



FRANK TALK

Actress Saiyami Kher says she doesn't give much importance to social media validation

LEISURE P2



TRUCE EXTENDED

Israel and Hamas agree to extend their ceasefire in Gaza by another day

INTERNATIONAL P10



4TH T20I TODAY

All eyes will be on India's young bowling attack when they take on Australia in the fourth T20 International

SPORTS P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Not in the tray, put them on the chair. He loves to sit on them

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	66988.44 ↑ 86.53
NIFTY	20133.20 ↑ 36.60
DOLLAR	83.40 ↑ ₹0.05
EURO	90.91 ↓ ₹0.51
GOLD	₹62,534 ↓ ₹71
SILVER	₹75,990 ↑ ₹218

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	31.0°C	30.6°C
TEMP. MIN	19.0°C	19.0°C
Humidity	74%	83%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry weather very likely	



CLIMATE ACTION: COP28 President Sultan al-Jaber, left, and Director-General Ambassador Majid Al Suwaidi talk at the COP28 UN Climate Summit in Dubai, Thursday

₹1,140cr boost for healthcare

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 30: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday laid the foundation stone for 372 healthcare projects worth Rs 1,000 crore and inaugurated 103 healthcare projects built at a cost of Rs 140 crore.

Naveen also launched BSKY helpline - 1800120120104 - for the Odia people living outside the state. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said 5T initiatives have brought transformation in government hospitals across Odisha. "It has increased people's confidence on the government healthcare system," Patnaik said.

He also said that the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) has been a blessing for the people. "People are getting better healthcare services at no cost. More than one lakh patients are being benefitted every month. It is a reflection of our commitment to provide better healthcare to people," Patnaik pointed out.

The CM said, "Our aim is to make Odisha a role model in the field of healthcare. Today's projects will bring a big change in the field of health infrastructure in Odisha." He said Rs 12,000 crore has been spent on the development of state's health infrastructure in the last five years.

Health Minister Niranjan Pujari said there has been a significant change in Odisha's healthcare sector in the last two decades under the leadership of the CM.

'Matter of concern'

US linking Indian official to murder plot on American soil doesn't change India's stand on Canada's allegations over Nijjar killing: Govt

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 30: India Thursday described as a 'matter of concern' the US linking an Indian official to a man charged with conspiring to kill a Sikh separatist on American soil, and asserted that follow up action will be taken based on findings of a panel investigating the allegations.

India has already constituted a probe team to investigate the allegations relating to the foiled plot to kill Gurbhagat Singh Pannun, a Sikh extremist known to be an American and Canadian citizen. On Wednesday, US federal prosecutors charged Nikhil Gupta, 52, of working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Pannun. The US prosecutors informed a Manhattan court that authorities in the Czech Republic arrested and detained Gupta and he is currently awaiting extradition to the US.

"As regards the case against an individual that has been filed



in a US court, allegedly linking him to an Indian official, this is a matter of concern," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said at a media briefing. "We have said and let me reiterate that this is also contrary to government policy," he said. At the same time, Bagchi said this case does not change India's stand on Canada's allegations in connection with the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Washington's allegations relating to the unsuccessful plot came weeks after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau alleged that there was a 'potential' involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar in a

Vancouver suburb in June.

"The nexus between organised crime, trafficking, gunrunning and extremists at an international level is a serious issue for the law enforcement agencies to consider and it is precisely for that reason a high-level inquiry committee has been constituted and we will obviously be guided by its results," Bagchi said on charges levelled by US.

The MEA spokesperson said, "The US side shared some 'inputs' pertaining to nexus between organised criminals, gun runners and terrorists and that India takes such inputs seriously since they impinge on our national security interests as well and that relevant departments were examining the issue."

"We take such inputs seriously, and a high-level enquiry committee has been constituted to look into all the relevant aspects of the matter and necessary follow-up action will be taken based on the findings of the enquiry committee," he said.

STATE TO OFFER FREE NEET, JEE COACHING

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 30: The state government has decided to provide free online NEET and JEE coaching to Class XI and XII students of various higher secondary schools (HSSs) in Odisha. Higher Secondary Education Director Raghuram R Iyer wrote a letter to principals of all government and non-government aided Plus II colleges (HSSs) in this regard.

"It has been decided to provide supplementary online coaching to National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) and Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) aspirants pursuing their studies in government and non-government aided higher secondary schools for enhancement of their competitive ability," Iyer said.

The coaching will be provided in the virtual mode. Hence, the principals of higher secondary schools that do not have smart classrooms with interactive panels or smart TVs were asked to install the system. The director said that many of the higher secondary schools have received assistance for the development of smart classrooms under a scheme of the state government.

Edge for Cong in Ch'garh, T'gana

ADVANTAGE FOR BJP IN MP & RAJASTHAN, PREDICT POLLSTERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 30: Most exit polls Thursday predicted an edge for the Congress in Chhattisgarh and Telangana, while giving advantage to BJP in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

India Today-Axis My India, Today's Chanakya and India TV-CNX predicted a big victory for the BJP in MP. While most pollsters predicted an edge for BJP in Rajasthan, three exit polls in their upper limit forecast a Congress win. Pollsters also indicated that there was a possibility of a hung House in Mizoram. Elections to the five states took place between November 7 and 30 and counting of votes would take place December 3.

For Chhattisgarh, while ABP News-C Voter predicted 41-53 for Congress and 36-48 seats for BJP in the 90-member House, India Today-Axis My India forecast 40-50 for Congress and 36-46 for the BJP. India TV-CNX forecast 46-56 seats for Congress and 30-40 seats for BJP. News 24-Today's Chanakya predicted that the Congress would bag a clear majority with 57 seats (plus-minus 8) while BJP would get 33 seats

(plus-minus 8 seats). According to Jan Ki Baat, the BJP would get 34-45 and Congress would get 42-53. Dainik Bhaskar also predicted a win for the Congress, putting its tally at 46-55 as against BJP's 35-45.

For Telangana, while India TV-CNX forecast 63-79 seats for Congress, 31-47 for BRS, 2-4 for BJP and 5-7 for AIMIM, Jan Ki Baat forecast that Congress would get 48-64 seats, BRS 40-55, BJP 7-13 and AIMIM 4-7. Republic TV-Matrize predicted that in Telangana, Congress would get

EXIT POLLS
58-68 seats, BRS 46-56, BJP 4-9 and AIMIM 5-7. TV9 Bharatvarsh Polstrat stated Congress would get 49-59 seats, BRS would get 48-58, BJP 5-10 and AIMIM 6-8.

News 24-Today's Chanakya gave a clear victory to Congress by giving it 71 seats against 33 of the BRS and 7 of the BJP. In MP, while Dainik Bhaskar predicted 95-115 seats for BJP and 105-120 for Congress, India Today-Axis My India forecast that BJP will get 140 to 162 seats and Congress 68-90. India TV CNX gave a landslide to BJP,

pegging its seats at 140 to 159 and 70-89 to Congress. Today's Chanakya forecast that BJP would get 151 (+/- 12) and Congress 74 (+/- 12) seats.

While Jan Ki Baat exit poll predicted BJP would get 100-123 seats and Congress 102-125, Republic TV-Matrize forecast 118-130 seats for BJP and 97-107 for Congress. TV9 Bharatvarsh Polstrat said BJP would get 106-116 and Congress would get 111-121. Times Now-ETG gave 105-117 seats to BJP and 109-125 to Congress.

In Rajasthan, India Today-Axis My India forecast a tight race, predicting 86-106 seats for Congress, 80-100 for BJP and others 9-18. While Dainik Bhaskar gave 98-105 to BJP and 85-95 to Congress, Jan Ki Baat pollsters forecast BJP would get 100-122 and Congress 62-85. Today's Chanakya gave a simple majority to Congress, projecting it would get 101 seats as against the BJP's 89.

In Mizoram, while India TV-CNX said the MNF would get 14-18 seats, ZPM 12-16, Congress 8-10 and BJP 0-2 in the 40-member House, ABP News-C Voter said MNF would get 15-21, ZPM 12-18 and Congress 2-8.

SHORT TAKES

Utkal University gets NAAC A+ rating back

Bhubaneswar: Utkal University Thursday regained A+ rating from National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). The ranking was obtained after re-examination by the NAAC team. The premier university scored 3.26 cumulative grade point average (CGPA) in the assessment to secure A+ grade. Earlier, Utkal University was dropped from A+ grade to A in May this year as it scored 3.16 CGPA in the third cycle of the accreditation. It had secured A+ grade with 3.53 CGPA in 2016. Speaking to Orissa POST, university Vice-Chancellor Sabita Acharya said, "We had appealed to the NAAC for reevaluation after our rating dropped. As expected, they reevaluated it and we got our A+ rating back." NAAC has been set up to facilitate volunteering institutions to assess their performance. P3

Teacher detained over sexual harassment

Sambalpur: Police Thursday detained a teacher of an English medium school in Sambalpur city for allegedly sexually harassing a Class IX girl student. According to police, the teacher allegedly asked a few students, including the victim to come to a classroom. Later, he asked them, barring the victim and one of her friends, to go outside. The teacher then asked the victim's friend to fetch his water bottle. With only the victim in the classroom, the accused 'sexually harassed' the girl, police said. The victim's parents took up the matter with the principal, who informed police. A case has been registered under IPC sections and POCSO Act. The teacher has been detained and probe is on, Sambalpur Sadar SDPO PK Sahu said.

US SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER PRESIDENTS NIXON & FORD DIES AT 100

Henry Kissinger's hate-love relationship with India

AGENCIES

Washington, Nov 30: Henry Kissinger, the veteran American diplomat who died at the age of 100, was known for his disdain towards India's leadership in the 1970s and even had used racist and misogynist language for the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

On Wednesday, when the centurion died in his Connecticut home, he left behind a chequered legacy. From his first visit to India in October 1974 to the one in March 2012, Kissinger, termed as a statesman by many, had reconciled to India's rise and as many believed, had become a votary of stronger US-India ties.

Kissinger's ties with India started in the 1970s when he was

in the US administration both as the National Security Advisor and Secretary of State.

In September 2020, the New York Times carried an opinion piece based on the then newly-declassified trove of White House tapes that provided 'startling evidence of the bigotry' voiced by then President Richard Nixon and Kissinger, his national security adviser in the 1970s.

Replying to a question by Nixon, the piece described how Kissinger sweepingly explained, "They (Indians) are superb flatterers, Mr. President. They are masters at flattery. They are masters at subtle flattery. That's how they survived 600 years. They suck up — their great skill is to suck up to people in key positions."



Detailing such insidious exchanges between the Nixon-Kissinger duo based on the declassified tapes, Gary J. Bass, a professor of politics and international affairs, explained how the full content of these tapes re-

vealed how 'US policy toward South Asia under Mr. Nixon was influenced by his hatred of, and sexual repulsion toward, Indians.'

The transcripts of the declassified tapes of the conversation between Nixon, Kissinger, and the President's Chief of Staff in Washington November 5, 1971, showed that both Nixon and Kissinger repeatedly described Indira Gandhi as a b**ch.

Speaking about the issue in India in March 2012 at a media conclave, Kissinger defended his use of unparliamentary language while referring to PM Indira Gandhi, said: "I was under pressure and made those comments in the heat of the moment. People took those remarks out of context."

He also added that he had the highest regard for Indira Gandhi, it was reported then.

Historians indeed say that both Kissinger and Nixon did not have a healthy relationship with Indira Gandhi and they turned their attention to China. But before that, his first preference was India as was evident from the establishment of US India Business Council (USIBC) in the 1970s on his advice to the US Chambers of Commerce.

However, despite the not-so-healthy relationship with the then-Indian leadership, as early as 1972, Kissinger had advocated for India and Japan to be permanent members of the UN Security Council, archival diplomatic conversations available publicly show.

leisure



JENNIFER GARNER GETS INTO HOLIDAY SPIRIT

Actress Jennifer Garner is having a festive start to the holiday season. The actress, 51, was spotted wearing a sleeveless red mini red dress at the Los Angeles premiere of *Family Switch*.

HADID APOLOGISES FOR 'NOT FACT-CHECKING'

Gigi Hadid has apologised for 'not fact-checking' a post she shared on Instagram in which she accused Israel of being 'the only country in the world that keeps children as prisoners of war.'



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
The artist in you seeks expression today. Thus, you could decide to paint your house in attractive colours, or repair a piece of old furniture in modern style. You may become sentimental about a forgotten matchbox collection, and decide to replenish it. Ganesh is in full agreement with all such activities that give you fulfillment.

TAURUS
Ganesh predicts that you will work extremely hard to meet your targets today. The dividends may not be what you anticipated, but do not let that bog you down. There will be no cause for anxiety or trouble today, says Ganesh. Partnership matters may end up in a cat and mouse chase.

GEMINI
You have a pleasing personality. Today, you will leave quite an impression on others, especially members of the opposite sex. At work, your colleagues will need your expertise to help them through difficult tasks. Later in the evening, a long stroll with your sweetheart will end a rather remarkable day.

CANCER
A lot can happen over a cup of coffee, and today a lot will. Things will be moving quite swiftly today; a little too swiftly to your liking. You will get a lot of authority at the workplace, and you will use it to the point of abuse. Your prime focus, however, will be your family. Even if your mind is busy thinking about how to get under the skin of certain people, your heart will be at home.

LEO
You will indulge in some important discussions with your family members and clarify some matters. You need to approach issues without prejudices. Do not judge without having all the facts at your disposal. You will spend the evening with your loved one, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
You are bursting at the seams with the creativity bubbling within you. However, you will find yourself struggling more than usual in dealing with the challenges at work. There are some monetary benefits on the cards. Ganesh advises you to take good care of your health.

LIBRA
Some private possessions are close to your heart, and you may want to keep them that way, says Ganesh. Let your mind walk the hidden alleys of mysticism in the afternoon as you seek peace of mind. Also, do not discount a trip to a sacred place, says Ganesh.

SCORPIO
Health issues are on top of the list today. Spend more time working out those muscles than working, says Ganesh. Those in marketing and advertising shall have a golden day today. The correct dose of marketing mix will help reap maximum profits.

SAGITTARIUS
A day where your thoughts will be inclined towards God and divinity, says Ganesh. Don't ease those purse strings easily too. At work, rise to the occasion and take charge. Your superiors will give you a pat on the back. Romantic escapades will be marked by rude health — as if you mind!

CAPRICORN
In total control of yourself, you will have the tendency to dominate those around you. It's a trait that keeps resurfacing at intervals, making you feel all powerful, says Ganesh. Later in the day, you may even enrol yourself for a personality development course to hone your communication and professional skills. But it won't be sailing smooth all throughout. An unfortunate incident at the end of the day may take you off guard, so be careful of your moves, Ganesh advises.

AQUARIUS
Hurry, splash on some Giorgio or curl your tresses! The spotlight is on you today, and you don't want a drab work jacket to take away the shine. You remain brilliant, both on the personal and professional fronts. Your rivals will envy your easy charm, says Ganesh.

PISCES
Your emotions are likely to rule you today. Expenses, which will cause you to dip into your savings, are indicated. Evening should see you build up an amazing connection with a special someone, says Ganesh.

Fatima on her difficult times

Mumbai: In recent times, several actors have opened up about dealing with mental health issues.

Opening up on the subject, Fatima Sana Shaikh says why it is important to seek help when needed.

"I have gone in for therapy and that's why I am here one-and-a-half years later. It is important. I feel everybody should go in for therapy. It's not because you are emotionally weak, they (therapists) give you tools to understand your pattern. Therapy has helped me," Fatima shares.

From being overly self-critical to being pragmatic, Fatima says she has come a long way. "I was very judgmental about myself. I have not been kind to myself. I needed a lot of validation from the outside to feel that I was good as a person. I associated self-love with narcissism and was extremely

hard on myself," she confesses. It has taken the actress a while to change her thought process. So, is she kind to herself now? "I have to practice it. I am kinder to myself than I used to be. It's a pattern that you have to break. You keep going back to it, but you need to keep pushing," she replies.



New Delhi: Actress Saiyami Kher, who portrayed the paraplegic sports person in *Ghoormer*, said she doesn't give much importance to the social media validation, revealing her influences that have shaped her acting career.

I don't care about social media validation: Saiyami

Kashyap and R. Balki sir, they are like family. So the validation I look upto is of my directors, close friends and family, and my two acting coaches, who I always go to. So if they don't like what I do then it really hurts," said the *Choked* actress.

She further said: "I don't really look at social media so much. But of course I try to improve things when I read social media comments, and I am told certain things, I look at it, try to improve but it doesn't bother me too much."

Ghoormer is currently streaming on Zee5.

Jhol ranks 9th at Bangkok's Top Tables 2023 Award

What set the Indian restaurant apart is not only its exquisite dish but also the dynamic duo of executive chefs, Sanchit Sahu and Anirban, hailing from the culturally rich Odisha

Bangkok: In a celebration of culinary excellence, Jhol, the acclaimed Michelin-guide restaurant, has been ranked ninth at Bangkok's prestigious Top Tables 2023 award by BK Magazine, November.



India-born, New York-trained chef and worldwide restaurateur Hari Nayak's Jhol has become a beacon of Indian fine dining on the global stage. Regarded as one of the celebrated chefs and flag bearer of Indian cuisine globally, chef Hari has created Jhol as a contemporary coastal Indian restaurant in the heart of Sukhumvit, Bangkok.

What set Jhol apart is not only their exquisite dish but also the dynamic duo of executive chefs, Sanchit Sahu and Anirban, hailing from the culturally rich state of Odisha. Their culinary prowess has played a pivotal role in elevating Jhol to international acclaim.

Expressing gratitude, Sanchit said, "It's an honour to showcase the innovative approach to regional Indian cuisine on such a prestigious platform. This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team."

BK Magazine's Top Tables 2023 restaurant award, which ranks Bangkok's Top 100 restaurants for the calendar year, was voted on by a panel of journalists, authors, chefs, restaurant owners, and the staff at BK Magazine.

