



## PROFESSIONAL APPROACH

Sushmita Sen says she didn't shy away from picking the phone and calling up people to ask for work

LEISURE P2



## PM'S WORD OF CAUTION

Prime Minister Narendra Modi cautions that deepfakes created by artificial intelligence can lead to a big crisis

NATIONAL P9



## ARGENTINA SUFFER LOSS

Lionel Messi fails to make an impact as Argentina go down to Uruguay in a World Cup qualifying match

SPORTS P12



**PERSONA NON GRATA:** Rohingyas disembark from their boat upon landing in Ulee Madon, North Aceh, Indonesia. Some 240 Rohingyas Muslims, including women and children, are afloat off the coast of Indonesia after two attempts to land were rejected by local residents. The boat left again a few hours later following the rejection

# ₹200cr scam unearthed

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 17: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police has unearthed a crypto-ponzi scam in which around 2.5 lakh people of eight states were defrauded of over Rs 200 crore, with the arrest of three persons, including its mastermind from Rajasthan, an official said Friday.

While Sandeep Choudhary, the kingpin, was taken into custody from Rajasthan capital Jaipur when he was about to flee to Dubai, the two other accused, Basant Kumar Pradhan and Manoj Kumar Patnaik, were picked up from Bhubaneswar Thursday, the EOW official said.

The accused were associated with a company, 'Yes World Crypto Token', which swindled 2.5 lakh investors from Punjab, Rajasthan, Odisha, West Bengal, Haryana, Gujarat, Bihar and Jharkhand of more than Rs 200 crore with a promise of exceptionally high returns in a very short time. "There are more than 8000 members/investors in Odisha alone who have invested money in the company. In Odisha, it is mainly spread in Bhubaneswar; Khurda, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Keonjhar and Nayagarh," an official said.

Though the company claims



**MASTERMIND:** Sandeep Choudhary is a BTech graduate from NIIT Jaipur. He used to click photographs with influential people and would later try to win the confidence of unsuspecting victims using the same, EOW said

More than 8000 members/investors of the company are in Odisha, spreading across Bhubaneswar, Khurda, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Keonjhar and Nayagarh

later try to win the faith of unsuspecting victims using the same.

The Odisha EOW launched an investigation into the scam on the basis of a complaint lodged by Swagat Kumar Nayak, an investor of Puri town, the official said.

Following request of the EOW, the Bureau of Immigration had issued a look out circular against Sandeep November 8.

"Wednesday, while Sandeep was trying to flee to Dubai, he was intercepted and detained by Bureau of Immigration officials at Jaipur International Airport under intimation to EOW, Odisha. The EOW team went to Jaipur and arrested the accused," said an official.

'Yes World Crypto Token' follows the same modus operandi to mislead gullible investors as deployed by STA (Solar Techno Alliance) that was involved in Rs 1000 crore crypto-ponzi scam and duped over 2 lakh people from across the country. Four people allegedly involved in the scam had been arrested then.

## Nod to ₹1,397cr proposals

Bhubaneswar: The State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA) Friday approved eight transformative projects worth ₹1,397.18 crore, with employment potential for at least 2,860 people. Chairing the meeting of SLSWCA, Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena said these projects span across diverse sectors.

## New chief advisor to CMO

Bhubaneswar: The state government Friday appointed former bureaucrat Suresh Chandra Mahapatra as chief advisor to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Mahapatra, who became the chairperson of OERC after he retired as chief secretary, had requested to relinquish the present post from Friday.

## Radiologist dupes patients

Bhubaneswar: A radiologist with Sum Hospital here was held by the Bharatpur police Friday for allegedly swindling ₹31 lakh from patients on pretext of treatment. Additional DCP PK Malla said Narayan Behera, 40, was arrested following a complaint by the hospital. Behera confessed to have pocketed ₹8-10 lakh from patients, he said.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Didn't I say that this would be cheaper than the dynamic train fares?

## MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	65794.73 ↓ 187.75
NIFTY	19731.80 ↓ 33.40
DOLLAR	83.26 ↑ ₹0.03
EURO	90.51 ↑ ₹0.17
GOLD	₹60,781 ↑ ₹59
SILVER	₹73,258 ↓ ₹102

## WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	31.8°C	31.4°C
TEMP MIN	21.1°C	21.0°C
Humidity	71%	72%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry weather very likely	

# ST land transfer on hold

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 17: Three days after the Odisha Cabinet decided to amend a regulation, allowing ST people to transfer their land to non-tribals, the government Friday withheld it, amid protests by the Opposition parties.

Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Sudam Marndi, however, did not reveal the reasons behind the withholding of the decision taken during the November 14 meeting. "The proposed Amendment to Regulation-2 of 1956, discussed in the Cabinet meeting held on November 14 regarding transfer of tribal land, has been withheld," Marndi wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

The state Cabinet had decided to amend the Odisha Scheduled Areas Transfer of Immovable Property (by STs) Regulation, 1956 to facilitate the transfer of land by ST community people to non-tribals.

As per the Cabinet decision, an ST per-

son can provide a gift, exchange for public purposes or obtain a loan by mortgaging a plot of land in a public financial institution for agriculture, construction of residential house, higher studies for children, self-employment, business or establishment of small scale industries or transfer it in favour of a person not belonging to ST community for these purposes.

The ST people, however, will have to obtain written permission from the sub-collector to sell their land. If the sub-collector declines to give permission, a person can appeal to the collector within six months, whose decision shall be final.

The state government, in a note after the Cabinet meeting, stated that the decision to allow STs to transfer their land to non-tribals was taken to help educated tribal people monetise their land for education, industry and other purposes.

Opposition BJP and Congress had alleged that it was a 'conspiracy to help industrialists buy tribal land'.

# 6 terrorists gunned down in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar/Jammu, Nov 17: Six terrorists were killed in two separate encounters with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir Friday, officials said.

While five Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) terrorists were killed following an overnight encounter with the security forces in Kulgam district in the valley, one ultra was neutralised in Rajouri, they added.

Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir Zone, V K Birdi said the body of the slain terrorists in Kulgam were lo-

cated with the help of drone footage.

Officials said they were involved in the attack on Kashmiri Pandit Sonu Bhat in Shopian last year, attack on a minority picket at Heerpora Batgund in Shopian, attack on a cordon party at Wattu Keegam and the attack on non-local labourers earlier this year at Gagran in Shopian.

Meanwhile, another terrorist was killed in an encounter with a joint team of security forces in Rajouri district of the Jammu region, the officials said. The identity of the terrorist is yet to be ascertained.

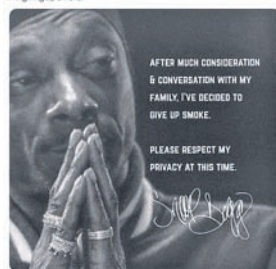
# Snoop Dogg gives up 'smoke'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Nov 17: Hip-hop legend Snoop Dogg, who is known for 'Drop It Like It's Hot', 'Gangsta Zone', 'Underrated' and other tracks, has announced that he has quit smoking.

The rapper took to Instagram and shared a monochromatic picture of himself with folded hands and his signature heavy eyes, and broke the news to his 82.4 million followers.

He wrote on the picture, "After much consideration and conversation with my family, I've decided to give up smoke. Please respect my



privacy at this time (sic). He wrote in the caption, "I'm giving up smoke (sic)".

The news left his fans shocked and pleased in equal measures. While there were some in the comments section expressing their sup-

port to their idol for his decision, others were having a gala time reacting to his decision in their amusing ways.

One Internet user wrote, "The withdrawals are going to be a big battle if you need the recipe let me know".

There was another who welcomed him to "sobriety". The user wrote, "The courage, the boldness, the ability to announce that you're stopping something that made you SO SO SO much money which created a character that you and all of us are used too is truly remarkable. As a sober man I speak for me and all of us sober people around the

world, welcome to sobriety". A third user wrote, "I am here to take over".

Another one wrote, "Gotta know the strain that made you come to this conclusion". Snoop Dogg has been known to be an avid smoker of marijuana. Over the years, the rapper has created a cult and a character of himself who is known to be on a perpetual "high".

There are many videos of him smoking outside The White House, the epicentre of world politics and on talk shows. Then there are other videos of him passing a smoke to a security guard.

**DHARITRI YOUTH CONCLAVE 2023**  
CLIMATE CHANGE: THE PATH AHEAD

**50 Years**

**SONU SOOD**  
ACTOR/  
YOUTH ICON

**RICKY KEJ**  
MUSIC  
COMPOSER  
3X GRAMMY  
AWARD  
WINNER

**Padmashri JADAV PAYENG**  
CONSERVATIONIST  
FOREST MAN OF INDIA

**ARUN KRISHNAMURTHY**  
FOUNDER, EFI

**SNEHA SHAHI**  
ENVIRONMENTALIST

**RICHARD MAHAPATRA**  
MANAGING EDITOR  
DOWN TO EARTH  
MAGAZINE

**DHARITRI YOUTH CONCLAVE 2023**  
CLIMATE CHANGE: THE PATH AHEAD

**NOVEMBER 24**

**LIVE STREAM ON**

DharitriLive DharitriNews

10:30 AM ONWARDS @ BHUBANESWAR

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JEWELLERS SINCE 1938

**ONPC**

**ODISHA**  
INDIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET

**IndianOil**  
The Energy of India

**vedanta**

**PARTNER Bakul**

**OrissaPOST**  
MEDIA PARTNER



## KHLOE KARDASHIAN ADMITS TRISTAN CHEATED ON HER

Reality star Khloe Kardashian has gone on record to acknowledge that her ex-boyfriend Tristan Thompson had cheated on her, reports *People* magazine. Meanwhile Thomson admitted at a show, "For me personally, when I cheat, I feel disgusted the next day with guilt."

## DIDDY CHARGED WITH SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Rapper Diddy, whose real name is Sean Combs, has been embroiled in a controversy. The New York Police Department has launched a probe into charges of sexual harassment levelled against him by an unknown person.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

#### ARIES

You are feeling very excited and are all geared up to do what you want. Put all that energy to productive use. Ganesh says this is the time to work and not to make plans as today you can accomplish very difficult tasks. So work now, you can indulge in your parties later.

#### TAURUS

This day promises to be like any other. You will, as usual, begin by attending to home chores and then get caught up in your hectic office schedule. Later in the day you will, says Ganesh, feel an urge to take time off and indulge in some socializing. You could, finally, be meeting your loved ones, your close friends and having a great time together.

#### GEMINI

An auspicious and progressive day awaits you. You will reflect on the problems at the work-place as well as on the home-front. You will try to understand the emotions that lie behind the troubles brewing at home and will try to resolve them. It is a good day to start new ventures in partnership with someone, says Ganesh.

#### CANCER

The day begins with worship and havan. In the evening, guests will throng your house for a celebration. You will feel sad as your trusted ones will not give you a vital clue or some important information promptly. Ganesh advises you keep away from other's affairs.

#### LEO

You are facing turbulent times, inspite of your hard work. Obstacles to progress are commonplace and should not tie you down. You need to keep working hard and sooner rather than later, the fruits of your labour will fall into your lap, says Ganesh.

#### VIRGO

Ganesh says that if your authority is questioned today, you will probably take to wielding your stick. A risky financial venture is a distinct possibility. Something unexpected and unpleasant in the evening will give you cause for some worry. However, Ganesh advises you not to take it to heart, as there is a lot of hope.

#### LIBRA

Ganesh says those of you in the field of art will find immense success. You will be able to please your beloved with your presence and also shower them with gifts. You may buy something expensive as a gift today. You will also focus on a long-term goal today. Ganesh shows you with his blessings always.

#### SCORPIO

Everything is fair in love and war, however, make sure your love story does not turn into a cold-war. It may happen that romance may make you altogether a different person. By the end of the day, you may solve the differences that lead to a cold-war between you and your beloved, says Ganesh.

#### SAGITTARIUS

You seem to be impressed by the handicrafts and plan to take it up as your business. You are a family person and give much attention to your loved ones. You may be smitten by love-bug as passion and intimacy give rise to romance.

#### CAPRICORN

In the fast paced life of today, rarely anyone gets time to spend with their old friends. Today, you're one of those rare people. Also, you will have a blissful love life, blesses Ganesh. You will develop a better level of understanding with your partner. Family members, your support system, will motivate you to fulfil their demands and expectations.

#### AQUARIUS

You will now deal with issues which you have brushed under the carpet for some reasons. Keep your affairs neat and tidy so that can avoid further complications, advises Ganesh. If you are seeking a job, you will pass the day scanning through job advertisements and applying for interviews.

#### PISCES

The day will start on an energetic and enthusiastic note, says Ganesh. Your day will be enjoyable up to afternoon but there will be some unexpected reasons that will make you fidget in your seat after that. Make sure to take a deep breath and do not let small problems overwhelm you.

# Tara aspires to be a versatile actor

**Mumbai:** Actress Tara Sutaria who made her debut with *Student of the Year 2*, admits preconceptions based on her appearance and is ready to prove her capabilities beyond being a beautiful sidekick to a hero.

shared, "I think because of the way I present myself, the way I inherently look people have perceived me in a certain way. In general there seems to be a preconceived notion that if you look a certain way, only a certain roles will come to you. And it is fine, it has been very enjoyable. But

I think it is very dull and boring to imagine a woman in just one way. We are all multi-faceted, we all have multiple aspects to us that are much more exciting than looking good alongside a hero. I am very proud that I got to be my own hero in this film for the first time."

"The journey has been wonderful, filled with diverse experiences in the films I've undertaken. From resembling this intensity to the mud-covered action in my last film, like in *Ek Villain Returns*, I've always believed in my capability," she concludes.



## Kajol AI's latest victim

**Mumbai:** The issue of deepfakes is really surging as artificial intelligence advances. After actresses Rashmika Mandana and Katrina Kaif, now Kajol has fallen prey to the deepfake controversy as an Internet influencer has morphed the K3G actress' face on herself.

morphed into the video. For a split second, the manipulated video features the face of the original woman.

Although the original clip was shared in June this year by influencer Rosie Breen on TikTok as part of the 'Get Ready With Me' trend, it resurfaced recently, sparking concerns over the use of AI.

In Rashmika's case, the deepfake video showed a woman, dressed in black, entering a lift. Her face was morphed and edited in a way that it resembled the actor.

The video in question shows Breen's face being replaced with that of Kajol. The clip showed the My Name Is Khan actress changing clothes on camera. The original video was of Rosie, and Kajol's face had been

In Katrina Kaif's case, a digitally altered image of the actress from her recently released film *Tiger 3* showed the actress engaging in a fight with a stuntwoman clad in a towel, the edited version showed her wearing a low-cut white top and a matching bottom instead of the towel.



## Sunny on showbiz's punctuality crisis

**xxMumbai:** Actress Sunny Leone who was last seen in Anurag Kashyap's *Kennedy* which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, recently discussed what she doesn't like about the Hindi film industry.

When asked about the one thing she hates about the industry but pretends to like it, the *Jism 2* actress said, "Okay let's talk about the timings in the industry. Why is everyone 2-3 hours late for every party? And when they arrive, you forget that they were so late and pretend like, 'It's okay, you're so much fun'. But in my head, I'm like, 'If I throw a dinner party and call people at 8 pm, they will come at 10 or 10:30 pm. So what timeline do I follow?' Why am I always the

first person at the party? It's the worst!" Sharing one such incident, she added, "Once I purposely showed up 90 minutes late for a wedding and they were still putting up lights." So, really, what time is one supposed to go to a party and how late? asks the former *Bigg Boss* participant.

## Sushmita shed stardom to revive career

**Mumbai:** Actress Sushmita Sen in a recent interview revealed about the time when she wanted to make her comeback in showbiz and did not shy away from picking the phone and calling up people to ask for work.

"I called up the heads of Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Hotstar. And, I said 'My name is Sushmita Sen. I am an actor, I used to be one anyway. And, I want to come back and work'."

walking away from films. I stepped away and unlearned, learned, and came back with *Aarya*," she said.

In short clip from the interview shared by the publication, the *Sirf Tum* actress said,

She also talked about her comeback. "I felt like a newcomer, attending 14-hour workshops and coming home late and loving every bit of it... I am glad I listened to my heart, even if it meant

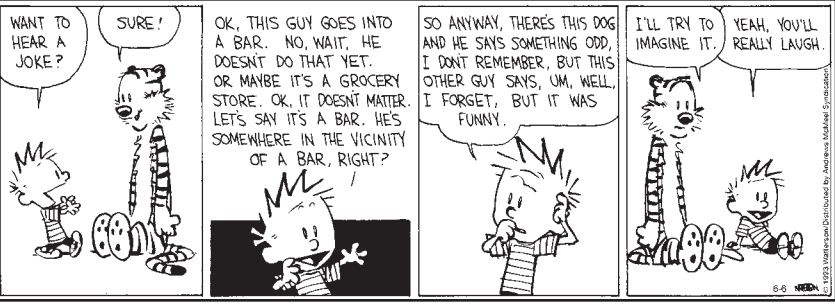
On the work front, Sushmita made a comeback with her digital debut *Aarya* in 2020 after a long break from acting and with season 3 exclusively streaming on Disney Hotstar.



