

Remarkable run

Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine As Light secures spots on the BAFTA Film Awards longlists

LEISURE | P2



Oil spill emergency

Russia-appointed officials in Crimea announces a regional emergency, as oil was detected on the shores of Sevastopol

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Nippon to sue US govt

Japan's Nippon Steel is set to file a lawsuit in response to US President Joe Biden's decision to block its takeover of US Steel

BUSINESS | P11



Fiery fifty

Rishabh Pant conjured up a spectacular 33-ball-61 to somehow keep India afloat against Australia in the final Test

SPORTS | P12

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BHUBANESWAR | SUNDAY | JANUARY 5, 2025

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DESTRUCTION OF LEGACY: View of the partially demolished heritage site Manzil Mubarak in Agra district, Saturday. The demolition work at the 17th-century structure, also known as 'Aurangzeb's Haveli' along the Yamuna, allegedly by an Agra-based builder with 'political connections', was halted following status quo orders issued by the District Magistrate. Revenue department officials have also launched a probe into the incident

NEW DELHI: Eminent physicist Rajagopala Chidambaram, who played a key role in the nuclear tests of 1974 and 1998, passed away Saturday, according to the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). He was 88.

Chidambaram, who was also associated with the nuclear weapons programme, breathed his last at Jaslok Hospital in Mumbai, a DAE official said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was 'deeply saddened" by the demise of Chidambaram.

"He was one of the key architects of India's nuclear programme and made ground-breaking contributions in strengthening India's scientific and strabe remembered with gratgenerations to come," the

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Murdering a journalist is abominable. Jailing him would have been better

New Delhi, Jan 4: ISRO

Saturday said the cowpea

seeds it had sent to space onboard the PSLV-C60 PO-

EM-4 platform have germi-

nated under microgravity

conditions within four days

of the launch of the mission.

eight cowpea seeds as part

of the Compact Research

Module for Orbital Plant

Studies (CROPS) exper-

iment conducted by the

Vikram Sarabhai Space

Centre (VSSC) to study

plant growth in micrograv-

ity conditions. "Life sprouts

in space! VSSC's CROPS ex-

periment onboard PSLV-C60

POEM-4 successfully sprout-

ed cowpea seeds in 4 days.

Leaves expected soon," IS-

The PSLV-C60 mission

RO said in a post on X.

The space agency sent

Nuclear scientist Chidambaram dies ROBBERS KILL 2

Daring daylight robberies by armed miscreants in two different parts of the state, in a span of 24 hours, have raised serious questions over the law and order situation which continues to be on the slide for the past several years in Odisha. Hours after a private gold loan company in Sambalpur town was emptied of 30 kg gold by hoodlums at gun point Friday, two persons were shot dead when they resisted a robbery attempt at Panikoili market in Jajpur district Saturday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jajpur, Jan 4: Two persons were shot dead by armed tegic capabilities. He will men during a robbery attempt at a jewellery store at itude by the whole nation Panikoili of this district Satand his efforts will inspire urday afternoon, police said.

> tified as Sunil Kumar Ray, the jewellery store employee and a native of nearby Bhubaneswar village, and Nila of Soti under Korei block it, Panda was returning on Friday.



and an employee of Energy department, they added.

According to the police, Ray was on his bike to a bank to deposit the store's cash when he was shot around 1.30 pm. He was admitted to the district headquarters hospital in critical condition but succumbed to his injuries, police said. According to sources, four

unidentified armed men on two motorcycles arrived at the scene and fired at Ray, injuring him critically. Hearing Ray's screams, locals rushed to the spot. Anticipating trouble, the armed men The victims were identried to flee when the store reached the site to keep situation. owner chased them from behind and hit their bike.

They fell down and fired upon the car and again tried

his bike when the miscreants tried to snatch his vehicle. They fired upon Panda when he resisted. As a result, he died on the spot. However, two of them managed to escape by snatching the bike of another youth while two others were overpowered. Police arrived at the spot

and launched a manhunt to nab others after arresting the two.

All the miscreants are natives of Assam, it was learnt. As tension mounted in the area, Jajpur SP Yash Pratap Shrimal and DIG Charan Singh Meena tion under control.

Notably, about 30 kg of gold was robbed at gunpoint from the branch of a gold Madhab Panda, a resident to flee. As ill fate could have loan company in Sambalpur,

Smart devices in buses soon: CM

Charan Majhi Saturday announced that smart devices strengthen road safety by will be installed in all buses as part of the state govern- police personnel. ment's effort to ensure road safety and reduce accidents.

The smart device will help detect and prevent different negligence and emergency and loss of consciousness by drivers.

Addressing a function marking the beginning of the National Road Safety

Month here, the chief minister said the state govern-Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: ment will provide assistance Minister Mohan to fit smart devices in buses. Majhi also said to

> recruiting over 2,000 traffic "Five hundred traffic personnel will be recruited this

year", he said. The smart device can analyse the breath of drivincluding drunk driving ers operating vehicles under the influence of alcohol, said

> department, principal secretary, Usha Padhee. "The smart device can

read iris movement and alert the driver if they fall asleep," added Padhee.

Commerce and Transport She said discussions were being held with IIT, Madras for manufacture and procurement of these devices.

The CM also inaugurated the Odisha Yatri app on the occasion. This App will help people to book auto-rickshaws and taxis.

He said the app will help reduce interference of middlemen who are taking benefits between the traveller and drivers.

On the occasion, a padyatra was held to create aware ness of this year's theme of 'Come Home Safe.' Apart from Transport department officials, NCC volunteers and students of several schools and colleges, drivers and artists participated

4 jawans dead as vehicle falls into gorge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Jan 4: Four Army personnel were killed and one injured when their vehicle fell into a gorge in Bandipora district of J&K, officials said Saturday.

The vehicle skidded off the road and fell into a gorge near SK Payen in the north Kashmir district, they said.

Army's Chinar Corps said in a post on X that while per-District, a vehicle of Indian viding immediate succour," Army fell into the gorge due they said in a post on X.



to inclement weather and poor visibility conditions.

"Injured soldiers were promptly evacuated for medical care with assistance from Kashmiri locals, for which we express gratitude forming duty in Bandipora towards the citizens in pro-

hearts lost their lives in the unfortunate accident. Indian Army extends heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families," the Army said. "Deeply grieved by the loss of

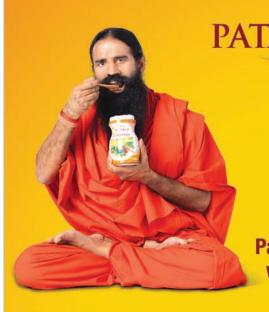
"Tragically four brave-

lives of Indian Army personnel due to a tragic road accident in Bandipora. The nation is deeply grateful for their service and commitment. My condolences to the bereaved families and prayers for the speedy recovery of the injured" the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said in a condolence message

Manoj Sahoo CM's

new private secy Bhubaneswar: Senior bureaucrat Manoj Kumar Sahoo was Saturday appointed as the private secretary to the chief minister of Odisha, an official notification said. Sahoo, a 2006-batch IAS officer, was working as the special secretary to the chief minister after his appointment to the post last month. The Centre had in November 2024, approved his intercadre deputation to Odisha for three years. Sahoo is an Arunachal Pradesh Goa, Mizoram and Union Territories (AGMUT) cadre IAS officer and was serving as deputy election commis sioner in EC office in Delhi before coming to Odisha. Sahoo replaced IAS officer Arindam Dakua who was appointed the ex-officio additional

. cretary of the H&UD department.



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Scan to know the process of making Chyawanprash.

Trump not to be jailed in hush money case

New York, Jan 4: In an extraordinary turn, a judge Friday set President-elect Donald Trump's sentencing in his hush money case for January 10 — little over a week before he's due to return to the White House —

placed two SpaDeX satellites

in orbit on the night of De-

cember 30. The fourth stage

of the rocket carrying the PO-

EM-4 platform has been orbit-

ing the earth with 24 onboard

experiments at an altitude of

The CROPS experiment

aims to understand how

plants grow in the unique

350 km since Tuesday.

conditions of

space, which

is essential for

future long-du-

ration space mis-

nevertheless leaves Trump on course to be the first president to take office convicted of felony crimes.

Judge Juan M Merchan, who presided over Trump's trial, signalled in a written decision that he'd sentence the former and future president to what's known as a conbut indicated he wouldn't ditional discharge, in which be jailed. The development a case gets dismissed if a de-

chan rejected Trump's push to dismiss the verdict and throw out the case on presidential immunity grounds and because of his impending return to the White House. The judge said he found "no legal impediment to sentencing" Trump and that it was "incumbent" on him to sen-

fendant avoids rearrest. Mer

Cowpea seeds germinate in space

travel CROPS is envisioned as a multi-phase platform to develop and evolve ISRO's capabilities for growing and sustaining flora in extraterrestrial environments.

Designed as a fully-automated system, a five to seven-day experiment has been planned to demonstrate seed germination and

plant suste-

sions. nance until The experireaching ment involves the twogrowing eight leaf stage cowpea seeds in in a microa controlled environment with active vironment. thermal regulation, The simulating conditions

that plants might encouncowpea seeds have been placed in a closed-box enviter during extended space ronment with active thermal control. Passive measurements,

including camera imaging, oxygen and carbon dioxide concentrations, relative humidity, temperature, and soil moisture monitoring, are available for plant growth and monitoring, the space agency said.

ISRO also posted a separate 'selfie video' of the chaser satellite of the space docking experiment that is orbiting the earth at an altitude of 470 km.

The chaser satellite is expected to dock with the target satellite in space on Tuesday, a feat that would make India only the fourth country to master this cutting-edge technology after Russia, the US and China.



American pop singer Madonna sparked internet speculation about a possible engagement to her rumoured boyfriend, Akeem Morris, after sharing several photos from her New Year celebrations, in which she flaunted a giant diamond ring on her left hand.

POP ICON MADONNA SPARKS **ENGAGEMENT RUMOURS**

MINAJ SUED FOR ASSAULT BY FORMER EMPLOYEE

American rapper Nicki Minaj has been slapped with a lawsuit over alleged assault, battery and "intentional infliction of emotional distress". The charges have been pressed by a man who alleges the Grammy-nominated rapper struck him in the face during a confrontation.



accuracy • reliability • trust

Today you may want to do only those things that you love to do. You have a very optimistic outlook. Your decision making will be fast, but you may postpone some of them. Ganesha says you may go home dancing if that is what makes you happy.

TAURUS

There is a fair chance that you will make heads turn at work today, forecasts Ganesha. It may not be an auspicious day for auction bids or tenders. Some of you may succeed in interviews and entrance tests this afternoon, says Ganesha

GEMINI Your career is finally on track and your dreams don't look too distant any more. A candlelit dinner with your spouse will leave you wanting for more. And you shall get more. A night to remember indeed. Ganesha, however, warns you to hold your horses or an imminent accident

CANCER

The first half of the day may leave you a little flummoxed. You may get discouraged when thing are not going your way, predicts Ganesha. But your subconscious mind knows how to handle such situations. You will take a break from the rat race and take a detour to your home

LEO You will spend an enjoyable

day with your family members today. Even at the work-place you will be thinking of ways to be with your family. You will take time out for some self-improvement projects. It is necessary to bring about some changes in life, says Ganesha.

VIRGO You will end up spending the

whole day at work today, making detailed plans for the future. While taking important decisions, Ganesha says, keep your partner nformed. Whenever needed, also take the consent of your family to avoid any misunderstandings in the future.

Ganesha says that you will find happiness and enhanced vigor today. You will make plans to go with your friends or family members for a short trip or excursion. You will be confused about something in the day which will drive you to seek answers in religious or philosophical discourses.

SCORPIO

According to Ganesha, you may just be happy basking in the glory of successful business deals. Focus on your target and there's lot more in store for you on the career front, Sometimes, it's all right to pamper your beloved with precious gifts, and for this you may end up splurging today.

SAGITTARIUS

The bossy nature of your soul mate is likely to put you off. At work, you may find yourself helpless and left scratching your head. Ganesha advises and foresees you sitting together with your beloved and resolving all your differences.

CAPRICORN

If you are a civil servant, goo times are ahead for you. Also, you may have to deal with the government for your business and it will turn out to be a fruitful transaction. says Ganesha. If you are a lawyer, doctor, or any other professional, you will need to prove you metal and ensure that you utilise the every opportunity coming

AQUARIUS

Fortune is mighty pleased with you, so go ahead and play roulette if you wish! Partnerships will work today, as will business deals. But somewhere, a dark sentiment may cloud your thinking. Ganesha says that you should enjoy yourself and take life a bit lightly.

PISCES

You will find yourself in a good mood today. Your co-workers will also enjoy being around you. You will be able to influence people for the positive with your respectful demeanor and your sense of humor. You could find yourself splurging on yourself at a spa or a beauty parlor, says Ganesha.



Mumbai: Bollywood actress Rakul Preet Singh's mantra for 2025 seems to be of letting

The *Doctor G* star recently treated fans with a couple of lovely pictures from her most recent holiday

Rakul also penned a long note sharing her learning from the year gone by and how she looks forward to 2025, "This holiday was all about letting go...so here is what I wanted to share ... I always struggled with letting go and relishing food without feeling guilty, or the constant stress of getting back on track .. basically a lot of guilt attached to indulgence and constant noise in my head .. but I'm so happy that I could let go this year !! I was able to enjoy every bit of every meal be it sugar or fried... it's a hard task to live in the moment and enjoy the joy of it and I'm sure a lot of you resonate with it .. so here I am telling you .. it's fine .. pause, enjoy and get back on track .. cos how you feel is more important than how you look .. no one's validation is more important than your acceptance of yourself...

The Runway 34 star further added, "Ok now yes obviously we do need to get back on track and it is time to do so but without any fads, without any stress... embracing all the memories of the trip and looking into the future of 2025."



Mumbai: Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas has revealed that her goal for 2025 is "abundance" in joy, happiness and peace

Priyanka took to her Instagram, where she shared a string of pictures with her family including husband Nick Jonas and daughter Malti Marie. In the first image, Priyanka is seen flaunting her svelte figure in an orange bikini as she stood on her luxury villa's parapet.

Another image showed her sporting an itsy-bitsy red bikini posing alongside Nick on the beach while her daughter played with water. Some images showed happy moments the family spent together. In one picture

the actress is seen sitting on a jet ski. While others had moments of

Privanka and daughter Malti together.

She wrote as the caption: "Abundance. That is my goal for 2025. In joy, in happiness and in peace. May we all find abundance this new year. So grateful for my family. Happy 2025. Thank you @ airbnb for such wonderful memories.'

On the work front, the *Dostana* actress has several exciting projects lined up, including Heads of State, where she stars alongside Idris Elba and John Ce-



All We Imagine As Light in BAFTA list New Delhi, Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light* continues its remark-

able run on the international awards circuit, securing spots on the BAFTA Film Awards longlists in three categories, including Best Director.
The British Academy Friday

evening shared the results of the first round of voting across 25 categories for its upcoming awards gala. Kapadia's Malayalam-Hindi

movie, which scripted history by becoming the first Indian movie to win the Grand Prix award at the Cannes in May, has made it to three longlists of 10 movies each Best Film Not in English Language, Best Director and Best Original Screenplay Besides All We Imagine As Light,

Sandhya Suri's Santosh and Karan Kandhari's Sister Midnight are nominated in the longlist for Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer.

Indian-origin British actor Dev Patel has also found a mention in the longlist for his directorial debut *Monkey Man*. Patel is nominated in the Leading Actor longlist.

According to BAFTA, the films mentioned in the longlists will advance to the nominating stage of voting, which started Friday and will conclude January 10.

The final nominations will be announced January 15. The 2025 BAFTA Film Awards will be held February 16. рті

9

8

4

4

8

2

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a

manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains

3

6 5

9 1

8

the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

2

3 5

6

SUDOKU

3

5

CROSSWORD

SOLUTIONS

4

6

'India can host music festivals bigger than Coachella⁵

events like Coachella, Punjabi singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh said during his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on New Year's Day. The globally popular singer met the prime minister at his residence

potential to host music festivals that are

bigger in scale than renowned global

NEW DELHI: India has the

Wednesday where they discussed music, culture and India's artistic legacy. During the meeting, PM Modi asked Dosanjh about his experience of travelling

outside of India and performing at various global festivals like the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in April 2023. "I feel that they have made festivals like Coachella or any other very big. And I believe we can make

> Diljit said music is embedded in India's cultural fabric and noted how people who are not trained professionally can often display impeccable talent.

world for such festivals," said the 40-year-old

it much bigger. People travel from all over the

"Whether we are eating food in a dhaba or someone is singing in Rajasthani, the song we listen to is so melodious that I feel like I should stop singing. He is singing such a good song. And I sing professionally, this person is not even singing professionally. And he is singing better than me. He has so much art in him. If such a development happens here, people from all over the world will come," Diliit said.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES

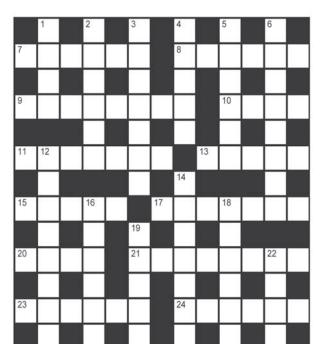


BREVITY



OOST

CROSSWORD



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21 Deficiency

24 Lauds

23 Kind of artist

Across

- 7 Automatons 8 Block out
- 9 Court game 10 Beat badly
- 11 Theatre

- presentation
- 15 Greek letter
- 17 Dig up 20 Glance over

- of roses
- Down 1 Lotus position
- discipline
 - 2 Concession stand treat
 - (3.3)3 Canaries, e.g.
- 4 Sacred text
- 5 Plant disease
- (3-3)
- 6 Peevish
- 12 Mackintosh
- 14 Pool game 16 Infinitely small
- 18 Sharp as a tack
- 19 English race place
- 22 Jamboree

SUDOKU

OPE V A M O O S E A L I B I ENGULF

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

wntown





Dharitri and **Orissa POST Editor Tathagata Satpathy** speaking at a function to mark the 51st anniversary of the state's leading Odia daily 'Dharitri' at the twin publications' headquarters in Bhubaneswar, Saturday. Chief Executive of the publications Advasha Satpathy, and Sahityayana in-charge and former Odisha Sahitya Akademi president Dr Hrushikesh Mallick are seen on the dais.

Dharitri staffers presenting a short play on environment protection on

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: Cold wave conditions gripped parts of Odisha Saturday with the mercury dropping to 4.6 degrees Celsius in G Udaygiri in Kandhamal district, the IMD said.

Ten places in the state recorded temperatures below 10 degrees Celsius in the last 24 hours, it said. Semiliguda in Koraput district

recorded 5.5 degrees Celsius, Phulbani in Kandhamal was at 7.5 degrees Celsius, Rourkela registered 8.7 degrees Celsius. Koraput was at 8.8 degrees Celsius, Jharsuguda and Angul were at 9 degrees Celsius, Daringibadi recorded 9.5 degrees Celsius, and Bhawanipatna and Chiplima registered 9.9 degrees Celsius.