Dulhan Banami turns an instant hit

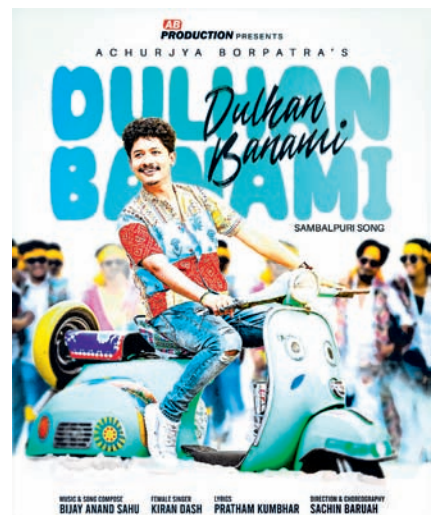
SEVERAL ARTISTES FROM ODISHA AND ASSAM HAVE COLLABORATED TO PRESENT THE MUSICAL VIDEO

Bhubaneswar: In a remarkable musical collaboration, artists from Odisha and Assam have joined hands to produce *Dulhan Banami*, a music video which has become an instant hit.

Composed by Bijay Anand Sahu, known for his Sambalpuri hits such as *Amar Gaan* and *Alta Makhi*, the song was filmed in Guwahati.

The soulful rendition of *Dulhan Banami* is brought to life by two celebrated singers: Assamese sensation Achurjya Borpatra and Kiran Dash from Odisha. The video also features Borpatra and Assamese actor and dancer Annanyya Kashyap. Pratham Kumbhar, who collaborated with Sahu earlier, has penned the lyrics.

Admiring Sahu's work, Borpatra said, "Everything for this song happened over a phone call, and I want to mention here that



whenever I talked to Bijay, there was never any strange feeling. We felt like we had known each other for years."

Speaking about the cultural connection between Assam's indigenous language, Jhumoor, and the Sambalpuri style, he added, "Few people here at first thought that it was a Jhumoor song. No matter what language it is, music itself is like a language that connects everyone across all barriers. This is why the song is now spreading love worldwide."

Overwhelmed by the response, Sahu said, "We got in touch through Instagram for this project. Achurjya is a great singer, and he has done amazing work on this project. I guided him with the accurate pronunciation and every other detail over the phone, as they had little time before they released the song."

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

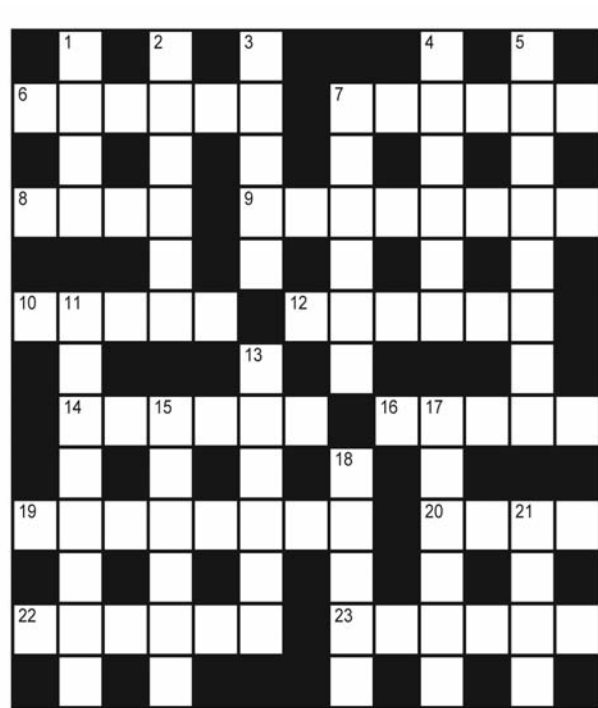


BREVITY



FUN post

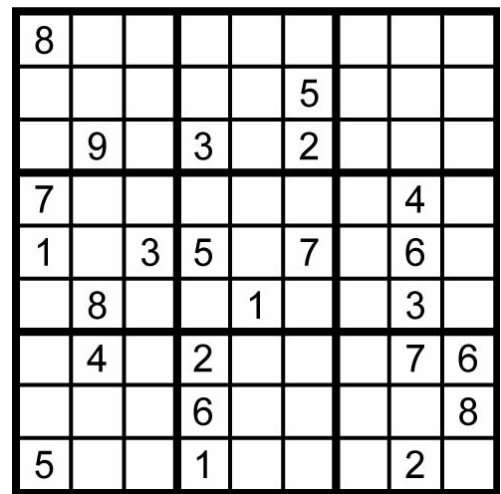
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 6 Waylay
 - 7 Fear
 - 8 Leg part
 - 9 Antithesis of a cad (5,3)
 - 10 Cast
 - 12 Old maid flower
 - 14 Mainstay
 - 16 Quartz variety
 - 19 Ribbonlike parasite
 - 20 Duds
 - 22 Flourish
 - 23 Fancy neckwear
- Down**
- 1 Eastern nurse
 - 2 Subtlety
 - 3 Not too brainy
 - 4 Relative
 - 5 Stealth bomber, e.g.
 - 7 Unruffled
 - 11 Migraine
 - 13 Humorous
 - 15 Man of the cloth
 - 17 Rich and elaborate cake
 - 18 Impact sound
 - 21 Seize suddenly

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.

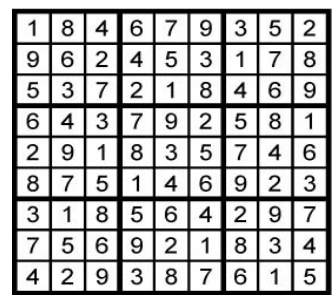


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



COURTESY CALL: Members of several outfits greet 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman VK Pandian, who joined BJD recently, at Navin Niwas in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

WORK OF ART

An artist draws a 'Boita' (ancient merchant vessel used by Odisha traders) at a Mission Shakti stall put up at Baliyatra Lower Ground in Cuttack, Thursday



NMA inspects renovation of 4 mutts

AGENCIES

Puri, Nov 30: A special team of National Monuments Authority (NMA) Thursday inspected the ongoing renovation of four mutts located within 100 metres of the Srimandir boundary wall here.

Earlier, NMA had issued no objection certificates (NOCs) to Odisha government for redevelopment of 15 mutts around the 12th century shrine that were demolished as part of the Shree Jagannath Parikrama (corridor) project.

The team comprising Odisha's culture department director, Puri sub-collector, chief of Puri circle Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and chief of state Archaeological circle inspected the works at Badachhata mutt, Chhauni mutt, Uttaraparswa mutt and Kakudikhali mutt.

Culture department director Dilip Routrai said according to



NMA guidelines, only the four mutts located within the prohibited area could be renovated and repaired.

Meanwhile, a 15-member ASI team completed the laser scanning of the outer walls of Ratnabhandar, officials said. The team comprising architects, expert engineers and scientific photographers conducted the laser scanning Tuesday and Wednesday, they said, adding it was done to detect suspected cracks on the

re-portedly seeping inside. "The team scanned a total of 45 points in the northern side and upper part of Ratnabhandar along with a few other areas," ASI superintending archeologist DB Garnaik told reporters after meeting senior officials of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA).

portedly seeping inside.

"The team scanned a total of 45 points in the northern side and upper part of Ratnabhandar along with a few other areas," ASI superintending archeologist DB Garnaik told reporters after meeting senior officials of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA).

"3D images were captured by our technicians. These will be converted to another format with the help of a software which will help us understand the physical condition of the wall," he said.

He added if they find any cracks on the outer walls of the temple treasury, the ASI will seek SJTA's permission to scan the inner walls.

Earlier, the SJTA had allowed the ASI to conduct laser scanning of the outer wall of Ratna Bhandar to detect suspected cracks through which water is reportedly seeping inside.

Utkal reclaims A+ rating

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Nov 30: Utkal University Thursday regained A+ rating from National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). The ranking was obtained after re-examination by the NAAC team.

The university scored 3.26 cumulative grade point average (CGPA) in the assessment to secure A+ grade.

Earlier, Utkal University was dropped from A+ to A in May this year as it scored 3.16 CGPA in the 3rd cycle of accreditation.

It had secured A+ grade with 3.53 CGPA in 2016.

Speaking to Orissa POST, university Vice-Chancellor Sabita Acharya said, "We had appealed to the NAAC for reevaluation after our rating dropped. As expected, they reevaluated it and we got our A+ rating back."

NAAC has been set up to facilitate volunteering institutions to assess their performance vis-a-vis set parameters and a process that provides space for participation of the institution.

NAAC uses several indicators as its criteria to assess the grade of higher educational institutions. They are: Curricular Aspects, Teaching-learning & Evaluation, Research, Innovations & Extension, Infrastructure & Learning Resources, Student Support & Progression, Governance, Leadership & Management, Institutional



Utkal University was dropped from A+ to A in May this year as it scored 3.16 CGPA in the 3rd cycle of accreditation

Values & Best Practices.

Meanwhile, Governor Raghuraj Das Thursday called upon the VCs and officials to strive for making the education standard of the universities competitive with international standard.

During a high-level meeting with the VCs, the Governor, who is the Chancellor of universities, stressed enhancement of educational atmosphere on the

campuses, improvement of education standard and increase in staff strength. He also called for successful implementation of National Education Policy (NEP) 2023.

Speaking to media after the meeting, Utkal University VC said the Governor emphasised on research and innovation in higher education institutions. Discussions were also held on more value-added courses on cultures and traditions of Odisha.

Fakir Mohan University Vice-Chancellor Santosh Kumar Tripathy said, "The Chancellor advised us to conduct day-to-day transactions in the universities through e-Office and stressed on timely conduct of examinations and publication of results."

PM interacts with farmer from Rayagada

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Nov 30: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday interacted with a farmer from Odisha who is a beneficiary of Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra via videoconferencing and asked him to share how his life changed after getting the benefits of various government schemes.

Modi greeted Purna Chandra Benia, a farmer from Rayagada district, with 'Jai Jaganath'. He asked Benia about the schemes he has been availing the benefits of. The beneficiary said that he has been taking benefits under schemes like Ujjwala and PM KISAN. He recounted how his life changed with Ujjwala scheme. He also said that he



doesn't have to step out to collect firewood anymore and how he has got relief from smoke.

He told the Prime Minister that now he feels confident to dream of a bright future for his children. Modi asked him to make inquiries from the officers accompanying the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra about what further schemes are available for his benefit.

The Prime Minister also launched Pradhan Mantri Mahila Kisan Drone Kendra. During the program, he dedicated the landmark 10,000th Jan Aushadi Kendra at AIIMS, Deoghar. Modi also launched the program to increase the number of Jan Aushadi Kendras in the country from 10,000 to 25,000.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Honey badger rescued near Puri

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sakhigopal, Nov 30: A honey badger, also known as ratel, was rescued from Bhandaridanda village under Dashbidiyadharpur panchayat of Satyabadi block in Puri district, Thursday.

Sources said Rangelata Baral of the village had gone to relieve herself in the backyard of her residence around 4am when the wild animal attacked her. Although Rangelata ran into a paddy field to save her, the relentless honey badger (called Gada Bhalu in Odisha) followed and pounced on her again.



Hearing woman's screams, some of the villagers rushed to her rescue. They managed to capture the animal. Afterwards, they kept the animal in a nearby school and in-

The honey badger (Mellivora capensis), also known as ratel, is a mammal widely distributed in Africa, Southwest Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. Because of its wide range and occurrence in a variety of habitats, it is listed as 'Least Concern' on the IUCN Red List. It is the only living species in the genus Mellivora and in the mustelid subfamily Mellivorinae. Despite its name, the honey badger does not closely resemble other badger species; instead, it bears more anatomical similarities to weasels. It is primarily a carnivorous species and has few natural predators because of its thick skin, strength and ferocious defensive abilities.

formed the Forest department officials who reached the spot around 10am. The wild animal was taken to Puri after a routine health check-up at Satyabadi veterinary centre.

People in large numbers thronged Bhandaridanda to get glimpse of the honey badger after news of its capture spread like wildfire in the locality.

JE flees spotting Vig team, nabbed later

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 30: A junior engineer of state Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWS&S) department fled when the State Vigilance officials arrived at his residence early Thursday following allegations of accumulation of assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

"When the team knocked on the door of his residence in the morning at Jagamara, Bhubaneswar, Sunil Kumar Padhy, the junior engineer went to the terrace of his building and jumped onto the adjacent building and escaped," said Vigilance sources.

He was reportedly nabbed from a neighbour's house after around seven hours.

Meanwhile, Padhy denied the allegations of fleeing away from his house.

He said, "I did not flee and am fully ready to cooperate with the Vigilance officials."

Teams of Vigilance sleuths carried out raids at five places related to Padhy in Bhubaneswar and Ganjam district Thursday.

Cyclone may form around Dec 3: IMD

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 30: Though the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Thursday issued a forecast stating that a cyclonic storm is likely to form over the southwest Bay of Bengal around December 3, it did not indicate on its possible impact on Odisha.

The IMD said the impact of the possible cyclone could be assessed only after formation of a depression in the sea Friday. "The path of the possible cyclone and other parameters could be estimated only after formation of the depression. Therefore, we have not said anything on the impact on Odisha or any other place in the coast," IMD scientist Umashankar Dash said.

Das also made it clear that there was no warning for Odisha coast for next four days. There is also no warning for fishermen for Odisha coast, he said.

Meanwhile, the IMD in a special bulletin said Wednesday's well-marked low-pressure area over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining south Andaman Sea moved west-northwestwards and lay over northeast Bay of Bengal. It is likely to move west-northwestwards and intensify into a depression over southeast Bay of Bengal during the next 24 hours, the national weather agency said.

Zero Fatality Week begins in state today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 30: With road accidents and the resultant fatalities witnessing year on increase, the state government will be observing the Zero Fatality Week from December 1 to 7 with a view to sensitising people about road safety and officials about the required preventive measures to curb mishaps.

A preparatory meeting in this regard was held at Lok Seva Bhawan Wednesday where Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena directed Collectors in their respective districts to achieve better results than the previous time. He also asked the Collectors to get all government offices and employees involved and work out activity plan to register zero fatalities during the week. RTOs have also been given similar instructions.

The Collectors have also been asked to rope in school students, NGOs, civil societies and SHGs in the campaign, while BDOs have been asked to conduct meeting at GPs and Panchayat Samiti levels to get participation of PRI members.

SHG members who have received scooters under 'Mission Shakti Scooter Yojana', and are learners, will be sensitised about safe riding which will help avoid

accidents.

The Zero Fatality Week is being observed by the Commerce and Transport department in association with stakeholders like Home (Police) department, Road Owning Agencies, H&FW, Education and H&UD department.

During the preparatory meeting, C&T department principal secretary Usha Padhee presented details about road accident scenario in Odisha. She said 8,939 road accidents, 4,178 fatalities and 7,898 injuries occurred during January to September this year.

While accidents witnessed 2.84 per cent increase, fatalities saw 4 per cent rise in 2023 (Jan to Sept) as compared to the figures in 2022 in the corresponding period. However, the figures were less as compared to the scenario in the two years prior to 2022.

According to data, during the Zero Fatality Week observed in April-2023, there was 33 per cent decrease in accidents and 14.6 fall in fatalities as compared to the period in 2022. Boudh, Rayagada, Subarnapur, Bhadrak, Malkangiri, Nayagarh and Sambalpur districts were the top performing districts that observed 100 per cent reduction in fatalities during that period.

HIV cases drop, fears of under-reporting galore

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, Nov 30: Today is the World Aids Day. And this year's theme, 'Let Communities Lead' highlights the contributions made by NGO workers, volunteers and support groups who have been leading a relentless fight against the deadly disease that created havoc across the globe few decades back.

According to the 2022 National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) report, Odisha, with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) prevalence rate of 0.14 per cent has made significant strides in the battle against the disease. This is lower than the national average of 0.21 per cent.

Speaking on the decline in the occurrences of the disease, social activist Namrata Chadha said, "In the early days, AIDS was misinterpreted as a foreign virus, deliberately let loose by western

country agents to afflict Indians. However, the collective effort of Indian doctors, researchers and administration has ensured effective control over the transmission of AIDS."

Additionally, she said, "Society must embrace HIV patients and provide additional care in form of empathy to them. Any discriminatory treatment towards the victims only aggravates the root cause behind the spread of the disease."

Though the NACO report rates Odisha low in AIDS prevalence index, it calls the state's performance to curb new HIV infections 'dismal', plummeting to the bottom ranks."

Professor, Community Medicine at KIIMS Hospital, Sonali Kar said, even though HIV patients in hospitals have been gradually decreasing, the disease is still a 'silent killer'.



A street show on AIDS awareness by voluntary organisation Vande Mataram in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

reporting of the disease, she said, "Being a conservative society, we have a habit of keeping things to ourselves. However, when things start taking a toll on sex-life, we scamper for a cure."

Terming AIDS a 'lifestyle disease', Kar said symptoms such as rapid weight loss, tiredness, constant ache and lowered immunity are the initial symptoms of the disease.

She said increased surveillance by hospitals to test blood samples of pregnant mothers and TB patients will bring down transmission of AIDS cases.

Throwing light on public misconceptions about AIDS, additional professor of community medicine at AIIMS Bhubaneswar, Arvind Singh said, the disease is not communicable that spreads by touch or contact. Repeated use of syringe needles for blood transfusion, lack of adherence to contraception usage methods and engaging in relationship with multiple partners builds the possibilities of AIDS transmission, he said.

Meanwhile, the AIIMS Bhubaneswar will be organising an AIDS awareness program today to educate people about the steps to be taken to keep the disease at bay. Voluntary blood sample testing, blood donation camp and distribution of contraceptives will mark the programme.

Patnaik launches bus service in Nabarangpur

In the first phase of LAccMI, 44 buses will connect all panchayats of the tribal-dominated district with their respective blocks



Minister said. In the first phase, 44 buses will connect all 44 panchayats with the 10 blocks in the district.