### PEANUTS



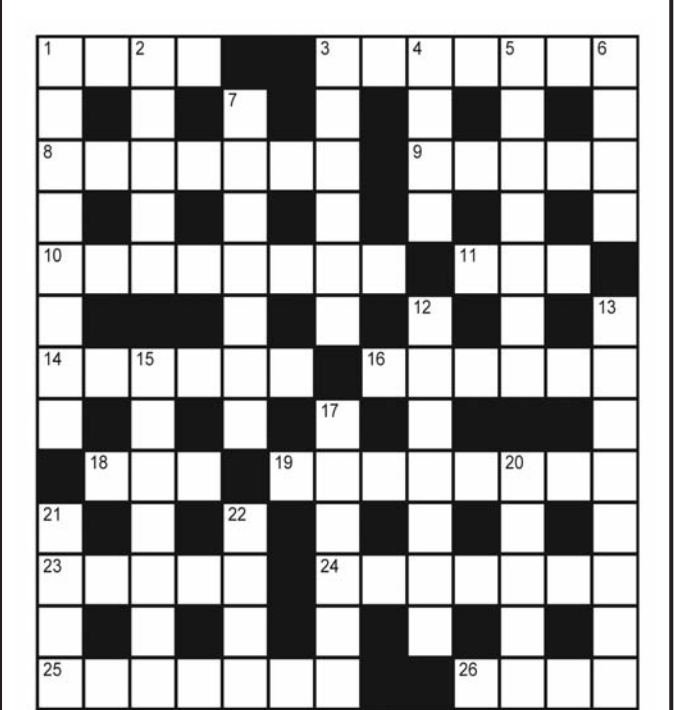
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



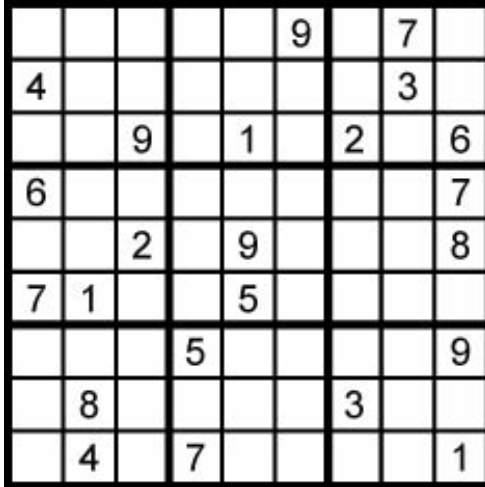
### FUN post CROSSWORD



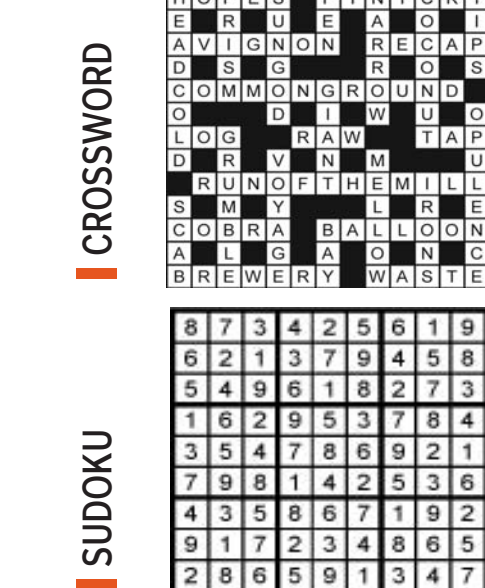
- Across**  
1 Owlsh, maybe  
3 Chest protector  
8 Skin engravings  
9 Clavier instrument  
10 Small motorboat  
11 Boggy lowland  
14 Fish hawk  
16 Iran, in the past  
18 Psyche  
19 Barren
- Down**  
23 Golden Hind captain  
24 Small flute  
25 Ripens  
26 Many millennia
- Across**  
5 Tall story tellers, at times  
6 Sicilian resort  
7 Hotel features  
12 Jump for joy  
13 Yaoundé locale  
15 Miss Universe show  
17 Entices  
20 Dwelling  
21 Wax-coated cheese  
22 Panic

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

## MUSIC FEST

Noted composer Guru Dhaneswar Swain performs during Rajarani Music Festival in Bhubaneswar, Friday



# Nod to 8 proposals worth ₹1,397 crore

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 17:** The State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA) Friday approved eight transformative projects worth ₹1,397.18 crore, with employment potential for at least 2,860 people.

Chairing the 124th meeting of SLSWCA, Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena said these sectors spanning across diverse sectors, from plastic to agro and forest products, spread over six districts indicating a widespread industrial development strategy.

Significant investments were made in the plastic, technical textile and aluminium sector further contributing to Odisha's manufacturing capabilities.

The steel sector witnessed a surge in approvals highlighting the region's rich mineral resources and metallurgical expertise. IT sector emerged as a priority, reflecting Odisha's commitment to increase IT solutions.

The agro industry sector saw advancements, tapping into the state's cultivation potential.

In the plastic sector, the SLSWCA approved the proposal of Sintex BAPL Limited to establish manufacturing unit for CPVC, UPVC, SWR, Agri Pipes, PVC fittings and Plastic tanks with annual capacity of 37,520 MT in Sambalpur. With an investment of ₹479.47 crore, the unit will provide employment



to 1,000 people.

HIL India's proposal for setting up of PVC and CPVC pipes manufacturing units in Balasore with an investment of ₹250 crore also got the approval. At least 275 people will get employment in HIL India's project.

The SLSWCA also approved Mega Flex Plastics Ltd's proposal for a manufacturing unit of plastic containers, leno bag, PP woven bags, PP woven fabrics and corrugated box with an annual capacity of 9,600 MT in Khurda. With an investment of ₹105.3 crore, the IT Park will provide employment to 300 people.

In the agro sector, the SLSWCA approved the proposal of GGL Chalet Private Limited to establish a manufacturing unit of veneer (2,50,00,000 SQM per annum), ply board and particle board (5,00,000 SQM per annum) and biomass pellet (10,00,000 MTPA) in Koraput. The company will be investing ₹70 crore for the project that aims at employing at least 290 people.

direct employment by companies.

In a boost to the aluminium sector, Hindalco Industries Ltd will be investing ₹241.05 crore for establishment of a white fused alumina manufacturing unit in Sambalpur. The unit will offer employment opportunities to 210 people from Odisha.

Anuj Autograph Business Park's proposal to set up an IT Park in Khurda also got a go-ahead from the SLSWCA. With an investment of ₹105.3 crore, the IT Park will provide employment to 300 people.

In the agro sector, the SLSWCA approved the proposal of GGL Chalet Private Limited to establish a manufacturing unit of veneer (2,50,00,000 SQM per annum), ply board and particle board (5,00,000 SQM per annum) and biomass pellet (10,00,000 MTPA) in Koraput. The company will be investing ₹70 crore for the project that aims at employing at least 290 people.

# CM approves 2 instream storage structures

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 17:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday approved two instream storage structure projects for Sundargarh district, sanctioning ₹386.25 crore. The projects are: Bhasma Instream Storage Structure Project on the Ib river and Phulbari Instream Storage Structure Project on the

Sapei river.

The CM sanctioned ₹262.50 crore for the Bhasma project while Phulbari project got ₹123.75 crore, a release issued by the CMO stated.

"The CM approved these two projects as per the wish of the people who gave the proposal to 5T chairman VK Pandian during his visit to the district," it said.

The projects will benefit people of five blocks by helping increase the groundwater level, drinking water availability, fish farming, and animal husbandry.

While the Bhasma project will benefit the people of Tangrapali, Sundergarh and Jharsuguda blocks, the Phulbari project will cater to the needs of Badagaon and Bamara blocks.



**TRADE FAIR AHEAD:** Installation of a Ferris wheel in progress at Baliyatra Ground in Cuttack, Friday, as state gears up for the biggest open air trade fair *OP PHOTO*

## CYCLONE 'MIDHILI' TO MAKE LANDFALL ON BANGLADESH COAST

# Fishermen warned not to venture into sea

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar/Kolkata, Nov 17:** The deep depression over the Bay of Bengal Friday intensified into cyclonic storm and will graze past the Sunderbans before making landfall on Bangladesh coast with a maximum wind speed of 80 kmph, India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in a bulletin.

The cyclonic storm 'Midhili' will cross the Bangladesh coast November 17 night or early hours of November 18, it said.

The Met department Friday warned fishermen not to venture into the sea in north Bay of Bengal and along and off West Bengal coasts till November 18.

The deep depression existing over north Bay of Bengal intensified into cyclonic storm Midhili as it moved in a north-northeaster ward direction, lying 200 km south-southeast of the sea-



side resort town of Digha in West Bengal and 220 km south-east of Khepupara in Bangladesh Friday morning, the Met said.

"It is likely to continue to move north-northeastwards and cross Bangladesh coast close to Khepupara with wind speed of 60-70 kmph gusting to 80 kmph during November 17 night or early hours of November 18," the IMD said.

The name 'Midhili' was given by the Maldives. Countries affected by the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal cyclones rotationally give names of cyclones in a sequence.

The Met department warned fishermen not to venture into the sea in north Bay of Bengal and along and off West Bengal coasts till Saturday.

The IMD said the cyclone Midhili will have no major impact on Odisha as it passes above 150 kilometres from the state's coast. However, some districts like Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur likely to get heavy rainfall Friday, IMD scientist Umashankar Das said.

Meanwhile, Odisha's Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) has put all the District Collectors on alert in the wake of the cy-

clone in the Bay of Bengal. "We do not want to take any chance and therefore put the state machinery on alert for any eventuality," SRC Satyabrata Sahoo said.

The cyclonic storm is likely to bring heavy rainfall in the coastal districts of West Bengal and in the northeastern states, the Met said.

It is likely to bring isolated heavy downpour in West Bengal's coastal districts of Purba Medinipur, South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas on Friday, the weather office said.

It said that the system is likely to bring very heavy rainfall in the northeastern states of Mizoram and Tripura on Friday and in Nagaland, Manipur, south Assam and east Meghalaya till Saturday.

This is the second deep depression during this season. The previous cyclone Hamoon also headed towards the Bangladesh coast.

## VAMSADHARA ROW SC TO HEAR CASE JAN 23

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

**New Delhi, Nov 17:** The Supreme Court will hear January 23 a batch of petitions filed by Odisha challenging the order of Vamsadhara Water Dispute Tribunal allowing Andhra Pradesh to construct Neradi barrage across the river.

The river water dispute between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, which has been pending for over 15 years before various institutions, came up for hearing only twice this year, in August and November. The apex court couldn't hear the case due to paucity of time and gave dates.

In September 2021, the Supreme Court had asked both the states to prepare a common compilation, bookmarked with the entire relevant documentary. It asked the counsels of both states to present brief skeleton notes of submissions, additional documents related to the water dispute and relevant case law, if any. The apex court had also observed that such interstate disputes should be disposed of the earliest.

Significantly, Odisha had filed three petitions in the Supreme Court challenging order of the Vamsadhara Water Dispute Tribunal and had opposed joint survey of the Neradi barrage as directed by the tribunal.

In June 2021, the Vamsadhara Water Dispute Tribunal had permitted Andhra Pradesh to construct the Neradi barrage across the river with ancillary structures. The tribunal had said that the barrage can have a right head sluice of 8,000 cusecs of design capacity for meeting the requirements of AP and have a Left Head Sluice (LHS) to cater to requirements of Odisha below the barrage.

# 8 Indians on 'Time 100 Climate' list



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New York, Nov 17:** Eight Indians and Indian-origin persons, including World Bank President Ajay Banga and co-founder of Ola Electric Bhavish Aggarwal, have been featured in Time magazine's first-ever list of the world's most influential leaders driving business to real climate action.

"Time 100 Climate" list, which includes CEOs, founders, philanthropists, musicians, policymakers and government officials from across the world, comes ahead of the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference scheduled to take place in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from November 30.

Along with Banga and Aggarwal, Rajiv J Shah, president of The Rockefeller Foundation; Geeta Aiyer, founder and president of Boston Common Asset Management; Jigar Shah, director of the US Department of Energy Loan Program Office; Manoj Sinha, CEO and co-founder of Husk Power Systems; Seema Wadhwa, executive director for environmental stewardship for Kaiser Permanente and Amit Kumar Sinha, managing director and CEO of Mahindra Lifespaces, are also on the list.

Banga, 64, who began his five-year term as World Bank Group president in June, is ushering in a new mission for the institution: eradicating poverty while fighting climate change, according to Time.

India is the world's most populous country, and it is likely to be the most vital to transition to sustainable transportation. Some 70 per cent

of the vehicles on India's roads are mopeds and scooters, and Aggarwal, 38, is leading the path to electrifying them, the magazine said. This year, Ola launched its most affordable electric scooter ever, priced at ₹79,999 (about USD 960).

Rajiv Shah's The Rockefeller Foundation works to ensure that all initiatives and investment strategies are focused through a climate lens. This year, the Rockefeller Foundation partnered with the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet to launch the Coal to Clean Credit Initiative. The aim is to develop a new carbon finance standard to spur a just transition away from coal-fired power plants to renewable energy in emerging economies, the magazine said.

Aiyer's Boston Common Asset Management is a woman-led, employee-owned sustainable investment firm with nearly USD 5 billion in assets under management.

The firm prioritises investment in climate change mitigation and uses shareholder engagement to push portfolio companies toward more sustainable business practices. Mahindra Lifespaces, is the real estate and infrastructure development arm of Indian conglomerate company Mahindra Group. Incomes are projected to rise, and India could see 400 million new urban dwellers by 2050, a shift that will require massive growth in new building stock. This will increase pressure to develop sustainably—a challenge Amit Kumar Sinha is rising to meet. Since 2013, Mahindra Lifespaces

says it has had an entirely green portfolio, prioritizing water efficiency, passive energy design, renewables, and more, Time said.

Manoj Sinha's Husk Power Systems operates 200 minigrids across Asia and Africa and reached profitability in India and Nigeria this year. According to Manoj Sinha, the most important climate legislation that could pass in the next year is the imposition of a uniform carbon tax.

Kaiser Permanente is one of the largest healthcare providers in the US. By 2050, it aims to be net zero. Under Wadhwa's leadership, this year Kaiser Permanente's office in Santa Rosa, California, was recognised as the country's first net-zero medical facility.

The US Department of Energy Loan Program Office is responsible for the public investment of hundreds of billions of dollars into clean infrastructure and energy projects.

"The solutions to meeting the (US) President's decarbonisation goals are already within our grasp. It's a matter of doing rather than waiting for a breakthrough," Jigar Shah, 49, told the Time.

To assemble this list, TIME reporters and editors—along with experts from the TIMECO2 team—sought out measurable, scalable achievements and prioritised recent action, selecting individuals making significant progress in fighting climate change by creating business value.

"Climate leadership is embedded across all of our coverage today. But we believe more could be done to draw attention to the people who are shaping and leading climate action... The TIME100 Climate is not only a community, it is an argument for how we see the future: we are recognising those who are connecting climate action and business value because we believe progress for the planet will come from the engagement with and leadership by the business world," TIME Editor-in-Chief Sam Jacobs wrote.

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Zindagi ke saath bhi, Zindagi ke baad bhi

# CM: Human touch can do wonders for patients



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 17:** Human touch can do wonders for patients, said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik while addressing 102 newly-recruited assistant professors at an orientation programme organised at Lok Seva Bhawan here Friday. The assistant professors, joining the Odisha Medical Education Service, will serve at government medical colleges in different districts of the state. The Chief Minister asked the young professors to have a human touch while treating patients. He said, "You are in a

profession that demands absolute commitment to the job. You need to create confidence among the patients and their relatives. Along with your professional skills, a human touch in your approach can do wonder." The CM further added that our vision of happiness for our people is 'Sustha Odisha, Sukhi Odisha,' with emphasis on the message that 'every life is precious.' Highlighting the state's initiatives in healthcare, he said that his government is committed to provide universal access to quality healthcare and bring down expenses. Under the

Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana, the government bears the entire cost of health services at government hospitals. "It is our responsibility to see that our patients get the best quality of care at our Government Medical College Hospitals," he underscored.

Focusing on the state's transformative initiatives, he said that the 5T initiative has paved way for a new, empowered Odisha. Components of transparency, technology, team work, time are leading to transformation. He expected the young professors to follow these principles in their career.

Encouraging the young recruits, the CM said, "I share your happiness with your parents and other family members for your success." Then the CM wished them a bright future.

Speaking on the occasion, Health and Family Welfare Minister Niranjana Pujari said that more than 300 assistant professors have been appointed in recent years. Following the vision of the Chief Minister, the state is making rapid progress in providing quality healthcare to people completely free of cost.



**SPORTS INFRA:** Children exercise at Sports Science Centre of Kalinga Sports Complex in Bhubaneswar, Friday. The Complex is a part of new facilities including South Asia's biggest Indoor Athletics Stadium, nearing completion with an aim to boost sports culture. OP PHOTO

# 'Don't sacrifice morality for personal interest'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 17:** Journalists should not sacrifice morality for their own personal interest, Governor Raghubar Das said at a function organised by the National Journalist Welfare Board, Bhubaneswar to celebrate the National Press Day.

The Governor said that in this day and age when all are eager to get the news fast, the journalists should be alert about fake news, adding that it is the duty of the media to create awareness and sensitise people.

He said that newspapers are more powerful than arms and weapons as small newspapers



have exposed many big scams. The press has many times forced the government to change policy with its sincere work.

"An Independent media can take a nation to the pinnacle of development and nation building," said the Governor while also expressing gratitude to the media for playing a positive role

in nation building since Independence.

Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment Minister RP Swain regretted the fact that despite several rules and regulations for maintaining the independence of media, the Indian media has fallen from 150 last year to 161 this year in the press

freedom ranking.

The Press Day, held under the chairmanship of National Journalist Welfare Board president Prodoosh Patnaik honoured former editor of the Odia daily Samaj Niranjana Rath with Utkal Sambadika Ratna Samman 2023.

