Prashant

the agency said

cer, was among the delegates who met Meena, asked the protesters to give "48 hours to the Nitish Kumar government", and said they could resume their stir if no solution came forth by the time.

Talking to reporters after being briefed by the delegates, the political strategist-turned-activist told reporters, "The chief secretary has given a patient hearing. He could not come up with a solution because this is a decision that would require intervention from the chief minister who is expected to return from Delhi tonight".



The glass bridge connecting Vivekananda memorial and Thiruvalluvar statue, inaugurated by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, in Kanniyakumari, Tamil Nadu, Monday PTI PHOTO

The commission stated that the issue was serious and that it had directed the Mumbai Police Commissioner to act immediately and submit a factual report.

Earlier in the day, Dhas when queried about Mali's complaint, had said the issue was over for him and that he was ready to face consequences.

Dhas had said the focus must remain on the December 9 murder of Santosh Deshmukh and the crime situation in Beed. "I am ready to answer anything about these issues," he added.

Mali had met Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at his residence in Mumbai on Sunday.

MAHA KUMBH 2025

AI cameras, RFID wristbands to be used for pilgrims headcount

The mega-religious event, which is held every 12 years, will be held in Prayagraj from January 13 and will continue for 45 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 30: Artificial intelligence-enabled cameras, RFID wristbands and mobile app tracking are among the methods that will be used to track headcount of the pilgrims attending the Maha Kumbh in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj next

month. The mega-religious event, which is held every 12 years, will be held in Prayagraj from January 13 and will continue for 45 days.

Sharing details of the ar-

rangements being made for the event, Uttar Pradesh Minister Suresh Khanna said the headcount of pilgrims attending the Maha Kumbh will be efficiently managed using advanced technology.

"The first method is attribute based search, where tracking will be conducted using person attribute search cameras. The second method involves RFID wristbands, which will be provided to the pilgrims. Through these wristbands, entry and exit times will be tracked using RFID readers," Khanna said at a roadshow here.

"The third method is mobile app tracking, where with the consent of pilgrims, their location will be tracked through GPS using a mobile application." he added. The minister said the govern-

ment is gearing up for a divine,



grand and digital Maha Kumbh.

"The preparations include the launch of a dedicated website and app, an AI-powered chatbot in 11 languages, QRbased passes for people and vehicles, a multilingual digital lost and found centre, ICT monitoring for cleanliness and tents, software for land and facility allocation, multilingual digital signage (VMD), an automated ration supply system, dronebased surveillance and disas-

The authorities are overseeing the installation of 160,000 tents, 150,000 toilets to be serviced by 15,000 sanitation workers, 1,250-km of pipeline, 67,000 LED lights, 2,000 solar lights, and 300,000 plants to give the area a complete makeover.

In addition, nine paved ghats, seven riverfront roads, and 12 km of temporary ghats are under construction

Seven bus stands are also being built, while over 1.5 million square feet of murals and street paintings have been commissioned to adorn the area

ter management, live software for monitoring 530 projects, an inventory tracking system and integration of all locations on Google maps," he added.

Khanna said the arrangements have been made to ensure the tourists do not face parking issues.

"In this regard, 101 smart parking facilities have been created, capable of accommodating up to five lakh vehicles daily. The parking area spans 1867.04 hectares, which is 763.75 hectares larger compared to the 1103.29 hectares allocated for parking in 2019. These parking facilities will be monitored through the Integrated Command Centre," he added.

The event draws millions of pilgrims to the banks of Ganga at Sangam, and this year, the state government is expecting a staggering 40 crore devotees to take the holy dip and make the Maha Kumbh the largest religious gathering in the world.

The monumental task of preparing for such an event includes meticulous planning and extensive logistics.













national



Our defence exports, which were around ₹2,000 crore a decade ago, have crossed the record figure of ₹21,000 crore today. We have set an export target of ₹50,000 crore by 2029 RAJNATH SINGH DEFENCE MINISTER

RECORD 917 GIRLS PARTICIPATE IN NCC REPUBLIC DAY CAMP

A total of 2,361 NCC cadets from across the country are taking part in a month-long Republic Day camp which began at Delhi Cantonment Monday. The annual event will also witness participation of 917 girl cadets, the largest so far. Out of 2,361 NCC cadets, 114 are from Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and 178 from the Northeast region





Tourism is the heart of Goa's econ omy, supporting countless liveli hoods and creating opportunities

for our people. Whether it's our bustling markets, traditional arts, or Goan culinary delights, tourism strengthens the bond between our communities and visitors ROHAN KHAUNTE | MINISTER, GOA

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MAMATA BANERJEE | CM, WEST BENGAL

AFFIDAVIT

I, hitherto known as

Appt., Lewis Road,

Bihari Dash.

Raghaba Bihari Dash, S/o. Gangadhar Dash, residing

Bhubaneswar, PIN - 751002

Odisha have changed my

name and shall hereafter

to be known as Raghab

I, Arupama Samal, D/o.

Akshaya Kumar Samal

& W/o. Prayush Kumar

Kamakhyanagar, Dist.:

759018 do hereby solemnly

declare by affidavit that,

wrongly as Rojalin Samal

Mahanta in my academic

Rojalin Samal@Arupama

records/documents. My

my name being scribed

in Voter Card and also

my name has scribed

wrongly as Arupama

name being changed

Samal. Rojalin Samal,

Arupama Mahanta and

Samal, At: Kengeila,

Dhenkanal, Odisha -

P.O.: Pippala, P.S.:

at C-3, Block-B, Satyasai

CLASSIFIED

WELCOME GENERATION BETA

Successor to Gen Alpha and Gen Z set to arrive in 2025

Generation Beta follows a naming convention that started with Generation *Alpha, using the Greek* alphabet to signify a new era in human history

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 30: Starting January 1, 2025, the newest demographic population, Generation Beta, is set to make its entrance into the world. The group, comprising of children born between 2025 and 2039, is expected to constitute 16 per cent of the global population by 2035, with many likely to see the dawn of the 22nd century, according to social researcher Mark McCrindle, who is often credited with defining the generational labels.

Generation Beta is the suc-



cessor of Gen Alpha (those born between 2010-2024), which came after Gen Z (1996-2010), and millennials (1981-1996), Generation Beta follows a naming convention that started with Generation Alpha, using the Greek alphabet to signify a new era in human history.

The 'Beta babies' as they are being called, will grow up in an era that is characterised by unprecedented technologi-

cal integration into daily life. They will likely be the first generation to experience "autonomous transportation at scale, wearable health technologies, and immersive virtual environments as standard aspects of daily life"

"While Generation Alpha has experienced the rise of smart technology and artificial intelligence, Generation Beta will live in an era where AI and

automation are fully embedded in everyday life, education and workplaces to healthcare and entertainment," said Mr McCrindle in his blog post. Challenges for Gen Beta

While technology will be at the touch of their fingertips, the Gen Beta will also inherit a societal landscape that has several significant challenges such as climate change, urbanisation, and shifts in global population dynamics. These challenges are expected to make Gen Beta prioritise adaptability, quality and collaboration.

Despite the previous two generations being more eco-conscious than their predecessors. the Gen Beta will have to take the onus to ensure that sustain ability is just not a buzzword but a fundamental expectation.

"Understanding their needs. values, and preferences will be critical as we anticipate how they will shape the future of society."

DELHI AAP promises ₹18K

'We've to take yoga among the masses'

AGENCIES

Jaipur, Dec 30: "We have to take voga among the masses and make everyone a vogi. Swami Parmarth Dev, disciple of Yoga Rishi Swami Ramdev and Chief Central In-charge, Bharat Swabhiman Trust, Haridwar said Monday.

Attending Yoga Workers' Conference organised by Chaumu Bharat Swabhiman Trust and Patanjali Yoga Samiti, Rajasthan here, he said, "We have to build a new India by connecting the young generation with yoga. Today, the whole world is adopting yoga."