State capital Bhubaneswar recorded the season's lowest temperature of 12.7 degrees Celsius, 2.3 notches below the normal.

Neighbouring Cuttack city also shivered at 12.4 degrees Celsius. The IMD said no large change in the minimum temperature is expected in the next two days, and thereafter, it might rise by 2-3 degrees Celsius.

Light to moderate fog is expect ed Sunday morning in Angul, Dhenkanal, Khurda, Cuttack, Ganjam, Gajapati, Nayagarh, Keonjhar, and Mayurbhanj districts, it said.



COLD WAVE GRIPS STATE Social security for only 5.5% elderly workforce



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: Odisha performs poorly when it comes to providing social security to the elderly workforce in informal sector, which is one of the lowest in the country.

Around 37.3 per cent of the state's elderly population are currently working, which is slightly above the national average of 35.7 per cent, according to an analysis of Longitudinal Aging Study of India (LASI) Wave I report by the Centre for Youth and Social Development in its study 'Emergent Odisha: Demography and Development'. "However, only 5.5 per cent of them are covered under any work-related social insurance scheme — one of the

lowest in the country," it said. Additionally, 46 per cent of

the elderly in the state have had no schooling, while only 23.7 per cent have completed secondary schooling or above. Among elderly women, a huge 82 per cent are economically dependent, either fully or partially, on others. compared to 54 per cent of men, the report said.

The labour participation rate among the elderly in the state is relatively high, with many continuing to work out of financial necessities. However, most of their work occurs in informal sectors and low-paying jobs, making it difficult for them to meet basic needs,

"This economic scenario. characterised by low wages 46% of the elderly in Odisha have had no schooling, while only 23.7% have completed secondary

82% elderly women are economically dependent, either fully or partially, on others, compared to 54% of men

and insecure employment, significantly contributes to the perpetuation of poverty levels among the elderly in Odisha. The link between low wages, unstable job security and poverty translates into fighting social and economic burdens.

The majority of the elderly in the state comes from the informal sector, yet only 35.7 per cent of them have access to IG-NOAP (Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension) scheme of the government and 38.4 per cent have access to widow pension as per the LASI Wave I report.

There were a total of 3.6 million elderly pensioners in Odisha covered under the MBPY (Madhu Babu Pension Yojana), according to the Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department of the state govern-

Additionally, 2.03 million elderly beneficiaries were enrolled in the NSAP (National Social Assistance Programme).

ISCHAEMIC STROKE

25% people have access to rehab centre in an hour

 $\mathbf{R}^{ ext{oughly a fourth of the Indian}}$ rehabilitation centre within an hour of experiencing an ischaemic stroke -- caused when a blood clot affects supply to the brain, a study has found.

The research, published in the International Journal of Stroke, also estimated that there is less than one ischaemic stroke centre per million population.

Ischaemic stroke is the most common, accounting for about 70-80 per cent of all strokes in India, according to a September 2024 study, published in the journal Scientific Reports.

In the recent study, researchers, including those from the US' Ascension Health and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS),



Hyderabad, found that a total of 566 stroke centres equipped with the 'intravenous thrombolysis' method of treatment (which breaks up blood clots) were spread across 26 states and Union Territories.

Of the 566, over 60 per cent (361) were found to be also equipped with endovascular therapy for stroke patients, considered su-

Typically, an ischaemic stroke patient was 115 kilometres away from the nearest intravenous thrombolysis treatment centre and about 130 kilometres away from the nearest endovascular therapy centre, the researchers found.

Further, a little over 26 per cent of the Indian population can access intravenous thrombolysis centre in under an hour, while about a fifth can access endovascular ther-

apy centre, the team found. For the analysis, data on "intravenous thrombolysis capable (IVT-C) and endovascular treatment capable (EVT-C)" stroke centres were collected in March 2021 from medical devices and pharmaceutical industry providers. Time taken to drive to the nearest stroke care centre was estimated using the application

'Google Distance Matrix API'.

"Access within one hour to an IVT-C and an EVT-C centre was available to 26.3 per cent and 20.6 per cent of the Indian population, respectively," the authors wrote.

"The average stroke centres per million (SCPM) population was 0.41 and 0.26 for IVT-C and EVT-C, respectively," they wrote.

Further, "median (typical) distances to the nearest IVT-C and EVT-C centres were 115 kilometres and 131 kilometres, respec-

The authors said establishing stroke facilities equipped with intravenous thrombolysis and endovascular treatments in poorly served regions in India is urgently needed to increase access and improve outcomes for stroke patients.

RBI's financial literacy programme in City

Bhubaneswar: As part of its drive to create awareness on financial literacy among people, RBI's Bhubaneswar branch Saturday organised a programme for visually challenged persons and distributed booklets translated into Braille script among the participants. The financial literacy and awareness programme was conducted on the premises of 'The Odisha Association for the Blind' here on the occasion of International Braille Day, Around 180 participants, including students, employees, members, and office bearers of the association, attended the programme. "The Financial Awareness Messages (FAME) booklet of RBI, translated in Braille script, was distributed among the participants," Madhukar Anand, deputy general manager, RBI, said.

Over 3K nat'l, int'l industry leaders, investors to attend Utkarsh Odisha

conferences over two days,

Special sessions will be

dedicated to various industry

sectors, including speeches

by prominent industry lead-

ers. A CEO roundtable with

the Chief Minister, a session

for Odia entrepreneurs, and

another session specifically

from January 28.

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: Around 3,000 national and international industry leaders, investors and start-up entrepreneurs are expected to attend 'Utkarsh Odisha: Make in Odisha Conclave 2025' scheduled to be held here from January 28, official

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the industry leaders and investors on the inaugural day

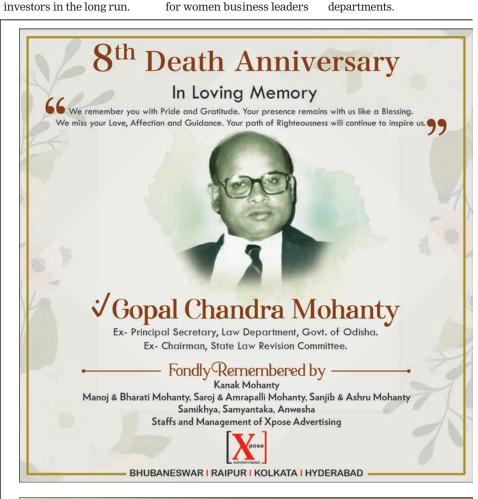
Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who reviewed the preparations for the two-day event with officials Saturday, emphasised creating a unique identity for Odisha among national and international

He urged for flawless and attractive management of all programmes to make the event a success

The Chief Minister said the event would position Odisha as a preferred destination for investors in the long run.

According to the Chief will also be part of the event. Minister's Office (CMO), Additionally, a session for the Confederation of Indian Odia women entrepreneurs Industries (CII) will hold its will also be held. An industrial exhibition is national executive council meeting January 27. The scheduled to take place from main event will feature four January 28 to 30. plenary sessions, 16 sectoral sessions, and four roundtable

The meeting was attended by Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain, Development Commissioner Anu Garg, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Nikunja Bihari Dhal Additional Chief Secretary of Public Administration de partment Surendra Kumar and Principal Secretaries and Secretaries of various





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downtown





IN MEMORIAM: Guests attend the 15th Rajkishore Nayak Memorial Gandhi Lecture- 2025 titled 'Global Legacy of Gandhian Ideology' at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

Ekamra Utsav to begin today in City

The event to feature a variety of cultural, culinary, and entertainment events celebrating **Odisha's heritage** and local talent

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: The Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) is all set to organise the Ekamra Utsav from January 5 to January 16, said BDA vice chairman N Thirumala Naik here. Saturday.

The festival will feature a diverse range of events, including a Park Utsav, food festival, city lighting, flea market, and Ekamra Walks.

The food festival will run at



the IDCO Exhibition Ground from January 5 to January 16, showcasing Odia, North Indian, South Indian, and international cuisines. Food trucks offering flavourful dishes will also be stationed throughout

The Park Utsay, scheduled for January 5 to 12, will take place in five iconic parks: Madhusudan Park, Indira Gandhi Park, Buddha Park, Forest Park, and Abdul Kalam Park. The event will feature health-focused activities in

the mornings from 6:30 am to am, including yoga, zumba, and health talks. Evening sessions (3:30 pm to 6:30 pm) will offer cultural programmes, such as storytelling, workshops on waste management, magic shows, and live performances by local singers.

A major highlight of the Ekamra Utsav is the night flea market, running from 4pm to 11pm daily. The market will offer a variety of products, from clothing to handcrafted décor, and provide a platform for local entrepreneurs and artists. Visitors can enjoy live performances from budding artists, college bands, and folk performers, along with demon strations of traditional Odisha crafts like terracotta work and Pattachitra painting.

Ekamra Utsav promises to be an unforgettable celebration of Odisha's culture, creativity and community spirit.

Man arrested in fatal hit-and-run incident



Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: A 42-year-old man was arrested by Tamando police Saturday in connection with a tragic hit-and-run incident that led to the death of a 19-month-old child. The child was allegedly run over and dragged by the suspect's mini-truck, sustaining fatal injuries.

tified as Abhay Kumar Nayak, a resident of Balipatna, located on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar.

The suspect has been iden-

A senior officer at the Tamando police station said that the incident took place Friday

Max Temp 25.5° Min Temp 12.5° 80% 80% Humidity Rainfall

FORECAST ForecastFog/mist in the morning and mainly clear sky later

LASSIFIED

I, Mamuni Behera, W/o - Debaraj Behera, R/o - Khandiabandha, Near Kartik Mandap, PO - Gopinathpur. Dist. - Puri, do hereby declare that two nos. of original sale deed bearing No. 1142001051 and 1142001036 which link to my sale deed No. -11482400096 have lost on 02.01.25 at Badasankha Market area, Puri, Which is beyond recovery. I Shall not be liable if some misuse the same after getting. Contact - 9090456678

The child's parents, though injured. survived and were rushed to a nearby hospital by bystanders. **Tragically, the infant** later succumbed to his injuries while

evening when the victim's family was returning home on their motorcycle. The child and his parents were involved in a head-on collision with Nayak's mini-truck near the Bhagabanpur bus stand.

receiving treatment

Instead of stopping to help the family, Nayak allegedly fled the scene, dragging the victims for several meters. Witnesses quickly gathered and tried to stop the truck, but Nayak managed to escape after a brief confrontation with locals. The child's parents. though injured, survived and were rushed to a nearby hospital by bystanders. Tragically, the infant later succumbed to his injuries while receiving treatment.

The Tamando police have charged Abhay under Sections 281 and 106 of the BNS and produced him before a local court

PM to lay foundation for Rayagada rly division Jan 6



₹107 crore projects to feature key components to strengthen the region's railway infrastructure

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually lay the foundation for the new Rayagada railway division of the East Coast Railway (ECoR) zone January 6, alongside inaugurating several other key railway projects. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw will join the event at Jammu, while the ceremony at Rayagada will be attended by Governor Kambhampati Hari Babu, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, and Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu,

among others.

railway division project aims to enhance rail connectivity and drive economic growth in the tribal regions of southern Odisha. Headquartered in Rayagada, the division will include a modern DRM office (G+2 structure spanning 12,000 sqm) and a divisional control office to optimise railway operations. Additionally, residential facilities for staff and officers will be developed to support its functions.

The initiative is expected to significantly improve transportation links, enhance regional economic activity, and create employment opportunities. The project will also incorporate sustainability features, such as rainwater harvesting systems, along with adequate parking and circulating areas.

In addition to the Rayagada

The initiative is expected to improve transportation links, enhance regional economic activity, and create employment opportunities

Project will also incorporate sustainability features, such as rainwater harvesting systems, along with adequate parking and circulating areas

will inaugurate the new Jammu railway division and the Charlapalli terminal station in Hyderabad. These projects are part of a broader push to modernise India's railway infrastructure and promote regional development. The Rayagada division is

anticipated to play a pivotal

role in addressing the trans-

portation needs of the tribal

belt, promoting socio-economic development, and ensuring better access to markets and resources for local communities The foundation stone laving ceremony for the Rayagada di-

vision will be held in Rayagada, with the Prime Minister participating virtually from Jammu. The initiative underscores the government's commitment to strengthening rail infrastructure and connectivity,

particularly in underserved re-

gions, contributing to India's

of Indian Origin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: The state government Saturday launched a central command control centre to coordinate with guests during the threeday Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) starting January 8.

This centre will provide information and assistance to around 7,000 Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) who are likely to attend the event here, a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

The centre can be reached



The centre to provide with an Interactive Voice Response system in place for information and event-specific inquiries. Perassistance to around sonnel from various departments will be deployed to as 7K Non-Resident sist the attendees. **Indians and Persons** Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugu

> will address the gathering January 10. Deputy Chief Minister Pra vati Parida, who also oversees the tourism department, con

> rate the event January 9, while

President Droupadi Murmu

are prepared for the occasion. "So far, 2,500 NRIs have registered, and guides speaking Odia, Hindi, and English will assist them at 31 tourist

firmed that all departments

destinations," she said. For security and smooth operations, the Commissionerate Police in Bhubaneswar-Cuttack has deployed over 40 platoons of force, and around 100 Pravasi Mitra (volunteers)

will assist with traffic manage

Alcohol consumption linked to seven types of cancer

US surgeon general urges cancer warnings for alcoholic drinks and calls for reassessment of alcohol consumption **quidelines**

lcoholic drinks should carry a warning about cancer risks on their label, the US Surgeon General said Friday in a move that could signal a shift toward more aggressive tobacco-style regulation for the sector if ad-

US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said alcohol consumption increases the risk of at least seven types of cancer, including breast, colon and liver cancer, but most US consumers remain unaware of this.

Murthy also called for the guidelines on alcohol consumption limits to be reassessed so that people can weigh the cancer risk when deciding whether or how much to drink. US dietary guidelines currently recommend two or fewer drinks per day for men and one drink or less per day for women.

"Alcohol consumption is the third leading preventable cause of cancer in the United States, after tobacco and obesity, Murthy's office said in a statement accompanying the new report, adding the type of alcohol consumed does not matter.

His advisory sent shares in alcohol companies including Diageo (DGE.L), Pernod Ricard (PERP.PA). Anheuser-Busch InBev (ABI.BR), and (HEIN.AS), in some cases over 3 per cent. The Distilled Spirits Council

of the United States (DISCUS), which represents top spirits makers, pointed to a new report, opens new tab by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine showing that moderate alcohol consumption is associated with lower rates of death from any causes, as well as higher risk of breast cancer.

"The current health warning on alcohol products has long informed consumers



about the potential risks of the consumption of alcohol," the group's vice president for science, Amanda Burger, said in a statement, adding that no one should drink for health

The US Beer Institute promotes responsible consumption of alcohol, a spokesperson said.

onsumption is ssociated with ower rates of leath from any ıs higher risk o

WHO says there is no safe level and even a small amount of alcohol can narm health - a as prompted debate around of moderate drinking

It is unclear when or if the Surgeon General's suggestions will be adopted. US President Joe Biden's administration is ending. Murthy could be succeeded by Janette Nesheiwat, a director of a New York chain of urgent care clinics and president-elect Donald Trump's pick for the role.

Trump, whose brother died from alcoholism and who does not drink himself, has long warned about the risks of alcohol. Robert F Kennedy Jr, Trump's nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services, has been open about his past struggles with heroin and alcohol, and says he attends Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

The decision to update labels will ultimately be made by Con-

'SAVE LIVES'

Public health bodies like the World Health Organisation (WHO) are also increasingly turning their attention toward alcohol after making progress on stronger tobacco controls.

The WHO says there is no safe level of drinking and that even a small amount of alcohol can harm health - a position that has prompted tense debate around the impact of moderate

drinking and its role in society. The Mayo Clinic says the health risk is low for moderate intake, opens new tab and rises with the amount consumed. The Surgeon General report says higher consumption raises risks and imbibing two drinks a day would result in about five more women out of 100 developing cancer and three more men

out of 100. Current US dietary guidelines run until 2025, and companies including Diageo and Heineken have lobbied officials ahead of the change, lobbying records show, amid concerns the US could adopt the WHO's language around safe consumption. Other countries guidelines already include such language, while nations like Ireland have already moved to introduce warning labels.

Some scientists accused the industry of misleading people about the risks of developing cancer from drinking in a 2017 study. DISCUS said the researchers had anti-alcohol biases and their study was selective.

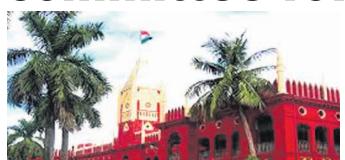
The Surgeon General's advisory said alcohol is responsible for 100,000 US cancer cas es and 20,000 cancer deaths each year, and more than the 13,500 alcohol-associated traffic crash deaths.

.ASSIFIED AD` CONTACT 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-9861341488

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.

DMF FUND MISUSE

HC directs state-level committee for probe



OST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar/ Hatadihi, Jan 4: The Orissa High Court has directed the state-level committee to investigate and take appropriate action concerning allegations of misuse, irregularities, and corruption in the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) Trust funds in Keonjhar

A bench led by Chief Justice Chakradhari Sharan Singh and Justice Savitri Rath issued the directions on the basis of Section 15(4) and 9B of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, and Rule 18(B) of the Odisha DMF Rules, 2015. The Chief Secretary of the

Baripada, Jan 4: A 45-year-old

man was trampled to death by an

elephant in Mayurbhani district

Saturday, Forest officials said.

The incident happened at

Daddur village under Baripa-

da Sadar police station. The

state serves as the chairperson of the state-level committee.

The court emphasised that allegations raised in the writ petition, backed by documents on record, necessitate a detailed inquiry by the committee. It also directed the state's government counsel to furnish relevant documents and counters for the committee's exam-

The court further noted that the allegations should first be reviewed by the state-level committee, which will submit its findings and determine the nature of actions to be taken. The high court clarified that it will decide on the necessity of further intervention after

Man killed in elephant attack in Mayurbhanj

deceased was identified as

Madhusudan Pandey. He en-

countered an elephant in the

paddy field which trampled

him to death, they said. Pand-

ey was rushed to PRM Medical

College and Hospital, where

doctors declared him dead,

police said. An unnatural death

Key allegations include executing projects without proper tenders, releasing funds disproportionately, failing to provide utilisation certificates, and disbursing advance payments to contractors, such as E&W LLP.

Other accusations involve executing projects without Trust Board approval, overspending on project estimates, discrepancies in DMF bank account funds, unauthorised appointments, and irregularities in contingency grants.

Initial complaints regarding these issues were submitted to the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, Planning and Coordination Department, and Keonjhar Collector. Following inaction, a case (W.P.(C) No. 26601/2024) was filed in the High Court October 22, 2024. Subsequently, the DMF Chairperson and Keonjhar Collector were served notices, with a response filed November 27, 2024.