Six senior Journalists namely Ritesh Kashyap and B Jaiswal (Jharkhand), Ranjan Acharya (Bangalore), Bishnu Agarwal (Kolkata), Santosh Pande and Mrinal Manjari Mall (Delhi) were honoured with 'Rashtriya Sambadika Gourav Samman'.

NJWB vice president Pradyumna Kumar Mohanty and general secretary Santa Mishra also addressed the gathering on the occasion.

# High drama at Nataala as contractor seizes articles

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 17:** Stating long deferment of dues by chief engineer, a senior division sub judge ruled here for auctioning of articles from Heads of the Departments Building, Nataala to settle the monetary dispute. The matter pertains to a petition filed by Construction India contractor, Dinesh Pathak for payment of pending bills amounting to Rs 18 lakh.

Addressing the media, chief engineer, Dukhabandhu Behera, said that no prior notice was served from court to put the items on auction. Earlier, the government had taken up the matter in both the High Court and the Supreme Court, but to no avail, he added.

After the Court's order Friday, officials were seen seizing several items including sofas, computer systems, chairs, television, inverters and ACs for auction. The seized items reportedly were from the third floor of the building, which includes conference room and chief engineer's office among others.

Sources informed that, Court had earlier pronounced a judgment April 29 for settling of pending dues. However, the state government had requested additional time to settle the dispute.

Reportedly, the building construction of the Head of the Department was completed in 1998. Meanwhile, later in the day, the process was rescinded after the state government paid the amount to chief engineer.

Confirming the development, R&B's senior divisional accounts officer Sambit Kumar Mishra said the chief engineer has received the designated amount from state government. The process has been underway to transfer the amount to senior civil judge, he added.

# Ropeway facility at NZP from today

**Bhubaneswar:** Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Pradip Kumar Amat inaugurated the ropeway project at Nandankanan Zoological Park here, Friday. The Minister and other senior officials took the first ride soon after the inauguration. The facility will be available for public from Saturday. The project, installed at an investment of Rs 14 crore has 12 cabins, each having capacity to accommodate 3 to 6 persons. The ropeway covers a distance of 626 meter length across the Kanjia lake connecting NZP and state botanical garden. As many as 72 visitors can avail the ropeway facility at a time, authorities said. The ropeway service will be available at a price of Rs 120 per head. Visitors will have to pay an additional amount for taking camera for photography, officials informed. Visitors have to book special ticket for the ropeway ride at a special counter. The service will be available from 8am to 4pm daily excluding weekly holiday.



**THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE:** People visiting stalls on the inaugural day of 26th Kalinga Book Fair organised at Unit III Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, Friday. OP PHOTO

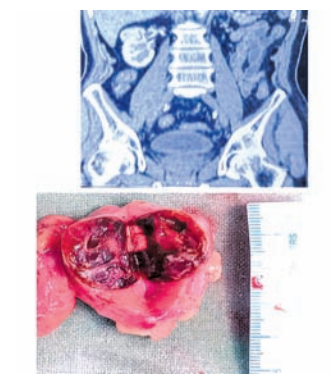
# KIMS docs remove patient's partial kidney in rare surgery

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 17:** The doctors at the Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), in a complex and rare operation, saved a cancer patient by removing a portion of his kidney through advanced laparoscopic surgery.

Urology Department's Assistant Professor and HoD Sumanta Mishra, performed the surgery on a 70-year old male patient with diabetes, high blood pressure and chronic kidney disease.

His left kidney was diagnosed with a 4 cm x 4 cm x 4 cm tumour. The doctors gave him the option of laparoscopic partial nephrectomy as he had multiple



comorbidities. Upon his approval, Mishra and his team performed the surgery successfully.

The doctors said the patient has been completely cured of cancer and the remaining kidney was working well.

KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta congratulated the doctors for the path breaking surgery, emphasizing that providing advanced treatment with care and compassion has always been the aim of KIMS.

Kidney cancer is a very common cancer today requiring early diagnosis and treatment. Radical nephrectomy or removal of the whole kidney is the treatment of choice which makes the patient live the rest of his life with only one kidney. Partial nephrectomy or removal of the cancer only part is the other option but needs specialized center for surgery, something which has now been successfully demonstrated at KIMS.

# 1st body sound capturing wearables to monitor health

The wearable devices can track the sounds -- air moving in and out of the lungs, heart beats and even digested food progressing through the long gastrointestinal tract -- simultaneously and wirelessly at multiple locations across any region of the body

about a person's health.

The device can track the sounds -- air moving in and out of the lungs, heart beats and even digested food progressing through the long gastrointestinal tract -- simultaneously and wirelessly at multiple locations across nearly any region of the body.

In pilot studies, Northwestern University researchers in the US tested the devices on 15 premature babies with respiratory and intestinal motility disorders and 55 adults, including 20 with chronic lung diseases.

Not only did the devices perform with clinical-grade accuracy they also offered new functionalities that have not been developed or introduced into research or clinical care, revealed the study published in the journal Nature Medicine.

"The idea behind these devices is to provide highly accu-



rate, continuous evaluation of patient health and then make clinical decisions in the clinics or when patients are admitted to the hospital or attached to ventilators," said Ankit Bharat, a thoracic surgeon at Northwestern Medicine, who led the clinical research in the adult subjects.

Containing pairs of high-per-

formance, digital microphones and accelerometers, the small, lightweight devices gently adhere to the skin to create a comprehensive non-invasive sensing network.

By simultaneously capturing sounds and correlating those sounds to body processes, the devices spatially map how air

flows into, through and out of the lungs as well as how cardiac rhythm changes in varied resting and active states, and how food, gas and fluids move through the intestines.

Encapsulated in soft silicone, each device measures 40 millimetres long, 20 millimetres wide and 8 millimetres thick. Within that small footprint, the device contains a flash memory drive, tiny battery, electronic components, Bluetooth capabilities and two tiny microphones -- one facing inward toward the body and another facing outward toward the exterior.

By capturing sounds in both directions, an algorithm can separate external (ambient or neighbouring organ) sounds and internal body sounds.

The device was particularly helpful for premature babies in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Premature babies com-

monly suffer from apnoeas, which are also a leading cause of prolonged hospitalisation and potentially death.

"Many of these babies are smaller than a stethoscope, so they are already technically challenging to monitor," said Dr. Debra E. Weese-Mayer, a co-author, chief of autonomic medicine at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.

"The beauty of these new acoustic devices is they can non-invasively monitor a baby continuously -- during wakefulness and sleep -- without disturbing them," Weese-Mayer added.

In adults with chronic lung diseases and healthy controls, the devices captured the distribution of lung sounds and body motions at various locations simultaneously, enabling researchers to analyse a single breath across a range of regions throughout the lungs.

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# Odia jawan found dead in Tripura

**Bhawanipatna, Nov 17:** Mystery surrounds the death of Odia BSF jawan Iswar Chandra Dora, who was found dead Friday in Tripura in a drain close to an iron bridge at Lankamura locality near the Tripura capital of Agartala. Dora is from Belkhandi village under Kesinga police limits in Kalahandi district. His family has been informed about his demise, officials said here Friday. Initially a section of the officials said that Dora may have been killed by smugglers who smuggle cattle to Bangladesh across the border. However, later in the evening BSF officials said that Dora was shot dead by Naxalites who are slowly gathering strength in the north-eastern state. They added that the Naxalites had ambushed the BSF patrolling team. Dora has been with the BSF since 2009. His family mem-



bers informed that he had called Thursday night and had informed that he would be visiting his native place soon as

his leave application had been sanctioned. Sadly that will not happen anymore. Family members said Friday that they were shocked when they received a call in the morning from the BSF office in Agartala informing them of Dora's demise. They added that BSF officials informed them Dora had died after being shot by unidentified persons. A pall of gloom descended on the village as news of Dora's demise spread across the village. Dora is survived by his wife, a five-year-old daughter, his father and mother. Officials said that after the completion of the post-mortem, Dora's body will be brought to his village for conducting the last rites. Villagers said that Dora's family will need state government support to survive. They asserted that Dora's family should be given compensation immediately as per rules.



**FESTIVE PREP:** An earthmover being used to prepare a ghat in Brahmani river Friday as the Bihari community in Rourkela celebrates 'Chhath' festival. OP PHOTO

# RSP warns against fraudulent dealings



its explicit consent," the statement said. "The general public is also strongly advised to exercise caution and refrain from entering into any dealings with such individuals. In the event that anyone occupies SAIL and RSP properties through such transactions, legal action under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act 1971 will be initiated against the trespasser at their own cost and risk," the release further stated. The release also pointed out that it has been observed that some unscrupulous persons are engaging in unlawful activities on RSP land. "These people are encroaching on RSP land, occupying vacant quarters, setting up unauthorised kiosks and erecting flex posters and hoardings in RSP area without proper permission," the release said. "All such individuals involved in such activities are hereby cautioned to cease their illegal activities immediately. Failure to comply will result in strict penal action in accordance with the law and/or Company Policy," the release added. SAIL and RSP authorities have urged the public to verify the authenticity of any transaction or dealing related to its properties. They have been asked to report any suspicious activity to the authorities.

**Rourkela, Nov 17:** In view of recent reports of illegal transactions (sale/lease/license) involving properties of the SAIL-run Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), a warning has been issued against those falsely representing themselves as either property owners or agents of SAIL and RSP. Authorities have cautioned people/companies against engaging in any such transactions. In a press release issued Friday, the steel major has cautioned the general public not to fall prey to the fraudulent activities. "People are hereby informed and cautioned against engaging in any transactions related to Properties (Land/Building/Houses) with the Lessee/Licensee of Steel Authority of India Limited and Rourkela Steel Plant without

# 5 killed in road mishaps

3 deaths reported from Angul district while 2 from Jagatsinghpur



The ill-fated bus in which the passengers were travelling. OP PHOTO

**Angul, Nov 17:** Roads in Odisha are slowly but surely turning into death traps for the commuters. Every day or the other, reports of deaths due to accidents are being reported from various districts of the state. Friday was also no exception with three deaths reported from Angul district by the police. The accident which also left one person injured, took place late Thursday night, police added. The accident took place at Baragapali near Kishore Nagar when the victims were standing on the road as their bus (in which they were travelling) developed a flat tyre. The speeding truck rammed into them and fled the spot, a

police officer said. The deceased were identified as Nayan Kumar Nayak and Ghanasyam Barik of Jharsuguda and Anand Nayak from Sundargarh district. While two passengers succumbed to their injuries at Rairakhol hospital, another died while undergoing treatment at Kishore Nagar hospital. The condition of the other passenger, Trilochan Nayak, is stated to be very critical. Kishore Nagar police have started an investigation into the incident. After conducting post-mortems, the bodies will be handed over to their family members, the police officer said. He added that the bus was travelling from Jharsuguda to Bhubaneswar.

Police said that they have launched a manhunt to nab the driver and the truck which was involved in the accident. In another accident in Jagatsinghpur district late Thursday night, two employees of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) were killed when the bike they were travelling on was hit by an SUV. The two victims identified as Kaivalya and Biswajit Nayak, were flung from the bike and suffered serious injuries. The accident occurred near Santaragada in Kujan locality of Jagatsinghpur district. Locals rushed the two injured to the Kujan hospital, but doctors declared them dead on arrival. It should be stated here that these two accidents are not isolated cases. Only a couple of days back, a man was killed while his brother suffered serious injuries en route to an office at Paradip in Jagatsinghpur district. The bike they were travelling on was hit from the rear by a speeding truck. Till now, police have not been able to trace the truck and the driver. Similarly, two minors on a bike were killed Wednesday by a speeding truck in a locality under Barbil police limits in Keonjhar district. Overall eight persons have lost their lives in road mishaps in the last four days.

# AAI technical support for Rourkela, 2 more airports



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, Nov 17:** The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has agreed to provide technical support for installation of approach control services (ACS) at Rourkela, Jeypore and Utkela airports in Sundargarh, Koraput and Kalahandi districts respectively. The matter came to the fore after a letter from AAI Chairman Sanjeev Kumar reached the airport authorities here recently. The letter mentions that AAI has executed the communication, navigation, surveillance (CNS) and air traffic management (ATM) infrastructure agreement for Rourkela airport with owner Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) and similar amendment needs to be carried out in that agreement. The state government is also taking all measures to fulfil some of the technical requirements of Rourkela airport as well as other airports in the state. This development confirms that efforts for the installation of the instrument landing system (ILS) at Rourkela and other airports are moving in right direction. Expressing happiness over the development, former secretary of SEFI and president of Sachetan Nagarika Mancha (SNM) Bimal Bisi said that he is aware of the development. "Our organisation is regularly working on this issue and now I am sure all impediments for the ILS and other facilities will be cleared in time." He also informed that the state government is working to hand over the land of Rourkela airport to the Central government so that it will finally go to AAI. "Once this process is over, AAI will begin its work," he added. Few days back, former

minister and BJP state president Manmohan Samal, during his visit to the city, had said the same thing. He had said, "AAI cannot undertake the installation of ILS unless it has the ownership of the land. The sooner the state government does that, the better it will be for all." Meanwhile, the Odisha government has given the survey work of the airport to RITES, informed Bisi. Former Union Minister Dilip Ray had also written to the Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia to hasten the process of installation of the ILS and the very high-frequency omni-directional range station (VOR) at Rourkela airport and elevating its status from 2-C to 3-C. Ray has argued that in the absence of the ILS and VOR it becomes difficult for the planes to land on the runway of the airport thus leading to cancellations. Frequent cancellations affect the passenger's confidence. Earlier, the chairman of AAI in a letter No 151/2023 had granted the CTR status to Rourkela airport effective from November 2, 2023. Authorities had applied for this status September 21.

# Rourkela sub-collector asks voters to register quickly

**Rourkela, Nov 17:** Rourkela sub-collector Bijay Kumar Nayak appealed Friday to all those who have not applied for their voter cards to do so immediately. He also urged the existing voters to register their names for the upcoming Lok Sabha and the Odisha Assembly elections due in the first half of 2024. The final preparation of the electoral rolls will begin soon, he informed. Nayak made the observations while speaking at a function

here organised on the occasion of National Press Day. "I request all my media friends to help in this regard. The last date for registering for the electoral rolls is December 9, 2023. Those eligible to vote should immediately register themselves when election officials visit their respective areas," Nayak stated. He however, was quick to add that registration for the voters' lists has been slow despite the best efforts of the administration. "We are trying to develop awareness among the people regard-

ing the importance of exercising their franchise. However, the pace of registration is very slow especially in the Raghunathpalli constituency," Nayak added. Nayak added that there will be no further extension of registration date after December 9. "The final electoral roll will be published January 5, 2024," Nayak informed. As per the last elections, there were 1,79,140 voters in the Rourkela Assembly constituency and 2,49,428 in Raghunathpalli, Nayak said.

# MLA faces villagers' wrath

**Bhawanipatna, Nov 17:** Lanjigarh's BJD MLA Pradip Kumar Dishari had to face the wrath of the villagers Friday while he was on his way to inaugurate a hostel and a park at Trilochanpur village in Kalahandi district. While the MLA was heading towards the locality to inaugurate the hostel and a park, the villagers intercepted his motorcade and sought reply from Dishari over lack of proper roads in the area. The locals demanded that he should first repair the roads and later inaugurate the projects. The irate villagers stopped the convoy holding banners and

posters that said 'First, repair roads in remote areas, and then inaugurate parks and new projects'. They demanded answers from the lawmaker as to why the roads till date have not been constructed. Some of them squatted on the clay road leading to the inauguration site. With no other option left, Dishari had to return red-faced from the village. Residents of Trilochanpur panchayat have been reeling under a host of problems due to a lack of basic communication facilities in the area. Despite running from pillar to post and bringing their plight to the notice of the district administration, BDO, and MLA, their pleas for a proper road have fallen on deaf ears.

# PRAWN GHERRIES THREATEN CHILIKA BIRDS

Despite Orissa HC ordering demolition of illegal gherries in and around Chilika, the local administrations have failed miserably to enforce the curbs

the birds are at great risk due to the pondweeds and gherries that have engulfed acres of land and water in Chilika. It can be mentioned here that during the bird census in January this year in Chilika, a team of enumerators in Satapada range had found that a number of little cormorants entangled in a fishing net set up for a prawn gherry. Similarly, another team rescued a little cormorant from the net of a prawn gherry near Manikpatna. It should also be stated here that the Chilika is a natural habitat for more than 50 non-migratory birds. However, often they get entangled in nets while searching for food. Not only birds, the dolphins are also suffering. The Satapada stretch of Chilika is famous for the Irrawaddy dolphins. However, experts pointed out recently that excessive boat movement and mushrooming of gherries have particularly affected the habi-



tat of the dolphins. This has happened due to the apathy of Chilika Development Authority (CDA) and the Forest department. Earlier, the Orissa High Court had ordered the demolition of illegal prawn gherries in and around Chilika. The local administrations of three districts - Khurda, Puri and Ganjam - began the process of gherry demolition following the court order.

degradation of the environment, sources pointed out. The Orissa High Court had earlier directed the state government to conduct a drone survey in order to protect the wetland and prevent encroachments. It had also ordered the demolition of the gherries. During a virtual hearing in this regard, the CDA had assured the court that demolition drives would be continuously monitored by it. "As per orders of the High Court, the eviction drive has been carried out in Chilika. Strict action will be taken against the violators," Khurda sub-collector Dipti Ranjan Sethi said Friday. "Chilika tehsildar has also lodged an FIR against some suspects. Patrolling is also being done and efforts are underway to improve Chilika's environment. People should also extend a helping hand for this cause," Sethi added.