On this occasion, Vishwa Yoga Rishi Swami Ramdev also joined online and gave his blessings to everyone.

On the occasion, Swami Parmarth Dev was felicitated by Bharat Swabhiman's state in-charge Arvind Pandev and Indian Education Board's state head Kulbhushan Bairathi.

State in-charge of Mahila Yoga Samiti Sarita Gurjar, state



in-charge of Kisan Seva Sami ti Sardar Baldev Singh, state in-charge of Patanjali Yoga Samiti Pawan Kumar, state incharge of Youth India Sandeep Kasaniya, former MLA Ramla Sharma and Dr Shravan Kuma Barala were present on the

stage during the programme. Thousands of yoga practi tioners from Jaipur, Dausa, Alwar, Kota, Sikar, Jhunjhunu Kotputli, Bharatpur, Karauli Ajmer, Sriganganagar and Ha numangarh districts participat ed on this occasion.

CHHATTISGARH LIQUOR 'SCAM'

Ex-minister Lakhma 'utilised' proceeds of crime in cash, claims ED

New Delhi, Dec 30: The Enforcement Directorate Mon day claimed it has gathered "evidence" showing that Ch hattisgarh Congress MLA and former excise minister Kawasi Lakhma "utilised in cash" pro ceeds of crime generated from

the alleged liquor scam. The federal agency had raid ed the premises of Lakhma and his son Harish Lakhma Decem ber 28 in Raipur, Sukma and Dhamtari districts of the state as part of a money laundering investigation.

The ED said in a statement that the search operation was carried at the residential prem ises of Lakhma, who "alleged ly was the main recipient of the proceeds of crime in cash, during his regime as excise minister'

"As a result of the search operation, ED has been able to gather evidence pertaining to utilization of proceeds of crime in cash by Kawasi Lakhma during the relevant period of scam," the agency said.

DALIT CUSTODIAL DEATH IN MP Not possible without support of govt: Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 30: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Monday condemned the death of a Dalit youth in police custody at Dewas in Madhya Pradesh and said it is not possible without the support of the government

there. He claimed that the Congress will not tolerate "shameful and highly condemnable" incidents. The party will continue to fight for the rights of "Bahujans" and get justice for them.

"On one hand, a Dalit youth was killed in police custody in Dewas, Madhya Pradesh. On the other hand, tribal women were tied to trees and beaten in Balasore, Odisha," he claimed in a post in Hindi on X.

"Both these incidents are sad, shameful and highly condemnable. Due to the Manuvadi thinking of the BJP, such incidents are happening one after another in the states ruled by them - this is not possible without the support of the government," Gandhi said.

"Such barbarism against the



We are with them, we will fight with full force for their constitutional rights and to get them justice," the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha said in his post.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also alleged that the "insult of Babasaheb Ambedkar and oppression on weaker sections is the basic mantra of BJP's rule'

The death of a Dalit youth in police custody in Dewas is extremely serious, she noted.

"The family alleges that the youth died due to police brutality. Earlier, there was news of atrocities on Dalit families and the death of a Dalit youth in police custody from Parbhani, Maharashtra. It seems that under the BJP rule, the police have got a free hand to oppress the weaker sections like Dalits.

New Delhi, Dec 30: AAP convenor Arvind Keiriwal announced Mondav a monthly honorarium of ₹18.000 for Hindu temple priests and Gurudwara granthis in the city after his party returns to power in Delhi, evoking sharp reactions from Opposition BJP and the Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kejriwal, at a press conference, said the registration process for the scheme will start at the Prachin Hanuman Mandir at Connaught Place in his presence.

The BJP dubbed the announcement a "political stunt", while the Congress termed it a 'trickery" by Keiriwal, saving Imams of mosques in the city were protesting outside his residence, demanding payment of their salaries allegedly pending for 17 months.

"Pujaris and granthis are



a neglected section. For the first time in the country, we are introducing a scheme to support them, under which they will receive a monthly allowance of ₹18.000." Keiri wal said, adding, registration for the scheme will start Tuesday.

He, however, did not elabo rate on the guidelines for registration and the eligibility

temple priests and Gurudwara granthis in Delhi.

"Their numbers will be known after the registration process is complete," Kejriwal said when asked about the number of potential beneficiaries of the scheme and asserted that there will be no lack of funds for it.

Kejriwal sought to outplay the BJP, saying the party should not try to hamper the scheme as it will be "sinful".

a "trickery" by Kejriwal, saying Imams of mosques in the city were protesting outside PRESS TRUST OF INDIA his residence, demanding payment of their salaries allegedly pending for 17 months

for priests, granthis The BJP dubbed the announcement a "political stunt", while the Congress termed it

person. Henceforth, from now I shall be known as Arupama Samal (As per Aadhaar - xxxx xxxx 7844 for all official purposes.

Arupama Samal are same

I, Bhaskar Jyotiraditya Nial, S/o-Bhawani Shankar Nial resident of Arkabahali Pada. Bhawanipatna, Dist.-Kalahandi, Odisha, Pin-766001 declare by this affidavit No-1542/ dated 30.12.2024 and Stamp Paper Sl. No. 69AA 688094 that now onwards I shall be known as Bhashkara Jyotiraditya Nial for all future purpose.

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar dated 28.10.2024, I, KATOKOTA SAIRAJ Address: At- Mausimaa Gali, P.S.- Puri, Dist.- Puri, Odisha declare that I have changed my name from K SAIRAJ to KATOKOTA SAIRAJ. Henceforth, I shall be known as KATOKOTA SAIRAJ for all purposes. KATOKOTA SAIRAJ

Bahuians of the country will not be tolerated at any cost.

Adivasis and the deprived, Vadra claimed.

an important part of our society, but they are often criteria for it. There are no official numbers of registered

Of Prime Ministers, raincoats and wind-cheaters!

words cut and kill but words stab and stay. And there will be many who will be accountable for much, to the late Indian Prime Minister on this score

For now Dr. Manmohan Singh who softly tip-toed into history and was gently laid to rest three days short of 2025 is a persona drenched in sterling tributes. Distant lands shrunk in size to bathe India's first Sikh Prime Minister in homage and compliments. India also pulled out all stops as stalwarts from all walks of life doffed their hats in acknowledgement of the debt of gratitude that liberalisation set in motion. But this does not distract from the hurtful darts hurled by his opposition detractors. Feted in death, he was the object of distasteful barbs by political pygmies in his lifetime. These will linger for a long time to come for the sheer uncivility of the assault on a distinguished, globally recognised economist whom fortuitous circumstances had pitchforked in the role of a saviour.

The government of the day declared a seven-day state mourning and a state funeral with full military honours

Even in neighbouring Pakistan, the entire village of Gah, located about a 100 km from Islamabad, is in mourning. This is the former Indian Prime Minister's native village where he studied up to Class IV. It falls in Chakwal district of Pakistan's Punjab. His father, Gurmukh Singh was a cloth trader and India's 13th Prime Minister was lovingly called 'Mohna' during his school days in his ancestral village. Though Singh never went back ever since his family left the place, the village hogged the limelight when he became the Prime Minister. Thereafter Gah was developed as a model village by the Pakistan government. The village held a formal condolence meeting after learning of Singh's passing away.

