

Chattogram court denies bail to

Hindu monk and former ISKCON

INTERNATIONAL | P10

leader Chinmoy Krishna Das in

a sedition case

# Actor Rakul Preet Singh

reveals what she considers to be the two greatest assets of her life

### LEISURE | P2

### VOLUME 14, ISSUE 273 I www. orissapost.com

# **Freedom fighter** pension doubled

#### PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: Freedom fighter pension would be doubled in the state, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said during an event held to mark the 38th Freedom Fighters' Day here, Thursday

"Acknowledging free dom fighters' role in India's struggle for Independence, the state government will enhance their pension amount. The freedom fighters, who were imprisoned, will get an increased pension of Rs 20,000 a month from earlier Rs 10,000 a month," he said.

Freedom fighters who actively participated in the Independence struggle but were not imprisoned would now get Rs 15,000 a month, instead of Rs 9,000 monthly, he said.

Maihi said those who were arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) during the Emergency will now be eligible for a monthly pension of Rs 20.000

Several people were arrested during the Emergency while fighting for re-establishment of democracy, the CM said.

"This was also called the second struggle for Independence and the pension amount is a step to honour their efforts,' he added.



GREETING CM: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi being presented a portrait at the 38th Freedom Fighters' Day celebration in Unit-IX area of Bhubaneswar, Thursday

# **RREGULAR** by MANJUL



# Nitrate hazard in 15 dists

High nitrate and fluoride levels have been detected in groundwater of 15 and 10 districts of Odisha. The revelation was made in the Annual Groundwater Quality Report 2024 by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) after it carried out a nationwide survey on groundwater quality. While nitrate concentration exceeding 45mg/l can cause health



into the soil. Urbanisation and population growth increase wastewater and sewage which often contain high nitrate levels, while leaking septic systems and poor sewage disposal worsen contamination.

Manufacturing sector

low in December

growth falls to a 12-month

BUSINESS | P11

The report said high fluoride concentrations (more than 1.5 mg/l) were found in the groundwater of Angul, Bolangir, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Nayagarh. Nuapada, Puri, Sambalpur, Subarnapur and Sundargarh districts

New Delhi, Jan 2: Double Olympic-medallist Manu Bhaker and world chess champion D Gukesh were among the four who will be honoured with the Major Dhyan

AGENCIES

gust. In the same Paris Games, Hamranpreet led the Indian hockey team to its second con-

Gukesh, on the other hand, became the youngest-ever world champion while also

secutive bronze medal.

Indian skipper Rohit Sharma

is likely to be dropped from

Australia starting today

the fifth and final Test against

Arindam Dakua removed as CM PS

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: In a

bureaucratic reshuffle, the

state government Thursday appointed Arindam Dakua, Pri-

vate Secretary (PS) to the Chief

Minister (CM), as the Director

of Municipal Administration

and ex-officio Additional Secre-

tary of Housing and Urban De-

velopment (H&UD) department.

Dakua was appointed as PS to the CM in July last year.

According to a GA&PG de

partment notification, NBS Ra-

jput, Principal Secretary to Gov

ernor, has been given additional

charge of Principal Secretary of Public Enterprises department.

Temjenwapang Ao, Commis-

sioner-cum-Secretary of Public Enterprises department, was appoint

ed Special Secretary of Planning

Bhupendra Singh Poonia, with

additional charge of Special Sec-

retary of Industries department

and Managing Director of IDCO

has been given additional charge of Commissioner-cum-Secretary

of Skill Development and Techni-

Agriculture and Food Pro-

duction Director Prem Chandra

Chaudhary has been appointed

Director of Textiles and Hand-

looms. He also holds additional

charge as Managing Director of

Odisha Agro Industries Corpo-

ration Limited, it added.

Manu, Gukesh among

4 Khel Ratna awardees

**RECORD 17 PARA-ATHLETES TO RECEIVE ARJUNA** 

cal Education department.

and Convergence department. IPICOL Managing Director

AGENCIES

SPORTS | P12

12 PAGE | ₹5.00

**Trump wants smart immigrants** Who's smarter than us? We made it here without a visa!

# Ayushman Bharat **Digital Mission in** Odisha soon: Min

#### AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: The state government is set to roll out the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) soon, Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling said here Thursday.

The state administration would also create Avushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) IDs for people so that a person's medical records can be accessed from anywhere in the country from one account, Mahaling said.

Speaking to media, he said, "We're raising awareness among people to create ABHA IDs under the National Health Authority (NHA) at common service centres.<sup>3</sup>

With ABHA, citizens can store their medical and health records in a centralised account and access them through their unique ID. "This initiative is going to be a major achievement for the health sector under the Digital India programme," the minister said. On implementation of the Ayushman Bharat scheme in Odisha, the minister said the process has started to issue new health cards to beneficiaries

About 3.5 crore members of one crore families of Odisha will be covered under the Ayushman Bharat and state-sponsored Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana (GJAY), he said.

issues like blue baby syndrome in infants besides its serious implications on ecology, long-term exposure to fluoride more than 1.5 mg/l can result in fluorosis, such as dental and skeletal fluorosis

#### PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: In what raises significant health concerns among the people, the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) has found high nitrate levels in groundwater of 15 districts of the state. The 'Annual Groundwater

Quality Report 2024' released by the CGWB also found excessive fluoride content in the groundwater of 10 districts.

High nitrate levels (above

45mg/l) have been found in the groundwater in Angul. Bolangir, Bargarh, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Khurda, Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Nayagarh, Nuapada, Puri, Sambalpur, Subarnapur and Sundargarh districts, the report said.

Nitrate contamination is a significant environmental and health concern, particularly in agricultural regions using nitrogen-based fertilizers and

animal waste. High nitrate levels can cause health issues like blue baby syndrome in infants and are unsafe for drinking.

"High nitrate levels in groundwater can be a result of excessive irrigation which can push nitrates from fertilizers deep into the soil." the report said, adding that poor management of animal waste in livestock farming adds to the problem as it releases nitrates

"High fluoride contents in groundwater used for consumption are harmful to human health. Long-term intake of groundwater with excessive fluoride concentrations often leads to waterborne fluorosis, such as dental and skeletal fluorosis." it said.

A total of 15,259 monitoring locations were chosen nationwide to check groundwater quality in May 2023. High nitrate levels were found in groundwater of 440 districts across India, with 20 per cent of the samples collected exceeding the permissible nitrate concentration, the report said.

Chand Khel Ratna award, the Sports Ministry announced, Thursday. It also named an unprecedented 17 para-athletes in the list of 32 Arjuna awardees to honour their resounding success at the Paris Paralympics.

The other two who will get the Khel Ratna honour were men's hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh and para-athlete Praveen Kumar.

The awards will be conferred on the athletes by President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan January 17.

Bhaker, 22, became independent India's first athlete to win two medals in a single edition of the Olympics with her bronze-winning show in the 10m air pistol individual and 10m air pistol mixed team events in Au-

helping the Indian team win a historic gold in the Chess Olym piad last year.

The fourth recipient, para high-jumper Praveen, was crowned the T64 champion in the Paris Paralympics.

The athletes selected for this year's Arjuna award include Paris Olympics bronze med al-winning lot of wrestler Aman Sehrawat, shooters Swapnil Kusale and Sarabjot Singh and the men's hockey team players Jarmanpreet Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, Sanjay and Abhishek.

The Khel Ratna awardees re ceive a cash prize of Rs 25 lakh along with a citation and a me dallion. The Arjuna awardees are given Rs 15 lakh as cash reward, a statuette of Arjuna and a citation. **P1**2

# New Orleans attacker inspired by IS group

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

New Orleans (US), Jan 2: A US Army veteran who drove a pickup truck into a crowd of New Year revellers in New Orleans, killing 15 people, had posted videos to social media hours before the carnage saying he was inspired by the Islamic State (IS) group and expressing

a desire to kill The FBI said it was investigating early Wednesday's attack in which the driver steered around a police blockade and slammed into revellers before being shot dead by police as a terrorist act and did not believe he acted alone.

Investigators found guns and what appeared to be an improvised explosive device in the vehicle — which bore the flag of the IS group — along with other explosive devices elsewhere in the city's famed French Quarter. President Joe Biden said

Wednesday evening that the FBI found the videos the driver posted to social media. He called the attack a 'despicable' and 'heinous act'.

The rampage turned festive Bourbon Street into a macabre scene of maimed victims, bloodied bodies and pedestrians fleeing for safety inside nightclubs and restaurants. In addition to the dead, dozens of people were hurt. Zion Parsons, 18, of Gulfport,

Mississippi, said he saw the truck barrelling through, throwing people like in a movie scene, throwing people into the air.

"Bodies, bodies all up and down the street, everybody screaming and hollering," said Parsons, whose friend Nikyra Dedeaux was among the people killed.

"This is not just an act of



terrorism. This is evil," New Orleans Police Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick said.

The attack is the latest example of a vehicle being used as a weapon to carry out mass violence and the deadliest IS-inspired assault on US soil in years.

The driver 'defeated' safety measures in place to protect pedestrians, Kirkpatrick said, and was hell-bent on creating the carnage and the damage that he did.

The FBI identified the driver as Shamsud-Din Jabbar, 42, a US citizen from Texas, and said

### Driver acted alone: FBI

The FBI now says that the pickup truck driver responsible for a deadly rampage in New Orleans acted alone Officials said Wednesday that

they were seeking additional potential suspects in an attack being in-vestigated as an act of terrorism. But Christopher Raia, deputy assistant director of the FBI's counterterrorism division, said Thursday that the evidence now shows that Shamsud Din Jabbar was solely responsible for the attack and professed allegiance to the Islamic State. New Orleans pressed ahead with plans to reopen the city's famed Bourbon Street Thursday as investigators kept digging into the background of the US Army veteran who drove a pickup truck into a crowd of New Year revel-lers, killing 15 people.

it was working to determine any potential associations with terrorist organisations.

Montenegro: Gunman kills 12, shoots self AGENCIES

Cetinje (Montenegro), Jan 2: Shock and dismay prevailed in Montenegro Thursday after a gunman fatally shot 12 people, including two children, in a west ern town before killing himself.

At least four others were wounded in the shooting ram page in Cetinje Wednesday that followed a bar brawl, officials said. This was the second such incident in the town in the past three years.

The shooter, identified as 45-year-old Aco Martinovic, killed the owner of the bar, the bar owner's children and his own family members, officials have said.

The attacker, who first fled after the rampage, was later located and surrounded by police. He died after shooting himself in the head, Interior Minister Danilo Saranovic said.













# ISUre



# HIDDEN LOVE STAR ZHAO LUSI **REVEALS FIGHTING DEPRESSION**

Chinese actor Zhao Lusi, best known for her globally popular romance series Hidden Love, has opened up about battling depression as well as facing mental and physical abuse in a social media post following her recent hospitalisation.

# MILLIE BOBBY BROWN SHUTS **DOWN AGE-SHAMING TROLLS**

Millie Bobby Brown addresses criticism on Instagram after posting a mirror selfie in a floral dress, facing comments about her looking older than her age. In response, Brown, who turns 21 next month, remarked, "Women grow!! Not sorry about it."



# IE FORECAS

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Nourishing high ambitions is a good thing if they can

drive you to achieve your potential. You make plans and execute them with utmost care. You may focus all your attention on attracting a member of the other sex.

# TAURUS

A trip to the mall with your beloved may end with a trunk loaded with shopping bags, suggests Ganesha. Purchase is on the cards and a home or a vehicle may be on your list. Financial

gains and family joys will make this day one to remember. The day will end with a feeling of gratitude and satisfaction.

# GEMINI

Your mind will be seized with tension on some account. You will be nervous and uneasy as a result. A grave illness may strike some member of your family. However, things should ease out during the later part of the day, says Ganesha

# CANCER Today you may behave

quite aggressively for most part of the day, predicts Ganesha. You may spend the afternoon with your business associates, and if you can use your aggression in a controlled manner, you can secure a very important deal today. In the evening, you will be on cloud nine, with your partner blowing you away with his/her love.

# LEO

You will complete your tasks courageously today. You will have the patience to wait for the fruits of your labour to fall into your lap, so as to say. You will redo those tasks that you are unable to complete to your expectations. Owing to this attitude of yours, you do not need to worry about a thing, says Ganesha.

# VIRGO

Opening up to your beloved about your whims and fancies, as well as your goals, is the key today. Energy levels will hit the sky today. Pay due reverence to higher education and social customs. People will look up to your epicurean tastes. especially in the performing kinds.

# LIBRA

Ganesha says that you will gain popularity and prestige with certain people today. Today you may be in a situation where you are amongst strangers in a strange situation but you will be able to handle it perfectly



# Armaan ties knot with Aashna

to his longtime girlfriend and influencer, Aashna Shroff.

news, posting dreamy wedding photos accompanied by a heartfelt caption.

Armaan and Aashna got engaged in August 2023. Thursday, Armaan and Aashna shared photos from their nuptials on their respective Instagram handles, writing in the caption, "tu hi mera Ghar." In the photos, the couple radiates pure happiness, dressed in stunning traditional wedding attire in shades of orange. Aashna looks beautiful as a bride in an orange lehenga, while Armaan opts for a pastel-shaded sherwani.

The wedding appeared to be an intimate outdoor affair, attended by close family and friends. Soon after the couple announced their wedding, the comments section was flooded with congratulatory messages. Pranutan shared a series of red heart emojis, while Sophie Choudry wrote, "Oh my goodness! Congratulations, you guys." Aahana Kumra simply wrote, "Congratulations." Varun Dhawan also liked the post. Armaan and Aashna announced their engagement on social media in August 2023. The singer posted a series of romantic pictures. In one of the photos, he was seen on one knee with a ring in his hand. In the other pictures, the couple posed adorably together.

Armaan captioned the post, "And our for

Mumbai: Singer Armaan Malik is finally married

The couple took to Instagram to share the joyful

ever

PEANUTS

# has only

iust be gun. IANS

# Raku's twin treasures

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Rakul Preet Singh has recently revealed what she considers to be the two greatest assets of her life — health and time.

In her latest social media post, the actress emphasized the importance of prioritizing physical and mental well-being, as well as the value of time in both personal and professional life.

Thursday, Rakul took to her Instagram handle to share a positive note that read, "Your two greatest assets in life: Health and time. Invest in your health. It will buy you more time." Along with the image, she wrote in the caption, "Kuch gyaan ki baat ho jaye," which roughly translates to "Let me share some wisdom.3

In addition to her motivational post, Rakul also shared an exciting announcement about her upcoming film, Mere Husband Ki Biwi, which also stars Arjun Kapoor and Bhumi Pednekar.

Directed by Mudassar Aziz, the film is slated to hit theatres in February.

Sharing the post, the Thank God actress wrote, "Yahaan pyaar ki geometry thodi twisted hai—kyunki ye love triangle nahi, pura circle hai! #MereHusbandKiBiwi In Cinemas 21st February, 2025 @arjunkapoor @rakulpreet @bhumipednekar #MudassarAziz @ vashubhagnani @jackkybhagnani @deepshikhadeshmukh @ pvrpictures @jjustmusicofficial." IANS

# PeeCee bats for movie theatres

Mumbai: Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas has consistently expressed her passion for cinema and the diverse platforms it encompasses. In a recent interview, the

Bajirao Mastani actress shared her thoughts on the ongoing debate between OTT platforms and traditional movie theatres. Priyanka firmly believes that while OTT has certainly transformed the entertainment industry, the experience of watching a film in a theatre remains

unparalleled. think it will always be special. There's nothing quite like entering a darkened theatre and watching a movie, not just with friends and family, but by a room full of strangers, all connectby ed the

viewing experience. The big screen's scale, sound, and immersive atmosphere add to make it a special experience. I don't think the magic of movie theatres will ever fade," she af firmed. In addition, the 42-year-old ac-

tress revealed her plans to make a return to Indian cinema, exciting her fans. Although specific details are still under wraps sources within the industry suggest that this upcoming project could redefine cinematic storytelling. Fans are eagerly awaiting official confirmation, with hopes of seeing Priyanka join forces with director S.S Rajamouli this year.

Currently, Priyanka is preparing for the next season of the highly-anticipated international series Citadel. Her performance in the first season garnered widespread critical acclaim and the second season promises to escalate the stakes. Priyanka's involvement in the show is expected to add further depth and intrigue to the storyline. AGENCIES

# **Krystle starts NY with self-love**

Mumbai: Television actress Krystle D'Souza has welcomed the New Year with a serene beachside photoshoot and a reflective

post Sharing her stunning photos on social media, the actress appeared calm and content, soaking in the beauty of nature as she bid farewell to 2024 and embraced the new year. In her

heartfelt

caption

the Ek Hazaaron Mein Meri Behna Hai actress wrote, "New year, same old me, just with some new experiences, lessons, and a lot of self-love. 2024, you were beautiful in your own chaotic way, you've

In the images, Krystle is paired with sunglasses. She also dropped photos and videos from her gateway on her

left with learnings, realizations, and a lot of amazing memories. Dear 2025, waiting to see what you have in store.' seen striking different poses in a stylish outfit that she

Instagram stories. IANS

well without getting scared or tensed. . . . . . . . . . . . . .

# **SCORPIO**

Today is one of those days when you will go through tremendous highs and lows, predicts Ganesha. There are chances of heated arguments with your peers, so keep a check on your tongue. However evening will be cheerful as you sit back and relax with your group of friends, go for dinner or watch a movie.

# SAGITTARIUS

A day full of highs and lows, predicts Ganesha. Heaps of work is likely to keep you on toes today. You experience a stressful day at work. In the evening, you may spend quality time with your beloved and treasure small joys of life.

# CAPRICORN

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Whether or not your business will prosper will depend on

how decisive you are, says Ganesha. Besides, it's time to test the potential of subordinates you have ap pointed, and see if they can deliver their best. And if they meet your standards, you can expect quick returns by the end of the day.

# 

You may not want to, but you have to pay the bills! Okay, so you can't even remember what you bought, and are cursing the loony credit cards. However, this may persuade you to be a bit more organised. There is no harm in taking ideas from others, suggests Ganesha.

# **PISCES**

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

You will find yourself experiencing problems with taking critical decisions urgently. You will need to carefully weigh the pros and cons of every alternative, before you pronounce your verdict. This is a better practice than to take decisions on a whim, even if slow.You will also plan on making some changes to your personal life.



DON'T FORGET

WE HAVE A BET

ON WHO GETS

THE HIGHER

GRADE .