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Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer, PRR-788/O/23-24 Khurda Road

**E-AUCTION NOTICE (DAMAGED WATER AFFECTED MATERIAL)**  
E-Auction forms are invited from interested buyers for disposal, strictly on "As is Where is" basis, for damaged salvage of "Damaged Water Affected Biaxially Oriented Polyester Film" on "Weightment Basis" belonging to M/s Jindal Poly Films Limited lying at M/s Chakadola Polymers Pvt. Ltd., at-Madanmohan, Pur, Po-Haladipadar, Berhampur, Ganjam, Odisha. (Case Handled By M/s Riskalyze Insurance Surveyors Pvt. Ltd. 9999600599) Salvage of the above materials can be inspected between 18/11/2023 to 27/11/2023, after taking prior appointment from D.K. Nayak. Ph: 7735635806. E-Auction to be held on 27/11/2023 at 03:30 PM. For E-Auction forms, Contact Mr. Ashish Kaushik, Mob:- 8882070495 of Salvage Auction Private Limited (Auctioneers) or download from website: [www.salvageauction.co.in](http://www.salvageauction.co.in). Last date for submission of E-auction form is 27/11/2023 before 12:30 PM.

**OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, BASUDEVPUR**  
At/Po: Basudevpur, Dist.: Bhadrak, Email: ori-basudevpur@nic.in  
Letter No.: 5990/Date: 16.11.2023  
No. I-477 **Tender Call Notice-05/2023**

1.	Name of the Project	:- "Construction of Mission Shakti Bazar Complex"			
2.	Total No. of Project	:- 01 No.			
3.	Class of Contractor	:- "C & D" Class			
4.	Period of Completion	:- 3 Calendar Months			
5.	Other details	:- As per DTCN			

Sl No.	Procurement Officer	Available Tender On-line for bidding From	Available Tender On-line for bidding To	Last date of receipt of Bids	Date & time of opening of Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Block Development Officer, Basudevpur	17.11.2023	01.12.2023	01.12.2023 12.00 PM	01.12.2023 3.30 PM

6. Further details can be seen from the website portal "https://www.bhadrak.nic.in"  
7. Any other changes/Corrigendum/Addendum may be seen only in website [www.bhadrak.nic.in](http://www.bhadrak.nic.in)  
Sd./- Block Development Officer Basudevpur  
OIPR-19306/11/0007/2324



In each world, in each being, in each thing, in each atom is the Divine Presence, and it is man's mission to manifest it.

THE MOTHER



## Trust at Stake

In the never-ending tussle between Narendra Modi sarkar and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar finds himself embroiled in a fresh controversy. While his previous headline-grabbing act involved sending files directly to Lt Governor VK. Saxena on service matters, bypassing the CM's office, this time the storm is over a dispute over the valuation of land earmarked for the Dwarka Expressway, and his alleged role.

The plot under scrutiny was set to be acquired from two Delhi businessmen, one of whom shares a marital connection with the promoter of a real estate firm that employs Kumar's son. Despite concerns regarding a potential conflict of interest, Kumar denies any wrongdoing.

According to sources, the dispute centres around the substantial increase in compensation awarded by the district magistrate of south-west Delhi, Hemant Kumar, which shot up from Rs 41.52 crore to Rs 353 crore for the same parcel of land.

Despite the Chief Secretary's attempts to distance himself from the controversy, doubts persist about this failure to declare the potential conflict of interest when the National Highway of India (NHAI) raised concerns.

For Kejriwal, who is back against the wall, after the arrest of Deputy CM Manish Sisodia and other senior leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for what he calls a witch hunt unleashed by the Modi sarkar, this episode may be a chance to hit back. Kejriwal has referred the matter to the Vigilance Department, and Minister Atishi Marlena has initiated an inquiry. Kumar, meanwhile, denies the allegations and attributes them to a political agenda aimed at tarnishing his reputation. Meanwhile, some in the bureaucracy are also questioning Kejriwal for signing off on the transfer of District Magistrate Hemant Kumar. Kumar was among the 21 IAS officers to be recommended for posting, in his case, to the Administrative Reforms Department.

Which way this will go is anybody's guess. But in this entire tussle, Delhi's bureaucracy has split down the middle, which is not a good sign for administrators. Public trust is at stake.



### BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

#### Election dynamics? Unpacking strategic babu changes

In a significant move, the Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) recently gave the nod to a major reshuffle of IAS and IRS officers, elevating several to the rank of Additional Secretary. As the dust settles on these appointments, observers cannot help but ponder the motivations behind the move, particularly in the middle of five critical state elections.

The list of newly appointed additional secretaries includes seasoned babus from various cadres, each entrusted with crucial responsibilities across diverse ministries. Notable among them are Anurag Agarwal, now Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Rupinder Brar, assuming the role of Additional Secretary at the Ministry of Coal.

The reshuffling extends to key domains such as health, petroleum, textiles and rural development, with officers like Deepti Gaur Mukerjee, Pallavi Jain Govil, and Carolyn Khongwar Deshmukh taking up key roles. Furthermore, the appointment of Amit Kumar Gosh as Additional Secretary in the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment underscores Modi Sarkar's focus on key issues facing marginalized communities.

The question that arises is: what could be the underlying rationale behind these appointments, especially at a juncture when the stakes are high for the Modi sarkar in the states that are having elections? Is this a routine babu reshuffle or does it carry deeper political implications?

Notably, officers have been upgraded in situ to the rank of additional secretary, signifying recognition of their capabilities and the need for experienced hands in crucial positions. Only time will reveal the full picture behind these recent appointments.

#### Cadre distribution confusion lands in court

Almost a decade after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and the creation of Telangana in 2014, babus in the state continue to grapple with the cadre distribution at that time. Current proceedings in the Telangana High Court shed light on the enduring confusion surrounding the allocation of cadres, particularly for six IAS/IPS officers.

The Centre, however, reiterated its stance to the high court that the judgement pertaining to former Telangana chief secretary Somesh Kumar's case should be applied to the pleas filed by these six officers. The government's primary argument appears to be a straightforward one—there is nothing more to discuss! However, the officers in question, including Director General of Police Anjani Kumar, vehemently oppose this assertion, contending that their cases are distinct from the precedent set by the Somesh Kumar judgement.

The legal tussle is unfolding as the high court navigates through the contentions of 13 officers who express grievances regarding the central government's decisions and cadre distribution process. While the Centre's counsel maintains that the cases of six officers align with the Somesh judgement, seven others necessitate further deliberation. The divergent claims of officers caught in the web of cadre confusion will need a nuanced approach to the issue.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@twitter.com](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian). Let's multiply the effect

#### WISDOM CORNER

Life is truly a mystery, and it is our duty as scientists to unravel its secrets. **HAR GOVIND KHORANA**

However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at. **STEPHEN HAWKING**

Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning. **ALBERT EINSTEIN**

#### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

**1928:** Walt Disney released Steamboat Willie, the first animated film with sound to feature Mickey Mouse; the huge success of the cartoon helped make Mickey an iconic character and led to the Disney Company's dominance in the animated market.

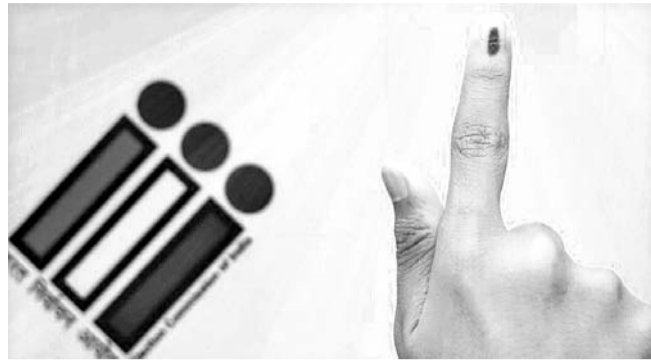
**1959:** The American dramatic film Ben-Hur, arguably the best of Hollywood's biblical epics, had its world premiere; it later won an unprecedented 11 Academy Awards.

**1963:** The first push-button (Touch-Tone) telephones debuted in the United States, eventually replacing most rotary-dial models.

**1978:** Jim Jones, leader of the Peoples Temple religious community that he formed in the 1950s, and some 900 of his followers died this day in 1978 in Guyana in a massive act of murder-suicide known as the Jonestown massacre.

## FOCUS STATE POLLS

# THE SEMI-FINAL



Together, these five states hold 93 Lok Sabha seats—that's a hefty chunk, around 17 per cent of the whole lot! Here's an interesting fact: almost half of the places where the BJP and Congress went head-to-head in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections are right here in these states



Anil Singh

THE ONGOING STATE POLLS WILL GIVE US A GLIMPSE INTO WHAT THE PEOPLE ARE THINKING AND HOW MUCH THEY LIKE THE PARTIES RUNNING THE SHOW

So, there are these ongoing and upcoming elections happening in Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Telangana. Some experts think of these as a sort of practice round for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh already finished voting; Rajasthan is up next on November 25, and Telangana is on November 30. It's been pretty intense, with the ruling and opposition parties really working hard to win people's support. These polls are viewed as a warm-up before the big showdown.

There are these big players in the elections—the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC), Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and some smaller local parties too. They're all diving into discussions about lots of things: how well the state and Central governments are doing, COVID-19 and vaccines, the economy and welfare programmes, farmers' protests, safety issues, and even social and communal harmony. Here's a close look at scenarios in these states:

**Madhya Pradesh**  
The state has wrapped up voting on November 17, and experts see it as a sneak peek into what might go down in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. These votes aren't just about the state; they're like a mood check for how folks feel about the ruling and opposition parties. There are the big guns—the BJP, INC, BSP, plus some local crews—all in the mix. They're talking about everything from government performance to COVID-19, money matters, farmers' protests, safety, and a bunch of other stuff. Voters

have a lot to think about when it comes to promises and policies. These Madhya Pradesh elections aren't just about who's winning here; they're a test for democracy, leadership, and how things run all across India.

**Chhattisgarh**  
Voting ended here on November 17, like MP, and the Congress and the BJP are neck and neck. But it's not just these two—other parties and solo candidates are stirring the pot, too. Different opinion polls are painting totally different pictures of who might come out on top. One poll by ABP News and C-Voter says the Congress could snag 45 to 51 seats out of 90, while the BJP might get 36 to 42 seats. Similarly, Financial Express thinks the Congress could grab 48 to 54 seats, leaving the BJP with 35 to 41 seats, while Small Box India suggests that the Congress might sweep up 52 to 58 seats, leaving the BJP with 25 to 26 seats.

The experts are saying that Congress is ahead in the popularity race in terms of votes, but the margins are so close! It's like trying to guess the ending of a thriller—you just can't tell.

**Rajasthan**  
The scenario in Rajasthan has been a subject of uncertainty, as reported by the media. Various opinion polls conducted by different agencies indicate that the BJP is likely to regain control of the state from the Congress in the elections to be held November 25. This trend of a 'revolving door' has prevented the ruling party from staying in power since 1998 and seems set to continue. However, the final outcome may depend on several factors that include the performance of the state and Central governments, the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccination efforts, the economic situation and welfare schemes, the ongoing farmers' protests and agrarian crisis,

the law and order situation and security challenges, as well as social and communal harmony and identity politics.

**Telangana**  
Media reports again paint a picture of uncertainty around the upcoming 2023 state Assembly elections in Telangana. It's a tight tussle between the ruling BRS and the Congress party, while the BJP is striving to make its mark. According to various opinion polls, the BRS might snag another term, but maybe with fewer seats this time. The Congress seems to be rising up, while the BJP is not expected to make a big splash, likely winning just a couple of seats.

These polls look at all those issues cited above. But the real results might surprise us. In the end, voters will need to think hard about who they trust: the promises, policies, and people running for office.

**Way Forward**  
The ongoing state polls will give us a glimpse into what the people are thinking and how much they like the parties running the show. These results won't just impact these states; they'll have a say in the big 2024 national elections too. Together, these five states hold 93 Lok Sabha seats—that's a hefty chunk, around 17 per cent of the whole lot! Here's an interesting fact: almost half of the places where the BJP and Congress went head-to-head in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections are right here in these states. Voters have a big decision ahead—they've got to weigh up what all these candidates and parties are promising and bringing to the table.

The writer is a political strategist.

## SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

# Justice for street vendors

A wave of evictions recently hit in Dakar's bustling Liberté 6 market in Senegal, a roughly mile-long commercial hub that has served its community for more than 20 years. Hundreds of street vendors' stalls were bulldozed to make way for a new bus system. Authorities gave prior notice and an indemnity to help with the loss of business, but did not address the real problem: the lack of trading space.

Street vending is a legitimate economic activity that provides livelihoods for millions and accounts for a large share of urban employment in many cities across the Global South. Nearly 59,000 street vendors work in Dakar, accounting for 13.8% of total employment, while metropolitan Lima has roughly 450,000, comprising 8.8% of total employment. And these numbers are likely growing as the informal economy absorbs many of those left unemployed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is a livelihood that requires one resource above all: access to busy, pedestrian-friendly, well-connected, and affordable public space. But government authorities focus instead on "cleaning up" cities, which means clearing the streets of vendors. In their view, informal traders are a nuisance: they litter and clutter streets, obstruct urban

mobility, and occupy precious space that could be used for modernization or beautification projects, or sold to deep-pocketed developers and transformed into oases of leisure for urban elites.

The failure to provide street vendors with the space they need is short-sighted, at best (eviction campaigns never solve the "problem" – workers often have no choice but to set up shop again). In 2015, the International Labor Organization recommended that subsistence workers be permitted to use public space as member states move from informal to formal economies. Yet time and again, governments have implemented narrow policies and legal frameworks that curtail access.

In fact, this pattern has become embedded in policymakers' strategies to formalize the informal economy. These strategies, focused mainly on getting informal workers to register and pay taxes, can provide important opportunities, including access to social protection, financing, and professional training. But they almost never recognize public space as a workplace, perpetuating the status quo. Instead, they build complex structures on shaky foundations – namely, punitive legal and policy frameworks that criminalize informal trading and deny the most vulnerable access

to economic activities.

Proposals to relocate street vendors to enclosed markets are often empty promises – or implemented with little or no consultation with the affected individuals, resulting in poorly planned markets far from the city's commercial hubs and difficult to reach. Vendors either shun or quickly abandon them, returning instead to the streets from which they were removed.

Acutely aware of their precarity, street vendors usually have one goal: to trade without fear of harassment or eviction. The United Nations' New Urban Agenda, adopted in 2016, recognizes that public space can function as a workplace reality and supports measures that allow for the "best possible commercial use of street-level floors, fostering both formal and informal local markets and commerce." A legal framework that guarantees informal vendors access to this space must underpin any formalization strategy.

Of course, as a scarce resource, urban public space is highly sought after, and there are many competing interests. But its effective management requires input from workers in informal employment, as various initiatives have demonstrated. In India, for example, the 2014 Street Vendors Act established "town vending committees," consist-

ing of government officials, sellers, and others, to make decisions about trading locations and monitor evictions and relocations. In the 1990s, the Lima municipality involved street vendors from the outset in its relocation planning process to ensure that they had proper access to infrastructure and customers. Between 2009 and 2011, the Dakar municipality started an effective dialogue with informal traders about relocation.

These examples are far from perfect. The inclusive planning process was discontinued in Lima (though it did result in successful relocations), as were the dialogues in Dakar, while India's Street Vendors Act is only partly implemented. But they show that the inclusive management of public space is possible.

Fair distribution of public space is crucial to recognizing street vendors, legalizing their access to a workplace, and protecting their livelihoods. That will not happen unless informal traders participate in – and meaningfully influence – the policies and regulations that affect them.

The writer, an adjunct professor at American University, is an access to justice lawyer at WIEGO.

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Teresa Marchiori

FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC SPACE IS CRUCIAL TO RECOGNIZING STREET VENDORS, LEGALIZING THEIR ACCESS TO A WORKPLACE, AND PROTECTING THEIR LIVELIHOODS

#### Delhi's pollution woes

Sir, For long, Delhi has been in focus for its worst air quality level. And the recent findings by the Swiss air purifier company IQAir that India's capital is the "most polluted city in the world" only accentuate the national capital's woes in tackling the air quality menace. Delhi's toxic air is caused by vehicle and industrial emissions, dust from building sites, smoke from the burning of rubbish, and crop residue in nearby fields. All these combine to choke the life out of the Delhiites. It destroys the vitality of flora and takes the blue out of the sky, making everything look dusted and dull. The Delhi government has reportedly rolled out a number of policies targeting various sources of air pollution, from industry to road traffic. Despite this, its air quality has consistently worsened to the point of today's public health emergency.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

#### Burden on borrowers

Sir, The RBI tightening capital norms for unsecured retail loans, including credit cards, was on the cards. Banks and NBFCs must allocate more capital and establish board-monitored processes to prevent financial system risks. The banking regulator raised risk weights on consumer credit exposure to 125%, raising costs for lenders in these segments. This move will lead to elevated interest rates for borrowers. All banking and financial stocks took a nosedive after the RBI's move.

N J Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

#### Lessons from war

Sir, What lessons can we learn in irregular warfare tactics from Hamas' attack on Israel? The first lesson is that high-tech weapons or tools do not guarantee victory, and even today, low-tech and unconventional methods can't be ignored. The tactics used by Hamas were not new, but their coordination and combination were very lethal, which is the second lesson to watch out for the evolution of these old tactics. The lesson is that if the irregular enemy can't win in a direct attack, then it definitely learns to overwhelm the capabilities of its target, like overwhelming Hamas' Iron Dome with 5,000 rockets. The last lesson is to develop non-military strategies, which is especially important in case of irregular warfare where information operations and economic tactics are used.