The high court has scheduled the next hearing for

case has been registered in this

connection and the body was

sent for postmortem, they said.

from Similipal National Park

had sneaked into the Shya-

makhunta block area under

Baripada Forest Division, offi-

A herd of 30 wild elephants



FOLK MELODY: Artistes perform Sambalpuri dance to the beats of traditional music 'Dulduli' at a procession held in front of Samaleswari temple to mark the beginning of district-level cultural festival Sambalpur Lok Mahotsav in Sambalpur, Saturdav

Youth detained in Basoi murder case

The horrific crime was committed with the motive to exact revenge for brothers' killing

Parjang, Jan 4: Police Saturday detained a youth for the gruesome murder of a co-villager on New Year's Day at Basoi village under this police limits in Dhenkanal district.

The accused was identified as Saroj Biswal, 28, alias Maku in the village. Saroj allegedly killed Rakesh Sethi, 27, by hacking him to death with a machete. Later, he chopped the body into 50 pieces and scattered the dismembered body parts on the village road.

Saroj admitted that he had

had been hiding behind a bush

near the village pond since

the day of the murder. He was

nabbed late Friday night 48

hours after committing the

crime. Police caught him over

a tip-off when he had come to

Following his detention, po-

lice recreated the crime scene

in Basoi village Saturday. Saroj

disclosed to police how he mur-

dered the victim and disposed off

the murder weapon -- a machete

and a lathi -- in the pond near the

his house for food.

ers over the past three years. In 2021, his younger brother Chiroj Biswal, 25, was murdered in Balasore, and in 2023, another brother, Manoj Biswal, was killed in a cashew forest in the village. The accused claimed that the deceased, Rakesh Sethi, was involved in these murders, and he killed Rajesh to avenge his brothers' deaths.

ing the deaths of his two broth-

Dhenkanal Additional SP Prabhat Biswal, Kamakhyanagar SDPO Gyanaranjan Mishra, and Parjang IIC Priyabrata Das were present during the crime scene recreation. They were joined by

2024057, Dated: 27.12.2024

Name of work: EXECUTION OF

BALLASTLESS TRACK AT PURI STATION

Lakh, EMD : ₹ 6,53,800.00, Completion period of the Work : 05 (Five) Months.

Tender closing date & time: At 1200

No manual offers sent by Post/Courie

Fax or in person shall be accepted agains such e-tenders even if these are submitted

on firm's letter head and receive in time

All such manual offers shall be considered

Complete information including e-tende

the website fifteen days before the date of

osing of tender to note any change

tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital

Signature Certificate and must be registered

on IREPS Portal. Only registered tendere

The tenderers should read all instruction:

to the tenderers carefully and ensure

compliance of all instructions including

check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list)

of Tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-

of chapter 2 of Tender documents,

submission of Annexure-B duly verified

Chief Administrative Officer (CON)

Bhubaneswa

and signed by Chartered Accountant

bidder can participate on e-tendering

without any consideration.

Sarang OIC Prashant Kumar Sahu, Dadaraghati OIC Shakti Prasad Sahu, and the Parjang ASI Ramesh Chandra Swain along with scientific team mem bers and fire service personnel.

The investigation of the case is now under the supervision of SDPO Gyanaranjan Mishra. A detailed account of the murder will be provided by the Parjang PS officer-in-charge Sunday, police authorities said.

2024-25, Dtd. 30.12.2024 TIONING OF CMS CROSSINGS BY ROBOTIC WELDING TECHNOLOGY AT VARIOUS STATION YARDS UNDER THE

JURISDICTION OF DIVISIONAL ENGINEER (DEN)/CENTRAL II Approx. cost of the work: ₹ 70,54,702.20

YARD FOR PLATFORM NO. 7 & 8 UNDER Bid Security: ₹ 1,41,100.00 KHURDA ROAD (KUR) DIVISION OF EAST OF WORN OUT POINTS & CROSSING BY

USING H3C ELECTRODES AND OTHER STATION YARDS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF DIVISIONAL ENGINEER (DEN)/EAST AND DIVISIONAL ENGINEER (DEN)/CENTRAL IN SAMBALPUR DIVISION.

Bid Security: ₹ 84,400.00.

(3) e-Tender No.: 41-eT-DENC-SBP-24 Name of the work: MAINTENANCE OF TRACK FOR RAISING OF SPEED UPTO DIVISIONAL ENGINEER (DEN)/CENTRAL

prospective tenderers are advised to revisit Approx. cost of the work: ₹ 2,61,06,331.97

(for all st. nos.). Tender closing Date & Time: At 1500

Fax or in person shall be accepted agains Complete information including e-tende

in website : www.ireps.gov.in Note: The prospective tenderers are advised

to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before he date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigendum issued for this tender Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.)

PR-856/P/24-25

been mentally disturbed follow-According to police, Saroj

> Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice Bid Identification No. FE&CC-DFO(T) KJR-02/2024-25

No.533, Dt.31,12,2024 e-mail: dfo.keonjhar@odisha.gov.i

No. of the Work :- 21 Nos. Waterbody (Pond)
 Estimated Cost:- From Rs.4.238 lakh to Rs.11.127 Lakh

3. Period of completion :- 2 (Two) Calendar Months

4. Date and Time of availability of Bid document in the portal: From 10.00 Hour of 06.01.2025 to 17.00 Hour of 15.01.2025

5. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal:- 17.00 Hour of 15.01.2025 Date of opening of Bid from Portal:- 11.30 Hour of 16.01.2025

Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid:- Divisional Forest Office Keonihar Division, Keonihar

"http://tendersodisha.gov.in".

OIPR-08042/11/0030/2425

Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer

B.J.B. AUTONOMOUS COLLEGE BHUBANESWAR - 751014

TENDER CALL NOTICE

Dt.02.01.2025 No.CAD-2061 : Sealed tenders are invited from registered firms/dealers/suppliers having valid GST registration, PAN and IT Clearance for supply of laboratory equipments for the College so as to reach the undersigned through registered/speed post only latest by 5.00 P.M. on or before 15.01.2025. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotations without assigning any reason thereof. The details of terms and conditions and department wise list of equipments are available in the website of the College www.bjbcollege.in

OIPR-11011/11/0020/2425

Sd./- Principal

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ोदा Bank of Baroda | Chowk, Dist.: Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN - 768001

Regional Office: Sambalpur, 1st Floor, At: Christian Para, G.M. College

PR-118/CH/24-25

VEHICLE AUCTION SALE NOTICE

Applications are invited from interested bidders for purchase of following vehicles, seized by the Bank on "As is where is basis" as per terms and conditions listed below. This public notice will be treated as a notice to the borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors of the loans. They are hereby advised to be present at the auction venue on the auction date and are free to liquidate their entire dues before the auction date, failing which the vehicles will be auctioned and balance dues, if any will be recovered from them with interest and apply the service of the interest and cost

SI. No.	Contact Number	Name of Borrower	Vehicle No. / Chasis No. / Engine No.	Make & Model	Month / Year of Manufacturing	FB/H) /Rid Increase :	A/c. No., IFSC Code				
1.	BISRA ROAD, ROURKELA / 7682829020	MR. ATISH KUMAR MISHRA	OD-14S-7500 / MA3C2F63SKF559556 / K12MN9003470	CAR MARUTI DZIRE VXI	JUNE 2019	₹3,33,000/- / ₹33,300/- / ₹2,000/-	78320015181219 / BARB0VJROUR				
2.	BISRA ROAD, ROURKELA / 7682829020	MR. RAMKRUSHNA GAUDA	OD-14T-1049 / MA3CZF03SKG569260 / D13A3537454	CAR MARUTI DZIRE VDI	JULY 2019	₹3,56,000/- / ₹35,600/- / ₹2,000/-	78320015181219 / BARB0VJROUR				
3.	KHETRAJPUR / 7752050848	MD. SAMIULLA SEIKH	OD-15P-6786 / MA3CZF03SKL604981/ D13A3551916	CAR MARUTI DZIRE VDI	NOVEMBER 2019	₹ 4,20,000/- / ₹ 42,000/- / ₹ 2,000/-	52370015181219 / BARB0KHETRA				
Parking Yard: Tarkara Pump House, Rourkela, Odisha											

1. Vehicles Inspection Date: 06.02.2025, Time: 1.00 PM

2. Last date of submission of online EMD 06.02.2025 latest by 2:30 PM

3. The schedule date of auction to be held on 07.02.2025 from 11.00 AM to 1.00 PM (E-Auction Site: https://bob.auctiontiger.net)

4. Bid and declaration form along with self-attested Aadhar, PAN, EMD deposit with UTR number to be submitted to Authorised officer on or before 06.02.2025 for getting user ID & password from Auction tiger. (Help Desk No.: 9265562821/9265562819) **TERMS AND CONDITIONS:**

1) Applications accompanied by ID/address proof copy (originals to be verified) and EMD of 10% of Reserve price as applicable fo each vehicle in shape of Banker's cheque/Draft drawn in favour of **Bank of Baroda**, **payable at Concerned Branch** should reach or or before **06.02.2025 upto 2.30 P.M. 2**) However the bank reserves the right to accept/reject/cancel the auction process of any/al vehicles at its own discretion at any point of time without assigning any reason whatsoever. 3) Bid amount does not include any statutory tax pending and applicable RTA fees. All these cost are additional and must be borne by the successfully bidder. 4) Dispute pertaining to year of manufacture, documents, condition of vehicle/assets, etc. will not be consider after successful bid. 5) Entry to the event is strictly restricted to the registered bidder only. 6) The refund of EMD will be made immediately after the closure of the bidding process to the unsuccessful bidders. 7) Successful Highest bidder has to deposit a minimum amount of 25% of the bic amount inclusive EMD on the same day, failing which the bid taken will not be considered as EMD amount will be forfeited withou further intimation. 8) The balance should be paid by the successful bidder within next 15 days from the date of auction. 9) Delayed interest @18%p.a. will be charged against any amount due and payable by the successful bidder beyond 15 days from the date of the event, subject to a maximum waiting period of 22 days from the date of auction. 10) Default in payment beyond the stipulated 22 days, will lead to deal cancellation and forfeiture of EMD paid and the vehicle/equipment/machinery will be resold without further nformation. Acceptance of payment on later date will be sole discretion of Bank. 11) Successful Bidders are fully responsible fo taking delivery of all vehicles or equipments from Parking yard after full payment is made. **12)** Successful bidders must remove the vehicles/equipments from Parking yard within 7 days from the date of release order along with RC Transfer in to their name.

Authorised Officer Place: Sambalpur

Crop loss claims yet another farmer's life

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, Jan 4: Unable to bear the heavy crop loss caused by unseasonal rain, a farmer in the coastal agrarian district of Kendrapara allegedly committed suicide by consuming

The deceased, identified as 57-year-old Kailash Chandra Dhal from Koladiha village under Aul police limits, reportedly took the drastic step after suffering extensive

crop damage. Family members revealed that Kailash had cultivated paddy on 8 acres of land by borrowing over ₹2.5 lakh from local moneylenders. He had planned to repay the loan after the harvest, but his hopes were dashed

severe crop damage. Distressed and overwhelmed by the thought of repaying the debt, Kailash was in mental

when unseasonal rains caused

After having dinner Friday night, he went to sleep as usual. However, family members discovered Saturday morning that he had consumed poison. He was rushed to the Aul Community Health Centre (CHC), where doctors declared him



dead, according to his nephew, Kumarsen Dhal.

Kailash is survived by two sons. The police later seized the body and sent it for an autopsy.

This tragic incident follows another similar case December 25, when 52-year-old Dalit sharecropper Babagrahi Mallick from Santhapura village under Derabish block died of cardiac arrest.

Babagrahi, who had cultivated kharif paddy crops on 8 acres of land—including one acre of his own-had borrowed money from local moneylenders.

Family sources reported that Babagrahi collapsed near his paddy field after discovering his standing crops were damaged by unseasonal rain.

18.5-foot-long injured giant python handed over to NZP



Kendrapara, Jan 4: The Forest personnel of Bhitarkanika National Park have handed over an injured 18.5-foot-long adult Indian rock python to the Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) authorities for proper treatment.

Sudarshan Gopinath Yadav, the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Rajnagar Mangrove Forest and Wildlife Division, stated that the python was transferred to the Nandankanan Zoo to ensure adeguate medical care for the reptile.

According to Yaday, Forest personnel rescued the injured adult python December 20 from an agricultural field in Baisigherry, under the Ragadapatia forest block of the Kanika forest range. The python had sustained head injuries. The Forest team initially treat-

ed the python with assistance from a local veterinary surgeon and later sought support from veterinary experts at the Nandankanan Zoo. The DFO said, "We have hand-

ed over the python for further

treatment. Once it fully recov-

ers from its injuries, it will re-

main at the Nandankanan Zoo

for display. Manas Kumar Dash, the Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) of Kanika forest range, noted that while Forest personnel often rescue pythons that stray into human habitats near Bhitarkanika National Park, this is the largest python ever rescued by the team.

Bus rams into police patrol vehicle injuring 7 personnel

Keonjhar: Seven policemen were injured when an unidentified bus rammed into their jeep late Friday night while they were patrolling near Dangapani village on NH-49, under the jurisdiction of Sadar police station here. According to sources, the green-coloured bus struck the police vehicle at a high speed while the officers were on patrol near a petrol pump. The impact caused the police ieep to crash into the back of a truck and overturn. The officers escaped death by a whisker, with seven of them sustaining injuries. Police officials from the district headquarters rushed to the scene, rescued and took the personnel to the district headquarters hospital for treatment. Sub-inspector Sushmita Har of Sadar police station confirmed that a case has been filed against the unidentified bus driver and an investigation is on.

Maoist killed in joint op by Odisha, Chhattisgarh police

Bhubaneswar: One Maoist was killed, and several others are suspected to have been seriously injured during a joint inter-state operation conducted by the Odisha and Chhattisgarh police. Sources at the Odisha Police Headquarters stated Saturday that the joint operation began at midnight January 2, near the border of Nuapada district in Odisha and Gariabandh district in Chhattisgarh. During the operation, one Maoist was killed, and several others were seriously injured. Additionally, arms and Maoist paraphernalia were seized from the site. Police sources reported that an exchange of fire with the Maoists occurred around 11am Saturday in the Athang forest, under the jurisdiction of Indagaon police station in Chhattisgarh, approximately 8km from the Nuapada border.

Valuables looted from 2 temples

Berhampur: Unidentified miscreants allegedly looted valuables worth over ₹30 lakh from two temples in Ganiam district, police said Saturday. The incident took place at Shirdi Sai Baba temple at Bhanianagar and Maa Budhisantani Thakurani temple at Jagadalpur Friday night, they said. Priests reported the matter to police and a case was subsequently registered. They took away silver and gold ornaments worth over ₹30 lakh. besides around ₹30.000 cash, according to the FIR. There is a CCTV camera at the Shirdi Sai Baba temple, but its footage was not clear, said Suiit Navak, Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO). Bhanianagar. He said a special police team has been formed to investigate the matter.

2 sisters killed in tractor accident

Jajpur: Two minor sisters died when a tractor in which they were travelling overturned in Jajpur district Saturday, police said. The victims were identified as Dulari (14) and Rani (11), daughters of Raju Hansda and residents of Majhi Sahi in Jodabara village in the district, police added. According to police, the tractor was heading towards Jodabara when the vehicle became unbalanced. Both the sisters were sitting on the tractor when it overturned and fell into a roadside ditch, killing them on the spot, a police officer said. The sisters were reportedly on their way to the paddy field to meet their father, who was working at the time. Jajpur Road police recovered the bodies and sent them for post-mortem.



To stand for the Truth in all circumstances, to declare it if necessary in the teeth of the worst opposition and to be ready to all you can for its sake, is the definition of heroism.

THE MOTHER



are expected

to defend the

laws, but it is

unclear what

government

is, headed by

the party that

benefited from

the movement

that led to the

legislation of

the Places of

Worship Act

Medieval & Present

he Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 is a law to "prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August, 1947.

This is an unusually phrased law which says that temples, mosques, churches, stupas, gurudwaras and so on will remain as they were in 1947. Meaning that the religion that was practiced in that structure would continue to be practiced. Why was it legislated? To prevent more incidents like the Babri Masjid demolition. It could not be more clear in phrasing or in intent.

However, laws have rarely stopped things from happening in India,

In 2019, after the Supreme Court's verdict handing over the Babri site to a temple, a petition was taken up in an Uttar Pradesh court regarding the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi. The court directed the Archaeological Survey of India to conduct a survey, though historians have clearly recorded that the mosque was built over an existing temple razed by Aurangzeb in 1669. The Places of Worship Act was meant to avoid precisely such medieval history from becoming current affairs. The matter went to the Supreme Court in 2022. Here, Justice DY

Chandrachud, who had authored the Babri judgement, made an observation that would prove to be devastating. He said that the "ascertainment of the religious character" of a place was not prohibited by the Places of Worship Act. Presumably meaning that people were free to bring to court suits to that effect.

He allowed the continuing of the "survey," which came to be centred around a fountain which the Hindu side claimed was a Shivling. In 2023, the Varanasi district court asked the ASI to ascertain whether the mosque was "constructed over a pre-existing structure All governments of a Hindu temple.

Predictably these events have led to a number of judges in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and elsewhere admitting petitions that sought to "ascertain the religious character" of mosques built in medieval India and ordering surveys. Demands for surveys on places the stand of this include the Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra mosque in Ajmer, built in 1199 by Qutub-ud-Din Aibak (who also built the Qutub Minar in Delhi) and the Ajmer Dargah of Moinuddin Chishti who

The mosque is already an ASI-protected site for its historical value, but was now subject to demands from the BJP's Speaker in the state Assembly who wanted an ASI survey to find out if the claim was true that it had been a Sanskrit college earlier.

The dispute over Lucknow's largest mosque, Teelewali Masjid, was centred around a claim that it was built by Shah Jahan's governor over a platform named after Lakshman. In Badaun the Jama Masjid

Shamsi, built under Iltutmish (who also died in 1236) was claimed by the Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha. The Atala Masjid in Jaunpur is, according to the government's tourism website, "the ideal for the construction of the other mosques of Jaunpur." A group named Swaraj Vahini Association has moved court demanding the right to worship inside it.

In March 2024, the 13th century Bhojshala-Kamal Maula complex in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district became the latest site for a "scientific survey" by the Archaeological Survey of India after an order from the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

In November last year, a court in western UP heard a petition on the Sambhal Jama Masjid. The court ordered a survey of the mosque premises, which took place on the same day. The team returned for a second visit early on a Sunday and a rumour spread that it was digging under the mosque. A crowd of protestors gathered and the police shot dead five of them. We can attribute this tragedy directly

The really unusual thing is that those remarks made in the Supreme Court have no binding authority, as experts have noted. Those words have not been recorded in the order and exist merely because they were reported at the moment they were uttered. The Supreme Court did not stay or undo the Places of Worship Act. It remains in force and unless a structure has been actively used by multiple faiths on 15 August 1947, it cannot be brought to court in a dispute. And yet as we can see, the number of cases is rising with structures that are seven centuries old being claimed as property disputes. For those who like the writer were adults when the Ayodhya dispute began to bubble and then burst and then remained as the core issue of politics for three decades, these events are alarming. Too much national energy and blood was expended over that.