Sighhhh

THE BET'S

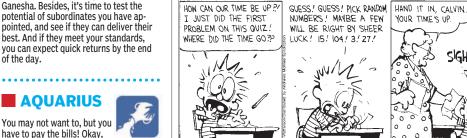
DON'I

GAMBLE:

NO BETS

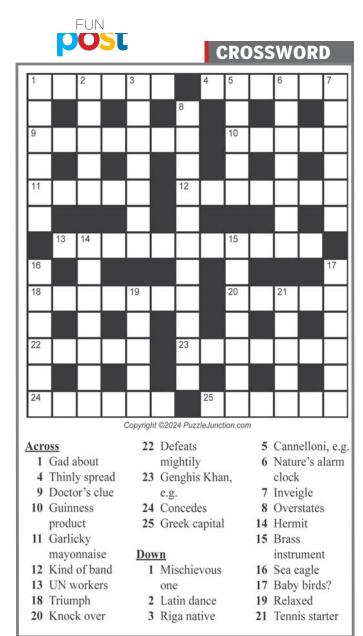
MIL

# **CALVIN AND HOBBES**



# BREVITY





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.

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

# SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

P	R	E	Т	Ζ	Е	L		G	Е	С	Κ	0
E		Х		0		0		1		R		L
A	Ρ	Ρ	R	0	Х	1	Μ	А	Т	Е	L	Y
C		R		L		Т				Μ		Μ
н	U	E		0	V	Е	R	S	L	Е	Е	Ρ
		S		G		R		L		D		U
C	A	S	S	1	S		В	1	С	Е	Ρ	S
A		1		S		1		D		Μ		
Ρ	0	0	L	Т	A	В	L	Е		Е	L	K
Т		Ν				Е		R		Ν		U
U	N	1	Ν	Т	Е	R	R	U	Ρ	Т	Е	D
R		S		0		1		L		н		0
E	M	M	E	Т	n.	Α	G	Е	L	Е	S	S
1		9	2	ľ	5	7	4	Т	3	8	T	6
8	5	6	7		3	9	2	T	5	4	T	1

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





SUDOKU



# **CITY SHOW**

Artistes from Dhenkanal Alternative Rhythm Theatre stage drama 'GIRGIT' during a cultural programme organised by Natyadhara at Bhanja Kala Mandap in Bhubaneswar Thursday

# owntown

IssaPo

FRIDAY | JANUARY 3, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

**POLITICKLE by MANJUL** 

# **Tiger relocation plan deferred**

The plan to relocate three Royal Bengal Tigers from Madhva Pradesh was put off owing to erratic behaviour of tigress Zeenat which crossed the STR boundary and wandered into the forests of Iharkhand and West Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: The state government Thursday said that plans to bring three more Roval Bengal Tigers (RBTs) from Madhya Pradesh have been delayed because of the "erratic" behaviour of two tigresses - Zeenat and Jamuna - which were translocated from Maharashtra.

State Forest and Environment Minister Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia said, "There were plans to relocate five RBTs from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh to boost the big cat population in Odisha. Two have already been translocated to Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) from Maharashtra.'

The minister added, "The three other RBTs from Mad-



hya Pradesh will be released in senior forest official said. Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary.

Zeenat is currently kept in a soft enclosure in Jenabil range of STR's southern division. Similarly, tigress Jamuna (two-and-a-half years old), released into STR in October, displayed similar behaviour. She crossed the national park boundary and entered Kuldhia Sanctuary in Balasore district, but later returned to STR without much difficulty. Both Jamuna and Zeenat were translocated to Simili-

pal from Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra to improve the gene pool and were released into the core area in October and November, respectively.

Officials said is focused on providing a well-managed and sustainable environment for the RBTs and is taking measures to increase the big cat population in the state while involving local communities in conservation efforts

Two days ago, state's principal chief conservator of forests (Wildlife) PK Jha mentioned that the Forest department would reassess the situation before deciding whether to proceed with the relocation of the tigers from MP.

Odisha forest officials had visited MP's Bandhavgarh National Park in October after the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) gave in-principle approval to bring three more RBTs.

An official said this is not the first time Odisha has faced setbacks in tiger relocation. In 2018, two tigers (one male and one female) were released into Satkosia Tiger Reserve after being brought from Madhya Pradesh. However, tigress "Sundari" was poached, while the male tiger "Mahavir" fell ill and was sent back to Bandhavgarh National Park.

According to the All Odisha Tiger Estimation 2023-24, conducted by the state government, there are currently 30 tigers and eight cubs, with 27 tigers found in STR.









# Naveen writes to Majhi for quick crop loss aid

#### PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik wrote to Chief Minister Mo han Charan Majhi Thursday, urging him to take immediate steps to compensate farmers who have been hit hard by unseasonal rains.

Patnaik undertook an extensive tour of rain-affected Ganjam, Puri, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapara districts December 30 and 31.

"The farmers have suffered huge losses due to unseasonal rains and they are in severe distress. The rains have caused extensive damage to both paddy and non-paddy crops during the harvesting period," he said.

"They were not aware about the intensity of rains as the government advisory was not issued on time. Patnaik said it was "disturbing" and "unfortunate" that several farmers died in the last 10 days.

"During my visit to Jagatinghpur district, I had gone to the house of a young farmer, Krutibas Swain of Balikuda



# BJP leadership upsetting BJD: Majhi

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Thursday launched a veiled attack on Pat-naik and said, "The leaders who were once living in ivory towers are now forced to visit muddy and dusty villages because of the BJP's style of functioning. Seeing our party leaders and ministers' style of working, they are now getting upset." Majhi alleged that those who had ruled the state for a long period were distant from the people. "I want to tell them, who were once confining themselves in ivory towers, that they don't need to get upset seeing our style of working," he added.

block who allegedly committed suicide December 30 due to crop loss. It is indeed deeply shocking," he said. "The farmers of Odisha

and their families have faced

a huge calamity. Their confi-

dence is shattered. In the pres ent circumstances, I would like to demand that the government must work hard and provide timely and adequate compensation so as to boost the confi dence of farmers," he said.

# Kambhampati to take oath as Guv today

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: Governor-designate Hari Babu Kambhampati, who arrived in the City by a special flight Thursday afternoon, will take oath as the Governor Friday.

On his arrival at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA), Kambhampati was received by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi, Deputy Chief Ministers Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo and Pravati Parida, Assembly Speaker Surama Padhy, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja and Director Gen-



However, the state is closely

monitoring the acclimatisation

of the two tigresses, Zeenat and

Jamuna. Once they adapt to the

new climate of STR, the state will

Sources said the relocation

of the three RBTs from MP,

initially planned for December,

was delayed after three-year-old

tigress Zeenat crossed the STR

boundary and wandered into

the forests of Jharkhand before

After 23 days, she was cap-

brought back to STR, suggest-

ing that she had not yet adjust-

ed to the STR environment, a

tranquillised, and

entering West Bengal.

tured.

proceed with the next steps."

eral of Police (DGP) YB Khurania, among others. From the airport, Kambhampa-

ti went to the Raj Bhavan where he received a guard of honour.

"Landed in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, where I was warmly received by the Hon'ble Chief Minister and officials. A Guard of Honour was presented before proceeding to Puri for the sacred darshan of Lord Jagannath," he posted on X.

Kambhapati went to Puri where he went for a darshan of the sibling deities at Srimandir in the evening.

Body found near tracks; family cries murder

the night at Puri Raj Bhavan and return to Bhubaneswar Friday to take oath as the new Governor of Odisha.

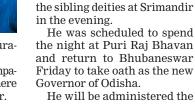
oath by Orissa High Court Chief Justice Chakradhari Sharan Singh at 10:15am.

Kambhampati was appointed as the Governor of Odisha December 24 after Raghubar Das resigned from the post.

Das, the former BJP CM of Jharkhand, resigned after staying in office for barely 14 months amid public outcry over his son allegedly assaulting an on-duty government officer

#### Kambhampati, a teacher-turned-politician, was the Governor of Mizoram in his last assignment.

Fake cement unit busted; 2 arrested



Bhubaneswar: Badagada police Thursday busted a duplicate cement manufacturing unit near Tankapani Road in Old Town area and arrested two persons in that connection. 140 bags of fake cement have been confiscated, officials said, Badagada IIC Trupti Ranian Navak said acting on a tip-off about the operation of the fake cement factory, a police team made a swoop at 'Stutee Enterprises' Thursday, They rounded up accused Durga Charan Sasmal, 53, and Sanjay Routray, 52, who were running the factory for the past few months. During questioning, the duo failed to give any satisfactory answer about the making of cement, Preliminary investigations revealed that Navak said Sasmal sourced used concrete sand and hardened cement from several shops near Jeypore in Koraput, Later, they engaged manual labour to crush them into fine particles and repackage them under various cement brands.



#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: Family members of a 23-year-old man whose mutilated body was found lving beside the railway tracks near Poonama Gate level crossing here Thursday alleged that he had been murdered, and the body had been dumped near the tracks to make it look like an accident.

The allegations reportedly stemmed from the multiple injuries on the deceased's abdomen

and back when the family members found the body.

Government Railway Police (GRP) IIC Ashok Kumar Gocchavat said the deceased has been identified as Swaraj Kumar Behera who lived with his parents in Kunjapatna Sahi area under the jurisdiction of Lingaraj police station.

Swaraj's family members claimed that he had been done to death by some of his rivals over

Swaraj had a running feud with the miscreants since past few days. "On Wednesday night he (Swaraj) left home around 11 pm for the New Year's eve celebrations. Few hours later, when his parents tried to contact him over phone, the calls went unanswered. They grew anxious and made frantic calls to his friends to know his whereabouts", Gocchayat added.

past enemity. They alleged that

He said GRP was alerted about the body by locals in the wee hours of Thursday. The police later sent it to the Capital Hospital for autopsy.

However, later in the day, irate locals, including Swarai's family members, staged a protest near Gosagareswar Square in Old Town area, demanding a fair police probe, and immediate arrest of the murderers. Personnel from the Lingaraj police station intervened and normalised traffic on Ratha Road by pacifying the agitators.

# No Odisha tableau at R-Day Parade this yr

State's tableau was adjudged the best among states at the national-level Republic Day Parade last year

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: After bagging first prize at the 75th Republic Day Parade last year, the Odisha tableau will not feature during this year's Republic Day Parade in New Delhi January 26.

Official sources said that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) rejected the state's tableau proposal for the January 26 parade at Kartavva Path after five rounds of the selection process.

Instead, it will be showcased at 'Bharat Parv', which is part of the Republic Day celebrations, being organised from January 26 to 31 near the Red Fort.

Tableaux of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana,



Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Tripura, Uttarakhand. Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Union Territories of Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu and Chandigarh will

the field of art, culture, painting, sculpture, music, architecture, choreography, constituted under the MoD for consideration. Mizoram and Sikkim had expressed their inability to participate this time, while officials of Andaman and Nicobar Islands along with Lakshadweep did not turn up for the expert committee meeting.

Notably, Odisha tableau was adjudged the best among states at the national level Republic Day Parade last year for highlighting women's involvement in the handicraft and handloom sector, empowering themselves. Odisha tableau had rolled on R-Dav Parade last year after a gap of three years.



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participate in the Republic Day

Territories had sent their pro-

posals to the expert committee,

comprising eminent persons in

A total of 34 states and Union

parade, sources added.





# **OrissaPOST**

FRIDAY | JANUARY 3, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

# downtown



# **Capital gears up to host Pravasi Bharatiya Divas**

This collaborative effort is in-

tended to reflect the City's hos-

pitality and community spirit.

baneswar Municipal Corpo-

ration (BMC), Bhubaneswar

Development Authority (BDA),

Speaking to media persons,

the minister said, "Our goal is

to create an unforgettable expe-

rience for our overseas guests.

Bhubaneswar is not only a city

of heritage and culture but also

one of warmth and hospitali-

ty. I urge all stakeholders to

contribute to presenting our

welcome the world with open

arms, celebrating the spirit of

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and

the rich cultural heritage of

With more than 7,500 guests,

the majority of them overseas

Indians expected to attend, the

Odisha government is working

tirelessly to ensure a seamless

and memorable experience

"Bhubaneswar is set to

City in its best light."

Odisha," he said.

this prestigious event.

Teams from the Bhu-

City is set to welcome thousands of overseas Indians with warmth and tradition starting January 8



#### PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mashapatra Thursday visited various places in the Cpital to inspect the preparations for the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to be held here from January 8. The minister conducted a

comprehensive inspection from Airport Chowk to Nandankanan and Janata Maidan. Mahapatra closely reviewed

the Citv's sanitation, road conditions, and beautification efforts, emphasising that no detail is too small. During the field visit, he

directed engineers to immediately address any potholes, uneven surfaces, or unkempt areas and ensure the City maintains its aesthetic appeal. He also instructed that trees and fences be painted to enhance the City's visual charm.

Mahapatra has urged corporate entities, businesses, and residents to actively participate in the cleanliness drive by maintaining their premises.

# Govt ramps up paddy procurement efforts

### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: Procurement process of paddy in the state has been intensified for the current kharif season. At present, paddy procurement is going on in 1591 mandis from 18 districts including Bargarh, Nuapada, Sambalpur, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Balasore, Boudh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Keunjhar, Koraput, Malkangiri, Mavurbhani, Nabafor all participants, an official said.

Traditional Odisha wall paintings now adorn the streets, while roadsides and public areas have been meticulously cleaned and beautified. Both sides of the major roads in the capital city have been decked up with colourful lights

Iron barricades have been put up on both sides of the roads leading to Janata Maidan, the venue where the mega event will be held. Bhubaneswar is organis-

ing the flagship event for the first time for its 2025 edition. The City civic authority along with key departments of the state government has planned several events coinciding with the conclave such as Night Flea market, Adivasi fair and a food festival.

To provide a unique cultural experience, the City will host a food festival and tribal fair at and other departments are working round the clock to the exhibition grounds, offering guests a taste of traditional ensure the city is ready to host Odia cuisine.

Additionally, special arrangements have been made to transport NRIs to Puri in newly introduced double-decker buses for a spiritual visit to the Srimandir, where they will enjoy Jagannath 'darshan' and partake in the temple's sacred offerings, the officials said.

As per schedule, the convention will kick off with the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas January 8. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on the second day. The convention will culminate with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman awards ceremony on the third day, which will graced by President Droupadi Murmu.



FINISHING TOUCH: A tribal woman paints her house, Thursday, ahead of annual Adivasi Mela to be organised at Unit-III IDCO Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar from January 5 to 16

# Adivasi Mela to kick off in City Jan 5

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: The ST&SC Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare department is all set to host the annual Adivasi Mela from January 5 to 16 at Unit-III IDCO Exhibition Ground. This year's event coincides with the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, which is being hosted for the first time in the state.

The state-level fair will transform a part of the City into the illusion of a tribal village this year.

The main attractions of this year's event include a tribal village, a tribal haat, art and craft stalls, tribal food courts, live demonstrations, and the



#### Bhagwan Birsa Munda Pavil-

ion.

A total of 20 tribal huts and 147 stalls for selling of tribal goods are being constructed at

the venue. In addition, 40 stalls are being prepared to feature art and craft, and 15 stalls will facilitate live demonstrations of different items

The Bhagwan Birsa Munda Pavilion will feature five galleries dedicated to themes such as the life and journey of Birsa Munda, galleries of national and state freedom fighters, a mini theatre, and painting exhibition and photo exhibitions.

Tribal dance and music performances will take place everv evening, accompanied by a laser show based on the life and journey of Bhagwan Birsa Munda.

Highlights of the event also include, a drone show depicting the different tribes, light and sound show focused on lesser known tribal freedom fighters of the state, fashion show, and fireworks display.

# Krushi Odisha 2025 to begin today

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 2: The Agriculture & Farmers' Empow erment department will host the three-day 'Krushi Odisha 2025' event from January 3 to 5 at Biju Patnaik Playground an official said Thursday.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will inaugurate the event, with Deputy Chief Minister and Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo along with other dignitaries, in attendance.



SHGs, FPOs, NGOs, agri-en trepreneurs, students, and researchers are expected to attend. The event will feature 13 technical sessions in coor dination with state and Central government departments ICAR, CGIAR institutes, and NGOs. There will also be over 200 stalls showcasing advanced agricultural tech nologies and farm produce.

To make the event more



rangpur, Rayagada, Subarnapur and Sundargarh districts.

Extensive preparations are underway for procurement in other districts soon. Prior advance information and tokens are being issued to registered farmers for the procurement process

Similarly, in each mandi, a nodal officer is appointed to monitor the procurement process. A strict vigil is being kept on paddy carts from outside the state and traders reserves paddy more than required at the time of procurement.



ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE: A hydraulic crane deployed by BDA removing an illegal shop near Vahi Vihar Square in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

The theme of Krushi Odisha 2025 is "A Step towards Sustainable Food System.' focusing on three sub-themes: Climate Smart Agriculture, Organic Farming, and Water Governance.

The first day will address Climate Resilient Food Systems and Climate Smart Horticulture, the second day will focus on Soil Health, Natural Farming, and its value chain,



while the third day will center on Pani Panchayat Pakhya Palan and Sustainable Water Governance.

The event aims to promote a sustainable food system in Odisha by improving local economies, environmental health, and food security. It will highlight investment opportunities in agriculture.

horticulture, food processing, and fisheries. Around 10,000 partici-

pants, including farmers,

engaging, activities such as quizzes, debates, storytelling skit competitions, a virtual experience zone, and a Farm er Facilitation Centre will be organised. The event will also recognise progressive farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, and SHGs/FPOs for their contributions to successful farming.

### WEATHER

	BBSR	стс
Max Temp	27.7°	24.8°
Min Temp	13.2°	13.0°
Humidity	71%	80%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAS Fog /mist in th morning and m clear sky later	e	Ö

N	MARKET WATCH						
INDEX		VARIATIO					
RSES	SENSEX	79943.71	4	1436.30			
Bou	NIFTY	24188.65	4	445.75			
CURRENCY	DOLLAR	85 <b>.</b> 94	•	0.10			
CURF	EURO	88.95	¥	0.14			
<b>RSES</b>	GOLD	₹ <b>77,559</b>	4	₹666			
BOUR	SILVER	₹ <b>88,832</b>	•	₹125			

# Former Norwegian min lauds Cuttack station makeover

#### AGENCIES

Cuttack, Jan 2: Former minister of Climate and Environment of Norway Erik Solheim Thursday praised the transformation of Indian Railways, saying, "Indian rail is improving day by day.

Solheim posted a video of Cuttack railway station on his social media handle and said, 'This is not an airport; this is a railway station opened in Cuttack, Odisha.