Md Mofidul Ali, HOWRAH

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: [edit@orissapost.com](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

## CABINET-ON-WHEELS

# Vijayan-led statewide yatra bus to roll today

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 17:** In a first, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his Cabinet will Saturday embark on a statewide tour in a bid to meet the people and address their grievances.

The trip that starts from Manjerwarum, the northern tip of the state, is scheduled to end December 24 in the state capital.

Not to give the weekly Cabinet meetings a miss, the ministers will meet every Wednesday while traversing through 140 Assembly constituencies.

However, the initiative has come under intense criticism from the Congress-led UDF and the BJP who have termed the travel in Benz luxury coach an extravagance, when the state's coffers are virtually empty.

Taking a dig at the yatra 'Nava Kerala Sadasu' (a trip aimed to take Kerala to new realms after calling on people directly), UDF convener MM Hassan dubbed it 'Dhuritha Kerala Sadasu' (a pleasure trip when people are going through the worst times).

"Earlier this month, we witnessed a ₹27 crore cultural jamboree and now this yatra is going to cost a whopping ₹100 crore. What's the need for it, when the burning issues of the people are not addressed as the pension for the weakest of weak have not been paid for the past four months. It is nothing but a political gimmick with an eye on the upcoming Lok Sabha polls," said Hassan.



According to the organisers of the trip, the ministers will interact with people of at least four constituencies a day. Seven counters will be set up in every constituency where people can register their grievances.

The day will start with a breakfast meeting with an invited group of people in every constituency. The officials are bound to resolve the issues in a matter of two weeks to 45 days depending on its gravity.

Manjerwarum legislator AKM Ashraf of the opposition IUML called it nothing but cheating the people. "I as a legislator have raised numerous issues being faced in my constituency and have been running from pillar to post and so is the case with other legislators and nothing has happened and now here comes a trip like this. This is done to fool and cheat people," said Ashraf. State Tourism Minister PA Mohammed Riyas flayed the

## 'Last' trip of Communist regime: BJP

With the Congress party already slamming Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for his forthcoming statewide trip, along with all the Cabinet ministers on a luxury bus to meet the people, the BJP Thursday described it as a sheer coincidence for the Communists. State BJP President K Surendran said that in the 1920's the Communist movement in the state began at a place called Pinarayi in Kannur district. "Now, this statewide bus trip is nothing but a coincidence as this would be the death knell of the Communist movement as it is only in Kerala that the Communists rule and through this it will come to a close. Normally a decorated bus becomes a hearse in our state and this is going to be the last journey of the Communists and it will be led by Pinarayi Vijayan," said Surendran.

Opposition for its stance. This type of reaching out to the people by the entire Cabinet has never happened and the Opposition is committing a historic blunder if they will boycott this as issues of the people are being taken up and discussed. There is nothing political in it, asserted Riyas, who is the son-in-law of Chief Minister Vijayan.

# Ex-K'taka CM pays ₹68K fine for 'stealing power'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Nov 17:** Former Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy said Friday that he has paid a fine of ₹68,526 for drawing electricity from an illegal connection to illuminate his JP Nagar residence here during Deepavali, but termed it as unjust and excessive.

However, the JD(S) state unit president protested the way the fine amount had been calculated and found flaws in the FIR registered against him.

Kumaraswamy, son of former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, alleged a political witch-hunt against him for being vocal against the ruling Congress government.

In a letter to the assistant executive engineer of Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM) vigilance police station, Kumaraswamy blamed the electricity contractor hired by his staff who had for testing purposes drawn a wire and connected it directly to the electric pole opposite his house. "Immediately after coming to



know the same, I informed my staff to disconnect the wire from the electric pole. I was not at home when this illumination work was being carried out or was being tested and I was in my house at Bidadi, Ramanagara District. The electrician worked on his own independently, without my knowledge," he explained. The FIR registered against him is flawed with defects, as the complainant, being BESCOM assistant executive engineer, has

stated that he had personally seen the theft taking place but the facts were contrary to the claim, Kumaraswamy said.

According to him, the BESCOM engineer who registered a case against him made it clear to him that he came to inspect the residential building after seeing the video on electronic and social media.

In the face of an unjust and excessive demand for payment to be made, it is my right as a consumer to voice my concern and protest against such practices, Kumaraswamy said.

Blaming the ruling party for registering a case against him, he said, "I am of the opinion that this is a political witch-hunt against me for the series of tweets and press meets conducted by me in connection to mismanagement of power sources against the present government which is run by a rival party headed by my arch rivals and also the head of the states --CMDM, who have given statements to the electronic media that I have committed a theft of electricity." In continuation to their state-

ments in the media, one of the officers had broken the official rules and given a press statement without the permission of the (Electricity) Board, Kumaraswamy alleged. This displays that officers were influenced to act as per instructions of their political heads to tarnish his name for an act committed by the electrical contractor.

Kumaraswamy found himself at the receiving end November 14 when the Congress alleged that he had stolen electricity to illuminate his house during Deepavali.

The ruling party also posted a video showing a power connection being drawn from the electric pole to Kumaraswamy's house.

"The lone honest person in the world HD Kumaraswamy's JP Nagar residence was illuminated with decorative lights with illegal power connection directly from the electric pole. It is a tragedy that such poverty has struck a former CM to steal electricity!" the Congress wrote on the micro-blogging site 'X' at the time.

# R Ashoka new K'taka LoP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Nov 17:** The BJP Friday chose former deputy chief minister R Ashoka as the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Karnataka Assembly.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, BJP National General Secretary Dushyant Kumar Gautam, BJP state unit President BY Vijayendra, and former chief ministers BS Yediyurappa and Basavaraj Bommai were among those present at the legislature party meeting, where Ashoka was picked as its leader.

Ashoka, a seven-time BJP MLA, was the deputy chief minister in the BJP government from July 2012 to May 2013. The senior BJP leader had the opportunity to work with five chief ministers as a cabinet member.

As a minister, he had held various portfolios such as home, revenue, municipal administration, transport and health and family welfare.

Ashoka is a prominent Vokkaliga face in the party, which is one of the dominant communities in Karnataka, especially spread in the southern parts of

Karnataka such as Bangalore, Chikkaballapura, Mysuru, Mandya, Chamarajanagar, Ramanagara, Kolar, Tumakuru and Chikkamagaluru.

Last week, the BJP central leadership appointed as its state unit president Shikaripura MLA BY Vijayendra, the son of BJP strongman BS Yediyurappa, who is a Lingayat -- another dominant community of Karnataka.

In the May elections to the 224-member assembly, the Congress ousted the BJP from power with a landslide victory. The Congress secured 135 seats, the BJP 66 and JD(S) 19.

# BJP should not be the party of a family: Yatnal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Nov 17:** Senior BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal Friday said the party should not become a part of one family, in an apparent reference to the appointment of BY Vijayendra, son of veteran leader BS Yediyurappa, to the post of Karnataka state unit president.

Neither the BJP nor Hindu activists will accept it if it becomes a party of one family, the Vijayapura MLA said, striking a discordant note ahead of the Legislature Party meeting where Opposition leaders in the Assembly and Council were slated to be chosen Friday.

He also put forth a demand that the leader of the opposition in the Assembly should be from North Karnataka.

Yatnal was speaking to reporters after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, BJP national general secretary Dushyant Kumar Gautam and Karnataka BJP general secretary (organisation) Rajesh GV met him at his residence here ahead of the meeting. Yatnal, a former Union Minister, said all of them sat together and discussed about the developments that have taken place in the last six months in the Karnataka unit of BJP.

He said he told them in great detail about those who got adjusted (played adjustment politics) and who betrayed the party in the May Assembly elections where the party suffered a debacle, and the way the party has become centralised to just one class of people.

To a question whether he would welcome the newly elected BJP state chief Vijayendra, the firebrand MLA, who is not known to mince words, preferred not to react.

# Kerala Tourism Investor Meet gets ₹15,116cr offer

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 17:** Kerala's first-ever Tourism Investors Meet (TIM) has come as a major boost to the state with the government receiving investment offers worth ₹15,116.65 crore in the core sector.

This included a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that Kerala Tourism signed with Tamara Leisure Experiences on a ₹250-crore houseboat hotel projects which the Bangalore-based hospitality group will execute in Alappuzha and Kannur districts.

The day-long deliberations in the state capital which ended, Thursday night also led the Tourism Department to set up a dedicated facilitation centre.

The new centre will be headed by the Tourism Secretary and will carry out time-bound actions as a follow-up to the outcomes of the deliberations and business meets at the TIM.

Further, there will be a coordination committee, led by the Tourism Director, with the association of the secretaries of various departments.

The committee will have the power to intervene if any projects face issues said State Tourism Minister PA Mohamed Riyas.

Besides, the committee will hold regular ministerial meetings to keep track of the progress of the tourism investment endeavours, said Riyas, the son-in-law of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

TIM 2023 saw the participation of nearly 500 investors and entrepreneurs which included 46 startups and 118 investors from the Responsible Tourism sector. A total of 75 projects were presented, of which 52 were from the private sector.

Besides, 23 projects proposed by the Tourism Department, 16 projects were mooted as public-private partnerships which saw investment offers worth ₹2,511.10 crore.



**DECRYING WAR:** Kerala Muslim Jamath members during their protest rally in solidarity with Palestinian people, in Thiruvananthapuram, Friday

PTI PHOTO

## 'GRUHA LAKSHMI' SCHEME

# Goddess Chamundeshwari to get ₹2,000 monthly assistance

Karnataka govt launched the Gruha Lakshmi scheme August 30 from the palace city of Mysuru by depositing the first instalment to Goddess Chamundeshwari temple



Goddess every month under the scheme.

He said Shivakumar, also Karnataka Congress chief, agreed to the proposal and instructed the

Women and Child Welfare Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar to deposit the amount to the Chamundeshwari temple account every month.

"The Deputy Chief Minister immediately responded to my letter request and instructed Laxmi Hebbalkar to deposit ₹2,000 to Devi every month from her department or personally," Gooligowda said in a press release.

The Karnataka government launched the Gruha Lakshmi scheme August 30 from the palace city of Mysuru by depositing the first instalment to Goddess Chamundeshwari temple.

Dedicating it to the Goddess, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar had prayed for the success of the scheme which is aimed at empowering women from economically weaker sections.

# SABARIMALA PILGRIMAGE BEGINS

AGENCIES

**Sabarimala (Ker), Nov 17:** Thousands of pilgrims, mostly from Kerala and the other southern states, converged at the famous Sabarimala temple to pay obeisance to Lord Ayyappa as its doors were opened Friday, commencing a two-month-long pilgrimage to the hill shrine.

Devotees from the states, including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, formed long queues at the Sannidhanam as the temple doors were opened by priests at 3am Friday, the first day of the auspicious Malayalam month of 'Vrischikam', for the annual pilgrimage. Present during the auspicious opening ceremony were prominent figures such as Kerala Devaswom Minister K Radhakrishnan, along with MLAs Pramod Narayan and KU Jineesh Kumar.

The newly-appointed president of the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), PS Prasanth, also offered prayers at the temple in the early hours of Friday. Later, minister Radhakrishnan inaugurated the



free food distribution at the Annadana Mandapam located at the Sannidhanam.

Talking to reporters after chairing a review meeting, he assured devotees that basic facilities would be meticulously arranged in a time-bound manner, ensuring a seamless and comfortable Sabarimala pilgrimage experience for all.

The sanctum sanctorum was opened on the eve of the pilgrim season Thursday under the aegis

of temple 'tantri' (head priest) Mahesh Mohanaru.

New 'melshanthis' (chief priests) of the Sabarimala and Malikkappuram temples -- PN Mahesh and PG Murali respectively -- have assumed charge for conducting rituals at the shrine for next one year.

The first phase of the present season ends December 27 and reopens December 30 for the second phase.

On the peak day January 15,

'Makara Vilaku', a celestial light, appears on the horizon thrice soon after sunset turning the pilgrims delirious and the hill-top, where the famed temple is located, reverberates with chants of 'Swamiya Ayyappa'.

Situated on the mountain ranges of the Western Ghats at an altitude of 914 metres above sea level, Sabarimala temple is four kilometre uphill from Pamba in Pathanamthitta district, which is around 100 km from the capital city.

The temple, which bars the entry of girls who have attained puberty, is accessible only on foot from the Pamba river.

As per practice, before setting off to the holy shrine a pilgrim normally undertakes an intense 41-day penance where he does not wear footwear, wears a black dhoti and sticks to strict vegetarian food.

Every pilgrim carries a kit ('Irumudi')-which contains coconuts which are broken just before climbing the 18 steps) on his head during the pilgrimage and without it, none is allowed to step onto the holy 18 steps at the 'Sannidhanam'.



Students and activists wear masks as they participate in a march to raise awareness for clean air in Kolkata



Indian Air Force's Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team flies past during rehearsal for an air show to be performed during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023's final match between India and Australia, at the Narendra Modi Stadium, in Ahmedabad



Tourists ride camels at the Pushkar Camel Fair, in Pushkar, Ajmer



Cosplayers at the Bengaluru Comic Con in Bangalore



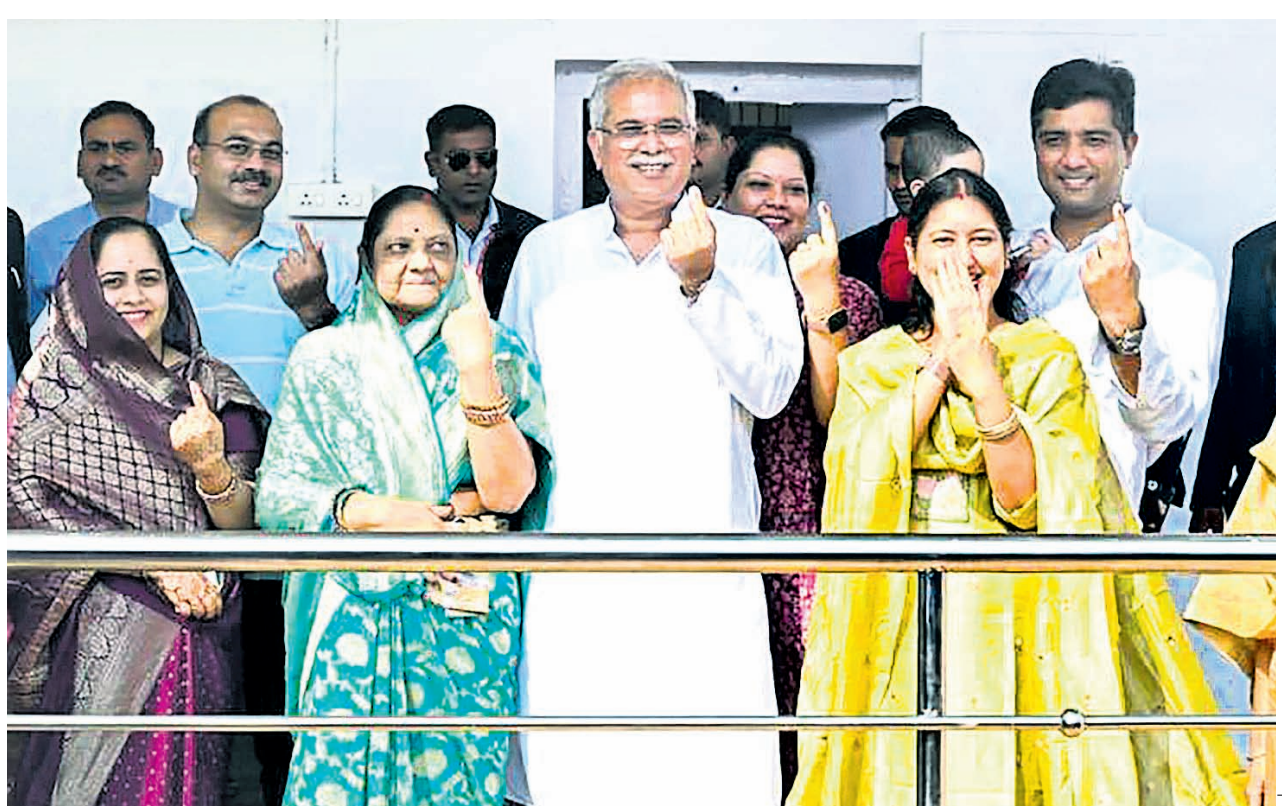
An Indian Army official demonstrates the use of weapons to students visiting the exhibition at the Rising Sun Water Fest 2023, at Deepor Beel, in Guwahati



Palestinians look for survivors after an Israeli strike on Rafah, Gaza Strip



Villagers prepare for a historical Assamese drama festival in Sonitpur district, Assam



Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel with his family after casting vote for the state Assembly election, in his native village Kuruddih in Durg district, Chhattisgarh





# national

## of the day quote

As we look ahead, our vision of everyone's growth, with everyone's trust is far from accomplished. While change is the natural order, there continues to be a resistance for a greater role for the Global South in shaping solutions for the key issues of our times

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

Prime Minister Modi's hatred towards Congress leaders can be easily gauged from his statement. How can a person holding a responsible position like the prime minister talk about hanging people through voting? The prime minister is strangling democracy. This is a clear example of hate speech. If the Election Commission is serious about fair and free elections then they should take immediate cognizance of this and take strict action

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

The Gehlot government ran an ATM to swipe card and withdraw money. The Congress party turned Rajasthan into an ATM where its leaders from Delhi swiped the card to withdraw money. Such a government should be ousted

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Nine dead

**Nainital (Uttarakhand):** Nine people were killed after their pick-up vehicle fell into a gorge on the Chedakhan-Midar Road in Uttarakhand's Nainital district early Friday, police said. The accident occurred around 8 am when the vehicle was going from Patlot to Amjad village, Senior Superintendent of Police (Nainital) Prahlad Narayan Meena said. The vehicle fell into the gorge while trying to save a motorcycle approaching from the opposite direction, he said.