Last month, the Supreme Court stopped courts from registering new suits. It also said no interim or final orders could be passed in the pending suits till it decided on the validity of the Places of Worship Act. The court will hear the matter again soon, when we may learn what the Modi government's position on the law is. All governments are expected to defend the laws, but it is unclear what the stand of this government is, headed by the party that benefited from the movement that led to the legislation of the Places of Worship Act.

WISDOM CORNER

The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion.

It is better wither to be silent, or to say things of more value than silence. Sooner throw a pearl at hazard than an idle or useless word; and do not say a little in many words, but a great deal in a few.

I have always believed, and I still believe, that whatever good or bad fortune may come our way we can always give it meaning and transform it into something of value.

THIS DAY **IN HISTORY**

- 1863: Russian actor, director, and producer Konstantin Stanislavsky, who developed a highly influential theory of acting called the Stanislavsky method, was born.
- 1914: Following the great success of the Model T, American automobile maker Henry Ford raised his workers' pay from \$2.40 to \$5.00 a day and reduced the hours
- 1919: Anton Drexler founded the German Workers' Party, the forerunner of the

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

CHINA'S NEW TARGET

person for former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte suggested that the Philippines and China had entered into an undisclosed "gentleman's agreement" between 2016 and 2022. China would not challenge the status quo in the West Philippine Sea, and the Philippines would send only basic supplies to its personnel and facilities on the Ayungin Shoal. But now, the Philippines is emerging as an essential player in resisting China's strategic ambitions in the region, with President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.'s administration asserting Philippine maritime claims through naval confrontations and new

n April 2024, a spokes-

This comes at a time when the country is facing a quieter, but equally serious, threat at home. The recent. high-profile case of Alice Guo a former mayor accused of graft, money laundering, and espionage - shows how domestic corruption leaves the Philippines vulnerable to Chinese infiltration and subterfuge. How the Philippines navigates this challenge could shape not only its future but also the broader stability of Southeast Asia.

In addition to conducting aggressive military maneuvers in the surrounding seas, China is also pursuing strategic investments and subtler forms of manipulation to push Philippine leaders (at all levels of government) into a more China-friendly stance. This is in keeping with its global strategy of building influence through investments targeting other countries' elites, clandestine business alliances, and economic incentives. As the Philippines approaches critical elections in 2025 and 2028, China will try to befriend or otherwise gain sway over anyone who is open to its overtures.

Given these efforts, one



A stable, democratic Philippines is vital to **US interests and regional security. America** and its Indo-Pacific partners and allies must do more to help the country build resilience against Chinese aggression not only in its territorial waters, but also in its politics

cannot rule out a future Philippine government that adopts China's own model of governance, state control, and mass surveillance. Such a government might not only consult China's authoritarian playbook to quash dissent; it could also leverage China's resources and international political support to evade scrutiny and accountability. Institutions meant to serve the Philippine people would become tools for monitoring and restricting opponents and critics, and China will have secured itself a valuable foothold in Southeast Asia.

China has been stepping up its information operations globally, using the Philippines as a testing ground for tactics designed to propagate anti-American narratives and build pro-Chinese sentiment. Through platforms like Facebook and TikTok, which many Filipinos rely on for news, Chinese accounts amplify content that casts doubt on Philippine-US relations and erodes social trust within Philippine society.

By exploiting internal instability, Chinese influence operations aim to distract Philippine authorities from China's own aggression in

the surrounding seas. One potential source of disruption is the lead-up to the elections in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Should an ongoing peace process there falter, the region would inevitably demand much more of the national government's attention and resources.

What can be done? Even if US investments do not match the scale of China's infrastructure projects in the Philippines, Western strategic aid can help by presenting a clear alternative to China's debt-driven model. Such a strategy would not only support Philippine sovereignty but also strengthen America's network of alliances in the Indo-Pacific.

Specifically, to counter Chinese interference, the US and its allies should direct investments and support to advance five priorities. First, since corruption is a national-security threat, they should fund programmes to ensure disclosures of "beneficial ownership" (who ultimately owns private businesses), debt transparency, and the integrity of public procurement and tendering processes. This would not only create a level

playing field for all businesses; it would also help safeguard Philippine institutions and political processes from covert foreign manipulation.

Second, the integrity of elections must be strengthened. Long-term election monitoring can help expose and counter covert foreign influence efforts and misuses of resources, ensuring transparency beyond Election Day. If sufficiently supported, citizen-led observation efforts can reinforce the sense that the process is fair, making electoral institutions more resilient against external pressures

Third, the Philippines' allies need to protect the BARMM peace process, such as by funding initiatives that strengthen local governance and security institutions in the region. The peace process, and the country more broadly. would benefit from enhanced information security, including targeted support for local initiatives to improve the public's digital news literacy.

Lastly, the Philippines needs help countering Chinese surveillance of its citizens and officials. US support for cybersecurity and programs to protect digital rights can frustrate Chinese influence tactics and provide more transparency on major digital platforms.

A stable, democratic Philippines is vital to US interests and regional security. America and its Indo-Pacific partners and allies must do more to help the country build resilience against Chinese aggression not only in its territorial waters, but also in its politics.

Adam Nelson is Senior Programme Director for the Asia-Pacific at the National Democratic Institute. May Butoy is the Country Representative for the Philippines at the National Democratic Institute. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM

Adam Nelson &

HOW THE

THIS

PHILIPPINES

NAVIGATES

CHALLENGE

NOT ONLY

BUT ALSO

ITS FUTURE

COULD SHAPE

THE BROADER

STABILITY OF

SOUTHEAST

ASIA

EMPLOYMENT

Retirement age needs review



Gopabandhu Mohapatra

ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION DIVISION, **GLOBAL LIFE EXPECTANCY IS ANTICIPATED TO INCREASE TO** 76 BY 2050

TO THE EDITOR

are most welcome to contribute letters

requested to send their contact

address/email ID. They may also send in

their valuable comments, opinion and

suggestions, preferably by email, to:

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(100 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

numbers and full postal

columns (between 600-1000

age refers to the average age of exit from the workforce for individuals after completing a full career. Alternatively, retirement is when someone stops working their regular job or occupation, either due to age, health reasons, or a choice to pursue other interests.

Life expectancy is one of the major factors in fixing the age of retirement. Retirement age varies by country and sector, but it is generally between 50 and 70. According to the United Nations Population Division, global life expectancy improved from 46.5 years in 1950 to 66 in 2000 and is anticipated to increase to 76 by 2050. As a result, some countries are revisiting their retirement age. Three countries - Iceland, Israel, and Norway have the highest current retirement age at 67. All other countries have slightly lower effective retirement age on average. In Japan, the retirement age is 65, but many people continue working well

number of factors, including high life expectancy and a cultural value on prolonged work. On the other hand, Turkey has retirement age at 52 and Saudi Arabia has the lowest current retirement age, 47, with full pension benefits.

Retirement ages between men and women can also differ. Almost all countries have effective retirement ages for women earlier than men. The five exceptions, where women retire later than men are Argentina, Estonia, Finland, France, and Luxembourg.

During 1998, as per the recommendation of the Fifth Central Pay Commission, the Government of India decided to increase the age of retirement of Central employees from 58 to 60. During 2016, the retirement age for general duty medical officers, non-teaching, and public health specialists was increased to 65. The retirement age is 65 for Supreme Court judges and 62 for High Court judges. There is no uniform reemployees in India.

The retirement age for defence personnel in the three wings -- Navy, Army and Air Force -- are different. The retirement age for Army personnel ranges between 42-62 years based on the rank of officers. For Air Force personnel, the age limit is 60 and for Navy officers, it is 56.

As the retirement age of government employees is a state subject, different states can set the retirement age at their discretion. However, they must adhere to the guidelines set by the Central government.

The average life expectancy of Indians has risen over the past few decades. It was 61.4 in 1998 and has increased to 72.24 in 2024. The government believes that the services of experienced employees can be utilised for a longer duration. The government has been considering increasing the retirement age of Central government employees by two years, raising it from 60 to 62.

age will decrease the expenses on pensions since employees will start taking pensions two years later. The presence of experienced employees will ensure continuity in administration and improve the quality of work. The expertise and effectiveness based on the experience would be more constructive and put to use if the retirement age is raised from 60 to 62. The costs associated with hiring new employees will decrease. However, with fewer new positions opening up for 2 years, youth may find it harder to get jobs. There may be a delay of 2 years in promotions for current employees. It is also to be noted that during the past 5 years the recruitment to the Central government has been negligible and hence the argument that raising the retirement age from 60 to 62 would stand in the way of fresh employment is incorrect.

Increasing the retirement

The writer is a retired banker.

HMPV outbreak

Sir, This refers to "Buzz over HMPV outbreak in China," Orissa Post, Jan 4. China is grappling with a surge of respiratory illnesses, notably human metapneumovirus (HMPV), as winter sets in. Social media posts and online videos depict overcrowded hospitals. There has been a lot of buzz online that a 'new epidemic' has hit China. The reports claim that the spike in HMPV cases has led to an alarming increase in sudden deaths, with people aged 40 to 80 being particularly affected. Some posts even say that China is covering up the real extent of the situation. While there is indeed a rise in respiratory illness in China, neither the Chinese government nor the World Health Organisation (WHO) has issued any formal advisories or alerts or declared emergency. The outbreak has heightened awareness about the need for preventive measures, especially since no vaccine exists for HMPV despite the virus being known for nearly two decades. China must be transparent and share the real picture on the ground, in order to prevent the intricacies that world suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak five years ago.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Wildlife marvel

Sir, After a melanistic leopard was spotted in the forests near Odisha's Nayagarh, wildlife lovers are understandably euphoric. Over the last five years, various forests of the country have reported the sighting of melanistic leopards. Black feline of the big cat family, with small head, robust jaw and strong hind legs---that's the compact description of panther or melanistic leopard. In India, dense forests of the southern part harbour the black beauties. The black cats love to live in dense evergreen forests so that they can, as far as possible, avoid light. A genetic mutation, dominant or recessive, causes an overexpression of melanin pigments resulting in the so-called melanistic leopard. However, the joy of sighting the big cat should be tempered with sobriety. Some 15 variants of the black cats are endangered. Knowledge of black leopards' habits and habitats may be of help in their conservation effort.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA



TWO STATES





1,500 yellow taxis to go off road

Kolkata, Jan 4: Around 1,500 metered yellow taxis in West Bengal would be phased out by the end of next year as commercial vehicles older than 15 years are not allowed to ply in the city, a transport department official said Saturday.

There are around 4,500 Ambassador metered vellow taxis in the state which will come down to 3,000 by the end of 2026, the official said.

In 2008 the Calcutta High Court had ordered that commercial vehicles older than 15 vehicles would not be allowed to ply in the city, the official The yellow taxis are an in-

tegral part of Kolkata's heritage and many taxi unions have urged the Transport department for a viable revival package for the yellow taxis.

Taxi drivers union claimed many Ambassadors metered yellow taxis are road-worthy and can be allowed to run another five years at least with proper maintenance and n 2008 the Calcutta axi drivers union

High Court had ordered that vehicles older than 15 vehicles would not be allowed to

age limit of 15 years.

"From 25,000 in 2019-20,

the number of yellow taxis

witnessed a steady dip in the

4,500 Ambassadoi etered yellow taxis come down to 3,000 by the end of 2026

proper maintenance city and its neighbourhood. It change in engine if the transwent down to 8,500 in 2023... port authorities withdraw the By next April the number is

claimed many

Ambassadors metered

vellow taxis are road-

allowed to run another

five years at least with

further set to come down," IN-

TUC state president and taxi

wing leader Pramod Pandey

worthy and can be

"We wish to know what is the government's line of action to avert the crisis. The transport department has not revised the fares of yellow metered taxis since 2016... The government virtually made the meter taxi system defunct while the app cab system cannot be used by a majority of elderly taxi drivers," he said.

Pandey said around 10,000 people - taxi drivers, family members and those who love the vehicles - will soon send an open letter to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee highlighting the issue and offer rose to Transport minister Snehasis Chakraborty as a symbolic protest against the state's alleged apathy towards yellow metered taxis.

"From Bollywood filmmakers to Kolkata's icons like Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen evervone had projected yellow taxis in their works. Visitors to the city take snaps of yellow taxi and board this vehicle. If the state don't do anything to

save yellow taxi a part of Kolkata's history will go forever,'

The senior transport official said the government was in favour of keeping the metered taxi fleet with BS 6 complaint new models and will facilitate bank loans to the owners.

"There is no way we can keep the old Ambassador models after they attain the age of 15 years. We have to abide by the 2008 Calcutta High Court order about commercial vehicles not being allowed to ply in the city after 15 years. Hence we have to follow the alternative ways for the interest of every stakeholder," the official said.

He said the transport department will soon meet the taxi unions.

Once coloured yellow and black, the Ambassador taxi has been synonymous with the city of joy, like the Howrah bridge and the Victoria Memorial.

yellow-and-black Ambassador taxis hit city

HMPV VIRUS

No need to worry: Kerala Health Min

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 4: Kerala Health Minister Veena George Saturday said the state government is closely monitoring the news reports about the massive outbreak of viral fever and respiratory infection in China and said there is no need to panic as of now.

In a Facebook post, George said there have been no reports so far about any virus found in China that could become pandemic or spread rapidly to other regions. As Malayalees are there in

all parts of the world and expatriates frequently come to the state, including from China, extra caution should be exercised,

"We are monitoring the situation in China. If an outbreak is detected that has the potential to spread to other areas, we can check its spread very quickly,"

The minister also urged peo ple, especially pregnant wom en, children and elderly people, to take extra vigil and asked them to wear masks.

An official source said Friday that the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is closely monitoring respiratory and seasonal influenza cases in the country, and is in touch with international agencies in the wake of the recent reports of an outbreak of the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in

"We will continue to monitor the situation closely and validate information and develop ments accordingly," a senior official said.

Director General of Health Services (DGHS), Atul Goel, said the Human Metapneumo virus is like any other respira tory virus which causes com mon cold, and it could cause flu-like symptoms in the young and the very old.

'MAKARAVILAKKU' **PREP IN FULL SWING**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sabarimala, Jan 4: Preparations for this year's 'makaravilakku' festival at the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple here January 15 have reached their final stages, temple authorities said.

"The focus is on ensuring that every devotee who visits Sabarimala for the 'makaravilakku' festival can have darshan and return safely," Sabarimala Administrative District Magistrate Arun S Nair said in a release Friday.

"Currently, the temple is witnessing a heavy rush, with more than 90,000 devotees arriving daily," Nair added.

The release said the 'thiruvabharanam' procession, part of the festival, will commence from Pandalam January 12.

It added that all government departments have stepped up efforts to ensure the smooth conduct of the festival. All necessary arrangements for the procession will be completed by January 10, following a review by various departments, it said. An inspection led by the

Pathanamthitta District Collector will be conducted in coordination with the police, forest, and health departments at key locations where devotees gather to witness the 'makaravilakku' (sacred light), the release added.

Foundation stone laid for bridge on Ichamati river



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 4: Union minister Shantanu Thakur Saturday laid the foundation stone for a single-lane bridge over the Ichamati river in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district.

The bridge, being constructed by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) at Swarupnagar at an estimated cost of ₹16 crore, will ensure safer transit and unhindered river navigation, a statement said.

Thakur, the Union minister of state for ports, shipping and waterways, said the government is committed to developing infrastructure and empowering the state's waterways network.

The minister also announced that the government is actively considering the construction of another bridge at Taranipur at a cost of ₹136.20 crore under the Sagarmala Project.

The development of National Waterways 44, which includes dredging operations and navigational aids, is part of the government's initiative to promote inland water transport and sustainable development in the region. the minister added.

Thakur said cargo traffic on national waterways has witnessed an exponential growth from 18 million tonnes in 2014 to 133 million tonnes at the end of FY2023-24. The release also stated that in a

bid to ease traffic congestion at the Ghojadanga, Bhomra and Petrapole integrated check posts (ICPs), India and Bangladesh have formed a joint technical committee.

According to the statement, the committee will conduct a feasibility study on the navigability of Ichamati river and explore its inclusion as a new route under the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWT&T).

The statement said the proposed Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route (IBPR) spans 170.38 km, connecting Hemnagar, Kalanchi, and

Union Min inaugurates new IIHT campus at Nadia

Kolkata, Jan 4: Union Minister for Textiles Giriraj Singh Saturday inaugurated the new permanent campus of the Indian Institute of Handloom Technology (IIHT) at Fulia in West Bengal's Nadia district, an official release said.

After inaugurating the campus, Singh said, "To usher in a new regime in the textile industry and to outgrow fibres in the country so as to compete with the world, West Bengal, the forerunner state in iute production should also come forward in growing fibres like flax on its soil, apart from paddy and jute.'