Previously, Erik Solheim has praised India several times under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Notably, the Central government has kept it focus on modernising the Railways. As of December 2, 2024, 136 Vande Bharat trains with chair car coaches were operating across the country. The introduction of 136 Vande Bharat trains, a hallmark of Make in India, showcases nation's capability to deliver world-class, indigenously manufactured rail technology.

The Kavach system, designed to enhance train safety, has already been deployed on 1,548 route kilometers (RKm) on South-Central Railway and North Central Railway. At present, about 97 per cent of the total broad gauge network of the Indian Railways has been electrified.



Earlier, in an exclusive interview with IANS, Solheim said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clean energy policies are creating some wonderful opportunities, which will not only help India achieve its Net

Zero goal but also pull millions more out of poverty.

He also said, "PM Modi is now working on making renewable energy mainstream, which would create several economic opportunities in

years to come." "I'm very optimistic when it comes to governments and industries talking about the green economy. For PM Modi, the green economy is another way to

move more people out of poverveteran diplomat emphasised

New rly line to boost connectivity in Odisha

Nuapara Road is set to enhance connectivity, promote regional development, and

generate employment. Sanctioned by the Railway Board September 10, 2024, with

a total cost of ₹2,621.92 crore, the project has received full support from the state

government, including land allocation and a grant of ₹300 crore. The project will require the acquisition of 924.64 hectares of land, including private, government

and forest land. The electrified broad gauge line, passing through Padmapur, will bypass the congested Jharsuguda-Bilaspur-Raipur route, reducing travel dis-

tances by 53km compared to Sambalpur-Jharsuguda-Raipur and 87km compared

to Sambalpur-Titlagarh-Raipur. With 13 stations planned, including 11 new ones,

the project will improve regional accessibility, foster economic growth, and streamline both passenger and freight transport.

Bhubaneswar: A new 138.32km railway line connecting Bargarh Road to

ty, help the middle class create more wealth and let the country shine on the global arena by tapping into the potential of solar, wind, hydropower and all other green assets," the

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Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-986134148 Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816 Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347 Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.











# Orissapos FRIDAY | JANUARY 3, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

# state

# Jungle safari opens at Atei reserve forest NHRC sends notice to Keonjhar,

Keonjhar, Jan 2: In good news for nature lovers, jungle safari at Atei reserve forest. located under the Ghatagaon range of Keonjhar Forest Division, opened to the public Thursday. The first-of-its-kind initiative by the Keonihar Forest department aims to attract more tourists and nature enthusiasts to the district

Keonjhar Member of Parliament (MP) Anant Naik inaugurated the facility during a ceremony held on the Maa Tarini Temple premises in Ghatagaon. Several MLAs from Keonjhar district and senior officials were present at the event.

Keonjhar district is known for its natural beauty, with tourists flocking to its waterfalls, streams, forested hills, reservoirs, and religious shrines throughout the year. The Atei jungle safari is expected to further enhance the district's appeal, providing visitors with the opportunity to explore the forest and observe wildlife up close in special vehicles provided by the Forest department.

This is the first safari of its kind in the district, and nature and wildlife lovers are partic-



excited about the development. The Forest department has completed the necessary infrastructure work to make the safari possible. It is anticipated that the new initiative will attract a significant number of tourists to Keonjhar. The safari includes a guided

tour of the forest in specially designed vehicles, with the package covering various points of interest such as the Atei viewpoint, Daragudisila river, the migratory bird zone, a wildlife watch tower, the meadows deer zone, and a bird watching zone, along with various forest management activities.

"Professional driver-guides

with extensive knowledge of local wildlife are part of the tour. Complimentary binoculars will be provided to tourists to aid in wildlife viewing, and refreshment kiosks offering light snacks and water will be available at designated spots,' Dhanraj HD, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Keonjhar, said. During the safari, visitors may spot elephants, deer, wild boars, and other animals, along

with a variety of birds. Tourists can also capture photographs of the scenic landscapes. The duration of the tour is approximately three hours, he added. The safari is expected to become a key attraction, along-

side other local landmarks such as the Maa Tarini temple in Ghatagaon, the Gundicha Ghaghi waterfall, the Sitabinjh historical site, and the Barha Tipura religious place in Ghatagaon.

Every day, thousands of devotees visit Ghatagaon for darshan at the Maa Tarini shrine. With the addition of the forest safari, the region is set to become more popular among tourists. A booking counter for the safari will be available on the Maa Tarini temple premises. The safari begins at Murgapahari up to Kadabahali, covering a distance of approximately 40km along a forest road. Visitors will also be able to enjoy views of the Dargadishila dam during the journey.

The Atei reserve forest gained attention when a photo of a Royal Bengal Tiger (RBT) was captured by a trap camera, and its paw prints were discovered in the area. Following this, Forest officials imposed restrictions on movement within the forest, sealing off all roads through the forest. Additionally, trap cameras installed by the department have recorded images of rare wildlife species in the reserve, further boosting interest in the safari.

# Sambalpur DMs over dam safety

Keonihar. Jan 2: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the District Magistrates (DMs) of Keonjhar and Sambalpur to take immediate steps to ensure the safety of people living near the Hadagarh and Hirakud dams The notice follows a complaint filed by senior lawyer and human rights activist Radhakant Tripathi in December. The apex rights body has asked the authorities to take appropriate action within eight weeks.

Tripathi highlighted that the Hadagarh dam, built on the Salandi river in Keonjhar district, serves residents in both Keonjhar and Bhadrak districts. He noted that an embankment was constructed to protect the local population from rising river waters, but the dam has weakened over time, requiring urgent repairs and restoration.

Tripathi also raised concerns over the safety of the Hirakud



dam, alleging that it too is in dire need of repairs. restoration, and sediment recovery. In the complaint, he pointed to the recent devastating floods in Kerala, which were attributed to issues with dam safety, as evidence of the potential dangers posed by poorly maintained dams

In his complaint, Tripathi claimed that dam safety audits are not being conducted properly in a timely manner. Despite the existence of the Dam Safety Act 2021 and the National Dam Safety Authority, many dams across India are operating without adequate safety measures, which he argues puts people's lives at risk.

He further highlighted that by 2025, more than 1,000 dams in the country will be at least 50 years old. Over time, factors such as reduced water-holding capacity and shrinking premis es have weakened both earther and concrete dams, leading to increased flood risks. Tripa thi also pointed to the risks associated with dams in earth quake-prone areas, particularly in the Himalayan basin. There are 6,000 dams in India,

with 80 per cent of them being over 25 years old. Of these, 234 dams are more than 100 years old. Tripathi called for urgent measures to ensure dam safety providing additional facts and data to the NHRC in support of his claims.

In response, the NHRC issued notices to the DMs of Keoniha and Sambalpur, instructing them to take necessary actions within eight weeks.

# 2 poachers held, weapons seized POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Jan 2: Forest officials from the Anandpur Wildlife Division have arrested two poachers for illegally entering a reserve forest for hunting or New Year's Eve. The weapons used by the accused, believed to be from the Nuamalia village in

the area, were also seized from their possession. Reports indicate that the two

youths were spotted roaming at midnight within the Barang Reserve Forest area without permission. They were appre hended by a patrolling team Wednesday night. Along with the suspects, the hunting tools used for animal trapping were recovered.

The Forest department confirmed that the poachers had entered the forest with the intent to hunt deer. DFO Dhanraj HD confirmed the arrests.

#### EAST COAST 02-2024. Dated : 26.12.2024 ne of the work : RENOVATION O CAO/C/RSP/BHUBANESWAR OFFICE AT RAIL VIHAR, CHANDRASEKHARPU BHUBANESWAR prox. cost of the work :

# Man shoots wife dead with arrow over illicit affair

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar/Joda, Jan 2: In a tragic fallout of an extramarital affair, a man shot his wife dead with an arrow at Handibhanga village under Bamebari police station in Keonjhar district Wednesday night.

The deceased was identified as Chini Munda, 35, and the accused husband as Dashara

Munda, 50, in the village. Police have arrest ed the accused husband and started an investigation into the incident. As per preliminary

probe, Chini Munda, wife of Dashara Munda of Handibhanga village

under Jhumpura block, was allegedly in an illicit relationship with another man. leading to disturbances in their marriage and frequent quarrels between the couple. An alterca-

tion broke out between the two Wednesday night prompting an agitated Dashara to shoot an arrow at Chini.

The arrow pierced Chini's chest resulting in severe bleeding. When Dashara and her family members admitted Chini to Jhumpura community health centre for treatment, the doctor declared her dead during the treatment. After receiving

a complaint, officials of Bamebari PS went to the hospital and seized the dead body and later sent the body to Keonjhar district headquarters hospital for post mortem

Police have arrested Dashara and started an interrogation ASP Manoj Rout and investigating officer Shib Shankar Alda said. "The accused has been arrested and the body sent for post mortem."



LESSON ON ROAD: Artistes dressed as God of Death 'Yamaraj', and his minister 'Chitragupt' sensitising commuters on road safety at a programme organised by the district administration in Sambalpur. Thursday

Odia poet Prativa Satpathy

# Gangadhar Nat'l Award for GUdayagiri state's coldest town at 4.8° C

### POST NEWS NETWORK

Man killed,

another

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accident

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afternoon on

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Kalieposh, under

State High-

Lahunipara

police station

in Sundargarh

deceased was

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as Debasish Ma

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of the car. Both

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Debasish Ma-

hant was found

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badly mangled

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wreckage. Initial

reports suggest

control of the ve

hicle, which then

that Kiran lost

collided with

three roadside

trees in quick

succession.

at the scene and

car. Police ar-

driver Kiran died

critically injured

identified as

driver Kiran

district. The

elling in collided

G Udayagiri, Jan 2: With cold wave returning to state after

4.8 degree Celsius Thursday.

The town recorded its lowest

temperature of 4.8 degree Cel-



sudden drop in temperatures has significantly affected normal life in the region. Additionally, thick fog has reduced visibility to less than 50 metres, causing disrup tions in vehicular movement. Despite the challenges, the cold weather has attracted tourists to G Udayagiri. Popular spots in the area have seen a rapid surge in visitors eager to enjoy the chilly ambience.

Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 2,08,000.00, Completic period of the work: 03 (Three) months Tender closing Date & Time: At 150 hrs. on 16.01.2025 Complete information including e-tende documents of the above e-tender is ailable in website www.ireps.gov.in Dy. Chief Engineering(CON)/RSP/ PR-116/CH/24-25 Bhubaneswa







PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambalpur, Jan 2: Noted Odia poet Prativa Satpathy will be conferred the Gangadhar National Award for Poetry 2023 by the Sambalpur University here on the occasion of its 58th foundation day January 5.

Satpathy, a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award, came into prominence in the 1960s with 'Sesha Janha'. Her writings in Odia have been translated into several Indian and foreign languages.

Named after renowned Odi-

# **Rider dies after bike** collides with truck

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhadrak, Jan 2: A motorcyclist was killed after his two-wheeler collided head-on with a truck on the National Highway-16 near Barikpur in Bhadrak district, police said Thursday

The motorcycle rider, identified as Jayanta Das from Nirgundi village, died on the spot after the collision took place Wednesday evening, a senior police officer said.

The accident triggered a protest with locals blocking the national highway, which led to traffic congestion. The Dhamnagar tehsildar and police officials rushed to the spot to pacify the protesters.

Locals alleged that ongoing construction work for a bridge along the Barikpur-Bishnupur stretch of the NH-16 had caused the accident. The protesters demanded compensation for the deceased's family and the completion of the bridge at the earliest.Dhamnagar Tehsildar and police placated the locals and the blockade was withdrawn.



sha poet Gangadhar Meher, the award, instituted by the university in 1989, is presented every year during its foundation day function.

The award carries a citation, shawl and cash prize of ₹1,00,000, said Nruparaj Sahu, Registrar of Sambalpur University.

Earlier, eminent personalities including Gulzar, Alli Sardar Zafri, Kedar Nath Singh, Ayyapa Panikar, Shakti Chottopadhyaya, K Sachidanandan, Dillip Chitre and Jayanta Mohapatra have re-

Rourkela: A ceived the Gangadhar Nationperson died and al Award for excellence in the another was hospitalised in critical conditio

# Tribals remember 14 deceased in police firing at Kalinga Nagar

*Tribals*, *led by* Visthapan Virodhi Jan Manch (VVJM), took out a rally from *Champakoila, the* spot where the firing took place

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jajpur, Jan 2: Hundreds of tribals from across Odisha and some other states Thursday gathered in Kalinga Nagar in Jajpur district to remember the 14 people who were allegedly killed in police firing on this day in 2006 for protesting the forcible land acquisition for a steel plant.

Tribals, led by Visthapan Virodhi Jan Manch (VVJM), took out a rally from Champakoila, the spot where the firing took place. They then visited 'Veerbhumi' where the deceased were mass cremated before attending a public meeting at

field of poetry.

Ambagadia. "Around 5,000 tribals were displaced for one private company. However, many locals who lost their lands to industrialisation in Kalinga Nagar, which houses a dozen steel plants now, are unable to find work," said Sini Soy, the mother of a tribal killed in police firing

VVJM secretary Rabindra Jarika said, "We have been paying tributes to those who sacrificed their lives for the cause of tribals for the last 19 years. We have been observing January 2 as Saheed Diwas to pay homage to the martyrs.

Police had allegedly fired on tribals who were protesting forcible displacement due to acquisition of land for Tata Steel's plant January 2, 2006.

While 12 persons died on the spot, 60 received bullet injuries. Later, two of them succumbed to the injuries. A police constable was also killed in the said clash.

a brief wet spell, G Udayagiri has been adjudged again as the coldest town in the state with the minimum temperature falling to

sius Thursday, while the mini mum temperature was 6 degree Celsius the previous day. This

No.G-38

Date : 31.12.2024

# **Government of Odisha Office of the Mining Officer** Nabarangpur. Jevpore Circle E-mail: (mo.nabarangpur@gmail.com)

No. 1090/Mines

Notice Inviting Tender

"Inviting application for grant of Quarry Leases" In exercise of the power conferred by Section 15 of Mines and Mineral (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 and in accordance with the Odisha

Minor Mineral Concession Rules, 2016 as amended from time to time notified thereunder, the Government of Odisha has identified 6 (Six) nos quarry lease for electronic auction and hereby invites tender for the purpose of grant of Quarry Lease Accordingly, technical bids for grant of guarry lease are invited in the format of 'Form-M' both in digital and physical format from eligible bidders. Eligible condition, date and time for participating in the electronic auction are provided in Tender Document. Detailed Tender Document along with the timeline, notification, updates and other details for the e-auction process for the quarries are available in electronic from only and can be downloaded from the website (https://www.mstcecommerce.com) https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mmb/odmmb/index.jsp Interested and eligible bidders can register themselves on the above website. On successful registration. Eligible bidders will obtain login ID and password necessary for participation in the e-auction process. Model Tender Document and Mineral Block Summary are available free of cost or the website of MSTC (https://www.mstcecommerce.com) https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mmb/odmmb/index.jsp The intending bidders should submit necessary details and relevant mandatory documents in Form – M, by using valid login User ID and password. The bidders should refer to the 'Bidder's Manual' for successful submission of 'Form-M' for participating in the tenders, which is available in the e-Auction portal. The period given to the bidder for submission of etenders for Technical Evaluation, is counted from the date on which the notice inviting tender (e-NIT) including e-tender is actually published in newspaper(s) and the website of the Directorate of Minor Minerals

#### Time schedule :

The detail time schedule is available in the tender document Last date for submission of application : 31/01/2025 Date of opening of application (Technical bids) : 05/02/2025 Date of auction : 17/02/2025 to 19/02/2025

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List of Quarries

#### OIPR-30032/11/0005/2425

Sd./- Mining Officer, Nabarangpur, Jeypore Circle











# power post

n a rare feat, NASA's



#### ASTRONOMY FOCUS

Timidity is a form of vanity. When you are timid, it means that you attach more importance to the opinions others have of you than to the sincerity of your actions.

THE MOTHER

# **Climate & Inflation**

lobal inflation in recent years has pushed the prices of food, energy, and basic goods to unprecedented levels. As a result, the rising cost of living has dominated political discussion around the world, but especially in G20 countries. Ahead of last year's presidential election in the United States, for example, 41 per cent of Americans cited inflation as their top economic issue.

High inflation risks overshadowing another urgent crisis: global warming. But rising prices and climate change are closely linked. Extreme weather damages crops, spoils harvests, and drives up food prices, and its impact is growing more pronounced as heatwaves, droughts, and floods become more frequent and intense. These events also disrupt supply chains and energy production, pushing up the price of other essential goods.

Climate-induced inflationary pressures are especially acute in Africa and Latin America, where food accounts for a significant share of household spending. For example, an extensive drought exacerbated by El Niño raised the price of staples in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe earlier this year, creating a hunger crisis. By contrast, households in wealthier countries tend to spend a smaller share of their income on food and are thus better insulated.

Discussions about climate change often overlook its economic toll on vulnerable populations and how it deepens inequality, focusing instead on green growth and emissions reductions. But as inflation increasingly disrupts economic stability, this toll can no longer be ignored. Shifting weather patterns have raised the prices of oranges in Brazil, cocoa in West Africa, and coffee in Vietnam. A recent study by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and the European Central Bank estimates that rising temperatures could drive up food inflation by 3.2 percentage points per year, with overall inflation increasing by 1.18 percentage points annually by 2035.

Rather than being treated solely as an environmental issue, climate change must be central to economic policy. Fiscal and monetary authorities should incorporate both immediate and long-term climate-related risks into their inflation forecasts and policies – as they already do with the "transition risks" of shifting to a low-carbon economy. Some institutions have begun to adapt. The SIGNIFICANT SHARE South African Reserve Bank has acknowledged the importance of understanding climate risks. Since 2018, the Central Bank of Costa Rica has integrated the impact of global warming into its economic models.

Central banks and finance ministries should also work with climate organizations to create practical solutions that help cushion economies from the interrelated shocks of extreme weather, soaring inflation, and food insecurity. For example, the African Climate Foundation (where one of us works) has developed Adaptation and Resilience Investment Platforms (ARIPs), which use advanced analytics that combine climate and weather data, biophysical models, and economy-wide models to facilitate investment and policy prioritisation - a more comprehensive approach to building resilience

The ACF used an ARIP in Malawi last year, after the country was devastated by Cyclone Freddy, the longest-lasting tropical cyclone ever recorded. Using this financial tool enabled policymakers to identify lasting solutions that would mitigate the economic damage caused by the cyclone while protecting key industries and strengthening financial stability.