One shudders to think of the plight of the village folk if the roles were reversed and an Indian ancestral village of a former Pakistani Prime Minister were to hold a similar condolence meeting in these times. All manner of vigilantes would be out to protect 'national honour'. Incidentally, the grandfather of the founder of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah was a Hindu named Premjibhai Meghjibhai



Thakkar. The family hailed from Moti Paneli village in Upleta taluka of Rajkot district in Gujarat. Last heard, their house still stands in the village though the ownership has changed. Imagine the mayhem if some sort of reciprocal recognition were to be afforded to the structure for its historical value, more so in a country where even the father of the nation is being targeted now. Published reports (December 26, 2024) testify that chaos erupted at a BJP event in Patna when a folk singer sang Mahatma Gandhi's version of "Raghupati Raghav." Ironically, the occasion was former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birth anniversary, a man known for his liberal world view for whom "Sarv dharma sambhav" was not an empty slogan but a strong belief.

Words hurt more than weapons. A sea of accolade and acclaim is swirling around Singh after he passed away. But there was lots of hurtful that were said about the genteel former Prime Minister by political opponents who could not scratch his toenails in knowledge depth or standing. That those holding constitutional office chose to clamber onto this bandwagon unmindful of the fact that such words affected the very dignity of their office, is the sad part of present day Indian politics.

The BJP which was in the Opposition when Singh helmed India. left little to imagination in vilifving him after assuming the reigns. In fact, while still the Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi referred to him as 'Maunmohan' Singh, the silent one, so to say. Modi's silence on Manipur where hundreds have lost their lives remains infinitely more deafening. In December 2017, in an innuendo-laden speech during the Gujarat elections, Prime Minister Modi had virtually charged former PM Singh, with sedition. He had implied that Singh and a former vice-president of the country had held a top-secret meeting with

the Pakistani High Commissioner and others to make Ahmed Patel, the chief minister of Gujarat. In hindsight, it was a ruse by a constitutional authority to win a state election which stood delicately poised. This implication emerged from the then Union finance minister Arun Jaitlev's statement in Parliament that the Prime Minister's statements "did not question, nor meant to question the commitment to this nation of either former PM Manmohan Singh or Former VP Hamid Ansari. Any such perception is erroneous." For all the heave ho, BJP came back to power in 2017 with a mere margin of eight bagging 99 seats with the Congress winning 77 seats in a 182 member House with 6 seats going to others.

Modi's lavish praise for his predecessor on his passing away was in sharp contrast to the trenchant criticism in 2017 when he credited him with the "art of bathing in the bathroom wearing a raincoat.³ History is a remorseless judge but those who single out Singh for his ability to shower in a raincoat, must wait their turn at facing the furnace in a wind-cheater!

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international



We repeat: stop attacks on hospitals. People in Gaza need access to health care. Humanitarians need access to provide health aid. **Ceasefire!** TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS

DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO

BAATH PARTY FACES COLLAPSE

A few days after insurgents in Syria overthrew President Bashar Assad, his ruling Baath party announced it was freezing its activities, marking a stunning change in fortunes for the political group that had ruled for more than six decades. Many members of the party's leadership have gone into hiding and some have fled the country



Freedom of expression also includes the greatest nonsense. It is indeed the case that Elon Musk is trying to influence the federal electio

through his statement CHRISTIANE HOFFMANN GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON, GERMANY

There will be strategic partnerships between us and Ukraine on the political, economic and social levels, and scientific partnerships

ASAAD HASSAN AL-SHIBANI FOREIGN MINISTER, SYRIA

Neither Shahbaz noi **Nawaz Sharif** have yet offered a public condolence on the loss of Manmohan Singh.

There was a message from Ishag Dar. Still, it's perplexing. They were contemporaries, had some similar economic views, and shared a desire for better India-Pakistan relations

MICHAEL KUGELMAN | DIRECTOR, WILSON CENTRE SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE

SHORT TAKES

More aid to Ukraine

Washington: US President Joe Biden announced \$2.5 billion in additional security assistance for Ukraine Mondav as he uses his final weeks in office to surge military aid to Kviv before President-elect Donald Trump takes power. "At my direction, the United States will continue to work relentlessly to strengthen Ukraine's position in this war over the remainder of my time in office." Biden said in a statement. Biden's announcement includes \$1.25 billion in military aid drawn from US stockpiles and a \$1.22 billion Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) package, the final USAI package of Biden's time in office. Nearly three years into the war. Washington has committed \$175 billion in total aid for Ukraine, but it is uncertain if the aid will continue at that pace under Trump, who replaces Biden January 20. Trump has said he wants to bring the war to a swift end.

GAZA Newborns freeze to death

Fourth infant dies of winter cold in Gaza as families share blankets in seaside tents

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Deir Al-Balah, Dec 30: A fourth infant has died of hypothermia in the Gaza Strip, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians displaced by nearly 15 months of war huddle in tents along the rainy, windswept coast as winter arrives.

Jomaa al-Batran, 20 days old, was found with his head as "cold as ice" early Sunday, his father, Yehia, said. The baby's twin brother, Ali, was moved to intensive care at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital.

Their father said they were born one month premature and spent just a day in the nursery at the hospital, which like other Gaza health centres is overwhelmed and only partially functioning.

He said medics told their mother to keep the newborns warm, but it was impossible because they live in a tent and temperatures regularly drop below 10 degrees Celsius (50 degrees Fahrenheit) at night.

'We are eight people, and we only have four blankets," al-Batran said as he cradled his son's pale body. He described drops of dew seeping through the tent overnight. "Look at his colour because (of) the cold. Do you see how frozen he is?



Children, some of them barefoot, stood outdoors and watched him mourn. The shrouded infant was laid at the feet of an imam for prayers. Then the imam took off his ankle-length coat and wrapped it

around the father. "Feel warm, my brother," he said. At least three other babies have died from the cold in re-

cent weeks, according to local health officials The death of Jomaa al-Batran

shows how severe the situation facing vulnerable families remains. Israeli authorities say they

have allowed thousands of aid trucks carrying food, water, medical equipment and shelter supplies into Gaza. International aid agencies say Israeli forces have been hampering aid deliveries, making the humani-

tarian crisis even worse. Yahya al-Batran's family, from the northern town of Beit Lahiya, fled their home early in the war for al-Maghazi, an open air patch of dunes and scrubland in central Gaza which Israeli endure it, he could authorities decreed not endure the cold as a humanitarian zone.

Later on, as al-Maghazi became increasingly unsafe, they moved to

another encampment in nearby Deir al-Balah city

"Since I am an adult I may take this and endure it, but what did the young one do to deserve this?" Jomaa's mother. Noura al-Batran said, as she held embraced her son's colourful blanket to her chest.

TATTERED TENTS

Around the area, dozens of tents, many already tattered from months of use, have been blown away or flooded by the strong winds and rain, leaving families struggling to repair the damage, patching torn sheets of plastic and piling up sand to

In the second winter of the war in Gaza, the weather has added an extra element of suffering to hundreds of thousands of people already displaced, often multiple times, while efforts to agree a ceasefire go nowhere

> hold back the water. "The water seeped inside and on the mattresses and my children's clothes. I changed the children's clothes this morning to their underwear." said

Sabreen Abu Shanab, a mother of three, whose tent was flooded. "They were sleeping and soaked wet to their underwear. I swear. The pants and



underwear (were all soaked). Everything is soaked, the blankets, the pillows, everything," added the woman.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

It is another aspect of the humanitarian crisis facing Gaza's 2.3 million population, caught by the relentless Israeli campaign against the remnants of Hamas and dependent on an erratic aid system increasingly vulnerable to looting as order has broken down.

Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza has killed more than 45.500 Palestinians. according to Palestinian health officials, and turned the enclave into a wasteland of rubble and destroyed buildings.

The war was triggered by a Hamas attack on southern Israel October 7, 2023, in which 1,200 people were killed and 251 taken to Gaza as hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

The United Nations relief agency for Palestinians, UNR-WA, said Sunday that the aid is nowhere near enough and a ceasefire was desperately needed to deliver as famine loomed



Indian student's body

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Dec 30: The body of a 22-year-old Indian student missing since earlier this month has been found in a river in Scotland and her family has been informed while formal identi fication is awaited.