This is aimed at giving a boost to the production



of linen, so that the dependence on the said textile from outside, particularly Belgium, does not arise, Flax fibre includes lin-

en fibre, thread, yarn and linseed. The Union government

has set up six campuses of the Indian Institute of Handloom Technology in

BAREIPALI BRANCH, MOB. NO.: 9556087857 / All that piece and parcel of Land and Building

places that have a large concentration of handloom units, including Salem, Varanasi, Guwahati, Jodhpur, Bargarh and Fulia, to preserve the unique identity of handloom and cater to the needs of the technical

These campuses are

manpower requirement of

handloom industry, the re-

functioning under the ad ministrative control of the Office of the Development Commissioner looms), Union Ministry of

will cater to the education al needs of the students from West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Sikkim,

Bid Increment

Amount

The new campus in Fulia

Indian Bank

BRANCH / Name & Address of

Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors

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Possession Notice/

Outstanding Dues

19 09 2024 /

Sale of Immovable property/ies mortgaged to Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002) Whereas, the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank had taken possession of the following property/ies pursuant to the notice issued

under Sec 13(2) of the Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS", "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WITHOUT ANY RECOURSE BASIS" for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under section 13(4) of the said Act proposes to realize the Bank's dues by sale of the said property/ies. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website https://www.baanknet.com. **Date of Demand**

Description of the

Immovable Property

e: Kerala CM			Borrower & Mortgagor: Mr. Abhishek Patel, S/o.: Niroj Kumar Patel / Co- Borrower: Mr. Niroj KumarPatel, S/o.: Dhaneswar Patel, Both ate At: Malipada Fatak, PO.: Budhraja Sadear, Dist.: Sambalpur-768003 Danipali, South: Plot No.: 159, East: Plot N		19.09.2024 / 25.11.2024 / ₹ 41,50,395/- as on 01.01.2025 + further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon	₹74,00,000/- / ₹7,40,000/- / ₹10,000/-				
જે જે જે	By giving more importance to art in education, creativity can be enhanced among individuals, the CM said adding that education should also be a process of awakening the artist inherent in every student. The CM also pointed out that there is a large section of people who end their art-related activities after schooling. Citing the example of many talented artists who emerged through the school youth festivals in the past, he urged the state to take collective action to identify and support such talents. He assured the audience that his government would focus on addressing these issues. In between the inaugural ceremony, the CM also interacted with the students of Vellarmala government school in Wayanad which was de-		Borrower & Mortgagor : Smt. Sanjukta Panda, W/o: Sri Pabitrabhanu Panda /Co- Borrowers: 1) Sri Dhiraj Kumar Panda, S/o: Sri Pabitrabhanu Panda, 2) Sri Saroj	All that piece and parcel of Land and Building immovable Property of Area: Ac.0.060Dec., in the name of Smt. Sanjukta Panda , W/o: Pabitrabhanu Panda, bearing Khata No.: 370. 356, Plot No.: 1797 at Mouza: Naksapali Town Planning SDA Area, Dist.: Sambalpur-786005, Bounded by North: Plot No.: 1794, South: Plot No.: 1797/3591, East: Plot No.: 1793, West: Road	04.05.2024 / 19.10.2024 / ₹ 22,19,231/- as on 01.01.2025 + further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon	₹33,50,000/- / ₹3,35,000/- / ₹10,000/-				
		3.	W/o.: Tirath Singh Thakur / Co-Borrower & Mortgagor: Mr. Tirath Singh Thakur, S/o.: Inder Singh Thakur, Both are At: Ward	All that piece and parcel of Property recorded in the name of Mr. Tirath Singh Thakur , S/o.: Inder Singh Thakur, Flat No.: 304(Third Floor) of Sai Tower, Mouza: Chatuanka, Tahasil: Kantabanji, Dist.: Bolangir, bearing Khata No.: 149/332, Plot No.: 211/1713 and Plot No.: 212/1712 with Area: 1350 Sqft., Bounded by North: Open to Sky, West: Flat No.: 303	29.08.2024 / 18.11.2024 / ₹ 25,38,835/- as on 02.01.2025 + further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon	₹31,00,000/- / ₹3,10,000/- / ₹10,000/-				
e organised to love, brother-		4.	and Interior, Prop.: Mrs. Minati Pradhan, W/o.: Mr. Dhaneswar Pradhan / Guarantors: 1) Mr. Dhaneswar Pradhan, S/o.: Indramani Pradhan, 2) Mr. Satyabrata Pradhan, S/o.:	All that piece and parcel of Land and Building recorded in the name of Mrs. Minati Pradhan, W/o.: Mr. Dhaneswar Pradhan, At: Geetagram, PTC, Angul, Odisha-759122 having Plot No.: 1/765, under Khata No.: 168/693, Area: Ac.0.09 Dec, Mouza: Turanga Jungle, P.S./Tahasil: Angul, Dist.: Angul, Bounded by North: Hadibandhu Das and Others, South; Raod, East: Plot of Pratap Chandra Das, West: Road	07.08.2024 / 28.10.2024 / ₹ 22,83,867/- as on 01.01.2025 + further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon	₹82,50,000/- / ₹8,25,000/- / ₹10,000/-				
nd unity among d.	stroyed in landslides that claimed over 300 lives there in July last year.	DATE AND TIME OF E-AUCTION: 10.02.2025 from 11.00 AM to 5.00 PM with unlimited extension of 10 Minutes duration								
his festival with										

Date & Time of Inspection of Properties: from 27.01.2025 to 07.02.2025 between 10.00 AM to 4.00 PM (with prior appointment from bank) at their own expense TERMS & CONDITIONS: 1) For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer to the link: https://www.baanknet.com. Prospective bidders may also contact the Authorised Officers / Branch as mentioned in above list., 2) This is a statutory 30 days sale notice to the above mentioned borrowers/guarantors under Rule 8(6) of the SARFAESI Act. 2002, 3) This is a 30 days notice to the Borrower / Guarantor / Mortgagor of the above said loan about holding of this sale on the above mentioned date., 4) All expenses relating the stamp duty and registration of Sale Certificate/conveyance, if any, shall be borne by the successful bidder. 5) The Authorized Officer will not be held responsible for any charge, lien, encumbrance, property tax or any other dues to the Government or anybody in respect of the property under sale. 6) The Authorized Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or adjourn/postpone/cancel the sale without assigning any reason thereof. It may be noted that nothing in this notice constitute of deemed to constitute any commitment or representation on the part of the bank to sell the property

STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002. Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors are hereby notified to pay the total dues along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of E-Auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/ sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest & cost.

Place: Sambalpur, Date: 04.01.2025 Sd/-Authorised Officer, Indian Bank

Art fests promote harmony, love:



Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 4: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Viiavan Saturday underscored the importance of art festivals in fostering love, brotherhood, and communal harmony among people in the state.

Speaking at the inauguration of the 63rd state School Youth Festival here, the CM highlighted the need to promote artistic talents while ensuring equal prominence to values like unity and mutual respect.

Noting that rivalries and disputes often mar the spirit of such festivals, he urged participants and organisers to avoid conflicts and instead focus on celebrating talent and creativity. strengthen mutual l hood, co-existence and people," Vijayan said.

"Participating in this f conviction is a greater achievement than winning prizes. May each of you participate in the art festival with this realisation," he said.

In a post on X, the CM said, "The State School Arts Festival, Asia's largest youth arts festival, began today, celebrating creativity and unity. Over the next five days, this vibrant event will showcase incredible artistic talents. May it inspire and nurture tomorrow's leaders. Best wishes to all particdistrict school staged 'nrithashilpam', a dance performance, during the programme. In a Facebook post, Vijayan hailed

the performance of the students and said their group dance has become a symbol of unity and self-confidence of the land.

Over 15,000 children, studying in various state schools, are participating in various art events in 25 venues during the five-day-long State Youth Festival which got underway here Saturday morning.

national



Kejriwal Ji, you will have to give an account to the people of Delhi. They are demanding answers from you

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

ATUL SUBHASH'S WIFE, **FAMILY MEMBERS GET BAIL**

A city civil court here Saturday granted bail to engineer Atul Subhash's wife Nikita Singhania, her mother Nisha Singhania and brother Anurag Singhania in suicide abetment case



The growth rate of the agriculture sector and allied sectors is expected to be between 3.5 per

cent and 4 per cent in 2025 SHIVRAL SINGH CHOUHAN I UNION AGRICULTURE MINISTER

We reiterate our demand to sack Home Minister Amit Shah for his derogatory remarks against



The mother (RSS) created them (BJP and APP). RSS created Jan Sangh and later BJP was formed



ASADUDDIN OWAISI | AIMIM PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

One dead in factory blast in Telangana

Hyderabad: One person was killed and three others suffered injuries in a blast at a factory in Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri district of Telangana Saturday. One person suffered burn injuries to the face and hands, while the injuries of the remaining two were not serious, police said.

3-yr-old girl dies after receiving jab

Jaisalmer: A three-vear-old girl died allegedly after being administered an injection at a medicine store in Jaisalmer Saturday, officials said. While the girl's family has accused the medicine store staff of negligence. Kotwali police station SHO Sawai Singh said the exact cause of death will be ascertained only after the autopsy report is received.

3 Rohingyas escape from detention centre

Goalpara: Assam Police launched a search operation to arrest three suspected Rohingyas who escaped from the detention transit camp in Goalpara district, an official said Saturday. The trio, taking advantage of the darkness. escaped by jumping the walls of the centre at Matia Thursday night.

Gangster killed in police encounter

Purnea: A notorious gangster, who had a bounty of ₹2 lakh on his head, was killed in a gunfight with the police in Bihar's Purnea district, police said Saturday. Shushil Mochi was wanted by Bihar's and West Bengal's police in multiple cases of dacoity, they said. The Special Task Force (STF) of the Bihar Police had been tracking him for days.

Two killed as two cars, truck collide

Hisar: Two people were killed and four others injured when two cars and a truck collided on Hisar-Chandigarh road Saturday. police said. The accident occurred near Surewala Chowk. about 55 kilometer from Hisar. the police said.

10-yr-old falls to death in open well

Jaipur: Following the death of a 10-year-old boy who fell into an open well at Sanganer in Jaipur district Friday, the administration Saturday suspended a patwari for providing misleading information about open borewells and wells in the area.

Delhi airport sees 400+ flight delays

New Delhi. Jan 4: Delhi airport Saturday saw 19 flight diversions, many cancellations and over 400 flight delays as low visibility conditions due to dense fog impacted operations for the second straight day

An official said 19 flights were diverted at the airport between 12.15 am and 1.30 am due to reduced visibility. Of them, 13 were domestic, four international and two non-scheduled flights.

More than 45 flights were cancelled due to bad weather conditions at Delhi as well as at the destination airports, the official said. As per information available on flight tracking website Flightradar24. com, over 400 flights were delayed at the Delhi airport.

The country's largest airline IndiGo had temporarily put arrivals and departures on hold at the airport early in the morning

The country's largest airline IndiGo had temporarily put arrivals and departures on hold at the airport early in the morning.

"While landing and takeoffs continue at Delhi Airport, flights that are not CAT III com-

Khuddian bats for

Centre-farmers talks

Chandigarh, Jan 4: Punjah

Minister Gurmeet Singh Khud-

dian Saturday sought Union

Agriculture Minister Shivraj

Singh Chouhan's personal in-

tervention urging that the Cen-

tre should hold a dialogue with

the protesting farmers at the

earliest to break the impasse.

He told Chouhan that farmer

leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal is

sitting on an indefinite hunger

strike for the past 40 days at

Khanauri protest site in Punjab.

He said being a Union agriculture

minister, Chouhan should take

personal interest in the matter.

During a virtual meeting, Chou-

han Saturday reviewed various

schemes with state agriculture

ministers and sought their sug-

gestions on ongoing programmes

and budget allocation ahead of the

Punjab's Agriculture Minister Khuddian, who joined the

meeting through video-confer-

encing, raised the matter relat-

ed to the protesting farmers and

some other issues. Khuddian al-

so told Chouhan that the latter

has remained Chief Minister of

Madhya Pradesh. He said states

have many hopes towards the

Centre and hoped that he will

make personal intervention

and will contribute in the pres-

Union Budget.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

■More than 45 flights were cancelled due to bad weather conditions at Delhi as well as at the destination airports, the official said

As per information available on flight tracking website Flightradar24.com, over 400 flights were delayed at the Delhi airport

pliant may get affected. Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information."

"Any inconvenience caused deeply regretted," the Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) said in a post on X at 6.56 am, CAT III facility allows aircraft to operate in low-visibility conditions.

Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in the national capital is operated by DIAL. "#6ETravelAdvisory: Departures and arrivals at #Delhi-Airport are currently on hold

due to reduced visibility,' IndiGo said in a post on X at 1.05 am Saturday.

Air India said in an update on X at 1.16 am that poor visibility due to dense fog was impacting flight operations in Delhi and parts of northern India. A thick blanket of fog had enveloped Delhi Friday as well, delaying more than 400 flights.

In an update on X at 10.58 am, IndiGo said dense fog continued to affect visibility in Delhi, Chandigarh, Amritsar, Srinagar, Guwahati, and Patna, even during daytime.

'We assure you that our teams are working diligently to assist all impacted customers, ensuring your journey resumes as soon as the weather improves," it said in another post at 11 am. IGIA handles around 1,300 flight movements daily.

A Sikh devotee during a 'Nagar Kirtan' procession ahead of the 358th birth anniversary (Gurupurab) of Guru

BJP holds agitation demanding Priyank Kharge's resignation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kalaburagi (Karnataka), Jan 4: The BJP staged a protest Saturday demanding the resignation of Minister Privank Kharge in connection with the alleged suicide of a Bidar-based civil contractor.

BJP state president B Y Vijayendra, Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly R Ashoka, and Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy led the protest.

The saffron party leaders gathered at Jagat Circle in large numbers, holding placards and raising slogans against the minister amid a tight security presence. They later marched toward the minister's residence but were detained by the police midway. According to the police, around 80 protesters detained, including Ashoka, Narayanaswamy and MLC C T Ravi.

"Around 80 protesters were detained while they were on their way to the minister's residence. They were taken into a police bus but were later released," a senior police officer said. As the BJP planned to lay siege to Kharge's residence, the minister decided to counter them uniquely.

"We have ordered tender coconuts, coffee, tea, and bottled drinking water for the BJP leaders, who will likely get tired after the protest," a Kharge supporter told PTI. Police personnel were also de ployed outside the residence as a precautionary measure to avoid any untoward incident.

3 arrested; SIT set up

Journalist's murder:

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, Jan 4: Three persons were arrested Saturday in connection with the murder of journalist Mukesh Chandrakar in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, while Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma announced the setting up of a Special Investigation Team to probe the case.

The Deputy CM also claimed the main accused was a Congress leader. Chandrakar (33), a freelance journalist, went missing January 1, and his body was found Friday in a septic tank on a property owned by civil contractor Suresh Chandrakar at Chattanpara Basti in Bijapur town, as per police. While Suresh Chandrakar is absconding, his kin Ritesh Chandrakar and Dinesh Chandrakar have been arrested along with supervisor Mahendra Ramteke, the deputy CM told reporters.

"Suresh Chandrakar is the main accused in the case. He is a Congress leader and office bearer of the party in Bijapur. Four police teams have been formed to nab him. The process to freeze his bank accounts and that of other accused has begun. We have put on hold three accounts of Suresh Chandrakar," Sharma said.

The administration has also initiated action against the accused's illegal properties and encroachments, Sharma added.

Hailing Mukesh Chandrakar, the deputy CM said he was known his reporting in the interiors of the Maoist-hit region and had deep understanding of local issues.

"His murder is a major dent in efforts to establish peace in Bastar Region. The Chhattisgarh government has set up an 11-member SIT under IPS officer Mayank Gurjar to probe his murder. Police will submit chargesheet in 3-4 weeks and we will request the court for a speedy trial," Sharma informed. A construction material yard

built by Suresh Chandrakar af-

ter usurping forest land along Bijapur-Gangaloor Road has been razed, local officials said. A news report highlighting alleged corruption in a road

construction work

on NDTV December 25, is said to be the motive behind Mukesh Chandrakar's murder, Sharma claimed.

in Bijapur, that was shown

A PWD probe was initiated after the NDTV report, Sharma

Police officials informed that Suresh Chandrakar is said to be involved in a construction work in which Mukesh Chandrakar had recently highlight ed irregularities.

Chandrakar worked as a freelance journalist for news channels, including NDTV, and also ran a YouTube channel, 'Bastar Junction', which has some 1.59 lakh subscribers.

He had played a crucial role in the release of CoBRA commando Rakeshwar Singh Manhas from Maoist captivity in April 2021 following the Takalguda Naxal ambush in Bijapur in which 22 security personnel were martyred.

After Mukesh Chandrakar went missing on the evening of January 1, his elder brother Yukesh Chandrakar lodged a complaint with the police the

next day. His body was found in a septic tank on a premises owned by Suresh Chandrakar after the deceased's mobile phone

was tracked. The septic tank had been freshly cast with concrete slabs,

as per police. The Press Association and the Editors Guild of India

Saturday condemned Mukesh Chandrakar's killing and de manded that the state govern ment conduct a thorough investigation into the case

In a separate statement, the Press Club of India and the Indian Women Press Corps called for time-bound action against the perpetrators.

Delhi student stabbed to death

Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh guru, at golden temple in Amritsar, Punjab

New Delhi: A dodgeball game at school turned fatal for a Class IX student as a schoolmate enraged after being hit by the ball allegedly got the 14-year-old stabbed to death outside their school in East Delhi, police said Saturday. The alleged incident took place around 6 pm Friday with the police apprehending seven people, including three schoolmates, officials said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Abhishek Dhania said among the seven arrested, five are juveniles. The suspects were planning to flee the city when they were apprehended.

Bailey bridge collapses

Gangtok: A 25-year-old bailey bridge in Sikkim collapsed when an overloaded truck was crossing it Saturday, officials said. The 200-foot bridge, located over Lachung Chu River, was on the Lachung-Katao Road. No casualties were reported in the incident as the bridge did not fall into the river and the driver of the truck was rescued safely. An official in the North Sikkim district administration said vehicles are being diverted through an alternative bridge, which can be used by tourists and locals till the collapsed bridge is repaired and restored. Tourists need not panic as the alternative route is functional, popular tourist destinations in the area are open and passes are being issued by the tourism department, the official said.

NIA conducts searches in J'khand

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Saturday searched multiple locations in Jharkhand's Bokaro district in connection with the February 2024 attack on security forces by Naxals, according to an official statement. NIA teams conducted searches at the premises of suspects and overground workers (OGWs) at eight locations, and seized digital devices such as laptop, mobile phones and memory cards, along with SIM cards. pocket diaries and incriminating documents, it said. The suspects and OGWs whose premises were searched were associated with members of the banned CPI (Maoist) and used to provide logistical support and facilitate extortion of levy money, said the statement issued by the NIA.

ent matter.

AIR POLLUTION SC plans pan-India tags for vehicles to mark fuel-type

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 4: The Supreme Court has stressed on the need of hologram-based colour-coded stickers for vehicles to tackle air pollution, saying it was considering to make it mandatory in states and Union Territories beyond the National Capital Region.

In 2018, the top court accepted the proposal of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), which envisaged that hologram-based light blue stickers would be used in vehicles using petrol and CNG in the National Capital Region (NCR), whereas diesel-run vehicles would have orange stickers.

These stickers, which facil-

based on the fuel used, were also supposed to include the date of registration of the vehicle.

Following the apex court's order, the Centre amended Rule 50 of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, and the High Security Registration Plate (HSRP) order of 2001 to give legal recognition to the scheme of hologram-based stickers.

The matter came up for hearing on Friday before a bench of Justices AS Oka and AG Masih. The bench emphasised on enforcement to deal with vehicular pollution and said the direction for colour-coded stickers was needed to be implemented.

It said diesel vehicles could be identified at the time when the Graded Response Action

Plan (GRAP) was in force to curb air pollution. The bench

said it may consider extending the direction for these stickers for vehicles beyond the NCR.

The apex court may extend the 2018 direction to other states and Union Territories by exercising its plenary powers under Article 142 of the Consti-

tution, the bench said It asked the concerned par-

ties, including the Centre, to address arguments on this issue and posted the matter for further hearing January 15.