The Chief Minister said, "The Laxmi Bus Yojana will connect everyone with development. It will transform our transit and transportation system. It will connect one village to another. People's social relations will be strengthened. The bus will come near your house and your children can now go to school and college with ease. The scheme will connect farmers to their markets. Hospitalisation of patients will be facilitated. Laxmi buses will be your charioteer in various works by providing facilities in the field of transit."

The buses are set to cover an aggregate distance exceeding 10,800 kilometres daily, thereby enhancing transportation accessibility and last-mile connectivity for the populace. The operation will be supported by 66 drivers and 111 conductors, all of whom have undergone comprehensive training to ensure efficient and safe service delivery.

Patnaik said he has accorded special attention to Nabarangpur district and now a lot of work is going on for infrastructure development in the districts.



REGULAR EMPLOYMENT: Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs and Jal Shakti Bisheshwar Tudu hands over appointment letter to a new recruit in Rozgar Mela organised at Rail Auditorium in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

PRIVATE BUS OWNERS' BODY WITHDRAWS STRIKE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Nov 30: The All Odisha Private Bus Owners' Association has withdrawn its proposed indefinite strike from December 1 after getting assurance from the state government regarding its demands.

The bus owners had called for a statewide 'chaka bandh' (cease work) agitation over various de-

mands, and in protest against routes of government buses plying under the Location-Accessible Multimodal Initiative (LAccMI) scheme.

In this regard, a meeting was held between representatives of the association and Transport Minister Tukuni Sahu here Wednesday.

After the meeting, the association decided to completely

withdraw the strike, its general secretary Debendra Sahu.

Speaking to reporters, the Minister said the state government is committed to providing transportation facilities to the people at their doorsteps through the LAccMI scheme and the private bus owners don't have any issue with the service.

However, the bus owners have certain concerns, she said.

"The association discussed how they can run their buses on the routes they are operating now, most importantly from the blocks to the district headquarters. They have been asked to submit a written memorandum on the issue, following which their demands will be discussed with Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and steps will be taken accordingly," the Minister said.

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 30: Further extending its affordable bus service to remote areas, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday launched the LAccMI scheme in tribal-dominated Nabarangpur district.

Launching the programme through video conferencing from Bhubaneswar, Patnaik said LAccMI will bring happiness and joy to every household in the district. It will also transform our rural transport system, he added.

The LAccMI (Location Accessible Multi-modal Initiative) scheme was first launched in Malkangiri district in October. Noting that communication

is the engine of development, Patnaik said, "The service will connect children to schools and colleges, farmers to markets and also will help to take patients to hospitals." He said women, students and persons with disabilities will pay Rs 5 bus fare for travelling from their villages to block headquarters.

The Chief Minister said all his government's schemes like LAccMI, Ama Bank and others were launched keeping in view the demands and requirements of people.

"Your village has now been included in the LAccMI Yojana transit and transport system. This will strengthen the social relations in the rural areas as well as the economy," the Chief

RSP to get 1K oxygen plant

Bhubaneswar: In a significant development, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), a flagship unit of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), has forged a pioneering contract for the installation of a state-of-the-art 1,000 Tonnes Per Day (TPD) oxygen plant. The comprehensive contract was signed with M/S Linde India Limited Wednesday in presence of RSP Director In-Charge Atanu Bhowmick.

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AFFIDAVIT

By the virtue of an affidavit No-68AA 649800 Dated 28.11.2023 before the Notary Public, Bhubaneswar, I Mama Sahoo, D/o- Sukanta Sahoo, At- Budhapada, PO- Anakhia, PS- Biridi, Dist- Jagatsinghpur, Odisha- 754102 have changed my name from Mama Sahoo to Suprava Sahoo. Henceforth, I shall be known as Suprava Sahoo for all future purposes.

By the virtue of an affidavit No.68AA 649800, Dated 28.11.2023 before the Notary Public, Bhubaneswar, I, Mama Sahoo, D/o- Sukanta Sahoo, At-Budhapada, PO- Anakhia, PS-Biridi, Dist- Jagatsinghpur, Odisha- 754102 have changed my name from Mama Sahoo to Suprava Sahoo. Henceforth I shall be known as Suprava Sahoo for all future purposes.

I, Laxmikanta Mahapatra aged about 50 yrs. Late Gokulananda Beura, At/PO/PS-Begunia, District-Khordha, Odisha, Pin-752062 Aadhaar No.xxxx xxxx 1651 declare by this affidavit No.3038, dated on 30.11.23, that now onwards I shall be known as Laxmikanta Mahapatra for all purposes.

Mo College approves projects for 10 colleges

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Nov 30: Mo College Abhijan Parichalana Sangathan (MCAPS) scrutiny committee recently added ten colleges to its list of colleges and universities earmarked for infrastructure and academic development. The committee approved a grant of RS 68,37,948 towards various projects worth Rs 1,04,31,904 at these ten institutions.

The colleges include: Shyam Sundar Sanskrit College of Balasore, Jagannath Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya of Bhadrak, Dharmasala Mahavidyalaya of Jajpur, Janda Anchalika Mahavidyalaya of Mayurbhanj, Dhadhibaman Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya of Nayagarh, Nimapara Autonomous College of Puri, Siddhartha Degree College of Subarnapur, Kuchinda College of Sambalpur, SVM Autonomous College of Jagatsinghpur and BR Science

Degree College of Kendrapara.

"Mo College Abhijan Parichalana Sangathan (MCAPS) is a platform dedicated to development of students from over 800 universities and colleges of the state. Through this approved matching grant, all the 10 colleges will restructure their infrastructure by establishing different sports courts, constructing open stages for cultural activities, taking steps towards automation of libraries, constructions of gates and two wheeler stands," informed an official.

The colleges will also upgrade their classrooms with electronic equipments, procurement of furniture and study equipments, air conditioners and books.

Mo College chairperson Akash Dasnayak, Aravind Agrawal, commissioner-cum-secretary and vice chairperson of MCAPS, along with Amiya Kumar Rout, CEO of MCAPS and Anita Sahoo, finance officer of MCAPS were present during the meeting.

OMBADC nod to projects worth over ₹18K crore

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 30: The Board of Directors of Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC) has approved 60 projects under different sectors amounting to more than Rs 18,000 crore from the total collection of Rs 20,700 crore till October 2023.

The 18 line departments have successfully utilised 72 per cent of the released amount, which stands at Rs 10,868 crore.

This was disclosed at the 27th Board of Directors Meeting of Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC), held on Thursday under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary and Chairman OMBADC Pradeep Kumar Jena.

Official sources said the Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Department, the School & Mass Education, Housing & Urban Development, Rural Development, Skill Development & Technical Education, and Farmers & Animal Resources Development have utilized more than 60 per cent of the funds.

ORMAS training programme to make youths future ready

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Nov 30: To bring employment opportunities to unemployed youths of the mineral-rich districts of the state, the Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS), under Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water department, launched a placement-linked skill development and training programme Thursday in collaboration with the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC).

The programme was virtually inaugurated in Jajpur, Keonjhar, Rayagada, Sundargarh, and Koraput to provide training to the unemployed youth of these 5 districts under various trades in private companies across the country.

Joining the launch event as the chief guest, Steel and Mines department additional chief secretary DK Singh said, "This is just the beginning of such placement-linked skill development and training programmes. In future, many more trades will be incorporated to train the unemployed youth in the mining



districts of the state which will not only enhance their skills but also help them become self-reliant."

Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water department principal secretary Sushil Kumar Lohani attended the virtual inauguration program and interacted with the newly joined trainees. He expressed his happiness that the training started in mining areas will be expedited to other areas of the state.

"In the 1st phase, training will be imparted in two trades: sewing machine operator and retail sales associate, apart from these core trades the residential programmes will also include soft skills like computer, general knowledge, language proficiency skills and fitness," informed an official.

Patnaik creates AIDS awareness sand art

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Nov 30: Renowned sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik has created a sand art installation on the occasion of World AIDS Day with the message 'Keep the Promise', at the beach, here.

Patnaik has used steel bowls to create the 30 ft-long ribbon in the sand sculpture. Students of his sand art institute helped him in creating the structure. He has used about 5 tons of sand in this sculpture which took about 4 hours to make.

Every year on the World AIDS day, Patnaik creates sand sculpture to make people aware of HIV/AIDS.

So far, the Padma Shri awarded artist has participated in more than 65 International sand sculpture championships and festivals around the world and won many prizes.



Outdoor air pollution kills 2.18mn Indians annually: Study

Outdoor air pollution from all sources accounts for 2.18 million deaths per year in India, second only to China, according to a modelling study published in The BMJ.

The research found that air pollution from using fossil fuels in industry, power generation, and transportation accounts for 5.1 million extra deaths a year worldwide.

This equates to 61 per cent of a total estimated 8.3 million deaths worldwide due to ambient (outdoor) air pollution from all sources in 2019, which could potentially be avoided by replacing fossil fuels with clean, renewable energy, the researchers said.

These new estimates of fossil fuel-related deaths are larger than most previously reported values suggesting that phasing

out fossil fuels might have a greater impact on attributable mortality than previously thought, they said.

The team, including researchers from Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, Germany, used a new model to estimate all cause and cause-specific deaths due to fossil fuel-related air pollution and to assess potential health benefits from policies that replace fossil fuels with clean, renewable energy sources.

They assessed excess deaths - the number of deaths above that expected during a given time period - using data from the Global Burden of Disease 2019 study, NASA satellite-based fine particulate matter and population data, and atmospheric chemistry, aerosol, and relative risk modeling for 2019, in four scenarios.



The first scenario assumes that all fossil fuel-related emission sources are phased out. The

second and third scenarios assume that 25 per cent and 50 per cent of exposure reductions towards the fossil phase-out are

realized.

The fourth scenario removes all human-induced (anthropogenic) sources of air pollution, leaving only natural sources such as desert dust and natural wildfires.

The results show that in 2019, 8.3 million deaths worldwide were attributable to fine particles (PM2.5) and ozone (O3) in ambient air, of which 61 per cent (5.1 million) were linked to fossil fuels.

This corresponds to 82 per cent of the maximum number of air pollution deaths that could be averted by controlling all anthropogenic emissions, according to the researchers.

Attributable deaths to all sources of ambient air pollution were highest across South and East Asia, particularly in

China with 2.44 million per year, followed by India with 2.18 million per year, they said.

The researchers found that most (52 per cent) of deaths were related to common conditions such as ischemic heart disease (30 per cent), stroke (16 per cent), chronic obstructive lung disease (16 per cent) and diabetes (6 per cent).

About 20 per cent were undefined but are likely to be partly linked to high blood pressure and neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, they said.

Phasing out fossil fuels would result in the largest absolute reductions in attributable deaths in South, South East and East Asia, amounting to about 3.85 million annually, the researchers said.

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Tribals write a strawberry story on Niyamgiri foothill

The primitive tribals, known for fiercely protecting their culture and sustaining themselves with the resources from the Niyamgiri forests, have turned a new leaf taking up horticulture



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, Nov 30: Dongria Kondhs, one of the primitive tribes living under the Niyamgiri hills in this district of Odisha, are once again in the news for good reasons. Members of the tribe are being talked about for undertaking strawberry cultivation on the foothills of Niyamgiri, their abode, which means everything to them. The primitive tribals, known for fiercely protecting their culture and sustaining themselves with the resources from the Niyamgiri forests, have turned a new leaf and are practicing horticulture apart from shifting cultivation. In recent past, the indigenous tribals had reaped success through the cultivation of a variety of fruits and spices like banana, pineapple, turmeric, ginger, arrowroot,

jackfruits, mango, flower broom and orange. However, a Dongria farmer Lakunu Yakeshika, a native of Kurli village under Bissam Cuttack block has carved a niche for himself by cultivating strawberry for the first time on the foothills of Niyamgiri, a feat that was unthinkable in the past. He has achieved this feat with the help of Dongria Kondh Development Agency (DKDA). The Odisha PVTG Empowerment and Livelihoods Improvement Programme (OPELIP) and Chatikana Kondh Development Agency have also provided their support for strawberry cultivation, Yakeshika said. Reports said that the Dongria farmers assisted by the DKDA undertook a field visit to Nuapada district to gain a firsthand experience on strawberry cultivation undertaken by the tribal

farmers of Chukatia and Bhunjia tribes. They gained rich experience from the field visit and once they came back the DKDA authorities decided to undertake strawberry farming on Niyamgiri foothills. Lakunu Yakeshika has cultivated strawberries on one acre of land in Kurli village on the foothills of Niyamgiri. He has planted over 20,000 saplings and nursed them with all sincerity and love. The plants will start giving fruits 45 days after plantation and will bear fruits for two months. Lakunu is elated over the success and hopes he will reap at least 60 quintal strawberry. The harvest will help him earn ₹10 to 12 lakh. He has spent around ₹5 lakh towards buying the saplings, fertilizers, arranging sprinkle irrigation facility and towards engagement of labourers. He will expand his cultivation to more land if he gets success. When contacted, Sudarshan Padhi, project manager of OPELIP and DKDA said that the cold climate of Rayagada district is conducive for strawberry cultivation. They aim at including more Dongria Kondh tribals if the experimental farming of strawberry proves successful. Moreover, the district horticulture department has also helped them in providing drip irrigation facilities for the cultivation, he added.



HONING SKILLS: Girls perform Sambalpuri dance as part of Integrated Youth Development Programme under the aegis of Nua 'O' Yuva Odisha, Nabin Odisha at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose (Government) College in Sambalpur, Thursday

'NIT needs to create wealth creators'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Nov 30: Keeping in mind the increasing number of students at NIT Rourkela, a host of infrastructure developmental projects were inaugurated Thursday by Union Minister of Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan at the premier institute here. Besides, a new Kendriya Vidyalaya was also inaugurated inside the campus for the community children. Speaking on the occasion, the minister exhorted the students and faculty of the institute to work for the betterment of the country and to create a new breed of technocrats "who would rather be entrepreneurs than job seekers". He said, "NIT Rourkela should ensure to create more wealth creators as this will take the country forward. And the dream of becoming a developed nation by 2047 will be easy to realise." "NIT Rourkela has a good environment to nurture wealth creators as it has created an atmosphere for start-ups, which is very much encouraging," Pradhan added. He also lauded the institute for its achievements and urged that in the coming



days, it would touch newer heights. Finally, he said NIT Rourkela has got the maximum of central aid to the tune of ₹250 crore and this will help the institute to achieve more excellence at all levels. Sundargarh MP Jual Oram, who was present on the occasion, said, "Studying in NIT Rourkela is a matter of prestige. During my student days, I appeared for the entrance but could not qualify and later I got a diploma." Speaking about his political journey, he said, "I started as a losing candidate but today I have won five times. I promise that in my capacity as the MP, I will do whatever little possible for this prestigious institute." Earlier, NIT R Director Professor Uma Maheswari informed that the institute was moving in the desired track and would scale newer heights in the future. "All the faculty and students are very emotional about the institute and their dedication is bringing good results." He fur-

ther added, "Today, we are third among all the NITs and 16th among all the technical institutes in the country. Our next target is to break into the top 10." The minister, apart from inaugurating the Kendriya Vidyalaya, laid foundation stone for six more projects including 1,000-bed boys' hostels, three 500-bed separate girls' hostels, one 1.5 MLD sewage treatment plant and a faculty residential complex with 72 flats. MCL has financed ₹42.69 crore for one of the girls' hostels under its CSR activity. NIT Rourkela is also extensively utilising the support of HEFA. Under the HEFA (Higher Education Financing Agency) grant for construction of the hostels. Under the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) scheme fund provided by the Ministry of Education, the institute is constructing another 500-bed girls' hostel. Also present on the occasion were MLAs of Biramitrapur and Talsara along with MCL CMD Keshav Rao.

RITES roped in to develop 3 airports

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Nov 30: The state government has appointed Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES) as the consultant for three airports in the state. The confirmation has been officially sent to RITES November 15 and it has been engaged as the consultant for developing Rourkela, Jeypore and Amarda Road airports. The upgradation will be to 3C for scheduled flight operations. RITES has been asked to sub-



mit a detailed project report (DPR) by accepting the proposal presented by the agency. RITES has quoted ₹1 crore and 10 lakh for each airport plus GST. Besides, the agency has been asked to submit the draft of the MoU for the development of the

airports to the 3C category. RITES sources said the DPR will be submitted soon. At present, Rourkela Airport is running with ATR 72. It is registering 90 per cent occupancy. The Airport Authority of India (AAI) is trying for visual flight rule (VFR 5000mtr visibility) for Rourkela Airport. But, it is unfortunate that flights are unable to land here due to lack of ILS on more than 30 per cent days in a month. Besides, the flight to Kolkata is not getting regularised due to the ILS factor.

Youth sentenced to life for killing grandmother



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar/Ghashipura, Nov 30: A local court here in Keonjhar district handed down life imprisonment to a youth after convicting him for the murder of his grandmother over money. The convict was identified as Siddhant Naik alias Muna, son of Balakrushna Naik from Gohira village under Ghashipura police limits in Keonjhar district. Additional District and Sessions Judge Prajyoti Rout also slapped a penalty of ₹10,000 on him, apart from

the punishment. In default, the convict has to undergo an additional year of imprisonment, government advocate Aswini Kumar Mallick said. The judge passed the order after examining the statements recorded by 17 witnesses and the police charge-sheet, the government advocate said. According to the case diary, Siddhant demanded money from his grandmother Dukhi Naik, 55, to eat food outside October 17, 2020, morning. He was aggrieved after the woman refused to oblige. Enraged, he picked up a large stone and hit the woman on the head. Bleeding profusely, the woman collapsed on the spot. The convict's grandfather Kulamani Naik rescued his wife and rushed her in an ambulance to Anandapur sub-divisional hospital. However, she succumbed to her injuries during treatment. Later, police registered a case after Kulamani lodged a complaint at Ghashipura police station. Police arrested Siddhanta on murder charge and produced him in the court.