Santra Saju from Kerala was enrolled at the Heriot-Watt University in the Scottish capital of Edinburgh. Police Scotland said in a statement over the weekend that they were made aware of a body in a river near Newbridge, a village near Ed inburgh.

"Around 11.55am on Friday. December 27, 2024, police were made aware of a body found in the water near to Newbridge, Police Scotland said.

"Formal identification has still to take place however the family of Santra Saju, 22, has been informed. The death is not believed to be suspicious," the police said.

The statement added that a report will be sent to the Procurator Fiscal, Scotland's prosecution service and death investigation body.

Saju was last caught on CCTV at an Asda supermarket store in Almondvale, Livingston, December 6 evening.

Taliban warns to close NGOs employing Afghan women

Afghanistan's Taliban govt has already barred women from many jobs and most public spaces, and also excluded them from education beyond sixth grade

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kabul, Dec 30: The Taliban say they will close all national and foreign nongovernmental



ried out by national and foreign organisations. The government was once

again ordering the stoppage of all female work in institutions not controlled by the Taliban, according to the letter. "In case of lack of coopera-

The martial law move shocked the nation. which has been a democracy since the 1980s and caused international alarm

REUTERS

Seoul, Dec 30: South Korean investigators have sought an arrest warrant for suspended President Yoon Suk Yeol over this month's short-lived impo sition of martial law, an official said Monday, the first time an incumbent president has faced such action. Yoon has failed to respond to summons for questioning by police and the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials who are jointly investigating whether his December 3 martial-law declaration amounted to insurrection.



MARTIAL LAW BID

Airline safety probe after worst crash

South Korea's acting President Choi Sang-mok Monday ordered an emergency safety inspection of the country's entire airline operation as investigators worked to identify victims and find out what caused the deadliest air disaster on South Korean soil. All 175 passengers and four of the six crew were killed wher Jeju Air Boeing 737-800 belly-landed and skidded off the end of the runway at Muan International Airport, erupting in a fireball as it slammed into a wall. Two crew members were pulled out alive. As a first step, the

or the hunger and this hopelessness NOURA AL-BATRAN OF JOMAA AL-BATRAN (DEAD INFANT)

He could not

Pak's largest N-plant

Islamabad: Pakistan is set to construct its largest nuclear plant for electricity generation after the country's atomic energy regulatory agency issued the licence for it. The Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) issued the licence to build Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit 5 (C-5, the largest plant producing electricity through nuclear power with a capacity of 1200 MWe. The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission applied for

the licence in April of this year.

groups in Afghanistan employing women. It comes two years after they told NGOs to suspend the employment of Afghan women, allegedly because they didn't wear the Islamic headscarf correctly.

In a letter published X Sunday night, the Economy Ministry warned that failure to comply with the latest order would lead to NGOs losing their license to operate in Afghanistan.

The ministry said it was responsible for the registration, coordination, leadership and supervision of all activities car-

tion, all activities of that institution will be cancelled and the activity license of that institution, granted by the ministry, will also be cancelled.'

It's the Taliban's latest attempt to control or intervene in NGO activity.

Rules for windows

In another development, the Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada has ordered that buildings should not have windows looking into places where a woman might sit or stand.

According to a four-clause decree posted on X late Saturday, the order applies to new buildings as well as existing ones.

Police have tried but failed to successfully raid the presidential office as part of the investigation.

A Seoul court will decide

whether to issue an arrest warrant following the request.

Insurrection is one of the few charges for which a South Korean president does not have immunity.

Yoon Kab-keun, a lawyer for the suspended president, said the arrest request was "unfair" and the anti-corruption agency has no authority to do so.

"Emergency martial law is within the president's authority," the lawyer told reporters outside the Seoul Western District Court after submitting a written opinion about the arrest warrant request as well

as a letter of appointment of lawyers.

Yoon was suspended from presidential powers after being impeached by parliament over his decision to briefly impose martial law.

Masked martial law troops equipped with rifles, body armour and night-vision equipment entered the parliament where they faced off with staffers who opposed them with fire extinguishers. The decree lasted just hours until the parliament voted it down and Yoon backed down.

A Constitutional Court trial

transport ministry announced plans to conduct a special inspection of all 101 Boeing 737-800 aircraft operated by South Korean airliners beginning Monday, focusing on the mainte nance record of key components.



has commenced into whether to reinstate Yoon or remove him permanently from office. It has 180 days to reach a decision.

Road mishap kills 71

Addis Ababa: At least 71 people died in Ethiopia when a truck packed with passengers plunged into a river, according to the spokesperson for the southern Sidama regional government and a statement. The accident occurred in the Bona district. the regional communication bureau said. Wosenveleh Simion, spokesperson for the Sidama regional government, told Reuters at least 71 people had died, including 68 males and 3 females.

Pakistan's polio crisis

Islamabad: Pakistan reported a new polio case Monday, taking the year's tally to 68 in a blow to national efforts to control the crippling disease. So far this year, 27 cases have been reported from Balochistan, 20 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 19 from Sindh, and one each from Punjab and Islamabad. The virus has persisted despite Pakistan conducting multiple mass vaccination drives in 2024 to provide free of cost vaccines to children under five years at their doorsteps.

BIG TECH'S HIB ARGUMENTS IN SPOTLIGH

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 30: The past few days have witnessed a fierce debate between President-elect Donald J Trump's very recent tech industry supporters and his long-standing America First base. At the core of the disagreement is the subject of legal immigrationspecifically, how Trump should handle so-called "high-skilled" foreign worker programs like the H1B visa.

One of the staunchest proponents of expanding the labor pool in this way is billionaire Elon Musk. In a Christmas Day post on X, Musk exclaimed America needs more than double the 160,000 semiconductor industry engineers said to be required by 2032. "No, we need more like double that number yesterday! The number of people who are super talented engineers AND super motivated in the USA is far too low," Musk wrote, adding "Think of

this like a pro sports team if you want your TEAM to win the championship, you need to recruit top talent wherever they may be. That enables the whole TEAM to win.'

Additionally, Musk-allies and newly-named artificial intelligence (AI) advisors to President-elect Trump, David Sacks, and Sriram Krishnan, have both emerged as loud advocates for more legal immigration, expanding the high-skilled labor supply through changes to the H1B visa lottery.

A FLAWED MORALITY

While bringing allegedly top talent from around the world to the United States sounds good on its face, this isn't actually what H1B visas do. The O-1 visa is actually the program used to grant legal work status to a foreign nation in the United States that is considered a 'once-in-a-generation' intellectual talent in a critical industrial sector.

H1B visas apply more to workers with skills that native-born Americans can easily learn through technical training programs or even collegiate classes. Think more programmer or mid-level software engineer than someone trained in semiconductor fabrication.

Even more concerning is that the big tech companies routinely abuse H1B visas as part of a scheme to suppress the wages of both American and foreign workers while maximizing shareholder profits.

Recently, the US Department of Justice ramped up enforcement of visa rules after a pattern emerged in which tech companies artificially create the appearance of a domestic work shortage to increase their H1B allotments. This ultimately resulted in native-born workers being laid off and replaced two or threefold by cheaper foreign H1B workers.

H1Bs benefit tech companies on two key fronts: First, on average, H1B workers are paid significantly less than their American-born counterparts. This effectively puts downward pressure on wages across the industry, meaning American workers also get paid less; Secondly, because the visa is attached to the sponsor company, the foreign worker lacks the leverage afforded to American-born workers who can demand higher salaries by simply looking to take a job with a different firm.

A COMPLETE SCAM

Little data actually supports the tech industry's claims of a worker shortage and a need to end H1B country caps. The data does suggest, however, that big tech is replacing qualified and capable American workers with cheaper foreign labor.