### CRPF jawan killed

**Chalbasa (Jharkhand):** A CRPF jawan was killed and two others were injured Friday when the proscribed CPI (Maoist) triggered an IED explosion in a forest in West Singhbhum district, police said. The incident took place around 2:30 pm, as a team of security personnel were conducting an anti-Maoist operation in Goukera area, Superintendent of Police Ashutosh Shekhar said. The injured jawans were airlifted to a hospital in Ranchi, he said.

### ASI seeks time

**Varanasi:** A court here will hear Saturday an application filed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), seeking 15 more days to submit its report of a scientific survey of the Gyanvapi mosque complex. The Varanasi district court, which was scheduled to hear the matter on Friday afternoon, will now take it up on Saturday, Centre's counsel Amit Srivastava said. The ASI carried out the scientific survey of the Gyanvapi premises, located next to the Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi, to determine whether the 17th-century mosque was constructed over a pre-existing structure of a Hindu temple.

### ITBP jawan killed

**Gariaband:** A jawan of the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) was killed in a blast triggered by Naxals in Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district where polling for the second phase of assembly elections took place Friday, police said. The incident took place near Bade Gobra village under Mainpur police station area when a polling team escorted by security personnel was returning after the voting was over, a senior police official said.

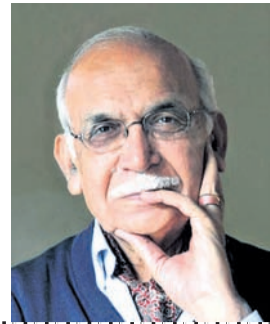


The BJP is a scattered party in Rajasthan and it does not have a face for the chief minister's post. The prime minister is roaming every corner of the state. Sometimes, it seems that he is out to find his chief ministerial face

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

## ART HISTORIAN BN GOSWAMY DIES

Renowned art historian and writer BN Goswamy died at Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) Chandigarh Friday. He was 90. Born on August 15, 1933, the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awardee was best known for his works on the Pahari style of paintings



## PM expresses concern over deepfake issue



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 17:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday cautioned that deepfakes created by artificial intelligence can lead to a big crisis and stoke discontent in society, as he urged the media to raise awareness about its misuse and educate people.

Addressing the media at BJP's 'Diwali Milan' programme at the party's headquarters here, Modi said he recently saw a video of him performing garba even though he has not done so since schooldays. Even those who love him are forwarding the video, he said in a lighter vein.

"In a diverse society like ours, deepfakes can cause a big crisis and even stoke the fire of discontent as people generally trust anything associated with the media in the same way anyone clad in 'gedua' (saffron) tends to get respect from others.

"A new crisis is emerging due to deepfakes produced through artificial intelligence. There is a very big section of society which does not have a parallel verification system," the prime minister told journalists at the programme where he aired views about a few things and sought their support to raise awareness.

Deepfake videos are synthetic media in which a person in an existing image or video is replaced with someone else's likeness. The prime minister noted that earlier a movie with some controversial comments would

Addressing the media at BJP's 'Diwali Milan' programme at the party's headquarters here, Modi said he recently saw a video of him performing garba even though he has not done so since school days

Modi said he had recently suggested to ChatGPT professionals that as products like cigarettes come with health warnings, deepfakes too should carry disclosures

come and go, but now it goes on to become a big issue. Even screening of such films becomes difficult on the ground that they have disrespected some section of society irrespective of the huge amount of money spent on making them, he said.

Modi said he had recently suggested to ChatGPT professionals that as products like cigarettes come with health warnings, deepfakes too should carry disclosures. Of late, deepfake videos featuring several celebrities have surfaced online, including one on Rashmika Mandanna, which led to a police FIR and action by the Union IT ministry.

Referring to his resolve for 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India) by 2047, the prime minister said these are not merely words but a ground reality.

He suggested the 'vocal for local' campaign has found people's support, noting that a business of around Rs 4.5 lakh crore has taken place in the Diwali week, including those related to Chhath.

## HC quashes Haryana's 75% quota in pvt jobs

The court had admitted multiple petitions against the implementation of the act that provided 75 per cent reservation in jobs in the private sector to candidates from the state. It came into effect from January 15, 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, Nov 17:** In a setback to the Haryana government, the Punjab and Haryana High Court Friday quashed a state government law that provided 75 per cent reservation in private sector jobs to the residents of the state.

The verdict was pronounced by Justices G S Sandhwalia and Harpreet Kaur Jeewan. Senior advocate Akshay Bhan, one of the counsels for the pe-



tioners, said the bench quashed the complete act. He said the petitioners argued that the Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020 violated Articles 14 and 19 of the Constitution. "...We are of the considered opinion that the writ petitions are liable to be allowed and The Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020 is held to be unconstitutional and violative of Part III of the Constitution of India and is accordingly held ultravires and the same is ineffective from the

date it came into force," according to the court order.

The court had admitted multiple petitions against the implementation of the act that provided 75 per cent reservation in jobs in the private sector to candidates from the state. It came into effect from January 15, 2022.

It covered jobs offering a maximum gross monthly salary or wages upto Rs 30,000. Advocate Bhan, who was representing the Faridabad Industrial Association, said several industrial associations had moved court

against the law.

The state did not have legislative competence under Article 35 for enacting this law, Bhan contended. The act was applicable on private sector companies, societies, trusts, limited liability partnership firms, partnership firm and any person who employed 10 or more persons on salary, wages, or other remuneration for manufacturing, carrying on business, or rendering any service in Haryana.

Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya had given his assent to the Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Bill in March 2021. Providing 75 per cent reservation in private sector jobs for state domiciled candidate was a key poll promise of the Jannayak Janta Party at the time of 2019 assembly polls.

After the polls, the JJP extended support to BJP and formed a government as the saffron party fell short of attaining a simple majority on its own.

## SIT to probe idol vandalism case in Ranchi village

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ranchi, Nov 17:** A special investigation team (SIT) has been set up to probe into the vandalism of idols in five temples at Mudma village in Ranchi district, police said Friday.

Ranchi superintendent of police (rural) Manish Toppo said, "We have formed an SIT to find the people involved in vandalising the idols. Additional security forces have been deployed near the temples in the village."

"Idols in five temples of Mudma village were vandalised. Two persons have been detained," Khelari DSP Ankita Roy said

Earlier, irate residents blocked NH-75 and other roads for around eight hours in protest against the vandalism at Mudma village, around 30-km from Ranchi, on Thursday night. "Idols in five temples of Mudma village were vandalised. Two persons have been detained," Khelari DSP Ankita Roy said.

According to the villagers, idols of Shiva, Hanuman and a goddess were damaged in the temples. In protest, hundreds of villagers including women with traditional weapons gathered on NH-75 around 6am and blocked traffic between Ranchi and Daltonganj, police said, adding that roads were also blocked at Thakurgaon, Chanho and Bijupura.

The blockades were withdrawn around 2:30pm after police agreed to three demands of the villagers.

"The demands include setting up of an SIT in the case, arrest of the miscreants and security to temples in the village," Ranchi rural SP said. He said the situation is under control and police have started an operation to arrest the miscreants involved in the vandalism.



A vendor sells puja items for rituals of 'Chhath Puja' in Ranchi

PTI PHOTO

## Cong candidate's aide killed in clash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal, Nov 17:** An aide of a Congress candidate was killed after two groups fought in the Rajnagar constituency of Madhya Pradesh and a few clashes were reported in other parts of the state, where assembly elections were held Friday, officials said.

Five persons were injured in a skirmish between two groups in the Mhow area of Indore district, while two men were wounded in a clash in Morena district's Dimani constituency, where Union minister Narendra Singh Tomar is contesting, they said. According to Chhatarpur Superintendent of Police Amit Sanghi, supporters of two political leaders faced off in the Rajnagar constituency in the early hours of Friday which resulted in the death of one Salman.



People wait to cast their votes for the Madhya Pradesh Assembly election, in Bhopal, Friday

The Congress candidate for the seat, Vikram Singh, alias Nati Raja, has alleged that Salman used to drive him around. However, BJP nominee Arvind Pateria dubbed the incident a conspiracy and sought a judicial probe into it. To ensure the

peaceful conduct of polls in the sensitive Sumawali assembly constituency of Morena district, the police asked BJP candidate Andar Singh Kansana, Congress nominee Ajab Singh Kushwaha and BSP's Kuldeep Singh Sikarwar to sit in one place.

## SC launches monthly newsletter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 17:** The Supreme Court has launched a monthly newsletter to showcase its ongoing operations and achievements and offer an insight into the workings of the court.

Announcing the publication of the inaugural issue, Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said within the pages of "Supreme Court Chronicle", one can find glimpses of the Court's storied history, overviews of the key judgments that define our legal landscape and the stories of the remarkable individuals who work day in and day out to realise the promise of our institution".

"I trust that the Supreme Court Chronicle will become a key source of information about the Supreme Court's functioning and keep readers updated on the activities of this Court, both



within and beyond the courtroom.

"It is my hope that this newsletter will illuminate the collaborative process of justice delivery, and communicate to readers the continuous efforts being made to improve the Court's functioning. This also marks a new era of transparency, connectedness and progress for the Court with various stakeholders in the justice-delivery ecosystem," the CJI said.

Chandrachud expressed gratitude to all those at the Centre for Research and Planning, and the New Judges' Library who contributed to the publication of the Supreme Court Chronicle.

## Holistic pilot fatigue management a challenge for airlines

EARLIER THIS MONTH, THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION (DGCA) CAME OUT WITH DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO NORMS GOVERNING DUTY TIMINGS OF FLIGHT CREW, INCLUDING MORE REST TIME FOR PILOTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 17:** As air traffic continues on its northward trajectory and aircraft fleet expands, tackling fatigue among pilots, in a holistic manner, seems to be a focal area for airlines and authorities.

While leading carriers have introduced tools to analyse and keep a tab on pilot fatigue, aviation watchdog DGCA has proposed more rest hours for the pilots, and the new norms, if implemented, could also mean that airlines might have to reduce the number of flights.

According to two senior commercial pilots, implementation of the proposed DGCA norms

will help in addressing fatigue issues and provide a big relief for the pilots. The draft norms, which have been put out for stakeholders' comments, proposed more rest time for pilots.

In recent months, the issue of fatigue has been in focus, especially after the death of an IndiGo pilot, who had collapsed at the boarding gate of Nagpur airport in September. And on Thursday, an Air India pilot during a training session showed signs of discomfort and later died at the Delhi airport.

Air India said the pilot was not on active flying duty and was undergoing conversion training to operate wide-body aircraft. The country's largest air-



line IndiGo's CEO Pieter Elbers, on November 6, said the issue of pilot fatigue needs a "very considerate, holistic and in-depth approach".

The carrier, with a domestic market share of more than 62 per cent, has introduced a tool to

analyse fatigue among pilots. "The best way to improve safety is to work in a transparent measure... We are taking the feedback (on pilots' fatigue) seriously," Elbers said.

"...We will take international experience, what is the frame-

work for working hours in EU, the US... How does it compare to the Indian framework," he had said in response to queries about the issue of fatigue among pilots. According to Elbers, these topics require a very considerate, holistic and in-depth approach.

Air India has also introduced a tool in its rostering system that will help in mitigating fatigue among pilots as well as put in place various initiatives to ensure the stability of rosters and minimise disruptions.

On September 15, Air India CEO and Managing Director Campbell Wilson said the airline has introduced several new initiatives in tandem that seek to increase the stability of printed

rosters and minimise disruptions, utilise standby blocks optimally, and set up efficient communications channels.

Mentioning about the safety protocols being introduced in all aspects of the airline's operations, Wilson earlier said, "We launched Coruson a few weeks ago, which was followed by the Boeing Alertness Model (BAM)3, the fatigue mitigating tool in our Jeppesen rostering system, that will prevent publishing fatiguing rosters and pairings".

Last year, a survey of more than 500 pilots showed that the majority of them admitted to falling asleep without the planning/ consent of the other crew or experienced microsleep.

# international



As a member of the Global South, we share its collective angst that on issues of core concern to the South, we have no voice at the high table

RUCHIRA KAMBOJ | INDIA'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN AMBASSADOR

## S KOREA TO TAKE DOG MEAT OFF MENU

South Korea aims to ban eating dog meat and put an end to the controversy over the ancient custom amid growing awareness of animal rights, a ruling party policy chief said Friday. The Korean practice of eating dog has drawn criticism from overseas for its cruelty but there has also been increasing opposition at home, particularly from the younger generation



## of the day quote

Our world stands at an inflection point, a point where the decisions we make now are going to determine the course of the world, not just a few of our countries, for the next several decades of consequence

JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

IMF programme is very necessary for some time as the economy has returned to stability that was still very fragile. Until we are able to increase exports and domestic resources, we will need another programme

SHAMSHAD AKHTAR | CARETAKER FM, PAKISTAN

The trust deficit among nations and the lack of respect for international laws have led to the ongoing war in Ukraine and the carnage in Palestine

SHEIKH HASINA | PM, BANGLADESH

## ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT

# Catastrophic ruins fill Gaza

OVER FIVE WEEKS INTO ISRAEL'S WAR AGAINST HAMAS, THE GAZA STREETS DEPICT A GRIM PICTURE OF DESTRUCTION BY NONSTOP BOMBINGS WITH NO END IN SIGHT FOR CIVILIANS

REUTERS



With winter fast approaching, unsafe and overcrowded shelters, and the lack of clean water, civilians are facing the immediate possibility of starvation

CINDY MCCAIN | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WFP

Gaza Strip, Nov 17: Israel's land, sea and air assault on the Gaza Strip, triggered by Hamas's cross-border attack October 7, has brought upheaval and destruction to the Palestinian territory on a scale never before seen in the enclave.

Internet and telephone services collapsed across the Gaza Strip Thursday for lack of fuel, the main Palestinian provider said, bringing a potentially long-term blackout of communications as Israel signalled its offensive against Hamas could next target the south, where most of the population has taken refuge.

Here are latest estimates from international organisations on the socio-economic impact of the conflict.

### HOUSING

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), quoting data from the Palestinian public works and housing department, said Israeli attacks had destroyed more than 41,000 housing units and damaged more than 222,000 housing units. In all, it said at least 45% of Gaza's housing units had reportedly been damaged or destroyed.

It was impossible to independently verify the numbers, but Reuters reporters in Gaza say the destruction is on a huge scale. An Israeli reporter who was taken to see the Gaza town of Beit Hanoun by the Israeli military reported November 12 that barely a single inhabitable building remains standing. More than 52,000 people had lived there before the war.

### before the war: HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS

In a November 15 report, OCHA said 279 educational facilities had reportedly been damaged, more than 51% of the total, with none of Gaza's 625,000 students able to access education.

According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, as of November 16, only nine of the enclave's 35 hospitals in Gaza were partially functioning. The rest have shut down formal medical services.

OCHA said 55 ambulances in Gaza had been damaged, with critical shortages reported of drugs and blood products.

### WATER, SANITATION

The UN Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA) said November 16 that due to an absence of fuel, 70% of the people in southern Gaza had no access to clean water.

The seawater desalination plant in Khan Younis in the south was operating at 5% of



### TELECOMS

On November 16, Gaza's telecommunications services shut down after fuel used to run generators ran out. OCHA said several communication infrastructures in south Gaza were hit and damaged November 14. OCHA said blackouts jeopardised the provision of life-saving assistance to civilians. UNRWA said that due to the communication shutdown, it was unable to manage or coordinate humanitarian aid convoys starting November 17.

### FOOD SECURITY

OCHA said in the north of Gaza, no bakeries had been active since November 7 due to the lack of fuel, water, wheat flour, and structural damage. It said the last functioning mill in Gaza was destroyed November 15.

The situation is catastrophic, OCHA said.

### HUMANITARIAN AID

On average 500 trucks of food

and goods entered Gaza each day before the conflict. All imports were halted after October 7 and only resumed October 21. Between then and November 14 a total of 1,139 trucks carrying humanitarian aid had crossed into Gaza.

## SHORT TAKES

### Muizzu takes oath

Male: Mohamed Muizzu took oath as the eighth President of the Maldives Friday at a ceremony attended by a multitude of foreign dignitaries, including India's Union Minister Kiren Rijiju. The eighth President of the Republic (of Maldives) Mohammed Muizzu was sworn in as President today, local media said. Chief Justice Muthasim Adnan administered the oath of office to Muizzu, 45. At the ceremony, Hussain Mohamed Latheef also took oath as the vice president of the Maldives.

### US spending bill

San Francisco: President Joe Biden has signed a temporary spending bill a day before a potential government shutdown, pushing a fight with congressional Republicans over the federal budget into the new year, as wartime aid for Ukraine and Israel remains stalled. The measure passed the House and Senate by wide bipartisan margins this week, ensuring the government remains open until after the holiday season, and potentially giving lawmakers more time to sort out their considerable differences over government spending levels for the current fiscal year.

### Earthquake hits Philippines

Manila: A magnitude 6.7 earthquake struck the southern Philippines on Friday, killing one person, injuring dozens and damaging buildings, authorities said. The magnitude 6.7 quake was located 26 kilometers (16 miles) from Burias at the southern tip of the Philippines, the US Geological Survey said. It was centered at a depth of 78 kilometers (48 miles), it said. Videos posted on social media showed ceilings falling at two large malls as pillars swayed and people covered and shouted in fear.