2 MINORS' BODIES FOUND IN NULLAH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boinda, Nov 30: Tension prevailed after villagers recovered the bodies of two missing minor boys buried under sand in Duimuhana nullah near Baliamba village under Handapa police limits and Kishorenagar block of Angul district, Thursday. The deceased were identified as Badal Behera, 9, son of Kalia Behera and Surendra Pradhan, 9, son of Jayant Pradhan in Baliamba village. The two deceased were students of Class VI in the local government school. The incident has sparked tension in the area. The reason behind the deaths is yet to be ascertained as various theories floated in the area over the minors'

mysterious death. Villagers claimed that someone might have killed the boys and later buried them under the sand to destroy evidence. Meanwhile, police have claimed that the two minors were plucking berries on the nullah bank and died after a heap of sand caved in on them. On being informed, Handapa police IIC Namita Nayak rushed to the spot with police officials and seized the bodies. An investigation was also launched into the deaths while the bodies will be sent for post-mortem, Friday. The two minors were missing since Thursday morning. The matter came to the fore when some youths bathing in the nullah noticed the legs of the deceased in the water and informed the villagers.

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Form No. STK - 6
PUBLIC NOTICE
[Pursuant to sub-section (2) and sub-section (4) of section 248 of the Companies Act, 2013 and rule 7 of the Companies (Removal of Names of Companies from the Register of Companies) Rules, 2016]

Public Notice No. ROC/C-PACE/STK-2/248(2)/523 **Date: 10.11.2023**

Reference: (1) In the matter of striking off or removal of names 14 (Fourteen) of companies in Odisha State of under section 248 of the Companies Act, 2013 in respect of:

S. No.	Work Item	CIN	Company Name
1	AA5882395	U92190OR2021PTC036188	XLENT EVENTS PRIVATE LIMITED
2	F60049988	U74910OR2008BPTC009748	BLUE HAWK SECURITY SERVICES PRIVATE LIMITED
3	AA3739959	U70101OR2011PTC013554	SIDHI ASHIANA PRIVATE LIMITED
4	F59782417	U45200OR2013PTC017322	SHREESAISUDHA INFRA PRIVATE LIMITED
5	F60950011	U74999OR2018PTC029894	MIHRAN TECHNOLOGIES PRIVATE LIMITED
6	AA5087925	U31909OR2019PTC030963	BATENE INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED
7	AA3946479	U74999OR2019PTC032381	EREVNA COLLOQUIUM PRIVATE LIMITED
8	AA4453572	U72900OR2020PTC034293	CODINGGURU TECHNOLOGIES PRIVATE LIMITED
9	AA4705225	U24303OR2021PTC038194	INVEN LIFESCIENCES PRIVATE LIMITED
10	AA4744609	U63090OR2022PTC039942	PLADS CLUBS PRIVATE LIMITED
11	AA3896064	U74999OR2018PTC029347	BPUT TIMES PRIVATE LIMITED
12	F59803213	U27100OR2021PTC036343	KTSL STEEL PRIVATE LIMITED
13	AA5872367	U45309OR2021PTC036126	VRIDHI DEVCON PRIVATE LIMITED
14	AA5819994	U52322OR2022PTC039497	VILLPURE E-COMMERCE PRIVATE LIMITED

(2) Notice is hereby given that the Registrar of Companies had received applications from the above-mentioned companies under section 248(2) of the Companies Act, 2013 for removal of its/their name(s) from the register of companies either on the ground that they have failed to commence business within one year of their incorporation or on the ground that the company(ies) is/are not carrying on any business or operation for a period of two immediately preceding financial years and has/have not made any application(s) within such period for obtaining the status of a dormant company under section 455 of the Companies Act, 2013 or the company(ies) have obtained the status of dormant company/subscribers to the memorandum have not paid the subscription which they have undertaken to pay at the time of incorporation of a company and a declaration to this effect has not been filed within one hundred and eighty days of its incorporation under subsection (1) of section 10A/have not been carrying on any business or operations, as revealed after the physical verification carried out under sub-section (9) of section 12, but it/they do not wish to continue its/their registration as companies and have, therefore, requested for removal/strike off of its/their names from the register of companies.

(3) Accordingly, the Registrar of Companies proposes to remove or strike off the names of the above-mentioned companies from the Register of Companies

(4) Any Person objecting to the proposed removal or striking off of name of the companies from the register of companies may send his or her objection to the office address mentioned hereabove within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 2023.11.13 14:33:37 +5'30'

Sd./- (Harihara Sahoo), Registrar
Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit
CBC-07123/11/0197/2324

AN INVESTOR EDUCATION AND AWARENESS INITIATIVE
Do join us to learn more about Mutual Funds.

Date and Venue:
Sunday, 3rd December, 2023; 12:30 pm onwards.
at Hotel Harjit Residency, Dayal Towers, VSS Marg, Sambalpur, Odisha.
For registration, please contact: Indranil Bose, Mobile: 91231 47315.

Registration is compulsory.
The registration time will be from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm.
No walk-ins will be allowed.

75 **HDFC**
Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav **MUTUAL FUND**
BHAROSA APNO KA

An Investor Education and Awareness Initiative

Visit <https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/key-know-how> to know more about the process to complete a one-time Know Your Customer (KYC) requirement to invest in Mutual Funds. Investors should only deal with registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified on the SEBI website (www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.html). For any queries, complaints & grievance redressal, investors may reach out to the AMC's and / or Investor Relations Officers. Additionally, investors may also lodge complaints on <https://scores.gov.in> if they are unsatisfied with the resolutions given by AMCs. SCORES portal facilitates investors to lodge complaint online with SEBI and subsequently view its status.

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

FORM A
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
(Under Regulation 6 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016)

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CREDITORS OF KVR STEELS ORISSA LTD

RELEVANT PARTICULARS	
1. Name of corporate debtor	KVR Steels Orissa Ltd
2. Date of incorporation of corporate debtor	09th April, 1987
3. Authority under which corporate debtor is incorporated / registered	Registrar of Companies (ROC)- Cuttack
4. Corporate Identity No. / Limited Liability Identification No. of corporate debtor	U27104OR1987PL0001824
5. Address of registered office and principal office (if any) of corporate debtor	Registered Office- Baruan Shegiri, Balasore, Orissa, India, 756000 Corporate office at 33/1, Netaji Subhas Road, Room No 444, Kolkata 700001
6. Insolvency commencement date in respect of corporate debtor	29th November, 2023 (Order received on 30th November, 2023)
7. Estimated date of closure of insolvency resolution process	26th May, 2024 (180 days from the Insolvency Commencement Date)
8. Name and the registration number of the insolvency professional acting as interim resolution professional	Rajesh Kumar Agrawal, IBB/IFA-001/IP-P01023/2017-2018/11722
9. Address and e-mail of the interim resolution professional, as registered with the Board	Address: 1, Ganesh Chandra Avenue, 3rd Floor, Room No 301, Kolkata- 700013 Mail id- rjesh521@yahoo.com
10. Address and email to be used for correspondence with the interim resolution professional	Address: 1, Ganesh Chandra Avenue, 3rd Floor, Room No 301, Kolkata- 700013 Mail id- crip.kvrsteels@gmail.com
11. Last date for submission of claims	14th December, 2023
12. Classes of creditors, if any, under clause (b) of sub-section (8A) of section 21, ascertained by the interim resolution professional	Name the class(es) NA
13. Names of insolvency Professionals identified to act as Authorised Representative of creditors in a class (Three names for each class)	NA
14. (a) Relevant Forms and (b) Details of authorized representatives are available at:	Web link: https://www.ibbi.gov.in/home/downloads Physical Address: NA

Notice is hereby given that the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Cuttack Bench has ordered the commencement of a corporate insolvency resolution process of the **KVR Steels Orissa Ltd** on 29th November, 2023 (Order received on 30th November, 2023). The creditors of **KVR Steels Orissa Ltd**, are hereby called upon to submit their claims with proof on or before **14th December, 2023** to the interim resolution professional at the address mentioned against entry No. 10.

The financial creditors shall submit their claims with proof by electronic means only. All other creditors may submit the claims with proof in person, by post or by electronic means. A financial creditor belonging to a class, as listed against the entry No. 12, shall indicate its choice of authorised representative from among the three insolvency professionals listed against entry No. 13 to act as authorised representative of the class (specify class) in Form CA-Not Applicable.

Submission of false or misleading proofs of claim shall attract penalties.

Date: 30/11/2023
Place: Kolkata

Rajesh Kumar Agrawal
Interim Resolution Professional of
KVR Steels Orissa Ltd
IBBI/IFA-001/IP-P01023/2017-2018/11722
AFA Valid till 22/11/2024

FOCUS POLITICAL FUNDING

REPLACING ELECTORAL BONDS



The Zero Coupon-Zero Principal Bonds have the potential to make the entire process of giving donations and utilising them more transparent and authentic

ments for raising funds from the market.

One such financial instrument which is slowly gaining ground in the sphere of not-for-profits is the Zero Coupon-Zero Principal (ZCZP) Bonds. As the name reflects, the issuer of the ZCZP Bonds has neither the obligation to pay interest, nor to repay the principal. Moreover, the regulatory environment around the ZCZP Bonds is robust and well established under the purview of experienced regulator in the form of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

At present the ZCZP Bonds are issued by not-for-profits, registered with the Social Stock Exchange (SSE) segment of a recognised stock exchange. These organisations will need to do regular audits of social impact, and these will be disclosed to all stakeholders. ZCZP Bonds have features which can address most of the limitations of Electoral Bonds.

A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) may be created for the purpose of raising funds for financing elections through ZCZP Bonds. The SPV may get registered and listed on the SSE and be subject to regulations of SEBI. This is also in line with the suggestion of the CJI. During the latest hearing of the case, the CJI stated that to have a level playing field, all donations may be given to the ECI, which would then be distributed on an equitable basis.

Unlike Electoral Bonds, funds collection through ZCZP Bonds may happen throughout the year. As and when elections are declared by the ECI, the SPV may devise a model for distribution of funds among contesting candidates, rather than political parties. The ZCZP Bonds have the potential to make the entire process of giving donations and utilising them more transparent and authentic. Let us make the festival of democracy more colourful by making it more transparent and less murky.

The writer is a professor at XIMB. Views are personal.

Elections are celebrated as a festival of democracy. Indians are known for splurging on any type of festival. Elections are no exception. More than Rs 50,000 crore was spent during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, making it the world's most expensive democratic event. An evolved democracy has the responsibility of developing a robust mechanism for funding elections. The process of financing elections should be transparent and should not create an opportunity for political parties to raise funds with an implicit understanding of extending benefits.

In the last few months, the country has witnessed a very interesting and important legal debate on this issue. A five-judge Bench, led by the Chief Justice of India (CJI), said the ultimate purpose of devising a scheme to sanitise the process of political donations is to reduce the infusion of unaccounted cash in the electoral system and bring in transparency.

One instrument which has become a focal point of heated debate in the corridors of power and justice is the Electoral Bond. The Electoral Bond is a bearer banking instrument to be used for funding eligible political parties. The problem is not with the instrument per-se, but the process of introducing the instrument has left several questions unanswered.

Important provisions of several Acts were amended without proper deliberations. The government brought in amendments to four Acts to introduce the Electoral Bond Scheme, through the Finance Act of 2016 and 2017. These Acts are, The Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951, the Companies Act, 2013, the Income Tax Act, 1961, and the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA), 2010. The amendments in these Acts have wide ramifications.

The Indian subsidiaries of foreign companies are now eligible to donate to political parties through the Electoral Bonds. Previously, foreign companies were not allowed to donate to po-

litical parties under the FCRA. Is this amendment against public interest?

Political parties had to maintain a record of all donations of more than Rs 20,000, including the name and address of every donor. The Income Tax Act, 1961 has been amended exempting political parties from their obligation to keep a detailed record of contributions received through Electoral Bonds. The feature of anonymous donations to a political party seems to be counter to international best practices in promoting transparency in political funding. Are we compromising on accountability in pursuit of providing anonymity?

Corporate entities could donate only up to 7.5% of three years of net profits. Now the upper limit has been removed through the amendment of the Companies Act. It seems even a loss-making company can buy Electoral Bonds and donate the same to any political party. Will this amendment lead to creation of shell companies exclusively for purpose of transferring funds to parties?

Similarly, companies have been exempted from declaring

their contributions to political parties. Such an amendment may be violating the basic tenets of the agent-principal relationship existing between shareholders and board of directors. Shareholders have a right to know the values and strategies of political parties to whom their funds are given. Is this a violation of one of the fundamental rights of citizens?

The Representation of the People Act 1951, has been amended to exempt parties from sharing details of contributions received through Electoral Bonds, with the Election Commission of India (ECI). Now it is impossible to ascertain whether a party has received any contribution from foreign sources. Such apprehensions were also expressed by the ECI. Will this not open the gates for foreign players to influence the government?

Despite the uncertainty about the future of Electoral Bonds, a healthy debate on election funding is taking place at different levels of democracy: from courtrooms to classrooms. It is a good time to explore the possibilities of using some of the well-established financial instru-



DV Ramana

AN EVOLVED DEMOCRACY HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF DEVELOPING A ROBUST MECHANISM FOR FUNDING ELECTIONS



Ian Buruma

Ultra-nationalists often emerge from the periphery – Napoleon from Corsica, Stalin from Georgia, Hitler from Austria

Rage of Outsiders

One of the biggest mistakes I ever made as a journalist was to underestimate Geert Wilders, now the leader (and only formal member) of the most popular political party in the Netherlands, and potentially the first far-right prime minister his country has ever known.

I interviewed Wilders in 2005 for my book, *Murder in Amsterdam*, about the assassination of the filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a Muslim extremist. The Party for Freedom (PVV), founded by Wilders in 2006, did not exist yet. But I was interested in the views of an outspoken critic of Islam, and of immigrants with a Muslim background.

Frankly, I thought he was a bore, with no political future, and did not quote him in my book. Like most people, I was struck by his rather weird hairstyle. Why would a grown man and member of parliament wish to dye his fine head of dark hair platinum blond? In fact, he turned out to have been somewhat of a pioneer in this respect. The later successes of Donald Trump and Boris Johnson demonstrated the importance of visual branding, of having a zany image boosted by the cultivation of odd hair. (Perhaps Hitler's toothbrush moustache, or even Napoleon's comb-over, was a harbinger.)

There is, however, another possible interpretation of Wilders' hair. In 2009, a Dutch anthropologist and expert on Indonesia, Lizzy van Leeuwen, argued that Wilders might have been keen to disguise his Eurasian roots. His maternal grandmother was partly Indonesian. His grandparents had to leave the Dutch East Indies under a cloud of financial malfeasance.

It would be unfair to hold any of this against Wilders, of course. Race may not explain anything. But there is a history of far-right, anti-Muslim sentiment among Eurasians in the former Dutch East Indies that might help to put his politics in context.

Eurasians, or Indos as they were called, were never fully accepted by the Indonesians or their Dutch colonial masters. They were born as outsiders. The more educated ones often yearned to become insiders. An aversion to Islam, the majority religion in the Dutch East Indies, and extreme Dutch nationalism were often the result.

During the 1930s, many members of the Dutch Nazi party in the colony had a Eurasian background. As van Leeuwen pointed out, the party enabled Indos to be "more Dutch than the Dutch." Wilders may not be a fascist, but his obsession with sovereignty, national belonging, and cultural and religious purity has a long lineage among outsiders. Ultra-nationalists often emerge from the periphery – Napoleon from Corsica, Stalin from Georgia, Hitler from Austria. Those who long to be insiders frequently become implacable enemies of people who are farther away from the center than they are.

Wilders is not a rarity, even in the Netherlands. In 1980, Henry Brookman founded the far-right Dutch Center Party to oppose immigration, especially Muslim immigration. Brookman, too, had a Eurasian background, as did another right-wing politician, Rita Verdonk, who founded the Proud of the Netherlands Party in 2007.

A politician who might fruitfully be compared to Wilders is former British Home Secretary Suella Braverman. As a child of immigrants – her parents are double outsiders, first as Indians in Africa and then as African-Indians in Britain – her animus toward immigrants and refugees "invading" the United Kingdom may seem puzzling. But in her case, too, a longing to belong may play a part in her politics.

Braverman's entry into the British establishment and ascent within the Conservative Party shows that Britain has become more open to outsiders. It is less laudable that her hard-right views on immigration have become mainstream in Conservative politics, or that white-skinned Tories were happy to use an ambitious daughter of immigrants to promote an anti-immigrant agenda – at least until her incendiary rhetoric became too embarrassing.

Until relatively recently, ultra-nationalist parties and politicians were marginalised by mainstream conservative parties, or dropped, as happened in 1968 to Enoch Powell, the British politician who predicted that more non-white immigration would lead to "rivers of blood." They were treated as political outsiders, whatever their family backgrounds.

To more and more disaffected voters, however, this was precisely their appeal. Brexiteers and Trump benefited from this in 2016, and Wilders is benefiting from it today.

But such outcomes could not happen without the cynicism displayed over the past few decades by traditional conservative parties. Afraid of losing their voters to the far right, they pandered to their prejudices, against foreign "freeloaders," the Muslim threat to "Judeo-Christian values," the "woke" city slickers, or the "people from nowhere." But it was mostly just rhetoric, and conservative parties simply carried on serving the interests of rich people and big business. This only fed the rage of people who felt treated like outsiders and wanted an outsider to blow up the old order.

The way the conservative parties in the Netherlands, such as the Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), have dealt with this problem in the past was to refuse to govern with extremists like Wilders. The VVD also stood for internationalism, the European Union, military support of Ukraine, and measures to deal with climate change. Wilders is opposed to all of it.

What changed is that the VVD, hoping to protect its right flank, took a harder line on immigration and hinted that governing with angry outsiders might be possible after all (a stance that has now been reversed, but for how long?). Now that the door was left open, and immigration was made into an election issue, Wilders was able to win in a landslide.