Other climate think tanks are pursuing similar goals. Iniciativa Climática de México is pushing policymakers to consider climate risks in economic planning, while the Institute for Climate and Society in Brazil has called for social-protection plans and climate-sensitive policies to shield low-income communities from the economic conse quences of extreme weather Equally important is regional collaboration, which would allow countries in Africa and Latin America to develop and share economic policies that are specifically tailored to their climate vulnerabilities and support the most exposed communities. Initiatives like the Inter-American Development Bank's Regional Climate Change Platform of Economy and Finance Ministries can serve as a blueprint for such efforts. At the global level, greater coordination between climate and economic institutions is crucial. Tools like the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism highlight the need for careful policy design to mitigate adverse effects - in this case, higher costs for consumers in developing countries. Brazil, as the host of this year's BRICS Summit and United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30), and South Africa, as the current G20 president, have a unique opportunity to redefine the global economic agenda, championing policies that address the twin crises of inflation and global warming. Failure to act collectively and decisively could deepen inequality, erode economic stability, and jeopardise climate goals. But if policymakers develop innovative solutions that bridge the gap between climate and economic strategies, they can reduce the immediate risks of extreme weather and foster long-term stability and resilience. As both inflation and the planet heat up, the need for integrated, equitable policies has never been more urgent.

# **UNLOCKING SOLAR MYSTERIES**

Parker Solar Probe spacecraft approached very close to the Sun on Nikunja Bihari Sahu IN 2025

24 December, 2024 withstanding its tremendous heat radiations which no spacecraft has done ever before. The probe passed through the atmosphere of the Sun, the corona, at a distance of nearly 6.1 million km from the Sun's surface making it the first man-made object to pass through any star's atmosphere. The spacecraft's signal was temporarily halted during this horrendous journey close to the Sun. However, its beacon signal was restored and received two days later showing that it had survived the passage through the unimaginable high temperatures and intense radiations of the corona. At its closest approach, the craft raced at an incredible speed of 191 km/ sec, roughly 0.064% the speed of light, becoming the fastest object ever built on Earth. This close pass allowed the spacecraft to conduct unrivaled scientific measurements with the potential to change our understanding of the Sun. The probe, launched in August 2018 to exclusively study the solar corona, will make a total 21 flybys of the Sun during its lifetime, exploring and looking

at its corona. The solar corona, the outermost layer of the atmosphere of the Sun, is visible only during total solar eclipse. It has been a source of mystery for astronomers for decades as regards to its temperature and wind behaviour. The temperature of the bright visible disc of the Sun, the photosphere, is around 6000 degrees Celsius. It was expected that as we move outward from the Sun's sur-



Through these close passages, the Parker Solar Probe is expected to furnish a treasure trove of data to further our knowledge and understanding of the Sun that powers life on our planet

face, the temperature should decrease. However, the temperature abruptly increases as we move outward through the corona to reach nearly 2.5 million degrees Celsius which is roughly 300 times hotter than the photosphere. Scientists have not yet been able to solve this mystery. The Parker probe is expected to shed light on this subject.

The second thing that baffles scientists is the behaviour of solar wind. Solar wind is a stream of charged particles released by the Sun's corona that travels all over our solar system and into the interstellar space beyond. This plasma matter of the solar wind mostly consists of electrons, protons and alpha particles with kinetic energy between 0.5 and 10 keV. These particles can escape the Sun's gravity because of their high energy resulting from the high temperature of the corona, which in turn is a result of the coronal magnetic field. But what is really mes-

merising is that the solar wind doesn't slow down as it leaves the Sun; rather it speeds up. Some particles shoot out of the corona with so much energy that they approach the speed of light. The Parker probe will try to unravel some of the mysteries shrouding the solar wind.

Finally, the Sun sometimes becomes very much violent and burps out knots of plasma matter into space. The Sun could blast out these huge blobs of materials threaded with solar magnetic fields to hurtle away at incredible velocities of several millions miles an hour. These activities give rise to a collection of phenomena that scientists call space weather. If these outbursts are strong enough, they can be dangerous to astronauts and satellites in their orbits and could knock out power grids on Earth causing widespread blackouts espe cially in polar regions. Scientists have some techniques in

place for predicting the space weather just like tornadoes and hurricanes on Earth: but they hope Parker mission will make those predictions more accurate and reliable.

The spacecraft was renamed the Parker Solar Probe in honour of US astrophysicist Eugene Newman Parker, who had proposed the existence of nanoflares as an explanation of coronal heating as well as having developed a mathematical theory that predicted the existence of solar wind. A memory card containing names submitted by over 1.1 million people was mounted on a plaque and installed below the spacecraft's high-gain antenna. The card also contains photos of Eugene Parker and a copy of his 1958 scientific paper predicting important aspects of solar physics. While making a passage through the Sun's corona, the craft encountered temperatures as high as 982 degrees Celsius that it was able to survive because of a special heat-shield of carbon composite material protection of 4.5 inches thickness provided over its surface.

The Parker probe will make two more close approaches to the Sun in 2025. The Sun, being the source of all energy on Earth, its study is of paramount importance to us to sustain life on the planet. Through these close passages, the Parker Solar Probe is expected to furnish a treasure trove of data to further our knowledge and understanding of the Sun that powers life on our planet.

> The writer is Education **Officer**, **Regional Science** Centre, Bhopal.

#### DIPLOMACY SPECTRUM

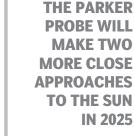
# India and the world

t the end of 2024, and in the beginning of a New Year, it is useful to reflect on the year goneby, the highs and lows, successes and disappointments. Such an exercise helps to re-strategise our actions for the next year. Thinking people across the world do this in their respective domains, so do we in this column on India and the world. To me, two events highlighted the past year - the re-election of Narendra Modi in India, and the bouncing back of Donald Trump to the White House. Modi's third consecutive term as Prime Minister meant maintenance of continuity in India's foreign policy and resumption of Trumpism in US and the world, albeit with a bit of difference. One can trust Trump to be unpredictable, surprising the world with dramatic posturing and positions that he is capable of taking. For Modi and India's foreign policy, it is sticking to the conventional strategy of 'continuity and change', although, admittedly, more change and less continuity. These are subjects for analysis in 2025. Trump may be precise in his public articulations, but

he is definite and decisive in his actions. Besides, the Trump-Modi inter-personal equations, supposed to be close, will determine India-US ties, especially with regard to China and Russia. Modi will be nudged to take

convergence of strategic interests between both countries. At the same time, Indian-Russian relations experienced a voluntary dilution, mainly due to the mess Russia has got into in unwisely invading Ukraine, and failing diplomatically to deal with the West. Russia may have fallen to a Chinese trap of making Moscow vulnerable and more dependable on Beijing. Modi managed to keep both the US and Russia on friendly terms. Although the stance of neutrality may not be viable in practical terms in the long run.

country's national interest. His maiden overseas visit to New Delhi went off well. The Sri Lankan President publicly acknowledged India's timely support and made relevant promises on regional security. He committed not to allow his country to be used against any anti-India activity. Bangladesh gave quite a bit of tension with a political upheaval in the country that brought unprovoked violence against Hindu minorities and anti-India posturing by the current government. This shift took place following the flight of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina into India where she is being sheltered. Nepal has not moved away much from India last year perhaps because of the instability of governments. India managed to hold its own in world politics, despite a few challenges and broke new grounds in certain areas and countries. The economy did not grow as it should have in keeping with New Delhi's targets and aspirations, but did not do badly.



Mónica Araya & Saliem Fakir

**CLIMATE-INDUCED INFLATIONARY PRESSURES ARE ESPECIALLY ACUTE IN AFRICA AND** LATIN AMERICA, WHERE FOOD **ACCOUNTS FOR A OF HOUSEHOLD SPENDING** 

Mónica Araya is Director of the Governing Board of the Natural Resource Governance Institute. Saliem Fakir is Founder and Executive Director of the African Climate Foundation. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



To complain is always nonacceptance of what is. It invariably carries an unconscious negative charge. When you complain, you make yourself into a victim. When you speak out, you are in your power. So change the situation by taking action or by speaking out if necessary or possible; leave the situation or accept it. All else is madness.

ECKHART TOLLE

Your only obligation in any lifetime is to be true to yourself. Being true to anyone else or anything else is not only impossible, but the mark of a fake messiah.

RICHARD BACH

A man can be himself only so long as he is alone, and if he does not love solitude, he will not love freedom, for it is only when he is alone that he is really free.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER



DK Giri

**ONE CAN TRUST TRUMP TO BE** UNPREDICTABLE, **SURPRISING THE WORLD** WITH DRAMATIC **POSTURING AND POSITIONS THAT HE IS CAPABLE OF TAKING** 

etters

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suggestions, preferably by email, to:

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B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

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TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post

(100 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

numbers and full postal

edit@orissapost.com

columns (between 600-1000

an emphatic and unwavering position in regard to these two countries.

India pursued its strategic autonomy in her response to the wars and other developments in world politics. It continued to expect the onset of multi-polarity as Ministry of External Affairs articulated. Both the strategy and assumption would be put to test in 2025 with Trumpism lurking around the world. Foreign policy has not been deeply debated in the public discourses in India, nor has it been a focus in parliamentarv debates. Although it is a non-partisan subject in many countries, in a democracy, it is expected to be contested by those disagreeing with the government line.

Despite Modi's open support to Trump in 2019 in the American presidential elections, the ties between India and the US under Joe Biden remained normal, or rather improved. This is largely because of huge

Despite several negotiations between Chinese and Indian armies, New Delhi has not been successful in pushing Beijing back from the borders and containing its predatory approach in claiming Indian land. Some patrolling and grazing rights in the friction areas of Depsangand Demchock have been retrieved.

In the neighbourhood, it has been a mixed bag. Sri Lanka seems to be making up with India while partially shedding its China fascination. The new president Anura Dissanayake has a left background, but in the office, he is displaying pragmatism in pursuing his

The writer is Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism. **©INFA** 

## Lone bright spot

Sir, At a time when Team India's morale is at an all-time low, following another humiliating defeat against Australia at Melbourne, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been a lone bright spot, offering some solace. In four Tests so far, the peerless fast bowler has scalped a staggering 30 wickets. Bumrah's rise in international cricket has been astonishing. Even if you keep aside the number of wickets he has taken so far across formats and talk about the diversity of his skill sets alone, hardly any fast bowler in present day international cricket comes close to him. No matter the format or the game situation. Bumrah will be at you with his skill, mind, and everything that helps him get a wicket. The whippy action and his bent back help him to hit the deck consistently, and his seam position extracts every ounce of lateral movement off the pitch. With the old ball, the extra moment that Bumrah gets becomes deadly, especially when reversing. Bumrah is a bona fide great and the most complete modern day fast bowler ...

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

# **Financial future**

Sir, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released its bi-annual Financial Stability Report (FSR). The report provided a comprehensive overview of the Indian financial system and insights into challenges and opportunities for 2025. A major highlight was the 12-year low in gross non-performing assets (GNPA), which stood at 2.6% in September 2024, driven by lower slippages, write-offs, and robust credit demand. However, the FSR cautioned that GNPA could rise to 3% by March 2026 under a baseline scenario, requiring close monitoring. Net non-performing assets stood at 0.6%, reflecting improved bank balance sheets capable of supporting private investment and growth. Retail lending trends were a focal point in 2024. Following the RBI's decision to increase risk weightings for specific consumer loans in late 2023, retail lending by banks and to non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) moderated. Banks' retail portfolios remained stable, with a GNPA of 1.2%, though unsecured retail loans recorded a slightly higher GNPA of 1.7% Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH





**Justice Dinesh Kumar** 

Sharma while dealing

with a POCSO case

also brought down

man convicted for a

minor's sexual assault

saying there was only

tor concerned," the judge said

fences (POCSO) Act, IPC and

the Juvenile Justice (Care and

The AAP supremo

charged that the

accepted farmers'

demands three years

**BJP-led Centre** 

ago but is now

reneged on it

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

the jail term of a

an attempt made

December 23, 2024.

The court took into account the provisions of Protection of Children against Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. IPC and the Iuvenile Iustice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and pointed to the

UTTAR

PRADESH

prohibition on the public disclosure of a child's identity



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: The Delhi High Court has asked the police commissioner and AIIMS medical superintendent to ensure the identities of minor survivors of sexual assault was not disclosed in any manner.

Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma while dealing with a POC-SO case also brought down the iail term of a man convicted for a minor's sexual assault saying there was only an attempt made.

However, the judge noted in the case, the investigating officer had failed to protect the minor survivor's identity.

"The investigating officer failed to mask the identity of the victim in any manner. including during the medical examination. This reflects poorly on the investigating officer and the examining doc-

# **Delhi pollution body** collected over ₹112cr in compensation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: The Delhi Pollution Control Committee collected over ₹112 crore in environmental compensation between April, 2015 and November 20, 2024, the NGT was recently told.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board the environmental compensation (EC) was a policy instrument for the protection of the environment and worked on the "polluter pays" principle.

Protection of Children) Act and pointed to the prohibition on the public disclosure of a child's identity.

"A copy of this order be sent to the commissioner of police and the medical superintendent, AIIMS, with directions to issue appropriate guidelines ensuring all necessary measures are to be taken to protect the identity of the victim in such

TWO STATES

cases and such violation does POCSO not take place in future. The CASES compliance report be placed before the

court," it said. The matter pertained to an

appeal against the conviction of man in a case of "aggravated penetrative sexual assault' under the PCOSO Act. The convict was awarded 20 years rigorous imprisonment in 2021. The high court brought

down the jail term to 10 years, along with a ₹5,000 fine, after holding him guilty under Section 18 of the POCSO Act. It considered the minor's

statement made to the doctor and statement made by her mother to the police to conclude there was only an attempt to commit aggravated penetrative sexual assault. For the prosecution, the Taking a stern view of the threshold to prove its case be-

failure on the officer's part, the yond any reasonable doubt in court ordered the authorities cases of "graver" offence was higher, but testimonies of its to ensure no such violation of the law took place in future. witnesses was not "wholly reliable" in the present case, the The court took into account the provisions of Protection court said. "If there is even slightest of of Children against Sexual Of

doubt the benefit must go to the accused," it said

*The family appeals to* the Indian government,

particularly to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to intervene and

negotiate with Pakistan for Babu's release

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aligarh (UP), Jan 2: A 21-year old man in Aligarh district has found himself behind bars in Pakistan due to a romantic relationship with a girl from across the border, officials here said. The young man, identified as Badal Babu, was arrested De-

cember 28 by Pakistani authorities in the Punjab province for illegally crossing into the neighbouring country without

'Centre preparing to implement 3 black laws'

cials said.

The shockwave from this unexpected incident reached Babu's village through the media. His parents, who had believed their son was working in a fac tory in Delhi, were shocked to learn of his arrest through a report sourced from a Pakistani news portal.

Babu's father, Kirpal Singh, who lives in Khitkari village under Barla police station area, told media that the family learned of their son's arrest via social media.

"We couldn't believe it. For us, till this moment we knew that he was working in Delhi, but the next moment we are shocked to discover that he's in a Pakistani jail. It's like some thing out of a movie," he said, in disbelief

led Centre accepted farmers'

demands three years ago but is

"Why do the BJP have such

'May God keep the farmers who are on an indefinite protest

arrogance that it does not even

talk to anyone," Kejriwal asked.

safe, but if something happens

to them, the BJP will be respon-

sible for it," he said in a long

now reneged on it.

post in Hindi.



The family has now appealed to the Indian government, particularly to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to intervene and negotiate with Pakistan for Babu's release.

"We want our son back and we don't know how to bring him home. We are calling on the prime minister to help us," Babu's mother said, speaking to reporters.

"He was a simple boy. He never did anything like this

# Delhi's night shelter provides nutritious meals to homeless

in August.

#### not talking to them. The AAP PRESS TRUST OF INDIA supremo charged that the BJP-

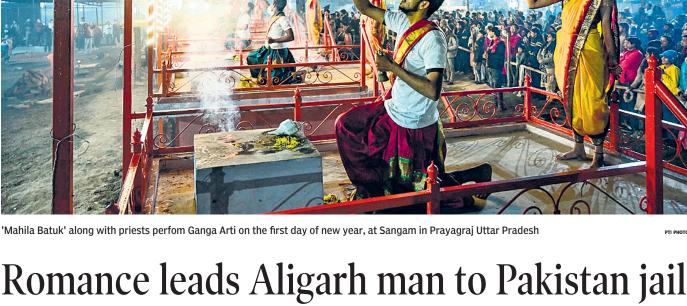
New Delhi, Jan 2: Delhi government's night shelters are providing nutritious threecourse meals, including protein rich soy-based foods, to homeless individuals this winter, officials said.

Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) has prepared a menu to enhance the nutritional intake, incorporat-

equipped with the necessary amenities to provide comfort during the winter. These in clude mattresses, blankets, toilet facilities, and health checkup services, the official said.

Permanent shelter buildings are additionally fitted with gey sers for hot water to ensure a more comfortable stay during the cold months, he added.

According to official data, more than 4,400 homeless individuals were rescued and



DELHI

'Mahila Batuk' along with priests perfom Ganga Arti on the first day of new year, at Sangam in Prayagraj Uttar Pradesh

# any legal documents, the offi-

before," she added. Aligarh Superintendent of Police (Rural) Amrit Jain confirmed that they had received a memorandum from the family and would be taking the matter up with the Ministry of Exter

ssa

FRIDAY | JANUARY 3, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

nal Affairs. "We will approach the proper channels to provide whatever assistance is necessary and work towards establishing contact with Babu. Our primary goal is to secure his release

from custody in Pakistan." Jain said in a statement. According to family sources, Babu was very active on Facebook, where he reportedly connected with a girl from Pakistan. After informing his par

ents that he would be heading

to Delhi for work. Babu left his

village after Raksha Bandhan

In other words, fine was levied on violators of environmental laws and used for restoration.

The green body had sought details on the EC imposed and its utilisation from the DPCC.

In a report dated December 26, the committee said, "DPCC has received ₹11.208.15 lakh (₹112.08 crore) as EC fund from April 2015 till November 20 (2024), and ₹3,605.66 lakh (₹36.05 crore) has been utilised so far.'

Giving a break-up of the utilisation, the report said the highest amount, about ₹10.11 crore, was spent on information, education and communication activities, followed by an expenditure of ₹8.77 crore on strengthening monitoring systems, including installation and running continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations and noise monitoring stations.

It further said about ₹6.79 crore was spent on laboratory strengthening; ₹5.11 crore on NGT-directed studies; ₹2.16 crore on research and development activities; ₹2.03 crore on the hiring of experts and consultants for specific purposes and for paying honorarium besides about ₹1.05 crore for other scientific and technical purposes.