In November last year, the top court had asked the Centre. Delhi and other NCR states for a compliance update on

SCHEME WAS INITIALLY SUGGESTED BY THE AMICUS CURIAE TO ENABLE IDENTIFICATION OF VEHICLES AND RESTRICT VEHICLES USING BAD QUALITY FUEL DURING "POOR CATEGORY" POLLUTION DAYS

44 THE COUNSEL APPEARING FOR THE CENTRE HAD SAID THE MORTH HAD WRITTEN TO ALL THE

STATES FOR COMPLIANCE OF THE DECEMBER 13, 2023, ORDER OF THE APEX COURT its direction over the use of

stickers in vehicles

gory" pollution days. hologram-based colour-coded The issue of colour-coded

The counsel appearing for the Centre had said the MoRTH had written to all the states for compliance of the December 13 2023, order of the apex court The top court had subsequent ly directed all states to report on their compliance with the orders on colour-coded stickers

Senior advocate Aparajita

Singh, assisting the top court

as an amicus curiae in the mat-

ter, had submitted that more

than 50 per cent of the vehicles

plying the Delhi-NCR roads did

not have colour-coded stickers

scheme was initially suggest-

ed by the amicus curiae to en-

able identification of vehicles

and restrict vehicles using bad

quality fuel during "poor cate-

The colour-coded sticker

itates in identifying vehicles

hearing a matter relating to air pollution in Delhi-NCR. The NCR states include Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

stickers for vehicles cropped up when the apex court was for vehicles.

national



We have to work to strengthen the heritage of peace and harmony

NARENDRA MODI

ALLU ARJUN COMPLETES **BAIL FORMALITIES**

Actor Allu Arjun, who was granted regular bail in a case over the death of a woman in a stampede during the premiere of his latest film, 'Pushpa-2', Saturday submitted sureties and bonds in a local court as per his bail conditions





stands firmly with the people. We will not allow bring the matter before the court

and proceed with any action only in compliance with the court's

MOHAN YADAV | MP CM

Savarkar was a great nationalist. but there is a section of society with a colonial mindset who have



Modi ji, your last visit to



state May 3, 2023

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE CONGRESS PRESIDENT



Keiriwal was created by RSS to build a team against Modi. AAP cut congress votes in Delhi. Guiarat, Goa and

Uttarakhand Elections, Keiriwal was silent during the CAA-NRC protests and Delhi Riots for Hindu votes

@SurrbhiM

SHORT **TAKES**

Two die as speeding truck runs over them

Bangalore: Two women died on the spot after a speeding Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) truck allegedly knocked down their two-wheeler and ran over them Saturday, police said. The deceased, identified as sisters, were aged 30 and 36, they added. According to the police, the incident occurred at around 11.20 am when the BBMP garbage truck hit the two-wheeler from behind.

Man who shot at **BJP leader held**

Jammu: A man, who shot at and wounded BJP Yuva Morcha Jammu district president Kanav Sharma, was arrested Saturday, police said, "The assailant, who fired two bullets at Kanay Sharma from his licensed nistol identified as Ravinder Singh, a Power Development Department (PDD) lineman, was arrested," the police said.

Leopard captured

Nagaon: A leopard which created panic for the last three days in Assam's Nagaon town was tranquillised and captured Saturday, forest officials said. The feline was reported to be prowling in the town since January 1 and was spotted in several places, an official said. The animal was captured on CCTV cameras Saturday morning at Daccapatty market area following which the locals informed forest officials

Jagan slams Naidu

Amaravati: YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy Saturday accused Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu of "failing" to deliver on several poll promises, especially Super Six. even seven months after coming to power. Super Six schemes include ₹1,500 monthly pension to every woman in the age bracket of 19 to 59 years, 20 lakh jobs for youth or ₹3,000 as monthly unemployment assistance and free bus travel for women.

BJP's first list for Delhi polls out

president Arvinder Singh

Lovely has been fielded from

the Gandhi Nagar seat in east

Delhi, replacing incumbent

Bajpai had defeated Lovely

from the seat in the 2020 polls.

Tarvinder Singh Marwah, a

three-time former Congress

MLA from Jangpura who

joined the BJP in 2022, will

He is pitted against senior

AAP leader and former depu-

tv Chief Minister Manish Si-

sodia. Former transport min-

ister Kailash Gahlot has been

The two-time Najafgarh

Raaj Kumar Anand, who

resigned as a minister and

quit AAP earlier this year,

was fielded from the Patel

Chhatarpur MLA Kartar

Singh, who also switched to

the saffron party from AAP,

has been fielded from the

ND Sharma, another former

The Badarpur seat was held

AAP MLA, will contest as a

BJP candidate from Badarpur.

by the BJP's Ramvir Singh

Bidhuri, who was elected to

the Lok Sabha from South

Delhi earlier this year. The

saffron party has fielded its

MLA resigned as minister

and quit AAP to join the BJP

fielded from Bijwasan.

in November.

Nagar seat.

contest from the same seat.

BJP MLA Anil Bajpai.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 4: The BJP Saturday released its first list of 29 candidates for the Delhi Assembly polls, fielding former MP Parvesh Verma from the New Delhi seat against ex-Chief Minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal.

It has named another former MP Ramesh Bidhuri from Kalkaji, where Chief Minister and AAP candidate Atishi is in the fray.

The New Delhi seat, held by Kejriwal since 2013, will witness the former Chief Minister taking on the sons of two other former chief ministers.

Verma is the son of Sahib Singh Verma, who had a two-year tenure as chief minister in the 1990s. Former West Delhi MP Verma started his preparations for contesting from the seat even before he was announced as the official candidate, saying he had been given the go-ahead by national leaders.

The Congress candidate from the seat is former threeterm Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit's son Sandeep Dikshit.

The BJP's first list features prominent leaders who switched over from the Congress and AAP in recent

Former Delhi Congress

Minister and AAP candidate Atishi is in the fray

he New Delhi seat, held by Kejriwal since 2013, Chief Minister taking on the sons of two other former Chief Ministers

national office-bearers Dushyant Kumar Gautam and Ashish Sood from the Karol Bagh and the Janakpuri seats, respectively.

BJP national secretary Manjinder Singh Sirsa will contest from Rajouri Garden, which he had won in the 2015 elections.

Former Congress councillor Kumari Rinku is the BJP's candidate from Seemapuri.

The BJP also retained incumbent MLAs OP Sharma (Vishwas Nagar), Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Vijender Gupta (Rohini), Ajay Mahawar (Ghonda) and Jitendra Mahajan (Rohtash Nagar).

The party has not vet announced its candidates for the two other seats it won in the 2020 polls -- Laxmi Nagar and the Karawal Nagar. Former Delhi BJP president Satish Upadhyay will contest from Malviva Nagar.

The party has fielded former MLA Manoj Shokeen against Delhi minister Raghuvinder Shokeen from the Nangloi Jat seat.

The BJP's city unit chief Virendra Sachdeva said in a statement that the party had fielded "strong" candidates who would act as "catalysts" for change.

Elections to the 70-member Delhi Assembly are due next month. The BJP is pulling out all the stops to end AAP's hold on power in the city since 2013, except for a brief period when Delhi was under President's rule.

Retest held for select Bihar PSC candidates



Patna, Jan 4: The retest for a select group of candidates who had appeared in the recent Bihar PSC exam, which has been embroiled in allegations of question paper leak, was held Saturday afternoon at 22 centres here, officials said.

Altogether, 12,000 candidates were scheduled to sit for the re-examination that started at 12 pm and continued till 2 pm, they said.

"The re-exam took place at 22 centres in Patna. Out of a total 12,012 candidates, around 8,111 aspirants had downloaded their admit cards. However, 5,943 students appeared for the retest Saturday. It was held peacefully at all centres without report of any misconduct and malpractice," the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) said in a statement in the evening.

The 70th Combined Competitive Examination (CCE) held December 13 has been in the eye of a storm over allegations of leak of question papers which has been denied by the BPSC, though a fresh test was ordered for 12,000 candidates, who had appeared for the exam at the Bapu Pariksha Parisar centre here.

Talking to PTI, Patna District Magistrate (DM) Chandrashekhar Singh said, "The retest was peacefully held at all the centres, where adequate arrangements were put in place. The district administration had issued strict guidelines.

The Jan Suraaj Party chief said it could also explore legal options against **BPSC's decision to** go ahead with the retest Saturday

Unauthorised entry, gatherings and protests within a 200-metre radius of the centres were prohibited"

The clamour for cancellation of the Combined Competitive Examination held December 13 by the BPSC has gained strength, as agitating aspirants found support from various political parties, Independent MP Pappu Yadav and Jan Suraaj Party founder Prashant Kishor. Yadav had Friday led his

supporters in blocking rail and road traffic in several areas of Patna as well as other parts of Several MLAs and leaders of

the Congress, CPI-ML (Liberation), CPI(M) and CPI also lent support to the protesting candidates, who have been demand ing that fresh exams be held for all the five lakh candidates. who had appeared at more than 900 centres across the state, to ensure a "level-playing field".

Kishor continued with his fast-unto-death that he began Thursday to press for the demand for cancellation of the December 13 exam.

All-party march in Parbhani for arrest of accused PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Parbhani, Jan 4: Leaders of various political hues at an all-party rally here Saturday demanded that the Beed sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh murder case be fast-tracked and investigated thoroughly without any political pressure At least two MLAs from the

ruling BJP and NCP demanded the invocation of stringent MCOCA and the arrest of all persons involved in the crime Some leaders from Oppo-

sition and ruling parties de manded resignation of NCF minister Dhananjay Munde alleging links between his aide Valmik Karad and the murder

Seven persons have been arrested so

far in the **BEED** murder case. Thou-**SARPANCH** sands par-**MURDER CASE** ticipated in the morcha

along the route from Nutan College ground to Shivaji Maharaj's statue in Parbhani Public representatives from the opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) and ruling NCP Maratha quota leader Manoj Jarange and family members of Santosh Deshmukh joined the march. Deshmukh, the sarpanch of Massajog village in Beed district, was abducted tortured and murdered Decem ber 9 prima facie for attempting to stop an extortion bid on an energy firm operating a windmill project in the region.



Consumer prices could rise 3-fold in poor nations by 2050: Study



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 4: Even under ambitious climate policies, lower-income countries would see consumer food prices rise 2.45 times by 2050 while producer prices would rise 3.3 times, a study has found.

While the rise in consumer prices is less pronounced for farmers in lower-income countries, it would still make it harder for people in these countries to afford sufficient and healthy food, said researchers from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), Germany.

"In high-income countries like the US or Germany, farmers receive less than a quarter of food spending, compared to over 70 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa, where farming costs make up a larger portion of food prices," said David Meng-Chuen Chen, a PIK scientist and lead author of the study published in Nature Food. "This gap underscores how

differently food systems function across regions," he said. The researchers projected that

as economies develop and food systems industrialise, farmers will increasingly receive a smaller share of consumer spending, a measure known as the 'farm

share' of the food dollar. For the analysis, the researchers assessed food price components across 136 countries and 11 food groups, using statistical

and process-based models. They

studied prices of food both consumed at home and away from

Analysing entire food value chains also helped the researchers provide insights into how policies aimed at mitigating greenhouse gases impact consumers.

"Climate policies aimed at reducing emissions in agriculture often raise concerns about rising food prices, particularly for consumers. Our analysis shows that long supply chains of modern food systems buffer consumer prices from drastic increases, especially in wealthier countries.' Chen said.

However, these climate policies impact poor consumers differently, the researchers said.

Consumer food prices in richer countries would be 1.25 times higher with climate policies, even if producer prices are 2.73 times higher by 2050, the researchers found.

In contrast, lower-income countries would see consumer food prices rise by a factor of 2.45 under ambitious climate policies by 2050 while producer prices would rise by a factor of 3.3, they found. Revenues from carbon

pricing - when governments charge one for emissions produced -- could be used to support low-income households, the researchers said, citing a 2021 PIK study that showed that the households would be better off this way despite food price inflation.

"Climate policies might be challenging for consumers, farmers and food producers in the short term but they are essential for safeguarding agriculture and food systems in the long run," said author Hermann Lotze-Campen, who is also the head of the research department - 'Climate Resilience' -- at PIK.

GAS TRAGEDY WASTE DISPOSAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhar (MP), Jan 4: A mob Saturday pelted stones at the firm in Pithampur in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district where 337 tonnes of Union Carbide

No.: 04

waste linked to the Bhopal gas tragedy is proposed to be incinerated, a police official said.

A mob of 100-150 persons pelted stones at the gate of the unit, Pithampur police station inspector Om Prakash Ahir

The incident comes a day after the town was rocked by protests against the disposal plan amid a bandh call given by the Pithampur Bachao Samiti.

On Friday, a mob of 500-

Mob pelts stones at incineration unit 600 persons had marched to Ramky Group's Industrial Waste Management Private Limited premises, where the waste is set to be incinerated, but police managed to disperse

6 killed in blast

Virudhunagai

(Tamil Nadu):

were killed following an explosion at a firecrackers manufacturing unit near here Saturday, an official said. The blast occurred in the morning when the workers were engaged in mixing chemical-rav materials, as part of the

manufacturing process, the deaths of 6 men and 4 rooms in the factory premises were flattened in the impact. A worker, Mohammed Sudeen was injured and he was rushed to a government ity in nearby

Madurai. Police have registered a case and are investigat-ing. The deceased were identified as S Sivakumar (56), S Meenakshi Sundaram (46). R Naga raj (37) and G Velmurugan, S Kamaraj and R Kannan, all the

aged 54.

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, BARGAON

Dist : Sundargarh

e-mail id: ori-bargaon@nic.in, PIN - 770016 Date: 03.01.2025

Tender Call Notice - 02/2024-25

No.i-401 Sealed Tenders are invited from the interested bidder for he civil work under BDO, Bargaon of Sundargarh district. The detail of works, eligibility, estimated cost and cost of tender paper has beer uploaded in the district website www.sundargarh.odisha.gov.in. The bidder should be C & B class contractor. They have to submit the bid document to the undersign in the address of office of the B.D.O. Bargaon, At./P.O. Bargaon, Pin - 770016, Dist- Sundargarh (Odisha) hrough Registered Post / Speed Post only on or before 16/01/2025 4:00 P.M. The sale of tender paper will be from dated, 03/01/2025 to dated 15/01/2025 in the district website www.sundargarh.odisha.gov.in The authority reserves the right to cancel or reject the entire proces vithout assigning any reason thereof. The tender will be opened or dated 17/01/2025 at 11.00 A.M. in the office of the undersigned in the presence of the bidders or his/her representatives.

OIPR-19338/11/0002/2425

Yours faithfully Sd./- Block Development Officer

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, NIMAPARA At/PO/PS - Nimapara, Dist - Puri, Odisha, PIN - 752106

c@gmail.com, Website - www.nimaparanac.in, Phone-06758-45416 Notice No. 24// Date. 02.01.2025// **QUOTATION CALL NOTICE**

FOR SANITATION WORKS UNDER NIMAPARA NAC" No.C-1398: Sealed Tenders are invited in the prescribed format from eputed, well established Service Provider / Agency / Firm for providing

PROVIDING OUTSOURCING MANPOWER SERVICES

outsourcing services of Sanitation workers to the Nimapara NAC for a period of 02(Two) years and it may be extended upto 01 (One) year of more from the date of commencing of the contract subject to satisfactor The information of aforesaid sanitation services has provided in the Fender Documents which is available in District website i.e. https://puri

odisha.gov.in/ or Nimapara NAC website http://www.nimaparanac.in/ and can obtain the Bid documents from Office of the NAC, Nimapara from Dt.03.01.2025 at 10.00 A.M. to Dt.17.01.2025 at 05.00 P.M. during office hours of working days by depositing paper cost of Rs. 10,000/ (Ten Thousand only) in shape of Cash/DD in favour of the Executive Officer, NAC, Nimapara and the same will open on Dt.18.01.2025 at The tender documents complete in all respect should reach

Office of the NAC, NIMAPARA by latest Dt.17.01.2025 upto 5.30 P.M. through Speed/ Registered Post/Courier only in address of EXECUTIVE OFFICER, NAC NIMAPARA, AT/PO-NIMAPARA, DIST-PURI, ODISHA Sd./- Executive Office

AN INVESTOR EDUCATION AND

them in time.

AWARENESS INITIATIVE Do join us to learn more about Mutual Funds. Date and Venue:

Tuesday, 7th January 2025; 11:00 a.m. onwards. at Loknath Mohavidyalaya, Patkura, At/Post-Korua, Via-Tyendakura, Dist-Kendrapara.

For registration, please contact: Sanket Swaroop, Mobile: 99370 81778. Registration is compulsory. The registration time will be from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. No walk-ins will be allowed



An Investor Education and Awareness Initiative

Visit https://www.hdfchud.com/information/key/know-how to know more about the process to complete a one-time Know Your Customer (KYC) requirement to invest in Mutual Funds. Investors should only deal with registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified on the SEBI website (www.sebi.gov.infintermediaries.html). For any queries, complaints & grievance redressal, investors may reach out to the AMCs and 10 rinvestor Relation Officers. Additionally, investors may also lodge complaints directly with the AMCs, if they are unsatisfied with the resolutions given by AMCs they may raise complaint through the SCORES portal on https://scores.gov.in.SCORES portal facilitates investors to lodge complaint online with SEBI and subsequently view its status. In case the investor is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaints raised directly with the AMCs or through the SCORES portal, they may file any complaint on the Smart ODR on https://smartodr.in/login.



ROURKELA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully

Uditnagar, Rourkela, Pin - 769012 Mail Id: rourkelamunicipality@gmail.com

No.: 184

Corporation"

Telephone: (0661) 2500388 Date: 03.01.2025

Tender Call Notice No.C-1390: The Commissioner, Rourkela Municipal Corporation Rourkela invites Tender in sealed envelope from the intending Agencies irms / Manufacturers / Dealers / Suppliers for "Supply and arrangemen of Tent & Decoration for different programs under Rourkela Municipal

The sealed tender superscribed as "Supply and arrangement of ent & Decoration for different programs under Rourkela Municipal Corporation" should reach to the undersigned on or before 10.01.2025 up to 01:00 P.M. through Regd. post / Speed Post / Courier / or by hand. The Tenders will be opened on the same day at 04:30 P.M. in presence of the Bidders or their authorized representatives who wish to attend The rate quoted shall be including of all applicable taxes, Handling & Fransportation/ delivery charges & excluding of GST. No extra cost on any account whatsoever will be admissible. The date of function to be ntimated. The agency must submit their Tender along with photocopies of valid GST registration certificate, PAN Card, Bid cost of Rs. 11,800/-Non-refundable) including GST in shape of DD/ Cheque in favour o Commissioner, Rourkela Municipal Corporation, Rourkela" payable at Rourkela, failing which the tender of the bidder will be rejected. Authority will not be responsible for any delay in receipt of tenders and the same will not be accepted. The tender paper may be downloaded from RMC

The undersigned reserves the right to reject/ cancel any or all the enders at any time without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Joint Commissioner Rourkela Municipal Corporation Date: 02.01.2025



international



I was offered the opportunity of a three-vear exile while I was in Attock Jail, but I will live and die in

IMRAN KHAN

WORLD'S OLDEST PERSON DIES

Tomiko Itooka, a Japanese woman who was the world's oldest person according to Guinness World Records, died December 29, an Ashiya city official said Saturday. She was 116. Itooka was born May 23, 1908. She became the oldest person last year following the death of 117-year-old Maria Branyas





dent, thorough and transpai ent investigations into all Israeli

tals, healthcare infrastructure and medical personnel, as well as the alleged misuse of such facilities

VOLKER TURK | HUMAN RIGHTS CHIEF, UN

Faced with a hostile attitude of mass expulsion of our brothers we would have to of our cooperation policies with the United States, especially in the



like the AfD, which is in parts rightwing extremist, which preaches rapprochement with Putin's Russia and wants to weaken transatlantic

OLAF SCHOLZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

SHORT **TAKES**

50 B'deshi judges to take training in India

Dhaka: The diplomatic row between Dhaka and New Delhi notwithstanding, as many as 50 Bangladeshi judicial officers will undergo 10 day training at state-run academies in India. according to a media report Saturday, The Law Ministry has given permission to 50 iudicial officials of subordinate courts to undergo training at the National Judicial Academy and State Judicial Academy at Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh with no cost to Bangladesh. "The Law Ministry has given permission in the wake of the Supreme Court's advice.' Prothom Alo newspaper said here. These judicial officers will participate in the training from February 10 to February 20. India and Bangladesh have witnessed strained ties since the deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled to New Delhi on August 5 last year following a massive student-led protest that toppled her Awami League's 16-year regime.