The irony of this sorry tale is that Dilan Yeşilgöz, the VVD leader who allowed this to happen, was born in Ankara to a Turkish mother and Kurdish father. She is precisely the kind of Dutch citizen that Wilders has vowed to stamp out.

The writer is the author, most recently, of The Collaborators: Three Stories of Deception and Survival in World War II.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1913: The world's first moving assembly line debuted, used in manufacturing Model Ts at a Ford factory in Highland Park, Michigan; the innovation was the idea of owner Henry Ford, and it revolutionized the auto industry.
- 1955: In violation of segregation laws in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks refused to surrender her bus seat to a white passenger and was arrested, sparking a 381-day bus boycott led by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- 1959: The Antarctic Treaty was signed by 12 countries, making the Antarctic continent a demilitarized zone to be preserved for scientific research.

SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

Is humanity under attack from AI?

If you are not inundated with articles on Artificial Intelligence (AI), you have probably been living under a rock. Several of these articles raise images of a dystopian future based on machines taking over mankind. If you are sufficiently apprehensive about the future awaiting mankind, let me try to offer my analysis of what AI is and is not, and how it might shape our world in the foreseeable future.

AI is not a recent phenomenon, although it has assumed greater currency of late in terms of specific hardware and software such as ChatGPT. The term was first coined in 1956 by John McCarthy, a computer scientist at Stanford University. He defined it as "the science and engineering of making intelligent machines."

The other term I wish to briefly introduce is the Turing test, named after Alan Turing, who postulated that if a machine can engage in a conversation with a human without being detected as a machine, it has demonstrated human intelligence. The development of devices like

Alexa and software such as ChatGPT are probably a result of researchers trying to meet the criteria for the Turing test.

AI, in its current avatar, is nothing more than sophisticated pattern recognition. The programmes look for patterns in consumer behaviour, in speech, in text, in photographs, in medical diagnostic scans, etc. The software is "trained" to recognise patterns using a very large database of words, pictures, numbers, and scans. The accuracy of the answers developed by AI is dependent on the data used to train it. Training is done by feeding a large amount of data into the software, then letting the software answer the question that is being asked. There is ample evidence of AI making mistakes due to gaps and shortcomings in the data used in the training.

Irrespective of the sophistication of the software, none of them are 100% reliable. Some people may say that neither are humans. There are two major dangers in letting a software make decisions. First, most AI software is like a black box. It is

not possible to question the logic used by the programme. This does not allow us to have an audit trail. Second, people place very great faith in output from software and do not question it, assuming that computers cannot make mistakes like humans. But as I have mentioned, there have been several instances where AI has made an error. It would be incorrect to completely hand over the responsibility of an entire human task to a computer programme, especially when we are not sure of the reliability of the programme.

What we can, and probably should do, is to automate the repetitive component of the human task. This would free the human to add greater value by providing inputs that computers cannot.

The question that ought to be asked is not whether technology displaced people; it certainly did. Rather we should be asking whether people would like to do the work being done by machines today for what consumers would be willing to pay for it. The answer, arguably, would be

a no. There are several human jobs that are ripe for automation. One of the most denigrating and dangerous jobs in India is that of manual scavenging. Would an AI powered solution not be a great way to eliminate the risk of death that manual scavengers face today? There can be many other such jobs which should not be done by humans. The rule that Japanese companies, such as Toyota, use is if a task is dirty, difficult, or dangerous, it is a good candidate for automation.

In conclusion, I feel that both the hype and the fear attributed to AI are overdone. If the test of AI is that it should be able to mimic a human, we need to remember that humans can make mistakes and computers cannot. At the same time humans can find an opportunity in failure or mistake, such as the discovery of penicillin. A computer cannot do that because it has to be told what to look for. Ultimately, humans decide what AI should be used for, not the other way around. Let us do this judiciously.

INFA



Rajiv Gupta

HUMANS DECIDE WHAT AI SHOULD BE USED FOR, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND

Awareness essential

Sir, Designated by the World Health Organisation as a pivotal moment for global public health awareness, December 1 marks the 35th annual observance of World AIDS Day. This global initiative not only serves to remember lives lost to HIV/AIDS but also underscores the ongoing collective effort to combat this preventable disease. As of 2022, AIDS has taken 40 million lives globally, with 39 million people currently living with HIV. Despite advanced therapies lowering the death toll, persistent misinformation fuels social exclusion and discrimination for those with HIV/AIDS. Reflecting on achievements, the day raises awareness about ongoing challenges in reaching the 2030 goal to end AIDS. The 2023 World AIDS Day theme, 'Let Communities Lead,' recognises communities' vital role in shaping awareness. Global leaders use this occasion to reflect, raise awareness, address challenges, and aim to defeat AIDS by 2030. Nations come together to address discrimination, emphasise the collective potential to overcome AIDS, and engage stakeholders in intensified efforts for the HIV response. The emphasis on community leadership and collaboration is crucial. Timely detection continues to be essential for better health outcomes, and heightened awareness empowers individuals with HIV to prevent transmission. World AIDS Day remains a symbol of international unity, committed to halting HIV spread, ensuring universal treatment access, and providing assistance to those in need.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Resilient Nadal

Sir, One of tennis' all-time greats, Rafael Nadal who was nursing a hip muscle injury he sustained during his second round match in the Australian open is all set to return to active tennis. The way the Spaniard has consistently come back with a vengeance, after short setbacks, is a treat to his legion of fans though one cannot say that he may go after Novak Djokovic's grand slam record. Modern tennis has not seen a more resilient player than Nadal. At 37, he is not getting any younger. It is a tribute to the physical and mental faculties of Nadal that he has played the game for so long considering many erstwhile greats like Bjorn Borg and Pete Sampras hung their boots unexpectedly early. The longevity Nadal has is also a testimony to his unbridled will power, intense competitiveness and, of course, unquestionable love for the game.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

All workers fit, can go home: AIIMS Stay back or return home: Labourers' dilemma

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rishikesh, Nov 30: The AIIMS-Rishikesh Thursday declared all 41 workers who were evacuated from Silkyara tunnel fit to return home.

Briefing the media here on their health condition, Dr Ravikant said the workers were thoroughly examined and their blood test, X-ray, and ECG reports were normal.

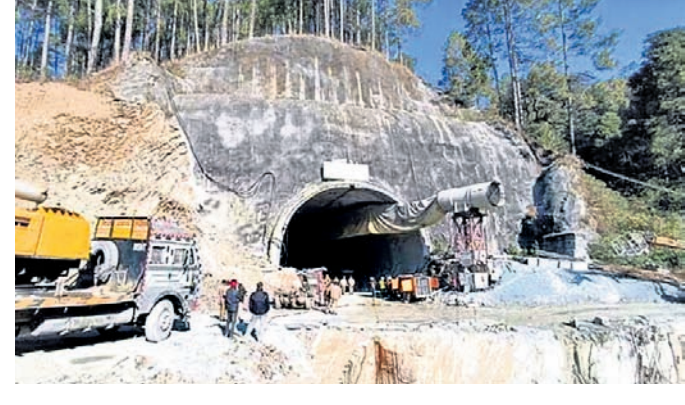
"They are physically normal and clinically stable. We have given them clearance to return home," he said.

The workers were rescued from the tunnel Tuesday night after a long-drawn operation.

The doctor said as they have come out of a tunnel after 17 days, the workers might need acclimatisation.

They have been advised to go to the nearest hospital after two weeks for a check-up.

"On the basis of their major organ screening, we can say they are fit to travel. As they were taken good care of during their confinement in the tunnel with regular feeding, there was no case of starvation. They are mostly quite young or of middle age. That also helped them stay



fit," Ravikant said.

Doctors from AIIMS-Rishikesh will stay connected with the workers through tele-medicine to monitor their mental health for the next few weeks, he said in reply to a question.

About how they will be taken home, the hospital authorities said respective state governments are working out details of their departure.

The number of workers from Jharkhand is the highest at 15. These 15 and five other workers from Odisha may be taken home today as their nodal officers are here already.

The responsibility of commute of the rest of them will be

handed over to authorised representatives from their states as and when they approach the hospital administration, he said.

"Our priority is to ensure that all workers are safely transported to their homes by officials authorised by their respective state governments," another doctor said at the media briefing.

Apart from 15 workers from Jharkhand and five from Odisha, eight are from Uttar Pradesh, five from Bihar, three from West Bengal, two each from Uttarakhand and Assam, and one from Himachal Pradesh.

According to a government official, the construction work could only be resumed after a safety audit of the tunnel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Uttarkashi, Nov 30: Workers at the Silkyara tunnel are now faced with a dilemma, whether to stay back or return to their homes, which their family members desperately want them to do, days after 41 trapped colleagues were evacuated in an almost 17-day-long rescue operation.

"I have filled up the leave application form to go back home. We don't know when the construction work will resume," a machine operator from Bihar said.

Another labourer said his mother wants him to quit the tunnelling job. "We work in such conditions.... It is dangerous," he said.

According to a government official, the construction work could only be resumed after a safety audit of the tunnel. The



mountain was drilled from the top to about 45 meters to rescue the trapped workers and the debris was still lying in the tunnel, he said.

"We don't know whether we have to stay back or should we home," a labourer from Odisha who has been working at the Silkyara Tunnel site for the past two years told PTI on Thursday.

The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited under the supervision of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways had begun the construction work of this tunnel four years ago. The project aims to decrease between Yamunotri and Gangotri on the National

Highway of the Char Dham route from 28 km to 4.5 km.

Wednesday, a worker said he was given two days of rest by his contractor. "We have been asked to take rest for one to two days but we are planning to extend our leaves," said another worker from Uttar Pradesh.

The workers - masons, foremen, machine operators and electricians - are lodged in porta cabins set up around 200 meters from the tunnel in Silkyara. At least four to five workers stay in one cabin. "The expenses for food are provided by our company," an Assamese worker said.

The officer and administrative employees live in the guest

houses and homestays near the tunnel site, another worker said.

A worker from Jharkhand said, "My contractor has asked me to stay back for two to three days, but I am planning to go home for some days." He said out of his 15 colleagues, four had already returned home while three were trapped in the tunnel.

Akhilesh Singh from Uttar Pradesh was one of 41 labourers trapped in the tunnel. "His uncle came and took his luggage a day after a portion of the tunnel collapsed," a room partner of Singh told PTI.

Asked what they will do now, he said, "I will not quit the job but if I get leave I will visit my home."

I am not a yes man: Kerala Guv

ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN CLAIMED THAT THERE WAS NO ROW OR DISPUTE BETWEEN HIM AND THE STATE GOVERNMENT AND IT WAS ALL AN ACT TO MISLEAD THE PUBLIC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 30: Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan Thursday said he was not a 'rubber stamp' or a 'yes man' who would give his assent to bills passed by the state Assembly without applying his mind.

Khan said when any ordinance or Bill comes before him, he applies his mind to ascertain whether it is constitutionally and legally sound.

He said that a bill or an ordinance meant for the welfare of the people of Kerala will not stay on his desk for even an hour.

"I will dispose of it immediately. But where they (government) use the power of law to destroy the institutions, universities and their autonomy and also go against the letter and spirit of the Constitution, they cannot expect me to be their yes man."

"I am not a rubber stamp. I am not," he told reporters here. Regarding the seven bills he reserved for presidential assent, Khan said he had waited for nearly two years for the ministers to come and explain the contents of those legislations.

"The ministers came but could not explain," he said.

Khan further said that since the government decided to go to the Supreme Court, instead of giving the explanations sought by him, he referred the seven bills to the President.

He further justified his action by claiming that of the seven bills, four were in the nature of Money Bills as they entailed expenditure and therefore, prior permission of the Governor was required for tabling them in the state Assembly.

Regarding the remaining three, Khan said that those

bills were contrary to the UGC norms.

His decision was criticised by Leader of Opposition in the Assembly V D Satheesan, who said that the Governor cannot unnecessarily hold back bills passed by the Assembly.

"He should not unreasonably hold back the bills for nearly two years," Satheesan said.

At the same time, he also said that the opposition was against the content of the pending bills.

He also claimed that there was no row or dispute between the Governor and the state government and it was all an act to mislead the public.

Among the bills reserved for presidential assent are two University Amendment Bills.

The other bills include the Lok Ayukta Bill, University Bill 2022 (related to investing the Governor of Chancellorship), the bill regarding the expansion of the University Search Committee, and the Cooperative (Milma) Bill, according to the Raj Bhavan.

Last week, the Supreme Court had asked the Kerala Governor's additional chief secretary to refer to its recent verdict in Punjab's case, where it held that governors cannot "thwart the normal course of lawmaking".

While deciding on the Punjab government's plea against Governor Banwarilal Purohit, the top court had held that governors cannot take the liberty to keep bills pending indefinitely without any action.

The apex court also said that if the governor decides to withhold assent to a bill, then he has to return the bill to the legislature for reconsideration.

Khan claimed that what the apex court said was only 'obiter dicta' or an observation.



FOR A CAUSE: Divers pose for photos during an underwater commemoration meet held in honour of the victims of the Cyclone Ockhi at the Kovalam beach, in Thiruvananthapuram, Thursday

Setback for Kerala govt: SC quashes Kannur varsity VC's reappointment

The top court also assailed Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, the chancellor, saying he did not independently apply his mind despite not being a mere 'titular head'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 30: In a major setback to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the Supreme Court Thursday cancelled the reappointment of Kannur Vice-Chancellor Gopinath Ravindran.

It also assailed Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, the chancellor, saying he did not independently apply his mind despite not being a mere 'titular head'.

In its judgement, the top court extensively dealt with the independent powers of the governor as the chancellor of state universities, narrated the sequence of events leading to reappointment of Ravindran and expressed its unhappiness over the handling of the issue by Khan.

"The ...Facts make it abundantly clear that there was no independent application of mind or satisfaction or judgment on the part of the Chancellor and the respondent No. 4 (Ravindran) came to be reappointed only at the behest of the State Government," a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B



Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said in its 72-page judgement.

Referring to the law governing the university, it said the chancellor plays a very important role and is not merely a "titular head".

"In the selection of the Vice Chancellor, he is the sole judge and his opinion is final in all respects. In reappointing the Vice-Chancellor, the main consideration to prevail upon the Chancellor is the interest of the university."

"The Chancellor was required to discharge his statutory duties in accordance with law and guided by the dictates of his own judgment and not at the behest of anybody else. Law does not recognise any such extra constitutional interference in the exercise of statutory discretion. Any such interference amounts to dictation from political superior and has been condemned by courts more than one occasion," Justice Pardiwala, writing the

judgement for the bench, said.

The top court, while delivering its judgement on an appeal, set aside the verdicts of a single judge bench and division bench of the Kerala High Court upholding Ravindran's reappointment. The appeal was filed by Dr Premachandran Keezoth and others challenging the high court verdicts.

Reacting to the SC verdict, the Kerala governor accused Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan of pressuring him to reappoint Ravindran as the vice chancellor.

Khan, speaking to reporters in Thiruvananthapuram, said state Higher Education Minister R Bindu was not to be blamed as it was Vijayan who used her for seeking Ravindran's reappointment.

The governors are also ex-officio chancellors of state universities and act independently of the council of ministers in taking decisions on all university matters.

Centre approves ₹1658cr revamp plan for Joshimath

The Uttarakhand town was affected by landslide and ground subsidence earlier this year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 30: The Centre Thursday approved a ₹1658.17 crore recovery and reconstruction plan for Joshimath in Uttarakhand which was affected by landslide and ground subsidence earlier this year.

The decision was taken by a high level committee, headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, according to an official statement. The committee approved the Recovery and Reconstruction (R&R) plan of ₹1658.17 crore for Joshimath, the statement said.

Under this plan, ₹1079.96 crore of central assistance will be provided from the recovery and reconstruction

window of the NDRF. The Uttarakhand government will provide ₹126.41 crore from its SDRF towards relief assistance and ₹451.80 crore from its state budget, including land acquisition cost for resettlement of ₹91.82 crore.

Joshimath was hit by landslide and ground subsidence and the central government has extended all necessary technical and logistical support to the state, the statement said. Under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi, all technical agencies under the guidance of the NDMA were put into action and they helped the state government in preparing the recovery plan for Joshimath expeditiously, it said.