The report, however, said no amount was spent on categories such as "remediation of contaminated sites", "specific investigations and studies regarding environment and ecology", "carrying capacity assessment", "capacity building" and "specialised studies on accidental, spill areas, health impact assessment, recalcitrant pollutants, etc".

New Delhi, Jan 2: AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal Thursday said the BJP would be responsible "if something happens" to the protesting farmers in Punjab who are on an indefinite fast

a legal guarantee on MSP. Kejriwal, in a post on X, also claimed that the Centre is preparing to implement the now-revoked three farm laws "through the backdoor" by calling it a "policy". He said copies of the new "policy" have been sent to all states for their views on it.

Farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal has been on an indef-

inite fast for over a month and over a set of demands, including has refused medical aid. The AAP-led Punjab gov-

ernment has termed the newly announced draft policy on 'National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing' as an attempt to backdoor entry to the three central agri laws passed in 2020. After a yearlong protest by farmers, the Centre repealed

May God keep the farmers who are on an indefinite protest safe, but if something happens to them, the BJP will be responsible for it ARVIND KEJRIWAL AAP CONVENER

#### the laws.

Kejriwal posted on X that while the farmers were on a fast unto death in Punjab, the BJP, due to its arrogance, was

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, when asked about holding talks with the protesting farmers to end the logjam, said Wednesday that the government will act as per instructions by the Supreme Court on the ongoing farmers protest at the Punjab-Haryana border.

The Supreme Court is hearing a matter against the AAPled Punjab government for not complying with directions to hospitalise farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal.

ing a variety of lentils, rajma, chole, and soy, to meet dietary needs of the homeless during the cold months, an official said.

For breakfast, shelter residents individuals receive two pieces of rusk, two slices of bread, and tea. Lunch and dinner typically consist of aloo, rajma, chole, dal, rice, and two chapatis. Peas, mixed dal, and soy are also also part of the evening meals, ensuring a

well-rounded diet, he said.

Each shelter, whether a tent or a permanent building, is

highest demand, especially the

Ramcharit Manas, Bhagwat Gi-

ta, Shiv Puran and collections

Priests performing rituals

are also purchasing Patra and

Panchang printed in Varanasi.

of bhajans and aartis.

relocated to shelter homes and pagoda tents between November 15 and December 31. The 'Rain Basera' mobile

app which aids rescue teams to track the GPS location of homeless individuals in need of immediate assistance, the official said.

"In November 621 homeless people were rescued while the number increased significantly in December to 3.826, driven by extreme cold weather gripping the city," said the official

# Rudraksh, Tulsi garlands being sourced from Nepal, U'khand

As the city prepares to host millions of devotees, the excitement is palpable among sadhus, Kalpvasis, pilgrims and local residents alike

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mahakumbh Nagar, Jan 2: Shopkeepers in the Sangam and Maha Kumbh Mela areas are stocking up essential religious items, including puja materials, patra-panchang, Rudraksh, Tulsi garlands and sacred texts sourced from Nepal, Varanasi,

Mathura and Vrindavan. In a statement, the Uttar

Pradesh government Thursday said preparations for Maha Kumbh 2025 are in full swing and rapid efforts are underway to ensure the event's success.

As the city prepares to host millions of devotees, the excitement is palpable among sadhus, Kalpvasis, pilgrims and local and residents alike, it said.

This year, an estimated 40 to 45 crore devotees are expected to visit Prayagraj during the Maha Kumbh, which is set to take place from January 13 to February 26.

The government said the Mela Authority is enthusiastically preparing for the arrival, stay and spiritual needs of the

devotees.

"Shopkeepers in the Sangam and Mela areas are stocking up on essential religious items, including puja materials, patra-panchang, Rudraksh, Tulsi garlands and sacred texts, sourced from Nepal, Varanasi and Mathura-Vrindavan," it said.

"The people of Prayagraj, along with shopkeepers and traders, are equally excited about the Maha Kumbh, viewing it as an opportunity for both spiritual enrichment and economic growth through business

opportunities," it said. Puja materials, religious books, garlands and flowers are being decked up across the city, hotels, restaurants, food stalls and shops selling these items to cater to the needs of visitors, it added.

employment

Wholesale traders are stocking up on goods from various



cities, anticipating the high demand during the event.

"Rudraksh garlands are being sourced from Uttarakhand and Nepal. Tulsi garlands from Mathura-Vrindavan and puja items like roli and sandalwood

from Varanasi and Delhi's Paharganj," the government said in the statement.

Sanjeev Tiwari, a religious book seller in Daraganj, Prayagraj, said books from Gita Press, Gorakhpur, are in

Puja materials, religious books, garlands and flowers are being decked up across the city, hotels, restaurants, food stalls and shops selling these items to cater to the needs of visitors, it added

Wholesale traders are stocking up on goods from various cities, anticipating the high demand during the event

Additionally, brass and copper bells, lamps and idols from Moradabad and Varanasi are being ordered in large quantities, according to the statement

Devotees, sadhus and sanyasis participating in Kalpavas at the fair are demanding havan samagri, aasan, Gangajal plates, urns and other items for worship, it noted.

Shopkeepers are stocking these items in large quantities to meet the anticipated demand, ensuring they are well-pre pared to serve the spiritual and practical needs of the visitors it added.











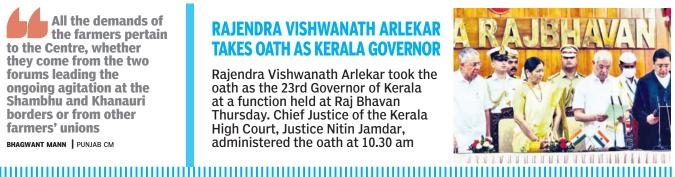
# national



All the demands of the farmers pertain to the Centre, whether they come from the two forums leading the ongoing agitation at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders or from other farmers' unions BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

# **RAJENDRA VISHWANATH ARLEKAR TAKES OATH AS KERALA GOVERNOR**

Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar took the oath as the 23rd Governor of Kerala at a function held at Raj Bhavan Thursday. Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court, Justice Nitin Jamdar, administered the oath at 10.30 am



of the day uote 🦷

All departments have been asked to actively identify and implement innovative ways to boost revenue.

Significant focus was placed on addressing under utilisation of allocated budgets PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

My doubt remains whether the

government at the Centre will survive till 2026. Modi will not complete his term, and when

that happens, there will be changes not only in Maharash tra but also in other places (states)

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA (UBT) LEADER

The BIP-led government has been using the SHGs to influence women for polit cal purposes

MANIK SARKAR | SENIOR CPI(M) LEADER

# SHORT TAKES

# Kota coaching student found dead on rly track

Kota (Rajasthan): An eighteen-year-old coaching student from Maharashtra fell off a passenger train and died, police Thursday said. The body of Keshav Das Amol was found on the Delhi-Mumbai railway track in Bundi district Wednesday morning with a wound to the head. Amol carried no papers on him nor anything in the way of a suicide note, police said.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

### **CBI books** own DySP

New Delhi: The CBI has booked one of its own deputy SPs posted in the Bank Security and Frauds branch in Mumbai for allegedly taking "undue advantage" from people probed by him, officials said Thursday. The FIR registered by the agency against Meena alleges he was utilising the services of middlemen for transacting the bribe money through a web of accounts and hawala channel, they said.

# **AAP, BJP lock horns** over farmers' issues



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: The BJP and the Aam Aadmi Party clashed over farmers' issues Thursday, with Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan accusing the AAP government in Delhi of denying peasants the benefits of central schemes, an allegation that comes ahead of the Assembly polls in the capital.

In response, Chief Minister Atishi hit back at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), saying it should ask Prime Minister Narendra Modi to hold talks with the farmers sitting on a fast unto death in Punjab instead of giving sermons.

She alleged that the condition of farmers was never as bad as it is under the BJP regime.

Former Delhi Chief Minister and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, in a post on X. also claimed that the BJP-led Centre is preparing to implement the three revoked farm laws "through the backdoor" by calling it a "policy". He said copies of the new "policy" have been sent to all states for

their views on it. In a letter to Atishi Wednesday, Chouhan alleged that her government is depriving farmers of benefits under central schemes and urged her to keep political differences aside in matters of farmer welfare. The Union minister said the Delhi government has failed to implement major central initiatives,

including the Integrated Horticulture Development Mission, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and the Beej Gram programme. "I am writing this letter in

sadness. You have never taken proper decisions in the interest of farmers. Your government has stopped implementation of farmers-friendly central schemes. Your government is not sympathetic towards farmers. Today, farmers in Delhi are upset and worried," Chouhan

said in the letter. The Union minister said the absence of the Integrated Horticulture Development Mission has prevented farmers from accessing benefits for nursery establishment, tissue-culture facilities, planting material procurement and post-harvest infrastructure. In a separate video message, he alleged that the Delhi government has failed

to submit proposals for implementing central agricultural schemes, effectively blocking benefits from reaching farmers in the national capital 'The Centre stands ready with funds, but their release hinges on state proposals. Unfortunately, Delhi's government

has not submitted any proposals, leaving farmers unable to access scheme benefits," Chouhan said in the video message. He urged the Delhi gov-

ernment to set aside political competition for farmers' welfare, emphasising that many schemes operate on a 60:40 **The Supreme Court** Thursday asked the **Centre why couldn't** it say its doors were open and it would consider the genuine grievances of farmers protesting over various demands, including the legal guarantee of minimum support price for crops

funding ratio between the Centre and states.

Responding to Chouhan's accusations, Atishi lashed out at the BJP, saying it should ask the Prime Minister to hold talks with the farmers sitting on a fast unto death in Punjab instead of giving sermons.

She said the condition of farmers was never as bad as it is under the BJP regime. "The BJP talking about farmers is like Dawood Ibrahim sermonising about non-violence," Atishi said, asking the saffron party to stop politics over farmers.

Farmers under the banner of Samyukta Kisan Morcha (non-political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha have been camping at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana since February 13 last year after their march to Delhi was stopped by security forces. Kejriwal slammed the BJP, saying the saffron party would be responsible "if some thing happens" to the protesting farmers in Punjab, who are on an indefinite fast over a set of demands, including a legal guarantee for the minimum support price (MSP) for crops.

Farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal has been on an indefinite fast for more than a month and has refused medical aid.

# Mamata's close aid aunned down in WB PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Artistes perform during the 'Chavni Pravesh' by 'sadhus' of 'Shri Panchayati Akhada Mahanirvani', the royal entry procession for Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, in Pravagrai, Uttar Pradesh

# Modi govt ended terror in J&K: Shah



Shah said Article 370 gave the false impression that Kashmir's integration with India is temporary and that sowed the seeds of separatism which later turned into terrorism

New Delhi, Jan 2: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Thursday said Article 370 sowed seeds of separatism in the minds of the youth of Kashmir and the Narendra Modi government not only ended terrorism in the valley but also the ecosystem of terrorism.

Shah said Article 370 and

# Survey report of Shahi Jama Masjid submitted in Court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

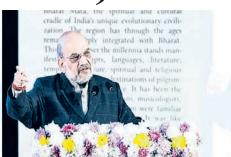
Sambhal (UP), Jan 2: The court commissioner Thursday submitted in the Chandausi court a detailed survey report on Sambhal's Jama Masjid The report, which includes videography from all angles was compiled during the survey conducted November 19

and November 24. Court Commissioner Ramesh Singh Raghav, appointed as the advocate for this case by the court, told reporters after submitting the report that the survey covered the Shahi Ja ma Masjid in Sambhal, which has been at the centre of a legal dispute following claims that Harihar temple stood at

the same location earlier. "The survey was conducted according to the directions of the court and the complete report, including videography. has been submitted today to the Civil Judge Senior Division in a sealed envelope,

Raghav explained. The report, which is believed to run into 40 to 45 pages, has been submitted in a sealed envelope in accordance with the directives of the

Supreme Court. The case has drawn considerable attention since November 19, when the court ordered the survey of the centuries-old Mughal-era mosque. Another survey was conducted November 24 when violence broke out. Protesters gathered near the Shahi Jama Masjid and clashed with the security personnel. Four people were killed and several people include ing police personnel injured in the violence. A case was registered against Samajwadi Party (SP) MP from Sambhal, Zia Ur Rahman, for inciting people to violence. A case of electricity theft has also been registered against him. SP president Akhilesh Yadav accused the BJP of deliberately instigating the last month's violence in Sambhal and called it a "conspiratorial" party. He charged that the BJP government and its chief minis ter have no vision. The BJP is destroying the democratic system. It misuses power. It uses the administration for its political gains, he said.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Article 35A, both of which were

ism in the minds of the youth

of the valley. "There are Muslim populations in many other parts of the country. Why are those

areas not affected by terrorism?" he said. The home minister said some people say Kashmir is close to the border with Pakistan and

hence, the problem came. Shah said Article 370 gave the false impression that Kashmir's integration with India is temporary and that sowed the seeds of separatism which later turned into terrorism.

Unfortunately, over 40,000 people lost their lives due to terrorism in Kashmir, he said. The home minister said Kashmir's development was delayed by decades and for

## Two-vear-old girl crushed to death

Mumbai: A two-year-old girl died and her parents were seriously injured after their scooter skidded at a spot where road repair work was underway and they were hit by a tempo. city police said Thursday.

# K'taka to increase bus fare by 15%

Bangalore: The Karnataka cabinet Thursday decided to increase the bus fares in the state-owned transport corporations by 15 per cent. The decision was taken in view of the substantial hike in operational costs such as increase in spending on fuel prices and staff, Karnataka Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H K Patil said.

### **ED conducts** raids at 8 places

Kolkata: Sleuths of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) started conducting raids at eight locations across West Bengal Thursday in connection with its probe into cyber frauds involving over ₹1,000 crore in Tamil Nadu, a senior officer said.

### Hand grenade found

Imphal: A hand grenade was Thursday found outside the house of Laishram Kamalbabu Singh, who went missing allegedly from the Leimakhong Military Station in November, triggering panic in the area, police said. The grenade was found near the gate of Singh's house at Loitang Khunou in Imphal West district, they said.

## to visit India next week

**US NSA Jake Sullivan set** 

New Delhi: US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan is set to visit India early next week to take stock of the India-US Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET). The iCET represents a landmark initiative between the two countries in areas of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, semiconductors, biotech, and defence innovation. Sullivan's trip will be the last high-profile visit to New Delhi from the outgoing Biden administration. The inauguration of Donald Trump as the 47th president of the US will take place January 20.

SNIPPETS

# HC grants 3 weeks' time to ED to respond to Soren's affidavit

Ranchi: The Jharkhand High Court Thursday granted the Enforcement Directorate (ED) three weeks to file a response to an affidavit filed by Chief Minister Hemant Soren. The ED had filed a case before the HC seeking to quash an FIR registered by Soren against the agency officials under the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Caste (Prevention of Atrocity) Act. Soren had filed the case against ED officials at the SC/ST police station here for conducting searches at his residences in Delhi and Ranchi in January last year.

# Bombay HC stops monitoring of Govind Pansare murder case

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court Thursday discontinued its monitoring of the probe in the 2015 murder of communist leader and rationalist writer Govind Pansare while asking the sessions court to expedite the ongoing trial. The trial at the Kolhapur court should be held on a daily basis, the HC directed. A division bench of Justices A S Gadkari and Kamal Khata said the monitoring of the investigation was no longer necessary, noting that a report submitted by the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) of Maharashtra Police indicates that the case has been probed from all angles.

Malda/ Kolkata, Jan 2: Trinamool Congress councillor Dulal Sarkar was shot dead by unidentified miscreants in West Bengal's Malda district Thursday morning, police said.

Sarkar, the TMC councillor from Malda, was shot in his head multiple times from close range by bike-borne assailants at Jhaljhalia More area, they said.

"He was taken to a nearby hospital, where he succumbed to injuries. A probe has been initiated and we are trying to identify the culprits," a senior police officer told PTL West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee expressed shock over the killing of Sarkar, who was popularly known as Babla.

"My close associate and a very popular leader, Babla Sarkar, has been murdered today. From the beginning of the Trinamool Congress, he (and his wife Chaitali Sarkar) worked hard for the party, and Babla was also elected a councillor," she said in a post on X.

abrogated August 5, 2019, were the key hurdles in the way of full integration of Kashmir into India. Referring to Kashmir's relations with the rest of India, the home minister said India is the only country in the world which is geo-cultural and whose boundaries are formed by its culture. India can be understood only from the Indian perspective and not from the geo-political perspective, he said here while releasing a book 'Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh: Through the Ages'. From the Silk Route to Central Asia and from Shankaracharya temple to Hemis monastery; and from trade to spirituality, strong foundations of both are present in and of Kashmir's culture. he said.

Shah said Article 370 gave the false impression that Kashmir's integration with India was temporary.

"Many people often ask me what is the relation between Article 370 and terrorism. They don't know that Article 370 sowed the seeds of separat-

years, there was bloodshed in Kashmir and the country had to watch it in silence.

"After the abolition of Article 370, there has been 70 per cent reduction in incidents of terrorism in Kashmir and it has proved that Article 370 fuelled the fire of terrorism. In 2018, there were 2,100 incidents of stone pelting in Kashmir but in 2024, not a single incident of stone pelting took place," he said

The home minister said people did not want the Article even at the time when it was incorporated (in the Constitution). Even in the Constituent Assembly, the majority did not want Article 370 to be part of the Constitution. However, it became a part of it.

Since then, he said, the process of development in Kashmir has started like any other part of India. The home minister said local bodies elections successfully concluded in Jammu and Kashmir following which more than 25,000 people got elected as panch, sarpanch or district council members.

# India 2nd most targeted by cyber attacks in 2024: CloudSEK

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: India emerged as the second most targeted nation in terms of cyber attacks in the world as 95 Indian entities came under data theft attacks in 2024, cyber intelligence firm CloudSEK said in a report.

According to the company's ThreatLandscape Report 2024 based on data monitoring in dark web, the US was the most targeted country, with 140 attacks, due to its economic dominance and digital infrastructure followed by India where data of 95 entities were

"India: Rapid digitization exposed 95 entities, making it the second most attacked nation," the report said. Israel was on the third spot where 57 entities faced attacks due to geopolitical tensions.

"The threat actors impacted various sectors in India, with the finance and banking sectors experiencing the highest number of victims at 20. This was followed by the government sector with 13 victims,

attacked in 2024.



srael was the third most affected country, experiencing attacks on 57 entities, largely due to geopolitical tensions

n India, rapid digitisation made 95 entities vulnerable to cyber threats

telecommunications with 12. and the healthcare and pharma and education sectors with 10 and 9 victims, respectively," the report said.