### Iran enriches more uranium

Paris: The United States and its allies have few routes left to rein in Iran's nuclear work with prospects for talks long buried and tougher actions against Tehran running the risk of stoking tensions in a region already enflamed by the Gaza war. With a US election next year limiting Washington's room for manoeuvre, four serving and three former diplomats painted a bleak picture of efforts to curb Iran's nuclear programme, which according to UN nuclear watchdog reports continues to advance.

## RARE LEADER TALKS

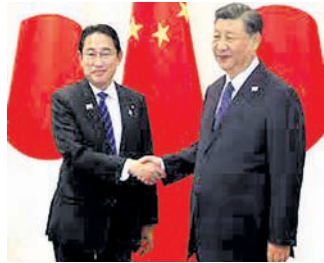
# China, Japan reaffirm ties

REUTERS

Tokyo, Nov 17: Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said they would pursue mutually beneficial relations in their first face-to-face talks in a year, putting emphasis on shared economic interests amid a series of diplomatic disputes.

The leaders of Asia's two largest economies discussed thorny issues such as China's ban on Japanese seafood and the case of a Japanese businessman detained in China on suspicion of espionage during hour-long talks at a hotel in San Francisco Thursday.

They also pledged to hold high-level dialogue on economic issues and welcomed the launch of a



framework to discuss export controls as they met on the sidelines of an Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

Their countries should "focus on common interests" and reaffirm a "strategic relationship of mutual benefit and give it new meaning," Xi told Kishida as they sat opposite one another at a long table flanked by their delegations.

# Russian Parl passes record budget

State Duma clears budget boosting defence spending and shoring up support for Putin

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, Nov 17: The lower house of Russia's parliament, the State Duma, Friday approved its biggest-ever federal budget which will increase spending by around 25 per cent in 2024, with record amounts going to defence.

Record low unemployment, higher wages and targeted social spending should help the Kremlin ride out the domestic impact of pivoting the economy to a war footing, but could pose a problem in the long term, analysts say.

Russian lawmakers said the budget for 2024-2026 was developed specifically to fund the military and mitigate the impact of "17,500 sanctions" on Russia,



the chairman of the State Duma, Vyacheslav Volodin, said.

"In these difficult conditions, we have managed to adopt a budget that will not only allocate the necessary funds for our country's defense, but which will also provide all the required funds to guarantee the state's social obligations," First Deputy Chairman of the State Duma Alexander Zhukov said, according to Russian state news agency Tass.

Defence spending is expected to overtake social spending next year for the first time in modern Russian history, at a time when the Kremlin is eager to shore up support for President Vladimir Putin as Russia prepares for a presidential election in March

voted against the budget because it provides "low pensions" and not enough financial support for elderly people, Tass said. The budget will now be passed to the Federation Council — the upper chamber of Russia's parliament — for approval before it is signed by President Vladimir Putin.

The draft budget "is about getting the war sorted in Ukraine and about being ready for a military confrontation with the West in perpetuity", Richard Connolly, an expert on Russia's

military and economy at the Royal United Services Institute in London, has said.

"This amounts to the wholesale remilitarization of Russian society," he said. Russia's finance ministry said it expects spending to reach 36.66 trillion rubles (around \$411 billion) in 2024 with a predicted budget deficit of 0.8 per cent of Russia's gross domestic product.

Part of the Russian budget is secret as the Kremlin tries to conceal its military plans and sidestep scrutiny of its war in Ukraine. Independent business journalists Farida Rustamova and Maksim Tovkaylo said on their Telegram channel Faridaily that around 39 per cent of all federal spending will go to defense and law enforcement in 2024.

# China-US fentanyl pact cannot stop overdose epidemic

Fentanyl emerged as a widespread problem in the US about a decade ago as there were crackdowns on prescribing opioid painkillers, which were linked to soaring death numbers already



## US' deadliest drug crisis

Synthetic opioids are now the biggest killers in the deadliest drug crisis the US has ever seen. In 2014, nearly 50,000 deaths in the US were linked to drug overdoses of all kinds. By last year, the total was more than 100,000, according to a tally by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than two-thirds of those deaths — more than 200 per day — involved fentanyl or similar synthetic drugs

abuses committed in China's campaign of repression, mass arbitrary detention, forced labor and high-technology surveillance against Uighurs, ethnic Kazakhs, and other members of Muslim minority groups."

In the early days, it was largely shipped from China to the US, easily concealed in envelopes and small packages. Fentanyl's potency makes it appealing to drug suppliers because it's easy to ship. And because it's made from chemicals in labs, it doesn't rely on growing crops for drugs such as heroin, cocaine or marijuana.

Pushed by then-President Donald Trump, China agreed in late 2018 to crack down on shipments of finished fentanyl and some of its precursors. After that, more production moved to Mexico — with the raw materials still coming largely from China.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Nov 17: Experts say new steps China has agreed to will eventually reduce the flow of the deadly opioid fentanyl into the US, but that alone will not stem the overdose crisis killing Americans at a record rate.

President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping announced at a meeting Wednesday in California that China is telling its chemical companies to curtail shipments to Latin America and elsewhere of the materials used to produce fentanyl, which is largely finished in Mexico and then smug-

gled into the US.

China has also resumed sharing information about suspected trafficking with an international database.

"It's a step in the right direction because not doing this would be negligent," said Adam Wandt, an associate professor of public policy at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "If this is a diplomatic option that we did not take, every fentanyl death over the next decade would be on our heads."

But he and others described the steps as necessary in addressing the overdose crisis in the US — but not sufficient. Wandt said the steps should re-

duce the amount of fentanyl in the U.S., though when that happens depends on how much of the chemicals are already in possession of Mexican cartels. And even if fentanyl is eradicated, he said, "they will switch to another drug, which I predict will be even more lethal."

Kevin Roy, the chief public policy officer at Shatterproof, a national group dedicated to combatting the addiction and over-

dose crisis, said that the steps announced were crucial, but they still have to be carried out. "It's only one part of a bigger picture," Roy said.

He was also concerned that the nations did not reach any agreements on how to deal with laundering drug money through China, an issue that Rahul Gupta, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, identified at a congressional hearing this

## of the day quote

The e-commerce industry has suggested the government permit foreign direct investment (FDI) in inventory-based model of online trade only for export purposes

We are targeting merchandise exports worth \$20 billion from India by 2025 by adding thousands of small sellers to our e-commerce platform

The G20 financial inclusion action plan for 2024 to 2026, also prioritises the deepening of engagement with the Global South. India stands ready to share its technical capabilities and knowledge resources for empowering the people of the Global South

## SHORT TAKES

### Alibaba loses \$20bn from mcap

**Hong Kong:** Investors wiped out some \$20 billion off Alibaba Group's market value Friday after it scrapped plans to spin off its cloud business, citing uncertainties over US curbs on exports to China of chips used in artificial intelligence applications. Alibaba Group's Hong Kong shares closed down 10%, their biggest single-day drop in more than a year. It was the first market reaction in Asia since the stunning strategy reversal was announced late Thursday, after which the company's US listed securities closed down 9%.

### BharatPe saga continues

**New Delhi:** BharatPe co-founder Ashneer Grover and his wife Madhuri Jain were stopped at the Delhi international airport following a look out circular issued against them in the alleged fraud at the fintech firm, sources said. The couple were to travel to New York late Thursday for vacation when they were stopped at the airport on the basis of a look out circular issued by the Economic Offences Wing (EoW) of the Delhi police. EoW is investigating complaints of payments being made at BharatPe to fake human resource consultancies allegedly operated by Grover and family. They have also been accused of backdating invoices to use funds.

## MILESTONE MOMENT

# India grants record 41,010 patents in 2023-24 so far

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 17:** The Indian patent office has granted "highest" number of 41,010 patents till November 15 this fiscal year, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said.

In 2013-14 fiscal year, 4,227 patents were granted.

"It's a record. Highest ever number of patents granted so far in 2023-24," he said in a post on social media platform X.

On this, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said this is a "notable feat" and it marks a milestone in India's journey towards an innovation-driven knowledge economy.

"India's youth will be great beneficiaries of such strides," he said.

The prime minister recently stated that the rise in patent applications in India demonstrates the rising innovative zeal of its

# Adani in choppy waters again

The conglomerate faces renewed pressure after Hindenburg report of January

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Nov 17:** Indian investigators are seeking to restart a probe into Adani Group for alleged overvaluation of coal imports and have asked the Supreme Court to allow them to collect evidence from Singapore, a step they say the company thwarted for years, legal documents show.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence since 2016 has been trying to procure transaction documents related to Adani's dealings from Singapore authorities.

The agency suspects many of the group's coal shipments imported from Indonesian suppliers were first billed at higher prices on paper to its Singapore unit, Adani Global Pte, and then to its Indian arms.

Adani Enterprises and its subsidiaries, led by billionaire Gautam Adani, have successfully mounted repeated legal challenges in India and Singapore to block the documents' release, court papers show. Adani has denied wrongdoing, saying that Indian authorities assessed its coal shipments before releasing them from ports.

In an October 9 legal filing, which Reuters is reporting for the first time, the revenue intelligence agency asked India's Supreme Court to quash a previous lower court order that allowed Adani to block authorities from collecting evidence from Singapore.

The Indian officials dispute Adani's arguments that the



The domestic pharmaceutical industry has the potential to grow by 4-5 times to around \$200 billion in value terms by scaling up manufacturing and enhancing exports

ARUNISH CHAWLA | SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACEUTICALS

## 'YONO GLOBAL' TO DEBUT IN S'PORE, US

State Bank of India (SBI) will soon launch its banking mobile app 'Yono Global' in Singapore and the US, offering digitalized remittance and other services to its customers, Vidya Krishnan, Deputy MD (IT), said. "We are continuing to invest in Yono Global to offer the best services available as we want to give superior experience to our customers," Krishnan told PTI



## OVERVALUATION OF COAL IMPORTS

agency did not follow "due process", saying in the filing it had approval to seek information from the Southeast Asian city-state under a mutual legal assistance treaty.

"Permission for following this route was obtained from the Ministry of Finance as well as (the) Ministry of Home Affairs," the 25-page filing states, adding that the investigation "is completely in compliance".

In a statement to Reuters, Adani Group said it had "fully co-operated" with the authorities by providing details and documents sought more than four years ago and that "no deficiency or objection" was communicated by investigators thereafter.

The effort to revive the coal probe comes amid wider regulatory scrutiny of Adani since Hindenburg Research in January accused the tycoon and his conglomerate of improper use of tax havens and stock manipulation.

Despite Adani's denials, the

- Adani Group alleged to have overvalued its coal imports
- India trying to restart probe by seeking Supreme Court help
- Adani denies wrongdoing in coal imports case

short seller's report triggered a \$150 billion plunge in the group's stocks. India's Supreme Court is also overseeing the market regulator's probe of Hindenburg's allegations.

The revenue agency began looking into Adani's imports as part of a broader investigation into 40 companies that started in 2014. Investigators alleged the companies importing Indonesian coal were over invoicing deliveries by showing bills of shipments routed through intermediaries in Singapore and elsewhere.

Indian authorities reviewed 1,300 shipments involving Adani and alleged in court filings that it "grossly overstated" or "arti-

The revenue agency began looking into Adani's imports as part of a broader probe into 40 companies that started in 2014

ficially inflated the import value of coal" as compared with the export value from Indonesia, "with the objective of siphoning off" funds to tax havens and charging higher power prices in India. The sums involved may run into billions of rupees, according to the agency, which has not identified any Indonesian supplier. The evidence India is seeking from Singapore authorities, which includes transaction documents from 20 of Adani's banks there, could help establish a financial trail in the case, a person with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

If India's Supreme Court allows the agency's latest request, it would then need to seek an order from Singapore's Court of Appeal to release the material. The Singapore court declined requests from Reuters last month to inspect related case documents, saying in written responses that the files were sealed.

But a Reuters review of hundreds of pages of Indian court filings and orders reveal a tussle between India and Adani that stretched from Mumbai to New Delhi to Singapore in recent years.

## IT BOOST

# Blue-chips witness third week of gains

NSE Nifty 50 index gained 1.58% this week, its best in two months, while the Sensex rose 1.37%

REUTERS

**Bangalore, Nov 17:** India's Nifty 50 and Sensex stock indexes logged their third consecutive weekly gains, boosted by information technology (IT) stocks on easing global interest rate outlooks.

The NSE Nifty 50 index gained 1.58% this week, its best in two months, while the Sensex rose 1.37%.

Stocks of IT companies, which earn a significant share of their revenue from the US, climbed 5.07%, their best week in 16 months.

The rise follows softer-than-expected US inflation data October 14, which bolstered expectations that the Federal Reserve will not hike rates and may start cutting rates in May 2024. US Treasury yields fell after the inflation data, while foreign investors snapped a 15-session selling streak in the week.

The fall in oil prices is also a positive for net importers like India, analysts said.

Brent crude futures hit four-month lows and were set to decline for the fourth straight week. The Nifty oil & gas index gained 1.40%, rising for the third week in a row. On the day, the Nifty 50



IT stocks climbed 5.07%, their best week in 16 months

Brent crude futures hit 4-month lows, set to fall further

The environment is favourable for domestic and global markets. Foreign inflows can fuel a sustained rally in domestic markets

RAHUL SHARMA | HEAD OF RESEARCH, EQUITY99

closed 0.17% lower at 19,731.80 and Sensex fell 0.28% to 65,794.73, dragged by financials.

Banks, financial services, public sector banks and private banks lost between 0.9% and 2.5%, amid concerns over the sector's loan growth and profitability after the Reserve Bank of India tightened rules for personal loans and credit cards.

State Bank of India, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finance were among the top Nifty losers, falling between 1.9% and 4%.

The more domestically-focused small and mid-caps hit fresh record highs, and outperformed the benchmarks on the day and the week, aided by retail inflows.

## IPO FRENZY

### Flair Writing IPO to open Nov 22

**New Delhi:** Pen maker Flair Writing Industries Ltd has set a price band of Rs 288-304 a share for its Rs 593-crore initial public offering (IPO), market sources said Friday. The maiden public issue will open for subscription November 22 and conclude November 24 and the anchor book of the offer will be opened for a day November 21, they added. As per the red herring prospectus (RHP), Flair Writing's IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 292 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of equity shares worth up to Rs 301 crore by promoters and promoter group entities.

### Fedfina declares ₹1,092cr IPO

**Mumbai:** Fedbank Financial Services (Fedfina) Friday said it plans to raise up to Rs 1,092-crore through an initial public offering opening November 22. The Reserve Bank's circular increasing the risk weights on unsecured lending will increase the borrowing costs, but the negative market sentiment will not impact the offering, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Anil Kothuri told reporters here. Fedfina, a subsidiary of south-based Federal Bank, has set a price band of Rs 133-140 per share for the issue which comes amid a raft of other issuances before the holiday season and the next year's general elections. The issue will open for three days starting November 22.

### IREDA's price band at ₹30-32/share

**Mumbai:** Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd (IREDA) Thursday fixed the price band for its up to Rs 2,150.21 crore Initial Public Offering (IPO) at Rs 30-32 per equity share, the company said here Thursday. The company's maiden IPO will open for the public November 21 for subscription and close November 23, it said. Investors can bid for a minimum of 460 equity shares and in multiples of 460 equity shares thereafter, it said. The public issue of face value of Rs 10 per equity share comprises fresh issuance of equity shares up to 403.16 million and an Offer for Sale (OFS) of up to 268.78 million shares aggregating to up to 671.94 million equity shares, the government-owned company said.

### Forex kitty dips to \$590.321bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Nov 17:** India's forex kitty decreased by \$462 million to \$590.321 billion for the week ended November 10, the Reserve Bank said Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had increased by \$4.672 billion to \$590.783 billion.

In October 2021, the country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion. The reserves took a hit as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments since last year.

For the week ended November 10, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by \$108 million to \$522.004 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by Reserve Bank of India.

Gold reserves were down by \$608 million to \$45.515 billion during the week, the RBI said. India's reserve position with the IMF was up by \$3 million to \$4.791 billion in the reporting week.

## OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY

# RBI's major relief to exporters

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Nov 17:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Friday permitted banks to open additional current account for exports proceeds in addition to special rupee vostro accounts with a view to provide greater operational flexibility to exporters.

To provide greater operational flexibility to exporters, banks maintaining special rupee vostro account as per the provisions of the RBI circular dated July 11, 2022 are permitted to open an additional special current account for its exporter constituent exclusively for settlement of their export transactions, RBI said in a notification.

In July 2022, the RBI had asked banks to put in place additional arrangements for export and import transactions in Indian rupees in view of increasing interest of the global trading community in the domestic currency.

"In order to promote growth of global trade with emphasis on exports from India and to support the increasing interest of global



RBI permits banks to open current account for export proceeds in addition to special rupee vostro accounts

trading community in INR, it has been decided to put in place an additional arrangement for invoicing, payment, and settlement of exports/imports in INR," it said.

India has been trying to promote rupee trade following the Russia-Ukraine war and the sanctions imposed by the West.

In July 2022, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to allow the settlement of India's international trade in rupee. Accordingly, authorised Indian banks must open and maintain

special rupee vostro accounts of the partner trading country's banks.

These accounts keep the foreign bank's holdings in the Indian counterpart in rupees. When an Indian trader wants to make a payment to a foreign trader in rupees, the amount will be credited to this vostro account.

Similarly, in the reverse scenario, the amount to be paid to an Indian trader is deducted from the vostro account, and credited to the person's regular account.