US plans \$8 billion arms sale to Israel

Washington: The administration of President Joe Biden has notified Congress of a proposed \$8 billion arms sale to Israel, a US official said Friday, with Washington maintaining support for its ally whose war in Gaza has killed tens of thousands. The deal would need approval from the House of Representatives and Senate committees and includes munitions for fighter jets and attack helicopters as well as artillery shells, Axios reported earlier. The package also includes small-diameter bombs and warheads, according to Axios. Protesters have for months demanded an arms embargo against Israel. but US policy has largely remained unchanged.

Myanmar junta frees 6K prisoners

Bangkok: Myanmar's military government has released more than 6,000 prisoners, including 180 foreigners, under an amnesty marking the Southeast Asian nation's independence day, state media said Saturday. Myanmar has been in turmoil since early 2021, when the military overthrew an elected civilian government and violently suppressed pro-democracy protests, sparking a nationwide armed rebellion. The junta has said it will hold elections this year, but the plan has been widely condemned by opposition groups as a sham. Among those still imprisoned by the junta is the country's former leader, Nobel laureate Aung

San Suu Kyi.

HUSH MONEY CASE

Judge upholds Trump's conviction

US prez-elect will be sentenced in hush money case Jan 10, judge signals no jail

New York, Jan 4: President-elect Donald Trump will be sentenced January 10 in the criminal case in which he was convicted on charges involving hush money paid to a porn star, but is unlikely to face jail time or other penalties, a judge said Friday.

Justice Juan Merchan's ruling means Trump will be required to appear at a court hearing just 10 days before his January 20 inauguration - an unprecedented scenario in US history. Before Trump, no US president - former or sitting had been charged with or convicted of a crime.

The judge said Trump, 78, may appear at his sentencing either in person or virtually. He wrote that he was not

inclined to sentence Trump to jail, and that a sentence of "unconditional discharge" - meaning no custody, monetary fine, or probation - would be "the most viable solution.

The case stemmed from a \$130,000 payment Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen made to adult film actor Stormy Daniels to keep her quiet about a sexual encounter she said she had with Trump, who denies it. A jury in May found Trump guilty of falsifying records to mask the payment prior to the 2016 election.

The imposition of the sentence would pave the way for



Trump to appeal. Merchan acknowledged in his ruling that Trump has made clear he intends to appeal.

Merchan announced his plan for the sentencing in denying Trump's motion to dismiss the case due to his presidential election victory. Trump's defense lawyers had argued that having the case hang over him

during his presidency would impede his ability to govern. Merchan rejected that ar-

gument, writing that setting aside the jury's verdict would fundermine the Rule of Law in immeasurable ways.' "Defendant's status as Presi-

dent-elect does not require the drastic and 'rare' application of (the court's) authority to grant the (dismissal) motion," Merchan wrote in the decision. opens new tab.

Merchan also rejected Trump's argument in a December 3 court filing that dismissal was warranted because his "civic and financial contributions to this city and the Nation are too numerous to count.

acknowledging Trump's service as president, the judge said Trump's public statements excoriating the justice system were also a factor for him in determining how Trump's character would factor into the decision.

Merchan criticized what he called Trump's "unrelenting and unsubstantiated attacks' against the integrity of the criminal proceeding, and noted that he had found him guilty of 10 counts of contempt during the trial for repeatedly violating an order restricting out-of-court statements about witnesses and others.

"Defendant has gone to great lengths to broadcast on social media and other forums his lack of respect for judges, juries, grand juries and the justice system as a whole," Merchan wrote.

"Defendant's character and history vis-a-vis the Rule of Law and the Third Branch of government must be analyzed.' the judge said, referring to the iudiciary. "In that vein, it does not weigh in his favor.'

A Manhattan jury in May found Trump guilty of 34 counts of falsifying business records to cover up the payment to Daniels. He had pleaded not guilty and called the case an attempt by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, the Democratic prosecutor who brought the charges, to harm his 2024 campaign.

BLACK SEA OIL SPILL

Emergency in Crimea



Fuel oil spilled out of two storm-stricken tankers nearly three weeks ago in the Kerch Strait, close to eastern Crimea

Moscow, Jan 4: Russia declared a regional state of emergency Saturday in Crimea, which it seized from Ukraine in 2014, as workers cleared tons of contaminated sand and earth on either side of the Kerch Strait following an oil spill in the Black Sea last month.

Mikhail Razvozhaev, the Russia-installed governor of the city of Sevastopol, said new traces of minor pollution required urgent elimination and declared a state of emergency in the city - giving authorities more power to take swift decisions such as ordering citizens to evacuate their homes.

The Kerch Strait runs between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov and separates Crimea's Kerch Peninsula from Russia's Krasnodar region.

Rescue workers have now cleared more than 86,000 metric Rescue workers have now Cleared more than 86,000 metric tons of contaminated sand and soil

Over 10K people have been working to shovel up viscous, foul-smelling fuel oil from sandy

Environmental groups have reported deaths of dolphins, porpoises and sea birds

tons of contaminated sand and soil, the emergencies ministry said Saturday. The oil leaked from two ageing tankers that were hit by a storm December 15. One sank and the other ran

More than 10,000 people have been working to shovel up viscous, foul-smelling fuel oil from sandy beaches in and around Anapa, a summer resort. Environmental groups have reported deaths of dolphins, porpoises and sea birds.

The emergencies ministry said on the Telegram messaging app that oil-tainted soil had been collected in the broader Kuban region in Russia and in Crimea, whose annexation by Russia has not been recognised by most other countries.

US House Speaker: Republicans reelect Mike despite dissent

Republicans on Capitol Hill.

Trump himself.

218 votes - the minimum number needed. Republicans control the chamber by a razor-thin 219-215 majority.

son vowed to extend Trump's 2017 tax cuts, which are due to expire this year and roll back regulations. "We're going to drastically cut back the size and scope of government," he said.

Other big challenges will loom, including addressing the nation's more than \$36 trillion in debt, which Congress will need to act on later this year.

Friday's vote was an early test of Republicans' ability to hang together as they advance Trump's agenda of tax cuts and border enforcement. It also tested Trump's clout on Capitol Hill, where a handful of Republicans have shown a willingness to defy him.

Members of Congress milled around the chamber for more than half an hour after voting had concluded, where Johnson and his lieutenants could be seen trying to persuade the holdouts.



Washington, Jan 4: US House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson was reelected to the chamber's top job Friday by a razor-thin margin that highlighted potential fissures among President-elect Donald Trump's

Johnson appeared to initially fall short of the majority he needed to retain his job in a roll-call vote that lasted nearly two hours, but two Republican opponents switched their votes to support him after lengthy negotiations, with at least one reporting receiving a call from

Johnson won reelection with

Following the vote, John-

House Republicans have been racked by internal divisions over the last two years. Johnson was elevated to speaker after the party ousted his predecessor Kevin McCarthy in the middle of his term.





Police attempt to stop people from leaving the protest site during a demonstration against impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, near his official residence in Seoul Saturday

SK investigators ask acting prez to clear way for Yoon's arrest Seoul: South Korean investigators

again asked the country's acting president Saturday to order the presidential security service to comply with an arrest warrant for impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol. The security service, along with military troops, Friday prevented prosecutors from arresting Yoon Suk Yeol in a six-hour standoff inside Yoon's compound. The investigators secured the warrant to arrest Yoon over his brief declaration of martial law last month. The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials, which is investigating the case, said Saturday it had again asked acting President Choi Sang-mok, the nation's finance minister, to order the presidential security service to cooperate with the warrant. The police asked the chief of the presidential security service, of Park Chong-jun, to appear for questioning Tuesday, Yonhap News reported. Yoon's December 3 martial declaration stunned South Korea and led to the first arrest warrant to be issued for a sitting president.

Biden to give US Presidential Medal of Freedom to Hillary, Soros, Messi

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is US' highest civilian honour

Washington, Jan 4: US President Joe Biden has named former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, fashion designer Ralph Lauren, football superstar Lionel Messi, former Defence Secretary late Ashton Carter, and controversial investor George Soros, along with 14 others for the prestigious Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is the Nation's highest civilian honour, would be presented to the awardees at a White House ceremony by Biden Saturday afternoon.

The prestigious award is presented to individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal, public or private



endeavours, the White House said Saturday.

Biden believes great leaders keep the faith, give everyone a fair shot, and put decency above all else. These nineteen individuals are great leaders who have made America and the world a better place. They are great leaders because they are good people who have made extraordinary contributions to their country and the world, the

White House said.

Clinton made history many times over decades in public service, including as the first First Lady elected to the US Senate. After serving as Secretary of State, she became the first woman nominated for president by a major US politi-

cal party, the White House said. Soros is an investor, philanthropist, and founder of the Open Society Foundations. Soros, 94, in the recent past has spoken openly against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The ruling BJP believe that he tried to interfere in Indian elections. In the last session of Parliament, the BJP raised the issue of alleged "links" of Congress leaders with Soros-backed outfits involved in "anti-India' activities, triggering vociferous protests from the opposition. Congress, however, trashed

these allegations.

Bangladesh EC to probe Awami League-era national elections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Jan 4: Bangladesh's Election Commission (EC) has decided to investigate irregularities and shortcomings in all previous elections, including the three preceding elections that have been controversial during the Awami League-rule in 2014, 2018 and 2024.

The Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported that following a meeting, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin instructed all 10 regional election officers to examine the reasons behind the decline in the electoral system and submit detailed reports.

The CEC issued written directives, asking regional officials to identify past irregularities and deficiencies and report their findings to the EC secretariat. The 2014, 2018 and 2024 national elections are widely regarded as some of the most controversial in the country's history.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of former prime minister Khaleda Zia and al-



lied parties boycotted the 2014 election, resulting in one-sided voting and unopposed election of 153 candidates, an unprece dented occurrence in the country's electoral history.

The 2018 election was marred by allegations of rigging and came to be known as the "midnight election", with the BNP and its allies winning only seven seats.

The BNP and like-minded parties abstained from participating in the January 2024 election that faced criticism for allegedly fielding dummy can didates from the ruling Awami League as opposition representatives. As a result, the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League managed to secure a fourth consecutive term in office.

Business

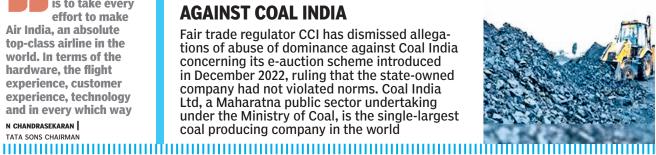


is to take every effort to make Air India. an absolute top-class airline in the world. In terms of the hardware, the flight experience, customer experience, technology and in every which way

My commitment

CCI DISMISSES PLAINT AGAINST COAL INDIA

Fair trade regulator CCI has dismissed allegations of abuse of dominance against Coal India concerning its e-auction scheme introduced in December 2022, ruling that the state-owned company had not violated norms. Coal India Ltd. a Maharatna public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Coal, is the single-largest coal producing company in the world





a lot of resistance was there from the industry. We held several meetings with

them and now finally the industry themselves realised the merit in focusing on high quality standards particularly when they are making that

AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

quality

We are seeing more than 3,000 retail stores coming up in the next two years. We are

seeing a lot of FDI coming into the gem and jewellery sector reflecting confidence in the industry VIPUL SHAH | GJEPC CHAIRMAN

There is continuous progress in the agriculture sector and we are all constantly making efforts for it... I have full faith that we will share suggestions together regarding the budget, improvement in schemes and move forward together in that direction SHIVARAJ SINGH CHOUHAN

SHORT **TAKES**

Kirloskar companies challenge SEBI letter

New Delhi: Four Kirloskar companies Saturday said they have filed an appeal before the **Securities Appellate Tribunal** challenging the SEBI letter asking them to disclose the deed of family settlement that was signed by members of the Kirloskar family September 11, 2009. In a joint statement, the Kirloskar companies --Kirloskar Ferrous Industries Ltd (KFIL), Kirloskar Industries Ltd (KIL), Kirloskar Pneumatic Company Ltd, Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd -- said they have filed the appeal before SAT challenging the SEBI letter dated December 30, 2024 wherein the market regulator advised them to disclose the Deed of Family Settlement (DDS). On December 31, these companies stated that they were preparing to legally challenge the letter by SEBI.

HMSI sales up 32% in 2024

New Delhi: Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Saturday reported a 32 per cent growth in total wholesales at 58,01,498 units in 2024 over the previous year. This included domestic sales of 52,92,976 units and 5,08,522 units exports, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) said in a statement. Last month, total sales stood at 3,08,083 units, which included domestic sales of 2,70,919 units and 37,164 units exports, it added.

DPIIT joins hands with Stride Ventures

New Delhi: The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Saturday said it has joined hands with venture debt firm Stride Ventures to support high growth potential startups in their funding requirements. It said this collaboration will be instrumental in creating enormous opportunities for startups by integrating financial support with strategic mentorship and market access. Highlighting the macroeconomic impact of this collaboration, Joint Secretary in DPIIT Sanjiv said Stride Ventures will curate dedicated programmes and collaborate on engagements like the Bharat Grand Challenge to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and investment. ecosystem".

Data protection rules balance regulation, innovation: Vaishnaw

New Delhi, Jan 4: The Digital Personal Data Protection Rules drafted by the government create a balance between regulation and innovation while protecting citizens' rights, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said Saturday.

The government has issued draft rules for the Digital Personal Data Protection Act Friday for public consultation till February 18.

"Rules have to be within four walls of the Act. It is within the ambit of the Act passed by Parliament, These rules have been framed to ensure a balance between regulation and innovation while completely safeguarding the rights of citizens," Vaishnaw told PTI in an interview.

The minister said earlier there was only one template available to the world -- the European data protection rule with high level of regulation -- but Indian rules have attempted to balance the regulation with innovation to safeguard the boom in innovation ecosystem developing among start-ups in the country.



He said extensive consultation has been held with the industry and a digital office is being put in place for registration of complaints, their handling and adjudication.

The minister said the final rules will be placed before Parliament in the monsoon session and all entities handling data digitally will get two years to adapt their system and comply with the law.

'All entities covered under the Act will have to review existing consent after the rules are in place," Vaishnaw said. He said the rules may be imence of the new data regime.

"As far as possible, minimum prescription has been kept in the rules to ensure simple implementation of the Act. The rules have carefully addressed the large harm that the digital world may pose to the privacy of people, especially that of children," Vaishnaw The Digital Personal Data

Protection draft rules specify that a parent's verifiable consent will have to be obtained by social media or online platforms before children can create an account.

Parents' identity and age will have to be checked through voluntarily provided identity proof or virtual

"We have also kept graded penalties to protect the interests of micro, small and medium enterprises. It is to save businesses that may be running using a single computer, However, Big Techs have higher obligations under the rules. Minor breaches will attract small penalties and big breaches will lead to higher penalties," Vaishnaw said.

US pizza chain Papa John's targets 2025 India re-entry



New Delhi, Jan 4: US pizza chain Papa John's International plans to make its return to the Indian market in 2025, a year later than planned, while many Western brands rethink their plans as inflation hits consumer spending.

Papa John's exited India in 2017 saying its restaurants were not able to meet the expectations of the brand and the franchisee.

In the meantime rivals Domino's Pizza and Pizza Hut have become popular as Indians increasingly opt for international cuisine. India "remains a priority" and the company will open its first restaurants this year, a spokesperson for Papa John's said by email.

Under plans outlined in 2023, the company aimed to scale up to 650 outlets over a decade.

"India is a complex market

Apparel exporters seek tax incentives

erences. We are taking the necessary time to ensure our franchise partner opens with the right products and menu, technology, and restaurant foot-

success," the company said. Inflation is also squeezing middle class budgets, prompting some players to slow expansion plans. India's Tata Consumer Products, which operates Starbucks stores under a joint venture, is pushing back plans for some new outlets until later in its schedule.

print to ensure their long-term

Consumer analysts in India still believe in the longer-term prospects for Western fast-food brands in the country noting its growing eating-out culture and urbanisation of smaller towns.

Papa John's has more than 5,900 locations in about 50 countries and territories, according

HDFC Bank says Q3 deposit growth outpaces loan growth

Mumbai, Jan 4: HDFC Bank saw quarter-on-quarter deposit growth outpace loan growth in the three months to December 31, the country's biggest private lender said Saturday.

Deposits rose 4.2% to 24.53 trillion Indian rupees (\$286.03 billion), slowing from 5.1% rise in July-September quarter, the Mumbai-based bank said. Its low-cost current and say

ings account deposits rose 1.1% Gross advances, or loans sanc

tioned and disbursed, rose 0.9% to 25.43 trillion rupees, slowing from 1.3% sequential growth in the previous quarter. HDFC Bank has the most as-

sets among all private banks in India. It merged with its parent HDFC in July 2023, adding a large pool of loans to its portfolio but a much smaller volume of deposits. After the merger, the bank's

loan-to-deposit ratio rose to around 110%, putting it under pressure to boost deposits or slow loan growth. Over the past few months, it

has offered retail loans for sale to reduce its loan-to-deposit ratio, a key metric for banks to assess their liquidity position.

In the December quarter, HD-FC Bank securitised 216 billion rupees of loans "as a strategic initiative", it said.

Securitisation volume estimated at ₹68k-cr in Q3

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Jan 4: The securitisation volumes in India are estimated at ₹68,000 crore for the October-December period this fiscal (Q3 FY25), according to latest data by credit rating This was driven by private

banks boosting credit-to-deposit ratios, while non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) face muted growth amid industry headwinds, according to Abhishek Dafria, SVP and Group Head-Structured Finance Ratings, ICRA Limited.

"The securitisation volumes for Q3 FY2025 are estimated by ICRA to be ₹68,000 crore, which is similar to the volumes witnessed in the previous quarter," said Dafria in a post on social media platform X.

The market volumes are being driven upwards this fiscal by a few private sector banks who have been using securitisation as means to improve their credit to deposit ratio given the relatively lower pace of deposit growth.