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, BASUDEVPUR
 At/Po:Basudevapur, Dist-Bhadrak
 Email:ori-basudevapur@nic.in
 Order No.6400/Date:30.11.2023
CORRIGENDUM NOTICE
 No.I-506:In continuation to the Tender Call Notification No.05/2023-24 Vide Order No.5992, dated 16.11.2023 and Memo No.5995, dated 16.11.2023 is hereby modified from 01.12.2023 to 06.12.2023 (Wednesday) for filling of bids by 1.00 PM and the said tender will be opened on 06.12.2023 at 4.00 PM due to unavoidable engagement in official meeting.
Sd./- Block Development Officer Basudevapur
 OIPR-19306/11/0008/2324

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, DHAMNAGAR
 Pin:-756117(Odisha), Tel. No-06786-236056
 E-Mail: dhamnagar-nac-bdk@gov.in / dhamnagar.nac@gmail.com
 No.3858 Date:29.11.2023
e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No-05/DNRRAC/2023-24
 No.C-1967:Bid Documents consisting of Work, Estimated Cost, Cost of Tender Paper, EMD, Time of Completion, Class of Contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. website i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
 1. Name of the Work : Civil Const. Works as mentioned in DTCN
 2. No. of Works : 8 (Eight) Nos.
 3. Estimated Cost : As per DTCN
 4. Period of Completion : 30 days
 5. Date and Time of Bidding : 04.12.2023 (10.00 AM)
 6. Last date and Time for receipt of bids in the portal : 16.12.2023 upto 5.00 PM
 7. Submission of Original Document : 18.12.2023 to 19.12.2023 upto 5.00 PM
 8. Bids received online shall be opened on : 20.12.2023 at 11.00 AM onwards
 9. Name and address of the officer inviting Bid : Executive Officer, Dhamnagar NAC
 Further details can be seen from the procurement portal i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
Sd./- Executive Officer, Dhamnagar NAC
 OIPR-13197/11/0006/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE WORKS DEPARTMENT
 E-mail: pwdoff_khd@yahoo.com
Tender Call Notice No. 33/2022-23
No.B-1359:The Executive Engineer, Khurda (R&B) Division, Khurda on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in Single Cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible class of contractors having valid registration certificate for execution of the Civil works as detailed below:
 1. Nature of Work : Building work
 2. No of Work : 02 Nos.
 3. Tender Cost : Rs.6000.00 (Online)
 4. Class of Contractor : 'D' & 'C' Contractor
 5. Available of Bid : From Dt. 01.12.2023 at 10.30 AM documents in the website. to Dt.08.12.2023 at 4.30 PM
 6. Date of opening of Bids : Dt 08.12.2023 at 5.00 PM
 7. Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website: https://tenderodisha.gov.in. Any information regarding Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can be available in the said website.
Sd./-Executive Engineer Khurda (R&B) Division, Khurda
 OIPR-34095/11/0022/2324





Marina beach wears a deserted look amid rain in Chennai. Northern coastal Tamil Nadu witnessed light showers Thursday while several parts of the city and nearby areas were inundated leading to traffic slowdown and inconvenience to people



Brides during a mass marriage ceremony in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh



Kids with congenital disabilities, believed to be caused by the exposure of their parents to gas leakage during the Union Carbide gas leak disaster in 1984, along with their relatives take part in a candle light vigil to pay homage to the victims of the tragedy in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh



President Droupadi Murmu distributes certificate to a cadet during the Passing Out Parade of 145th Course of the National Defence Academy (NDA) at Khadakwasla in Pune, Maharashtra



Devotees during the immersion procession of idols of Lord Krishna during the 'Raas' festival, at Santipur in Nadia district, West Bengal



New ambulances of the revamped '108' ambulance service parked at Vidhanasoudha during a ceremony for their launch in Bangalore, Karnataka



Tourists ride all-terrain vehicles (ATV) after fresh snowfall at Koksar in Lahaul & Spiti district, Himachal Pradesh

PTI PHOTOS

of the day quote

When you started your career, we had in the country an ecosystem which unfortunately had embedded in it an element of patronage, an element of corruption. People thought they were above the law



JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE-PRESIDENT

I would earnestly request you (Prime Minister) to kindly intervene for immediate release of the NHM fund for West Bengal and for removal of specific colour branding conditionality for the health & wellness centres for fund release under NHM, so that the poor people do not suffer from lack of quality health services



MAMATA BANERJEE | BENGAL CM

The ambulance drivers have an underhand pact with private hospitals and they take all accident patients to private hospitals instead of government hospitals



D K SHIVAKUMAR | KARNATAKA DEPUTY CM

SHORT TAKES

Another NEET aspirant kills self

Kota (Rajasthan): Yet another student preparing for NEET in Rajasthan's coaching hub of Kota has committed suicide by hanging herself, the police said Thursday. The victim has been identified as Nisha Yadav (21), a resident of Auraiya, Uttar Pradesh, who had come to Kota six months back. Her body was found in a private hostel in the Mahavir Nagar area at around 1.30 a.m. Thursday.

Protests over social media post

Srinagar: The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar closed for winter vacation Thursday - 10 days ahead of schedule - as a precautionary measure, a day after protests against a student's social media post spread to other institutes. The Islamia College of Science and Commerce suspended all classwork and internal examinations scheduled for the day. While NIT Srinagar declared a holiday for Thursday, the Dean of Students Welfare issued a circular announcing winter vacation in the engineering institute from today.

Encounter in J&K

Srinagar: An encounter broke out between security forces and terrorists in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir Thursday. The gunfight started at New Colony in the Arial area of the district after security forces launched an anti-militancy operation in the orchards there, the officials said. Intermittent exchange of firing was going on between the two sides till last reports came in, they said, adding there were no casualties reported so far.



The real poll will come out December 3. Those who are trying to confuse Telangana voters are in for a huge surprise. Exit polls are not new

K T RAMA RAO | BRS WORKING PRESIDENT

COURT ALLOWS VARAVARA TO TRAVEL TO HYDERABAD FOR EYE SURGERY

A special NIA court in Mumbai has allowed activist Varavara Rao, an accused in the 2018 Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case, to travel to Hyderabad to undergo cataract surgery. Judge Rajesh Katariya Wednesday permitted Rao to travel to the Telangana capital between December 5 and 11 for his left eye surgery



ASSEMBLY POLLS

EC cracked whip on several occasions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 30: The Election Commission cracked its whip on several occasions to ensure a level playing field for all parties in the five states where assembly polls were held even as authorities seized freebies, drugs, cash and liquor worth over ₹2,000 crore aimed at alluring voters.

It withdrew permission given to the Telangana government for disbursements of financial aid to farmers for rabi crops under the Rythu Bandhu Scheme after a state minister violated the provisions of the model code by making a public announcement about it.

The poll panel had given its nod to the state government to disburse the rabi installment during the model code of conduct period on certain grounds.

It had also asked the government not to carry out the proposed Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra, its mega outreach programme on schemes and initiatives, in these five states till December 5.

The government had made it clear that the yatra will not cover poll-going states till the model code of conduct was in force.

Based on complaints from rival parties, the EC issued no-



tices to former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, his sister and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and BRS chief and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. He was later issued an advisory and asked to follow the model code in letter and spirit.

Recently, the Election Commission also sought an explanation from the Congress government in Karnataka over advertisements publicising its achievements in newspapers in Telangana.

In a letter to the Karnataka chief secretary, the commission said the state government did not obtain prior approval from

Elections were held in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Telangana between November 7-November 30 and the counting of votes would take place December 3

Acting on complaints and inputs by the local poll machinery, the EC issued show cause notices and advisories to top politicians to adhere to the provisions of the model code

for publishing the advertisements, an action violative of the poll code.

It also said the publication of any such advertisement by the government of Karnataka in Telangana should stop with immediate effect till necessary approvals are taken by the state government from the commission.

According to the EC, the over ₹2000 crore seizures during the poll period in Mizoram, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan were over seven-fold more as compared to 2018 assembly elections.

Used for the first time, the Election Seizure Management System facilitated coordination among enforcement agencies, the poll panel said.

FOREIGN HOSPITALITY

Govt's nod must for MPs: RS notification

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 30: Members of Parliament should observe strict guidelines while accepting foreign hospitality during private visits abroad or obtain prior permission of the central government, according to fresh orders issued Thursday.

The series of notifications were issued by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat.

One of them requires MPs to follow the norms including the Code of Ethics, which mandates they not to take gifts that may interfere with honest and impartial discharge of their official duties.

These guidelines come at a time when the Ethics Committee of the Lok Sabha has recommended expulsion of TMC member Mohua Moitra in the bribery-for-query row. Moitra has been accused of accepting "illegal gratifications" from Dubai-based businessman Darshan Hiranandani to raise questions in Parliament.

The norms said all invitations from any foreign source, namely, government of any country or any foreign entity are expected to be routed through the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

In case such an invitation is received directly, MPs are required to bring it to the notice of the MEA and necessary political clearance of that ministry should also be obtained for the purpose.



"Members of Parliament are required to obtain prior permission of the Central Government for accepting any foreign hospitality during their private visits abroad or visits abroad in their personal capacity, a new notification under Section 6 of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010," another notification said.

MPs are also advised that their applications for acceptance of foreign hospitality must reach the Ministry of Home Affairs at least two weeks before the proposed date of onward journey, it said.

"Before accepting the hospitality, the Members should satisfy themselves about the credentials of the organization/institution extending the hospitality," the communication said.

Another notification said MPs are requested to send information of their visit abroad, stating the purpose, to the secretary-general at least 3 weeks in advance so that the MEA and the Indian mission/post concerned could be informed of the same.

Govt approves 97 Tejas fighter jets, 156 copters for IAF



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 30: India Thursday accorded an initial approval to defence acquisition projects worth ₹2.23 lakh crore that included procurement of 97 Tejas light combat aircraft and 156 Prachand combat helicopters, in a major move to significantly enhance the combat capabilities of the armed forces.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, cleared the projects, at a time India is locked in a bitter military standoff with China at a number of friction points in eastern Ladakh for over three years.

The defence ministry said 98 per cent of the total procurement worth ₹2.23 lakh crore will be sourced from the domestic industries and that the move will give a substantial boost to the Indian defence industry in

achieving the goal of 'Aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance) in defence industry.

The DAC also approved a proposal of the Indian Air Force to upgrade its Su-30 fighter fleet by state-run aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL).

The DAC further accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) or initial approval for procurement of two types of anti-tank munitions namely area denial munition (ADM) type-2 and type-3. The top body on procurement of military hardware also cleared acquisition and integration of automatic target tracker (ATT) and digital basaltic computer (DBC) for T-90 tanks besides approving another proposal to buy MRASHM for the Indian Navy. The MRASHM is a lightweight surface-to-surface missile which will be a primary offensive weapon onboard various Indian naval ships.

"The DAC accorded AoNs for procurement of Light Combat Helicopter for Indian Air Force and Indian Army and Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk-1A for IAF from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) under Buy (Indian-IDDM) category," the ministry said.



People wait in a queue to cast their votes at a polling booth during Telangana Assembly election, at Goshamahal in Hyderabad. With an estimated 63.94 per cent voter turnout in an election where exit poll results were trying to seal the fate of parties even before all the ballot boxes were sealed, Telangana witnessed what is widely considered the fiercest poll battle since its formation

India, China hold another WMCC meeting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 30: India and China Thursday held "constructive" diplomatic talks on proposals to resolve the remaining issues and achieve complete disengagement in eastern Ladakh, but there was no clear indications of any major breakthrough.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said both sides decided to hold the next round of senior commanders' meet-

ing at the earliest to achieve the "objective" and that it was agreed on the need to ensure a stable situation on the ground and avoid any

untoward incident. It said the two sides reviewed the situation and engaged in an "open, constructive and in-depth" discussion on proposals to resolve the remaining issues and achieve complete disengagement in eastern Ladakh.

The virtual talks took place under the framework of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC). Gourangalal Das, Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the Ministry of

External Affairs, led the Indian delegation. The Chinese team was headed by the director-general, boundary and oceanic affairs in the Chinese foreign ministry.

"The two sides reviewed the situation along the LAC in the Western Sector of the India-China border areas, and engaged in an open, constructive and in-depth discussion of proposals to resolve the remaining issues and achieve complete disengagement in eastern Ladakh," the MEA said.

INDIA MUST BE PREPARED: EXPERTS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 30: Hot on the heels of a deadly Covid-19 pandemic, the recent pneumonia outbreak reported in China is a concern for the rest of the world as our interconnected world still poses risks, said experts Thursday, while calling on the need for preparing for the worst.

A recent post on ProMED Mail, the online reporting system of the International Society for Infectious Diseases, reported that China was experiencing a major pneumonia outbreak with no known cause in children. Netherlands and Denmark have also reported a similar uptick in pneumonia cases among children.

"In the wake of the pneumonia outbreak in China, vigilance becomes our greatest shield.

CHINA PNEUMONIA OUTBREAK



Although, there is no imminent threat to India, given our robust preparedness. Drawing from our past encounters with novel viruses, our readiness is evident. The lessons learned have fortified our capabilities to ef-

fectively address potential challenges posed by emerging infectious agents. However, our interconnected world still poses risks, and in such a case awareness and precautions are potent tools," added Dr Nidhin Mohan,

Consultant, Internal Medicine, Narayana Health City, Bengaluru.

A new paper in the Lancet journal shows a significant resurgence of Mycoplasma pneumoniae cases post Covid in several countries including Singapore and Sweden since April.

Last week, the Union Health Ministry noted that it is "closely monitoring the reported outbreak of H9N2 cases and clusters of respiratory illness in children" in northern China.

"There is low risk to India from both the avian influenza case reported from China as well as the clusters of respiratory illness," said a statement from the Ministry. It added that the country is prepared for any kind of exigency that may emerge from the current influenza situation in China.

SNIPPETS

Gyanvapi: Court grants 10 more days to ASI

Varanasi: The Varanasi district court Thursday gave 10 more days to the Archaeological Survey of India to complete and submit a scientific survey report of the Gyanvapi mosque complex here. Taking up the plea of the ASI seeking three additional weeks to submit the report, District Judge A K Vishvesh said he hoped that the ASI would not ask for more time, according to counsel for the Hindu side Madan Mohan Yadav.



CBI raids residences of TMC MLA, councillors



Kolkata: The CBI Thursday conducted simultaneous raids at the residences of several Trinamool Congress leaders, including an MLA and two councillors, for their alleged involvement in irregularities in school recruitment in West Bengal, an official said. The central agency raided the residence of Jafikul Islam, the MLA of Domkal in Murshidabad district, and Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) councillor Bappaditya Dasgupta and Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation councillor Debraj Chakraborty, he said.

Ruckus in WB Assembly

Kolkata: The West Bengal Assembly witnessed a ruckus Thursday as the BJP legislators staged a walk-out after a "point-of-order" plea seeking discussion on why arrested minister Jyotipriya Mallick continues to be a member of the state Cabinet was turned down. Placing the plea, BJP legislator Shankar Ghosh sought a discussion on the matter, but Speaker Biman Bandyopadhyay turned the plea down. The BJP's legislative team questioned the Speaker as to why the plea was turned down. But as Bandyopadhyay stuck to his decision, the BJP MLAs started raising slogans inside the House. Later, they staged a walkout and started sloganeering in the Assembly lawn.

international



Taiwan's security depends on the peaceful development of cross-strait relations instead of a few pieces of US-made weapons
WU QIAN | CHINA'S DEFENCE MINISTRY'S TOP SPOKESPERSON

SINGAPORE, ZURICH MOST EXPENSIVE CITIES

Singapore and Zurich tied for the world's most expensive city this year, followed by Geneva, New York and Hong Kong, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) said Thursday as it cautioned that the global cost-of-living crisis was not yet over



of the day quote

The White House is not seeking to place conditions on US military assistance to Israel
JAKE SULLIVAN | NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR OF THE US

We should revitalize the political prospects of the two-state solution with stronger determination. The lack of a Palestinian state is the crux of the repeated turbulence in the Palestinian-Israeli situation
WANG YI | CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER

There's a recognition that my government is committed to climate action and that we're playing a positive role, not just with our commitment to reduce our emissions by 43% by 2030 and to reach net zero by 2050, but that, importantly, we are playing a role in the region, and indeed, around the globe
ANTHONY ALBANESE | AUSTRALIA'S PM

SHORT TAKES

Imran writes to Pak chief justice

Islamabad: Pakistan's jailed ex-premier Imran Khan Thursday urged Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa to take cognizance of the alleged political victimisation of his party workers, including their abductions and disappearances and sought the formation of a commission to probe all issues faced by his party ahead of elections. In a seven-page letter to Chief Justice Isa, Khan, chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party pleaded with him to assert Article 184 (3) of the Pakistani Constitution that safeguards the 'right to liberty, to associate, assemble, and speak' on account of their political affiliation.

Top Ramaswamy aide resigns

Washington: A top aide to Republican presidential aspirant Vivek Ramaswamy has resigned and joined former President Donald Trump's campaign, according to a media report which called the departure the latest indicator of Indian-American's stagnating election campaign. Brian Swensen formally resigned from his role as national political director for the Ramaswamy campaign over the weekend, CNN reported. Swensen has joined the Trump campaign, the news network quoted a source familiar with his departure, as saying. Swensen is expected to be working on the campaign's political operation in the early-voting states, specifically in Nevada, two Trump campaign sources said.

Truce extended in Gaza

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, Nov 30: Israel and Hamas agreed at the last minute Thursday to extend their ceasefire in Gaza by another day. But any further renewal of the deal that has seen dozens of hostages and prisoners released could prove more daunting since Hamas is expected to set a higher price for many of the remaining captives.

International pressure has mounted for the truce to continue as long as possible after nearly eight weeks of Israeli bombardment and a ground campaign in Gaza that have killed thousands of Palestinians, uprooted more than three-quarters of the population of 2.3 million and led to a humanitarian crisis.

Israel has vowed to resume its offensive once the ceasefire expires. And the talks appear to be growing tougher, with Hamas having already freed most of the women and children kidnapped during the deadly October 7 attack on Israel that triggered the war. The militants are expected to make greater demands in return for freeing scores of civilian men and soldiers.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin



Thai hostages who were freed from Hamas arrive at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Samut Prakan Province, Thailand, Thursday

As word of Thursday's extension came, gunmen opened fire on people waiting for buses along a main highway entering Jerusalem, killing at least three people and wounding several others, according to police

Israel has vowed to resume its offensive once the ceasefire expires

is producing results. It's important, and we hope that it can continue," he said.

Qatar, which along with Egypt has played a key role in mediating, announced the latest extension of the truce, under which Hamas has released at least 10 Israeli hostages per day in exchange for Israel's release of at least 30 Palestinian prisoners. The two Arab countries are now seeking to prolong the deal by another two days, according to Diaa Rashwan, the head of Egypt's State Information Service.

As word of Thursday's extension came, gunmen opened fire on people waiting for buses

along a main highway entering Jerusalem, killing at least three people and wounding several others, according to police.

The two attackers, brothers from a Palestinian neighborhood in annexed east Jerusalem, were killed. Hamas' armed wing claimed the attack, casting it as retaliation for the killing of women and children in Gaza and other Israeli "crimes." The attack did not appear to threaten the truce in Gaza.

Netanyahu is under intense pressure from families of the hostages to bring them home. But his far-right governing partners are also pushing him to continue the war until Hamas is destroyed, and could bolt his coalition if he is seen as making too many concessions.

Israel says it will maintain the truce until Hamas stops releasing captives, at which point it will resume military operations aimed at eliminating the group, even as the Biden administration has urged it to operate with far greater precision if it resumes its offensive.

"As soon as Hamas stops releasing mothers, we're coming for the fathers. As soon as it stops releasing daughters, we're coming for the sons," Israeli government spokesman Eylon Levy said.