Between 2022 and 2024, Ama zon laid off nearly 30,000 high skilled workers. In the same period-though in compliance with federal law regarding when companies can request H1B visa workers-the online retail giant expanded its workforce by nearly 100,000 foreign workers

Despite the layoffs, Amazon asked the federal government for a total allotment of 125,000 new H1B visa workers between 2022 and 2024, while they requested to retain around 90,000 Similar trends are true for Google and Microsoft. Between 2022 and 2024, nearly 60,000 American workers were laid off among the three companies, while the companies increased their H1B employees by over 340 percent.

















The focus will be on upskilling and reskilling the workforce to meet evolving technological demands. We will also see a significant rise in talent and opportunities within Tier 2 cities, reflecting a broader geographic distribution of tech talent PUNEET CHANDOK | PRESIDENT,

MICROSOFT INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA

6 MORE IPOS

Sebi has cleared proposals of six companies, Ivalue Infosolutions Ltd, Ather Energy, Oswal Pumps, Quality Power Electrical Equipments, Fabtech Technologies and Schloss Bangalore Ltd, to launch their initial public offerings. The six companies filed their draft IPO papers with Sebi from September 10 to 23 and obtained the regulator's observations December 23-27, an update with the markets regulator showed Monday.



Adani to exit FMCG joint venture

Adani Wilmar in \$2 billion deal

of the day uote

The vear 2024 witnessed a steady but uneven recoverv in demand for

tech services. with strong growth in areas like AI, cloud computing, and cybersecurity. Companies are increasingly prioritis-

ing investments in these transformative technologies to enhance efficiency and resilience

SINDHU GANGADHARAN NASSCOM CHAIRPERSON



DAMMU RAVI SECRETARY IN MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CCI has started the process for the study of competition issues in the renewable energy space across the BRICS countries RAVNEET KAUR CCI CHAIRPERSON

SHORT TAKES

📕 India's external debt

rises to \$711.8bn

New Delhi: India's external debt rose to USD 711.8 billion as of September this year, up 4.3 per cent over June 2024, as per the data released by the Finance Ministry. At the end of September 2023, the external debt stood at USD 637.1 billion. In September 2024, India's external debt was placed at USD 711.8 billion, recording an increase of USD 29.6 billion over its level at June-end 2024. India's **Quarterly External Debt Report** said. The external debt to GDP ratio stood at 19.4 per cent in September 2024 against 18.8 per cent as of June 2024, it added. "The US dollar-denominated debt remained the largest component of India's external debt with a share of 53.4 per cent at end-September 2024.

GNPAs of banks at 12-yr low: RBI report PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 30: The Reserve Bank Monday said asset quality of banks improved further and their gross non-performing assets (GNPA) or bad loans ratio declined to a 12-year low of 2.6 per cent in September 2024 on the back of falling slippages and steady credit demand.

The RBI also flagged concern over a sharp rise in write-offs, especially among private sector banks (PVBs), which could be partly masking worsening asset quality in unsecured lending segment and dilution in underwriting standards.

The net NPA ratio or the proportion of net non-performing assets in net loans and advances was at around 0.6 per cent, according to the RBI's December 2024 issue of the Financial Stability Report (FSR)

The Financial Stability Report reflects the collective assessment of the Sub-Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) on the resilience of the Indian financial system and risks to financial stability

"Buoyed by falling slippages, higher writeoffs and steady credit demand, the gross nonperforming assets (GNPA) ratio of 37 scheduled commercial



banks (SCBs) fell to a multiyear low of 2.6 per cent," the report said.

Fresh accretion of NPAs in retail loan portfolios was also dominated by slippages in the unsecured loan book, with 51.9 per cent from unsecured loans as of September 2024.

The improvement in asset quality of SCBs was broadbased across sectors and bank groups.

The report also said that the banking system liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) declined from 135.7 per cent in September 2023 to 128.5 per cent in September

2024, driven by an increase in net cash outflows, which, in turn, is influenced by a rise in less stable sources of funding.

According to the FSR, the share of large borrowers in GNPA of SCBs has steadily declined over the past two years. The asset quality of banks large borrower portfolios has improved considerably, with the GNPA ratio falling from 4.5 per cent in March 2023 to 2.4 per cent in September 2024.

In the large borrower segment, the share of standard assets in total funded amount has consistently improved over

Within the large horrowers cohort, the share of top 100 borrowers has decreased to 34.6 per cent in September 2024, reflecting a growing credit appetite among medium-sized borrowers," the report said.

Notably, none of the top 100 borrowers are classified as NPAs in September 2024.

In terms of value, investment grade advances (rated BBB and above) constituted 91.5 per cent of the funded advances to large borrowers with long-term external ratings, the report said.

It further said profitability of SCBs improved during H1:2024-25, with profit after tax (PAT) surging by 22.2 per cent (y-o-y).

Public sector banks (PSBs) and PVBs recorded PAT growth of 30.2 per cent and 20.2 per cent, respectively, while foreign banks (FBs) experienced single digit growth (8.9 per cent).

RBI said the banking stability indicator (BSI), which provides an assessment of the resilience of the domestic banking system, showed further improvement during H1:2024-25.

The resilience of the domestic banking system has been bolstered by robust capital buffers, strong earnings and sustained improvement in asset quality, it added.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 30: Billionaire Gautam Adani's group Monday announced its exit from FMCG joint venture Adani Wilmar by selling its entire stake to the Singaporean partner and in the open market for over USD 2 bil-

lion in a first major deal since the US bribery indictment. In a statement, Adani En-

terprises Ltd -- which held 43.94 per cent stake in Fortune brand cooking oil, wheat flour and other food product maker Adani Wilmar Ltd -- said it will sell 31.06 per cent stake to Wilmar International. The remaining about 13 per cent holding will be sold in the open market to meet minimum public shareholding requirements.

Adani will sell up to 40.37 crore shares (31.06 per cent stake) to Wilmar at no more than ₹305 apiece to net ₹12,314 crore. Adding the share sale through OFS, whose price will determined on the day of sales, the total proceeds will exceed USD 2 billion (about ₹17,100 crore).

"With this, AEL (Adani Enterprises Limited) will fully exit Adani Wilmar Ltd," it said. "Adani's nominee directors will step down from the board of Adani Wilmar Ltd.³



Pranav V Adani, director of AEL and nephew of group founder and chairman Gautam Adani, and Malay Mahadevia will resign from the board upon execution of the agreement.

The transaction is expected to conclude before March 31 2025.

Proceeds from the stake sale will be used to turbocharge the growth of AEL in core infra structure businesses.

"Adani Enterprises Ltd Adani Commodities LLP (a wholly-owned subsidiary of AEL) and Lence Pte Ltd (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wilmar International Ltd) have entered into an agreement on December 30, 2024, pursuant to which Lence will acquire all the paid-up equity shares of Adani Wilmar Ltd held by Adan Commodities as at the date of exercise of the call option or put option, as the case maybe, in respect of a maximum of 31.06 per cent of the existing paid up equity share capital of AWL, the statement said.

Pre-Budget meet: India Inc flags dumping by China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 30: Representatives from industry bodies sought reduction in personal income tax rates to ensure higher disposable income in the hands of the middle class, reduction in excise duty on fuel, and mea sures to provide impetus to employment-intensive sectors in their customary pre-Budget meeting with the Finance

Minister Monday. Industry bodies also raised the issue of dumping of excess stock by China globally, including in India, and chal lenges posed to food security and inflation due to the "cli mate emergency", during the fifth pre-Budget consultation meeting.