# 'Tighter lending norms to hit banks' capital adequacy'

## RBI HAS RAISED RISK WEIGHTS ON UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS, CREDIT CARDS AND LENDING TO NBFCs BY 25 PERCENTAGE POINTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 17:** The Reserve Bank's decision to tighten norms for consumer credit by raising risk weight for unsecured personal loans is likely to hit banks' capital adequacy by 60 basis points, S&P Global Ratings said Friday.

The move will curtail riskier bank lending to consumers and is expected to squeeze the non-bank sector in particular.

The RBI Thursday increased risk weights on unsecured personal loans, credit cards, and lending to nonbank finance companies (NBFCs) by 25 percentage points.

This will likely lead to higher lending rates, lower credit growth, and increase the need for capital raising among weak lenders, S&P Global Ratings said, adding that higher risk weights will ultimately support

asset quality. "Slower loan growth and an increased emphasis on risk management will likely support asset quality in the Indian banking system. However, the immediate effect will likely be higher interest rates for borrowers, slower loan growth for lenders reduced capital adequacy, and some hit on profits. We estimate that the Tier-1 capital adequacy of banks will decline by about 60 basis points. Finance companies will be worse affected as their incremental bank borrowing costs will surge, in addition to the capital adequacy impact," S&P Global Ratings credit analyst Geeta Chugh said in the statement.

These changes will not have any immediate effect on India's financial sector ratings, and this will also not affect the risk-adjusted capital ratio for the rated banks and finance companies, the



agency said.

Unsecured personal loans and credit card debt have risen rapidly in the past few years in India. Such loans have grown 26 per cent in the 12 months ending September 2023.

This type of loan, along with consumer durable lending, represented about 9.8 per cent of total loans in the banking system as of September 22, 2023.

Small-ticket personal loans of less than Rs 50,000 are particularly at higher risk. Reported delinquencies (90-plus days past

NBFCs face a double-whammy of higher risk weights on their unsecured loans and on bank lending to NBFCs. This will squeeze the reported capital adequacy of nonbanks and push up their funding costs

DEEPA SETH CHHABRIA | CREDIT ANALYST, S&P GLOBAL RATINGS

due) for this type of lending was 5.4 per cent as of June 2023, according to credit bureau Transunion Cibil.

While these small borrowers are often highly leveraged and may have other lending products, loans below Rs 50,000 comprise only 0.3 per cent of total retail loans. Financial technology firms are more exposed to these loans, as around 80 per cent of their personal loans are in this customer segment, the rating agency said.

Notwithstanding the risk of a potential buildup of imbalances in some categories of retail loans, the delinquency rate of 90-plus

days past due is at acceptable limits for this product category, it added.

Specifically, as of June 30, 2023, the delinquency rate was 1.6 per cent for credit cards and 0.8 per cent for unsecured personal loans.

While NBFCs are not homogeneous, many retail-focused finance companies have a much higher exposure to unsecured loans than banks.

For example, Poonawalla Fincorp Ltd (PFL), part of Cyrus Poonawalla Group, said the capital adequacy ratio would come down by 2.20 per cent due to the RBI's action.

Based on initial calculations, the increase in the risk weight from 100 per cent to 125 per cent on the company's consumer credit exposure would be marginal and is expected to be around 220 bps, Poonawalla Fincorp Ltd said in a separate press release.

With this, the resultant capital adequacy would moderate to 40 per cent, still significantly higher than the regulatory requirement of 15 per cent, PFL said.

# AUSSIES PICK UP PACE

## That was not remotely close to a choke: Walter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Nov 17:** South Africa suffered yet another defeat in a knockout game of a global event but their performance against Australia in the second World Cup semifinal on Thursday was far from a choke, feels head coach Rob Walter.

From a precarious 24/4, South Africa rode on David Miller's counter-attacking century to post a respectable 212 before Australia survived some tense moments to chase down the target in 47.2 overs.

Walter provided his personal definition of a choke, stating, "For me, a choke is losing a game that you are in a position to win. In this instance, we were behind right from the word go, and we actually fought our way back into the competition and put up a score that gave us a chance."

Walter said his team was 30-40 runs short. "And then, again, they (Australia) got us to a flier. We fought and we put ourselves back into the game," he said, adding 30 more runs would have made the difference.

"Of course, we were 30 runs or 40 runs short, but still having them seven down. So, for me,

there's nothing even remotely close to a choke that happened out there today. It's a serious contest between two good teams of the tournament.

"It's gutting to lose a semifinal. It was incredibly serious challenge in first 12 overs. To come back from 24/4, the way Klaasen and Miller put together, it showed 270 was the total. Even 250 would have proved to be a serious total. First 10 overs on either side separated the game. But there were a lot of positives to take home," Walter added.

Asked if they erred in batting first after winning the toss, he said: "To be honest, even the commentators that I've spoken to, no one could predict the pitch to play like that for the first five overs."

"And had it played as we expected it to, then we would have backed ourselves to get 270. And once we got 270, because it was turning so much in the evening, we knew that that was going to be our end into the game."

"And ultimately it was, really. We just didn't have enough runs to work with. It's easy to say in the back end of losing, but I think the contest would have been even a touch closer than it really was."



REUTERS

**Ahmedabad, Nov 17:** Australia head into their World Cup decider against India with all pieces in place following a devastating return to form of their vaunted pace attack in the South Africa semifinal.

Powerplay wickets had proved elusive for the five-time champions but the withering opening spells of Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood were decisive against the Proteas in the three-wicket win in Kolkata, Thursday.

Along with captain Pat Cummins, the fire-and-ice duo of Starc and Hazlewood had previously been left in the shade by leg-spinner Adam Zampa and his 22 victims at the tournament.

However, Thursday, the quicks grabbed eight of the 10 wickets between them for a handy confidence boost before the ultimate test against India's peerless batting machine.

"It's probably not been the tournament I would have liked from the get-go," Starc told reporters. "But nice to step up in a big game."

Pace has never failed to be a factor in Australia's white-ball triumphs and proved key when Aaron Finch's squad won the nation's maiden T20 World Cup in the United Arab Emirates in 2021.

For all-rounder Glenn Maxwell, the glow in the Australian dressing room is akin to the squad's ebullience during the UAE tournament where they peaked at the right time. Australia's quicks will again be looking to make early in-roads against the hosts, who racked up 397/4 in their semifinal against New Zealand in Mumbai.

New Zealand's pacemen failed to deal with the heat brought by India captain Rohit Sharma and fellow opener Shubman Gill who paved the way for the Virat Kohli and Shreyas Iyer centuries.

"It's huge, and the bigger the game the more important it becomes," said Hazlewood of capturing early wickets. "So we know the blueprint now if we're bowling first, and hopefully go again Sunday."

Ahmedabad's pitch is likely to be a major talking point following the Mumbai semifinal where the hosts made a late change and served up a slow wicket. Australia beat England in Ahmedabad on a pitch which Hazlewood described as good "without being an absolute flat track".

He said he expected similar for the final but was confident Australia's quicks would be able to deal with any conditions.

The familiar foes India and Australia have faced off in some of the most engaging contests in recent times and a new chapter to their rivalry will be added when they contest for cricket's ultimate glory, Sunday. The familiar foes will conclude their campaign like they

started it, against each other, and none of the 130,000-odd seats at the Narendra Modi Stadium will be empty.

Favourites India comprehensively beat No.2-ranked Australia in their tournament opener and then strung together 10 wins in a row to storm into the final of their home World Cup with an unblemished record.

Australia, by contrast, began with two defeats before going on an eight-match winning streak. "We want to take on the best. They've been the best in the tournament so far," Starc said of India. "It's why we play the game."

Captain Rohit and his team's semifinal victory against New Zealand, considered their bogey side, has answered questions about India's fragility in knockouts. Rohit has led by example, with unbridled aggression at the top allowing others to play with more freedom. Virat Kohli, the tournament's leading scorer, has been the trusted anchor, while others have batted around the senior duo in India's familiar template.

"The top-five-six batters, whenever they've gotten an opportunity, they've made it really count," Rohit said after the semifinal. "All in all, the batting was superb, and that is the kind of template we want to bat with and move forward with."

### HOME ADVANTAGE

Their bowling, aided by the knowledge of home conditions, has been equally impressive. Jasprit Bumrah has stifled batters both with the new ball and in the death overs while Mohammed Shami has emerged as the tournament's leading wicket-taker despite warming the bench in India's first few matches.

The left-arm duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja has shared the spin duties with considerable success on their quest for a third 50-overs World Cup trophy.

Expectation in the cricket-mad country is particularly high since the last three editions of the tournament have been won by the host nation. Australia, however, are banking on their ability to lift themselves in big moments to gatecrash the Indian party and earn a sixth World Cup title.

## Stump-to-stump length reason for Shami's success



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, Nov 17:** Senior India pacer Mohammed Shami has said there is nothing extraordinary in his bowling, adding he just focuses on stump-to-stump length and putting the delivery in "a zone" to get wickets.

Shami has been India's go-to bowler in the World Cup, where he is currently the side's top wicket-taker, scalping 23 wickets in six matches at an economy of 5.01, including a four-for and three fifters. He grabbed 7/57 in the semifinal against New Zealand in Mumbai, Tuesday.

"I always look at what the situation is, how the pitch and the ball are behaving and if the ball is swinging or not," Shami told Star Sports. "And, if the ball is not swinging, I try and bowl stump to stump while trying to land it in a zone where the ball can catch an edge of the batters (when they) are driving."

Shami missed the initial four matches of the World Cup, with all-rounder Hardik Pandya being the preferred pacer in the team before an ankle injury ruled him out for the remainder of the competition. Since then, Shami has been phenomenal with his pace and seam, getting the ball to move in every condition.

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri also believes that Shami will have a significant role to play in the final against Australia here, Sunday.



## BCCI CURATORS MONITOR PREPARATIONS ICC consultant Atkinson to join preparations today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, Nov 17:** What will be ICC pitch consultant Andy Atkinson's future was a question floating around as the burly New Zealander was nowhere to be seen during pitch preparation 48 hours ahead of the World Cup final between India and Australia here. It has been learnt that Atkinson has arrived here Friday afternoon and he will join the preparations Saturday. "Andy hasn't gone back home. He has come with ICC delegation today afternoon and hence didn't come to the ground. He will be available tomorrow (Saturday) to check on the preparation of the track," an ICC source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Atkinson isn't exactly a favourite with the BCCI brass after he accused the host nation of changing track for the semifinal between India and New Zealand from a fresh to a used one.

However, the ICC later sent a clarification that there is no such rule of holding knock-out matches on a fresh track and Atkinson was apprised of the development in advance.

Friday, the two senior BCCI's chief of ground staff Ashish Bhowmick and his second in command Taposh Chatterjee, along with former India seamer and BCCI's GM (Domestic Cricket) Abbey Kuruvilla, closely monitored the pitch preparations for the mega final on Sunday.

It couldn't be confirmed if the track to be used for the final is a used one or a fresh surface. But the two senior curators and BCCI GM monitored the use of heavy roller on the designated 22-yard strip.

"If heavy roller is being used on a black soil strip then the idea is to create a slow batting track where you can get a big score but you possibly can't consistently hit through the line. 315 could be a defendable score as batting second will be difficult," a state association curator explained.

Indian skipper Rohit Sharma, along with first team regulars KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja, had an extensive net session. As has been the custom, Rohit and Dravid spent a considerable amount of time looking at the track and also had extensive discussions with Bhowmick and Chatterjee.

## Argentina, Brazil go down



HEATED ENCOUNTER: Lionel Messi involves in a fight with a Uruguay player during their match, Thursday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Buenos Aires, Nov 17:** Lionel Messi could not help Argentina extend their unbeaten streak since its World Cup title. Uruguay beat Argentina 2-0 at La Bombonera Stadium here Thursday in a World Cup qualifying match, their biggest victory so far under new coach Marcelo Bielsa. Argentina had-

n't lost a competitive match since its group-stage opener against Saudi Arabia during last year's World Cup in Qatar.

Brazil continued their so far poor campaign in qualifying with a 1-2 loss at Colombia, their second consecutive defeat in the round-robin competition. Striker Luiz Diaz scored twice on headers to lead an impressive turnaround in Barranquilla.

Argentina still lead the 10-team South American qualifying group with 12 points from five matches. Uruguay are second with 10 points. Colombia have nine and Venezuela eight. Brazil are in fifth position, with seven points. Ecuador, Paraguay and Chile have five points each. Bolivia has three and Peru one.

### URUGUAY IMPRESS

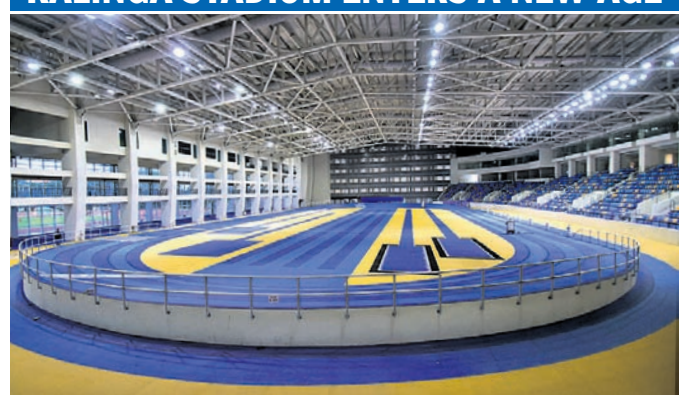
Uruguay were aggressive from the start against the World Cup champions. For the first time since Argentina's World Cup title, coach Lionel Scaloni looked jittery as his midfielders struggled to block Uruguay's wingers.

Their punishment came in the 42nd minute, when Matias Vina easily stole the ball from Nahuel Molina and gently made a low cross into the penalty box. Ronald Araujo smashed it into the back of the net.

Argentina came close to leveling the scoring on a free-kick by Messi and a close-range shot by Otamendi, which forced goalkeeper Sergio Rochet to make a key save near the end of the first half.

After the break, Uruguay kept the pressure on Argentina. Messi hit the bar with a free-kick in the 57th minute. Nunez scored in the 87th minute on a counter after the Uruguayan defence stopped Messi at the edge of its box.

## KALINGA STADIUM ENTERS A NEW AGE



(Clockwise): A snap of the Indoor Athletics Centre; a couple of dreampods for athletes' recovery purpose at Sports Science Centre (SSC); an SSC staff gives the visiting mediapersons a brief about the facilities, Friday. The soon to be inaugurated Indoor Athletics Centre in the iconic Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar is South Asia's largest indoor athletic stadium, having seating gallery for 2000 spectators. It features 200m athletics track along with few other sports disciplines as well as weight training centre and athletes' accommodation. The upcoming Sports Science Centre will be India's largest. With cutting edge equipment it will cater to the rehab and recovery of both sportspersons and para-sports persons across disciplines. The Kalinga Stadium also have an Indoor Aquatic Complex with 1000 sitting capacity, an ITF certified Tennis Centre featuring synthetic match court with a seating for 1500 spectators, a Gymnastics Centre with 250 seating capacity as well as a 10m Shooting range, Hockey Stadium, Weightlifting Hall, Swimming Pool Complex, Football-cum-athletics Stadium, Khelo India State Centre of Excellence and Sports Climbing Wall. Soon it will have a badminton complex.

PICS: BIKASH NAYAK

## INDIA EDGE PAST KUWAIT IN QUALIFIERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kuwait City, Nov 17:** Manvir Singh struck a late goal as India beat Kuwait 1-0 in their 2026 FIFA World Cup second round qualifiers match here, Thursday. Manvir scored with a left-footed shot in the 75th minute as he connected a Lallianzuala Chhangte cross to help India win the match at the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium here. Kuwait ended the match with



10 men as their player Faisal Alharbi was sent off after picking his second yellow card in the third minute of the added time for a high boot challenge on Chhangte.

India will play Asian champions Qatar next November 21 in Bhubaneswar. India are placed in Group A alongside Qatar, Kuwait and Afghanistan with the top two from the group progressing to the third round of the FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Las Vegas, Nov 17:** The Las Vegas Grand Prix had a bumpy opening when the first practice of the USD 500 million Formula One (F1) race was halted nine minutes into the session Thursday night because Carlos Sainz Jr ran over a water valve cover that badly damaged his Ferrari.

It caused the first practice to be aborted, a delay of two-and-a-half hours before second practice for track repairs, and all spectators

Most recently in 2019 at Baku, George Russell ran over a manhole cover in the first practice. In 2016, Nico Rosberg ran over a manhole cover at Monaco and the cover flew up and hit Jenson Button's car, causing extensive damage to Button's McLaren

were removed from viewing areas ahead of the 90-minute session that ended at 4 am local time — the deadline for F1 to return the roads to Las Vegas commuters.

The FIA said Sainz hit the concrete frame around the cover moments after cars took to the track in the hyped return to Las Vegas. After Sainz came to a

stop and was examining his damaged car, the governing body ordered all cars off track so it could inspect the entire circuit.

Multiple drainage covers needed to be sealed ahead of the second practice, which was originally scheduled for midnight but didn't begin until 2:30am Friday. Track organizers an hour earlier had told all fans to

leave "due to logistical considerations for our fans and our staff."

Ferrari boss Fred Vasseur raged after the abbreviated first practice was "just unacceptable". Ferrari changed the chassis during the lengthy break and Sainz was able to get on track for the extended 90-minute session. But, because of the repairs to the Ferrari, the FIA ruled Sainz will be given a 10-place grid penalty. Ferrari salvaged the day as Charles Leclerc and Sainz went 1-2 in the second practice session.