CIPHER CASE Pak Cabinet okays Imran's jail trial

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Nov 30: Pakistan's Cabinet Thursday approved the jail trial of former Prime Minister Imran Khan in the cipher case after the special court's decision to conduct in-prison proceedings due to security reasons.

Following the court order, the report for the jail trial was moved by the Ministry of Law and Justice and it was approved by the Cabinet, Geo News quoted officials as saying.

Khan, 71, has been incarcerated in the Adiala jail Rawalpindi since September 26, where his in-prison trial had been going until last week when the Islamabad High Court ruled against the jail trial on procedural grounds while declaring the proceedings held so far as vitiated.

After the Islamabad High Court ruling, Special Court judge Abul Hasnat Zulqernain heard the cipher case on Tuesday at the Federal Judicial Complex in Islamabad.



Dog farmers struggle with police officers during a rally against the government-led dog meat banning bill in front of the presidential office in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday

Japan may suspend its own Osprey flights

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, Nov 30: Japan plans to suspend its own Osprey flights after a US Air Force Osprey based in Japan crashed into waters off the southern coast during a training mission, officials said Thursday. Tokyo has also asked the US military to stop all Ospreys operating in Japan except for those searching for victims of crashes.

A senior Defence Ministry official, Taro Yamato, told a parliamentary hearing that Japan plans to suspend flights of Ospreys for the time being, but



Japanese coast guard helicopter and patrol vessel conduct search and rescue operation in the waters where a US military Osprey aircraft crashed into off the coast of Yakushima Island, Kagoshima prefecture, southern Japan

there were few other immediate details.

A US Air Force Osprey based in Japan crashed during a training mission Wednesday off of the country's southern coast, killing at least one of the eight crew members.

Russian court bans 'LGBT' movement



The move is part of a pattern of increasing restrictions in Russia on expressions of sexual orientation and gender identity, including laws outlawing the promotion of "non-traditional" sexual relations and banning legal or medical changes of gender

REUTERS

Moscow, Nov 30: Russia's Supreme Court ruled Thursday that LGBT activists should be designated as extremists, in a move that representatives of gay and transgender people fear will lead to arrests and prosecutions. A Reuters reporter in court heard it announce that it had approved a request from the justice ministry to recognise what it called "the international LGBT social movement" as extremist and to ban its activities.

The move is part of a pattern of increasing restrictions in Russia on expressions of sexual orientation and gender identity, including laws outlawing the promotion of "non-traditional" sexual relations and banning legal or medical changes of gender.

President Vladimir Putin, expected shortly to announce that he will seek a new six-year term in March, has long sought to promote an image of Russia as a guardian of traditional moral values in contrast with a decadent West. In a speech last year, he said the West was welcome to

adopt "rather strange, in my view, new-fangled trends like dozens of genders, and gay parades" but had no right to impose them on other countries.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters before the court decision was announced that the Kremlin was "not following" the case and had no comment on it. The Supreme Court took around five hours to issue its ruling, after opening its session at 10 am (0700 GMT). The proceedings were closed to media, but reporters were allowed in to hear the decision.

LGBT activists had seen the decision as inevitable after the November 17 request by the justice ministry, which said - without giving examples - that "various signs and manifestations of extremist orientation, including the incitement of social and religious discord" had been identified in the activities of the LGBT movement in Russia.

"Of course it's very alarming, and I don't remember the threat ever being so serious and real," Alexei Sergeyev, an LGBT activist in St Petersburg, told Reuters TV in an interview earlier this month.

More than 100 groups are already banned in Russia as "extremist". Previous listings, for example of the Jehovah's Witnesses religious movement and organisations linked to opposition politician Alexei Navalny, have served as a prelude to arrests.

Sergeyev said activities such as psychological and legal support, or even "meetings where you can just sit and drink tea", would be driven underground, depriving many LGBT people of support.

Hancock defends his record at COVID inquiry

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Nov 30: Former British health secretary Matt Hancock defended his record at the UK's COVID-19 inquiry Thursday, contesting widespread accusations of incompetence in leading the response to the biggest public health crisis Britain faced in a century.

The inquiry, which began public hearings this summer, is questioning key government officials about their political decision-making — namely when they decided to impose national lockdowns — during the pandemic.

Hancock played a key role in the UK's pandemic response but resigned in 2021 after he was caught on camera kissing his aide in his office, breaking the social distancing rules in place at the time. A number of officials who gave evidence at the inquiry have accused Hancock of being "overoptimistic" and recalled concerns at the time about poor organization within the health department under him.

The inquiry heard that in one WhatsApp message, Mark Sedwill, the UK's most senior civil servant at the time, joked to Downing Street's permanent secretary that it was necessary to remove Hancock to "save lives and protect the NHS (National Health Service)."

Helen MacNamara, who served as deputy Cabinet secretary, said in her testimony that Hancock displayed "nuclear levels" of overconfidence and a pattern of reassuring colleagues the pandemic was being dealt with in ways that were not true.

Responding to questioning about the accusations, Hancock told the inquiry Thursday that he and his department repeatedly tried but failed to "wake up" the central government and warn of the coming pandemic early in 2020.

COP28 kicks off with climate disaster fund victory

THE EARLY BREAKTHROUGH ON THE DAMAGE FUND, WHICH POORER NATIONS HAD DEMANDED FOR YEARS, COULD HELP GREASE THE WHEELS FOR OTHER COMPROMISES TO BE MADE DURING THE TWO-WEEK SUMMIT

REUTERS

Dubai, Nov 30: The UN climate summit clinched an early victory Thursday, with delegates adopting a new fund to help poor nations cope with costly climate disasters.

COP28 president Sultan al-

Jaber said the decision sent a "positive signal of momentum to the world and to our work here in Dubai." In establishing the fund on the first day of the two-week COP28 conference, delegates opened the door for governments to announce contributions.

And several did, kicking off a series of small pledges that countries hoped would build to a substantial sum, including \$100 million from the COP28 host United Arab Emirates, another \$100 million from Germany, at least \$51 million from Britain, \$17.5 million from the United States, and \$10 million from Japan.

The early breakthrough on the damage fund, which poorer nations had demanded for years, could help grease the wheels for other compromises to be made during the two-week summit. But some groups were cautious, noting there were still unresolved issues including how the fund would be financed in the future.



COP28 President Sultan al-Jaber speaks during the opening session at the COP28 UN Climate Summit in Dubai

"The absence of a defined replenishment cycle raises serious questions about the fund's long-term sustainability," said Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy at Climate

Action Network International. "The responsibility now lies with affluent nations to meet their financial obligations in a manner proportionate to their role in the climate crisis."

Adnan Amin, CEO of the COP28 summit, told Reuters this month the aim was to secure several hundred million U.S. dollars for the climate disaster fund during the event.

Pope Francis, who was forced to cancel his trip to COP28 due to illness, sent a message on social media platform X: "May participants in #COP28 be strategists who focus on the common good and the future of their children, rather than the vested interests of certain countries or businesses. May they demonstrate the nobility of politics and not its shame."

Earlier on Thursday, Jaber opened the summit by urging countries and fossil fuel companies to work together to meet global climate goals. Governments are preparing for marathon negotiations on whether to agree, for the first time, to phase out the world's use of CO2-emitting coal, oil and gas, the main source of warm-

ing emissions.

Jaber, who is also the CEO of the United Arab Emirates' national oil company ADNOC, aimed to strike a conciliatory tone following months of criticism over his appointment as the head of COP28. He acknowledged that there were "strong views" about the idea of including language on fossil fuels and renewables in the negotiated text.

"It is essential that no issue is left off the table. And yes, as I have been saying, we must look for ways and ensure the inclusion of the role of fossil fuels," he said.

He touted his country's decision to "proactively engage" with fossil fuel companies, and noted that many national oil companies had adopted net-zero targets for 2050. "I am grateful that they have stepped up to join this game-changing journey," Jaber said. "But, I must say, it is not enough, and I know that they can do much more."



Coal is, and would, remain an important part of India's energy needs
VINAY MOHAN KWATRA | FOREIGN SECRETARY

FORBES ASIA HEROES OF PHILANTHROPY LIST

Nandan Nilekani, co-founder of Infosys, KP Singh, chairman emeritus at DLF, and Nikhil Kamath, co-founder of Zerodha, have been named on the 17th edition of Forbes Asia's Heroes of Philanthropy list released Thursday. The unranked list "highlights business leaders who are donating from their fortunes and giving personal time and attention to their select causes", Forbes said in a press release



of the day quote

India is expected to remain a bright spot in Asia for petrochemical demand in 2024, given its strong economic growth and resilient industrial production

STUTI CHAWLA | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, INDIA/MIDDLE EAST CHEMICALS PRICING, S&P GLOBAL COMMODITY INSIGHTS

Demand for both luxury and ultra-luxury properties has surged since the pandemic, with HNIs (High Net Worth Individuals) and ultra-HNIs buying such homes for investment, personal use, or both

ANU PURI | CHAIRMAN, ANAROCK

It is a momentous step towards our commitment to boosting the local smartphone manufacturing ecosystem in India. We believe that this association will leverage our excellence and superior execution and Xiaomi's expertise and leadership in the Indian business ecosystem

SUNIL VACHANI | EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, DIXON TECHNOLOGIES

SHORT TAKES

Tata Coffee to invest ₹450cr

New Delhi: Tata Coffee Thursday received the board's approval for the capacity expansion of its Vietnam-based wholly-owned subsidiary firm at an investment of ₹450 crore. The board has approved the setting up of an additional 5,500-tonne freeze-dried coffee facility in Vietnam, the company said in a regulatory filing. Tata Coffee said the additional capacity would be created with an investment of \$53.3 million (approximately ₹450 crore).

SMCP inks deal with Reliance

Aris: Fashion group SMCP, owner of French fashion labels Sandro and Maje, said Thursday it signed a deal with Reliance to expand into India and will join other high-end European brands opening stores in the Jio World Plaza mall in Mumbai. "There aren't a lot of accessible luxury fashion labels in India so we think it's time to be pioneering," said SMCP CEO Isabelle Guichot, citing India's wealth and growing population of younger generations among reasons for entering the country.

REC approves borrowing hike

New Delhi: State-owned REC Ltd Thursday said its board has approved a proposal to increase borrowing to ₹1.5 lakh crore from ₹1.2 lakh crore for 2023-24. The Board of Directors of REC Ltd, in its meeting held November 30, approved revision in its market borrowing programme under different debt segments with interchangeability among various instruments, including bonds/debentures, term loans, external commercial borrowing, commercial papers etc.

Go First CEO quits

Mumbai: Grounded Go First's CEO Kaushik Khona has put in his papers, nearly seven months after the no-frills airline filed for insolvency proceedings. In an e-mail to the airline's employees on Thursday, Khona said that November 30 is his last day. "With a heavy heart, I have to inform that today is my last day with the company. I got an opportunity to work for Go FIRST once again in August 2020 and with your able and active support I tried to perform to my best abilities," Khona said.

RISE FOR 3RD DAY Stock markets edge up in volatile trade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 30: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty eked out gains Thursday to extend the winning run for a third straight day in a highly volatile trade amid the scheduled monthly derivatives expiry and muted trend in the US markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex closed 86.53 points or 0.13 per cent higher at 66,988.44, registering its third day of gains. Stock markets witnessed heavy volatility due to the monthly expiry of derivatives contracts and oscillated between gains and losses during the day. Sensex hit a high of 67,069.89 and a low of 66,610.35 in day trade.

Despite heavy volatility, the combined market valuation of all listed companies on the leading stock exchange BSE continued to remain above the \$4-trillion mark for the second day in a row. The market valuation of all listed companies on the BSE reached the \$4-trillion milestone for the first time ever Wednesday.

The broader Nifty50 of the National Stock Exchange edged up 36.55 points or 0.18 per cent to close at 20,133.15.

The rupee snapped a two-day rising streak to settle 5 paise lower at 83.37 against the US dollar amid strengthening American currency overseas and rising crude oil prices.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹71.91 crore Wednesday.

The BSE benchmark jumped 727.71 points or 1.10 per cent to settle at 66,901.91 Wednesday. The Nifty climbed 206.90 points or 1.04 per cent to reclaim the 20,000-mark after a gap of over two months. It ended at 20,096.60.

FASTEST-GROWING MAJOR ECONOMY GDP grows 7.6% in Q2

ECONOMY TOPS EXPECTATIONS, GROWS BY 7.6% IN SEPT QUARTER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 30: India retained the tag of the world's fastest-growing major economy, with its GDP expanding by a faster-than-expected rate of 7.6 per cent in the July-September quarter on booster shots from government spending and manufacturing.

Gross domestic product, or GDP, growth of 7.6 per cent beat most estimates, including 6.5 per cent projected by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It expanded by 6.2 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2022-23. India remained the fastest-growing major economy, as China posted a 4.9 per cent growth.

According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) data, the agriculture sector GVA (Gross Value Added) growth decelerated to 1.2 per cent in the quarter from 2.5 per cent a year ago.

The expansion in financial, real estate and professional services' GVA was 6 per cent, down from 7.1 per cent in the year-ago quarter. The GVA in the manufacturing sector showed a growth of 13.9 per cent in the second quarter of the current fiscal compared to a contraction of 3.8 per cent in the year-ago period.

As per the data, the output (GVA) in the 'mining and quarrying' accelerated to 10 per cent in the second quarter against a contraction of 0.1 per cent a year ago. Electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services' grew by 10.1 per cent from 6.1 per cent.

The construction sector recorded a growth of 13.3 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter compared to 5.7 per cent.



The GDP growth numbers for Q2 display the resilience and strength of the Indian economy in the midst of such testing times globally. We are committed to ensuring fast-paced growth to create more opportunities, rapid eradication of poverty and improving 'ease of living' for our people

NARENDRA MODI | PM

The growth in gross domestic product (GDP) during the April-June quarter of 2023-24 remained unchanged at 7.8 per cent.

"Real GDP or GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in Q2 2023-24 is estimated to attain a level of ₹41.74 lakh crore, as against ₹38.78 lakh crore in Q2 2022-23, showing a growth of 7.6 per cent as compared to 6.2 per cent in Q2 2022-23," the NSO said.

Nominal GDP or GDP at current prices in Q2 2023-24 is estimated at ₹71.66 lakh crore against ₹65.67 lakh crore in Q2 2022-23, showing a growth of 9.1 per cent as compared to 17.2 per cent in Q2 2022-23, it added.

It further said the GDP at constant (2011-12) prices in April-September 2023-24 (H1 2023-24) is estimated at ₹82.11 lakh crore against ₹76.22 lakh crore during the corresponding period of the previous year, showing a

growth of 7.7 per cent in H1 2023-24 compared to 9.5 per cent in H1 2022-23, it said.

GDP at current prices in H1 2023-24 is estimated at ₹142.33 lakh crore compared to ₹131.09 lakh crore during the corresponding period of the previous year, showing a growth of 8.6 per cent in H1 2023-24 against 22.2 per cent in H1 2022-23.

The buoyancy in manufacturing was helped by a favourable base, an uptick in volume growth and an improvement in profit margins, owing to continued deflation in input prices.

The robust performance of the steel and cement sectors reflecting strong demand from the infrastructure sector, lower input costs improving the profitability margins, and steady domestic consumption demand in sectors like auto also contributed.

Factory output quickens

Key infra industries growth up at 12.1% in Oct; 4 sectors log double-digit expansion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 30: The output of eight key infrastructure sectors jumped by 12.1 per cent in October 2023 against 0.7 per cent expansion in the year-ago period on account of a sharp uptick in production of coal, steel, cement and electricity, according to the official data released Thursday.

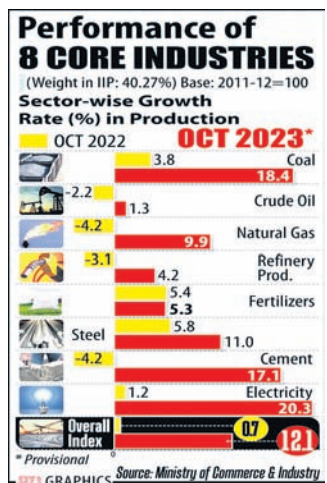
These numbers assume significance as the eight core sectors -- coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity -- contribute 40.27 per cent to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

Growth was primarily driven by a low base effect and double-digit growth in four sectors -- coal, steel, cement and electricity.

Infrastructure sectors grew by 9.2 per cent in September.

The output growth of eight sectors was at 8.6 per cent in April-October 2023-24 against 8.4 per cent in the year-ago period.

Coal output rose by 18.4 per cent while steel production jumped 11 per cent during the month under review as against 3.8 per cent and 5.8 per cent in October 2022 respectively.



Cement production grew by 17.1 per cent against a 4.2 per cent contraction in the year-ago period. Electricity generation rose by 20.3 per cent in October 2023 against 1.2 per cent in the same month last year.

Output of crude oil and natural gas increased by 1.3 per cent and 9.9 per cent in October this year respectively as against a negative growth of 2.2 per cent and 4.2 per cent in October 2022 respectively.

Refinery products production stood at 4.2 per cent in October this year as against (-) 3.1 per cent in October 2022.

Fertiliser production growth stood at 5.3 per cent in October this year as against 5.4 per cent in October 2022.

All-India House Price Index contracts: RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Nov 30: The all-India House Price Index (HPI) moderated to 3.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2023-24 from 4.5 per cent in the year-ago period, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India Thursday.

The RBI releases HPI-based on transaction-level data received from the registration authorities in 10 major cities.

The cities are Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kochi, Kolkata, Lucknow, and Mumbai.

"All-India HPI growth (year-on-year) moderated to 3.4 per cent in Q2:2023-24 from 5.1 per cent in the previous quarter and 4.5 per cent a year ago; annual growth in HPI varied widely across the cities - ranging from the high growth of 6.5 per cent (Chennai) to a contraction of 0.2 per cent (Jaipur)," the central bank said.