The 2025-26 Union Budget will be presented February 1. Apart from the finance

Sensex drops by 451 pts on unabated FII outflows **BSE SENSEX DECEMBER 30, 2024** HANGE: -450.94 (-0.579 78,248.13 Previous Today's



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 30: Benchmark Sensex declined by nearly 451 points Monday due to selling in heavyweight stocks HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Reliance Industries, weak global trends and unabated foreign fund outflows. In a volatile trading session, the 30-share BSE barometer dropped by 450.94 points or 0.57 per cent to settle at 78,248.13. As many as 23 of its constituents closed lower while

Mumbai, Dec 30: Facing criticism from the government over the central bank prioritising 78,248.13 inflation over growth, the new RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra Monday said that prospects of

dence in 2025.

"As we strive to preserve financial stability to support a higher growth path for the Indian economy, our focus remains steadfast on maintaining stability of financial institutions and. more broadly, systemic stability," Malhotra said in foreword to the Financial Stability Report. He further said that despite



the global uncertainties Indian economy is expected to pick up pace in the second half of the current financial year.

"Notwithstanding the uncertainties shrouding the global macro-financial ethos as it unfolds, prospects for the Indian economy are expected to improve after the slowdown in the pace of economic activity in the first half of 2024-25. Consumer and business confidence for the year ahead remain high and the investment scenario is brighter as corporations step into 2025 with robust balance sheets and high profitability," said Malhotra who took over as 26th Governor earlier this month.

Flagging the issue of growth moderation in the first half, the Finance Ministry in its November Monthly Economic Review had raised concerns that the possibility that structural factors may also have contributed to the slowdown in H1 should not be ruled out.

improve in 2025: RBI Guv PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prospects of economy to

the Indian economy are expected to improve on the back of high consumer and business confi-

followed by Indian Rupee (31.2 per cent), Japanese Yen (6.6 per cent), SDR (5.0 per cent) and Euro (3.0 per cent)," it said.

KG block: RIL seeks premium for oil

New Delhi: Reliance Industries Ltd is seeking a premium of at least USD 3.5 per barrel over an international benchmark for crude oil it produces for eastern offshore KG-D6 block, according to the tender the firm put out Monday. Reliance and its partner BP of the UK sought bids from domestic refiners for sale of 17,600 barrels (2,800 kilolitres) of crude oil every month from April 2025 to February 2026. The crude oil has been priced at daily average price of Nigerian Bonny Light grade of crude oil plus USD 1.5 per barrel quality premium. Bidders have to quote a premium over this price, the tender document said.

NMDC CMD's term extended

New Delhi: State-owned NMDC Monday announced the extension of the tenure of its Chairman and Managing Director Amitava Mukheriee. Mukheriee, the company's Director (Finance), was earlier given the additional charge of CMD. "The additional charge of the post of Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD). NMDC Ltd assigned to Amitava Mukheriee, Director (Finance). NMDC Limited is extended for a further period of one year w.e.f. 20.11.2024, or till appointment of regular incumbent to the post, or until further orders. whichever is the earliest." the company said in a regulatory filing to BSE.

seven closed with gains. The barometer opened lower but recovered losses in the mid session to hit a high of 79,092.70. The index failed to hold onto gains in the second half due to selling in bluechips and tanked 621.94 points or 0.79 per cent to touch a low of 78,077.13. The NSE Nifty declined 168.50 points or 0.71 per cent to settle

among the laggards. Zomato, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech and IndusInd Bank were among the gainers.

at 23,644.90 as 38 of its compo-

nents fell and 11 closed higher.

Motors fell the most by 2.24 per

cent. Titan, Tata Steel, State

Bank of India, Mahindra &

Mahindra, NTPC, ICICI Bank,

Maruti, HDFC Bank, Reliance

Industries and Infosvs were

Among Sensex shares. Tata

"The market began the week on a volatile note, ending with a loss of over half a per cent. After a flat opening, the Nifty gained ground in the first half but faced selling pressure in heavyweight stocks across sectors, reversing its trajectory,' Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.47 per cent and midcap index went up by 0.13 per cent.

SBI's CSR initiative

Bhubaneswar: Under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of the State Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Circle, a school bus and pickup vehicle have been donated to Open Learning Systems, Bhubaneswar and Govind Godham Goshala Puri respectively. In an event organised at Hotel Welcome, Dumduma, Bhubaneswar, Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh, Managing Director (R,C & SARG)



Corporate Centre Mumbai handed over possession of the vehicles to representatives of these NGOs in the presence of Dinesh Pruthi, Chief General Manager Bhubaneswar Circle,

Kaushal Kishor Singh General Manager (NW-II), Prashant Kumar DGM(B&O) AO Bhubaneswar, Manoj Kumar Singh, DGM & CDO and other senior officials of SBI.

minister, the meeting was attended by finance secretary, secretary of DIPAM (De partment of Investment and Public Asset Management) Secretaries of the Department of Economic Affairs and the Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India among others.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, CII President Saniiv Puri said while the Indian economy is doing very well, globally there are a lot of challenges.

India's housing market in de-growth phase

New home sales in the country declined for the first time since the pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 30: New home sales in India declined for the first time since the pandemic, as a sharp rise in housing prices and elevated borrowing costs ruined buyers' appetite in 2024 and the real estate industry is now eyeing the upcoming Budget for favourable economic conditions -- a key to reviving demand conditions.

The de-growth in the Indi-

an housing market came after

three straight years of stellar

growth, following the COVID-

era downturn, and was attribut-

ed in part to a high base in the

previous year, a fall in supply

of new homes and price appre-

Anuj Puri, Chairman of

Anarock, one of the leading housing brokerage firms in the country, termed the year 2024 as a "mixed bag" for the Indian residential market and noted that, while demand for the affordable housing segment was weak, sales and launches of luxury homes remained strong. India's residential real estate market, estimated to be valued at over USD 300 billion, faced a marginal 4 per cent drop in sales volumes during 2024, ac-

cording to data from consultant Anarock. After a 47 per cent decline in 2020, housing sales had grown by 71 per cent, 54 per cent and 31 per cent in 2021, 2022 and 2023, respectively.

Post-pandemic, the ultra-rich started lapping up luxurious flats, villas and penthouses at launch itself and this year was no different.

"No doubt, the central and state elections played spoilsport to some extent, but it would also be fair to attribute at least some of the decline to the high base considering that



in 2023 both new launches and sales had attained all-time high peaks," Puri said

Going forward, he expects the housing market to stabilize in 2025, with muted growth in prices, as against an average 21 per cent year-on-year rise this year. "Much also depends on what the upcoming Union Budget holds in store," Puri said.

Real estate developers have a long-standing demand for an increase in the deduction limit of interest on home loans under the Income Tax Act to boost housing sales, particularly in affordable and mid-income categories.

The luxury and ultra-luxury housing segment, which does not need any fiscal support, continued its upward journey.

Most of the real estate compa nies focused on luxury residential projects led by realty major DLF Ltd that launched a super luxury project 'The Dahlias' in Gurugram comprising around 400 units with an estimated sales value of ₹26,000 crore -- possibly the largest project announced so far in terms of revenue potential

News of luxury residential projects getting sold within a few days of their launches became the new normal in 2024.

"2024 has been another monumental year for the Indian real estate sector, with residential demand still remaining robust on the back of heightened consumer interest and the shift towards buying instead of renting," CREDAI National President Boman Irani told PTI.

The luxury segment has done particularly well, providing further validation of the evolving appetite of the Indian homebuyers who now seek better, bigger homes with enhanced lifestyles, he added.

In contrast to the housing segment, the office market saw record leasing of workspaces this year, with foreign companies looking to set up Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in India to capitalize on the availability of cheaper real estate and English-speaking skilled talent pool.

Gross leasing of office space across eight major cities is estimated to rise 14 per cent to touch a record 85 million square feet in 2023, according to Cushman & Wakefield data

The demand for managed office space gained further momentum, prompting coworking operators to expand their port folios in a big way.