'The NBCs, on the other hand, have seen relatively muted growth in disbursements, especially in the unsecured asset classes such as microfinance and personal loans, due to industry headwinds resulting in tepid securitisation volThe market volumes are being driven upwards this fiscal by a few private sector banks who have been using securitisation as means to improve their credit to deposit ratio given the relatively lower pace of deposit growth

ume growth for the quarter,' Dafria posted.

According to estimates, ₹25,000 crore is on account of private banks acting as originators and the remaining ₹43,000 crore has been securitised by NBFCs. Securitisation by HDFC Bank, the largest private lender in the country, is around ₹12.000 crore in Q3.

In the second quarter this fiscal (Q2 FY25), securitisation volume in India rose 56 per cent (year-on-year) to about ₹70,000 crore. This was propelled by large issuances by some key players, especially a large private sector bank, and a few NBFCs that are primarily into vehicle financing, according to a recent report by CRISIL Ratings.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 4: Apparel

The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) has also requested that an interest equalization rate of 5 per cent be announced in the Budget, scheduled to be unveiled February 1 by Finance Minister

Other demands include exprocedures.

"Ready Made Garments (RMG) industry has also demanded removal of Sec43B (H) of IT Act in the ensuing Budget which pertains to payment to any MSME companies within a maximum 45 days' time to claim any deduction in tax. This has increased tax liabilities and has disrupted the cash

exporters body AEPC Saturday urged the government to announce tax incentives, including removal of a provision requiring payments to MSMEs within 45 days to claim deductions and customs duty exemption on garment machinery imports.

Nirmala Sitharaman.

tension of concessional tax rate for new manufacturing units to encourage setting up of new garment units; simplification in the procedure of imports of trims and embellishments under IGCR (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate); and liberalizing e-commerce export

flow of exporters," it said in a



statement.

It added that the cap per consignment of export value under e-commerce should be increased to minimum ₹25

Nirmala Sitharaman

lakh and export realization period should be extended to 12 months.

India's garment export sector relies heavily on imported machinery to maintain quality and global competitiveness, as domestic production is insufficient to meet demand. "High import duties make

Indian garments exports less competitive vis-a-vis countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam. AEPC recommends not only continuing existing exemptions but also reducing the customs duty to zero on remaining garmenting machinery to enhance the sector's efficiency," it said.

AEPC Chairman Sudhir Sekhri said, "The Union Budget is a great opportunity where our demands for long-term pol

icy support can be considered. AEPC Secretary General Mithileshwar Thakur said there is an urgent need to quickly adopt right strategies to take advantage of evolving supply chain reorientation.

The Indian apparel sector is on a high growth trajectory and has the potential to out pace global competitors with upscaling of production capac ity, channelizing investments into the sector, upskilling of workforce and labour reforms, Thakur said.

Japan's Nippon Steel to sue US govt for blocking acquisition

Nippon Steel and US Steel are expected to claim in court that **Biden did not present** sufficient evidence to prove the proposed acquisition poses a threat to US national security

AGENCIES

Tokyo, Jan 4: Japan's Nippon Steel Corp. is set to file a lawsuit in response to United States President Joe Biden's decision to block its takeover of US Steel Corp., local media reported Saturday.

Nippon Steel and US Steel are expected to claim in court that Biden did not present sufficient evidence to prove the

proposed acquisition poses a

threat to US national security,

and that his decision violates due process under the US Constitution and the law governing the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, Kvodo News reported, citing sources close to the matter. Biden said Friday that he

has decided to block the 14.1 billion US dollars sale of US Steel to the Japanese steel giant, citing risks to national security, while urging the two steelmakers to "fully and permanently" abandon their plan. In a joint statement Friday,

the two firms said the US authorities' review of the international buyout project was "manipulated to advance President Biden's political agenda" and that they will "take all appropriate action to protect our legal rights.'

ister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Yoji Muto said, "It is incomprehensible and regrettable that this kind of decision has been made on the grounds of concerns over national se-

Meanwhile, Japan's Min-

reported.

regarded Nippon Steel's plan to acquire US Steel as a deal

"that would benefit both councontinue increasing, Muto said in a statement.

announced plans to acquire US Steel, which is headquartered in Pennsylvania, one of the key swing states in the 2024 presidential election. Before Biden withdrew from the race, both he and his then-opponent, Donald Trump, had expressed opposition to the acquisition.

Nippon Steel is the world's fourth-largest steelmaker by volume, while US Steel ranks 24th, according to a 2023 tally by the World Steel Association.

Biden blocked the USD 15 billion acquisition of US Steel by Japan's Nippon Steel Friday something he had first vowed to do in March. His decision comes after the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, known as CFI US, failed to reach consensus on the possible national securi ty risks of the deal last month The rise of US Steel, a storied American company, runs par allel to the arrival of America on the world stage. With roots dating to the late 19th century, US Steel has produced the materials used for everything from the nation's bridges and skyscrapers, to its tanks and battleships.



Pant's fifty props India Rohit rubbishes retirement rumors

Rishabh Pant scripts history with fiery fifty vs Australia in fifth Test

Sydney, Jan 4: Staying true to his aggressive style of play, generational talent Rishabh Pant conjured up a spectacular 33-ball-61 to somehow keep India afloat even as Australia remained in driver's seat in the fifth Test, which is poised for an intriguing finish.

It was largely due to Pant's breathtaking knock that India finished the second day at 141 for 6 for an overall lead of 145. Pant entrained the packed SCG with four monstrous sixes and six boundaries.

His back-to-back sixes off Mitchell Starc into the heritage Ladies Members Stands were for posterity.

Pant's knock prevented Indian second innings from falling apart with the visitors ton and lower order struggling to negotiate Aussie attack on a track that was aided seam and

This was after unheralded bowling duo of Prasidh Krishna (3/42) and Nitish Reddy (2/32) complemented Mohammed Siraj (3/51) and Jasprit Bumrah (2/33) to shoot Australia out for 181.

On a difficult track, Virat Kohli (6) and his top-order colleagues found Scott Boland (3/38) too hot to handle.

Kohli lost his wicket on outside the off stump line for the eighth successive time in this

The match is certain to end on the third day but if India will be able to defend the total will very much depend on whether skipper Jasprit Bumrah is fit to bowl full tilt.

Bumrah underwent precau-



tionary scans for an unspecified injury after he left the field in the post-lunch session in which he bowled just one over

If even a half-fit Bumrah bowls, it won't be easy for Australia to chase even a 175-run target on a track with variable bounce and widening cracks.

Pant Power Having curbed his natural instinct to attack during a sedate 40 in the first essay after being torn to shreds by the most important member of the Indian coaching staff for indiscreet shot selection at the MCG, Pant perhaps cleared his mind about what he needed to do.

He came in at a time when not just Boland but even debutant Beau Webster was getting the ball to move a proverbial mile off the deck.

There was steep bounce available at the Randwick End (far end) where Kohli got out. Boland pitched it on hard length and got both seam and bounce. The result was a now familiar dab towards slips as Kohli's future beyond 123 Tests looks doubtful.

This was after both KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal got a couple of rippers.

However once Pant came out, he was a man-on-a-mission as the first ball disappeared into the long-on stand. The fallen pull shot also came out of the closet. It was exhilarating stuff.

Pant rode on bounce and hit Webster over point but the two sixes off Starc do take the cake. It was understood that Pant was mentally not in frame due to unsolicit ed sermons from a coaching staff member, who despite knowing the dashing southpaw's game told him to play otherwise.

At one point, a clueless Pat Cummins was forced to put six fielders near the boundary ropes. The skipper himself who saw the back of Pant, inducing edge from a ball that rose. Indian and Australian fans gave a standing ovation to the diminutive southpaw.

Sydney, Jan 4: Senior India batter Rohit Sharma Saturday firmly dismissed his retirement rumours, saying he is "not going anywhere" and offered poor form as the reason for him "standing down" from the ongoing Sydney Test against

Grappling with modest form, Rohit "opted to rest" from the Sydney Test, handing over the leadership duties to Jasprit Bumrah, sparking widespread speculations about his future.

"I have not retired. I stood down, that is what I would say. Basically the chat that I had with the coach and the selector was very simple. I am not able to score runs, there is no form, it is an important match and we need a player with form," Rohit told Star Sports.

"As it is, in our batting, the form of the boys is not that good. So you cannot carry a lot of out of form players in the team. This simple thing was going on in my mind. I am not going anywhere," he added.

The 37-year-old said the team management and selectors backed his decision.

"I wanted to tell the coach and the selector that this is what is going on in my mind. They backed my decision. They

Bumrah suffers back spasm

Sydney: Skipper Jasprit Bumrah has suffered back spasm and the team is

waiting for an update from the medical staff about the availability of star

pacer when India's turn comes to defend the target in the fifth Test against

Australia, pacer Prasidh Krishna said Saturday, Bumrah had left the field for

scans during the second day's post-lunch session after bowling just one over

overall lead is still under-150 and they are reeling at 141 for six. "He had a back

spasm. He had gone for scans. The medical team is monitoring him. So, we will

and 20 minutes and senior batter Virat Kohli led the side in his absence. It may

be recalled that Bumrah had suffered a lower back injury that kept him out of

cricket for nearly one year between 2022 and 2023. The 31-year-old has taken

32 wickets in the series so far. He had figures of 2/33 in 10 overs, having removed Marnus Labuschagne in the morning session with a peach of a delivery.

know whenever the medical team gets back to us," said Prasidh during the

post-day press conference. Bumrah was away from the field for three hours

as he felt some discomfort. His presence would be key, given that India's



said that you have been playing for so many years. You know what you are doing. So for me, it was difficult to take this decision. But if everything is kept in front, then this decision was sensible. I will not think much further," he added.

The Mumbaikar endured a tough time in Test cricket in 2024, accumulating just 619 runs in 26 innings across 14 matches averaging 24.76.

Before standing down, he had scored just 31 runs across five I have not retired. I stood down, that is what I would say. Basically the chat that I had with the coach and the selector was very simple. I am not able to score runs, there is no form, it is an important match and we need a player with form

ROHIT SHARMA | SKIPPER, INDIA

innings in three Tests in this series after joining the team following the Perth Test.

Rohit's bold call triggered speculations that he might pull the plug on his Test career after this series.

"This is not a retirement decision. I am not going to leave the game. There is no such decision. But I am out of this game because the bat is not working But there is no guarantee that the bat will not work after 5 months. There is no guarantee that the bat will not work after two months or six months down the line," Rohit said.

SHORT **TAKES**

US Olympic runner tased, arrested

Miami Beach: US Olympic runner Fred Kerley has been arrested in South Florida following a confrontation with police, authorities said. Body camera footage released by Miami Beach police shows Kerley arguing with a group of officers late Thursday before a physical confrontation erupted. Kerley was wrestled to the ground, where an officer stuck him several times and then used a Taser on the 29-year-old sprinter, police said. According to an arrest report, officers were investigating an unrelated active police scene when Kerley approached the area and attempted to force his way through to his vehicle, which was parked nearby. Officers had told Kerley to go around the area, but Kerley began to argue with them, which led to a shoving match with police. Four officers tried to take Kerley into custody while he moved to evade arrest, officials said. After being stunned with the Taser, Kerley was taken to a local hospital and then to the Miami-Dade County jail.

Barcelona's Olmo problem persists

Madrid: The Spanish league and Spain's soccer federation Saturday again denied Barcelona's request to register Dani Olmo and Pau Víctor for the rest of the season. The players were only registered through the end of 2024 and Barcelona failed to meet the league's financial fair-play rules by the end-of-the-vear deadline. The league and the federation said in a ioint statement that even though Barcelona eventually was able to meet the salary-cap rules, the players can't be registered again after already having been dropped because of the missed deadline.

UNITED CUP

Fritz, Gauff help USA beat Czechia, seal berth in final

US will now take on a Poland side including Iga Swiatek and Hubert Hurkacz in the final Sunday



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Sydney, Jan 4: Coco Gauff registered a comprehensive singles win over Karolina Muchova while Taylor Fritz benefitted from the abrupt retirement by Tomas Machac as the United States sealed an unassailable 2-0 lead over Czechia and a place in the final of the United Cup mixed-teams tennis tournament here Saturday

After Gauff began her country's semifinal tie against Czechia with a comprehensive victory against Muchova, Machac was in a great position to level the tie for his country against Fritz. But from serving for the match at 7-6(4), 5-3, the No 25 player in the ATP Rankings lost three consecutive games to World No 4 Fritz and then abruptly retired due to cramps

and left knee pain.

"He said he'd been cramping for a couple games already. I didn't notice, but yeah," Fritz said in his on-court interview as quoted by the ATP website. "He was moving pretty well, but I guess he was playing through it, fighting. It's really humid in here.

"That's something I was thinking was a possibility if I could win that set, take it to a third I was thinking maybe someone might start cramping later on. It's tough conditions, it was a physical match.'

The United States will now take on a Poland side including Iga Swiatek and Hubert Hurkacz in the final Sunday. Czechia looked set to win the men's singles before things unraveled because of an injury to Tomas Machac.

FC Goa notch 4-2 win against Odisha FC after Brison brace

Odisha FC is now winless in their 11 face-offs in the league with the Gaurs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: Brison Fernandes bagged his second successive brace as visitors FC Goa notched a 4-2 victory over Odisha FC in their Indian Super League match here Saturday.

The Gaurs are third in the table with 25 points now, having extended their unbeaten streak in away matches to seven games, with Manolo Marquez winning his maiden ISL game on the road against a side coached by Sergio Lobera.

Brison (8th, 53rd), who scored twice in a match for the second straight time, kicked off the game strongly for the visitors, as he combined with Iker Guarrotxena inside the box to pounce upon the Odisha FC backline that had given them ample space to attempt a shot right through the centre.

Iker got the ball inside the box but lost possession to Mourtada Fall. The Odisha FC defender took a heavy touch, resulting in the ball landing in Brison's path. The FC Goa player controlled the ball with his chest, before getting it down and drilling it into the bottom right corner to open the scoring in the eighth minute. The Juggernauts struck back with Jerry Lalrinzuala drawing a foul in-



side the penalty box. This was Jerry's 150 appearance in the ISL, making him only the 10th player to do so in the league.

His effort yielded immediate returns for the Juggernauts. Ahmed Jahouh stepped up on the spot, pulling off a panenka style penalty, which hit the high centre of the goal, completely catching goalkeeper Hrithik Tiwari off-guard and equalising the scores in the 29th minute.

FC Goa regained their lead in the added time of the first half. It came as a result of a piercing move by the Gaurs, with Iker again playing an indirect role in the goal. He cut into the in side channel of the left flank, pulling the entire attention of the Odisha FC defensive unit.

His shot was thus obstructed. but the home side didn't clear it properly, with the ball landing in Udanta Singh's feet on the right flank. He nestled it into the bottom right corner with absolute ease, following an impeccable touch to control the ball. The Gaurs added to their tally with a solo effort in the 53rd minute. It was a move that didn't require significant build-up. Brison simply received the ball from defender Sandesh Jhingan as the team looked to break forward.

FC Goa capitalised on this momentum, with their frontline momentarily assuming a free-flowing role to exploit further openings in the Odisha FC defence.

Odisha FC grabbed their second goal of the game through a header by Jerry Mawihmingthanga, who converted a cross by Thoiba Singh from the left side of the six-yard box.

Delhi SG Pipers go down against **Bengal Tigers**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Rourkela, Jan 4: A brace of goals by Jugraj Singh helped Bengal Tigers beat Delhi SG Pipers 4-1 and hand them their first outright defeat of the sea son in the ongoing Hockey India League (HIL) at the Birsa

Munda Stadium here Saturday. Jugraj (17th, 38th) converted two penalty corners, while Sukhjeet Singh (1st) and Abhishek (47th) struck from field play for Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers. Delhi's lone goal was scored from a penalty corner by Gareth Furlong in the 53rd

In the earlier two match es before this for the Delhi team, both of which went to the shootouts, the Pipers won the first while losing the second. The win, their third straight, propelled Bengal Tigers to the top of the points table.

On Saturday, the Bengal Ti gers started the match in the best fashion possible when Sukhjeet scored 30 seconds into the contest from a field effort to push the Delhi SG Pipers on the backfoot from the outset.

The Tigers maintained their shape throughout the first quarter while also de fending solidly to deny the Pipers' offensive forays. Even though Delhi SG Pipers had more circle penetrations they failed to get a shot on target. Two minutes into the second quarter, Jugraj doubled the Bengal Tigers lead with a powerful drag flick from a penalty corner.

Esports' inclusion in Asian Youth Games a shot in arm

India has been consistently making podium finishes in global Esports events, with the League of Legends team finishing fifth in the 2022 Asian Games, a silver medal in Tekken 8 at the BRICS Esports Championship, and a bronze medal in eFootball at the Asian Esports Games 2024

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 4: The Esports Federation of India (ES-FI) expressed confidence that the Olympic Council of Asia's decision to include Esports as a medal discipline in the 3rd Asian Youth Games to be held in Bahrain from Oct 22-31, 2025 would become a catalyst for the

growth of competitive gaming across the country and unearth

quality next generation gamers. This will be the first time that Esports will be included in the Asian Youth Games and the Esports athletes will get to rub shoulders with young stars from 20 other sports disciplines across 45 member countries within the age group of 14-17 years.



Lokesh Suji, Director of ESFI and Vice President of the Asian

Esports Federation (AESF) was understandably elated with the announcement and exuded confidence that this could provide a major flip to the grassroots esports development in the country.

"The Asian Youth Games is another prestigious platform

that has now recognized Esports as a competitive discipline. With Esports already being part of the Asian Games as a medal sport, this move will pave the way for greater opportunities and support for grassroots and talent identification of esports athletes and help to build a holistic esports ecosystem for competitive gaming," he said.

With esports already featured in the Asian Games, Asian Indoor Games, and the upcoming inaugural Olympic Esports Games later this year, being included in the Asian Youth Games will be a great flip for the sport in the region.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Los Angeles, Jan 4: LeBron James, who turned 40 recently, moved past Michael Jordan for the most 30-point games in NBA regular season history during the Los Angeles Lakers' 119-102 victory over the Atlanta Hawks

LeBron's 30 points on the night saw him hit the 30-point mark for the 563rd time in his career, to move past Jordan who set the record in 2003. Jordan set the record in 1,072 games over 15 seasons, while LeBron broke the mark in his 1.523rd appearance over 22 seasons.



With 5:58 minutes left to play in the game, LeBron hit an 18-foot jumper to reach yet another milestone. On the same night he moved past Dallas Mavericks legend Dirk Nowitzki to have played the fourth most games in NBA history with 1,522 games.

LeBron entered the league

LeBron hits the **30-point mark for** the 563rd time in his career, to move past Jordan who set the record in 2003

as a 18-year old in 2002, di rectly from high-school, and joined his home-town team the Cleveland Cavaliers, After entering as one of the biggest rookie prospects in the league history, he has dominated the game for 22-years, a feat which has never been accomplished in any sport.

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