The major breaches as per the report comprised 850 million records of Indian citizen data leaked from Hi-Tek Group, Star Health and Allied Insurance customers data, 2TB of data from Telecommunica tions Consultants India.

According to the report, there were 108 ransomware incidents known in the country.

"Lockbit was the most active ransomware group in India being responsible for over 20 incidents in the country, followed by more than 15 targets by Killsec. Ransomhub ransomware was responsible for over 12 incidents in the country," the report said.











# national



Around 3.45 lakh people will be benefited from this flyover everyday. There was an issue of traffic in the area. We believe that everyday 40,800 hours of the people of Delhi will be saved from the inauguration of this flyover TISHI DELHI CM

# INDIA ANNOUNCES \$5 LAKH FOR QUAKE-HIT VANUATU

India Thursday announced an assistance of \$500,000 to the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu to help it deal with destruction caused by a 7.4 magnitude earthquake last month



# of the day

We measure units only in houses where meters are installed. We can not measure units in houses that do

not have proper agreements. This scheme, set to roll out in March or April, will benefit only those consumers with installed meters OMAR ABDULLAH J&K CM

We are getting proper documenta tion and once we

get that then we will take action (if there was any corruption involved). If we cancel the

MoUs right away then it may lead to legal issues and unnecessary complications

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU AP CM

So this overwhelming support in political circles in Switzerland for the TEPA with EFTA is truly a sign of the

times to come... and in their statement also, it shows that that it has cleared an important hurdle and they are hoping to bring in entry to force by autumn of 2025, before the end of calendar year 2025

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE,





Vande Bharat if it cannot even run at 130kmph Rajdhani Express

was launched in 1969 and has been running at 130Kmph for the last 54 years. Just marketing/looks? Anything else?

@manoi 216

# SHORT TAKES

Veteran journalist S Jayachandran Nair dies Thiruvananthapuram:

# **Prashant begins fast unto death**

Kishor made the announcement at the historic Gandhi Maidan in the state capital, three days after giving a

"48-hour ultimatum" to the Nitish Kumar government for acting on the demand, raised by aggrieved candidates

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Jan 2: Upping the ante, Jan Suraaj founder Prashant Kishor Thursday began a fast unto death to press the demand for cancellation of an examination recently held by Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC). Kishor made the announce

ment at the historic Gandhi Maidan in the state capital, three days after giving a "48-hour ultimatum" to the Nitish Kumar government for acting on the demand, raised by aggrieved candidates.

The administration, however, said the hunger strike at Gandhi Maidan is illegal as it is not the designated site for holding protests. "My primary demand, of

course, is cancellation of the exam held December 13 and conducting a fresh test. I have also heard allegations that posts to be filled by the exam were virtually put on sale. Such corrupt officials must be identified and brought to justice", said Kishor, who was accompanied by a number of supporters.



Bagh where the aggrieved aspirants have been holding a round-the-clock sit-in for nearly two weeks.

The 47-year-old former poll strategist, who hopes his fledgling party to make a big impact in Assembly polls due in less than a year, also made it clear that the demands he is making were just a few of the things on which he expected the government to act.

Striking a populist note, the former JD(U) vice president said he wanted the state's NDA government to "bring in a domicile policy, reserving two thirds of government vacancies for candidates from the state". He added: "The injustice do-

ne to the state's youth by the current regime goes long back. Before his ascent to power, the Chief Minister (Nitish Kumar) had toured the state and promised unemployment doles. Not a single person has got the

unemployment allowance".

also demanded Kishor a white paper on several competitive exams held in the last 10 years which were marred by question paper leaks and claimed that the government demonstrated its inability to crack down on the education mafia suspected to be behind the malpractices.

The Jan Suraaj leader's aggressive stance comes in the wake of scorn heaped on him by political both ruling and Opposition leaders in the state, after a demonstration he staged Sunday ended in lathi charge and use of water cannons by police.

Meanwhile, the district administration in a statement said that the dharna staged by Kishor and his nearly 150 supporters at Gandhi Maidan is illegal

"The Patna High Court has clearly ordered that no demonstration is allowed anywhere in the city except the designated spot in Gardani Bagh. Hence, an FIR is being lodged against Kishor and his supporters. They are also being served with a notice to either move to Gardani Bagh or face legal action,' the statement added.

In a related development, the CPI(ML) Liberation announced that its students' wing AISA, along with like-minded orga nizations, will Friday stage a demonstration in front of the Chief Minister's residence "to compel Nitish Kumar to break his silence" on the issue.

"Thousands of young men and women, from across Bihar, will gather in Patna for tomorrow's protest. The government will have to cancel the exam and order fresh tests, besides taking action against erring officials," said the Left party.

Notably, nearly five lakh candidates had appeared for Combined Competitive Exams held December 13 when hundreds of examinees, all of them at the Bapu Pariksha Parisar here, boycotted the tests alleging question papers had been leaked.

This was met with a strong denial from the BPSC, which claimed the allegations were "a conspiracy" to force the exam's cancellation, even as fresh tests were ordered for more than 10,000 candidates who had appeared at Bapu Pariksha Parisar.

The candidates have been asked to appear January 4 at 22 newly designated centres across the city.

CM Mamata accuses BSF of infiltration plot

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 2: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Baneriee Thursday accused the Border Security Force of facilitating infiltration from Bangladesh as part of a central government "blueprint" to destabilise the state, a charge the BSF denied, asserting it diligently guards the country's boundary.

Speaking at an administrative review meeting at the state secretariat, Banerjee alleged that the BSF was allowing infiltrators to enter through areas like Islampur, Sitai, and Chopra.

"We have information that the BSF is letting infiltrators enter India through various border areas. This is a deliberate attempt to destabilise the state. There is a deep-rooted conspiracy involving the central government," she said.

Banerjee said she could sense a "blueprint of the Centre" behind this attitude of the BSF.

'Goons are entering India. want peace on both sides of the border. We have a good relationship with neighbouring Bangladesh," she said in a statement. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo further alleged that women were being tortured by the BSF. "They (BSF) torture women,

but why haven't you protested?" she asked officials present at the meeting. Banerjee emphasised that border security was not the responsibility of the state. "The guard-



Speaking at an administrative review meeting at the state secretariat, Banerjee alleged that the BSF was allowing infiltrators to enter through areas like Islampur, Sitai, and Chopra

ing of borders is not in our hands. It's the BSF's duty. The Trinamool Congress doesn't guard the border. When people enter, where are they going? The DMs have information on where they are going," she said.

A senior BSF official in the eastern region dismissed the allegations, emphasising that the border guarding force was performing its duties with utmost sincerity.

"The BSF has maintained a 24/7 vigil along the border We are diligently performing our responsibilities to ensure the safety and security of the borders," the official told PTI on condition of anonymity.

# Mother-son found murdered in home; two teens arrested

Thane: Navi Mumbai police Thursday said it had solved the murders of a 70-year-old woman and her son in Kamote with the arrest of two 19-year olds. Geeta Bhushan Jaggi and her son Jitendra (45) were found dead in their house in Sector 6 Wednesday evening after which local police and Crime Branch teams began probing various angles, the official said. "Our probe found that two persons had come to the residential complex with Jitendra The duo then attacked and killed the 70-year-old woman and her son Based on a tip-off, we arrested Sanjyo Mangesh Dodke and Subham Mahindra Narayani, both 19 years old, from Ulwe he said. "The two were known to litendra, who had called them for a party or the night of December 31. After having drinks. Jitendra made sexua towards the two accused. This enraged the two who attacked Jitendra with an extension board. They then strangled Geeta Jaggi," the official said



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Jan 2: Dismissing suggestions that his National Conference was under pressure to join the BJP-led NDA, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Thursday expressed optimism that the promises made by the Centre to restore statehood of



Democratic Alliance (NDA) to alter the National Conference's ideology and join the alliance.

"There is no pressure from the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi). Home Minister (Amit Shah) or the Raj Bhawan on us to change our ideology,' he said.

The Chief Minister added that he has received assurances from the Prime Minister and Home Minister that the National Conference government would remain stable and that they would



Renowned writer and senior journalist S Jayachandran Nair, known for redefining Malayalam magazine journalism with a focus on literature and culture, passed away Thursday. He died at 2.30 pm while undergoing treatment for age-related ailments at a hospital in Bangalore, sources close to him said.

### Police SI dies of heart attack

Jodhpur: The in-charge of the District Special Team here died of a heart attack while he was out for a morning walk Thursday morning, police said. People present on the spot rushed him to AIIMS Jodhpur, where doctors declared him dead, they said.

# Man wanted in rape case held

New Delhi: Delhi Police arrested a 24-year-old man wanted in a four-year-old rape case from Bihar's Muzaffarpur, an official said Thursday. The case involved the kidnapping of a 14-yearold girl, who later accused her brother and his friend of raping her and a case was registered against them at Kapashera Police Station October 11, 2021. While the victim's brother was arrested and sent to judicial custody, the accused remained absconding, police said.

## 45 injured after bus rams into two trucks

Jaipur: Around 45 passengers were injured when a private bus rammed into two trucks, which had already collided with each other on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway in Rajasthan's Dausa district Thursday, police said.

During his first media meet here since assuming office in October, Abdullah emphasised that the region's current status as a Union Territory should be viewed as a temporary arrangement, with the restoration of statehood being the "biggest challenge' his government faces. Abdullah dismissed ru-

mours suggesting pressure should be the last resort. from the BJP-led National

receive the same coopera tion extended earlier to the lieutenant governor earlier.

'They have stated they will respect the mandate of the people. Those spreading rumours that I will now join NDA and that I have changed my ideology, I cannot help that. I am here to work and I will work," he said at the media interaction held at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre. In response to a question whether his government was planning to approach the court for restoration of statehood. Abdullah said that confrontation



Tourists at Solang Nala after fresh snowfall in Manali, Himachal Pradesh

# Empty gas cylinder found near rail tack in Kanpur; probe on

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kanpur/Saharanpur, Jan 2: An empty five kilogram gas cylinder was found placed on the railway tracks near the Barrajpur railway station here, Government Railway police (GRP) said Thursday.

In a separate incident, a major accident was averted when a large fragment of a

metal was found lying on the railway track near Tapri on the Haridwar railwav line in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur district Tuesday, officials said.

A safety team found the cylinder on the loopline tracks in Shivrajpur Wednesday during patrolling. It was kept in a sack, the officials said, as a probe was launched into the



matter. "Upon receiving information GRP officials along with the forensic teams from

PTI PHOTO

Kanpur and its neighbouring districts reached the spot and inspected the area as well as the cvlinder and found it empty,' Superintendent of Police (GRP) Abhishek Verma said.

Preliminary information suggested that the cylinder was deliberately put on the tracks with an intent to trigger panic he added.

# Lack of tech transfer slowing climate action in India: Govt

India had also raised the matter at the UN climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November last year and urged developed nations to eliminate intellectual property barriers to technology transfer that hinder climate action in developing countries

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: A concerning lack of technology transfer from developed countries has forced India to rely heavily on domestic resources and stretch national capacity, slowing its efforts to achieve critical climate objectives, the government has said in a biennial update report (BUR) to the

UN climate change office. In its fourth BUR submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNF-CCC) December 30. India said that in the absence of promised technology and financial support, it is forced to divert resources from other essential needs to develop these solutions independently.

India had also raised the matter at the UN climate con-

ference in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November last year and urged developed nations to eliminate intellectual property barriers to technology transfer that hinder climate action in developing countries.

"India's climate strategy emphasises integrating advanced technologies across kev sectors. such as solar, wind, bioenergy, electric vehicles, climate-resilient agriculture, and carbon capture to foster low-carbon development and build resilience.

"Despite substantial national efforts and investments, barriers like slow international technology transfer and intellectual property rights (IPR) hinder the rapid adoption of these technologies," the BUR report said.

Biennial update reports are



submitted by developing countries to the UNFCCC every two years, providing updates on emissions, climate action progress, and needs for support in mitigation and adaptation. India's previous BURs have outlined essential technologies

required to cut greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the warming world

However, none of the required technologies have been effectively transferred, facilitated, or made available under the current climate change regime, the report said.

"This lack of technology transfer has forced India to rely heavily on domestic resources and stretch national capacity, slowing its efforts to achieve critical climate objectives," it said.

Technology transfer is a critical component of climate change mitigation and adaptation that faces both demand and supply-side challenges which must be addressed within the framework of the 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) principles

"The Convention, along with subsequent agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement (Article 10), emphasises the central role of transferring financial resources and technology from developed to developing nations for climate action. The establishment of the Technology Mechanism, consisting of the Technology Executive Com mittee (TEC) and the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN), was intended to facilitate this process.

On the demand side, India said, access to relevant, affordable, and scalable technologies is often limited due to high costs, lack of infrastructure, and regulatory barriers.

Addressing both demand and supply side issues is crucial for effective technology transfer requiring a comprehensive approach that includes policy interventions, capacity build ing, financial support, and in ternational cooperation, it said.

















The shockingly violent attack in New Orleans is horrific. My thoughts are with the victims, their families, the emergency responders and the people of the United States at this tragic time KEIR STARMER PRIME MINISTER, UP

inauguration in 18 days' time

a "disaster" and a "laughing

He appeared to blame the

New Orleans attack on the

negligence of law enforcement

agencies that he said had been

too busy conducting criminal

investigations into him that he

has long derided as a political

witch-hunt. He also repeated an

assertion – first made Wednes-

ineffective, and virtually non-

- A violent erosion of Safe-

ty, National Security, and

Democracy is taking place

all across our Nation. Only

strength and powerful lead-

"The USA is breaking down

existent leadership.

stock"

# **INDIAN GRANT TO DEVELOP** SL'S NORTH BOATYARD

India will provide Sri Lankan Rupees 290 million to develop the Karainagar Boatyard in the Northern Province of the island nation, the Indian High Commission said Thursday.



uote day

We are preparing to resume diplomatic relations with Syria and cooperation in international organizations

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKIY PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

What better than to come first to thank God and to ask God to give me the wisdom, the

fortitude and the tools to fulfil everything I promised the people of Puerto Rico ENNIFFER GONZALEZ COLON

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, PUERTO RICO

The European **Union could** submit a proposal as soon as March on the creation of socalled 'return hubs'

to expedite the removal of illegal migrants.

ULF KRISTERSSON | PRIME MINISTER ,SWEDEN

# SHORT TAKES

### Khan's party, Pak govt to hold talks

Islamabad: The second round of talks between the government and jailed former premier Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf party representatives concluded Thursday with the commitment to meet again next week in a bid to end the prevailing political tension and instability in the country. National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq facilitated the talks held in the parliament house. Later, he told the media that the two sides participated in good spirits and with the commitment to continue the process. "The two sides have agreed to meet again next week," he said, adding that talks were held in a cordial atmosphere.

## May 9 riots: 19 convicts pardoned

Islamabad: Pakistan military Thursday said that it has accepted the mercy petitions of 19 convicts involved in attacks on the

# **Biden, Trump give contrasting reactions** B'desh court rejects monk's bail petition

**President cautions** against 'jumping to conclusions' while president-elect labels country a 'disaster'

### AGENCIES

New Orleans, Jan 2: Joe Biden and Donald Trump have given drastically contrasting reactions to the deadly New Year's Day explosions in New Orleans and Las Vegas that killed at least 16 people.

The US president cautioned against "jumping to conclusions" and expressed empathy for victims and the city of New Orleans, while his incoming successor sought to blame Democrats, "open borders" and institutions that he has vowed to purge, including the FBI, once

he returns to office. Speaking from the White House Wednesday evening, Biden cited FBI reports that identified the suspected perpetrator of the attack in New Orleans's busy Bourbon Street. 42-year-old Shamsud-Din Jabbar, as "an American citizen, born in Texas" who appeared to have been inspired by the

Islamic State. "He served in the United States army on active duty for many years," Biden said in a four-minute address.

The president also said he had been told by the FBI that Jabbar had posted videos on social media hours before the attack, which killed 15 people. The videos "indicated that he's inspired by ISIS, expressing a desire to kill".

"The ISIS flag was found

FTA takes effect

Male, Jan 2: Male has de-

scribed as "a significant mile-

stone" the China-Maldives Free Trade Agreement (CMFTA)

under which both nations will

benefit from reduced tariffs and

improved market access com-

mitments, media reports said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Our Country is a disaster, a laughing stock all over the World! This is what happens when you have OPEN BOR-DERS, with weak, ineffective, and virtually nonexistent leadership DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT-ELECT, US

in his vehicle, which he rented to conduct this attack," he said. "Possible explosives were found in the vehicle as well, and more explosives were found nearby."

Biden said intelligence and law enforcement agents were working to establish if the suspect acted alone or had co-conspirators, adding that the investigation was "fluid".

The president said investigators were exploring possible links between the New Orleans attack and a later episode outside the Trump hotel in Las Vegas – owned by the president-elect - in which one person was killed after a Tesla electric vehicle, built by the company owned by Elon Musk, Trump's richest supporter, exploded.

"Thus far, there's nothing to report on that score." Biden said, adding that "no one

should jump to conclusions" **China-Maldives** 

day in its immediate aftermath - that the attack proved the need for an immigration crackdown, despite the fact that the suspect was born in the US. "Our Country is a disaster a laughing stock all over the He served in the United States World!," Trump wrote on his army on active duty for many Truth Social platform. "This is years. Thus far, there's nothing what happens when you have to report on that score. No one OPEN BORDERS, with weak.

His measured tone differed markedly from that of the president-elect, who in an early morning social media post, labelled the country over which he is about to preside after his

should jump to conclusions

JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

# FBI investigates link between Tesla blast, New Orleans attack

Las Vegas: The FBI is investigating whether there is any connection between the explosion of a Tesla Cybertruck outside the Trump International Hotel Las Vegas and a New Orleans truck attack that killed 15 people on New Year's Day, officials said. Gasoline canisters and large firework mortars were packed into the Cybertruck that burst into flames shortly after a driver intentionally drove a pickup truck into crowds celebrating the new year in the French Quarter of New Orleans according to officials. The sole occupant of the truck was found dead inside and seven people sustained minor injuries, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Depart ment said in a statement. Videos taken by witnesses inside and outside the Las Vegas hotel showed the vehicle exploding and flames pouring out of it, as it sat outside the hotel at around 8:40 am local time (1640 GMT) Wednesday. A Trump spokesman did not return a request for comment Thursday on the Cybertruck in cident. Eric Trump praised Las Vegas fire and law enforcement officials Wednes-day for their quick action on the explosion. The Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas is part of the Trump Organization, the company of President-elect Donald Trump, who will return to the White House Jan. 20. Tesla (TSLA.O), opens new tab CEO Elon Musk was a key backer of Trump in his 2024 presidential campaign and is also an adviser to the incoming president.