To fund their expansion plan, coworking operators Awfis successfully launched its Initial Public Offering (IPO) this year, while Smartworks and IndiQube Spaces have filed preliminary papers with market regulator Se bi to launch their public issues.

The office market also got a filip from SEBI, which earlier this year approved regulation for Small and Medium Real Estate Investment Trusts (SM-RRITs) to boost investments in rent-yielding commercial properties. It is similar to REIT but as the name suggests smaller in scale.



ciation.







SPORTS **Orissa**POST TUESDAY | DECEMBER 31, 2024 | BHUBANESWAR **STARS CONTINUE TO DISAPPOINT** Rohit, Virat fail again as India lose fourth Test giving the Kangaroos lead of 2-1 in BGT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne, Dec 30: India slumped to a demoralising 184-run loss to Australia in the fourth Test here Monday with contemporary greats Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli failing to come good yet again, signalling that their walk towards the exit door is not too far.

Chasing a near improbable target of 340, both Rohit (9 off 40 balls) and Kohli (5) failed to battle their technical frailties and mental cobwebs as India lost seven wickets for 34 runs in just 20.4 overs in the final session to be all out for 155 in 79.1 overs

Australian captain Pat Cummins (3/28 in 18 overs) was superb as usual and Scott Boland was also magnificent (3/39 in 16 overs) in his every spell.

Nathan Lyon (2/37 in 20.1 overs) took advantage of variable bounce while Mitchell Starc (1/25 in 16 overs) got the prized scalp of Kohli.

This was after an 88-run fourth-wicket stand between Yashasvi Jasiwal and Rishabh

Australia now lead the series 2-1 and unless India draw level in Sydney, a third successive World Test Championship final could become a distant dream. Even to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, India would need to post a win.

Save Jaiswal (84, 208 balls), whose controversial caught-behind in which the third umpire overruled technology to adjudge him out, none of the other batters performed well enough to save the team.

"They batted well in the middle session. We knew that we had to get one breakthrough and anything can happen and that proved to be the case. We had plenty of runs to play with, we had plenty of fielders with the helmet around," a beaming Cummins, who was also adjudged player of the match



Australian players celebrate after winning the fourth test cricket match against India at the Melbourne Ground, Australia, Monday AP/PT

The art of saving Test matches has slowly become extinct but India would have depended on their two senior-most players, who are also fighting to save their legacy and reputation built

over nearly two decades over-rated, Indian batting lineup from implosion with overthe-hill seniors and young superstars unable to handle the pressure

SKIPPER UNDER SCANNER The defeat could have severe

repercussions as there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel for skipper Rohit. As for Kohli, despite all his

white-ball exploits, the problems outside the off-stump will stick out like a sore thumb. For Rohit, his ultra-defen-

sive approach in the opening slot, is causing India to stare down the barrel with alarming regularity. Rohit did all the hard work during the first hour before op-

In case of Rishabh Pant. it was one bad shot too many afposition skipper Cummins got ter a full session in which he his bunny for the 10th time in concentrated. He got a rank Test matches. long hop from Travis Head but Kohli could never control his urge of playing the cover drive after a 103-ball vigil, it all came

again and was caught at first Even Jaiswal's guts and grit slip after Mitchell Starc pushed couldn't prevent a once highone across with the angle. ly-rated, but currently a trifle Rahul was out without trou-

bling the scorers after getting a second good ball in the game. Rohit's decision to bat up the order backfired and it also tinkered with Rahul's mindset despite him being perfectly fine opening the innings.

The captaincy was pedestrian as he let the game drift on occasions and there were lot of phases that led to India's defeat but none more telling than the final wicket partnership between Scott Boland and Nathan Lyon where the target went out of reach Sunday.

Save Jasprit Bumrah, who once again toiled manfully for 50 overs and took nine wickets, and find-of-the-series Nitish Reddy, who scored a gritty hundred, there are no positives to be taken from this defeat.

The batting, save for the second innings in the opening Perth Test, has been absolutely below par and India won't be doing themselves any favours if they have walking wickets at the top of the order.

The team is going through a tough transition and it is now time that their feisty head 📢 coach Gautam Gambhir shows some spark along with chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar.

Mentally disturbing: Rohit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne: Indian skipper Rohit Sharma Monday said the 184-run drubbing at the hands of Australia in the fourth Test here is "mentally disturbing", conceding that his team failed to fight in the match.

India will now head to Sydney for the fifth and final Test trailing 1-2 in the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy. The series finale begins January 3.

"It is mentally disturbing when you can't do what you have come to do," Rohit, whose own poor form has been under the scanner, told reporters after the game.

DREAM

Australia were struggling at 90 for six in their second innings with the overall lead yet to touch 200 on Sunday

INDIA'S WTC QUALIFICATION CHANCE FADES ter suffering a 184-run loss in the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne

Cricket Ground, India remain in third place, while Australia also re-A tained their second place in the World Test Championship standings. India's point percentage (PCT), however, has dipped from 55.88 to 52.78 after a loss in the fourth Test while Australia's PCT saw a jump from 58.89 to 61.46 as they close in on a second consecutive appearance in the WTC final after a thrilling victory Monday. The Aussies can join South Africa, who have secured their qualification after clinching the first of two Tests against Pakistan by two wickets Sunday, for the final with a win in any of their three remaining Tests this cycle. Australia will tour Sri Lanka next year for an additional two Tests, meaning if they could theoretically draw series 2-2 with India, they can remain in contention for a place in the final India, however, can still qualify for the World Test Championship final but they must win the final Test of the series against Australia in Sydney to tie the Border-Gavaskar series and then rely on the Aussies not winning a Test during their series in Sri Lanka that commences next month.

ably cost us the game there,'

Rohit said the team want-

ed to have a go at the target

despite its daunting nature.

to be easy. We tried to set a

platform and keep wickets

in hand for the last two ses-

sions, but they bowled per-

fectly as well. We wanted

to go for the target, but we

didn't set the platform from

The Mumbaikar lauded Ni-

tish Kumar Reddy for mak-

ing a fine hundred during

the first innings, and hoped

the youngster will climb the

He also patted pacer Jas-

prit Bumrah for leading the

Indian bowling attack almost

singlehandedly. "Absolutely

brilliant, We've been watch-

ing him for so many years

now, coming here and get-

ting the job done. He's not

a statistical person. He just

our side," he noted.

ladder.

"We knew 340 wasn't going

he added.

but managed to make it a 340run target for the visitors. Rohit admitted his team could not exploit the favourable situation.

"We had Australia 90 for 6. We know things can get tough, but we want to play tough cricket from hard situations. But we were not good enough. I went back to my room and thought about what else we could have done as a team," Rohit said.

"But we threw

It is pretty disappointing There are ways to win mes and we fell short in finding ways to win the game here. We wanted to fight till the end and unfortunately we couldn't do it ROHIT SHARMA SKIPPER, INDIA

wants to play for the country everything we had, and do well for the team, but they fought hard, esunfortunately he's not got a pecially that last-wicket lot of support from the other partnership, which probside."

India's captain Rohit Sharma walks off the field after losing his wicket during play on the last day of the fourth cricket test between Australia and India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground

SHORT TAKES

Bumrah nominated

Dubai: Operating at a level rarely seen in the game before, India's peerless fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah was Monday nominated for the ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year award and also featured in the list for the best player in the Test format. Bumrah, who has left the Australian batters scrambling for survival with his incredible display of fast bowling in the ongoing five-



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

to a naught.