On a sequential (quarter-on-quarter) basis, all-India HPI contracted by 1.2 per cent in the second quarter of 2023-24; seven of the 10 cities witnessed price increase in housing registration during the latest quarter.



DREAM DEBUT

Tata Technologies sees stellar listing

New Delhi: Shares of Tata Technologies, an arm of Tata Motors, made a dream stock market debut Thursday and ended with a huge premium of nearly 163 per cent, against the issue price of ₹500. The stock of the company, which provides engineering and product development digital services, was listed at ₹1,199.95, registering a sharp jump of 139.99 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. During the day, it zoomed 180 per cent to ₹1,400. Shares of the company ended at ₹1,314.25 apiece, rallying 162.85 per cent. On the NSE, it began the trade at ₹1,200, climbing 140 per cent. The stock jumped to ₹1,400 during the day. Shares of the firm ended at ₹1,313 per piece, a jump of 162.6 per cent. The company's market valuation stood at ₹53,314.99 crore. This was the first company from the Tata Group to float an Initial Public Offer (IPO) in nearly two decades. Tata Consultancy Services was the last IPO from the group in 2004.

Gandhar Oil Refinery lists with a bang

New Delhi: Shares of Gandhar Oil Refinery (India) Ltd listed with a bang on Thursday, rallying over 78 per cent, against the issue price of ₹169. The stock made its debut at ₹295.40, a jump of 74.79 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. During the day, it climbed 103.90 per cent to ₹344.60. Shares of the company ended at ₹301.50 apiece, a surge of 78.40 per cent. On the NSE, the stock listed at ₹298, up 76.33 per cent. Shares of the company further jumped 103.57 per cent to ₹344.05 per piece. It finally ended at ₹301.55, up 78.43 per cent. The company's market valuation was ₹2,950.78 crore. In terms of volume, 29.06 lakh shares of the company were traded on the BSE and over 3.80 crore shares on the NSE during the day. The initial share sale of Gandhar Oil Refinery received 64.07 times subscription on the final day of bidding on Friday.

ALL-SHARE DEAL

UltraTech to take over Kesoram's cement business

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Nov 30: UltraTech Cement is set to acquire the cement business of BK Birla Group's flagship company Kesoram Industries in an all-share deal, with a business valuation of approximately ₹7,600 crore, including debt.

Kesoram announced that its board has approved the demerger of its cement business under a scheme of arrangement. In the deal, shareholders will receive one share of UltraTech Cement for every 52 Kesoram shares of ₹10 each.

Kesoram currently has two integrated cement units at Sedam (Karnataka) and Basantnagar (Telangana) with a total installed capacity of 10.75 mtpa as well as a 0.66 mtpa packing plant at Solapur, Maharashtra. In 2022-23, Kesoram's turnover from cement operations was ₹3,533.75 crore.

The deal was made within the Birla family. Kumar Mangalam Birla, the grandson of BK Birla, heads the AV Birla Group which owns UltraTech.

UltraTech is the third-largest cement producer in the world, outside of China, with a total grey cement capacity of 137.85 MTPA and the ongoing projects will take its capacity to 160 million.

The Kesoram management failed to infuse fresh capital to manage its ₹1,700 crore high-cost debt with interest rates ranging between 18 per cent and 20 per cent.

For this transaction, UltraTech will issue 59,74,301 new equity shares to the shareholders. This will increase its equity capital to ₹294.66 crore, consisting of 29.47 crore equity shares of ₹10 each.

The transaction will provide UltraTech with the opportunity to expand its footprint in the highly fragmented, competitive and fast-growing western and southern markets in the country, a statement said. The transaction is expected to be consummated within 9-12 months subject to above regulatory approvals.

Bangalore biggest hub for self-made entrepreneurs

The list of top 200 self-made entrepreneurs of the millennium has 405 founders of 200 most valued firms started after the year 2000. The cumulative value of these companies is ₹30 lakh crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Nov 30: Long touted as India's Silicon Valley, Bangalore has emerged as the biggest hub for most valued companies started by self-made entrepreneurs in this millennium, a report said Thursday.

A majority 129 such industry leaders are from the Karnataka capital, which is ahead of Mumbai (78), and Gurugram and New Delhi (49), as per a report by Hurun India.

Radhakishan Damani of

Avenue Supermarkets, which runs the D-Mart retail chain, leads the list of top 200 self-made entrepreneurs of the millennium as the 2000-founded company has a market capitalisation of ₹2.38 lakh crore as of September.

Binny Bansal and Sachin Bansal-founded Flipkart from Bangalore comes second with an equity value of ₹1.19 lakh crore, while Gurugram-headquartered Zomato founded by Deepinder Goyal comes third with a market capitalisation of



₹86,835 crore.

The list includes both listed and unlisted entities, and Hurun India's founder and managing director Anas Rahman Junaid said they have taken into account the mark-downs by investors

while analysing the companies' valuations.

The list has 405 founders of 200 most valued companies started after the year 2000. The cumulative value of these companies is ₹30 lakh crore.

Eyes on Indian bowlers

3 different captains for 3-format Proteas series



Suryakumar Yadav and KL Rahul will lead the Indian teams in T20Is and ODIs respectively, while Rohit Sharma has been named the captain for Tests

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

THE SQUADS

New Delhi, Nov 30: India will have three different captains for three separate squads on their upcoming all-format tour of South Africa with Rohit Sharma leading in Tests, KL Rahul in ODIs and Suryakumar Yadav captaining the squad in the T20Is.

With Rohit and Virat Kohli requesting the board for a break from the white-ball leg of the tour to be held in December-January and will get into action in the two Tests to be played December 26-30 at Centurion and the second Test January 3-7, 2024 at Cape Town.

Surya will lead the T20I squad which will take on South Africa in three matches from December 10 to 14. The Indian team will participate in three T20Is, three ODIs and two Tests.

While Rohit and Virat have been selected only for the Tests, pacer Mohammed Shami, who is currently undergoing medical treatment, has been selected subject to recuperating and getting fit in time. Interestingly, Shami has not been picked in the ODI squad, despite being the top wicket-taker in the recently concluded World Cup.

Among the surprise inclusions in the white-ball squads, Sanju Samson has been named in the squad for the ODIs.

TESTS: Rohit Sharma (C), Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Rituraj Gaikwad, Ishan Kishan (wk), KL Rahul (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur, Mohd. Siraj, Mukesh Kumar, Mohd. Shami*, Jasprit Bumrah (VC), Prasidh Krishna.

T20Is: Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Rituraj Gaikwad, Tilak Varma, Suryakumar Yadav (C), Rinku Singh, Shreyas Iyer, Ishan Kishan (wk), Jitesh Sharma (wk), Ravindra Jadeja (VC), Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Kuldeep Yadav, Arshdeep Singh, Mohd. Siraj, Mukesh Kumar, Deepak Chahar.

ODIs: Rituraj Gaikwad, Sai Sudharsan, Tilak Varma, Rajat Patidar, Rinku Singh, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (C) (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Mukesh Kumar, Avesh Khan, Arshdeep Singh, Deepak Chahar.

Yuzvendra Chahal, who was ignored for the World Cup, is back in the 50-over format, while Deepak Chahar has been named for ODIs and T20Is.

The tour will start with the T20Is Dec 10 (Durban), Dec 12 (Gqeberha) and Dec 14 at Johannesburg. The ODIs will be played Dec 17 (Johannesburg), Dec 19 (Gqeberha) and Dec 21 at Paarl.

cluding 21 in the final over.

Deepak Chahar is back in the T20 mix and his ability to move the new ball should be considered for his inclusion in the playing XI along with death overs specialist Mukesh Kumar, who is back after one-match break.

Both Prasidh and Avesh Khan lack variety and innovation as they keep pitching the ball at the same length. Both bowl in late 130s or early 140s but consistently pitch it back of the length and the nature of Indian tracks make it a cannon fodder for batters. Also not being able to use variations like conventional or wide yorkers has been the undoing of these bowlers who also didn't execute slower deliveries properly.

MATCHDAY

India vs Australia
4th T20 International

Time: 7 pm

Telecast: Sports 18 Network

Stream: Jio Cinema

Australia back into the five-match series with a win in a last-ball finish in Guwahati.

But the hosts will fancy their chances with Maxwell, and other influential players such as Steve Smith and Adam Zampa not figuring in the playing XI here, having left for home after a long stay in the country where they won their sixth World Cup title recently.

Cricket Australia (CA) released many of its top players including Maxwell midway into the series keeping in mind their workload and fitness ahead of the T20 World Cup.

The Suryakumar Yadav-led second-string India are smarting from a classic Maxwell innings,

In the batting line up, Shreyas Iyer's comeback means only Tilak Varma looks a candidate who could be benched as five others - Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rituraj Gaikwad, Ishan Kishan, skipper Suryakumar Yadav and finisher Rinku Singh select themselves.

India will also look to exploit the absence of a marauding Maxwell who pulled off a heist of sorts to singlehandedly bring

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, Nov 30: India's young bowling unit, which has been under the pump, will look to better its death overs performance while utilising Glenn Maxwell's absence to its advantage in the fourth T20I against Australia here Friday.

India's second-string attack did not paint a good picture of itself by not defending 40-plus runs in the final two overs in the third match which the Australians won while chasing a daunting 223-run target.

There is a possibility of a minor tweak in the Indian line-up after Prasidh Krishna gave away 68 runs in four overs, in-

Priyanshu, Treesa-Gayatri pair sail into quarterfinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Nov 30: Priyanshu Rajawat was the lone Indian shuttler to qualify for the quarterfinals in men's singles, while Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand made the cut in women's doubles at the Syed Modi International badminton tournament here Thursday.

Priyanshu, who won the Orleans Masters this year, emerged victorious after compatriot Sathish Kumar Karunakaran retired while lagging 18-21, 6-11 in the second round match. The World No.31 Indian will now clash against Indonesian qualifier Alwi Farhan.

Commonwealth Games bronze medallists Treesa and Gayatri, seeded fourth, defeated compatriots Dhanya Nandakumar and Ridhi Kaur Toor 21-9, 21-5 and are set to face another Indian pair next.

As many as 10 Indians had participated in the men's singles draw which has World No.12 Japanese Kenta Nishimoto and World No.14 Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei as the top two world-ranked players.

While HS Prannoy and Lakshya Sen had withdrawn at the last-minute, the rest of the shuttlers, apart from Priyanshu, cut a sorry figure after failing to cross the second round of the Super 300 tournament.

World No.40 Kiran George, who won the Denmark Masters



this year, fought hard before losing 16-21, 21-18, 20-22 to World No.36 Chia Hao Lee of Taiwan.

Things were more gloomy in women's singles as none of the Indian players could cross the second round, though as many as 11 of them participated in the tournament. The draw has Japan's World No.17 Aya Ohori as the top ranked player.

While the left-handed Ashmita Chaliha, who had won Maldives International this season, was outclassed by third seed Ohori 21-7, 21-13, 16-year-old Unnati Hooda, the 2022 Odisha Open and 2023 Abu Dhabi Masters winner, was humbled 9-21, 13-21 by former World Champion Nozomi Okuhara of Japan and qualifier Janani Ananthakumar lost 15-21, 12-21 to Malaysia's Wong Ling Ching.

Anupama Upadhyaya, the former junior World No.1 and current senior national champion, lost 16-21, 17-21 to Taiwan's Sung Shuo Yun, seeded eighth, while Ruthvika Shivani Gadge was no match for Thailand's Lalinnat Chaiwan, losing 8-21, 12-21.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Geneva, Nov 30: Arsenal scored six to advance in the Champions League as a group winner and Manchester United stayed last in their group despite again scoring three times away from home.

Arsenal's 6-0 rout of Lens on Wednesday ensured second-place PSV Eindhoven also advanced from Group B to the round of 16. PSV's second-half rally to win 3-2 at Sevilla was clinched by United States forward Ricardo Pepi in stoppage time.

There are now 12 confirmed teams in the round of 16 draw December 18 and Man United are in serious danger of missing out. The three-time European champions led by two goals after 18 minutes at Galatasaray and 3-2 early in the second half but was pegged back again in a wild 3-3 draw.

HAIL JUDE

Jude Bellingham was a stand-out again for Real Madrid in what is becoming the 20-year-old England star's routine excellence this season. Bellingham scored Madrid's second goal against Napoli to make it four goals in four Champions League games for his new club and provided an assist for Joselu in stoppage time.

Bellingham now has scored 15 goals in his first 16 matches with Madrid wearing the No.5 shirt of the great Zinedine Zidane.

ONANA ERRORS

Andre Onana's goalkeeping



ON A ROLL: Bukayo Saka (L) and Gabriel Jesus wheel away in celebration after the former's goal against Lens, Wednesday

errors have cost Manchester United in losses at Bayern and at home to Galatasaray, and almost led to another defeat Wednesday in Istanbul. For each of Hakim Ziyech's two goals from free-kicks, Onana's positional play or handling could be faulted.

Man United could end up third even if they beat Bayern December 12, the same night Copenhagen hosts Galatasaray. Salzburg needs only a draw at home to Benfica in two weeks to clinch third place in Group D Europa League title holder

Sevilla can rise off the bottom of Group B by winning at Lens December 12 and getting back into the competition it won seven times in the past 18 seasons. Winning the Europa title also is a ticket back to the Champions League next season.

GUNNERS ON RAMPAGE

It took just 13 minutes in the first half for Arsenal to dismantle their opponents, who had beaten them 2-1 in the reverse fixture in October. Kai Havertz (13th minute) began the glut, scoring in his second successive game, before Gabriel

Jesus (21st) doubled the advantage. Bukayo Saka (23rd) bundled home the next, but the best came from a fine, solo effort from Gabriel Martinelli (27th).

His effort was perhaps matched by Martin Odegaard's (45+1) brilliant strike on the stroke of halftime, whipping home a thunderous volley. Jorginho (86th) then rounded off a statement Arsenal performance from the penalty spot after European debutant Abduquodir Khusanov was penalised for handball.

India women start with rout of Canada in Junior Hockey WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Santiago (Chile), Nov 30: The Indian team made a resounding start to their FIH Women's Junior Hockey World Cup campaign by securing a commanding 12-0 victory over Canada here.

Annu (fourth, sixth and 39th minute), Dipi Monika Toppo (21st), Mumtaz Khan (26th, 41st, 54th and 60th), Deepika Soreng (34th, 50th and 54th), and Neelam (45th) were the goal scorers for India Wednesday.

India began the match with an attacking approach, and swiftly secured an early advantage as Annu scored two early goals through penalty corners.

The momentum from the first quarter was carried into the second by India, who continued their dominance. They maintained possession, consistently penetrating the circle, resulting in Dipi and Mumtaz netting a field goal each, further extending India's lead.

Despite having a healthy lead, the Indian team showed no signs of slowing down in the third quarter and continued to dominate the proceedings with Deepika, Annu, Mumtaz and Neelam finding the goals.

The Indian team's hunger for goals continued in the fourth quarter, resulting in strikes from Deepika, who completed her hat-trick, and Mumtaz, who struck her fourth in the match. India will next lock horns with Germany, Friday.

'Players approached for match manipulation'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 30: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) Thursday revealed that several I-League players were recently approached for "match manipulation" and promised to investigate the matter.

AIFF President Kalyan Chaubey did not elaborate on how they received the information, which players were approached and who contacted them but insisted that the federation is committed to save the integrity of the game.

"We have received information of multiple approaches to

our players. We will thoroughly examine the incidents, investigate, and take all necessary action," Chaubey said in a statement. "We are committed to protecting our players and our beautiful game and will not tolerate any attempts of this nature to put the players and the game at risk," he said.

The 2023 I-League season began in October and more than 40 matches have already been played in the 13-team competition. "We will also continue to strengthen our institutional capacities to not only counter such threats but also educate our players and officials on how to recog-

nise, respond to, and report incidents of this nature," said Chaubey.

The AIFF said it has taken serious note of the matter and reiterated its zero-tolerance policy towards any activity that impacts the integrity of its competitions or otherwise brings the game of football into disrepute.

"AIFF is committed to taking every step within its power to prevent corrupt practices from undermining the values of football," it said.

Sources in the know of things said that the players being approached are from four clubs.

"The information received is related to approaches to players of four clubs. Most probably, the approaches were made early in the season," an AIFF source told PTI on conditions of anonymity, without revealing the name of the players and clubs. "AIFF integrity officer Javed Siraj is looking into the matter," the source added.

It is also learnt that the AIFF could also investigate into few "suspicious" I-League matches. The AIFF has in the past expressed concerns about investments made to I-League clubs by shell companies linked to shady people.

ABD recalls snub by Delhi in 2010 edition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Durban, Nov 30: One of the greatest batters of modern era, AB de Villiers has revealed that he was snubbed by erstwhile Delhi Daredevils after spending three seasons at the IPL franchise.

Before making it big at the Royal Challengers Bangalore, the South African batting legend had three lukewarm seasons with the Delhi franchise, now known as Delhi Capitals.

But in a team meeting, also attended by explosive Australian opener David Warner, de Villiers was told that he was going to be "retained" but it happened otherwise as the franchise released

him before the 2011 auction. Recalling the incident in his YouTube channel, AB de Villiers 360', the former South African skipper said: "When I played in the 2010 season, I got called into the office and was told 'you are going to get retained, young AB de Villiers'."

"I sat alongside David Warner in that meeting. It came as a huge surprise to me a week or two later when I realised I had been released. So the communication wasn't great back in the day, that must be different these days but it's not a nice feeling," De Villiers added.

The 39-year-old said it was a huge blow and he was very nerv-

ous before the auction. "You're unsure of your career, at that time in 2010 I think I only played five games in that IPL season so a lot of doubts crept up in my mind.

"But I did have a very good international season. I kept playing good cricket and luckily for me the auction happened and I got picked up by RCB, and it changed my life forever, so great memories with regards to that. I was so nervous. Then I got the news from Twitter that I was picked by RCB and the next moment Virat (Kohli) called."

De Villiers said the released players should not feel disappointed as it's not the "end of the road".