A group of 11 lawyers stood for Krishna Das with a bail petition during the hearing for which Das appeared virtually

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Jan 2: A court in the southeastern port city of Chattogram Thursday denied bail to Hindu monk and former ISK-CON leader Chinmov Krishna Das in a sedition case.

A group of 11 lawyers stood for him with a bail petition during the hearing for which Das appeared virtually.

"The hearing continued for some 30 minutes when (Metropolitan Sessions) Judge Mohammad Saiful Islam heard both the prosecution and the defence lawyers and then rejected his (Das') bail petition, a court official said.

Das, formerly with the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and now a spokesperson for the Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatani Jagran Jote organisation, was arrested at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka November 25. He was brought to Chattogram where the court sent him to jail rejecting his bail petition the next day.

He was arrested on sedition charges for allegedly "desecrating" the Bangladesh flag brought to Chattogram where subsequent violence over his arrest left a government prosecutor dead, sparking further tensions.

New textbooks to alter credit of declaration of independence

Bangladesh has introduced new textbooks that state that Ziaur Rahman declared the country's independence in 1971, replacing the previous ones crediting founding father Bangabandhu Sheikh Muiibur Rahman with the declaration. according to a media report. The new textbooks for primary and secondary students have several changes, The Daily Star newspape said. The textbooks also removed the title "Father of the Nation" for Mujibur Rahman. The new textbooks for the 2025 academic year will state that "March 26. 1971. Ziaur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh, and March 27. he made another declaration of independence on behalf of Bangabandhu," the paper quoted Prof AKM Reazul Hassan, chairman of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board, as saying. The information has been included in the free textbooks where the matter of the declaration was mentioned, he added. According to the paper writer and researcher Rakhal Raha, who was involved in the process of making changes in the textbooks, said they tried to free the textbooks from "exaggerated. imposed history".

Bhattacharya, a former deputy attorney general, was leading the team of 11 Supreme Court lawyers to represent Das

Police enforced a tight securi ty inside and around the court complex allowing lawyers and others concerned after strict identity checks. When Das' hail was rejected November 26, the decision had angered members of the Hin du community, who staged a protest around the prison van outside the court leading to vi olent clashes. It led to the death of lawyer Saiful Islam Alif.



army facilities May 9, 2023. Former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreeke-Insaf party supporters allegedly attacked several military installations May 9. 2023, including the army headquarters in Rawalpindi and the ISI building in Faisalabad, to vent their anger against the arrest of their party founder in a corruption case. Hundreds of suspects were arrested in the countrywide swoop. Cases of more than 100 civilians were sent to the military court for trial because they were involved in the attack on military installations. In December, military courts sentenced 85 civilians to prison terms ranging from two to ten years for their roles in the violence. According to a statement issued by the army Thursday, the sequel to the promulgation of punishments to the May 9 tragedy convicts, they have exercised their right to appeal and have asked for mercy and remission in their punishments.

## Fireworks explosion in Honolulu kills 3

Honolulu: A New Year's Eve fireworks explosion in a Honolulu-area neighbourhood killed at least three people and critically injured 20 others, authorities said. The accident occurred just before midnight outside a home, the Honolulu Fire Department said in a statement. The neighbourhood is near Honolulu's international airport and a joint US Air Force and Navy base and a little more than 3 km east of the USS Arizona Memorial, which honours sailors who died in the attack on Pearl Harbor that drew the US into World War II.

The CMFTA, which came into effect starting Wednesday, aims to enhance trade volumes, increase exports, increase productive capacity, reduce trade barriers, and create new opportunities for businesses in both Maldives and China, a release from the Maldives' Ministry of Economic Development and Trade said.

"The FTA marking a significant milestone in the economic relations between the two countries." state-run Public Service Media (PSM) said here Wednesday.



Supporters of impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stage a rally to oppose a court having issued a warrant to detain Yoon, near the presidential residence in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday. The signs read, "Oppose impeachment"

The allegation of disrespect ing the national flag is baseless, as it was not a national flag. We informed the court that this case cannot proceed," top defence counsel Apurba Kumar Bhattacharya told journalists emerging from the closely monitored hearing.

Public Prosecutor Mofizul Haque Bhuiyan, on the other hand, said, "We opposed the bail during the hearing, and the court has rejected the bail application."

Earlier December 11, the court rejected a plea seeking advanced hearing of his bail petition by lawyer Rabindra Ghose ruling that it would be heard on the previously fixed date January 2, 2025.

# Israel's ex-defence chief Gallant quits parliament

#### REUTERS

Jerusalem, Jan 2: Former Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, who had often taken an independent line against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his far-right government allies, said Wednesday he was resigning from parliament.

Gallant was fired from the government in November by Netanyahu, after months of disagreements over the conduct of the war against Hamas in Gaza, but kept his seat as an elected

member of the Knesset. "Just as it is on the battlefield, so it is in public service. There are moments in which one must stop, assess and choose a direction in order to achieve the goals," Gallant said in a televised statement.

Gallant had often broken ranks with Netanyahu and his coalition allies of far-right and religious parties, including over exemptions granted to ultra-Orthodox Jewish men from serving in the conscript military - a hot button issue.



In March 2023, Netanyahu fired Gallant after he urged a halt to a highly contested government plan to cut the Supreme Court's powers. His dismissal triggered mass protests and Netanyahu backtracked.

The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Gallant and Netanyahu, along with a Hamas leader, for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza conflict, which Israel has contested.

Israeli airstrikes killed at least 18 people in the Gaza Strip Thursday, including three children and two high-ranking officers in the Hamas-run police force, according to Palestinian and hospital officials.

*The nuns of the hill-top* Druk Amitabha *Monastery*, *put on the* show of strength to mark the institution's reopening five years after the COVID-19 pandemic forced it to close its doors to the public

#### REUTERS

Kathmandu, Jan 2: About a dozen nuns performed hand chops and high kicks, some of them wielding swords, as they showed off their martial art skills to hundreds of cheering wellwishers at the long-awaited reopening of their nunnery in Nepal.

The nuns of the hill-top Druk Amitabha Monastery, put on the show of strength to mark the institution's reopening five years after the COVID-19 pandemic forced it to close its doors to the public.

The group of kung fu nuns, aged from 17 to 30, are members of the 1,000 year-old Drukpa lineage, which gives nuns equal



status as monks and is the only female order in the patriarchal Buddhist monastic system.

Usually, nuns are expected to cook and clean and are not allowed to practise any form of martial art. But His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa, a monk who ranks only slightly below the Dalai Lama in the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy, decided to train women in kung fu to improve their health and spiritual vell-being

He opened the nunnery in 2009 and it now has 300 members aged between six and 54. "We do kung fu to keep our-

selves mentally and physically fit, and our aim is to promote women's empowerment and gender equality," said Jigme Jangchub Chosdon, 23, a nun who is originally from Ladakh in India.

The nuns come from Bhutan, India and Nepal and are all trained in kung fu, the Chinese martial art for self-defence and strength.

"With the confidence from kung fu, I really want to help the community, young girls to build their own strength," said 24-year-old Jigme Yangchen Gamo, a nun from Ramechhap in U sually, nuns are expected to cook and clean and are not allowed to practise any form of martial art

But His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa, a monk who ranks only slightly below the Dalai Lama in the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy. decided to train women in kung fu to improve their health and spiritual well-being

Nepal. The nunnery's website says that the combination of gen der equality, physical strength and respect for all living things represents the order's return to its "true spiritual roots".

In the past, the nuns have completed lengthy expeditions on foot and by bike in the Hi malayas to raise money for di saster relief, as well as to promote environmentally-friendly living.

Jigme Konchok Lhamo, 30, from India, said her main goal was to achieve enlightenment like Lord Buddha, who founded Buddhism 2,600 years ago.

"But for now as I am a nor mal person. I think I will be focusing more on helping others," she said. "Helping others is our religion."













**Exporters** are indeed facing significant challenges on the liquidity front, with high interest rates and declining export finance impacting their competitiveness SANJAY BUDHIA | CHAIRMAN, CII NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON EXIM

# **BLINKIT UPS QUICK COMMERCE GAME**

Quick commerce major Blinkit Thursday launched 10-minute ambulance service in select areas of Gurugram as a pilot project. Users will be able to see the option to call for an ambulance on the Blinkit app, according to a company statement. Each vehicle will be manned by a paramedic, a duty assistant, and a trained driver





Conduct a study on the state of the steel industry in India and assess the impact of

proposed and existing import measures on resulting higher costs, economic growth and jobs. Take any new action after this assessment

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | FOUNDER, GTRI

The implementation process of FTA between India and EFTA is progressing fast and is

expected to come into force before the end of this year PIYUSH GOYAL COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

We look ahead with hope and confidence, driven by our

aspiration to achieve growth at scale. We will continue to lead with purpose, to set audacious goals and work with discipline and determination

to achieve them ANISH SHAH CEO & MD, MAHINDRA

## SHORT TAKES

### Textile exports grow

New Delhi: India's textiles and apparel exports, including handicrafts, grew 7 per cent during the April-October period to \$21.35 billion, the government said Thursday. The outbound shipments from the sector stood at \$20 billion in the same period of the previous financial year. FY 2023-24. "The Ready Made Garments (RMG) category with exports of \$8,733 million has the largest share (41 per cent) in the total exports (\$21.358 million) during the period of April-October of FY 2024-25. followed by Cotton Textiles (33 per cent. \$7.082 million). Man-Made Textiles (15 per cent. \$3.105 million)," the Textiles Ministry said. Meanwhile, the overall import of textiles and apparel including handicrafts





Manufacturing growth hits 12-month low in Dec amid softer rise in output, new orders

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: India's manufacturing sector growth fell to a 12-month low in December. as new business orders and production expanded at softer rates, a monthly survey said Thursday.

The seasonally adjusted HS-BC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index was at 56.4 in December, down from 56.5 in November, indicating a weaker improvement in operating conditions.

Despite the decline, the headline figure remained above its long-run average of 54.1 thereby signalling a robust rate of growth. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion. while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India's manufacturing activity ended a strong 2024 with a soft note amidst more signs of a slowing trend, albeit moderate. in the industrial sector. The rate of expansion in new orders was the slowest in the year, suggesting weaker growth in future production," Ines Lam, Economist at HSBC, said.

The manufacturing sector growth was hampered by competition and price pressures.

Lam said there was some uplift in the growth of new export orders, which rose at the fastest pace since July. "Although new export sales

rose at a slower rate than total

new business, the pace of growth for the former strengthened as firms were able to secure international orders from across the globe," the survey said.

According to the survey, the "substantial" rate of growth resulted in further expansions in

buying levels and employment. Ongoing improvements in new work intakes prompted manufacturing companies in India to purchase additional inputs for use in production processes and on the job front, around one in ten companies recruited extra staff, while fewer than 2 per cent of firms

shed jobs. India's manufacturing activity ended a strong 2024 with a soft note amidst more signs of a slowing trend, albeit moderate, in the industrial sector. The rate of expansion in new orders was the slowest in

the year, suggesting weaker arowth in future production INES LAM | ECONOMIST, HSBC

On the price front, with container, material and labour costs reportedly rising since November, Indian manufacturers registered another increase in overall expenses. On a month-on-month basis, however, the rate of input price inflation was moderate by historical standards.

The HSBC India Manufacturing PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in a panel of around 400 manufacturers

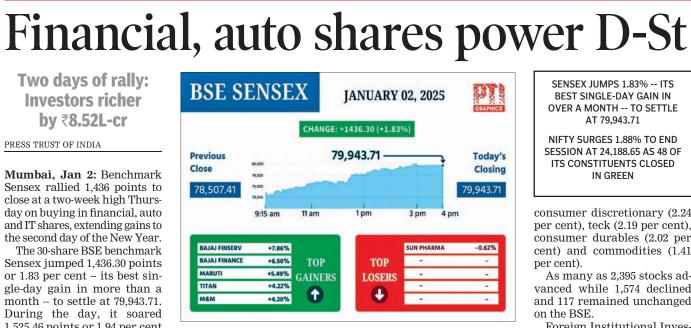
# Two days of rally: **Investors richer** by ₹8.52L-cr PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 2: Benchmark Sensex rallied 1,436 points to close at a two-week high Thursday on buying in financial, auto and IT shares, extending gains to the second day of the New Year.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,436.30 points or 1.83 per cent -- its best single-day gain in more than a month -- to settle at 79,943.71. During the day, it soared 1,525.46 points or 1.94 per cent to 80,032.87

The NSE Nifty surged 445.75 points or 1.88 per cent to 24.188.65 as 48 of its constituents closed in green.

From 30 Sensex shares, Bajaj Finserv jumped nearly 8 per cent while Bajaj Finance soared over 6 per cent. Maruti, Titan, Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Infosys, HCL Tech, Zomato, UltraTech Cement and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the



**POSITIVE START FOR 2025** 

other major gainers. Sun Pharma emerged as the only laggard.

"Increased momentum was observed in the domestic market, driven by optimism about the upcoming earnings season starting next week. The rally was broad-based, with most sectoral indices posting gains. The auto sector led the way, showing the strongest momentum due to robust December sales that defied the usual subdued demand. Banking and IT stocks also performed well, as the economy bottomed in Q2,3 Vinod Nair. Head of Research. Geojit Financial Services, said.

The BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.89 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.68 per cent. All sectoral indices ended in positive territory. Auto surged the most by 3.66 per cent, followed by BSE Focused IT (2.34 per cent), IT (2.31 per cent),

SENSEX JUMPS 1.83% -- ITS BEST SINGLE-DAY GAIN IN OVER A MONTH -- TO SETTLE AT 79,943.71

NIFTY SURGES 1.88% TO END SESSION AT 24,188.65 AS 48 OF ITS CONSTITUENTS CLOSED IN GREEN

consumer discretionary (2.24 per cent), teck (2.19 per cent) consumer durables (2.02 per cent) and commodities (1.4) per cent).

As many as 2,395 stocks advanced while 1.574 declined and 117 remained unchanged on the BSE

Foreign Institutional Inves tors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹1,782.71 crore Wednesday, according to exchange data Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.09 per cent to \$75.47 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark climbed 368.40 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at 78,507.41 on the first trading session of 2025 Wednesday. The Nifty went up by 98.10 points or 0.41 per cent to 23.742.90

### M&M, Tata Motors bag ₹ SLUMPS TO FRESH I big PLI incentives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 2: The rupee depreciated 11 paise to close at a record low of 85.75 against the US dollar Thursday, as strong dollar demand from importers and foreign fund outflows dent-

Forex traders said the dollar dented investors' sentiments.

Additionally, global markets are expected to see low volumes as the holiday season is underway in major economies like those in Europe

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened on a weak note and sank to an intra-day low of 85.79 while registering a high of 85.68 against the American currency. The local unit settled for the day at a record low of 85.75, registering a



ON DEC 27, THE LOCAL CURRENCY TOUCHED ITS LIFETIME INTRA-DAY LOW OF 85.80 AGAINST THE GREENBACK

added.

fall of 11 paise over its previous at Mirae Asset Sharekhan. close amid a sharp recovery in domestic equities. by the Reserve Bank of India

On Wednesday, the rupee settled flat at 85.64 against the US dollar

'We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on strength in the US Dollar and dollar demand from importers. Sustained FII outflows may further pressure the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary -- Research Analyst

# PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi, Jan 2: Ministry of

Heavy Industries has approved incentive claims of ₹246 crore submitted by Mahindra & Mahindra and Tata Motors under the ₹25.938 crore PLI scheme for the automobile and auto components industry, officials said.

Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel HD Kumaraswamy has expressed satisfaction with the progress made by auto orig inal equipment manufacturers (OEMs) toward achieving local ized manufacturing through ini-

tiatives like PLI scheme. He also congratulated Tata Mo tors and M&M for developing this capability and exuded confidence that more applicants would take advantage of the PLI scheme.

According to sources, Tata Motors submitted an incentive claim of approximately ₹142.13 crore based on determined sales in FY 2023-24.

The eligible sales of Advanced Automotive Technology (AAT) products from Tata Motors include the Tiago EV (electric four-wheeler), Starbus EV (electric bus ), and Ace EV (electric cargo vehicle), totalling ₹1,380.24 crore. Mahindra & Mahindra submitted an incentive claim of ₹104.08 crore based on determined incremental sales of AAT products totalling ₹ 800.59 crore for FY 2023-24, with a cumulative investment of ₹978.30 crore, officials said.

ed investor sentiments.

gained against most currencies during 2024 and continued to remain on a strong footing this year. Moreover, persistent foreign fund outflows further

declined 1 per cent during the April-October period of FY 2024-25 (\$5.425 million). compared to the same period of FY 2023-24 (\$5,464 million).

### Sugar output drops

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New Delhi: Sugar production fell by 16 per cent to 95.40 lakh tonne in the first quarter of the ongoing current marketing year that started in October, mainly due to a decline in output in Maharashtra, according to industry body ISMA data released Thursday. Mills had manufactured 113.01 lakh tonne in the year-ago period. The production data excludes the diversion of sugar for ethanol making. According to the Indian Sugar and Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA), crushing rate in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka was better than last year. During the first quarter, 493 mills were operational as against 512 factories a year ago.

#### New Delhi. Jan 2: While a massive 4.67 crore additional jobs were created in the Indian economy in the financial year ended March 2024, the fast pace of employment generation has continued into 2024-25 in both the formal and informal sec-

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

tors. official data shows. The total estimated employment in India's Unincorporated Sector recorded a double-digit growth of 10.01 per cent during October 2023-September 2024, compared to the same period of the previous year, according to the annual survey of the Ministry of Statistics released Thursday.

The Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE (ASUSE) shows that among the broad sectors cov-



ered, the number of establishments in the "Other Services" employed more than 12 crore additional workers between October 2023 and September 2024, marking an increase of more than one crore workers from 2022-23 and reflecting robust labour market growth.

Among the broad activities, the "Other Services" sector showed the highest annual growth of 17.86 per cent, followed by 10.03 per cent in the

manufacturing sector.

The unincorporated non-agricultural sector plays an important role in the Indian economy contributing significantly to employment, Gross Domestic Product, and the overall socio-economic landscape. This sector not only sustains livelihoods for millions but also acts as a backbone for the incorporated sector by supplying goods and services, reinforcing its role in the domestic value chain.