Virat Kohli walks off the field after

losing his wicket on the last day

of the fourth cricket test between

Australia and India at the Mel-

for his haul of six wickets, said

in the presentation ceremony.

bourne Cricket Ground

New York, Dec 30: World number one Magnus Carlsen will return to the World Blitz Chess Championship here following FIDE's decision to allow players to compete in jeans, a couple of days after disqualifying him from the Rapid event for refusing to change into for mal trousers. The five-time world champion was fined \$200 for wearing jeans, which was "explicitly prohibited" under the original tournament regulations. The Norwegian was also disqualified from the championship after he refused to change his attire by chief arbiter Alex Holowczak ahead of the ninth round. Announcing the change in policy, FIDE boss Arkady Dvorkovich said, "I took the decision to trial an approach to provide more flexibility to FIDE officials in judgements regarding the suitability of the attire. "The principle is simple: it is still required to follow the official dress-code, but elegant minor deviations (that may, in particular, include appropriate jeans matching the jacket) are allowed," Dvorkovich said in a statement on X. After disqualification in the Rapid event, Carlsen had opted out of the Blitz section but he will now return to defend his title "FIDE is pleased to confirm that Magnus Carlsen will participate in the FIDE World Blitz Championship," the statement read. Carlsen had met FIDE vice president and Indian great Viswanathan Anand on the sidelines of the tournament Sunday "FIDE looks forward to continuing our collaboration with Mr Carlsen and the global chess community to enhance the conditions and atmosphere of FIDE competitions, ensuring the best possible experience for players and fans alike," the world body statement added.



in New York.'

Take Take.

Carlsen also confirmed his

"I am playing at least one

more day here in New York

and, if I do well, another day

after that." Carlsen told 'Take

yesterday and we have a good

relationship with FIDE Pres-

ident Dvorkovich. Speaking

to Dvorkovich and the main

sponsor Turlov it did feel we

could have some fruitful dis-

cussions and in the end of the

day I decided to play." Carlsen

said during the interview, a

portion of which was pub-

FIDE's deputy president

Viswanathan Anand had said

that the governing body didn't

want to disqualify Carlsen but

was left with no options.

lished in FIDE's X account.

"We had a lot of discussions

participation in the event.

Bengal, Kerala to clash for crown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Dec 30: West Bengal and Kerala, two of India's finest teams with a rich history in the game, will clash in a blockbuster summit showdown of the National Football Championship for the Santosh Trophy here Tuesday.

The two states that have rightfully earned the tags of Indian football hubs are no



match series Down Under, has been nominated for the top award, named after legendary West Indies allrounder Sir Garfield Sobers, alongside England's prolific duo of Joe Root and Harry Brook, with swashbuckling Australian batter Travis Head completing the list. Besides Bumrah, who has been at the top of his game throughout 2024, Root, Brook and Sri Lanka's Kamindu Mendis featured in the list for the ICC Test Cricketer of the Year award. Bumrah has been the best bowler in Test cricket in 2024 with 71 wickets from 13 matches at an average of 14.92 and a strike rate of 30.16, the best figures for any bowler.

Fonseca fired by Milan

Milan: Paulo Fonseca has been fired by AC Milan, with the club confirming the decision Monday morning after the Portuguese coach was informed following a 1-1 draw at home to Roma the previous night. "Yes, it's true. I'm out," Fonseca told reporters when he lowered his car window as he left San Siro following Sunday's match. "That's life. ... I did everything I could." Milan is expected to hire Sergio Conceicao, another Portuguese coach, as Fonseca's replacement. The Serie A club released a short statement confirming Fonseca's dismissal. "AC Milan announces that Paulo Fonseca has been relieved from his duties as head coach of the men's first team," it said. "The club extends its gratitude to Paulo for his great professionalism and wishes him the very best in his future endeavours."

FIDE said Carlsen's return to the tournament will

he reigning World Blitz Chess Champion confirmed his participation in the FIDE World Rapid and Blitz tournament and will play in jeans after a change in the rules

World number one Magnus Carlsen criticised senior FIDE officials, including its deputy president Viswanathan Anand, for mishandling the dress code violation issue, calling them "not grown-ups" and stating that the Indian was "not ready for the job"

do a lot of good for the sport. "This is great news for the chess world. We are delighted that the reigning World Blitz Chess Champion will be competing to defend his title and aim for another crown at the highly anticipated event

HUMPY EYEING GRAND DOUBLE

NEW YORK: Having achieved the monumental feat of winning the World Rapid chess title for a second time, Indian stalwart Koneru Humpy would be eyeing a grand double when the FIDE World Blitz Championship commences here Tuesday. Humpy had Sunday capped a wonderful year for Indian chess, defeating Irene Sukandar of Indonesia to emerge the FIDE Women's World Rapid Chess champion. The Indian had won the event back in 2019 at Georgia and, Sunday, became only the second player after China's Ju Wenjun to clinch the title a second time. At stake is not just the title but a chance to win another \$60,000 (around Rs 50 lakhs) cheque as the Blitz championship carries the same prize money as Rapid.

strangers to the pinnacle of the national championships with West Bengal gearing up for a record 47th final and Kerala standing on the verge of playing their 16th summit clash.

Both sides have shown form befitting of their stature in the

tournament, winning nine of their 10 matches, while drawing one

each.

Historically, Bengal have dominated at this stage, winning the tournament 32 times, while Kerala are seven-time champions.

In recent years, however, Kerala have had the edge over their eastern rivals, winning

COMEBACK VICTORY UP Rudras beat Kalinga Lancers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rourkela, Dec 30: UP Rudras came from a goal down to beat Vedanta Kalinga Lancers 3-1 to register their first win in the Hockey India League here Monday.

Enrique Gonzalez put Kalin ga Lancers ahead in the 13th minute through a field strike before Kane Russell (45th) converted a penalty corner and later Sudeep Chirmako (50th) scored from a field effort to give UP Rudras a 2-1 lead.

Russell was again in the thick of action, converting another penalty corner in the final minute of the game.

Gonzalez found the back of the net after he was brilliantly set up by Sanjay from the right for the first goal of the match.

Sanjay carried the ball and then squared it to Gonzalez, who was completely unmarked. With time and space to shoot, he slotted home the ball. UP Rudras pressed hard for the 2017-18 and the 2021-22 titles defeating West Bengal.

History, however, has no part to play in the final on New Years' Eve, believes Bengal head coach Sanjoy Sen.

SANTOSH TROPHY FINAL

"Perhaps reaching the

(Santosh Trophy) final is an

achievement for other states.

but that is not the case for us.

It means nothing to Bengal - Ze-

ro," he exclaimed. "Unless we

win the trophy, it all counts

for nothing. Yes, we have won

the tournament 32 times in the

the equaliser and their efforts

bore fruit at the stroke of the

third quarter when Russell's

powerful low shot hit the op-

position goal, leaving rival

goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur

In the dying moments of the

game, Russell sealed the game

in UP Rudras' favour, slam-

ming home another penalty

Pathak all ends up.

corner past Pathak.

past, but the Santosh Trophy is a much bigger tournament now in terms of the number of states that participate in it. I do not intend to downplay past achievements, but I feel that

it is more difficult to win it now," said Sen

Sen's counterpart Biby Thomas Muttath echoed similar expectations from his home state. The Santosh Trophy is like a World Cup for us, back in Kerala. The minimum expectation is for us to reach the final. but of course, everyone wants a win," he said.

Women crush Maldives 14-0 in football friendly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Dec 30: Player of the Match Lynda Kom Serto scored four goals on debut while Pvari Xaxa struck a hattrick in a span of just eight minutes as the Indian women's football team hammered Maldives 14-0 in an international friendly here Monday.

The demolition meant India's newly-appointed Swedish coach, Joakim Alexandersson, began his stint on a rousing note.

Xaxa found the back of the net in the seventh, eighth, and 15th minutes, and in between assisted Lynda in the 12th in what turned out to be a goal fest for the home team at the Padukone-Dravid Centre for Sports Excellence.

It was one of the Blue Tigress es' biggest-ever victory margins in international football. In 2010, India defeated Bhutan 18-0 in the SAFF Championship in Bangladesh.

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