Similarly, India's employment in the formal sector, which offers better quality jobs, has kept up its growth momentum during the first half of the current financial year with an increase in new additions across the three social security schemes compared to the same period last year.

# Job creation gathers further pace Sebi to continue proceedings against ZEEL PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: Markets watchdog Sebi Thursday said it will slap a fresh show cause notice on ZEEL founder chairman Subhash Chandra, and his son Punit Goenka as it vowed to continue the investigation into alleged violation of listing norms against the media baron and his company.

The order passed by Sebi's adjudicating officer said the contents of the earlier Show Cause Notice (SCN) issued to them will also be incorporated "in the SCN to be issued in the instant matter"

The ZEEL and its top management are under Sebi scrutiny for alleged violations of disclosure norms and initially a show cause notice was issued to them in July 2022.



"However, any intervention

(RBI) may support the rupee

at lower levels. USD/INR spot

price is expected to trade in a

range of 85.50 to 86," Choudhary

Meanwhile, the dollar index,

which gauges the greenback's

strength against a basket of six

currencies, was trading 0.02 per

cent lower at 108.46

Following the July 2022 show cause notice, Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) and Punit Goenka filed settlement applications with the Sebi.

However, the application to settle the adjudication proceedings was rejected by a panel of whole-time members of Sebi and the matter was referred to the markets watchdog for further investigation.

The eligible sales from their e3W models, including Treo, Treo Zor, and Zor Grand amount to ₹836.02 crore, supported by a certificate of domes tic value addition (DVA) issued by the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI).

Approved September 15, 2021 the PLI scheme is designed to operate from FY 2023-24 to FY 2027-28, with incentive disbursements scheduled from FY 2024-25 to FY 2028-29.

# Tesla joins top H-1B employers list as Musk pushes for reforms

PNB sees loan growth

New Delhi: State-owned Puniab National Bank (PNB) Thursday said it has posted a credit growth of 15 per cent at ₹11.11 lakh crore for the December quarter. Total advances were ₹9.67 lakh crore at the end of December 31. 2023, PNB said in a regulatory filing. The lender reported a 15.6 per cent rise in total deposits to ₹15.30 lakh crore as against ₹13.23 lakh crore at the end of the third quarter of the previous financial year. Total business of the bank rose 15.3 per cent to ₹26.42 lakh crore as compared to ₹22.90 lakh crore at the end of December 31, 2023.

The H-IB program has been a cornerstone for many of the largest tech firms in the US, which rely on it to meet growing demands for skilled labors particularly from countries like India, China, and the Philippines

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 2: Elon Musk, a prominent advocate for the H-1B visa program, is speaking from both personal experience and as a business owner, with his company, Tesla, increasingly relying on for-

eign talent to fill key roles. Tesla, which previously did not make the top 25 list of H-1B visa employers, now ranks 16th in 2024, according to the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP).

The company's increase in H-1B petitions signals a growing reliance on skilled foreign workers, with 742 initial petitions approved in 2024, more than double the 328 approved in 2023. Tesla also had 1,025 petitions for continuing employ-

ment approved in 2024. Musk, who himself worked in the US on an H-1B visa early in his career, has become one of the most vocal supporters of the program, which allows US companies to hire foreign workers for skilled positions.



"I'm in America along with so many critical people who built SpaceX, Tesla and hundreds of other companies that made America strong because of H-1B," Musk posted on his social media platform X.

He added that he would "go to war on this issue the likes of

issue, with business leaders advocating for broader access to talent, while critics argue that it undermines opportunities for domestic workers in US which you cannot possibly

highlighting

As the debate over foreign workers

continues, Musk's push for H-1B

expansion remains a contentious

visas granted by the US government. The program, which is capped at 65,000 new visas annually, with an additional 20,000 available for workers holding advanced degrees, has been a critical pathway for skilled workers, particularly from countries like India, China, and the Philippines.

In fiscal year 2024, Amazon led the list with 3,871 approved petitions for initial employment, followed by Cognizant with 2,837 and Infosys with 2,504. Other major players in the tech industry, including IBM, Microsoft, and Google also ranked high, with Tesla securing its place alongside these global giants.

With its increased reliance on the program. Tesla's posi tion as a top H-1B employer reflects the ongoing demand for skilled workers in the tech and engineering sectors, and Musk's vocal support underscores the stakes in the larger debate over US immigration policy.









the program's importance to

follows a broader trend in the

tech industry, where compa-

nies have long advocated for

expanding the number of H-1B

Tesla's rise on the H-1B list

comprehend,"

his business success



# **Orissa**POS FRIDAY | JANUARY 3, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR **Record para-athletes to receive Arjuna**

An unprecedented **17 para-athletes are** named in the list of 32 Arjuna awardees to honour their resounding success at the Paris Paralympics

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 2: Double Olympic-medallist Manu Bhaker and chess world champion D Gukesh were among four winners of the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award announced by the Sports Ministry, which also named an unprecedented 17 para-athletes in the list of 32 Arjuna awardees to honour their resounding success at the Paris Paralympics

The other two Khel Ratna winners unveiled by the ministry Thursday for the year 2024 were men's hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh and para-athlete Praveen Kumar.

The athletes selected for this year's Arjuna award include Paris Olympics bronze medal-winning lot of wrestler Aman Sehrawat, shooters Swapnil Kusale and Sarabjot Singh and the men's hockey team players Jarmanpreet Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, Sanjay and Abhishek.

The para-athletes outnumber the able-bodied ones in the list of Arjuna winners this time due to the magnificent Paris showing in which they returned with 29 medals, including seven gold and nine silver.

The official list also includes sprinter Jyothi Yarraji, javelin thrower Annu Rani, women's hockey team captain Salima Tete, world champion boxers Nitu Ghangas and Saweety, veteran swimmer Sajan Prakash, Olympiad gold-winning chess player Vantika Agrawal and squash star Abhay Singh.

Among the para athletes, Paris Paralympics gold-medallists Dharambir (club throw), Navdeep Singh (javelin throw) and Nitesh Kumar (para badminton) are the prominent names in the record number of Arjuna winners.

Paris Olympics bronze-win-

SHORT TAKES

Nelson: Kusal Perera scored

Sri Lanka's fastest Twenty20

International century - from 44

to a consolation win over New

Zealand by seven runs in the the

series. Perera's career-best scor

final match of the three-match

balls - Thursday to spur his team

This combo of file photos shows the winners of Arjuna Award 2024; first row L-R, Saweety Boora (Boxing), Sachin Sarjerao Khilari (Para-Athletics), Abhishek (Hockey), Salima Tete (Hockey), Sanjay (Hockey), Ajeet Singh Yadav (Para-Athletics), Sarabjot Singh (Shooting); second row L-R, Mona Agarw al (Para-Shooting), Rubina Francis (Para-Shooting), Vantika Agrawal (Chess), Manisha Ramadass (Para-Badminton), Thulasimathi Murugesan (Para-Athletics), Kapil Parmar (Para-Judo), Deepthi Jeevanji(Para-Athletics); third row L-R, Hokato Hotozhe Sema (Para-Athletics), Pranav Soorma (Para-Athletiics), Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan (Para-Badminton), Abhay Singh (Squash), Jyothi Yarraji (Athletics), Annu Rani (Athletics), Jarmanpreet Singh (Hockey); fourth row L-R, Navdeep Singh (Para-Athletics), Nitu Ghanghas (Boxing), Swapnil Suresh Kusale (Shooting), Aman Sehrawat (Wrestling), Nitesh Kumar (Para-Badminton), Sajan Prakash (Swimming), and Dharambir (Para-Athletics) РТІ РНОТО

# Lifetime Arjuna for Murlikant Petkar

ndia's first Paralympic gold-medallist Murlikant Petkar, who won the top honours in the 50m freestyle swimming event of the 1972 Heidelberg Paralympics, was named for the Arjuna Awards (Lifetime). An Army man, Petkar's inspiring tale of resurrecting himself as a para-athlete after being disabled due to bullet wounds sustained during the 1965 India-Pakistan war, was recently turned into a biopic, 'Chandu Champion', starring Kartik Aaryan. "This was my only wish left (to be fulfilled). Before today, this was the only regret, this one was left and now I got this fulfilled too and I am very happy about that. I did not get it earlier, that is right but now I am happy to get it. It always feels good to be recognised. Whatever happens is for the good, it is God's wish," Murlikant said over the phone from Pune where he spends his retired life with his son, Arjun.

award in the regular category, including Olympic bronze-medallist Swapnil Kusale's coach Deepali Deshpande. The Dronacharya award

in the lifetime category will be conferred on former India football manager Armando Colaco and badminton coach S Muralidharan. The award is giv-

en to coaches to honour their outstanding work and for enabling athletes to achieve excellence in their chosen sport in top international competitions.



Oldest Olympic gold

REUTERS

Budapest, Jan 2: Five-time Olympic champion Hungarian gymnast Agnes Keleti, the world's oldest living Olympic gold medallist and a survivor of the persecution of Jews in World War Two, died at the age of 103 Thursday, the Hungarian

Olympic Committee said. Born as Agnes Klein in Budapest January 9, 1921, Keleti ioined the National Gymnastics Association in 1938 and won her first Hungarian championship in 1940, only to be banned from all sports activities that year because of her Jewish origin.

"Agnes Keleti is the greatest gymnast produced by Hungary, but one whose life and career were intertwined with the politics of her country and her religion," the International Olympic Committee said in a profile on its website.

The HOC said Keleti escaped deportation to Nazi death camps where hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews were killed, by hiding in a village south of Buda pest with false papers. Her father and several relatives died in the Auschwitz death camp.

She won her first gold at the Helsinki games in 1952 aged 31 when most gymnasts had long been retired, the HOC said.

Keleti reached the peak of her career in Melbourne ir 1956, where she won four gold medals and became the oldest female gymnast to win gold the HOC said. A year later Keleti settled in Israel, where she married and had two children

Her 10 Olympic medals, in cluding five golds, rank Keleti as the second most successful Hungarian athlete of all time, the HOC said. She has also received multiple Hungarian state awards.

# **CT 2025 OPENER IN JEOPARDY**

Karachi: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is in a scramble to complete the renovatior work of the National Stadium ahead of next month's Champions Trophy, and has moved all matches scheduled at the venue to other places. The stadium will play host to the opening match of the ICC marguee event between Pakistan and New Zealand February 19. "Due to the ongoing construction and renovation work it was decided against holding any matches at the NSK as it would only further delay the work and also disturb the players," one official said. The PCB has also announced that the two-Test series against the West Indies later this month would be held in Multan after scheduling the first Test in Karachi after continuing delay in the renovation work remained a cause of concern. The PCB is carrying out massive construction work worth ₹12 billion at all three venues scheduled to host the Cham pions Trophy including Lahore and Rawalpindi

### Uncertainty clouds Rohit's spot **BGT FINALE** Sri Lanka beat Kiwis

playing XI after

oking at the pitch

Skipper Rohit is no longer in coach **Gambhir's scheme** of things after scoring just one second innings half-century in the eight Tests that he has played this season

The Khel ratna

awardees receive a

cash prize of ₹25 lakh

along with a citation

and a medallion. The

**Arjuna awardees** 

are given ₹15 lakh

as cash reward, a

and a citation

others

statuette of Arjuna

ning para-archer Rakesh

Kumar, para-shooters Mona

Agarwal and Rubina Francis

also feature in the list among

three coaches for Dronacharya

The ministry also cleared



#### captaincy that India won its only Test on the tour so far - the lung-opener in Perth. will take a call on the

Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Anil Kumble walked into Test retirements mid-series as their bodies

"Indian cricket's transition is in safe hands as long as there are honest people in the dressing room. Only criteria to be in that dressing room is performance," Gambhir said at the pre-match press conference.

# **UP Rudras blank** Soorma 3-0 in HIL

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rourkela, Jan 2: UP Rudras blanked Soorma Hockey Club 3-0 in their Hero Hockey India League contest here Thursday Sudeep Chirmako (2') scored early in the game for the UP Rudras, while Soorma Hockey Club created multiple opportunities in the second quarter but the UP Rudras held firm and Jobanpreet Singh (38') doubled their lead in the third quarter Akashdeep Singh (58') scored



in a century partnership with captain Charirth Asalanka lifted Sri Lanka to 218-5 - its secondhighest T20 score, as it batted first for the first time in the series. New Zealand held a winning 2-0 lead in the series after winning the first match by eight runs and the second by 45 runs. New Zealand needed to achieve its highest run chase in T20s to complete a clean sweep of the series and was given a good start by Rachin Ravindra who made 69 from 39 balls. But it fell just short. held to 211-7.

### **Dioko's dominance**

Brisbane: Novak Djokovic extended his head-to-head record against Gael Monfils to 20-0 with a commanding 6-3, 6-3 victory in the second round of the Brisbane International, here at the Pat Rafter Arena. Despite their lopsided head-to-head record, Djokovic expressed deep admiration for Monfils, who he first encountered as a junior."We have been playing for many years. I have known Gael since I was 15," Djokovic said. Their first encounter dates back to the 2005 US Open when Djokovic claimed his maiden win against Monfils. Nearly two decades later, the Serbian legend is on the verge of history, aiming to become only the third male player to win 100 tour-level titles after Jimmy Connors (109) and Roger Federer (103).

### Arsenal move up

London: Arsenal is back into second place in the Premier League and in no rush to add players in the transfer window. Mikel Arteta's team beat Brentford 3-1 Wednesday to leapfrog Nottingham Forest and close the gap on league leader Liverpool to six points. "If there's an opportunity, we'll look at it." Arteta said of the January window

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Jan 2: Battered by extra bounce and seam movement along with scathing criticism of his leadership, India skipper Rohit Sharma's career as a Test cricketer seems headed for a dispiriting climax amid swirling speculation that he is set to be dropped from the fifth

and final Test against Australia

GAUTAM GAMBHIR HEAD COACH

starting here Friday.

Rohit, just like Melbourne, was last among recognised batters to enter the nets but this was after head coach Gautam Gambhir refused to confirm whether the out-of-form skipper will be at the toss Friday morning.

"We will take a call on the playing XI after looking at the pitch," Gambhir gave a cryptic reply to a straight query on whether Rohit will play.

If it happens, Rohit will become the first Indian captain to be dropped on account of poor form and he would have none to blame except for the abysmal return of 31 runs from five innings.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who has been the team's top performer with an astonishing 30 wickets in four outings at a sub-20 average, will take over the leadership role in that scenario. It was under Bumrah's d no longer take the rigours of the longest format.

However, in Rohit's case, he will be dropped on the basis of form after Gambhir made it clear that performance is the only thing that would keep a player in the dressing room helmed by him.

If he doesn't come out for toss Friday, it would be safe to conclude that Rohit, the Test batter, played his last knock at the MCG earlier this week where he looked completely out of place on a good track.

While Gambhir didn't spell out the playing eleven, there were enough indications that India might bring back Shubman Gill at number three.

Trailing 1-2, a win for Australia will seal their place in the final at the Lord's against South Africa

India, on other hand, not only require a win but also need Sri Lanka to not lose any of their two Tests at home against Pat Cummins' men.

The visitors aren't looking like a team at ease right now especially Rohit, who is caught between a rock and a hard place both as skipper and batter.

He may or may not announce retirement but playing the traditional format after Sydney looks a long shot.

Add to this, the murmurs of dissension in the team that could have a bearing on how the players perform.

in the last quarter to seal the UP Rudras' second win in the league. UP Rudras took control of the

game right from the push off forcing Soorma Hockey Club to defend deep. In just the second minute, Gurjot Singh ventured into the shooting circle and found Lalit Kumar Upadhyay but his shot was deflected to Chirmako who unleashed a rocket on the half turn to score the first goal of the game.

# Bollipalli exits Brisbane



### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Brisbane, Jan 2: Rithivik Choudary Bollipalli, the latest Indian player to make a steady progress on the ATP doubles circuit, Thursday made a pre-quarterfinal exit from the Brisbane International along with partner Robin Haase.

The Indo-Duch team lost 4-6 2-6 to local alternate combination of Rinky Hijikata and Ja-

son Kubler in 65 minutes in the ATP 250 tournament ahead of the Australian Open-season's first Grand Slam, starting January 12

Bollipalli is set to make his Major debut in Melbourne.

N Sriram Balaji and Miguel Reves-Varela had exited the tournament with a 4-6 2-6 defeat against Manuel Guinard and Arthur Rinderknech in the opening round.

Another Indian who opened his 2025 campaign this week was Yuki Bhambri, who lost the Hong Kong Tennis Open quarterfinal with French part-

ner Albano Olivetti. The fourth seeds had lost 4-6 6-7(5) to Karen Khachanov and Andrey Rublev.

In the singles, Sumit Nagal made a first round exit from the ATP Challenger event in Canberra, losing 6-2 4-6 1-6 to the American qualifier Patrick Kypson.

### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, Jan 2: Debutant forward Lhingdeikim netted four goals as the senior India women's team began its 2025 international campaign on a bright note, defeating the Maldives 11-1 in the second FIFA Friendly at the Padukone-Dravid Centre for Sports Excellence. here Thursday. The Blue Tigresses led 6-1 at half-time.

Lhingdeikim (12', 16', 56', 59') who scored two in each half, along with Nongmeikapam Sibani Devi (45+1'), were the two debutants in India's starting XI. Meanwhile, Ribansi Jamu, Thingbaijam Sanjita Devi, Juhi Singh, Monisha Singha, Khumukcham Bhumika Devi, and Simran Gurung made their debuts off the bench.



Debutant Lhingdeikim stars with four goals

The latter scored a debut brace. India head coach Joakim Alexandersson made wholesale changes to the team that played in the first friendly December 30; goalkeeper Maibam Linthoingambi Devi, defender Aruna Bag, and midfielder and captain Sangita Basfore were the only players to retain their respective

spots in the starting XI from the last match that India won 14-0. India goalkeeper Linthoingambi Devi had to make a couple of regulation saves early on, but once the Blue Tigresses settled into the game, they well and truly opened the floodgates

and were up by four goals by

the 17th minute.

Lhingdeikim scored the first with a right-footed drive from inside the box, before she turned provider, setting up Kajol Dsouza (15'). The debutant scored her second goal a minute later, this time, being fed a through ball by Sibani. Maldives captain Hawwa Haneefa's (17') own goal soon made four in India's favour, as a header by skipper Sangita Basfore deflect ed off her feet and into the goal

The Maldives did compose themselves for a brief period after the initial India onslaught, and managed to score their only goal from the two friendlies, as Mariyam Rifa (27') capitalised on a defensive error near the half-hour mark, the only blemish on an otherwise seamless couple of friendlies for the Blue Tigresses.

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